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## **EUROPA GALANTE**

Europa Galante was founded in 1990 by its musical director Fabio Biondi who wanted to form an Italian period instrument ensemble to perform both baroque and classical repertoire. The ensemble has a varying structure and often performs chamber music such as the string sonatas of Italian composers of the seventeenth century.

The ensemble's repertoire includes the operas. The most recent is performances and a recording of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. The group is also widely known for its performances of the operas of Handel and Vivaldi, and also the works of Alessandro Scarlatti such as the oratorios (*Maddalena, La Santissima Trinità*), serenatas (Clori, Dorino e Amore) and operas including Massimo Puppieno, *Il Trionfo dell'Onore, La Principessa Fedele* and *Carlo Re d'Allemagna*. Europa Galante collaborates regularly with the Fondazione Santa Cecilia in Rome to rediscover and restore eighteenth-century Italian operas such as Antonio Caldara's *La Passione di Gesù Cristo*, L. Leo's *Sant'Elena al Calvario*, or *Gesu sotto il peso Della Croce* by F.di Mayo. In Rome the ensemble presented *La Foresta Incantata* by Francesco Geminiani, together with an animated film by Fabio Biondi and the director Davide Livermore.

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, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Royal Albert Hall in London, Musikverein in Vienna, Lincoln Center in New York and the Sydney Opera House. The ensemble has toured throughout Australia, Japan, Europe, Canada, Israel, the USA and South America.

Ever since the release of its first record dedicated to Vivaldi concertos, the ensemble has received worldwide recognition, gaining an impressive list of awards in their first five years such as Choc de la Musique, 5 Diapason d'Or, Diapason d'Or of the year and nominations for record of the year in Spain, Canada, Switzerland, Finland and the Grand Prix du disque de l'académie Charles Cros.

The ensemble has been nominated twice for a Grammy, first in 2004 with its record of Vivaldi's *Concerti con molti strumenti* and then in 2006 for its recording of Vivaldi's *Bajazet*. The most recent release, Vivaldi's opera *L'Oracolo in Messenia* has received the Diapason D'Or and has been critically acclaimed. Their next recording projects include Francesco Maria Veracini's opera *Adriano in Siria* (which will be recorded live with a top class cast including Genaux, Hallenberg, Prina and Basso) and the concertos composed by different composers for Chiara, an exceptional violinist orphan of La Pietà and most talented pupil of Vivaldi.

This season, Europa Galante will tour Europe (including Switzerland, Romania, Poland, France and Spain), Asia and the U.S. with instrumental and vocal repertoire such as Handel's *Imeneo* (Germany, Poland), Veracini's opera *Adriano in Siria* (Austria, Krakow) and Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* in Spain and Italy. Europa Galante is the resident orchestra of [Fondazione Teatro Due](#) in Parma

## **FABIO BIONDI**

Born in Palermo, Fabio Biondi began his international career at the age of twelve, performing his first solo concert with the RAI symphony orchestra. Driven early on by an inexhaustible cultural curiosity, Fabio 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 sixteen, he was invited by the Musikverein of Vienna to perform Bach's violin concertos. Since then, Fabio Biondi has performed with ensembles including Cappella Real, Musica Antiqua Wien, Seminario Musicale, La Chapelle Royale and Les Musiciens du Louvre (ever since its foundation) all specialised in the performance of baroque music using original technique and instruments.

In 1990, Fabio 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. Fabio Biondi and his ensemble have been invited to play at the most important world 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, the Lincoln Center in New York and the Sydney Opera House.

Their first record (Vivaldi's concertos) was awarded the 'Premio Cini' of Venice & the 'Choc de la Musique' and was soon followed by a number of other awards such as five Diapasons d'Or, 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 the review Telerama. In 2006 their recording of Vivaldi's opera *Bajazet* was nominated for a Grammy Award.

