

Mellon, Agnès

(b Epinay-sur-Seine, 17 Jan 1958). French soprano. She studied with Nicole Fallien and Jacqueline Bonnardot in Paris, and with Lilian Loran in San Francisco. Later she became a member of the Paris Opéra; she has also appeared at the Opéra-Comique. She has established an international reputation in Renaissance and Baroque music, her roles including Tibrino and Love in Cesti's *Orontea* (1986, Innsbruck), Eryxene in Hasse's *Cleofide* (1987) and Telaira in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* (1991, Aix-en-Provence). Mellon's natural-sounding declamation, carefully controlled vibrato and purity of tone make for a rewarding partnership with period instruments. Her recordings include Baroque choral works and many Baroque operas, among them Cavalli's *Xerse* and *Giasone*, Lully's *Atys*, Charpentier's *Actéon*, *Les Arts Florissants*, *Médée* and *David et Jonathas*, Rameau's *Anacréon*, *Zoroastre*, *Castor et Pollux* and *Pigmalion*, Leclair's *Scylla et Glaucus*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Hasse's *Cleofide* and Rossi's *Orfeo*.
(Nicholas Anderson, **New Grove's Dictionary of Music**)

"Agnès Mellon excels in this secular repertoire: her refined, restrained dramatic art and impeccable diction allow her to explore the passions of the soul with infinite delicacy and insight. The instrumental ensemble is an eloquent partner in this intimate conversation. There is no weakness or affectation, just a genuine, refined energy. Agnès Mellon has a true sense of the lyric narrative style of this period; every page provides an opportunity to create a new atmosphere, perfectly adapted to the text and music. We can only admire such commitment to the art at both the vocal and instrumental level."

LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE, Véronique Leblanc, February 7, 2009

"A concert during which the voice of the soprano brilliantly rendered this music from the sacred baroque repertoire."

LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE, February 5, 2009

Baroque elegance from across the Rhine (reissue of the CD entitled *Historia der Auferstehung Jesu Christi* by H. Schütz)

"This two-CD reissue of a very lovely program of German baroque music is worthy of attention. Although the recordings date from 1995 and 1998, they haven't aged a day—on the contrary! The supple elegance and beauty of form of these performances is nothing short of enchanting. [...] The recording features the best possible voices for this repertoire, including Agnès Mellon, Mark Padmore, Stephan Van Dijk and Paul Agnew..."

RESMUSICA, Hubert Stoecklin, February 3, 2009

French poetry set to music

"The *Maison belge* was host to French soprano Agnès Mellon, who is particularly known for her interpretation of music from the baroque repertoire. She is also, however, an exquisite performer of French mélodie, unique counterpart of the German Lied that mirrors perhaps even more closely the poetic language on which it is based, intensifying the poetry and raising it to another musical level. [...] The singer, who was accompanied at the piano by the subtle, delicate touch of Christian Ivaldi, delighted the audience with her precise diction and clear, sweet tone, which was perfectly suited to the hall."

KÖLN-BONNER MUSIKKALENDER, Gunter Duvenbeck, December 2008, No. 233

(CD *Maria, Madre di Dio*)

"Agnès Mellon's performance of the cantata *Giunta l'ora fatal* by Giovanni Battista Ferrandini portrays all the emotions—particularly the heartrending anguish—experienced by the Virgin Mary during the crucifixion of her Son. The soprano's incredible sensitivity and vocal quality, combined with the performance of the instrumental ensemble, make this a recording of great interest to all baroque music fans."

ALLMUSIC, Stephen Eddins, December 2008, Rating: *****

(CD – *Déeses outragées* or *Offended Goddesses*)

"The soprano approaches the cantata like a lyric tragedy, and the new life she instils in these works transforms them from merely "pretty" into riveting expressions of the human experience. Even the most cantankerous critic, subjugated to the point of overlooking the excellent accompaniment provided by Ensemble Barcarole, would never dare offend such a goddess."

MUSEBAROQUE.FR, Muse d'Or, Viet-Linh Nguyen, July-August 2008

(CD – *Leçons de Ténèbres*)

"Emma Kirkby and Agnes Mellon are among the most celebrated early music sopranos of our time, and their performances here reflect the vivid rhetoric intrinsic to Couperin's settings."

