

If Music be the Food of Love

Z. 379, 1690

Music: Henry Purcell
Text: Henry Heveningham

If Mu_sic be the food of Love, sing on, sing on, sing on, sing on, till I am fill'd, am

6 fill'd with Joy: For then my list'ning Soul you move, for then my list'ning Soul you move to Pleas_ures that can

12 nev_er cloy. Your Eyes, your Mien, your Tongue declare that you are Mu_sic ev'_ry_where

The song "If music be the food of love" is thought by some to be a setting of a Shakespearean text, however the only direct quotation is the first line, which matches the opening seven words heard in "Twelfth Night".

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.