

Susan Dunn - Sings Verdi, Beethoven & Wagner (1989)

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1. *Ah! Perfido, Op. 65 (Beethoven)* 2. *Dich, teure Halle (Tannhäuser)* 3. *Der Männer Sippe (Die Walküre)* 4. *Du bist der Lenz (Die Walküre)* 5. *Ecco l'orrido campo (Un Ballo In Maschera)* 6. *Ernani! Ernani! involami (Ernani)* 7. *Arrigo! ah! parli a un core (I Vespri Siciliani)* 8. *Pace, pace, mio Dio! (La Forza del Destino)* 9. *Tacea la notte placida...Di tale amor (Il Trovatore)*
Susan Dunn (Soprano) Nicoletta Curiel Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna Riccardo Chailly (Conductor)

Susan Dunn is unfortunately not singing anymore. Her best years were the 1980s. She came into vocal trouble in the 1990s and is now retired from the operatic stage. Susan Dunn was the possessor of a large, warm, beautiful, youthful-sounding lirico-spinto instrument. Her voice had a strong, tonal center. On this CD, she displays her marvelously rich middle register, which is the best part of her voice. Her top notes here, while for the most part secure, are not her glory and some of them have a cutting edge to them. Her low notes lack presence and resonance, a few being almost inaudible. She sings "Ah, perfido" really well and gives a good portrait of the heroine she is singing. Her Wagner selections ("Dich, teure Halle", "Der Männer Sippe", "Du bist der Lenz") show her dramatically involved and singing superbly. In the Verdi arias ("Ecco l'orrido campo", "Ernani! Ernani! involami", "Arrigo! ah! parli a un core", "Pace, pace, mio Dio!", "Tacea la notte in placida...Di tale amor"), she sings with true Verdian line and great use of dynamics, though she has a less-than-remarkable pianissimo. She has a decent trill, though it could be much tighter. She shows surprising agility in the "Ernani" aria and the "Il Trovatore" cabaletta. Unfortunately, she only gets to sing one verse of the cabaletta to "Ernani! Ernani! involami". Her forte singing is secure and her soft singing in "Arrigo! ah! parli a un core" and "Pace, pace, mio Dio" is great. The pianissimo high B-flat of the latter aria does not sound like it is her most comfortable note. A bit more intensity from her would have been welcome in the Verdi arias. Her diction in both Italian and German is exemplary. She knows how to phrase intelligently and the listener is aware that he/she is listening to a true musician at work.

The conductor, Riccardo Chailly, is quite slack in his choice of tempi for the Verdi arias. The

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cabalettas of "Ernani! Ernani! involami" and "Tacea la notte in placida" need more rhythmic propulsion. Perhaps he slowed down the orchestra in these cabalettas in order to aid Dunn's agility. His conducting of the Wagner and Beethoven selections is better. Decca provides excellent sound, warm and clear. It also supplies biographical notes on Dunn and texts and translations. --- V. Chau, amazon.com

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