

# Henry Purcell Songs

Book one

Galliard


# Henry Purcell Songs

edited by Peter Wishart and Maureen Lehane

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## INTRODUCTION

A publication like this ought to be unnecessary, at this time. If even a third of Purcell's vocal and other works were easily and cheaply obtainable in a respectably accurate edition (like virtually all the keyboard works of Bach have been for many years, put out by various publishers), there would be less reason for dissatisfaction. As it is, very few of Purcell's songs are so available, with an accompaniment which is not only in his harmonic and contrapuntal style but at all imaginative. Usually they are neither. One recent scholarly publication even gives an altered bass in a famous song. Yet there are few English people, and probably fewer foreign musicians who would make the claim for any other composer to be our greatest.

We have chosen for these three books sixteen varied songs which we like, though we certainly do not claim that these are necessarily the greatest. Several we have omitted because the orchestral prelude is such an important part of the song that to play it on the piano would be pointless, and would take up far too much space. For similar reasons we have omitted those which require a chorus. In short, these are songs suitable for recitals; some are very well known, while others will be new to many singers.

### THE TEXT

While we believe the texts are accurate and faithful, no attempt has been made to present an *Urtext*. The texts of most of the songs have been drawn from *Orpheus Britannicus* and *Harmonia Sacra*, though we have consulted other sources where there were obscurities.

### REALISATION

In most cases all that we have from Purcell is the voice part and a bass, with occasional figures. Sometimes (as in 'Dido's lament' or 'Hark! how all things with one sound rejoice') Purcell has left us some string parts which give us an authentic harmonisation. Elsewhere we have realised the bass using a familiarity with Purcell's style gained over many years of loving study and performance. It might be said here that a sparsely figured bass does not, as some seem to think, give one the opportunity to use a keyboard style, and indeed a harmonic language, derived from twentieth century practice. There is no longer any need for Purcell's basses and harmony to be altered wholesale, even in the name of imaginative performance. The bass and top parts impose their style on the rest, just as much as if Purcell had figured them completely. Those who have a real knowledge of Purcell's style will, no doubt, simplify or complicate as they think fit. Others should leave well alone, as Purcell's style is extremely idiosyncratic and hard to imitate.

### KEYS

Original keys are given in the footnotes where they differ from those chosen, which are, on the whole, those which suit our performance. There is even less virtue in

sticking rigidly to Purcell's keys (except where specific instruments are to be used) than in, say, German Lieder; the composers of the latter were not above altering technical awkwardnesses arising out of transposition, which showed that they expected it. Indeed it was an economic necessity for them.

Accidentals which are editorial suggestions are set small in front of the note.

### NOTES ON PERFORMANCE

**Recitative** In Purcell's time this is not like the later *recitativo secco*. It should be sung so that the pulse is discernible, though the short notes should hardly ever be exactly equal or rigid. This does not mean that a long stretch of recitative should all be in the same tempo, and we have usually suggested desirable changes.

**Changes of time** These present some problem to the modern performer as the old methods derived from prolation are now forgotten by most musicians. We have therefore suggested tempo relationships, and the performer can choose an overall tempo which feels comfortable.

**Breathing** Occasional marks are put in where there seems a need. Otherwise breathing should depend, naturally, on the words.

**Phrasing and dynamics** One of the most important things in the performance of this music is to try to hear where the rhythmic and phrasing accents are. The terms 'first beat' ('Since from my dear', Book one) and 'second beat' music (parts of 'Hark! how all things with one sound rejoice', Book two) are useful. Very often springing rhythm can be obtained by shortening the note previous to the accent (as suggested in 'Sweeter than roses', Book one, in the accompaniment to bars 35 to 39).

Where dynamics are concerned so much depends on the room, the singer, and the individual conception that we have put in a minimum of marks. All such marks, phrasing and speed indications are our suggestions and the performer is free to go his own way with due regard to style. Occasionally, however, some indications are printed in bold roman type, and these distinguish Purcell's own marks.