Fabio 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, the serenatas and operas of Alessandro Scarlatti (*La Messa di Natale*, *Clori*, *Dorino e Amore*, *Massimo Puppiano* and *Il trionfo dell'onore*) Handel's operas (*Poro*), and the XVIII century Italian violin repertoire (Veracini, Vivaldi, Locatelli, Tartini) as well as sonatas by Bach, Schubert and Schumann.

## PRESS

# The New York Times

## Review: Europa Galante Tells the Story of a Musical Orphan in 'Chiara's Diary'

By **JAMES R. OESTREICH** JAN. 18, 2016

Vivaldi fanciers may know of the Ospedale Della Pietà, the orphanage in Venice where that composer spent much of his career, teaching music to young women. But for most music lovers, the Pietà undoubtedly remains an abstraction.

**The searching and virtuosic Italian violinist [Fabio Biondi](#) and his excellent period ensemble, [Europa Galante](#)**, fleshed out skeletal notions of the institution and its denizens at Zankel Hall on Saturday evening in a revelatory program, "Chiara's Diary: A Life at the Pietà Orphanage in Venice, 1730-1770." The concert largely replicated their fine 2014 CD, "Il Diario di Chiara" (Glossa Music), which comes with an even more valuable DVD, a beautiful and touching [documentary](#) by Lucrezia Le Moli and Mr. Biondi, with fragmentary performances by Europa Galante.

Mr. Biondi, in his various accounts of the Pietà, both narrows and broadens the context, simultaneously sketching the life story of one of the foundlings, Chiara, and noting how musical

activities at the Pietà reflected the larger shift in Europe from complex Baroque toward streamlined Classical styles.

Chiara, who was abandoned on the orphanage's steps at the age of 2 months in 1718 and died there in 1791, was evidently a commanding violin virtuoso, second at the Pietà only to her teacher Anna Maria. (She also sang and played viola d'amore and organ.) Vivaldi dedicated two concertos to Chiara, and Antonio Martinelli, a later "maestro di strumenti" at the Pietà, several more.

Neither Vivaldi nor Martinelli is entirely central to this story, though each was represented by two works in the Zankel program. Other more or less formative figures associated with the Pietà, like Giovanni Porta, Nicola Porpora, Andrea Bernasconi, Fulgenso Perotti and Gaetano Latilla, were also included. Clearly, to judge from the later works, all signs were pointing toward a new era and the so-called galant style, which would stress, in Mr. Biondi's words, "a straightforward and cheerful melodicism."

Many of these works have come down incomplete, and the editions here were listed as arrangements by Mr. Biondi, who, as soloist, also supplied cadenzas in Martinelli's Violin Concerto in E. The fascinating cadenzas in Martinelli's Viola d'Amore Concerto in D and in a movement for violin and organ by Perotti were credited to Chiara.

**The Galante performances, led from the violin by Mr. Biondi, were typically energetic and refined, and beautifully suited to the differing qualities of each work. But the Chiara project as a whole amounts to so much more than the sum of these musical parts.**

The Baltimore Sun

# Europa Galante explores 18th-century music written for Venetian orphanage

**Tim Smith** The Baltimore Sun January 19, 2016

At Shriver Hall, a vibrant history lesson from **the superb Italian early music group Europa Galante.**

**Europa Galante, the first-rate early music ensemble from Italy,** offered a never-dry history lesson Sunday evening for the **Shriver Hall Concert Series.**

The subject was the Pietà orphanage for girls in Venice, famed for its musically talented wards and the works composed for them. Although Vivaldi is the name most readily associated with the institution -- he held posts there off and on for years -- several other composers contributed to the Pietà's legacy.

Violinist and Europa Galante founder Fabio Biondi drew from all of this to fashion a fascinating assortment of Italian string repertoire from the middle of the 18th century under the heading "Il diario di Chiara" ("Chiara's Diary"). Chiara, an orphan at Pietà who became a much-admired violinist, she inspired and performed music on this program.

It was especially rewarding on Sunday to hear a couple of her own cadenzas for pieces by Antonio Martinelli and Fulgensio Perotti; they suggest a musician of taste, cleverness and modesty.

