



Eclatante Amarante

Elisabeth Belgrano, Jennifer Ellis,
sopranos;
Lucas Harris, theorbo, lute;
Carlene Stober, viola da gamba

EB 2004 (self-produced, available at
<http://elibelgrano.org/>) 61:56 minutes

'Spellbinding....Superb...' - Santa Fe New Mexican, 2005

'The French singer Anne Chabanceau de La Barre (1628-1688) reminds one of the title character in Woody Allen's film Zelig. She was everywhere. A singer who enjoyed a great career in Paris (she performed in the ballets de cour and sang the sublimes airs du cour of Michel Lambert [1610-1696] in salons), she also sang at the court of Queen Christina of Sweden. Back in France, she was the only French singer to perform in the premiere of Francesco Cavalli's opera, L'Ercole amante. This recording by soprano Elisabeth Belgrano (profiled on page 20) is a portrait of de La Barre's life and times. Any way you look at it—musicobiography or straight-ahead recital of 17th-century vocal music—Belgrano's selection of repertoire and her performances (accompanied by the excellent lutenist Lucas Harris) make this a very special disc. The French diarist Jean Loret raved that de La Barre's voice was "so clear and so rare." The same can be said of Belgrano, whose light, bright voice and precise declamation is well-suited to these works. She is also one of the most meticulous singers I've heard in awhile. The precision (what trills!), beauty, and intensity she brings to Lambert's "Si l'amour vous soumet à ses loix" reminds me of Emma Kirkby (one of Belgrano's teachers) in her prime. Passion? Luigi Rossi's "Un ferito Cavaliero" is a lament that Belgrano sings with crushing impact. You won't find this disc in a record shop, but if you pick it up from Belgrano's website, it will be a recording you come to treasure'. - Craig Zeichner ,

Early Music America, Fall 2005