

Saturday, January 23, 2010, 8pm
First Congregational Church

Europa Galante

Fabio Biondi, *director & violin*

PROGRAM

- Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) Overture à quatre in F major
(Schwerin manuscript)
- Overture
Passetemps
Sarabande
Rigaudon I–II
Rondeau
Polonaise
Chasse
- Telemann Concerto for Flute, Violin, Cello and Strings in
A major (TWV53:A2)
- Largo
Allegro
Gratioso
Allegro

INTERMISSION

- Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1701–1775) Symphony for Strings in G major (JC 39)

Allegro
Tempo di minuetto
Grave
Presto

- Pietro Nardini (1722–1793) Concerto for Violin in A major, Op. 1, No. 1

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

- Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713) Concerto Grosso in B-flat major, Op. 6, No. 11

Preludio
Andante largo
Allemanda allegro
Andante largo
Sarabanda largo
Giga vivace

- Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764) Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 1, No. 5

Largo
Allegro
Largo
Allegro

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Sightlines

Saturday, January 23, 2010, 7pm
First Congregational Church

Pre-performance talk by Professor Kate van Orden, UC Berkeley Department of Music. This talk is free to all event ticket holders.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)
Ouverture à quatre in F major

One of the world wonders of musical fertility was Georg Philipp Telemann. His skill and speed of composition were widely known in his own time. Like Schubert and other extremely prolific composers, Telemann eventually had difficulty recalling all that he had written. However, in contradistinction to Schubert, Telemann was ranked as a master by his contemporaries but judged by posterity to be shallow and too facile. Not that these features were unusual in the 18th century. In fact, for certain types of music too much depth would have been a distinct handicap.

The general lightness of Telemann's music is due in part to his attraction to French *rococo* style. This comes out particularly in his *Ouverturen*, or French overtures. The models for these go back to the court of Louis XIV and its brilliant composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully. In line with French taste, Lully's operas were full of instrumental dances, and, outside of operatic performances, this music took life in the form of suites of dance movements. Usually, the opening movement is a French *ouverture*, formed in two large, repeated sections: the first majestic with marked rhythms; the second lively and fugal, but often ending with a return to the majestic spirit of the opening section. After the *ouverture*, a loosely organized suite of dances in the same key would follow. An entire suite of this type took the generic title of *Ouverture*.

Telemann composed more than 130 *ouvertures*, popularizing the form in Germany. Several of these exist in multiple versions, because local aggregations of musicians often required changing the instrumentation. The present version of the *Ouverture* in F major was found in the archives of the court at Schwerin, Germany.

Telemann
**Concerto in A major for Flute, Violin,
 Cello and Strings (TWV 53:A2)**

"I must admit that since the concerto form was never close to my heart, it was immaterial to me whether I wrote a great many or not." Telemann's

words written in 1718 may seem strange to us, considering the 170 concertos with which he let "currents of fresh air" into German instrumental music. At once, we recognize Telemann's light, *galant* style of phrasing—short-breathed compared to J. S. Bach. There is also the adventurousness in tone color. While Vivaldi wrote a great many concertos for different instruments, Telemann experimented with combining dissimilar instruments (such as horn and violin) in the same work. Perhaps Telemann's rejection of the "learned" style of composition and his indifference to the concerto form gave him just the right amount of freedom needed to write fresh, entertaining concertos.

This triple concerto was originally included in the first series (1733) of what Telemann titled *Tafelmusik* ("table music"), pleasant background music for fancy dining or banquets. Its quality, however, is far above ordinary 18th-century Muzak. The first movement, for example, gives us charming and engaging solos from all three solo instruments and the flute-violin combination. The rugged, energetic second movement shows off the soloists' virtuosic side with idiomatic solos alternating with full-orchestra statements of the main theme. A pastoral flavor pervades the third movement, marked *Gratoso*. We hear more from the cello here than previously, although the flute still predominates, as before. The final *Allegro* combines the charm of the opening movement with the strong rhythms of the second, yet the music is all new. Here, a rivalry between flute and solo violin is engaged, creating some courtly fireworks at times. The concluding thematic statement gives us a final reminder of the vast imagination pervading all of Telemann's music.

Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1701–1775)
Sinfonia in G major (JC 39)

The form we call the symphony had its origins in Italian opera. Around 1700, these operas typically opened with an orchestral movement called a *sinfonia*. It consisted of three short contrasting sections: fast–slow–fast. A *sinfonia* could easily be detached from its opera and performed or published independently. Gradually, the three

sections became larger independent movements, but still part of a cycle called a *sinfonia*. Around 1730, some Italian composers, notably Giovanni Battista Sammartini, began to compose independent works following the *sinfonia* model. The orchestra remained a small opera-theater-size group of strings with harpsichord.

The G major *Sinfonia's* very energetic first movement is based on only a few contrasting ideas. The first, announced at the beginning, is a rumbling, cascading bass line topped by sharp, stabbing chords in the violins. Immediately, another idea follows, actually a string of short melodic ideas linked together. Sammartini subsequently develops and restates all of this.

The *Grave* movement that follows is scarcely a movement at all. Rather, it resembles an operatic recitative designed as a bridge between two more significant movements.

It was usual with the early *sinfonia* that the finale is either a quick, dancelike movement or a minuet. The unusual thing about the G major *Sinfonia* is that both of these types are used (an early anticipation of the four-movement symphony). The third movement is a quick gigue-style essay with a variety of ideas in the upper strings—some of them sounding like an animated, exciting dialogue with the lower strings. The final *Minuetto* (which might alternately be performed before the *Grave*) is polite and courtly. It is to be repeated, adding plenty of flourishes and ornaments in its melodies, to bring this *sinfonia* to a decorative close.

Pietro Nardini (1722–1793)
Violin Concerto in A major, Op. 1, No. 1

At a time when virtuoso players were beginning to wow their listeners with thrilling acrobatics and tricks, Pietro Nardini was a voice of moderation and genuineness. Born in Livorno, Nardini showed such prodigious talent that he was accepted as a student of the Giuseppe ("Devil's Trill") Tartini at age 12. He quickly became Tartini's prize pupil. Nardini travelled extensively, sometimes taking a position with a princely orchestra, but also giving private and public concerts. Finally, he returned to his own country, where he was appointed to the

Tuscan Grand Ducal chapel in Florence as solo violinist in 1768, but soon became music director. Nardini concertized until the 1790s, often at royal or princely residences.

His playing as well as his compositions exhibited passion and sensitivity rather than empty display. The hypercritical violinist Leopold Mozart (father of Wolfgang Amadeus) even grudgingly gave him backhanded compliments with the words:

The beauty, purity and equality of his tone, and the tastefulness of his cantabile playing, cannot be surpassed; but he does not execute great difficulties. His compositions are marked by vivacity, grace, and sweet sentimentality, but he has neither the depth of feeling, the grand pathos, nor the concentrated energy of his master Tartini.

Nardini composed both orchestral and chamber works. For the violin, he published 25 sonatas and about 10 concertos. The earliest concertos were composed around 1760, and six were published in 1764 as Op. 1. Biographer Maria Teresa Dellaborra tells us that Nardini's listeners tended to disagree with Leopold Mozart:

According to Schubart, he managed to move even the most insensitive listeners by the deep emotions expressed so effortlessly and naturally. His compositions, accordingly, combine two traits typical of the Italian style in the 18th century: cantabile and passionate writing in slow movements and fluency in fast ones.

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)
**Concerto Grosso in B-flat major,
 Op. 6, No. 11**

The harmony is so pure, so rich, and so grateful; the parts are so whole, from a large band, so majestic, solemn, and sublime, that they preclude all criticism, and make us forget that there is any other Music of the same kind existing.—Charles Burney, 1776

These words, written about Arcangelo Corelli's *concerti grossi* some 64 years after their publication, attest to the high regard that musicians around

Corelli's time held the composer and this group of works. The 12 concertos must have been special to the composer as well. There is evidence that they were performed in the 1690s, yet Corelli continued polishing them, not allowing them to be published during his lifetime.

Several of Corelli's concertos, like some of his sonatas, functioned to enhance the Mass with instrumental music. In a Corelli *concerto grosso*, a group of solo strings plays a good deal of the time by themselves, and the larger *tutti* string group joins in during repeated material, helping the music to drive toward important cadence points.

