



RACHEL PAPO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Early Music New York Baroque Orchestra played a program including Heinrich Biber and Carlo Farina on Saturday.

From the Austrian Court, Impersonations in Sound

Even in a corner of the music world where ensembles are typically flexible, Early Music New York has made shape shifting an art form. Its founder and director,

**ALLAN
KOZINN**

**MUSIC
REVIEW**

Frederick Renz, named the group in a way that allows an expansive sense of mission, touching on six centuries of music. For one concert the group might be a medieval quartet, for another it might be a vocal ensemble, and for the next a Baroque orchestra.

Mr. Renz led the group in its Baroque orchestra guise at St. James's Church on Saturday evening. The program, "Capricious Extravagance," brought to-

Early Music New York performs French sacred works on May 9 at St. James's Church, Madison Avenue at 71st Street; (212) 280-0330, earlymusicny.org.

**Early Music New York
Baroque Orchestra**
St. James's Church

gether colorful scores composed for the Austrian court in the 17th and early 18th centuries, including the one that gave the concert its name, Carlo Farina's "Capriccio Stravagante" (1627).

The 26 short movements of Farina's suite for strings are meant to show off a particular kind of virtuosity: not speed or flashy ornamentation but an ability to mimic. Trumpets are approximated in a simple, chordal fanfare, and the guitar (no surprise here) is imitated in a pizzicato section. Animals are attempted, as well: the cat, for example, was heard first as descending slide on a single violin, with more violins and violas joining in a chorus.

An overture (or suite) by Johann Joseph Fux, from around 1700, mixed similar if more stylized tone painting (birds, in this case) among more conventional dance movements. And in Johann Heinrich Schmelzer's "Fechtschule" ("Fencing School," 1668), courtly dances gave way to an earthy evocation of the work's title, and an equally vivid "Barber's Aria."

Included as well were a zesty sonata from Georg Muffat's "Armonico Tributo" (1682), and Heinrich Biber's Serenada (from around 1670), in which a vocal movement (a "Night Watchman's Song") is interposed amid the dances.

Mr. Renz's ensemble, which performed standing (except for the cellists and harpsichordist) gave these works vital, beautifully sculptured performances, and Scott Dispensa was the solid, pleasurable baritone in the Biber