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**EUROPA GALANTE RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES
WITH DIRECTOR AND VIOLINIST FABIO BIONDI
SATURDAY, JANUARY 23 AT 8:00 P.M.
AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

***Sightlines:* Pre-concert talk by UC Berkeley Professor Kate van Orden, January 23 at 7:00 p.m.**

BERKELEY, December 18, 2009—Acclaimed for its “spicy ensemble sound that mingle[s] crisp delivery and animation with the throatiness of period instruments” (*The New York Times*), **Europa Galante** returns to Berkeley’s **First Congregational Church** on **Saturday, January 23 at 8:00 p.m.** Led by founder and violinist **Fabio Biondi**, the ever-ambitious Baroque ensemble is one of the most celebrated of its kind, balancing an extensive international touring schedule with award-winning recordings, including two releases in 2009. “Europa Galante are acknowledged as the world’s best” (*Gramophone* magazine). Last at Cal Performances in 2008, this season’s program consists of concerti and sinfonias by Baroque masters **Georg Philipp Telemann, Giovanni Battista Sammartini, Pietro Nardini, Arcangelo Corelli** and **Pietro Locatelli**.

Sightlines pre-performance talk will be given by UC Berkeley Department of Music professor **Kate van Orden** on Saturday, January 23, from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church. This event is free to ticket holders.

PROGRAM

Europa Galante begins the evening with two works by Georg Philipp Telemann: Overture à quatre in F major and Concerto for Flute, Violin, Cello and Strings in A major, TWV 53. Thought by some to be the most prolific composer of all time, Telemann’s music was highly regarded in his time but eventually fell out of the performing circuit after his death, only regaining recognition and popularity in the 20th century and now frequently performed by early music ensembles. The ensemble continues with Giovanni Battista Sammartini’s Sinfonia JC57

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in G minor, which they performed in the critically acclaimed 2007 recording *Improvvisata*. Sammartini's symphony is followed by concerti from three Baroque composers with a common medium: the violin. Concerto for Violin, Op. 1 by Pietro Nardini, a violinist who studied under Tartini's tutelage; and Arcangelo Corelli's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 11, part of a 12-concerti set recorded by Europa Galante in 2003 that provides some of the finest examples of the Baroque-style *Concerti grossi*. Corelli's subsequent influence on violin playing and composition is reflected with Europa Galante's concluding piece, Pietro Locatelli's Concerto Grosso, Op. 1, No. 5; one of the composer's earliest compositions, the work shows the influence of Corelli, Locatelli's mentor and was recorded by Europa Galante in 1995's *Locatelli: Concerti Grossi*.

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 age 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

“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*). Since its beginning almost 20 years ago, Europa Galante became an internationally respected in the Baroque music world as a result of its impressive recordings and tireless worldwide concert schedule. 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, including Grammy Award-nominated recordings for *Concerti con molti strumenti* (2004) and the opera *Bajazet* (2006). Europa Galante released two recordings in 2009: *Boccherini: Trio, Quartet, Quintet & Sextet for Strings* in March and *Pyrotechnics: Vivaldi Opera Arias*, with American soprano Vivica Genaux, in December. Since 1990, the ensemble has been an exclusive Virgin Classics recording artist.

Europa Galante is resident orchestra of Fondazione Teatro Due in Parma, Italy.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Europa Galante** with **Fabio Biondi**, director & violin, on **Saturday, January 23, 2010**, at **8:00 p.m.** in **First Congregational Church** are priced at **\$52.00**. 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 three 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 for UCB students; \$15 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

Saturday, January 23 at 7:00 p.m.

SIGHTLINES

First Congregational Church

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Pre-performance talk by Professor Kate van Orden, UC Berkeley Department of Music. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This event is free to ticket holders.

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Saturday, January 23 at 8:00 p.m.

Music Before 1850
Europa Galante

First Congregational Church

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Fabio Biondi, director & violin

Program: Telemann/Ouverture à quatre (Schwering manuscript); Concerto per flauto, violino cello ed archi TWV53; Sammartini/Sinfonia JC57; Nardini/Concerto per violino Op.1 n.1; Corelli/Concerto Grosso Op.6 n.11; Locatelli/Concerto Grosso Op.1 n.5

Tickets: \$52.00, 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.

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