**Dotted notes** For much longer than many people realise, a dot after a note signified an *unspecified* lengthening. No double dot existed in Purcell's day and the use of a triplet mark over two notes of a triole (actual compound time apart) is so rare that it is almost an impossibility. Therefore considerable freedom is permitted, and the jerky double-dotting often heard in Purcell performance (in the name of correct style) is sometimes not only unmusical but unstylish to boot. These dotted note runs are, as often as not, a notation in a simple time for triplet groups. The performer must also realise that a dotted crotchet, in a passage containing dotted quavers, will probably need to be lengthened to fit the general rhythm.

Sometimes rhythmic alterations are put above the stave; these, of course, are editorial suggestions.

**Ornamentation** This is a difficult question, and on the whole we have not added any ornamentation except in repeated passages. It ought to be said however that the notion of performing music as it stands on the page is a very modern one and certainly would have been thought odd in the late seventeenth century. The following

abbreviations have been used; their interpretation given here is rhythmically approximate.

Written:



Performed:



**Pianoforte and harpsichord** Until there is a harpsichord (let alone a chamber organ) in every place where people perform, and a cellist in addition to the harpsichord in rooms of any size at all (particularly remembering that the accompanying harpsichords of Purcell's day had even less bass than most modern instruments, and certainly had no 16' stops), the pianoforte will continue to be used as an accompaniment to Purcell's songs. These are piano accompaniments, but can be transferred to the harpsichord or organ easily enough; experience or experiment will guide the player to adapt where necessary. It will sometimes be found that a large modern piano will serve best if the lid is shut down and the desk placed on top. Held bass notes intended for the organ (e.g. 'Lord, what is man', Book one) which cannot sound long enough on a piano, may have to be repeated.

It is worth reiterating, however, that the two things which Purcell left are the voice and the bass parts, and they should both be heard, so that harpsichord without a bass to match the voice and no cello (viola da gamba or whatever) is an insult to Purcell's art.

**Introductions** In those songs where there is no introduction (the majority), a simple tonic chord is the best beginning, though sometimes the last line of the song will do.

**Sex of singers** In Purcell's day people were indifferent to the sex of the singer, and many of Purcell's most passionate men's songs (as far as the words tell us) would have been sung by women or, indeed, boys. So ladies need not feel bashful about performing these.

We hope that experienced professional singers who may use this volume will not be offended by our simple directions for performance. They will surely know that beginners are often frightened off composers like Purcell because they have simply no idea where to start in the interpretation of them.

They may however find the collection useful in other ways.

PETER WISHART

MAUREEN LEHANE

Frome, Somerset, 1976.

## LORD, WHAT IS MAN

William Fuller



Henry Purcell

Slow

VOICE

Lord, what is man, lost man, that thou should'st

KEYBOARD

be so mind-ful of him! Lord, what is man, lost man, that thou should'st

be so mind-ful of him! that the Son of God for-sook his glo - - ry. his a -

**Notes** The first section of this cantata should be treated as recitative, accompanied recitative, but nevertheless recitative. Colour, colour, colour the words. The vocal line already paints an exquisite picture and it is up to the singer to exploit this to the full: look at those bars contrasting 'worm' and 'God'. The triple time section requires something different, less dramatic, flowing and mellifluous. Don't race ahead at the end with the Hallelujah: it is surely a quiet affirmation of faith.

**Source** *Harmonia Sacra*, 'A Divine Hymn'. Original key G minor. Dr William Fuller was Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

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10

— bode, — to become a poor — tor-ment-ed man! Lord, —

— what is man, lost, — lost — man, that thou should'st

15

be so mind - ful of him! that the Son of God for-sook his

glo - ry. his a - bode, — to be-come a poor. — tor-ment - ed

20

man! The De-i-ty was shrunk — in - - to — a span, and that for

me, for me, O — wond-rous Love! — for — me, and that for

25

me, for me O — wond-rous Love! — for — me.

