



Old-style pleasure

CONCERT

New London Consort
Perth Concert Hall
Review: Neville Cohn

One of Britain's most accomplished baroque ensembles, the New London Consort, was an ideal interpreter of four of Vivaldi's engaging compositions at the ensemble's performance for PIAF on Wednesday.

Vivaldi's Concerto for two trumpets provided unalloyed listening pleasure with the two soloists playing fine copies of baroque instruments to give remarkable evidence of near-total mastery of these treacherous members of the brass family. The occasional split note and fleeting intonational lapses brought more than a touch of authenticity to the playing as silvery-toned arabesques caressed the ear.

But the Concerto for recorder

was less uniformly satisfying. Listening from the rear of the lower gallery, solo tone, especially in the recorder's middle and low registers, sounded so tonally self-effacing as to almost inaudible.

Recorder tone, or lack of it, bedevilled passages in the Concerto for recorder, oboe, bassoon and strings. Bouquets, however, to oboist Christophe Mazeaud for a first-rate contribution.

The Concerto for strings RV151, on the other hand, was pure delight, with players on two violins, viola, cello and harpsichord evoking images of dancing rustics in the finale.

The cantata Vengo a Voi was a fine medium for soprano Julia Gooding to demonstrate way-above-average skill. Blessed with an agile, supple vocal instrument, the soloist ensured that even the meanest succession of notes was made memorable by subtle tonal shadings.

Here, buoyancy of both mood and momentum produced one of the highlights of the evening, thoroughly deserving the storm of applause that broke out at its conclusion. Bravo!

How agreeable, for once, to hear Vivaldi's Gloria sung, not by some bloated choir but by eight choristers, each of whom warrants the highest praise for the fidelity of their presentation, not least the clarity of each vocal line. Here, freshness was brought to familiar notes by ensemble director Philip Pickett. He did wonders in coaxing a response that made for consistently compelling listening in Quoniam tu solus, its mood of jubilation and radiant corporate tone taking the listener to the epicentre of the composer's mood and sound world.

This performance was recorded by ABC Classic FM and will be broadcast on Monday from 8pm.



New London Consort director Philip Pickett.