

## Music Review: It's a dream come true

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*A "Vermeer trio" of Tafelmusik violinists (l-r), Aisslin Nosky, Cristina Zacharias, Genviève Gillardeau, play in front of Johannes Vermeer paintings.*

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra brought 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century music on period instruments to Toronto three decades ago, but rather than become a museum curator of old masterworks, the organization continues to find new ways of connecting audiences to its art.

Its latest creation, *House of Dreams*, currently on at the orchestra's home base at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, is much more than a concert. It is an experience that transcends its many components to create a special, all-encompassing experience that makes one forget time and place for two bliss-filled hours.

Like Tafelmusik's *Galileo Project* from a couple of seasons ago, this is a music-centered multimedia show that is as much great entertainment as insightful documentary.

A riveting performance on Thursday night testified to Tafelmusik's impressive and evolving contribution to this city's cultural life.

Conceived by double-bass player Alison Mackay and given finishing touches at the Banff Centre last week, *House of Dreams* succeeds on many levels.

First, this is a great concert that highlights popular pieces of music by Baroque-era greats, including George Frideric Handel, Henry Purcell, Antonio Vivaldi, J.S. Bach, Georg Philipp Telemann and Marin Marais. The orchestra performs everything from memory allowing those players not tied to the floor by their instruments to circulate around the stage. Thanks to violinist Jeanne Lamon's leadership and extra focus needed to play by heart, the music-making was suffused with particularly deep and vibrant colours.

Opera Atelier co-artistic director Marshall Pynkoski contributed choreography that never felt busy or distracting.

Mackay has grouped individual movement and dances into clusters of music that reflect the Old Master paintings found in five European locations related to the composers on the program.

The program notes ascribe Mackay's initial ideas to the writings of Ovid. His *Metamorphoses* provide the background for *House of Dreams*, serving as jumping-off points for a bigger story.

Production designer Glenn Davidson has created a huge, Baroque style picture frame to focus Raha Javanfar's projected images.

Actor Blair Williams is the narrator, also working without a script. He set the scene at each destination, putting the images and music into historical context using short, engaging historical references that also integrated seamlessly into a bigger picture.

*House of Dreams* is held aloft by music as well as visual and historical structure inspired by so many interrelationships that one could return for every one of the remaining performances to find new layers of insight and meaning.

It is a rare treat to experience such a smoothly and expertly integrated show. Don't miss it.