

# Watson does it all magnificently

**Edward Reichel**  
Deseret News Music Critic

**SOPRANO MARGO WATSON in recital, together with trumpeter Richard Tate. Saturday, Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. Assembly Hall. One performance only.**

There are few sopranos who can match Margo Watson's range of expression and vocal talents. This local singer is a remarkable performer. She has a clear, pristine voice that is also lyrical and quite supple. And with that voice she can do it all – from Baroque to George Gershwin – and she does it all magnificently.

Watson's recital Saturday showed off her considerable vocal skills. For this performance, she was teamed up with trumpeter Richard Tate and keyboardists Denise Farrington and Jeffrey Price, and in a couple of numbers, by a small, select string group.

Watson began with three selections from Alessandro Scarlatti's "7 Arie con Tromba Sola" – arias with obbligato trumpet. These pieces lie in the upper range of the soprano voice, and the voice and trumpet are actually two equal partners. Watson was impressive here. She sang her demanding parts (which included long coloratura passages) with an ease that belied the difficulty of the music.

A selection from J.S. Bach's humorous "Coffee Cantata" ("Schweiget still, plaudert nicht") followed next. Watson not only sang but also acted out the story of this aria, which tells of the plight of a father trying to get his daughter to quit drinking coffee.

Before the next section of the concert, Tate was joined by a second trumpet (Jeff Tate) and a string ensemble for a performance of Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Trumpets in C major. The two soloists were outstanding. They gave a very musical and exciting performance of this lively little piece.

Watson returned then, and for the second half of the concert devoted herself to American music. She opened with a song by Louis Moreau Gottschalk, "O Loving Heart, Trust On!" Gottschalk is admittedly not a household name, but he composed scores of melodic salon pieces such as this one during his brief lifetime.

The incomparably beautiful spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" was next. Watson was superb in her tender rendition of this plaintive song. Her interpretation brought out the suppleness of her voice, and she was given a soft,

mellow, subdued accompaniment by Tate and Farrington (on piano).

Before swinging into songs by Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein, Farrington and Price performed the two-piano arrangement of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." This was a drastically abridged version, but it got the gist of the piece across to the audience.

Watson was wonderful in a Gershwin medley that featured such well-known songs as "Fascinatin' Rhythm," "Our Love is Here to Stay," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "I Got Rhythm." Watson put her own spin on these timeless numbers and made them her own.

Listening to Watson perform songs like these, and also Bernstein's "Maria" and "Tonight" from "West Side Story" and Gershwin's "Summertime," which closed out the evening, it's difficult to decide whether Watson does popular classics better than the old classics. One thing is certain though, she's too versatile and talented a performer to be put into one or another category.

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DESERET NEWS, SUNDAY  
AUGUST 29, 1999

