

# Il Giardino Armonico

Saturday, May 3, 2003, 8 pm  
First Congregational Church

Giovanni Antonini, *flutes*  
Stefano Barneschi and Marco Bianchi, *violins*  
Riccardo Minasi, *violin and viola*  
Paolo Beschi, *cello*  
Luca Pianca, *lute*  
Vanni Moretto, *double bass*  
Riccardo Doni, *harpsichord*

Harpsichord: historic copy (Italian or German harpsichord)  
A = Hz 416

*This presentation of Il Giardino Armonico is made possible  
with the generous support of the members of the Producers Circle.*

*Support for the Music Before 1850 Series is provided by The L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs  
Foundation.*

*Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.*

*Cal Performances receives additional funding from the National Endowment for the  
Arts,  
a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit  
all Americans,  
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.*

Giovanni Battista Fontana Sonata No. 16 for Three Violins  
and Basso Continuo

Carlo Farina *Capriccio stravagante*  
for Strings and Basso Continuo

Fontana Sonata No. 15 for Two Violins,  
Cello, and Basso Continuo

Alessandro Piccinini *Balletto in Diverse Partite* for Lute

Henry Purcell Chacony (Chaconne) for Strings  
and Basso Continuo in G minor, Z. 730

Francesco Mancini Sonata for Recorder, Two Violins,  
and Basso Continuo in D minor  
Amoroso  
Allegro  
Largo  
Allegro

## INTERMISSION

Antonio Vivaldi Concerto for Flute, Strings,  
and Basso Continuo in C minor, R. 441  
Allegro non troppo  
Largo  
Allegro

Johann Gottlieb Goldberg Sonata for Strings and Basso Continuo  
Largo  
Fuga: Allegro moderato  
Grave  
Giga

Giuseppe Sammartini Concerto for Recorder, Strings,  
and Basso Continuo in F major  
Allegro  
Siciliana  
Allegro assai

### **Sonatas Nos. 15 and 16**

#### **Giovanni Battista Fontana (ca. 1589–ca. 1630)**

Had it not been for a friend, a priest who cared (in both senses of the word) for his music, Giovanni Battista Fontana would have effectively vanished from the historical record. Virtually all that is known about Fontana derives from the preface to the comprehensively titled (and easily marketable) collection of *Sonate a 1, 2, 3 il violino o[r] cornetto [a hybrid instrument with a recorder-like body and a trumpet mouthpiece], fagotto [bassoon], chitarone [bass lute], violonchino [cello] o simile altro istromento* that one Father Reghino, *maestro di cappella* of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Venice, had preserved and published in 1641, a decade after the composer's death. Fontana, described by Reghino as being from Brescia, earned a reputation as a violinist and composer in Venice, Rome, and Padua, where he died around 1630 from "the voracity of the pestilence." One of the few other extant documents mentioning Fontana, a property assessment from Padua in 1627 giving his age as 38, indicates a birth year around 1589. Fontana's sonatas, some of the earliest works of their kind, show their derivation from the old *canzona* of the Renaissance in their conservative harmonic vocabulary, their dance-like thematic material, and their construction in several continuous but varied formal sections.

#### Capriccio stravagante

#### **Carlo Farina (ca. 1604–1639)**

Little is known about the life of the man who created one of the 17th-century's most audacious musical experiments. Carlo Farina, born in Mantua around 1604, was apparently the son of a violinist in the service of the Gonzagas, and probably was introduced to music by his father. Carlo had gained enough renown as a violinist by 1625 to be called to the court of the Elector of Saxony, Johann Georg I, at Dresden, where he was *Konzertmeister* to the celebrated Heinrich Schütz. When the deprivations of the Thirty Years War gutted the musical establishment at Dresden in 1628, Farina returned to Italy. Other than brief tenures working as a violinist in Parma (1631–1632) and Lucca (1635), little is known of Farina until he moved again across the Alps to join the municipal orchestra of Danzig in 1636–1637. For a year or so before his death, in July 1639, he was in the service of the Empress Eleonora I in Vienna.

The most remarkable work among the five volumes of Farina's published dances, sonatas, and *canzonas* is the *Capriccio stravagante*, issued in Dresden in 1627, which shows not only the virtuosic nature of his own playing but also his daring, inventiveness, and humor as a composer. The *Capriccio* is a series of tiny musical tableaux mimicking a delightful array of instruments and animals, with the scenes separated by a returning but varied refrain, a kind of curtain rung quickly up and down, titled *canzona* (which, at that point in history, meant simply an instrumental piece in lighthearted dance style). A droning hurdy-gurdy is first up, then a

*pifferino* (a "shepherd's pipe" playing a lively country dance) and a *col legno* passage, one of the earliest known, in which the wood of the bows taps on the strings. Next portrayed are trumpet, *clarino* (high signaling bugle), and drum, followed by riotous evocations of a hen and a cock. The flute is evoked by playing close to the bridge (*ponticello*) and a wheezing organ by gasping repeated notes that get biliously off-track in their harmonies (Farina called this passage *Il Tremulanto*). A fife-and-drum march is interrupted first by a reminiscence of the *canzona* and then by some squalling cats. Dogs, of course, follow cats, and here their yaps intrude upon a (mock) serious polyphonic version of the *canzona*. Pizzicato strumming portrays a Spanish guitar before this wonderful musical concoction closes with quiet recall of the refrain.