**Biondi and his colleagues -- all of them standing throughout (except for harpsichordist/organist Paola Poncet) -- demonstrated consistent technical polish and phrased with abundant color. They paid particular attention to dynamic contrasts; pianissimo playing in slow movements, notably those of Martinelli's D major Viola d'Amore Concerto, proved exquisite.**

And while there were certain surface similarities in the compositions, subtle stylistic differences clearly emerged as well. The musicians deftly spotlighted all the distinctive nuances -- from the downright noble depth of the Andante in a D major Concerto by Vivaldi (the crescendo had terrific power) to the wildly dancing finale of a Sinfonia by Giovanni Porta and the surprise turns that cap a Sinfonia by Nicola Porpora.

# The New York Times

## Review: Europa Galante Plays at Alice Tully Hall

By VIVIEN SCHWEITZER MAY 11, 2015

During a visit to New York last year, the period-instrument ensemble Europa Galante offered a Vivaldi program showcasing (with [distinctive interpretive touches](#)) the oft-heard "Four Seasons." On Sunday evening at Alice Tully Hall, they played something far less common: a vivid programmatic work by Carlo Monza, part of a concert tracing the development of the symphonic genre in Italy and its impact on a young visitor, Mozart.

The event offered a rare chance to thumb through what could have been Mozart's childhood photo album: Here he is at 14, hints of his maturity already evident; here he is at 15, surrounded by the older composers who would prove vital influences on his development.

Composers jostled for prominence in 1770s Milan. One of the most successful was Giovanni Battista Sammartini, highly respected by the Mozart family. Europa Galante, **led by the dynamic violinist Fabio Biondi**, offered Sammartini's four-movement Sinfonia in G, the bristling tremolo figures unfolding with intensity. Monza was one of Sammartini's best students. His ["Tempesta di Mare"](#) evokes with colorful gestures a turbulent seascape, a subject also conveyed by Vivaldi in his [piece of the same name](#).

Here and **throughout the evening, the ensemble played with buoyant spirit, nuanced shadings and a wide dynamic palette**, as in its rendition of Mozart's Symphony No. 13 in F, which concluded the program. Written in 1771 during Mozart's second trip to Italy, the work demonstrates his quick mastery of the form, with a more advanced use of winds and more confidently articulated themes than in his more juvenile Symphony No. 11 in D, which opened the concert. That work, composed in 1770 during Mozart and his father's first trip to Italy, is a portrait of the composer in truly early adolescence, as is the Symphony No. 10 in G, **both given fresh, vibrant performances here**.

The program also featured music by Angelo Maria Scaccia and Antonio Brioschi, now obscure composers who had a major impact as Milan symphonists during their careers and influenced the development of the classical symphonic style. **Mr. Biondi was the dynamic soloist** in Scaccia's Violin Concerto in E flat, with its hints of Vivaldi. Brioschi was represented by his joyous Sinfonia in D. As an encore, the ensemble offered the Overture to Gluck's Sinfonia, from "Ipermestra."

# The New York Times

February 12, 2014

Blowing This Way and That

**Europa Galante Brings Vivaldi to Zankel Hall**



**Europa Galante** The violinist Fabio Biondi leading his period-instrument ensemble at Zankel Hall in a program that interwove movements from Vivaldi sonatas with natural themes. Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

Few violin concertos are as tightly scripted as those making up Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." Four sonnets chronicling the agricultural calendar — possibly by Vivaldi himself — accompany the music. Their lines are written into the score like stage directions, instructing the player to evoke the sounds of buzzing gnats on a hot summer day, hunting calls in autumn or the motion of someone walking gingerly on ice. Additional labels identify particular kinds of birds — a finch, a cuckoo, a turtledove — and barking dogs.

