



Santa Cruz Baroque Festival

P. O. Box 482

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Santa Cruz Baroque Festival 2017

The Many Delights of Hearing *Esfera Armoniosa* Live in Concert

May 2, 2017

I have a large collection of recordings of South American music (folkloric, jazz, and classical) and have traveled in many countries of Latin America. Therefore, I was quite excited about the rare opportunity to hear in my own town a classical music group from Colombia. ***Esfera Armoniosa*** performed at the fifth concert of the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival on April 29, 2017, at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz, California. Their concert consisted of 17th and 18th century music that was either composed in Spain or sent from there to Spain's colonies in Latin America. The excellent program notes (with translations of the lyrics) told about each the composers whose works would be played. The musicians' extensive backgrounds (often specializing in Baroque music) and subsequent performances on many continents led me to believe that I would be hearing exceptionally talented artists.

Esfera Armoniosa's first selection of the evening assured me that I was indeed fortunate to be present, and the subsequent pieces were of equally high caliber. Their enthusiasm for the material was totally infectious for the audience. Many of us were tapping our toes during the lively jacaras and other dance tunes. The recorder is called in Spanish a *flauta dulce* ("sweet flute"), a name that was made evident by the sweet sounds flowing from the recorders of Claudia Liliana Gantívar (also the group's music director) and of Sergio Llano. Tenor Andrés Silva had a voice that was as pleasurable as the warm smile on his face. Julián Navarro's baroque guitar added to the depth and rhythmic qualities of the performance. Alfonso Correa's viola da gamba accompaniment was perfect. The theorbo playing of Sebastián Vega Q. led me to believe that

he was providing the continuo to the selections, a role which he executed wonderfully.

Esfera Armoniosa received many rounds of applause, which led to an encore to further delight our ears. Afterwards, the musicians lingered in the performance area to answer questions and were also given many hearty words of thanks.

At the post-concert reception, the members of ***Esfera Armoniosa*** received more well-deserved accolades plus offers by two patrons to sponsor a return performance by the group. In the meantime, I know that I will continue to enjoy the group's two recordings, which will bring back many pleasant memories of a unique, lively, and enchanting evening that I shall long treasure.

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