"The two voices combine admirably in Couperin's Third Lesson."

AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, May/June 2008, Gatens

(CD – *Leçons de Ténèbres*)

"The singing is exquisite, and both sopranos blend well despite the differences in their technique: Kirkby is refined and ethereal, while Mellon has more warmth and sensuality."

LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE, May 2008, William Yeoman

(CD – *Leçons de Ténèbres*)

"Kirkby and Mellon sing beautifully, nowhere more so than when their lines are combined almost erotically in the second section of the third lesson." CLASSIC FM, May 2008, Richard Lawrence

Smoky toned: Agnes Mellon complements Emma Kirkby's purity

"Such chiaroscuro is heightened here as the crystalline purity of Emma Kirkby's soprano offsets the smoky tones of Agnes Mellon. Eloquent restraint and internalized ardour combine in these sensitively judged accounts"

"[...] Mellon, [...] brings into play the voluptuousness and pliancy that has made her one of the finest interpreters of French Baroque music. These are, in short, performances of infinite tenderness, profound affection and mature insight"

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE, April 2008, Kate Bolton

(CD – *Leçons de Ténèbres*)

"Both sopranos here sound extremely well together, Mellon's slightly darker soprano and more pronounced vibrato complementing Kirkby's lighter, less coloured sound. Mellon does seem more flexible in her phrasing, especially in the recitatives, whereas Kirkby is more atomistic, even in the melismatic passages. The emotional impact of both is, however, equally arresting." [...] such are the excellence of this new release that one really need look no further"

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW, March 2008, Robert Levett

Music in the spirit of Holy Week

"This wonderful performance from BIS records, with sopranos Emma Kirkby and Agnès Mellon accompanied by bass viola da gamba and organ, offers a selection of richly harmonic compositions that are exquisite melodic expressions of great beauty and spirituality."
"The subdued ambiance of Holy Week, the introspective message and acknowledgement of personal sin come together to create music of great spiritual expression that captivates both the ears and the soul. This is music for both listening and contemplation." KYRKANS TIDNING, March 2008, Kaj Englehart

(CD – *Leçons de Ténèbres*)

"Agnès Mellon [has an] exceptionally sensitive and rigorous approach to text and diction, combined with an artistic sense that immediately reaches out to the listener." LE MONDE DE LA MUSIQUE, Frank Langlois, March 2008

Agnès Mellon illuminates these *Leçons de Ténèbres*

"No matter how often we have written these lines, Agnès Mellon's performances continue to astonish us with her dazzling upper register, the brilliance of her timbre and the colours of her ornaments."
RES MUSICA, Monique Parmentier, March 3, 2008

A musical delight

"With her richer tone and more dramatic approach, Agnès Mellon nonetheless seeks to obtain (in François Couperin's *Seconde Leçon de Ténèbres*) the same purity of sound [as Emma Kirkby]. Her diction, however, is more effective in underscoring the rhetorical effects and dramatic accents of the music."

"With her exquisite vocal technique and very direct expressivity, Mellon shines in the *Leçon de Ténèbres du Vendredi Saint*."
KLASSIK.COM, Miquel Cabruja, February 25, 2008

Maria, Madre di Dio

Mellon gives an appropriately wrenching, emotionally transparent performance. The sensitivity and consistently quality of the singing and ensemble playing make this an album that should be a strong interest to fans of the Baroque. » Rating **** ALLMUSIC, Stephen Eddins, December 2008

Eighth edition of the *Festival de Musique Ancienne – Avignon: A handful of incorrigible enthusiasts...*

...and the following Tuesday, we could say that perfection was truly achieved. Thanks to the magnificent soprano Agnès Mellon and counter-tenor Dominique Visse, we were invited to take part in a celebration of the fiery and loving partnership that has characterized their 25 years of marriage. What better occasion to perform some of the sublime love duets from the repertoire? [...] We were treated to an Italian evening of *parole e querelle d'amore*, with emotions running the gamut from tenderness, kisses, teasing and desire to jealousy, torment and despair. We can only hope that the undaunted enthusiasts of Avignon will always be this inspired! (RES MUSICA, Geneviève Allène-Dewulf, November 9, 2007)

