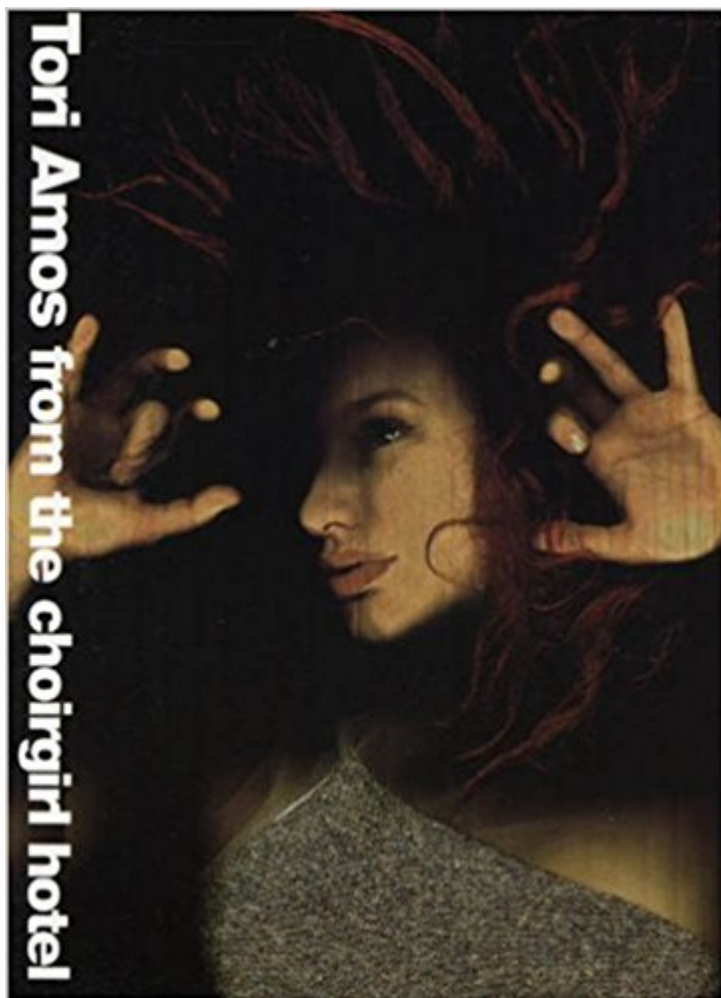


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Tori Amos: From The Choirgirl Hotel



Synopsis

Amos Tori Edition Music Sales Songbook Spark Cruel Black Dove Raspberry Swirl Jackie's Strength I I E E E Liquid Diamonds She's Your Cocaine Northern Lad Hotel Playboy Mommy Pandora's Aquarium

Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Amsco Publications; 1st edition (October 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0825616646

ISBN-13: 978-0825616648

Product Dimensions: 11.8 x 9 x 0.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #350,115 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in [Books > Arts &](#)

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Customer Reviews

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The book has decent enough transcriptions of the songs, however they are not as accurate as some of her other songbooks. Still a must have for all die hard Tori Amos fans.

Choirgirl offers pianists a few challenges while mostly avoiding the daunting key signatures and compound time found on efforts like Under the Pink. Compared to the books for Little Earthquakes and Under The Pink the omissions here are few and mostly forgivable, and a few songs that could have turned out unplayable are spared by judicious compositing. There are two unqualified highlights in the book: a fantastic "Pandora's Aquarium" and a faithful "Spark." Both songs are eminently playable while offering a few instances where you might need to pencil in your fingering. A serviceable trio of "Liquid Diamonds," "Jackie's Strength," and "Black Dove" follows them closely

