

If music be the food of love

verses by Colonel Henry Heveningham
music by Henry Purcell, 1691/2 (Z. 379 b)

Many choristers believe this song to be a Purcell setting of a Shakespearean text, but the only direct quotation is the first line, which matches the opening seven words of *Twelfth Night*. Purcell set this text twice in the 1690s, and made two slightly different versions of the first setting. The first version of the earlier setting for solo voice and harpsichord (Z. 379 b), is here arranged for a capella mixed choir and transposed down two whole tones. In this version Purcell set only the first verse to music, so the alternate version, which was published in the *Gentleman's Journal* of June 1692 (Z. 379 a) has been consulted to provide a second verse; singers should note the rhythmic differences at the outset of each verse in all parts.

This song was made famous in modern times by the countertenor Alfred Deller in the version arranged by Sir Michael Tippett and Walter Bergmann.

Heveningham:

If music be the food of love,
sing on till I am fill'd with joy;
for then my list'ning soul you move
with pleasures that can never cloy,
your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare
that you are music ev'rywhere.

Pleasures invade both eye and ear,
so fierce the transports are, they wound,
and all my senses feasted are,
tho' yet the treat is only sound.
Sure I must perish by your charms,
unless you save me in your arms.

Shakespeare:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough, no more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou!
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy,
That it alone is high fantastical.

If Music be the Food of Love

Col. Henry Heveningham

Note: these divisi indicate verse differences:

V.1 upward stems, V.2 downward stems.

Do not try to sing both at once!

Henry Purcell

(1659-1695)

Soprano

1. If mu - sic be the food of love, Sing on, sing on, sing
2. Plea - sures in - vade both eye and ear, So fierce, so fierce, so

Alto

1. If mu - sic be the food of love, Sing on, sing
2. Plea - sures in - vade both eye and ear, So fierce, so

Tenor

1. If mu - sic be the food of love, Sing on, sing on, sing,
2. Plea - sures in - vade both eye and ear, So fierce, so fierce, so,

Bass

1. If mu - sic be the food of love, Sing on, sing on,
2. Plea - sures in - vade both eye and ear, So fierce, so fierce, so fierce,

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on, sing on till I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy; For
fierce, so fierce the trans - ports are they wound, And

on, sing on till I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy;
fierce, so fierce the trans - ports are, so fierce they wound,

— sing on till I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy; For
— so fierce the trans - ports are, so fierce they wound, And

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— sing on till I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy; For
— so fierce the trans - ports are, so fierce they wound, My

then my list' - ning soul you move, for then my list' - ning
all my sen - ses feast - ed are, and all my sen - ses

My list' - ning soul you move, for then my list' - ning
My sen - ses feast - ed are, and all my sen - ses

then my list' - ning soul you move, for then my list' - ning
all my sen - ses feast - ed are, and all my sen - ses

then my soul you move, for then my
sen - ses feast - ed are, my sen - ses

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soul you move With plea - sures that can ne - ver cloy, Your
 feast - ed are, Tho' yet the treat is on - ly sound. Sure

soul you move With plea - sures that can ne - ver cloy, Your
 feast - ed are, Tho' yet the treat is on - ly sound. Sure

soul you move With plea - sures that can ne - ver cloy, Your
 feast - ed are, Tho' yet the treat is on - ly sound. Sure

soul you move With plea - sures that can ne - ver cloy, Your
 feast - ed are, Tho' yet the treat is on - ly sound. Sure

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eyes, your mien, your tongue de - clare That you are mu -
 I must pe - rish by your charms, Un - less you save

eyes, your mien, your tongue de - clare That you are mu -
 I must pe - rish by your charms, Un - less you save

eyes, your mien, your tongue de - clare That you are mu -
 I must pe - rish by your charms, Un - less you save

eyes, your mien, your tongue de - clare That you are mu -
 I must pe - rish by your charms, Un - less you save me

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- sic ev' - ry - where, your where.
 me in your arms, Sure arms.

- sic ev' - ry - where, your where.
 me in your arms, Sure arms.

- sic ev' - ry - where, your where.
 me in your arms, Sure arms.

ev' - - ry where, your where.
 in - - your arms, Sure arms.