Médée, Ariane, Circé, Héro... les déesses outragées

"Mellon is perfect as each character, and just as the original singers would have, she creates the anger and pain these women felt with powerful vocal interpretations. Best, however, is how amazingly well her voice merges with instruments all played with the utmost skill and historical integrity by members of Barcarole. Whether in passages of recitative or airs, she navigates the vocal lines with elegance and grace. A must for the fan of French Baroque vocal music..." (EARLY MUSIC AMERICA, Spring 2006, Denise Gallo)

Agnès Mellon: The voice of reverent contemplation

There was palpable emotion in Purcell's *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*, and even more in the *Première Leçon de Ténèbres* by François Couperin. The expression of human passions in Giovanni Felice Sances' *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* evoked the suffering of the Virgin Mary before her Son's agony on the cross. Agnès Mellon's voice, which moves easily from effortless high notes to a well-supported lower range, demonstrates not only agility, but the interiority of a performer who doesn't need to rely on virtuosic effects to plumb the expressive depths of the sacred and religious texts. (RESMUSICA.COM, Jacques Héту, April 13, 2006)

The magical worlds of Agnès Mellon

Soprano Agnès Mellon, fairy godmother of the *Musiques d'automne* festival, has created *Chante-moi une histoire* as an introduction to opera for children. Mission accomplished! The young audience at the premiere was won over, completely entranced. (...) A simply enchanting spectacle, throughout which Agnès Mellon performs amusing, moving works by Poulenc, Kosma, Rossini and even Offenbach, interweaving a children's story, her own story, into the threads of the music. (LA TRIBUNE – LE PROGRÈS, November 21, 2005)

Soprano Agnès Mellon and the *Ensemble Barcarole*: "Twixt heaven and earth"

...such delicacy, such subtlety, and such commitment—both vocal and instrumental—inspires unqualified admiration. (...) 'Twixt heaven and earth, Agnès Mellon's sincerity is breathtaking as she interprets the grief-stricken Virgin with infinitely poignant musicality. A magnificent concert. (LA TRIBUNE – LE PROGRÈS, October 2005)

(*Ensemble Barcarole* at the Arques-la-Bataille festival)

Undisputed specialist of the French baroque repertoire, Agnès Mellon applies her refined dramatic skills and a rich palette of colours to the art of the French cantata. The members of her ensemble provide her with admirable support in this artistic venture.
(LA CROIX, Philippe Venturimi, August 24, 2005)

Agnès Mellon astounds at the *Musicales du Luberon*

The organizers of the *Musicales de Luberon* welcomed a truly out-of-the-ordinary singer to the church of Saint-Luc de Ménerbes for their second summer concert. Agnès Mellon is a superb dramatic soprano whose rich and powerful voice possesses a ringing tone and a rare intensity of expression. Her elegant phrasing lends intense feeling to everything she sings.
(VU POUR VOUS, July 31, 2005)

Exquisite mélodie française at église Saint-Nicolas

"Perhaps one has to have drawn all the detail of expression and diction from the music of the baroque period—as Agnès Mellon has done as one of William Christie's best interpreters—to do full justice, as she does, to these melodies. (...) Her interpretation imbues the literary and musical phrases with impeccable expressivity, moving listeners in exactly the right way at exactly the right time. Ms. Mellon's voice, with its varied timbre over an impressive range, is always perfectly placed. (...) Christian Ivaldi's magical touch at the piano reveals him to be a true purebred of the instrument, with a natural, flowing style. This was an heure exquise, to be sure". (OUEST-FRANCE, Olivier Hauray, 4 juillet 2005)

Concerts with Ensemble baroque de Nice (Gilbert Bezzina) « Agnès Mellon is more than a singer with a virtuosic technique and a beautiful tone; she is a master in the Japanese sense of the word. In Europe, we have forgotten that a true master has knowledge and experience that surpass the limits of the artist's chosen material for self-expression. Performers who are masters of their art have an indescribable aura that is enthusiastically recognized by audiences, » (RES MUSICA, Cédric Costantino, May 11, 2005)

Concerts with Ensemble baroque de Nice (Gilbert Bezzina)

« Her singing reached its highest point in the first Vivaldi Cantata, with shapely contours, where her voice gathered in its high register notes that were as delicate as flowers in the springtime. » (André Peyregne, NICE MATIN, May 8th 2005)