#### Balletto in Diverse Partite **for Lute**

##### **Alessandro Piccinini (1566Dca. 1638)**

Alessandro Piccinini belonged to one of northern Italy's most distinguished families of lutenists at the turn of the 17th century. His father, Leonardo Maria Piccinini, was highly enough regarded as a performer that he secured an engagement for Alessandro and two of his other sons, Girolamo and Filippo, at the Este court at Ferrara in 1582, where the brothers remained until the death of Duke Alfonso II in 1597. Alessandro then entered the service of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, the papal legate at Bologna and Ferrara, distinguishing himself sufficiently to be elected a member of Bologna's distinguished Accademia dei Filomusi. Piccinini was survived by his son Leonardo Maria, a lutenist, after his death in Bologna around 1638. In addition to publishing two volumes of music (1623, 1639) comprising various dances, *ricercares*, *canzonas*, and a descriptive piece titled *The Battle*, Piccinini also contributed to the development of the long-necked archlute (his claim to have invented the instrument in the 1590s has not gone unchallenged, however), and a concise manual (included as a preface to the first published volume) on the performance practices of the day. The *Balletto in Diverse Partite* is a suite (*partita*) of brief, varied dances (*balletti*) composed to accompany an elaborate costume ball at the palace of Alessandro Bentivogli, a Bolognese relative of the employer of Piccinini's brother Girolamo in his later years.

#### **Chacony (Chaconne) in G minor, Z. 730**

##### **Henry Purcell (1659D1695)**

The "chaconne" (or "chacony," to use Purcell's word), one of the most popular and durable forms of Baroque music, is a set of continuous variations unfolding around a short, repeated melody. It may have had its surprising origin in a wild and sensuous Mexican dance in triple meter that was imported into Europe through Spain during the 16th century. The dance soon lost its original character, however, and by the middle of the following century had become a sedate concert and dramatic genre often used to express tragic emotions. Purcell included a number of such pieces in the stage works written during the last half-dozen years of his life (the lament from *Dido and Aeneas* is the most famous example), but among his early realizations of the form is the Chaconne in G minor. The work is included in a manuscript now in the British Museum containing a dozen fantasias for viol consort that were apparently written at Windsor during the summer of 1680, the year after Purcell was appointed organist at Westminster Abbey. Since the viol, one of the staples of Elizabethan music, was largely out of fashion by the reign of Charles II, it is unclear why Purcell undertook such works at that time. Indeed, these are the last known examples of the viol fantasia ever written. In the manuscript, the Chaconne is scored for four viols and paired with a Pavan in the same key. The piece is built on an eight-measure theme first presented in the bass as support for the chordal accompaniment of the upper strings, and then becomes the subject for 18 variations. The mood throughout is somber, almost tragic,

though it is unlikely that the music was associated with any dramatic production since Purcell did little composing for the stage until 1689.

**Sonata for Flute, Two Violins,  
and Basso Continuo in D minor  
Francesco Mancini (1672-1737)**

Francesco Mancini was one of the leading musicians in Naples when it was the most important city of opera in Europe. He was born in Naples in 1672, studied at the Conservatorio di S Maria della Piet<sup>^</sup> dei Turchini, and became organist at the school in 1694. Around 1700, he joined the music staff of the Spanish viceroy who was then ruling the city, and two years later began his career as an opera composer with the successful premiere of *Ariovista* at the Teatro S Bartolomeo. In 1707-1708, he directed music in the viceregal chapel during the absence of Alessandro Scarlatti, the regular *maestro di cappella*. Mancini was appointed director of the Conservatorio di S Maria di Loreto in 1720, and five years later became *maestro di cappella* to the viceroy upon Scarlatti's death. A stroke in 1735 largely paralyzed him for the last two years of his life. In addition to nearly 30 operas, some 200 secular cantatas, a dozen oratorios, and a number of sacred compositions, Mancini also wrote a small amount of instrumental music, which shows the old Baroque idioms evolving into the ingratiating Classical style.

