

Harpsichords and Others

Friday 11 May

Les Histoires des Femmes dans la Musique Baroque

John Reid Coulter and Jetty de Vries, harpsichord duo

Christine Geldenhuis, recorders, and Alna Smit, soprano.

The Friday night concert showcased the precise and delicate tones of harpsichords played in perfect accord by John and Jetty. The important part that the recorder had in Baroque music was demonstrated by Christine, who brought out several different sized and toned recorders and played them with charm and expertise. We were also treated to the warm, smooth as cream soprano voice of Alna, and the beautiful conversation between voice and recorder as they told the story of Jupiter's eventual seduction of Europe effected by changing himself into a bull, was charming.

The first eight small pieces were taken from a late sixteenth century music notebook of a young woman, Susanne von Soldt who lived in Antwerp. They included psalms and secular songs and set the tone for a varied programme. Several compositions were by lesser known composers in this concert, but Handel came to the fore again at the beginning of the second half, with a spirited rendering of 'The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba'. From the title of the concert you can deduce that music for or about women played quite a part, but we also enjoyed the Trio Sonata no. 8 in B flat by Telemann, sounding so elegant played on the period instruments, and they wound up with a spirited 'Muséte de Taverni' by Couperin, in which the drone of a bagpipe is imitated by repeated low notes on the harpsichord.

The music still echoes in my heart.