Agnès Mellon's rebel goddesses

The light soprano, launched by Christie and consort, has evolved into a seasoned singer, with a somber, cutting voice. An ideal evolution to tackle the seldom revived French Baroque Cantata (...). Agnès Mellon makes these quite coded scores (where desperate outpourings of emotion alternate with brilliant rebellious arias) sensitive and sensual, spectacular and moving. Virtuosity is no obstacle for her, and she embodies flesh and blood goddesses, solidly supported by the Barcarole Ensemble. This has the potential to change our vision of this repertoire. (Jean-Luc Macia, LA CROIX, April 24th 2005)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)

« Formidable program, formidable singer as well, whose charms are made for these heartfelt cries (...) The artist knows lyrical narrative of that period better than anyone; every page opens the door to a new climate, a new mood, with the same precision and generosity. Finally, the instrumental quintet is perhaps the strongest, truest, most varied part of this equivocal repertoire, halfway between chamber and opera music (...) such an album will be remembered in the renewed history of the French cantata (5 diapasons, DIAPASON, April 2005, Ivan A. Alexandre)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)

« ... The brilliant and revolutionary interpretation is what makes this recording so priceless. (...) An intrinsically moving tone, with troubling ease and humanity. The singer has changed and this record confirms it (..)

The metamorphosis is spectacular and leaves us, just as the fragile Amour caught by the storm, « frozen with terror » (Anacreon) (...) A total selflessness, at the risk of shocking the style doctors and other esthetes of a normalized and refined approach to Baroque. One has to hear it to believe it (...). But hypnotized by the presence of Agnès Mellon, I almost forgot her partners, a very revealing error indeed, since the instrumental support flows so naturally. (FORUM OPERA, Bernard Schreuders, April 2005)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)

« (...) Agnès Mellon gives a sizzling rendition of the somber tension found in the four cantatas of this collection. She is an expert at dismissing artifice and following the lyrics' modulations by leaning on the expression of consonants. (...) Has a very sensitive interpretation that unleashes the infinite palette of human psychological climates. Agnès Mellon creates a sort of musical photograph from 1710, from which stems the indisputable creativity of lyrical writers in the intimist context of the cantata : next to the « Grande Machine Versaillaise », we have here a series of little chamber jewels crafted by a small ensemble who has managed to render the polished eloquence of the instrumentation (...). As involved as the singer, the musicians of Barcarole emphasize with biting grace the incandescent expressivity of the lyrics ». (RES MUSICA, Écouter, voir, lire... Alexandre Pham 10/03/2005)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)

« Soprano Agnès Mellon gives a superb account of this expressively subtle music and she is ideally supported by the ensemble Barcarole. Both Clerambault pieces have been recorded previously but seldom - if ever - have I heard such impassioned singing as Mellon offers here; it sounds as if her very life depends on it. » (EARLY MUSIC TODAY, June 2005)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)


« This timely program of French cantatas depicting the legendary women of antiquity marks the welcome return of the very eloquent Agnès Mellon. (...) Agnès Mellon's interpretations are characterized by restraint and subtle sensitivity; (...) her introspective art and impeccable diction perfectly espouse the twists and turns of destructive jealousy. The Ensemble Barcarole (...) carries on an intimate conversation with Mellon's voice during more than an hour of meticulously prepared music that is both scholarly and dramatic. This recording, devoted to a type of music that is not readily accessible, is a perfect model of the genre » (9/10, CLASSICA-RÉPERTOIRE, Vincent Borel, June 2005)

Women who love too much: Agnès Mellon's psychological portraits « (...) As far as the art of performance is concerned, Agnès Mellon is in no danger of being surpassed in the near future. She infuses every phrase, every word with such dramatic inspiration that even the most stereotyped devices sound as if she were using them for the first time. (...) Mellon renders the indications contained in the score with a psychological flair that allows her to express the various states of mind and the profound crises of the women she portrays with astonishing accuracy. The instrumentalists are equally effective in their support of the singer's carefully thought-out interpretations, leaving the listener captivated and deeply moved. » (MUSIKANSICH, Georg Henkel, April 1, 2005)

Les déesses outragées (Offended Goddesses)