**Flute Concerto in C minor, R. 441  
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)**

Vivaldi obtained his first official post in September 1703 at the Pio Ospedale della Piet<sup>^</sup>, one of four institutions in Venice devoted to the care of orphaned, abandoned, and poor girls. As part of its training, the school devoted much effort to the musical education of its wards, and there was an elaborate organization of administrators, teachers, and associates who oversaw the activities of the students. Part of his duties as violin teacher required Vivaldi to compose at least two new concertos each month for the regular public concerts given by the Ospedale. The featured performers in these works were occasionally members of the faculty, but usually they were the more advanced students, and the difficulty of Vivaldi's music is ample testimony to their skill.

These concerts offered some of the best music to be found in Venice, and they attracted visitors from all over Europe. One French traveler, Pr<sup>^</sup>sident Charles de Brosses, described the conservatory concerts in a letter of August 1739: "The most marvelous music is that of the *ospedali*. There are four of them, all composed of bastard girls, or orphans, or of girls whose parents cannot afford the expense of bringing them up. They are reared at the expense of the State and trained only to excel in music. And indeed they sing like angels and play the violin, the flute, the organ, the oboe, the violoncello, the bassoon, the lute; in short, there is no instrument big enough to scare them. They are cloistered like nuns. They are the only executants, and at each concert about 40 of them perform. I swear to you that there is nothing so pleasant as to see a young and pretty girl robed in white, with a garland of pomegranate flowers in her hair, conducting the orchestra and beating time with all imaginable grace and precision." These young ladies became the object of much attention in Venice, and the most gifted among them were even the regular recipients of proposals of marriage. The beauty and charm of Vivaldi's music undoubtedly played no little part in the success of the graduates of the Ospedale.

Vivaldi wrote some 16 concertos for recorder and transverse flute. The Concerto in C minor (R. 441), one of his most handsome creations in the genre, was originally intended for alto recorder. Its opening movement uses solemn processional music over a walking bass line as the material for its orchestral *ritornello*. The intervening episodes for the soloist burst into

frequent displays of virtuosity. The Largo is an Arcadian lament of touching simplicity framed at beginning and end by a sonorous paragraph for the full ensemble. The last movement is built around the recurrences of a stern, pealing, contrapuntal *ritornello* that achieves an almost Bachian weight of expression. Into these formidable orchestral utterances are inserted brilliant arpeggiated passages for the solo flute.

**Sonata for Strings and Basso Continuo**  
**Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1727-1756)**

The name of Johann Gottlieb Goldberg has come down to us most famously in connection with Bach's *Aria with Sundry Variations* (BWV 988) but Goldberg was a talented composer, organist, and harpsichordist in his own right. Born in Danzig in 1727 (he died prematurely in 1756), Goldberg showed such musical promise as a child that Count Hermann Carl von Keyserling became his patron and subsidized his education, sending him first to Dresden to study with Wilhelm Friedemann, Johann Sebastian Bach's eldest son, and then to Leipzig for training by the master himself. In 1741, while Goldberg was his pupil, Bach wrote his *Aria with Sundry Variations* on commission from Count Keyserling, and dispatched it to him via Goldberg. So enthralled with the new work was Keyserling that he demanded almost daily repetitions of it by Goldberg, thus attaching the name of the messenger to the message for all time. In addition to his work as a keyboard virtuoso, Goldberg also composed two concertos, 24 polonaises, and a sonata for harpsichord, a cantata, a motet, and six trio sonatas for flute, violin, and continuo, one of which (BWV 1037) is worthy enough to have long been ascribed to Bach himself.

The trio sonata was the most popular genre of Baroque chamber music: a composition for twin melodic lines (usually violins, though flutes, oboes, or any available treble instruments could also be used) and keyboard. (The harpsichord's bass line was often doubled by a cello or bassoon, so the Baroque "trio" sonata usually required four performers: two melody instruments plus harpsichord and cello.) Such a combination of instruments allowed the 18th-century composer to exploit the contrapuntal and harmonic resources of the era's music to create a wide variety of works, which, by Goldberg's time, had resolved themselves into two basic types—the serious, frequently fugal "church sonata" (*sonata da chiesa*) and the dance-like and light-textured "chamber sonata" (*sonata da camera*). This work, in C major, has formal elements of both genres. It is in four movements, the first three patterned on the example of the *sonata da chiesa*, the last borrowed from the *sonata da camera*. The work opens with a restrained Largo. There follows a vivacious movement in fugal style, which is followed by a plangent slow movement. The sonata closes with a brilliant Giga.

