



Seattle Baroque Orchestra's unusual program is well-played

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Seattle Baroque Orchestra's programs are frequently of music we rarely hear and distinguished by the way they are assembled.

For its Friday night concert, it focused on Handel's vocal music, but included music by his older, not-widely-known contemporaries.

The exception was Purcell, who died before Handel reached London, but whose work he knew and whose influence on music for the English theatre was profound. The concert opened with his ravishing suite from "The Married Beau."

Bass Curtis Streetman sang arias from Handel's operas and oratorios, and one of his cantatas, plus "Arise Ye Subterranean Winds," a song once attributed to Purcell but now thought to be by one of his students. Singers of Baroque music must deal with florid ornamentation and long strings of incredibly fast notes that must be produced so each is separately and clearly articulated.

Basses who can do this are rare, and the young Streetman is on his way to carving out an important niche for himself.

His singing is as theatrical as Handel could want; his phrasing shapely, his breath control excellent; his pitch control extraordinarily accurate, even when his voice was tumbling at headlong speed from high to low and back through arpeggios and runs, in such arias as "Honor and Arms" from Handel's oratorio "Samson."

Streetman's vibrato is slight, his tone open, large and clear, without edge. He used his entire body to produce his big voice, and he gave his all to each piece.

Lively accompaniments from the orchestra gave way to lively performances of Bononcini's Sinfonia in F from "Il Trionfo di Camilla," and Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D, in which conductor/concert master Ingrid Mathews and guest violinist David Greenberg took prominent roles.