Diogenes

Book factsheet

Donna Leon & Michael Sowa (Ill.)
Handel's Bestiary

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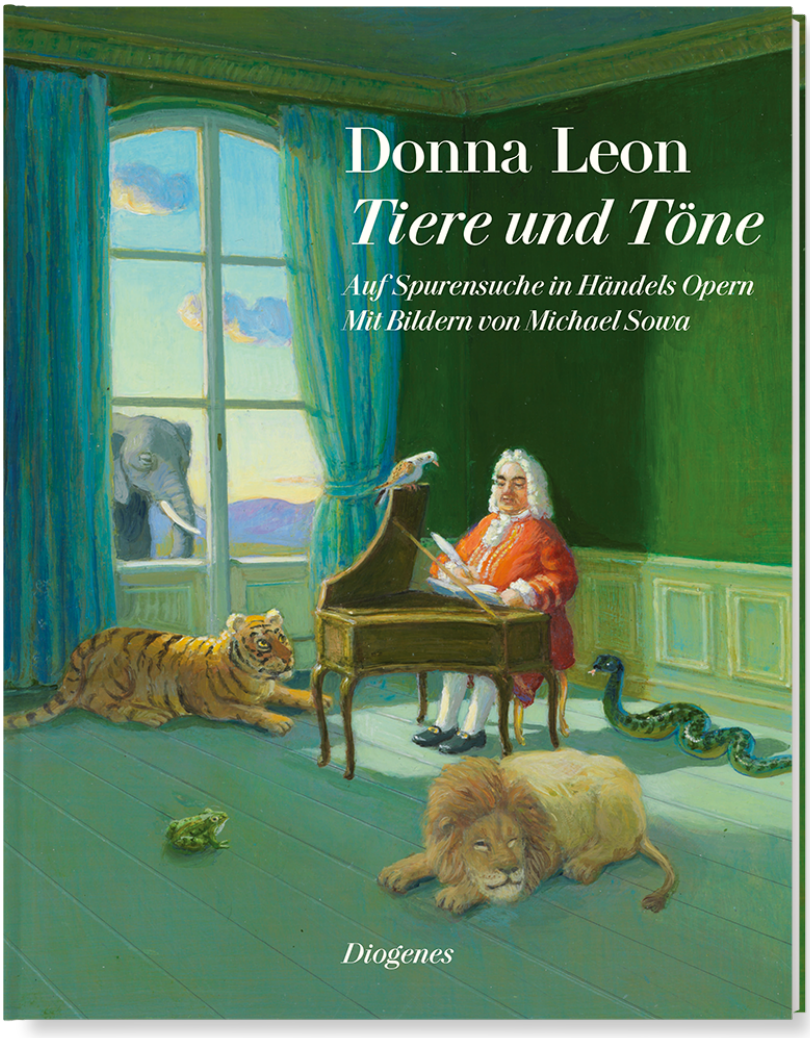

›I'm no musician,‹ says Donna Leon. ›I can't read music. I know nothing about musical theory. I'm a follower, a groupie, call me what you will: I am a heart with a pair of ears stuck on, one that for over ten years has been listening almost exclusively to music by Handel.‹ While listening, it struck Donna Leon that Handel's music is teeming with animals, that he again and again gives voice to animals through his notation. What is Handel's intention when a snake hisses through an aria or when armies of frogs penetrate the King's chambers? Donna Leon investigates. She tells us how animals have informed the imagination, beliefs and superstitions since year dot. *Handel's Bestiary* reveals a different side to Donna Leon: she is not only an appreciator of music, but also an expert in the symbolism of medieval bestiaries. Michael Sowa has also taken inspiration from those animals to create these marvellous images.
The arias on the attached CD are performed by the Handel expert Alan Curtis and his orchestra, *Il Complesso Barocco*. Divertimento fantastico!

Contemporary Literature, Gift Books
144 pages
14 × 18 cm
November 2010

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Translation rights currently sold:
English/UK (William Heinemann)
English/USA (Grove /Atlantic)

Movie adaptations

2019: Ewige Jugend
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Jens-Frederik Otto
Cast: Mit: Uew Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer, Michael Degen. In Episodenrollen: Max von Thun, Nadja Bobyleva, Hildegard Schmahl, Andreas Pietschmann, Nina Kronjäger.

2019: Stille Wasser
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan und Florian Iwersen Holtz
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Marie Leuenberger,Suzanne von Borsody

2018: Endlich mein
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan Holtz und Florian Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen, Annett Renneberg. In Episodenrollen Leslie Malton, Edin Hasanovic und Jürgen Tarrach.

2017: Tod zwischen den Zeilen
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan und Florian Iwersen Holtz
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen und Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen: Jenny Schily, Thorsten Merten, Harald Schrott.

