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## Arts

### Impressions of Baroque Venice

By [Sarah Young](#) Tue, Nov 16, 2010



Q: What do you get when the resident ensemble of Vivaldi's own San Vidal Church plays an evening of Baroque staples at the Lied Center? A: A rapt audience unwilling to let the musicians leave the stage.



Although the Lied Center is far from the Grand Canal, there was no shortage of Venetian atmosphere on Saturday night as Interpreti Veneziani gleefully played its way through an evening of Baroque standards including several concertos of that consummate Venetian: Antonio Vivaldi. Interpreti Veneziani, a nine-member string and harpsichord ensemble, is based in Venice, primarily at Vivaldi's own San Vidal Church, where they give nearly 350 concerts each year. Their skill and joy in playing is so extraordinary that the Lied Center audience sat quietly transfixed through the evening.

The program began with La Follia for strings and harpsichord by Francesco Geminiani, a brisk Portuguese dance characterized by its underlying bass pattern that supports several variations. The piece established the ensemble's lively but cohesive sound as well as featuring their individual personalities and skills. The ensemble is really a group of finely tuned individual soloists, which is a situation conducive to the repertoire that features one or two members of the ensemble.

The first of three Vivaldi concertos followed. Concerto for two violins, strings and harpsichord, RV 523 featured solo violinists Paolo Ciociola and Nicola Granillo. This first concerto also established the relation-

ship of soloist and ensemble that proved extremely flexible throughout the evening. Another Vivaldi concerto followed: Concerto for violin, strings, and harpsichord Op. 8 No. 7 with violinist Sebastiano Maria Vianello whose delicate touch in the Largo was matched only by his dexterity and tone in the flying cadenzas of the Allegro. This collection of concerti (*Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione*—The Contest Between Harmony and Invention) was published under a single opus number and contains the famous *The Four Seasons*. Although the concerti in this group stand alone, I could hear echoes of “Summer’s” famous Presto, in Vianello’s playing.

The clear emotional center of *Interpreti Veneziani* is cellist Davide Amadio, a performer who draws the audience’s eye as well as its ear. Featured in Johan Halvorsen’s arrangement of a Handel *Passacaglia* for violin and cello as well as Vivaldi’s Concerto for cello, strings, and harpsichord, RV. 412, Amadio also provided leadership in the ensemble’s give-and-take with each solo performer.

The concert’s final number, Paganini’s *La Streghe* highlighted violinist Nicola Granillo again in the extraordinarily beautiful “Witch’s Dance” with its compositional variations on a theme variously poignant and amusing. Granillo’s technical skill was again at the fore with Paganini’s bowing techniques and the extraordinary integration of left-handed pizzicato, which Granillo accomplished with a flourish and a wink. Rarely have I seen an audience so unready for a performance to end. Very few people headed for the exits at the end of the program, and they enthusiastically welcomed the two encores including the Presto from *The Four Seasons*’ “Summer,” played by Vianello at a tempo brisk enough to send the audience out with hearts racing.