

# Choral & Song Reviews



Luminous lyricism:  
Dorothee Miels is  
splendid in Handel

## Handel's Tea Time

**Handel:** Venus & Adonis; 24 English Songs, HWV 228 - excerpts; *Mi palpita il cor*, HWV 132b; **Purcell:** The Fairy Queen - O Let Me Weep  
Dorothee Miels (soprano);  
Die Freitagsakademie Bern  
*Sony Classical 19439792732 76:04 mins*



Baroque ensemble Die Freitagsakademie and star soprano Dorothee Miels have performed

together since 2017, but this is their first recording. The wait has been worth it.

Miels is splendid. Her poise, luminous vocalism and animated dialogue with the band show why she's an Early Music legend. Her command of the recording's three languages allows her to relish words

as well as music, whether goofing around – as in 'Bacchus' HWV 228 – or lamenting. Her consistently intelligent musicianship is apparent above all when she improvises according to period and location. The profound reflection she brings to the sacred air 'Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden' is as impressive as the wild peregrinations with which she executes the cantata 'Mi palpita il cor'. The musicianship of the ensemble's six players is likewise intense, delicate and alert to rhetoric. Band director Katharina Suske brings to her oboe part a slow-burning lyricism, while the realisations by lutenist Jonathan Rubin make the humblest of progressions richly sonorous.

If I have a complaint, it is with the packaging. The programme is from *Mi palpita il cor*, an earlier Freitagsakademie concert with Miels, but you'd never know this from the sleeve notes. Why silently rebrand a selection of love-themed songs under such an ill-suited title? The music isn't all Handel, with Purcell's 'O let me weep' clocking in as the longest single track, nor is it all English. And scholars have shown that a number of pieces said here to be 'by Handel' are almost certainly not. We must close our eyes to the misleading branding, and listen: the performers' artistry speaks for itself.

*Berta Joncus*

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★★

**RECORDING**

★★★★