2016: Das goldene Ei
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian & Stefan Holtz Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen, Juliane Köhler, Imogen Kogge

2015: Tierische Profite
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer, Michael Degen, Alice Dwyer, Florian Bartholomäi, Max Hopp, Walter Kreye

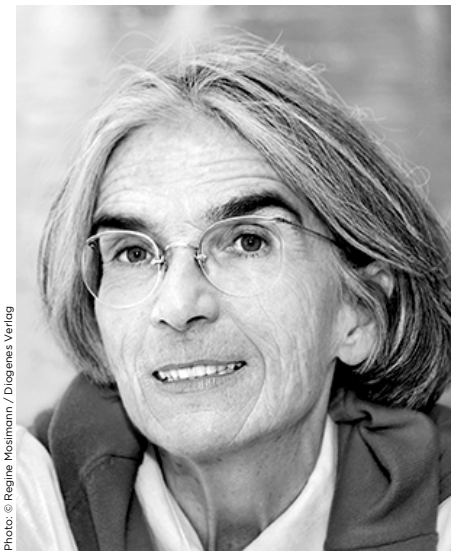

Photo: © Regine Mosimann / Diogenes Verlag

Donna Leon, born in New Jersey in 1942, has worked as a travel guide in Rome and as a copywriter in London. She taught literature in universities in Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia. The Brunetti novels brought her to world-wide fame. Donna Leon lived in Italy for many years, and although she now lives in Switzerland, she often visits Venice.



Photo: © Gianni Plescia



Brunetti's Venice
368 pages
2008



Death in a Strange Country
400 pages
1995
Movie Adaptation



Death at La Fenice
352 pages
1993
Award winner
Movie Adaptation

Movie adaptations (cont'd)

2014: Reiches Erbe
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian Iwersen
Cast: Neben dem beliebten Stammensemble um Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer und Michael Degen spielen in Episodenrollen David Rott, Lisa Wagner, Tilo Prückner, Renate Delfs und Liv Lisa Fries.

2013: Auf Treu und Glauben
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Holger Joos
Cast: Mit der bewährten Besetzung rund um Uwe Kockisch, in Episodenrollen u.a. Jeanette Hain, Stephan Grossmann und Nicole Heesters

2012: Schöner Schein
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Holger Joos
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen u.a Michael Mendl, Esther Schweins und Merab Ninidze.

2011: Das Mädchen seiner Träume
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen Annett Renneberg, Jasmin Tabatabai, Martin Feifel, Valerie Niehaus

2010: Lasset die Kinder zu mir kommen (TV)
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen und Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen u.a.: Nadeshda Brennicke, Michael Gwisdek und Gregor Törzs

2009: Wie durch ein dunkles Glas
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen und Annett Renneberg. In Episodenrollen Heikko Deutschmann, Katharina Wackernagel und Birge Schade.

2008: Die dunkle Stunde der Serenissima
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger, Axel Milberg, Katrin Sass, Bettina Zimmermann, Rike Schmid

2008: Blutige Steine
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger, Helmut Zierl, Ernest Allan Hausmann, Rosel Zech

2006: Endstation Venedig
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Esther Schweins, Heiner Lauterbach, Monica Bleibtreu

2006: Das Gesetz der Lagune
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Tim Bergmann, Laura-Charlotte Syniawa

Movie adaptations (cont'd)

2005: Beweise, dass es böse ist
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2005: Verschwiegene Kanäle
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2004: Sanft entschlafen
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2004: Acqua Alta
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2003: Venezianisches Finale
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2003: Feine Freunde
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2002: Nobiltà
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Joachim Krol , Barbara Auer

2001: In Sachen Signora Brunetti
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Joachim Krol , Barbara Auer

2001: Davon stirbt man nicht
Director: Christine Hartmann
Cast: J. Prochnow

2000: Vendetta
Director: Christian Castelberg
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

2000: Venizianische Scharade
Director: Christian Castelberg
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

Awards

2024 ›Ehrenpreis des Bayerischen Ministerpräsidenten‹ für ihr Werk
2024 ›Ripper Award‹ von der Jury des Europäischen Preises für Kriminalliteratur
2021 ›Gaudium Award‹ des Breukelein Institutes
2019 ›Lifetime Achievement Award‹ vom *Strand Magazine*
2019 *Ein Sohn ist uns geboren* war auf der Shortlist des ›Golden Dagger Award‹
2018 ›B.Z.-Kulturpreis‹ (Berliner Zeitung)
2016 ›Premio Pepe Carvalho‹ anlässlich des Krimifestivals BCNegra von der Stadtregierung Barcelonas
2006 Das Hörbuch *Mein Venedig* ist auf den 1. Platz des österreichischen Publikumspreises ›Buchliebling‹ gewählt worden, der Roman *Verschwiegene Kanäle* erzielte den 3. Platz in der Rubrik ›Krimis und Thriller‹

Awards (cont'd)

2005 ›Silver Award‹ in der Kategorie ›Krimi/Thriller‹ des britischen Hörbuchpreises ›Spoken Word Awards‹ für das englische Hörbuch *Blood from a Stone*

(dt. Blutige Steine)

2003 Donna Leon erhält den ›Corine – Internationaler Buchpreis‹ für *Die dunkle Stunde der Serenissima*

2000 Donna Leon ist im Rahmen der Veranstaltungen zum Welttag des Buches für *Nobiltà* mit dem ›Goldenen Buch‹ des Österreichischen Hauptverbandes des Buchhandels ausgezeichnet worden.

