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## Recorded Sound Reviews

### *Touched*

Calmus Ensemble  
Carus 83.379 (2012;55:05)

Imagine a rendezvous where Freddie Mercury, Bill Withers, and Sting congregate with Montiverdi, Schütz, and Janequin. **Touched eliminates boundaries of time and place and offers such a convincing comingling of pop song and madrigal that one might marvel at the congruity of it all rather than question the compatibility.** “Ain’t No Sunshine When She’s Gone” is the natural predecessor of “Lasciatemi morire,” and Janequin’s playful birdcalls usher in not only spring’s arousal but also Mercury’s “Crazy Little Thing Called Love.”

**The laser-like tonal precision of the Calmus Ensemble** (a quintet of Leipzig musicians Anja Pöche, soprano; Sebastian Krause, countertenor; Tobias Pöche, tenor; Ludwig Böhme, baritone; and bass, Joe Roesler) and the thematic trajectory of love, longing, pain, and pleasure supply cohesion and stir our imagination. In case one would not yet be convinced of this alliance of songs, the union is secured by the novel and occasional Interlude – brief musical bridges between CD tracks that refashion Renaissance refrains with inventive, modern turns.

Whether the strains are deeply romantic, as in Elton John’s “Your Song” and Purcell’s “If Love’s A Sweet Passion,” or whimsical, as in Eric Idle’s Monty Python hit, “Always Look On the Bright Side of Life” and Schütz’s “Feritevi, ferite,” **the singing is exact and crystalline in its clarity.** Although there is no attempt to mask the studio mixing and mastering of sound on *Touched*, **the Calmus Ensemble shifts from smoldering passions to reverent simplicity; the journey through sound and time is quixotic and fantastic.**

*Natasia Sexton*