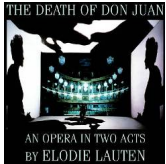


Elodie Lauten - The Death of Don Juan (1985/2008)

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1 Overture 5:59 2 Act 1. Scene 1. Vision 5:09 3 Act 1. Scene 2. Death As A Shadow 8:22 4 Act 1. Scene 3. Don Juan Enlightened 5:50 5 Act 2. Prelude 2:36 6 Act 2. Scene 1. Death As A Woman 3:04 7 Act 2. Scene 2. Duel 6:18 8 Act 2. Scene 3. Despair 6:50 9 Act 2. Scene 3. Despair - Instrumental 1:48 10 Act 2. Scene 4. Kyrie 5:56
Randi Larowitz - Soprano Elodie Lauten – Alto, Contralto, Fairlight CMI, Harpsichord Bill Raynor - guitar Arthur Russell - Cello, Tenor Steven Sauber - Actor, Bass Peter Zummo – Trombone

CD debut of this 1985 post-minimal landmark by Elodie Lauten, featuring performances by Arthur Russell and Peter Zummo. Lauten has been active in the downtown New York classical and punk scenes since moving from France in the 1970s. *The Death of Don Juan* is a breakthrough for its bold, lyrical minimalism in concert with a dramatic sensibility that is deeply faithful to the modern existential emotional experience. Originally self-produced and released as a small LP edition on her own label, it has been touted ever since by Kyle Gann, who adds notes to this edition, and was recently included on one of Alan Licht's Minimal Top Ten lists. --- unseenworlds.net

French-born, American-based composer Elodie Lauten was one of the most intriguing post-minimalist composers to emerge in the 1980s. It's easy to hear repetitive structures, additive layers, and harmonic stasis in her 1984 opera *The Death of Don Juan*, but her handling of minimalist materials creates a unique sound that makes her work stand out from that of Glass, Reich, and Riley. Critic John Schaefer aptly describes her style as a blend of "Satie-like lyricism, minimalist keyboard patterns, brooding electronics, gentle impressionism, and tapes of everyday noises." The simultaneity of all these elements in the opera makes for a dense and

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complex texture that still manages to sound delicate. The opera, which lasts less than an hour, structurally resembles Glass' Satyagraha somewhat in its establishing a single mood and musical ambience for each section and letting it play itself out in subtly shifting patterns and reconfigurations. An exception is the final scene, which begins with a simple chanting of the Kyrie and builds in power through an increasingly dissonant amalgamation of harmonic layers. The work isn't conventionally operatic in the sense of having a clear narrative conveyed by bel canto voices, but its ritualistic scenes are strongly dramatic. The recording dates from a 1985 release and is a welcome addition to the distressingly sparse selection of Lauten's music that's available on CD. Although the voices here aren't always the most beautiful, the singers, and instrumentalists (some of whom both sing and play) perform with conviction and eloquence. The sound is atmospheric and present, and Lauten's use of electronics gives it a brightness characteristic of electro-acoustic music of the period. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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