30

Re-veal, re - veal, ye glo - - - rious spi-rits, when ye knew the way the

Son of God took to re - new lost \_\_\_\_\_ man, your va - cant pla - ces to sup -

- ply:                    blest spi - rits tell,                    tell,

35  
which. which did ex - cel,    which was more pre - va - lent,    your joy \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or your as - to - nish - ment,

40  
that man should be as - sum'd in - to the De - i - ty,

that for a worm                    a god should die,                    that for a worm a

Quick  
45                    ← d = d. →  
god                    should die.

50  
Oh!                    oh! for a quill,                    oh!                    oh! for a

55

quill \_\_\_\_\_ drawn \_\_\_\_\_ from your wing, to write \_\_\_\_\_ the

60

prais - es, the \_\_\_\_\_ prais - es, to write \_\_\_\_\_ the prais - es, the \_\_\_\_\_

65

prais - es of \_\_\_\_\_ th'E-ter - - nal Love; oh!

oh! for a voice, oh! oh! for a

70

voice like \_\_\_\_\_ Yours, to \_\_\_\_\_ sing that an - - them

75

here, \_\_\_\_\_ which \_\_\_\_\_ once, \_\_\_\_\_ which \_\_\_\_\_ once \_\_\_\_\_ you sung, \_\_\_\_\_ you

80

sung \_\_\_\_\_ a - bove: oh! oh! for a

85

voice like Yours, \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ sing that an - - them

here, which once you sung,

90 you sung a - bove.

Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah,

95 hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal -

- le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le -

100 - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le -

105 - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le -

- lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le -



# SWEETER THAN ROSES

110

-lu-jah. hal - le - lu - jah, hal -

- le-lu - jah, hal-le - lu-jah, hal-le - lu-jah. hal-le - lu-jah, hal - le - lu-jah, hal-le-

115

-lu-jah. hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le -

120

-lu - jah. hal - le - lu - jah.

Thomas Norton



Henry Purcell

Lento

VOICE Sweet - er than ro - ses, or

KEYBOARD

5

cool, cool ev' - ning breeze; *piu mosso*

Sweet - er than

*a tempo*

Notes The problem here is to give the picture of utter ecstasy: you don't actually mention *what* is sweeter than roses until bar 16, which is surely a sign that you are in love. Within the discipline of the notes, the feeling must appear free and spontaneous, but the rhythm must remain. No such problems after 'Then shot like fire', and the final section is a shout of joy.

Sources Pausanias and Orpheus Britannicus.

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10

ro - ses, or cool, cool ev - - - ning

breeze. On a warm flow - 'ry shore, Was the dear, the

15 *piu mosso*

dear, the dear, dear, dear kiss; First tremb -

- ling, first tremb - - ling made me, made me freeze.

20 *rall.* *tempo primo*

*allegro*

made me freeze; Then shot like fire all.

25

all, all, all o'er, then shot like fire all, all, all, all, then shot like fire

*Allegro*

all, all o'er.

30

35

What ma-gic has vic - to -

40

rious love,

45

What ma-gic has vic -

*p*

50

- to

rious love, For all, all, all I touch, all,

55

all, all, all I touch or see; Since that dear.

60

dear kiss I hour-ly, hour-ly prove, All, all, all,

*cresc.*

65

all is love, all, all, all, all, all, all is love, all, all, all, all, all is love,

70

all, all, all, all, all is love, is love to me.

## WHAT SHALL I DO TO SHOW HOW MUCH I LOVE HER?

Beaumont and Fletcher



Henry Purcell

VOICE

What shall I do to show how much I

KEYBOARD

love her? How ma - ny mil - lions of sighs can suf -

-fice? That which wins o - thers' hearts ne - ver can

**Notes** This song, perhaps almost more than any other in the present collection, repays reading, knowing and feeling the words: watch out for emphases in the poem, and then relate these to Purcell's setting. Colour the words: 'melt' with a long 'm'; 'implore' with lots of 'pl', and perhaps the section beginning 'Since gods' could be rather more conversational - more pointed - than languishing. The young man is surely not too melancholy about his love; in fact the lines beginning 'till for her own sake' are positively humorous.

