

## An expressive Baroque Orchestra.

by Paul Kosidowski | Tuesday 2/17/2009

There was some interesting body language at Early Music Now’s concert last Tuesday. Toronto’s **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra** stand while playing - all 19 of them (save the two cellists). Throughout the concert, there were expressive glances between players, and lots of dance-like flourishes. I’m not sure if that’s part of authentic Baroque performance style, but it makes for a dynamic and visually expressive concert.



Which describes the music as well. Lead by Jeanne Lamon, Tafelmusik has been around for almost 30 years, and its playing is seamless and spirited. In excerpts of Henry Purcell’s “The Fairy Queen,” the ensemble hit the dance rhythms hard, but let the “Aire’s” rapturous melodies soar. Lamon and Aislinn Nosky stepped forward for Bach’s familiar “Double Violin Concerto.” In the second movement, they stripped away some of the romantic affectation without leaving behind the piece’s heart, built on that melodic

staircase that seems to rise right into the heavens.

The horns came out for Handel’s “F Major Suite from Water Music,” and Tafelmusik showed why early music ensembles are essential. One could argue forever over which interpretation is “right.” But simply hearing it in different hands - played with more dexterity and less bombast, for example - is a great pleasure, whether it is simply for variety’s sake, or for the sake of clearer understanding.