« The Ensemble Barcarole (...) accompanies Mellon's sensual instrument with an extraordinary variety of nuances. Time seems to have endowed Mellon's voice with more body and presence, as well as more solidity in the lower range, without sacrificing any of the charm of her high notes. It is a true delight to listen to Mellon's exquisite articulation of these texts, which renders the prosody with admirable clarity. (...) We look forward to hearing more from Mme Mellon. » (DIVERDI, Pablo J. Vayon, May 2005)

(Les Déesses outragées / Offended Goddesses) Shimmering operatics [...] « With her generous voice, which is nonetheless perfectly at home in the baroque repertoire, these pieces seem to have been written just for her. [...] ...her warm, powerful soprano was one of the first of such shimmering operatic voices that allowed Cecilia Bartoli, for example, or, more recently, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, to introduce a new, more sensual style of interpretation of baroque music. [...] ...after hearing this vocal performance, one can easily imagine Agnès Mellon interpreting works from the romantic opera repertoire. [...] The instrumental ensemble supports her with enthusiasm and breathtaking eloquence, as we have come to expect from musicians on this label. In the pastoral scenes, Amélie Michel's flute, with its luscious, round tone, brings a wonderful lyricism to the fore, while the robust string playing does justice to the harsher passages »

(PIZZICATO,  Luxembourg, Erwin Hösi, June 2005)

Leçons de ténèbres at the Blancs-Manteaux (Paris, March 22nd, 2005)

« (...) Soprano Agnès Mellon's great mastery of the eloquent images of the Gallican school (...) The penitent Agnès modulated her complaint and her emotion in perfect symbiosis with the very *British* Emma (Kirkby). (Roger Tellart, LA LETTRE DU MUSICIEN, April 2005).

L'orgue et la voix à l'unisson (Été à Bourges)

« The best for last (...) a soprano with the voice as pure as a diamond. An extraordinary duo (...). More than 1500 people attended, at the Bourges Cathedral, the concert given by soprano Agnès Mellon ». (LE BERRY RÉPUBLICAIN, September 20th, 2004)

A divine concert!

Angels must have been in attendance at the church during the concert given by Agnès Mellon and Kenneth Weiss of the ensemble Barcarole. Under the arches, the singer's voice showed extraordinary sonorities which made more than one music lover shiver. (MORBIER, August 2004)

Festival du Comminges, Agnès Mellon, Christian Ivaldi and the Quatuor Alcan

« Ernest Chausson's *Chanson Perpétuelle* is prodigiously powerful, very evocative of the composer's expert way of depicting the most painful emotions. Soprano Agnès Mellon gladly lends her voice to these pages. A soloist's voice that has improved over the years with « Barcarole », her usual ensemble specialized in Baroque music. (LA DÉPÊCHE DU MIDI, July 29th, 2004)

Arion with Huggett, Mellon, White « Maria, madre di Dio » early-music.com

Opus Prize of « Best Early Music CD of the year 2003 » OPUS MAGAZINE, Toronto, March/April 2004

Arion with Huggett, Mellon, White « Maria, madre di Dio » early-music.com

The voices are gorgeous, and perfectly matched. But ultimately it's the conjunction of sensual beauty and intense sorrow that floors the listener, and elevates the program into a profound meditation on the human condition. But the showstopper is Handel's *Il Pianto di Maria* - an astonishingly dramatic cantata for soprano in which an incandescent Mellon embraces every nuance of emotion from both music and text. One of the year's best releases. THE NATIONAL POST, Toronto, October 2003

Royal Haendel in Cavaillon

The Barcarole Ensemble embrace faithfully the numerous forms of the songs and never cease to highlight the voices. First, Agnès Mellon's voice, who stand for each single one of her parts with exemplary conviction, thus giving life to all arias she sings. We also heard a cantata by Barbara Strozzi which enabled Agnès Mellon to find for her voice, emphasis of a rare dramatic intensity, in a magnificently contrasted interpretation. A duet, excerpt from Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* reached a summit of happiness, in a loving complicity by these two inspired soloists. LA PROVENCE, July 2003

