



The Shit of God

Diamanda Galás , Clive Barker (Introduction)

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The first collection of the texts by one of the world's leading and most controversial performance artists

The Shit of God Details

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Author : Diamanda Galás , Clive Barker (Introduction)

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From Reader Review The Shit of God for online ebook

Joel says

Diamanda Galas's texts are interspersed with biblical passages, poetry from renowned writers and her own thoughts. The songs, searing, the lyrics, while may be deemed iconoclastic and groundbreaking struck me as something coming from someone who is really sad and lonely. I guess, that's just me.

CuntyLicious says

Honestly? i got it simply because it was an autographed copy.
Unless you're knowledgeable about her Background, opinions, activism, and her rich musical history, you won't find anything sustainable here.
but, if you're a devotee of Miss Galas, then, it's a must own.

Scott says

I don't care what anybody says, but song lyrics presented as poetry never work. Not even great song lyrics. On top of that, the lyrics here vacillate between 1) images of death and religion that fail to rise above a high school goth level of depth, and 2) utter gibberish. This is really lost without the music.

There are a couple of isolated moments that are brilliant. I particularly liked the last passage, her violent and pornographic depiction of her raping a music critic, if only for its boldness. But even that was a bit puerile.

For Fans Only.

Trevor Woodhouse says

I absolutely adore Diamanda and think she is a genius but she too often resorts to childish name calling and humor becoming a teenager which hurts her overall tone. Some of her work is brilliant and others just incoherent blather unfortunately. She is amazing though nonetheless.

Tim says

If you need escapist, cheery songs to simplistically lift your spirits and distract your mind from the tribulations of life - if you want a soothing voice (in terms of words AND sound) - LEAVE NOW WHILE YOU STILL CAN! YOU HAVE JUST ENTERED DIAMANDA GALAS TERRITORY!

Diamanda Galas is a singer/musician/AIDS activist and (this I was unaware of until I read the book) former

immunologist. Her work can rarely be described as sunny or cheerful, because it delves in dark areas, but there is an element of hope and righteous anger and a desire to overcome in her material that is heartening in an entirely more complex way.

I had heard of the woman for many years before I laid ears on her voice (which is powerful and frightening and majestic and loving all at once, both lyrically and sonically), but the first description I heard, 'demonic diva', suits her (bearing in mind that 'demon' used to mean any spirit, good or evil). In this respect, it is entirely appropriate that Clive Barker, the horror novelist and gay man who has doubtless lost friends to the 'plague' Ms. Galas rails against, wrote the foreword for this collection of her best lyrics from 1981 to 1996.

Some of these pieces, I do not know the music, but they stand very strongly on their own as mere words on paper - a high tribute to the average pop song lyric.

Diamanda has, ironically, been adopted by many Goths as some kind of vampire goddess - a situation she has said she finds funny at best and pathetic at worst. If anything, she is more of a Valkyrie, carrying tired warriors off to the halls of eternal cheer and battle and watching over those left behind to goad them on to a victory we must win.

Sarah says

Beautiful, dark, and humorous!

Abel says

Have you seen her performances? All of the voices are Diamanda Galas, *solo voce, il sono l'Anticristo*, singing through four octaves like an amplified soul; the microphones, four or five in all, are all plugged into different speakers, and the speakers are located in Babylon, Akeldama, Golgotha, and Circle #9. And maybe one in the secret porno room in the Vatican.

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1. Multimike Declamations = 3 minutes
space : S320 → monophonic and/triphonic + → stereophonic
use notes 3,4
processing : mike #1
} 7 ADA 512 millisecond delay 50% regeneration
mike #2
mike #3
} Lexicon 42 pcm 200 millisecond delay
mike #4</i>
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This is the legend of how she has her microphones dialed in to produce one of her million eerie effects. The musical notation and score that follow the legend is untranslatable.

The most minimal or the most maximal increment of timbral change over the smallest unit of time is required

and, in many ways, resembles what is attempted in subtraction synthesis of white noise, wherein highly highly specified pitch/timbre bands may be heard suddenly alone, in quick succession, or simultaneously (p. 3).

When confronted with her music one does not think of process, the virtuosity behind its composition. Classically trained and cut-teeth in diverse traditions, father's gospel choir, a soloist in San Diego Symphony at age 14, various jazz and avant garde in the 70s, and covering Charley Pride and Carpenters with a gently afro'd backing band, and on to playing torture victim in Vinko Globokar's *Un Jour Comme Un Autre*. Many cannot see beyond the repugnance, through her use of confrontation to exorcise long-held, unquestioned, moral beliefs. We need more singular artists who follow their own gospel, producing vision and epiphany unswayed into commercialism. We don't need Saul halfway to Damascus, we need Salome in dancing shoes and severed head.