2000 Donna Leon erhält den ›Silver Dagger‹ der Crime Writers' Association für *Friends in High Places* (dt. *Feine Freunde)*

1997 3. Platz für *Venezianische Scharade* in der Internationalen Sparte beim 13. ›Deutschen Krimi-Preis‹

1991 Japans renommierter ›Suntory‹-Preis für *Death at la Fenice* (dt. *Venezianisches Finale)*

Praise

Handel's Bestiary

»A wonderful compendium colourfully illustrated by Michael Sowa, to be enjoyed not only by musical connoisseurs.« – Der Spiegel, Hamburg

The book, wittily illustrated by Michael Sowa, is accompanied by a CD of arias recorded by the ›Complesso Barocco‹. A real tour de force! – Dagmar Kaindl / News, Vienna

Donna Leon

»Brilliant.« – Sunday Times, London

»A splendid series . . . with a backdrop of the city so vivid you can almost smell it.« – The Sunday Telegraph, London

»Donna Leon can paralyze the reader with joyful suspense.« – The Mail on Sunday, London

»[Donna Leon] has never become perfunctory, never failed to give us vivid portraits of people and of Venice, never lost her fine, disillusioned indignation.« – Ursula K. LeGuin / The New York Times

»The most obvious appeal of Donna Leon's novels about Commissario Guido Brunetti is that they are so supremely civilized. For readers with a certain mindset—distaste for violence, love of Italy's cultural and sensual pleasures and scorn for officialdom — Donna Leon's novels are always a pleasure.« – Patrick Anderson / The Washington Post

Praise (cont'd)

»Donna Leon guides us through Venice like James Ellroy through Los Angeles or Manuel Vázquez Montalbán through Barcelona: with an eye used to detect what lies behind the façade.« – Le Figaro, Paris

»Donna Leon is a top thriller writer, on a par with Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Patricia Highsmith and Ruth Rendell. Women, so it would seem from literary history, have always been in their element with the genre of murder and violence.« – Sonntags Zeitung, Zurich

»Brilliantly evokes Venetian atmosphere. The characters of Brunetti and his family continue to deepen throughout this series.« – The Times, London

»Donna Leon is the undisputed crime fiction queen.« – Sarah Weinman / Baltimore Sun

»In the footsteps of Brunetti, endowed with a ruthless humor and a healthy appetite, Donna Leon's readers discover Venice better than with a guide book.« – Le Monde, Paris

»Brunetti's humane police work is disarming, and his ambles through the city are a delight.« – The New York Times, Book Review

»Brunetti remains unique – an everyman who's also extraordinary.« – Publishers Weekly

»Donna Leon's Venetian mysteries never disappoint, calling up the romantic sights and sound of La Serenissima even as they acquaint us with the practical matters that concern the city's residents.« – Marilyn Stasio / The New York Times Book Rreview

»Donna Leon's books are a joy.« – The Guardian, London

»When writing about her beloved Venice, Donna Leon can do no wrong.« – The New York Times

»[Leon] has never become perfunctory, never failed to give us vivid portraits of people and of Venice, never lost her fine, disillusioned indignation.« – Ursula K. Le Guin / New York Times, New York

»Hers is an unusually potent cocktail of atmosphere and event.« – The New Yorker, New York

»[Leon] uses the relatively small and crime-free canvas of Venice for rips about Italian life, sexual styles and - best of all - the kind of ingrown business and political corruption that seems to lurk just below the surface.« – Chicago Tribune, Chicago

»Leon started out with offhand, elegant excellence, and has simply kept it up.« – The Guardian, London

»Leon whips up a brilliant narrative storm.« – Sunday Times, London

Praise (cont'd)

»Her depiction of Venice, its crimes and beauties, villains and heroes, high and low and the character of Brunetti and his family and friends has long been a delight for discerning readers. The warmth, understanding and shrewdness with which Leon's elegant, witty prose depicts this particular part of Italy is a joy. She is one of the best European novelists around, and her unflinching address to current affairs makes her worthy of the highest regard.« – Amanda Craig

»She has reinvented Venice.« – Kristina Maidt-Zinke / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»Her love for this city shines through from every line of her crime novels.« – Maria Wiesner / Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt

»Leon's pedagogical eros is akin to that of Mary Poppins. Who could resist it?« – Simone Dattenberger / Münchner Merkur, Munich

»To read her is to restore the soul.« – Mark Sanderson / The Times, London