

El Cant de la Sibil·la [Savall] (1996)

Written by bluesever

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El Cant de la Sibil·la [Savall] (1996)



01 Sibila Latine

02 Sibila Provençale

03 Sibila Catalane

Montserrat Figueras - soprano

La Capella Reial de la Catalunya

Jordi Savall – conductor

Some of our more extreme brothers and sisters on the good planet Earth believe today is the end of the world. Should we happen to survive any pending catastrophes, I think now is an excellent time to bring you back to the turn of the last millennium and offer you Jordi Savall and Montserrat Figueras with La Capella Reial de Catalunya in El Cant de la Sibil·la I.

Yes, this is apocalyptic music that appeared in its first forms a thousand years ago, as well-represented today as we can possibly get at the beginning of the 21st century. When it comes to early music, Savall is a wizard, and his wife, Figueras, commands the voice of the heavens. This recording is the first of three installments. The Song of the Sibyl (as it's called in English) took many forms in the early Middle Ages and was performed in various interpretations at various sites over several centuries. The performances here feature versions in Latin, Provençal, and Catalan. The second and third recordings are yet other accounts, all equally powerful as the first. See Amazon for links to the other recordings and Wikipedia for links to the texts.

The music is about the end of the world and incorporates various pieces written by Eusebius of

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Caesarea, Saint Augustine, and troubador poets, depending on which version is being performed. All the texts are similar in nature. I think it is almost better to hear the music first and then look for the lyrics. At any rate, the music itself is chillingly slow and melismatic, meaning several notes are sung with each syllable. It has a very medieval Spanish character, along with a kind of beauty I've never heard before. Despite the apocalyptic Christian thematic material of the words, the title of the music invokes the very pagan muse of the Sibyl, which first appears in Greek mythology. To better explain this, I've included along with the music an excellent historical article about the Song of the Sibyl, published in PDF format by Goldberg Magazine, a now-defunct bilingual English/Spanish magazine that was dedicated to early music.

Perhaps due to the efforts of Savall and Figueras, The Song of the Sibyl has been declared one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. It is, I believe, worth its title, and as I said before, I've never heard anything quite like it - a very strange and beautiful terror. --- angusdegraosta.blogspot.com

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