

**DIAMANDA GALAS PROGRAM COPY:  
Masque of the Red Death**

**DIAMANDA GALAS**

in

**PLAGUE MASS  
MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH  
(1984 - end of Epidemic)**

Composed, Written and Performed by **DIAMANDA GALAS**

Lighting Design by **Dan Kotlowitz**

Ms. Galas wishes to thank Beth Bellis, Sally Dricks, Ramon Diaz, Blaise Dupuy, Michael Flanigan, Linda Greenberg, Barbara Gustern, David Linton, Michael McGrath, and Jedediah Wheeler.

**Staff for Plague Mass:**

Production Stage Manager/Lighting Supervisor: **Marc Warren**  
Company Manager: **Linda Greenberg**  
Lighting Director: **Dan Kotlowitz**  
Sound Engineer/Mixer: **Michael McGrath**  
Sound Engineer/Mixer: **Eric Liljestrang**

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**DIAMANDA GALAS** is the international vocalist, composer, and director of Intravenous Sound Operations based in New York and Berlin. John Gill of *TIME OUT* (London) most aptly described Galas as "Whore, saint, demon, lover, madwomen, or angel, there is no other voice in rock, jazz, or the avant garde with her violence, consuming passion and pure elemental force."

Diamanda Galas' work was first discovered at the Festival Avignon in 1979 by the Yugoslavian avant garde composer, Vinko Globokar. After viewing a video tape of Galas performance at a mental institution, Globokar invited Diamanda to Festival Avignon to perform the lead role in his opera, *Un Jour Comme Une Autre* - a work based upon the Amnesty International documentation of a Turkish woman who was arrested and tortured to death for treason. Galas then returned to Paris for performances of her solo works *Wild Women With Steakknives* and *Tragouthia apo to Aima Exoun Fonos* (Song from the Blood of those Murdered) in the underground Theatre Gerard Phillippe Saint-Denis at the invitation of its director, Rene Gonzalez.

Subsequently Ms. Galas toured her solo work throughout Europe at festivals including Donaueschingen, Pro Musica Nova, Inventioned, Biennale de Paris, Musica Oggi, Festivale de la Voce, and Monster Mythen Mutation at the Tempodrome in Berlin. Ms. Galas also performed the United States and Central American premieres of works by Iannis Xenakis and Vinko Globokar with L'Ensemble Intercontemporaine, Musique Vivante, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. In America, Galas has given solo performances at the New York Philharmonic's *Horizons' Festival*, the Pepsico Festival, the Brooklyn Philharmonic's *Meet the Moderns* series, the San Francisco Symphony's *New and Unusual Music* series, Creative Time's *Art in the Anchorage* series, and many other festivals and venues.

In addition to solo works, Galas has collaborated with English filmmaker Derek Jarman in *Last of England*, and Wes Craven in *A Serpent and the Rainbow*, and Galas appears in Berlin filmmakers Rosa Von Praunheim's *Positive Positive* and contributed to the music for Von Praunheim's *Silence=Death*. Perspectives in New Music published Galas' *Intravenous Song: Wild Women with Steakknives*, which was delivered in 1982 at the Colloquium for Schizophrenia and Linguistic at the University of California in San Diego.

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Diamanda Galas' initial work for **Masque of the Red Death** began in 1984 at Hunter's Point, an industrial area outside San Francisco. In 1985 Diamanda moved to London and Berlin to develop and record **Masque** for MUTE Records. Upon the project's completion Diamanda traveled throughout Europe to discuss the work and its political intent. In 1988 she began the performance tour of her one-woman show, beginning with rehearsal performances in Dallas and San Francisco and then moving to Australia, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Holland, Italy, Spain, Bavaria, where she performed on the Catholic Day of Repentance. **Masque of the Red Death** premiered in the United Kingdom on New Year's Day 1989, with an additional performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and Lincoln Center in New York City.

In 1990, Ms. Galas has performed her **Plague Mass (Masque of the Red Death)** in Berlin, Basel, the Olympic Festival in Barcelona, the Helsinki Festival, and the Festival delle Colline at the Villa Medicea di Poggio a Cainao in Italy. After her performance, Ms. Galas was denounced by members of the Italian government for committing blasphemy against the Roman Catholic Church. She continued to perform new segments of the work at the International AIDS Conference in San Francisco and at the Coalition for Freedom of Expression.

In October 1990, she performed the **Plague Mass** at the Cathedral Saint John the Divine in New York, the second largest cathedral in the world. This production featured the world premiere of **There are No More Tickets to the Funeral**, the newest section of the **Plague Mass (Masque of the Red Death)**. The live recording of this performance will be released in April 1991 on Mute/Elektra.

Diamanda Galas is available on MUTE/Elektra **Masque of the Red Death** trilogy: **The Divine Punishment** (1986), **Saint of the Pit** (1987), and **You Must Be Certain of the Devil and The Litanies of Satan** (1982).