Majestic Chamber Music

Agnès Mellon is passionate about French repertoire, and her vocal approach to French Music is of dazzling finesse. (In Ernest Chausson's *Chanson perpétuelle*), Agnès Mellon, accompanied by the intense and refined pianist Christian Ivaldi and the beautiful cohesion of the Alcan String Quartet, gave a profound, shivering and moving interpretation. She knows how to highlight a text which talk about love, solitude, vanished happiness, appeal for death. And the osmosis between the artists is perfect. The Fauré's *Bonne Chanson* conclude a rare and intelligent program. With great sensitivity, Agnès Mellon gave to this lifetime love story, a subtle emotion, an elegant voluptuousness, full of poetry and beauty. (RESMUSICA, July 2003)

The expressiveness of French soprano Agnès Mellon shone brilliantly last night in the Vigo Cathedral with musicians of the ensemble « L'Assemblée des Honnêtes Curieux ». The singer offered us a program dedicated to Haendel : « Tormento e gelosia », a very passionate vision of love in this composer's cantatas. Although Mellon possess a beautiful voice, let's not forget her appropriateness interpretation, which was clearly demonstrated last night. (Spain, FARO DE VIGO, November 2002)

Musiques d'Automne : Accompanied by her ensemble Barcarole, Agnès Mellon knew how to give to these « Gods' Passions » human and touching inflexions.

It is with passion that Agnès Mellon took over the character of Armide, translated it into violence and hesitation as well. Her voice, with nuances, gave a communicative warmth, thus helping us to grasp the expressive strength of this great musician which is Lully. ...in the aria « *Deh! Piangete* » : what emotion and grace in the ornamentation. LA TRIBUNE – LE PROGRÈS, October 2002

Italian Lieder, an exceptional concert (Printemps des Arts de Nantes)

« Her impeccable diction, the quality and the power of her voice made wonders in the acoustic of the Chapelle des Ursulines » OUEST-FRANCE June 2001

February-March: the perfect moments (Opéra de Lyon: Purcell, Barrière and Forqueray programme)

« In school, we were taught that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever", but little did we know that this phrase could apply to the delicate joy of minimalistic baroque. The luminous simplicity and haunting smile of Agnès Mellon, the instrumental subtlety of her colleagues, everything in this performance seemed to paraphrase Purcell: "If music be the food of love..." (PLUMART, April 2001)

« Soprano Agnès Mellon expresses Dido's and Medea's pain with genius, sometimes subdued, often exacerbated... her dramatic approach makes up for the lack of depth of *La mort de Didon's* libretto, and suits the emotional excess of a character like Medea. All of this is quite harmonious, and even more so with the ultimate Italian touch of Montéclair's *La morte di Lucrezia* ». OUEST-FRANCE, February 2001

« Agnès Mellon has given a very moving performance of Montéclair's *La mort de Didon*, putting emphasis on the dignity and the violence of the character. Clérambault's *Medée* was rendered with equal quality. With the purity of her inflexions and the expressiveness of her ornamentations, Agnès Mellon has given here a true lesson in baroque interpretation ». COURRIER DE L'OUEST, February 2001

A. Mellon and D. Visse: Stars of the baroque scene

« Dark, languid, sparkling or teasing, and sung by two highly qualified singers, the arias, madrigals and cantatas showed the subtleties of the emotions they tackled... may it be said, this concert was pure wonder ». (LILLE-MÉTROPOLE, January 2001)

Agnès Mellon and the Barcarole Ensemble

« Chills were certainly felt when Agnès Mellon's serene and clear voice was heard: a wonderful example of emotional expertise ». (LA VOIX DU MERCREDI, January 2000)

« It was impossible not to be seduced by the soprano's performance of *Lucrezia*, a performance which was human, emotional and certainly moving... » « A programme that showcased Agnès Mellon's expressive singing, large and controlled voice, and rich harmonic range, which were in perfect harmony with Kenneth Weiss's harpsichord performance ». (LYON FIGARO, January 2000)

The Barcarole Ensemble at the peak of their art

« The sensitive and intelligent accents of Agnès Mellon's voice suits Michel Lambert's art perfectly. In Lully's flamboyant *Plainte italienne*, Agnès Mellon's vocal technique was divine. In an excerpt from Monteverdi's *Scherzi Musicali*, her perfect diction and surprising inflexions fit the structure of the music like a glove.