The first seven *concerti grossi* in Corelli's set of 12 follow a movement plan related to the Baroque *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata). The remaining concertos (Nos. 8–12) are modeled on the *sonata da camera*, that is, movements heavily influenced by French dance suites.

In the event, they are a blend of French and Italian practice, heavy on the Italian. For example, the opening of No. 11, "Preludio: Andante Largo," is, for the most part, a softly sustained texture supported by a "walking" bass (one of Corelli's hallmarks). Similarly, the quick "Allemanda" is a busy *Allegro* and not a dance at all.

The two middle movements are not labeled as dances. The *Adagio* is slightly operatic in style, with a solo violin taking the part of a solo character. *Andante largo* recalls the tempo, character and texture of the "Preludio," the novelty here being an echo effect near the ending.

Marked "Sarabanda: Largo," the next movement is a lilting movement resembling a courtly minuet. The concluding "Giga: Vivace" is truly a *gigue*, demonstrating how international this dance was, especially in concluding a cycle of movements. We hear occasional snippets of solo violin, reminding us that this is, after all, not really a dance suite but a concerto.

Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764)
Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 1, No. 5

As a composer, Pietro Locatelli has been called the "Paganini of the 18th century." That reputation rests on only a few works, including a set of 24 caprices for unaccompanied violin (forerunners to Paganini's). However, Locatelli was an important *rococo* composer during the transition between the Baroque and Classical periods, and many of his works look forward to the newer style.

Born in Bergamo, Locatelli spent most of his career in Rome, following in the footsteps of Corelli. His music also emulates Corelli in several ways. Chief among these was his publication of 12 *Concerti Grossi*, Op. 1, in 1721, just seven years after the publication of Corelli's 12 *Concerti Grossi*, Op. 6. Also like Corelli, some of Locatelli's concertos follow the dance suite *da camera* (chamber) plan, while other are cast in the more severe *da chiesa* (church) mold. However, Locatelli's *concerti grossi* go a little further by using a full string quartet to fill out the small string group, the *concertino*.

The movement plan of the D major Concerto is the *da chiesa* type: slow–fast–slow–fast. In the opening *Largo*, we hear the composer's mastery of counterpoint, as the violin sections and the bass instruments alternately compete and collaborate. Not until near the ending do the soloists come to the fore. In the spritely *Allegro* fugue that follows, soloists lead off and then alternate with the full orchestra in blocks of music reminiscent of Corelli's style. Locatelli's lyrical gift emerges in the *Largo*, and at the same time he displays a natural leaning to idiomatic writing for the violins. A natural string idiom continues in the *Allegro* finale, as we frequently hear in the dominating musical figures a rapid alternation of strings. Finally, the composer shows off the violin soloists—one first and then both—brilliantly bringing the concerto to a close.

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EUROPA GALANTE



Fabio Biondi, *soloist & conductor*

Violin I

Fabio Ravasi
 Carla Marotta

Violin II

Andrea Rognoni
 Alessandra Bottai
 Elin Gabriëlsson

Viola

Stefano Marcocchi

Cello

Maurizio Naddeo

Double Bass

Patxi Montero

Theorbo

Giangiaco Pinardi

Harpichord

Paola Poncet

Flute

Frank Theuns

Europa Galante was formed by Fabio Biondi to draw the international public's attention to a new and definitive Italian presence in the interpretation of music from the baroque and classical eras on original instruments. Mr. Biondi gathered around him some of the best Italian musicians with whom he had already worked, and soon Europa Galante met with huge success.

Their first record, Vivaldi's concertos, was awarded the *Premio Cini* of Venice and the Choc du Monde de la Musique, and it was soon followed in the subsequent years by a number of further awards, including five Golden Diapasons; Golden Diapason of the Year in France; the RTL Prize; "Record of the Year" nominations in Spain, Canada, Sweden, France and Finland; the Prix du Disque (Locatelli's *concerti grossi*); and *ffff* of *Telerama* (Alessandro Scarlatti's oratorio *Humanità e Lucifero*). The ensemble has been nominated twice for Grammy Awards: in 2004, for its disc of Vivaldi's *Concerti con molti strumenti*, and, in 2006, for its recording of Vivaldi's *Bajazet*. Upcoming recording projects include Vivaldi arias with Vivica Genaux and a Vivaldi compilation, *La Stravaganza*. After the critically acclaimed *Bajazet*, their next opera project will be Vivaldi's *Ercole sul Termodonte*, with a very well known cast: Ms. Genaux, Joyce di Donato, Diana Damrau, Topi Lehtipuu and Romina Basso. Since 1998, Europa Galante has recorded exclusively for Virgin Classics.