*What is my name? What is my name? What is your name?
What is your name baby? Your name is a condemned man.
[the next verse is in tongues]*

Seeing the lyrics written out in this book is dimensionally different than hearing the performance; a separate illumination combined with voice. They read like the disjointed reality of human on deathbed, weighted down with lack of confession, and the shriekings of its confused soul as it passes over into purgatory and wandereth; they read like the belligerent sacrilege of demon still holed up in flesh, throwing feints as the priest reads from the handbook of exorcism, casting Legion out into us, the listeners, ourselves swine headlong over a rocky cliff.

Diabolus in musica. People have always found the devil in music. The diminished 4th chord (tritone) in medieval times was thought to summon demons. The notes in Balinese gamelon music are tuned ever so slightly apart to produce a shimmering, pulsating sound because if they were tuned perfectly the devil could hide in the empty spaces. And if you play Black Sabbath backward you are too drunk and need to go home.

TyLean says

I was rather disappointed with this book as I assumed it was more a collection of essays and rants by Diamanda, but in fact, it's simply a collection of lyrics and photos with SOME extra text. It's perfect for the

collector, but if you are wanting to better understand Diamanda's exquisite work, there isn't much in this book that can't be found on her albums.

Mike says

I absolutely fucking adore Diamanda, but honestly, this book is utterly useless.

As poetry without the music, this book doesn't work. You really need the music otherwise this does come off as drivel. Such is the way with music-less lyrics a lot of the time, especially from a performer who is all about embodiment, delivery, and the inhibition of a certain elemental spirit. Diamanda's not the right person to give this treatment; you absolutely have to hear her. It's blasphemous to try to market her otherwise.

As lyrics to read along with the music, don't bother. The pages for *Vena Cava* are disastrously out of order, so expect flipping around hopping from segment to segment because the pieces are out of order with the record. And I mean, not just the tracks, but the lyrics *within tracks* themselves are separated to the point of confusion, leaving one flipping back a few pages, skipping ahead rather far, and so on. Who needs that shit?

Also, in the section for Plague Mass, *Let Us Praise the Masters of Slow Death* is missing whole swathes of text that occur in the recording. Not to mention this is far from a complete collection to follow along with, it's just downright baffling and a struggle to figure out (typos, lines written as occurring before they're sung, and more). For example, it claims "Spider" is something in *Schrei X*, but it's actually some words that appear in the "Headbox" track. Of course, actually committing paper to transcribe the lyrics to "Hee Shock Die" just looks absolutely stupid. It's not needed.

The book doesn't have the harder-to-decipher pieces, once again making itself redundant by only printing the lyrics to the clear, low-hanging fruit. As a reference for something that might not particularly be clear, it's useless even still.

The Clive Barker introduction is useless, the photos are okay, and the bonus material for "Insekta" and her dark-humored rant against some nameless music critic are fine, I guess, but, and I say this as an obsessive, far enough from essential that it does not justify the existence of this book.

Not needed for die-hard fans like myself. Not really needed at all; all it does is frustrate the listening experience, and offers nothing as a reading experience. The whole thing pales in comparison to sitting your ass down and listening to one of the most inspiring singers I've seen in my lifetime. Keep it out of print, please.

melissa says

Read this a while ago, but forgot to rate it.

Daniel Levesque says

"The Shit of God" takes every activist cell in my body and makes it question just what the fuck it thinks it's

doing. "Not enough," says my brain. "Your activist cells are not doing enough..."

A beautiful collection of the written words used in her performances, the texts read like poetry. If you like Diamanda Galás, you should eat this book.

Robert Beveridge says

Diamanda Galás, *The Shit of God* (High Risk Books, 1996)

Printing a book of song lyrics and marketing it as poetry is a very risky proposition indeed. In my experience, maybe 20% of them work intermittently. I've only ever encountered one that worked from first page to last, Nick Cave's now woefully long out-of-print *King Ink*. (Cave's novels, by the by, are equally enchanting and come highly recommended at Goat Central.) *The Shit of God*, which covers Diamanda Galás' work from the earliest days ("Wild Women with Steak Knives") to *Schrei X*, is one of those books that works intermittently. About half of this is excellent stuff, and if you are familiar with Galás' recordings, you'll know which half. If you're not, hit youtube and search on "galas plague mass" without the quotes. (Start with "Cris d'Aveugle" and "Confessional", preferably in that order.) But then you get to the later stuff, *Schrei X* etc., and, well...

"OK GO
OK GO
OK GO
OK GO
OK OK
OK
OK
OK
OK
OK
OK
O
O
O
O..."

(from "Hee Shock Die", 106)

Kind of makes me long for the bits in "Confessional" where instead of attempting to transcribe, they just put "[TONGUES]". They're horrifying in the best way when you listen to them. Transcribed, well, you can see the result.

Definitely worth having for existing fans of Galás' work. Those as yet unfamiliar are strongly advised to start with the CDs (kick things off with *Plague Mass* and *Vena Cava*, then go with the original trilogy and the album with John Paul Jones, and work your way outwards from there) before picking this up. ** ½

Lisa says

