

DIAMANDA GALÁS

LONDON QUEEN

ELIZABETH HALL

Little girls should be seen and not heard. Ancient myths abound with cautionary tales of what happens to women who transgress this commandment. Harpies. Gorgons. Furies. Witches. Diamanda Galás takes these archetypes and upends them. She's never avoided negatives. Indeed, she achieved fame for 'Plague Mass', a wail of protest against the political mishandling of the AIDS epidemic. Using her astonishing voice as a surgical instrument, or weapon, she strips bare the darkest chambers of the human heart; rage, grief, desire, betrayal, obsession. Old standards by Edith Piaf and Billie Holiday crackle and melt under her blast furnace, almost unrecognisable, twisted nuggets of distilled emotion. Genres become meaningless under the onslaught. Jazz, blues, goth, classical, avant guard, the soft purr of a seductress, the keening, unearthly cry of Middle Eastern mourners. The sheer power of Galás' unadorned piano and monumental voice inspires the whirlwind of her emotional range. One moment, fists are clenched in fury; the next, tears spring forth in great sobs, hearts bursting, spirits soaring with longing as The Voice swoops to atmospheric heights before crashing to earth with burning rage. You don't enjoy a Diamanda Galás performance so much as simply experience it, letting the emotions wash over you, harrowing, devastating, yet ultimately cathartic, leaving a deep, exhausted sense of peace.

FIONA FLETCHER

TERRORIZER

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PIC: AUSTIN YOUNG