**Sources** *Dioclesian* and *Orpheus Britannicus*.

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move her, Those com - mon me - thods of love she'll de -

-spise. I will love more than man e'er lov'd be -

-fore me; Gaze on her all the day, and melt all the

night; Till for her own sake, at

last she'll im - plore me To love her

30 less to pre - serve our de - light. Since gods them -

35 - selves could not e - ver be lov - ing,

Men must have breath - ing re - cruits for new

40 joys; I wish my love could be

45 e - ver im - prov - ing, Though ca - ger

love more than sor - row de - stroys.

50 In fair Au - re - lia's arms leave me ex -

-pir - ing, To be em - balm'd by the

55

sweets of her breath; To the last

60

mo - ment I'll still be de - sir - ing;

Ne - ver had he - ro so glo - rious a death.

## SINCE FROM MY DEAR

Beaumont and Fletcher

Henry Purcell

Andante (slow 1 in a bar)

VOICE

Since from my dear, my dear, my dear,

KEYBOARD

5

since from my dear, my dear, my dear, my

10

dear, my dear As - tre - a's sight I

**Notes** Another incredible example of Purcell's brilliance at painting words in music: his treatment of 'my dear, my dear' is so affecting, as is the drop on 'to mourn', and notice particularly 'bleeding' in bars 39 to 40. Going back, why not shorten the first syllable of 'never' a little more each time to give emphasis, and you will notice our suggestion for the performance of the word 'rudely': this is normal stylistic practice.

**Sources** *Dioclesian* and *Orpheus Britannicus*.

*Fl. etc.* 15

was so rude - - -

20

- - - ly torn, My soul has ne - ver, ne - ver,

ne - ver, has ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver known de - light, Un -

25

- less it were to mourn, to

30

mourn, un - less, un - less, it were to -

1 2 35

mourn. mourn. But oh! a - las, a -

- las, with weep - ing eyes, And bleed - ing,

40

bleed - ing heart I - lie; Think - ing on

45

her, on her whose ab - - sence 'tis That

*cresc.*

50

makes me wish to die, die,

*dim.*

55

die, die, makes me, makes me

3

wish to die, die, die.

## DEAR PRETTY YOUTH

Thomas Shadwell

Henry Purcell

*Allegretto*

VOICE

Dear, dear

KEYBOARD

*mf*

5

pret-ty, pret-ty, pret-ty youth, dear pret-ty, pret-ty, pret-ty

youth, un - veil, un - veil your eyes, un - veil, un - veil your

*mf*

*p*

**Notes** How many tone colours can you employ? – because here is your chance: beguiling, reproachful, sensuous and lots of echo effects, a feature of the period. Use plenty of coquettish confidence when singing this delightful song. We think the young lady knows she's got her man anyway.

**Source** *Orpheus Britannicus*, 'A song in the Tempest, sung by Miss Cross'. Original key A major.



eyes; How can you, can you sleep, how

*mf* *p*

10 can you, can you sleep, how can you, can you sleep when I, when I am by, when

*mf* *p*

15 I, when I am by? Were I with you all night to be, Me -

*mf*

- thinks I could, me-thinks I could, I could from sleep be free; me -

-thinks I could, me-thinks I could from sleep, I could from sleep be -

20 free. A-las, a-las, my dear, you're

25 cold, cold as stone: You must no long-er, no, no long-er, no, no long-er,

*p*

no, no long-er, long-er lie a-lone. But be with me my

*f* *dim.* *p*

30

dear, my dear, dear, dear, but be with me my dear, and I in each

arm, and I in each arm Will hug you, hug you close, will hug you, hug you

35

close, hug you close and keep you warm, will hug you, hug you

close, will hug you, hug you close, hug you close and keep you warm.

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