**Flute Concerto in F major**  
**Giuseppe Sammartini (1695-1750)**

Giuseppe Sammartini, born on January 6, 1695, was one of the eight children of Alexis Saint-Martin, an oboist who had emigrated from France to Milan. At least four of the Sammartini sons became musicians; Giuseppe's younger brother Giovanni, born in 1700 or 1701, was one of the seminal figures in the early development of the symphony. Giuseppe studied with his father, and he was performing professionally on the oboe by age 16 and composing soon thereafter. An oboe concerto of his was published in Amsterdam around 1717, and by 1720, he was playing in the orchestra of the Teatro Regio Ducal in Milan. J.J. Quantz, composer and flute teacher to Frederick the Great of Prussia, heard Sammartini perform in Milan in 1726 and declared that his only rival among Italian instrumentalists was the violinist Antonio Vivaldi in Venice. In 1727, a collection of Sammartini's trio sonatas was published in London, and the following year he went to try his luck in that city. He succeeded there immediately, not least as principal

oboist in Handel's orchestra, and he remained in London for the rest of his life. From 1736, Sammartini was music master to the family of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to whom he dedicated two collections of his works; he also composed a ballet for a birthday of Frederick's daughter, Augusta. Sammartini maintained his reputation as a virtuoso oboist and talented composer until his death in November 1750. In his evaluation of Sammartini, the British music historian Sir John Hawkins noted that he was "the greatest oboist that the world had ever known," and praised his compositions for being "full of science, originality, and fire."

Though he composed three ballets, a theatrical pastoral on *The Judgment of Paris*, and several arias and nine cantatas to Italian texts, Giuseppe Sammartini's creative output encompassed principally the leading instrumental genres of the early 18th century: trio and solo sonatas, concertos, concerti grossi, and multi-movement "overtures" modeled upon the French orchestral suite. His Flute Concerto in F major consists of an opening Allegro with a striding, processional quality, a somber movement in the swaying rhythm of a Siciliano, and a spirited finale of flamboyant virtuosity.

© 2003 Dr. Richard E. Rodda

**Il Giardino Armonico**, with its unmistakable sound and hugely varied repertory, is one of the most remarkable of today's Baroque ensembles. Founded in Milan in 1985, it brings together a number of young graduates from some of Europe's leading colleges of music, all of whom have specialized in playing on period instruments. Several of its members are also in demand as international soloists and have appeared in concert with such eminent artists as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Gustav Leonhardt, Trevor Pinnock, Christophe Coin, and Jordi Savall.

The ensemble's repertory is concentrated in the main on the music of the 17th and 18th centuries. Depending on the demands of each individual program, the group will consist of anything from three to 26 musicians. Numerous appearances in many of the world's major concert halls and at the international festivals have helped to establish the group's international standing.

Il Giardino Armonico has performed in the most important concert halls worldwide. Among them are the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Wigmore Hall in London, Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Tonhalle in Zurich, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Staatsoper unter den Linden in Berlin, Glinka Hall in St. Petersburg, National Gallery in Dublin, Konserthus in Oslo, Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, Oji Hall in Tokyo, Library of Congress in Washington (DC), and Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York.

In 2000, the *Vivaldi Album*, Il Giardino's collaboration with mezzo soprano Cecilia Bartoli, received a Grammy Award. In 2001, Il Giardino Armonico performed at both Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall as part of its sold-out tour with Cecilia Bartoli.

Il Giardino Armonico had been under exclusive contract to Teldec Classics for a number of years. Its various recordings of works by Vivaldi—including *The Four Seasons*—and other 18th-century composers have met with widespread critical and popular acclaim and have received several major awards (including the "Fondazione Cini" of Venice, Caecilia Award in Belgium, Diapason d'Or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, and Grand Prix des Discophiles). Released under the title *Il Proteo*, the group's recording of several of Vivaldi's double and triple concertos for cello and orchestra, with Christophe Coin as guest soloist, received a *Gramophone* Award and the Diapason d'Or. The *Brandenburg* Concertos were awarded with the Echo-Preis 1998 and a CD dedicated to works by M. Locke and H.I.F. Biber won the Diapason d'Or (1999). Popular CDs in recent years include *Viaggio Musicale*, with Italian music of the

17th century; *Musica Barocca* (2001); and *Artist Portrait* (2002), a compilation of pieces that Teldec has taken from previous recordings (including "Winter" from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, the *Brandenburg Concerto*

No. 3, and music by Torelli).

The ensemble plays regularly with many acclaimed soloists, including Cecilia Bartoli, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Eva Mei, Sumi Jo, Sara Mingardo, Lynn Dawson, Bernarda Fink, Viktoria Mullova, and Giuliano Carmignola, both in concert and in opera stage productions.

Il Giardino Armonico is conducted by Giovanni Antonini.

**North American Representation:**

Robert Friedman Presents  
1353 4th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94122  
Tel: 415.759.1992  
Fax: 415.759.6663  
e-mail: info@rfpresents.com  
www.rfpresents.com