Europa Galante
Fabio Biondi, violin & conductor

PROGRAM

New Faces & Old

Antonio Briocchi (fl. c. 1725–c. 1750) Sinfonia in D major (bef. 1734)
Allegro
Andante piano
Presto

Joseph Haydn Double Concerto for Violin and Harpsichord in F major (Hob. 18:6) (1766)
Allegro moderato
Largo
Presto

Soloists: Fabio Biondi, Paola Poncet

Angelo Maria Scaccia (c. 1690–1761) Violin Concerto in E-flat major
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

Soloist: Fabio Biondi

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) Concerto for Three Violins in G major, Op. 3, No. 3 (RV 310)
Allegro
Largo
Allegro

Soloists: Fabio Biondi, Fabi Ravasi, Andrea Rognoni

INTERMISSION

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Concerto for Two Violins in D minor (BWV 1043)
Vivace
Largo ma non tanto
Allegro

Soloists: Fabio Biondi, Andrea Rognoni

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) Suite from Rodrigo (1704)
Ouverture
Gigue
Sarabande
Menuet
Bourree
Menuet
Passacaille

Program is subject to change.

EUROPA GALANTE
Fabio Biondi, violin & conductor

VIOLIN 1
Fabi Ravasi
Isabella Bison
Elin Gabrielsson

VIOLONE
Andrea Rognoni
Luca Giardini
Barbara Altobello

VIOLINA
Stefano Marcocchi
Gianni de Rosa

CELLO
Marco Frezzato
Antonio Fantinuoli

VIOLONCE
Patxi Montero

THEORBO
Giangiacomo Pinardi

HARPSICHORD
Paola Poncet

Cal Performances’ 2011–2012 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.
Antonio Broschi was a composer of early symphonies beginning in the 1740s. Along with G. B. Sammartini, he helped to established Milan as a great center of instrumental music. A total of 51 symphonies by Broschi have been found. They circulated widely in the mid-18th century, becoming popular in many capitals, including Paris, Prague and Stockholm.

The Sinfonia in D major for string orchestra with continuo was completed not later than 1734. Brioschi scholar Sarah Mandel-Yehuda writes: “...it is not exactly...”

Program notes

Antonio Brioschi (fl. c. 1725–c.1750)
Sinfonia in D major

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
Double Concerto for Violin and Harpsichord in F major (Hob. 18:6)

An excerpt from Joseph Haydn's Double Concerto for Violin and Harpsichord in F major (Hob. 18:6)

“...The music gains special vitality from the varied rhythmic vocabulary, featuring many syncopations, dance patterns, play between symmetrical and asymmetrical phrases, and from the large leaps in the melodic lines of the violin parts.

The concise first movement is in two repeated sections, showing close interplay between first and second violins throughout. The first section exposes two main ideas. The second begins with a contrasting passage featuring baroque ‘walking’ rhythms, then concluding with a modified reprise of ideas from the first section.

The Andante piano is not exactly tuneful, but its melodies are pleasant. It is in a binary form similar to the first movement. The relationship between first and second violins is interesting, sometimes very close, utilizing the same rhythm and melody. At other times, the two parts play against each other in contrast.

The finale is mostly a showcase for the first violin. The music is rhythmically incisive with several short ideas spun out in succession. The form is in two parts like the first movement. However, the second part begins more like a real development of ideas before reprising the main ideas and ending conclusively.

Joseph Haydn lived so long and composed so much music that he became uncertain about the occasion or reason for composing many of his works. One work about which his memory was fuzzy was the Violin-Harpsichord Concerto, an early work from before 1766 (the start of the Esterhazy period). Haydn thought he may have composed it for the 1756 ceremony in which his future sister-in-law became a nun. For certain, the concerto was written for a special occasion, since it is comparatively lengthy. Also, some technical aspects suggest an early date. In any case, the work appeared in the Breitkopf catalog in 1766, and it was Haydn’s only concerto for two instruments.

In the double exposition of the first movement, we do not hear the soloists until the second time. Here, we perceive a quality that shines throughout the work: a classical balance between soloists in both solo passages and those where the instruments are combined. This plays out especially beautifully in the double cadenza near the movement’s ending.

The steady beat in the bass accompaniment to the Largo seems like a remnant from the baroque “walking” bass sound. The music Haydn’s writes above this, however, is much more classical: the restrained orchestral theme and intertwined solo lines that focus on beauty and expression. Again, Haydn offers a double cadenza, and although lovely, it does not grow organically from the main ideas of this otherwise perfectly crafted movement.

The Presto finale’s main points of interest are the frequent syncopations and other constructions that skip over the downbeats of some measures. The soloists’ parts are especially tuneful in this movement, which, even in an early period, exemplifies the typical jollity of a Haydn finale.

Angelo Maria Scaccia was a violinist in Milan beginning as early as 1711. Active in opera orchestras, Scaccia also played in the yearly Concerti di Quaresima, a series of concerts held during Lent, when theaters were closed. Under the direction of pioneer symphonist G. B. Sammartini, an orchestra of 60 players performed in these outdoor events, which gave Milan widespread fame for its instrumental music. Beginning in 1720, Scaccia was a member of an elite theater orchestra of “virtuosi,” and in 1751 he was awarded an honorary degree of “patente di violinista.”