Given this meticulous specificity, it never ceases to amaze and delight me how different this deservedly popular music sounds from one interpretation to the next. On Tuesday evening, **the zesty Italian period-instrument ensemble [Europa Galante](#) presented an all-Vivaldi concert at Zankel Hall that included memorably temperamental renditions of parts of "The Four Seasons."** Led by the group's director, Fabio Biondi, who played the principal part in the concertos for violin, the program offered a collage of works inspired by nature.

Only one of them — the violin concerto nicknamed "La Caccia" ("The Hunt") — was played in its entirety. The opening Allegro from "Spring" was followed by the Cantabile and Allegro from a flute concerto nicknamed "Il Gardellino" ("The Goldfinch"), played with a full-bodied, luminous sound by [Marcello Gatti](#). The first and third movements of "Summer" framed the Largo and Allegro from "La Pastorella," ("The Shepherdess"), a concerto for recorder (here flute), oboe, violin and bassoon, which featured fine solo playing by the oboist Paolo Grazzi and the mellow-toned bassoonist Dana Karmon. "Winter" was interspliced with movements from the violin concerto "La Tempesta di Mare" ("The Storm at Sea").

**The wind-tossed program proved a perfect fit for Europa Galante. The ensemble's fresh sound owes much to its vivid, gusty crescendos**, in which the sound seems to gather not only in volume, but in density, too. **On Tuesday evening, those crescendos took shape as spring showers, August hailstorms and maritime tempests. "Winter" opened with a jolt, as if someone had kicked open a door to send a blast of icy air into the auditorium.** Sweetly lyrical moments like the slow movement from "La Pastorella," in which Mr. Gatti's lilting solo meshed beautifully with the tender theorbo playing by Giangiacomo Pinardi, offered welcome

respite.

Mr. Biondi's violin solos abound with embellishments and sudden changes of tempo that give them an improvised feel but can sometimes come across as somewhat precious. But **there was a very Baroque flavor to the bracing changes and sudden surprises that echoed Vivaldi's seasons, where hail showers interrupt the torpor of a hot afternoon, and the merriment of harvest revelers contrasts with the terror of the hunted prey.**

Fabio Biondi performs Bach sonatas with the harpsichordist Kenneth Weiss on Feb. 20 at Weill Recital Hall; 212-247-7800 or [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org).

# The New York Times

Saturday, January 23, 2010 Last Update: 9:57 AM ET

Music Review | Europa Galante

## 18th-Century Extroverts and Introverts at Zankel Hall



Rachel Papo for The New York Times

Europa Galante, led by violinist Fabio Biondi (left of center), performing in a program of Telemann, Sammartini, Nardini, Corelli and Locatelli, at Zankel Hall.

By ALLAN KOZINN

Published: January 22, 2010

Europa Galante, **the superb period-instrument ensemble** led by the violinist Fabio Biondi, explored two distinct sides of the 18th-century orchestral repertory at Zankel Hall on Thursday evening. The first half of the program was devoted to the extroverted music of Telemann. After

intermission Mr. Biondi and company set their sights on Italy by way of four strikingly different composers: Sammartini, Nardini, Corelli and Locatelli.

Like many ensembles of its kind, Europa Galante performs standing (except for its cellist, harpsichordist and theorbo player). And though the physical disposition of a band — whether it is seated or not — usually has little effect on the performance, here the players often moved in and out of small clusters, depending on the density of the scoring and the speed of the music. The movement was subtle rather than choreographed, but it created a sense of interaction that **made the performance particularly vital.**

In the broadest and most superficial terms, a pair of Telemann works may have appeared to represent a German approach to Baroque style. But not so fast: Telemann was an outward-looking cosmopolitan composer, and Mr. Biondi undoubtedly chose him (rather than, say, the more distinctly Germanic Biber) for the breadth of his influence. The Overture à Quatre in F, which opened the program, is steeped in the influences of the French courtly style, with its stately dotted rhythms, ornate dance forms and elegant pictorialism. Even so, the work also glanced further afield, though still through a French prism, in a lively Polonaise.

