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## **Review | Tafelmusik at the Folly Theater**

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Special to The Star

Both musicians and audiences have long been aware of the rapport among music, science and math. On Sunday afternoon, the Canadian chamber orchestra Tafelmusik made both a compelling case and an eloquent statement of the relevance of that relationship in the present and in the past.

Presented by the Friends of Chamber Music, the program was entitled "The Galileo Project: Music of the Spheres," and featured an intriguing mix of baroque music and a variety of readings, including some from Galileo himself.

The setting was highly theatrical, with a 12-foot screen resembling a telescope lens displaying images of astronomical wonders. A golden circle in the center of the stage not only drew the eye, but occasionally served as a pathway for promenading instrumentalists.

The musical performances were both splendid and highly effective in underscoring the gravity of the readings. The concert opened with a lively reading of two movements from Vivaldi's "Concerto for 2 Violins in A Major," marvelous in its sense of ensemble though the fast movement revealed a few slips in tone from the soloists.

A number of selections from Jean-Baptiste Lully's "Phaeton" followed while narrator Shaun Smyth recounted the mythical tale. Smyth proved himself a superb reader, and served an essential role in the afternoon's success.

He declaimed readings from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and from Galileo's 1629 letter reporting his demonstration of his telescope for the Venetian Senate. Between readings, the orchestra played selections from Monteverdi and Merula.

The tone of the concert grew somber as Smyth read the Inquisition's sentence of Galileo to doleful tones of the lute played by Lucas Harris.

The second half of the concert musically evoked a "Festival of the Planets" from 1719.

The program was one of the best I've seen in years — a celebration of reason and imagination, whether in art, science or the world of ideas.

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