Scaccia’s pre-classical concertos employed some elements left over from the baroque period. The shadow of Vivaldi hung heavily over his music, and his use of ritornello form in the fast movements was backward-looking.

In the E-flat major Concerto, the first movement main theme is made up of chains of short ideas, usually repeated immediately. The soloists’ music features idiomatic violin figures for showing off technique. Sometimes these are like little comments on an idea from the main theme.

The second movement offers a bare pair of orchestral phrases at the beginning. After that, the orchestra supports the solo violin, which functions somewhat like an operatic soloist, concluding with an opportunity for an ad libitum cadenza before the orchestra join in for an undulating ending.

An Allegro finale offers a rhythmically varied opening theme, which the soloist develops at first. Orchestral segments are relatively long and varied, and not always related to the opening theme. The soloist comments on these ideas but also presents Vivaldi-like figure, culminating in a held chord, an optional cadenza, and a sweeping scale that leads to a series of exchanges between orchestra and soloist and a conclusive re-iteration of the concerto’s home key.

Antonio Vivaldi was a violinist and composer. He was born in Venice in 1678 and died in Vienna in 1741. He is known for his prolific output of music, including over 400 concertos, 930 sonatas, and 214 concerti grossi.

The Concerto in E-flat major for violin and harpsichord (Hob. 18:5) was composed in 1711, when Haydn was 18 years old. The concerto is a reflection of the Baroque era, with its use of complex harmonies and counterpoint.

The concerto begins with a short prelude, which sets the stage for the main theme. The main theme is played by the violin, with the harpsichord providing a counterpoint. The second theme is a variation of the first, with the harpsichord providing a more intricate counterpoint.

The concerto’s final movement is a fast-paced Presto, with the violin and harpsichord playing together. The movement concludes with a final cadenza, which is a display of technical skill and virtuosity.

In summary, this concerto is a beautiful example of the Baroque style, with its use of complex harmonies, counterpoint, and technical skill. It is a testament to the creativity and skill of its composers.
the orchestral strings, and the soloists come together as a group more often. In rounding out this concerto, Vivaldi places the soloists in a high register near the end, producing a shimmering effect.

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**

**Concerto for Two Violins in D minor**

(BWV 1043)

Most of Bach’s orchestral works in concerto form originated in his period at Cöthen (1717–1723) or earlier. During the Cöthen period, he wrote little or no church music, concentrating instead on keyboard, chamber, and orchestral music for the court. Only a few concertos have come down to us, although Bach experts speculate that there must have been many more now lost.

Bach wrote three concertos featuring violin soloists. Two of them (in A minor and E major) are for solo violin, and one in D minor (BWV 1043) is for two violins. Vivaldi was the deepest influence on Bach wherever Italian forms (such as the concerto) were concerned, and the two-violin work bears some external similarities to Vivaldi. However, the spirit and compositional technique of the work is pure Bach.

The first movement’s main theme and several solo passages are constructed as miniature fugues, exposing a high degree of learnedness and depth. The second movement—one of the most exquisitely wrought cantilenas in all of Bach’s music—is actually a pastoral similar to those scattered throughout his cantatas. The vigorous final movement contains passages where the two violins play repeated chords to accompany the orchestra in the manner of an organ. In this movement, as in the first, Bach employs the violins not as individual solo instruments but as a featured unit pitted against the main orchestra. Thus, the Concerto in D minor closely resembles the solo concerto’s ancestor, the concerto grosso.

**George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)**

**Suite from Rodrigo**

From the time in the 17th century, when commercial public opera houses were opened, a composer’s best bet for financial success and fame was to compose for these institutions. By the time that George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) came to maturity, that trend was still in place, but in Germany the opportunities were very limited. Hamburg was the only city with a commercial opera company. Handel came to Hamburg in 1703 and started as a second violinist in the opera orchestra, later playing the harpsichord. In 1705, his first opera, Almira, was given in Hamburg. Nero followed in the same year.

To perfect his technique and explore new opportunities for opera productions, he travelled to Italy the following year, settling in Rome. Using that as a base, he composed both sacred music and opera, including Rodrigo, first performed in Florence in 1707. Almost immediately (and mysteriously), the instrumental music from the opera became known in England, where most of it was used in a play by Ben Jonson. With the addition of the final Passacaille, that music has been rounded out as the present Suite.

Predictably, the movements of the Rodrigo Suite are French types. The Ouverture is among Handel’s most daring and incisive pieces of this type. Most of the movements that follow are familiar in style: a jolly Gigue, a touchingly graceful Sarabande, two Menuets, a quick and busy Bourée, and a proud instrumental Air. The Matelot is less familiar, but it is merely a French sailor’s dance. The concluding Passacaille is noteworthy for its virtuosic violin part, which dialogues with the strings and other instruments, seemingly inviting them to play more challenging, applause-getting music.