Telemann's Concerto for Flute, Violin, Cello and Strings in A (TWV 53:A2) was another matter. Like Bach's concertos, this work is built on an Italian form but uses themes with a more distinctively German accent. Some of it is boilerplate: the work was composed as Tafelmusik — music to dine by — and it is meant to entertain without wresting the attention. Often it captivates despite itself, as in the pastoral Gratoso movement, with its sweetly melodic flute line, played with a gentle shapeliness by Frank Theuns.

The Italian works Mr. Biondi presented ranged widely too, with Sammartini's dramatic Sinfonia in G (JC 39) showing the theatrical roots of the symphony, and Nardini's Violin Concerto in A (Op. 1, No. 1) taking a conservative view of virtuosity that prizes melodic subtlety over showiness. Locatelli's Concerto Grosso in D (Op.1, No. 5) was a lovely demonstration of textural flexibility and, in its finale, sizzling ensemble writing.

But the real centerpiece here was Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D (Op. 6, No. 4), a zesty attention-grabber packed with vivid solo passages — even the continuo players had a share of the spotlight — and a robust full ensemble finale. **The group's sound, unified and appealingly astringent throughout the concert, had an energy that lifted it off the stage** in the Corelli.

"Extroverts and Introverts of the 18th Century" The violinist Fabio Biondi and the harpsichordist Paola Poncet play a recital of Italian works on Feb. 1 at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall; (212) 247-7800, [carnegiehall.org](http://carnegiehall.org).

## Chicago Tribune

### Biondi brings freshness to 'Four Seasons'

By Alan G. Artner, Special to the Tribune

January 25, 2010

**One of the finest things interpretative musicians can do is rescue a masterpiece from routine and repetition. Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante did it** Friday night at Mandel Hall with a work much in need of rescue, Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons."

**Biondi, an inspired baroque violinist/conductor and fervent iconoclast**, founded his ensemble 20 years ago, when period-instrument groups started to appear in Italy. They recorded "The Four Seasons" twice in just over a decade. Part of the discs' lack of routine came from what they presented, not the published text but an earlier version differing in many details.

The basis for Friday's performance was that "Manchester Version." But after playing it for the whole of his group's history, Biondi said he evolved beyond it. So with characteristic meticulousness, he prepared his own edition. **And with just as much characteristic energy, he dug into it, displaying iron control and electrifying virtuosity.**

The scores' pictorialism — barking dog, thunderstorm, sleeping drunkards, icy rain — emerged vividly. Yet, despite affection for detail and more expressive tone than many period-instrument groups create, the shapeliness of each concerto was maintained. No episode relaxed into hazy mood painting. Color and fantasy were tightly held on a rein that allowed exhilaration but not forced sound or overstatement. It was an ideal balance.

The last time here, at Ravinia in 2001, the 12-member ensemble had a countertenor as star performer. This time there were three imaginative instrumentalists: Biondi, baroque flutist Frank Theuns, and the group's cellist, Maurizio Naddeo. They came together in the famous A-major Concerto from Georg Philipp Telemann's ambitious collection called "Banquet Music."

Everyone showed a grace that recognized such rococo characteristics as refined textures, ingratiating ornaments and lightly sprung rhythms. Italian fire was, of course, turned down. But both the concerto and Telemann's plusher, lesser-known Overture a quatre in F still had a keenness of response that enlivened rich, tapestry-like color and cosmopolitan expression.

There were two encores: The allegro finale from Arcangelo Corelli's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 4, played with lean brilliance; and the pizzicato movement of Christoph Willibald Gluck's ballet pantomime, "Don Juan," which was all delicacy consummately shaded into silence.

