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**ITALY'S CELEBRATED EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE, EUROPA GALANTE,
LED BY VIOLINIST AND CONDUCTOR FABIO BIONDI, PERFORMS
BAROQUE AND CLASSICAL MASTERWORKS FRIDAY, APRIL 4
AT BERKELEY'S FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

**SIGHTLINES: Pre-concert talk by musicologist John Prescott Friday, April 4
at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church**

BERKELEY, February 27, 2008—While many period-instrument and early music groups flourish today, few do so with both critical acclaim and public embrace as does **Europa Galante**, the Italian company led by violinist and conductor **Fabio Biondi**. Europa Galante brings its exciting and distinctive style to Cal Performances **Friday, April 4, at 8:00 p.m.** at **First Congregational Church** of Berkeley. The concert features both well-known and more obscure Baroque music including a violin concerto by **Jean-Marie Leclair**; **Henry Purcell's** incidental music for *Abdelazer*; a suite of pieces representing many nations collected by Biondi; and concludes with a complete performance of **Antonio Vivaldi's** timeless, much-loved *Four Seasons*. Europe Galante is highly regarded for its “spicy ensemble sound that mingle[s] crisp delivery and animation with the throatiness of period instruments” (*The New York Times*). Berkeley is the second site on the band's two-week United States tour that also stops in New York; Los Angeles; Washington, DC; and other cities.

PROGRAM

Europa Galante will begin its Berkeley concert with the Concerto for Violin Op. 7 No. 5 by the French composer, **Jean-Marie Leclair** (1697–1764); born in Lyon, Leclair is considered the founder of the French violin school. Incidental music for the stage play *Abdelazer*—or “The Moor's Revenge”—by the English composer **Henry Purcell** (1659–1695); composed in 1695, it was one of Purcell's last works. A set of pieces collected by **Fabio Biondi** under the banner *Suite 'Les Nations'* follows: *Alla Francese* by **Baldassare Galuppi** (1706–1785); *Les Jeunes Espagnol* by **Georg Muffat** (1653–1704); *Les Chinois* by **André Campra** (1660–1744); *Badinerie Italienne* by **Georg Philipp Telemann** (1681–1767); *Les Barbares* by **Heinrich**

Ignaz Franz von Biber (1664–1704); *Les Danoises* and *Les Angloises* by Telemann; and *Chaconne* by **André Destouches** (1672–1749). After an intermission, the concert will conclude with **Antonio Vivaldi**'s (1678–1741) best-known work, *The Four Seasons*, a suite of pieces for which Europa Galante is rightfully praised; the group's recording of *Four Seasons* has sold half a million copies.

FABIO BIONDI

Fabio Biondi was born in Palermo, Italy, in 1961 and performed his first solo with Italy's RAI Symphony Orchestra at the age of 12. At the age of 16, he was invited by the Musikverein of Vienna to play Bach's violin concertos. He has since performed with many ensembles, including Cappella Real, Musica Antiqua Wien, Seminario Musicale, La Chapelle Royale and Les Musiciens du Louvre, all of which play Baroque music using original technique and instruments.

He founded **Europa Galante** in 1990 and with the group has played countless concerts to audiences worldwide and recorded dozens of critically lauded, top-selling CDs. In addition to playing with and conducting Europa Galante, he has appeared as soloist or conductor with many orchestras, including Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Rotterdam Chamber Orchestra, the European Baroque Orchestra, the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Norway and the Orchestra Ciudad de Granada in Spain.

As a performer, Biondi is known for his meticulous musicianship coupled with a lack of pretentiousness. "Biondi's stage demeanor is fairly low key; the disparity between the torrents of notes flying off his instrument and his poker face was a refreshing change of pace to the emotional mugging of many violin soloists." (*San Diego Online*).

EUROPA GALANTE

Founded in 1990 by Fabio Biondi, **Europa Galante** became an internationally respected in the Baroque music world as a result of its impressive recordings and tireless worldwide concert schedule. Drawing raves such as "vibrant, crackling, and assured" (*The New York Times*), the ensemble has performed in many of the world's major concert halls, including La

Scala in Milan, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Musikverein in Vienna, Lincoln Center in New York, and the Sydney Opera House in Australia. Its repertoire ranges from the operas of Handel and Vivaldi and the oratorios of Scarlatti through the great instrumental works of the 18th century. Biondi and the group have also helped to recover and restore several 18th-century Italian operas, including Antonio Caldara's *La Passione di Gesù Cristo* and Leonardo Leo's *Sant'Elena al Calvario*, and presented several world premieres. Because the ensemble can grow or shrink as the music demands, Europa Galante also has been known to perform chamber music such as string sonatas and string quintets.

Europa Galante's discography includes more than 40 recordings, ranging from Handel operas to Schubert sonatas to Bach cantatas and concertos, with many recordings of the works of Vivaldi. Since 1990, the ensemble has been an exclusive Virgin Classics recording artist. Even in recordings, Europa Galante's musical vitality shine through: "What accounts for the verve? A sense of spontaneity, enviable technical facility and stylistic polish, to be sure, but also Europa Galante's unfailing musicality, that salient but hard-to-define quality responsible for transforming the adept into the memorable" (*The New York Times*).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Europa Galante** led by **Fabio Biondi** on **Friday, April 4 at 8:00 p.m.** in **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** are priced at **\$48.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and

seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, April 4 at 7:00 p.m.

Sightlines

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

Dana Street at Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Europa Galante concert pre-performance talk will be given by musicologist **John Prescott**. Sightlines is a continuing program of pre-and post-performance discussions with artists and scholars, designed to enrich the concertgoer's experience. These events are free to ticketholders.

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Friday, April 4 at 8:00 p.m.

Europa Galante

Fabio Biondi, conductor and violin

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

Dana Street at Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Program:

Leclair/Concerto for violin Op.7 No.5 in D major

Purcell/*Abdelazer*

Suite 'Les Nations' assembled by Fabio Biondi

Galuppi/*Alla Francese*

Muffat/*Les Jeunes Espagnol*

Campra/*Les Chinois*

Telemann/*Badinerie Italienne*

von Biber/*Les Barbares*

Telemann/*Les Danoises; Les Angloises*

Destouches/*Chaconne*

Vivaldi/*The Four Seasons*

Tickets: \$48.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

– Cal Performances –