**Europa Galante**

has performed in many of the world’s major concert halls and theatres including La Scala in Milan, Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Suntyard Hall in Tokyo, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Royal Albert Hall in London, Musikverein in Vienna, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York and the Sydney Opera House. The ensemble has toured throughout Australia, Japan, Canada, Israel, the United States and South America. Europa Galante’s repertoire includes the works of Handel (Agrippina), Vivaldi (Bajazet) and instrumental works through the 18th century.

They have shown a great interest in the works of Alessandro Scarlatti, such as the oratorios (Maddalena, La Santissima Trinità), Seneratias (Clori, Dorino e Amore) and operas such as Massimo Poppiano, Il Triunfo dell’Onore, La Principesa Fedele and Carlo Re d’Allemagna.

Europa Galante often collaborates with the Fondazione Santa Cecilia in Rome to rediscover and restore such 18th-century Italian operas as Antonio Caldara’s La Passione di Gesù Cristo, Leo’s Sant’Elena al Calvario or Di Mayo’s Gesu sotto il peso Della Croce. The ensemble has a varying structure and often performs chamber music such as the string sonatas of Italian composers of the 17th century.

In 1988, after years of collaboration with the French record company Opus 111, Europa Galante signed a contract with Virgin Classics to record Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons and two volumes of Luigi Boccherini’s string quintets, as well as arias from cantatas by J. S. Bach with Ian Bostridge.

The ensemble has been nominated three times for Grammy Awards—most recently for their collaboration with mezzo-soprano Vivica Genaux in album of Vivaldi arias, Pyrotechnics, which won the Echo Classics award. Europa Galante was nominated for Grammys in 2004 for the CD of Vivaldi’s Concerti con molti strumenti and in 2006 for their recording of Vivaldi’s Bajazet. Their next recording projects include a Vivaldi compilation La Stravaganza and Vivaldi’s Eroce sul Termodonte, with a cast of Genaux, di Donato, Damrau, Lehtipuu and Basso.

This past season, Europa Galante had a long tour in Sweden and performing in Europe extensively (Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Poland) with repertoire including Bach’s Orchestral Suites. Their season also included many concerts of the “Three Tenors” program with Ian Bostridge at Grand Théâtre d’Amiens, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Béa Bartók National Concert Hall in Budapest, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Grand Auditorium of Luxembourg, the Bruges Concertgebouw and the Barbican Centre in London. Opera programs included Ariosti’s La Fede nei Tradimenti, which toured to festivals in Vienna, Siena and Montpellier, and Handel’s Agrrippina at the Hallé Festival.

This season, Europa Galante tours in Europe, Asia and the United States, presenting a program of instrumental works and a separate program with Vivica Genaux. Europa Galante is resident orchestra at Fondazione Teatro Due in Parma.

Europa Galante with Fabio Biondi records for Virgin Classics and may also be heard on Opus 111/Nävye. They appear by arrangement with New World Classics, Kerby Lovallo, Director (kl@newworldclassics.com). Learn more about the artists at www.newworldclassics.com/galante.htm and www.europagalante.com.
Born in Palermo, Fabio Biondi began his international career at age twelve, performing his first solo concert with the RAI Symphony Orchestra. Driven 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, Fabio Biondi has performed with many ensembles, including 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 technique and instruments.

In 1990, Mr. Biondi founded Europa Galante, an ensemble which, 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 and his ensemble have been invited to play at important international festivals and concert halls, from La Scala in Milan to the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Musikverein in Vienna, Lincoln Center in New York and Sydney Opera House.

Europa Galante’s first record, of Vivaldi’s concertos, was awarded the Premio Cini of Venice and the Choc de la Musique, and was soon followed by a number of other awards, such as five Diapasons d’Or and Diapason d’Or de l’Année in France, RTL Prize, “Record of the Year” nominations in many countries, and the Prix du Disque, ffff by Telerama. In 2006, their recording of Vivaldi’s Bajazet was nominated for a Grammy Award.

Mr. Biondi’s musical development, taking in both the universal repertoire plus the rediscovering of minor composers, includes three centuries of music. This is illustrated in 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) Handel’s operas (Poro), and the 18th-century Italian violin repertoire (Veracini, Vivaldi, Locatelli, Tartini), as well as sonatas by Bach, Schubert and Schumann. Mr. Biondi embodies the perpetual pursuit of style, free from dogmatism and he remains intent in his quest for the original language. It is because of this very approach that he can collaborate as soloist and conductor with many varied orchestras, including Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Rotterdam Chamber Orchestra, the European Baroque Orchestra, the Opera of Hallé, the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Norway, the Orchestre Nationale of Montpellier and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

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

Since March 2005, Mr. Biondi has served as artistic director for baroque music of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. Since 2011, he has been academician of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome.

Next season, Mr. Biondi will conduct the Orchestre de Montpellier, Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid, Orquesta de la Coruña and the Camerata of Patras.

Fabio Biondi plays an Andrea Guarneri violin (Cremona, 1686). He also plays a 1766 Carlo Ferdinando Gagliano violin, owned by his teacher Maestro Salvatore Cicero and kindly lent to him by the Salvatore Cicero Foundation in Palermo.