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## Los Angeles Times

### **Italian violinist Fabio Biondi's Baroque ensemble shines at Disney Hall.**

By Chris Pasles, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

April 3, 2008

Whatever is happening to global weather patterns, there's definitely been a climate change in the performance of Baroque music since the stranglehold of historical performance practice began tightening in the 1970s. The atmosphere is more temperate now. Laws have relaxed. Variety is encouraged. The regional differences that existed in the period itself are mirrored in different approaches by groups from a variety of cities and countries. Italian violinist Fabio Biondi founded his period instrument group, [Europa Galante](#), in 1990 to assert his country's presence on this international scene. The results have grown increasingly prominent and welcome at festivals and concerts around the world. The group has a special reputation for resurrecting 18th century Italian operas, and its recording of Vivaldi's "Bajazet" was nominated for a Grammy in 2006.

Tuesday night, Biondi brought the 11-member ensemble to Walt Disney Concert Hall for a program called "France, Italy and England -- Connections and Exchange," which included concertos by Vivaldi and Leclair, a suite by Purcell and a suite of Biondi's own devising drawing on the music of six composers. **The playing that ensued was inviting, energetic, tightly cohesive and transparent in texture.** It adhered to the general historically informed approach regarding short phrasings and sparing use of vibrato, but it was more liberal in its shifting dynamics.

Although not as personally expressive as some Baroque violinists (the San Francisco-based Philharmonia Baroque's Elizabeth Blumenstock comes to mind), **Biondi wore his considerable virtuosity and authority lightly, with no grandstanding.** Like all the musicians, except for the cellist, harpsichordist and theorbo, or lute, player, he stood when he played. Vivaldi was represented by three pieces: the Sinfonia to the serenata "La Senna Festeggiante," the Concerto in D minor for viola d'amore and lute, RV 540, and the Concerto in D minor for two violins, cello and strings, Opus 3, No. 11. The last, from the influential collection "L'Estro Armonico," is one of the works Bach transcribed for keyboard as he studied the Italian master's music.

All three works gave evidence of that amazing quality of unpredictable melodic, harmonic and rhythmic invention in seemingly straitjacketed forms that has beguiled audiences for three centuries. Short fanfares and trotting rhythms opened the Sinfonia, taken from an obsequious 1726 Venetian ceremony honoring the French King Louis XV -- although unexpected chromatic slithering surfaced in the slow middle movement.

Giangiaco Pinardi was Biondi's valuable partner in the soft-toned concerto for viola d'amore and lute. In the sometimes weird duo-violin concerto, Andrea Rognoni matched Biondi perfectly in imitative passages and stood by patiently whenever Biondi got the lion's share of the limelight, which was more often than might have been expected. Maurizio Naddeo was the exceedingly capable cellist, Salvatore Carchiolo the harpsichordist.

Not surprisingly, Purcell's nine-movement Suite from Aphra Benn's bloody-minded play "Abdelazer, or the Moor's Revenge" was more dour and dramatic than any of the Vivaldi pieces. But Leclair's Violin Concerto in C, Opus 7, No. 3, which followed, restored a sense of ease and good humor to the program.

Biondi's concluding suite, "Les Nations," consisted of movements by Baldassare Galuppi, Georg Muffat, André Campra, Georg Philipp Telemann, Heinrich Biber and André Cardinal Destouches. Each piece was originally composed in a style considered foreign or exotic, but those distinctions seem only quaint now, even as some of the composers have faded into obscurity. All were worthy, with Destouches' closing Chaconne especially gracious and delightful.

The encore was the Pizzicato from Gluck's "Don Juan."

## Daily Gazette article

Thursday, April 10, 2008

<http://www.dailygazette.com/>  
See HTML Version of article

## Music hall hosts bright, bouncy show by Italian baroque group

GERALDINE FREEDMAN

### Europa Galante brings effervescent performance

**TROY** — Bold, brisk, and bubbly were the bywords for Europa Galante's Wednesday night concert at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

Everything the Italian baroque music group of 10 men and one woman played was as effervescent as champagne with not a little fire water added in the guise of its director and solo violinist, Fabio Biondi.

He tore up the technical charts like a speedster without dropping a note and still had enough room to add some expert ornamentation.

The program began with Purcell's suite of incidental music from "Abdelazer, or the Moor's Revenge" — a 1695 bloody drama.

