

Henry Purcell – O Solitude (Scholl) [2010]

Written by bluesever

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1 *If Music Be The Food Of Love* 2:16 2 *Sound The Trumpet* 3:00 3 *Strike The Viol* 4:19
4 *Chacony* 3:37 5 *Fairest Isle* 4:55 6 *What Power Art Thou* 3:10 7 *Chacony In G Minor*
4:08 8 *One Charming Night* 2:24 9 *Sweeter Than Roses* 3:18 10 *When I Am Laid In Earth*
4:05 11 *Incidental Music For The Gordian Knot Unty'd* 10:47 12 *Here The Deities Approve*
4:36 13 *Music For A While* 4:14 14 *O Dive Custos* 6:59 15 *O Solitude, My Sweetest*
Solitude 5:32 16 *Pavan In G Minor* 4:50 17 *Now That The Sun Hath Veiled His Light (An*
Evening Hymn On A Ground) 4:34 Andreas Scholl - Counter Tenor Accademia Bizantina
(Ensemble) Stefano Montanari - Conductor

Purcell would seem like a natural fit for Andrea Scholl's voice, but this album of songs, arias, and orchestral selections from Purcell's semi-operas and incidental music is the counter tenor's first foray into recording this repertoire, and it's a fabulous success. This is a recording that takes a while to establish its momentum, but it grows in stature as it progresses. The first few tracks are very fine, but by the time Scholl has finished "What power art thou," (the "Cold Song" from King Arthur), the first of many tracks where one might have to repress the urge to hit replay to experience its wonder again immediately, the music and the performance have cast a net of enchantment that doesn't let up. A few other selections that may elicit a similarly intense response include "One Charming Night," from The Fairy Queen, "Music for a While," from Oedipus, and "Dido's Lament." Seeing this last on the tracklist might reasonably cause a skeptical response, because there are so many superb recordings by sopranos and mezzo-sopranos, and the idea of a counter tenor singing a role that is virtually always, if not always, sung by a woman in the theater seems odd. Scholl's broadly paced and deeply felt singing is fully persuasive, though, and makes it possible to hear the solo not only as a woman's grief at love lost, but as a more universal expression of profound, dignified sorrow. Stefano Montanari conducts Accademia Bizantina in a performance every bit as invested in probing the depths of the music as Scholl's. The violence the orchestra evokes in the "Cold Song" is genuinely startling, fierce enough to make one concerned about the string instruments' withstanding such a battering; it's hugely effective. Scholl is joined on two tracks by counter tenor Christophe Dumaux, with whom he blends beautifully. Their duet, "O dive custos," has a gorgeous Monteverdian lyricism and immediacy. Decca's sound is wonderfully clean, warm, and

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present. --- Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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