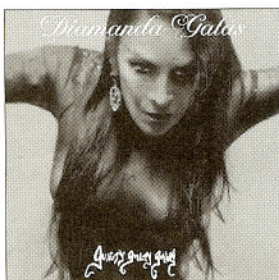


music



DIAMANDA GALÁS

Guilty Guilty Guilty {MUTE RECORDS}

You can't tell anyone what Diamanda Galás sounds like.

You could try. You could use words the critics use, like "howling," "intense," and "primal." You could mention how typical descriptions emphasize torment, horror, the pain of isolation, and homicidal obsession. All of this

would be accurate, but none of it would be enough—Galás's voice is one that has to be experienced. Like accomplished classically trained singers, she boasts a three-and-a-half octave range. She does not merely sing; she moves with ease from operatic screams and howls to guttural moans and whispers. She paints vocal soundscapes in blood. The depth of her voice expresses love in a way no conventional instrument—and few voices—can match.

Yes, I said "love." *Guilty Guilty Guilty*, her latest release, is about love above all. She grabs love from those dark, honest, terrifying places not spoken of in most love songs. *Guilty* speaks of love that is bold, naked, and fearless—love from its most radical perspective.

On the title track, she sings, "Guilty, guilty, guilty!" in the rhythm of a judge's gavel. The word is released, expelled from her body; she exorcises it from her being and her psyche. Galás is also an accomplished pianist, and she attacks the piano with a similar passionate ferocity as accompaniment in many of the album's songs.

The final track, a haunting version of Edith Piaf's "Heaven Have Mercy," shudders with the pain of a woman who has lost her love in war. The piano sounds as if it is possessed by the spirit of the woman, aching in her memory. "Shall I wait by the grave for my lost lover's kiss? / Stop the bell, stop the bell! / I have no tears left to cry," she sings, as the shriek of a siren rises behind her voice and piano.

Galás is nothing if not consistent. Throughout her decades-long career she has, with unapologetic courage and conviction, addressed themes and issues many would prefer to ignore. Her blues albums have always been her most accessible, and this one is arguably her best. The interpretations and arrangements are stellar, and the crystal-clear production captures the intensity and immediacy of her live performance better than previous releases have. *Guilty Guilty Guilty* stands as testament to Diamanda Galás as an artist, performer, and revolutionary. —ADELE NIEVES

THE PERFECT SOUNDTRACK FOR: Being in love and never being sorry.

BEST LISTENING ENVIRONMENT: Total darkness and a great set of headphones.