Tempos were very vigorous, everyone played with a flashy edge to their techniques and the dynamic range was interesting.

Accents were emphasized, which gave the gambist and the bassist a more voluble voice than in most period music groups. The energy level was very high, which made the music sound fresh.

In Leclair's Concerto for Violin and Strings, Op. 7, No. 3 (1737), Biondi played taut articulations.

The ensemble, which was extremely well polished throughout the evening, put good air between the phrases.

The first movement was bouncy, the second and slower movement played in baroque style with a bare hint of vibrato on the longer held notes.

Biondi took his time in an unusually chromatic mini-cadenza. The final movement was perky with strong accents and fiery playing.

Biondi arranged eight short pieces by composers from Italy (Galuppi), Germany (Muffat, Telemann), Austria (Biber) and France (Campra, Destouches) to form a suite, "Les Nations."

A lot of the music sounded similar. You can't get away from the baroque style of a lot of fast notes, tight harmonies and strongly tonal resolutions.

But the pieces he chose had a few passages here and there that showed an adventurous thought.

Telemann's "Badinerie italienne" was in a pleasing minor key; Biber's "Les Barbares" was furious and fast, and Telemann's "Les Danoises" repeated a slow to fiery sequence with panache.

The most original presentation, however, was Biondi's version of Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons." Changes in articulations, pacing and dynamic ranges for the ensemble and Biondi's fire-breathing interpretation left the crowd breathless.

**The New York Times**



Michael Falco for *The New York Times*

Fabio Biondi, second from left, led Europa Galante at the Miller Theater in the last concert in the series "Bach and the Baroque."

April 14, 2008 Music Review | Europa Galante By [BERNARD HOLLAND](#)

## World Tour, in a Baroque Sort of Way

Baroque music practiced its own kind of globalism in its time, although the globe was smaller then. Bach wrote French and English suites and an "Italian Concerto." Domenico Scarlatti wrote in a style nurtured in Italy but with the twang and rhythmic snap of a Spanish guitar. The fascination that turn-of-the-18th-century Europe felt for the faraway extended to barbarians ("Les Barbares" by Biber) and China ("Les Chinois" by André Campra), both pieces heard in Europa Galante's concert at the Miller Theater on Saturday evening, the last of four in a series called "Bach and the Baroque." The 10-member string band, directed by Fabio Biondi, offered music by Italians, British, French and Germans, all thinking about places other than their own. There were various concertos by Vivaldi, one by Jean-Marie Leclair and a suite from Purcell's "Abdelazer (The Moor's Revenge)."

At the end Mr. Biondi assembled an international conference in eight movements called "Les Nations," with references to Spain, France, Italy, Denmark, Britain, China and, again, those barbarians. The participating composers were Galuppi, Muffat, Campra, Telemann and Biber. A handsome Chaconne by André Cardinal Destouches served as a finale. Some of the exchanges of information between composer and country were firsthand. Vivaldi traveled north to Central Europe. Telemann's movements were more east and west. Bach never went much of anywhere but devoured the Vivaldi scores that came his way. Until fairly recently, works thought to be Bach's were really Vivaldi pieces copied out in Bach's hand.

Distinguishing nationalistic tendencies at Saturday's concert required paying attention to formats, and also to the power of suggestion. The slow introduction in dotted rhythms by Galuppi (a Venetian) displayed a Frenchness that was later a hallmark for the symphonies of Haydn (an Austrian). Campra's Chinese music, on the other hand, was about as Chinese as chop suey. Biber's barbarisms were unmistakable: violent accents, lopsided movement and a sudden ending. The nine Purcell movements here were completely civil and filled with life; if exoticisms were intended, jaded modern ears had to take them on faith.

Mr. Biondi, busy everywhere as a violinist, also joined Giangiacomo Pinardi in Vivaldi's D minor

Concerto for viola d'amore and lute. Other principals in this good group were Andrea Rognoni, violinist, and Maurizio Naddeo, cellist.