In *Lucrezia*, Agnès Mellon stunned the audience with extremely delicate effects, particularly during the third aria, where she was phenomenal. She ended with an excerpt from *Samson*, hence demonstrating her ease in Haendel's music ». (LA MONTAGNE- ÉDITION VICHY, July 1999)

« Much like Purcell's *Celia*, Agnès Mellon's voice has a thousand charms, among which there is the supreme musical intelligence which characterizes her. The most splendid example of this were the last notes of Michel Lambert's *Ombre de mon amant*, which seemed suspended in the air in a state of miraculous and strange grace ». (LYON CAPITALE, June 1999)

Two great concerts for a somptuous Vivaldi night

Agnès Mellon, an exceptional voice

« This great lyric soprano's voice seems possessed by such flame that it can become exceptionally intense while remaining extremely clear and pure ». (LA PROVENCE, August 1998)

Mellon: refinement

« Agnès Mellon's voice... impeccable technique, obvious knowledge of the style and, most of all, a refinement that never ceases to impress. The singer surrenders to emotion and tragedy and creates nothing less than an aura around her ». (LA PRESSE, MONTRÉAL, April 1998)

« Agnès Mellon is one of those artists who believe that pure intonation is a matter of simple musical politeness. Every line, every phrase is expressed with moving sensitivity, charm and vivacity. She has an almost revolutionary way of expressing rebellion. The singer dominates the text, taking it for what it is in a way that few artists can achieve: with grace wrapped in sadness ». (DIE RHEINPFLAZ, November 1996)

« Her soft, bright and clear voice is the dream instrument for the love songs and grieving complaints of baroque music. She has achieved the most difficult ornamentations with extraordinary ease, thus colouring the pieces with a sublime richness. Already, in Montéclair's *La morte di Lucrezia*, she had revealed the character's depth and intensity through a dynamic and intelligent performance ». (BERGISCHE MORGENPOST, 1996)

« Her tone of voice has an almost absolute purity, and she has a wide range of deep emotional subtleties ». (ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 1996)

« Sovereign interpreter of melodramatic baroque, she handles the nuances proper to lyrical charm with ease and precision, which results in a very profound dramatic performance ». (MANNHEIMER MORGEN, 1996)

« Agnès Mellon's voice is perfectly balanced. It goes from baroque's typical submission to the expression of earthly feelings, from frozen transcendence to flaming passion, each time hitting the right inflexions with model confidence and flexibility ».

« The arias and recitatives, the anger in the agitato, the serenity of the complaints; even in the difficult cantatas, this singer lives every emotion and gives it depth and sparkle, without ever overdoing it. In a word: truthfully, with measure ». (MAINZER RHEIN-ZEITUNG, 1996)

« The soprano's angelic voice has received countless honors, not only for the acoustic touch that she has brought to this baroque event, but also for the attention that she has received. Agnès Mellon has mastered her voice admirably ». (RHEIN ZEITUNG, 1996)

« She has seduced everyone with her intelligence and sensitivity, and with absolutely perfect intonation ». (LE SOIR, BRUXELLES, April 1996)

« The exquisite Agnès Mellon sings with joy, emotion and great sincerity ». (PRESSE-OCÉAN, NANTES, May 1996)

« Her voice has become more lyrical. Her confidence comes from her knowledge of french vocal art, which she transposes beautifully to baroque, where singing, music and movement meet ». (OUEST-FRANCE, May 1996)

« She was ahead of the other soloists because of her precise and sincere performance, along with her simple and truthful dramatic presence. She has always been very touching, giving emotional depth to sometimes superficial music ». (OPERA INTERNATIONAL, September 1996)

« The performance was unique, thanks to the beauty of her voice and the very appropriate grace of her phrasing ». (AMADEUS, Italy 1996)

« Music lovers were mesmerized by Agnès Mellon, whose grace is equal to her talent and professionalism. She has let us see the extent of her magnificent voice. In Haendel's *Lucrezia*, she has showed the extent of her talent by accentuating the theatrical dimension of the cantata and by showing once again her striking vocal virtuosity. Impressive in her technique and in her expressive effects ». (LE PROGRÈS, October 1996)

« Boccherini's *Stabat Mater* allows for poignant vocal effects and for Agnès Mellon to reveal the extent of a clear and moving voice, as much at ease in suave medium notes than in pure high notes. The notes, the coloraturas, the trills never fail to charm. She holds the secret to creating striking moments... as if she were unaware of the difficulty of the score, she continues to vary her style in countless ways ». (LE MÉRIDIONAL, July 1996)

