

Henry Purcell – Music for a While (Deller) [1992]



1. *The Plaint* 2. *If Music Be The Food Of Love* 3. *I Attempt From Love's Sickness* 4. *Fairest Isle* 5. *Sweeter Than Roses* 6. *Not All My Torments* 7. *Thrice Happy Lovers* 8. *An Evening Hymn* 9. *From Rosy Bow'rs* 10. *O Lead Me To Some Peaceful Gloom* 11. *Retired From Any Mortal's Sight* 12. *Music For A While* 13. *Since From My Dear Astrea's Sight* 14. *O Solitude*
Alfred Deller – haute-contre Wieland Kuijken – basse de viole William Christie – clavecin Roderick Skeaping – violon baroque Robert Elliot – orgue (14) Jane Ryan – basse de viole (14)

This is one of the gems of the Harmonia Mundi back-catalogue. Even at the age of 67 and recorded within three months of his death Deller preserves his special purity almost completely unimpaired. Only at the end of some demanding phrases is there the slightest hint of crumbling. What remains is his exemplary purity of stratospheric tone. He makes play with a delightful affected tremble in *If Music be the Food of Love* and his bird-like attack in miniature on quite high notes is memorable in *Not all my torments*. A sepulchral cortege is evoked through *O lead me to some peaceful gloom* with its evocative shrill trumpets. Equally stygian is the instrumental tissue for *O Solitude* while Deller's voice courses high above. The instrumental ensemble comprises various permutations of clavecin, baroque violin, organ and bass viol. The notes include a useful chronology of Deller's life and there are essays by David Vickers, Gustav Leonhardt, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, René Jacobs, Paul Elliott and Bernard Coutaz. A rich context indeed. --- Rob Barnett, MusicWeb International

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