in quality. However, the latter two tunes plateau at a particular difficulty, omitting a few killer passages that are just slightly defter than the rest of the song. A careful listen will reveal what's missing (and, if you have a good ear, will help you to fix it). The problem is much more more glaring on "Raspberry Swirl." Where Tori occasionally departs from big block chords the book always stays with them. Also, there are some instances where the book could have indicated some of the additional keyboards from the song. Finally, it omits the ad-libbed solo running through the outro. Simple "Playboy Mommy" is - puzzlingly - the worst offender. The book displaces simple figures from where they ought to be, and repeatedly ignores sparse right hand work in favor of continuous vocal melody. It plays okay, but it's clearly not the same thing Tori is doing. The same goes for a middling version of "Northern Lad." Choirgirl includes some songs where piano isn't the most prominent fixture of an arrangement - songs are driven by keyboards, or Tori just supports the rhythm section. The book approaches these songs in a number of ways, because providing a verbatim keyboard part isn't always the best solution ... much of "Hotel" is very accurate to what Tori performed on tour, but at points it sounds peculiar when you play it by yourself. The best-adapted band arrangement is "She's Your Cocaine." It mostly sticks to what Tori plays, but it adds some bass to the left hand and gives the melody to the right where it would be tacit. The additions don't sound wrong, and they're easy to identify and eliminate if you choose. "lieee" does it's best to composite an occasional piano with with keyboards and bass guitar. It's a solid arrangement, and with a little ad-lib it can match perfectly to the disc. By contrast, "Cruel" could very well be what Tori is playing on keys and we'd never know it - the mix of the song obscures almost everything. The book errs in favor of bass notes and melody for most of the arrangement. It's not very fun to play. Only one truly serious omission is made: the amazing "doing oh so well these days" section of "Liquid Diamonds" is completely absent. Also, the second verse piano is lost to a repeat sign, and Tori is clearly doing something different (more simple?) than what is notated in the chorus. Balancing these errors are a nearly flawless intro and first verse. Overall the song is playable and sounds fine. The only other omission is that the "how many fates" bridge in "Spark" is clearly simplified. Otherwise, the brief piano bridge of "Black Dove" is close to accurate, as are most of the outstanding compound-time solos in the middle of "Hotel." And, as already mentioned, the arrangement of "Pandora" is excellent. The book features no background vocals, which leaves Tori's unintelligible and sometimes operatic efforts to the imagination. The loss isn't too objectionable since nothing could really be counted as a dual-lead on this disc (as opposed to the bridges of "Space Dog" and "Father Lucifer"). Choirgirl might be the best Amos book for guitarists - the chord frames offer logical choices, nothing requires a capo (though try first on "Swirl" and fourth on "Black

Dove"), and the songs all lend themselves to adaptation. A guitarist who reads a bit of music will be able to incorporate many key riffs or arpeggios that are perfect for guitar or bass (see "ieeee," "Playboy Mommy," and "Jackie's Strength"). Inventive players will even be able to adapt songs for solo performance using alternate tunings (try a drop-D variation such as DADGAD for "Hotel"). Choirgirl is perhaps the Tori album that could most benefit from a full score, as it uses her band to the utmost. However, even as just a piano folio it's a strong set of songs that sometimes benefit from careful adaptation. If you're planning to just buy one Tori book based on the strength of the piano transcriptions you may want to opt for Pink, Pele, or Scarlet's before coming back to this one. If you're collecting Tori's entire series of sheet music you should buy it ASAP, as has been out of print for quite some time.

I bought the book expecting to "play like Tori." that was my first mistake. She just goes TOO many places, and that's very noticeable in this book. As has been said before the Piano took a back seat to the other instruments, and so playing without the other instruments just doesn't give the feel; however, it is fun to turn on the CD and play along, especially with Raspberry Swirl. But other than that, there isn't the fluidity that other Tori books have. The chords are so blocky and sustained (ie Jackie's Strength: held bass notes throughout the entire song) that I just couldn't capture what I was looking for. Not my first choice for a Tori sheet music book, but still not a bad buy if you like to play along.

Choirgirl Hotel is probably my favorite album. Of course, her girls are changing all the time (what do you expect? all of us grow older) so when I really say it's my favorite, it more refers to what this album means to me and what musically maturing is. Also, because we are changing all the time, our favorites really could change from day to day. Would you really listen to Boys for Pele end-to-end if you just found the perfect love of your life? At the time of the album's release, the music world was experience new trends, especially an explosion in Electronica/Ambient/Trance (well, these were not necessarily new, but newly popular). This album, to me, seemed to follow this same trend of altering the sounds coming from acoustic instruments and by using ethereal voices along with repetitive/hypnotic lines. We also start seeing Tori using a synthesizer in her live shows. So many of these sounds can't be produced with just the piano - 'I guess you go to far when pianos try to be guitars.' Regardless whether this trend was intentional on her part, or if was just something she needed coming out because she is finally admitting to herself that it's time to turn the page, she openly admits she did put Bose in the back seat. So if the piano does not have a big role in the

concept of this album, how can we have the expectation it's going to have one in the song book? Yes, I admit I was very excited to take my new purchase home and start playing these songs I immediately fell in love the first time I ever heard the album, but when I sat down to play, my piano had seemed to lose its voice. So not to betray Tori, I left the book out as much as I could, but it eventually no longer was considered something good enough to be in the bench seat (It went into long-term storage). However, just about a month ago, when I received the Stimulus check without any knowledge as to what it was or why, I found myself with some extra cash. I bought a new synthesizer to replace the one I've had for years (the one with the second C# that no longer works, and the electrical cord had a short). Of course, I have had many different residences since *Choirgirl* came out, so when I received my keyboard, all my music was in one place, so luckily they got a chance to possibly come out and play. With some of these new features on keyboards these days, you can do some really cool stuff...and to pieces where you really need the additional 'stuff' Anyway, I'm just now experiencing some ways I can reproduce some of these songs in a way that still captures Tori's original intent. This songbook really isn't just for a girl and her piano. But you could put on a nice big-bottom beat and add some interesting arpeggiated harmonies to the music and still feel like you're singing in the Choir.

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