**DAN KOTLOWITZ** (Lighting Designer), designed the New York production of **Plague Mass** at the Cathedral Saint John the Divine. His Off-Broadway credits include: **The Wash, Yankee Dawg You Die, The Perfect Party, Second Chance, Money Talks, The Second Hurricane** and **Ladies and Gentleman, Jerome Kern**. Mr. Kotlowitz has designed for numerous regional theatres including: Milwaukee Rep, Berkeley Rep, The Huntington, Virginia Stage, Northlight, and Studio Arena. He has also served as Lighting Director for the Serious Fun! Festival at Lincoln Center, Carlton Dance Festival in Brazil, and the Leningrad Music Hall, Lyon Opera Ballet at City Center, and the Donestkl Ballet of the USSR.

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Optional Program Notes

Dedicated to the Plague Mass Premiere at Cathedral Saint John the Divine - October 12, 1990

by Michael Flanigan

On December 10, 1989 Diamanda Galas was arrested with ACT UP at St. Patrick's Cathedral for disorderly conduct, disrupting a religious service, resisting arrest, and criminal trespass. On October 12-13, 1990 she performed the **Masque of the Red Death Plague Mass** at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Her moral outrage had at last found a safe sanctuary.

Diamanda emerged in front of the altar, stripped to the waist. Behind her was a lit crucifix. Her introit "Were You A Witness" contains text from spirituals such as "Were you there when the crucified my Lord?" and exhortations to action ("We who have died do not rest in peace, There is no rest until the fighting's done".) Her multi-octave voice sings of angels (devils) who warn of the perils of resistance. These "angels" want PWAs (persons with AIDS) to proceed politely into death. In the anti-Kyrie "This is the Law of the Plague" on a stage lit by candles she excoriates those who condemn PWAs with judgment and moral hysteria. Her voice (that of a judge without mercy) courses out a mocking "Unclean" over the Cathedral as red light and smoke fill the space. This piece, from Leviticus (the Christian "Old Law"), refers to a society based in judgment and not the compassion of salvation. Diamanda is not raging against a loving, compassionate deity. It is a mean-spirited, malevolent God of the unjust and petty against whom she rails. She identifies with the "Enemy" (as the devil is sometimes called) of this god. Like Milton, Diamanda knows that it is better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven.

One message of this mass is that in a world without redemption the person who is unjustly accused should rebel. This message is present in Job, Chapter 10, which questions the plan of the merciless God, a Gospel "I Wake Up and I See the Face of the Devil..." and a Confiteor "Confessional" which confronts judging clerics who want to "purify" the PWA. Diamanda's Epistle "How Shall Our Judgment Be Carried Out Upon The Wicked" is a call to arms against those who would slaughter, burn, or intimidate PWAs. In texts from Revelations and Malcolm X she sings of a bloody Armageddon ("How shall our judgment be carried out upon the wicked? By any means necessary.")

During the Consecration, while bathed in red light, Diamanda chants "Hoc est signum corpus meum" (This is my body), "Hoc est signum sangre meum" (This is my blood). She covers herself with ceremonial blood as bells ring. The consecration portrays the PWA as the Christ, the sacrificial lamb through which the evil clerics seek salvation. The offertory, "Lamentations", is a cry of desolation in the midst of unjust affliction. Here the treatment of Christ is reflected in hospital scenes ("My flesh and my skin hath be made old, he hath broken my bones... He hath made me drunken with wormwood".)

"Sono l'Antichristo" (the anti-pater noster) spits venom and bile in the eyes of the God of the false accuser. She claims all epithets and turns them on the accuser ("I am the plague, I am the Antichrist") and calls upon the disempowered to turn back the power of all such accusations.

"Cris D'Aveugle: Blind Man's Cry" is a spiritual communion in which the audience is brought into the experience of the suffering of the dying. The recessional "Let My People Go" cries for respite from this endless torment.

The voice of the oppressed resonates throughout the Masque of the Red Death Plague Mass. Father Conrado Balweg (a Philippine guerilla priest) has said liberation from oppression is "the essence of the Mass." This angry Requiem is an exorcism of a false and unjust spirit, a cry for liberation from meaningless death, and a prayer for power over our enemies. Whenever great suffering has been caused by adversity (whether manmade or "natural") a voice appears which decries the suffering and opposes the adversity. Now, as the number of persons dead from AIDS (in the U.S.) approaches the number of U.S. soldiers killed in World War I, Diamanda Galas' "Masque" is our anguished voice (much as Britten's War Requiem was the voice of World War I.) The rightful place for this voice is in the sanctuary of the Cathedral and in our raging hearts.

\*Michael Flanigan is the President of DARE (Documentation of AIDS Issues and Research), an AIDS Information Resource, 415.552-1665.