Europa Galante has performed in many of the world's major concert halls and theatres: La Scala Theatre 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. The ensemble has toured in Australia, Japan, Canada, Israel, the United States and South America, and often collaborates with the Ente Santa Cecilia in Rome to recover and restore such 18th-century Italian operas as Antonio Caldara's *La Passione di Gesù Cristo* and Leonardo Leo's *Sant'Elena al Calvario*. The ensemble regularly performs at the Alessandro Scarlatti Festival in Palermo and has given the world premieres of *Clori, Dorino e Amore serenata*, *Massimo Puppieno*, *Il Trionfo dell'Onore* and *La Principessa Fedele*.

Europa Galante's repertoire ranges from the operas of Handel (*Poro*) and Vivaldi (*Bajazet*) and the oratorios of Alessandro Scarlatti (*Maddalena, Humanità e Lucifero, Caino*), through to the great instrumental works of the 18th century. The ensemble has a varying structure and often performs chamber music, e.g. the string sonatas of such 17th-century Italian composers as Castello, Legrenzi and Farina.

This season, Europa Galante performs extensively in Europe, including in France (Théâtre de la Ville, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées), Italy (Rome), Spain, Poland (Kraków Festival) and the Netherlands (Amsterdam). In 2010, Europa Galante will perform in many important halls presenting "the three tenors," a program of arias with the tenor Ian Bostridge.



Born in Palermo, **Fabio Biondi** (*violin, conductor*) began his international career at age 12, performing his first solo concert with the RAI Symphony Orchestra. Moved early on by an inexhaustible cultural curiosity, Mr. Biondi was introduced to pioneers of the new approach to Baroque music, an opportunity that was to expand his musical vision and change the direction of his career.

When he was 16, he was invited by the Musikverein of Vienna to perform Bach's violin concertos. Since then, Mr. Biondi has performed with such ensembles as Cappella Real, Musica Antiqua Wien, Seminario Musicale, La Chapelle

Royale and Les Musiciens du Louvre (since its founding), all specializing in the performance of Baroque music using original techniques and instruments.

In 1990, Mr. Biondi founded Europa Galante, an ensemble that, in just a few years thanks to their worldwide concert schedule and extraordinary recording successes, became the most internationally renowned and awarded Italian ensemble of baroque music. Mr. Biondi's musical development, oriented towards both the universal repertoire plus the rediscovering of minor composers, includes three centuries of music. This is demonstrated by his varied discography: Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*; Corelli's *concerti grossi*; the oratorios, serenatas and operas of Alessandro Scarlatti (*La Messa di Natale, Clori, Dorino e Amore, Massimo Puppieno* and *Il trionfo dell'onore*); the operas of Handel (*Poro*); 18th-century Italian violin repertoire (Veracini, Vivaldi, Locatelli, Tartini); and sonatas by Bach, Schubert and Schumann.

Today, Mr. Biondi embodies the perpetual pursuit of style, free from dogmatism and intent in his quest for the original language. It is due to this very approach that he can collaborate as soloist and conductor with many varied orchestras, including Santa Cecilia in Rome, Rotterdam Chamber Orchestra, the European Baroque Orchestra, the Opera of Hallé, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Norway, the Orchestre Nationale of Montpellier and the Orchestra Ciudad de Granada, to name but a few.

Fabio Biondi also performs in duo with piano, harpsichord or fortepiano in prestigious venues around the world, including Cité de la Musique in Paris, Hagi Hall in Tokyo, Auditorium Nacional in Madrid and Wigmore Hall in London.

Europa Galante with Fabio Biondi records for Virgin Classics and may also be heard on Opus 111/Naïve. They appear by arrangement with New World Classics, Kerby Lovallo, Director. Learn more about the artists at www.newworldclassics.com/galante.htm and www.eurogalante.com.