« The ever so transparent Agnès Mellon is nonetheless charged with fundamental pain ». (LA CROIX, 1996)

« She sung impeccably, and showed French hauteur succumbing to the infectious Italian manner » (THE INDEPENDANT, Juin 1994)

Médée, by Charpentier, presented in Brooklyn, New York

« The death of Princesse Créüse as sung by Agnès Mellon, one of the founders of the Arts Florissants, is not only of impeccable style, but is also one of the highlights of the show ». (LE DEVOIR, MONTRÉAL, 1994)

« Her aria was a moment of purity and contemplation... one of those rare supernatural moments that one can only dream of... » (LA LIBRE BELGIQUE, March 1994)

« Agnès Mellon's pure and naked voice transported us to a universe which was both sensory and ethereal ». (LE SOIR, March 1994)

Recital at the Montpellier Opera

« She undoubtedly overcame all the difficulties that are linked to such a diversified programme, and added to it her originality, agility and clarity. In both Poulenc and Satie, Agnès Mellon was a virtuoso and a brilliant performer, using her talent as an actress to illustrate the different colors of the pieces ». (MIDI LIBRE, January 1993)

Boccherini's Stabat Mater, the record

« Agnès Mellon's pure and emotionally rich voice... to the beauty of her voice is added such taste and refinement... some kind of an elegance of soul which is undubitable and luminous ». (L'ÉVÉNEMENT DU JEUDI, April 1993)

Concert at the BAM : Rameau's Castor et Pollux

« Agnès Mellon elegantly phrased her dialogue as Télétaire. With care, she also lavished in arias » (NEW YORK TIMES, Mars 1993)

« Her voice is ideally weighted and centered to explore the charged emotions of Rameau's precisely contoured vocal lines, and give to the words the maximum musical expression. Her Télétaire was lovely, deeply moving piece of singing » (NEW YORK MAGAZINE, Mars 1993)

Purcell's Songs, the record

« Her musical phrasing is transparent and her ornaments remind us of a virtuoso violin. In the very sorrowful *O Solitude*, she even has us forgetting Deller ». (COMPACT DISC MAGAZINE, 1993)

« Agnès Mellon as Télétaire was the most touching performer, singing with shattering sincerity ». (RÉPUBLICAIN LORRAIN, September 1992)

Recital at the Aix-en-Provence Festival

« The purity of her voice, her ease, grace and luminous stage presence as well as her impeccable musicality made for very poetic interpretations of the lieder... The french melodies were a triumph of refinement and intelligence, with Agnès Mellon delivering the delightful and brilliant chills that only Poulenc's music does contain. Impeccable phrasing, perfect pronunciation: it was the perfect union of a genius composer and an artist of such caliber. Agnès Mellon was also astonishing in L. Bernstein's *Chansons Enfantines*, singing with a unique blend of subtlety, comedy, ease and intelligence ». (LE FIGARO, July 1991)

« Just listen to the beginning of *Sweeter than roses*. No, not just the beginning: "Sweeter than roses, or cool Evening Breeze on a warm flowry shore, was the Dear Kiss". Agnès Mellon is not acting, she IS the kiss ». (RÉPERTOIRE)

« Musically, it's L'Amour who really wins the day. In that role, she somehow manages the sound exactly as one might imagine the pert little god. Her pure voice haloed by fluttering flutes, fairly flies through agile coloratura and knots of thrills and turns, she exemplifies the ultimate in vocal style for Rameau » (STEREO REVIEW 1985)

« Créüse, delicate and very poetic, whose death is particularly moving... » (HARMONIE, 1984)

« A sublime Créüse... » (LE MONDE DE LA MUSIQUE' 1984)

« She was beautifully sweet, yet resolute » (THE TIMES, LONDON, 1984)

« She showed a rare command of the sophisticated style in her sensuous, subdued gently languid account of « *Le Repos* » of Lambert, and again, with exquisite shading and delicate ornamentation in « *Par mes chants* » (FINANCIAL TIMES, LONDON, 1984)

« Agnès Mellon, whose clear voice seems to have been extracted from the depths of the soul... » (LE MONDE, July 1983)