

# Jean-Marie Lectral Complete Violin Concertos

Igor Ruhadze · Ensemble Violini Capricciosi

## Jean-Marie Leclair 1697-1764 Complete Violin Concertos

#### Concerto Op.10 No.1 in B flat

for	viol	in, strings and basso continu	0
1.	I.	Allegro	5'49
2.	II.	Andante	2'42
3.	III.	Giga- Allegro ma non troppo	5'22

# Concerto Op.10 No.2 in A

for violin, strings and basso continuo					
4.	I.	Allegro ma non troppo	5'33		
5.	II.	Adagio	5'52		
6.	III.	Allegro ma non troppo	5'01		

# Concerto Op.10 No.3 in D

for	viol	in,	strings	and	basso	continuo
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7.	I.	Allegro moderato	5'34
8.	II.	Andante	5'25
9.	III.	Allegro ma non troppo	5'29

# Concerto Op.10 No.4 in F

for violin, strings and basso continuo				
10. I.	Allegro ma poco	6'49		
11. II.	Aria. Grazioso – Andante	6'38		
12. III.	Allegro	5'49		

### Concerto Op.10 No.5 in E minor

for violin, strings and basso continuo				
13. I. Al	legro ma poco	6'25		
14. II. La	rgo	5'13		
15. III. Al	legro	5'37		
Concerto Op.10 No.6 in G minor				
for violin,	strings and basso cont	nuo		
16. I. Al	legro ma poco	8'20		
17. II. An	ndante. Aria Grazioso	3'29		
18. III. Al	legro	6'57		
Concerto Op.7 No.1 in D minor				
for violin	for violin strings and basso continuo			

for violin, strings and basso continuo				
19. I.	Allegro	3'34		
20. II.	Aria. Grazioso	4'36		
21. III.	Vivace	4'30		

#### Concerto Op.7 No.2 in D

for violin, strings and basso continuo			
22. I.	Adagio – Allegro ma		
	non troppo	7'05	
23. II.	Adagio	3'59	
24. III.	Allegro	5'37	

#### Concerto Op.7 No.3 in C

for viol	in, strings and basso	o continuo
25. I.	Allegro	4'55
26. II.	Adagio	7'23
27. III.	Allegro assai	3'46

## Concerto Op.7 No.4 in F

for violin, strings and basso con	tinuo
28. I. Allegro moderato	5'26
29. II. Adagio	5'32
30. III. Allegro	3'42

#### Concerto Op.7 No.5 in A minor

for violin, strings and basso co	ntinuo
31. I. Vivace	5'19
32. II. Largo – Adagio	5'46
33. III. Allegro assai	4'41

### Concerto Op.7 No.6 in A

for viol	in, strings and basso contini	10
34. I.	Allegro ma non presto	9'18
35. II.	Aria. Grazioso non troppo	
	adagio	5'49
36. III.	Giga. Allegro	5'19

## Ensemble Violini Capricciosi

Igor Ruhadze solo violin, leader (Hendrik Jakobs, Amsterdam, 1693) on loan from the NMF Daria Gorban violin (David Tecchler, Rome, 1706) on loan from the NMF Marta Noelia Jiménez Vega violin (Anonymous, Germany 18th century) Eirini Stratigopoulou viola (Anonymous, Germany 19th century) Octavie Dostaler-Lalonde cello (Anonymous, Germany 18th century) on loan from the NMF Juan Diaz double bass (Mirecourt, 1850) Alexandr Puliaev harpsichord (Klaus Ahrend, Leer 1968, after Dulcken, Antwerpen 1750) The son of a skilled haberdasher and amateur musician, **Jean-Marie Leclair** was born in Lyon on 10 May 1697, one of six siblings, five of whom were also to become musicians. We know nothing of him until his 19th year, when he is listed among the dancers at the Lyons opera, together with Marie-Rose Casthagnié whom he married on 9 November 1716. By then he had become accomplished at the disciplines of dancing and lace-making as well as the violin playing for which he is now best remembered.

In 1722 Leclair spent time in Turin as a ballet master, before moving to Paris the following year. There he enjoyed the generous patronage of Joseph Bonnier, to whom he dedicated his Op.1 volume of accompanied sonatas. The following years found Leclair in both the French capital and Turin, where he took a position as *premier danseur* at the Teatro Regio. It was there that he made the acquaintance of Joachim Quantz and became a violin pupil of Giovanni Battista Somis, himself an accomplished student of Corelli.

In France, the violin fell well short of the prominence it enjoyed in the hands of the great Italian composers and virtuosi. Although it had become well established in orchestras by the 1640s, the instrument had virtually no following in the chamber repertoire. Louis Francoeur and Jean-Baptiste Senaille had lately updated French violin style with the latest developments of the Italian school, but Leclair's first two books stood out both for their originality and their difficulty of execution, as the musical public were quick to recognise.

Leclair pursued a virtuoso career both at home and abroad. From 1728 on he had become a regular performer at France's first public concert venue, where the precision and refinement of his playing won him an enthusiastic following. Visiting the German city of Kassel for the first time, he met Pietro Locatelli, another distinguished violinist and pupil of Locatelli, and André Chéron, a composer and theoretician who gave Leclair instruction in counterpoint. In gratitude for Chéron's instruction, Leclair dedicated his first collection (Op.7) of concertos to him. Leclair's principal rival for the favour of Parisian audiences was Pierre Guignon, a violinist from Piedmont and pupil of Somis who had entered the king's service. The two violinists often confronted one another in musical jousts to public acclaim. Leclair, who was growing increasingly withdrawn and irascible, found he was no longer able to tolerate the competition. In 1733 he had been appointed to a senior position within the musical establishment at the court of Louis XV – which he recognised with the dedication of his op.3 sonatas in 1734, and Sere de Rieux wrote: 'Leclair is the first composer who, imitating nothing, has created something fine and new, something that is distinctively his own.'

However, Leclair and Guignon quarrelled, and despite an arrangement whereby they took turns in appearing at the Chapelle and the Chambre du Roi, the French composer resigned from the king's service in 1736 and never again performed at the Concerts Spirituel. The following year he travelled to the fine city of Leeuwarden in the distant north-east corner of the Netherlands, taking up an invitation to the court of Orange from Anne, Princess of Orange and daughter of George II of England. Anne was herself a practised musician who had studied harpsichord with Handel, and Leclair dedicated to her his fourth (and last) book of Violin Sonatas Op.9.

In Amsterdam, he once again encountered Locatelli, with whom he established a cordial, professional relationship, and whom he ultimately convinced to publish in Paris the concertos and caprices of his *Arte del Violino*. In 1740 we encountered him at the Hague conducting the private orchestra of the wealthy adventurer Francois du Liz. Three years later, following the bankruptcy of his benefactor, Leclair returned to Paris, thence to Chambéry where Don Felipe, Infante of Spain, had established his court. In 1745, Leclair dedicated to him his second (Op.10) collection of violin concertos, many of which had won favour with the prince. Having moved back to Paris, he entered the service of a former pupil, Antoine-Antonin, Duc de Gramont, and gradually his output as a composer turned away from instrumental and towards vocal genres. He bought a small house in a dangerous suburb of Paris, and on 22

October 1764 – the same year that saw the passing of Locatelli, Rameau and the Marquise de Pompadour – he was murdered outside his house, most likely by his nephew, with whom he had fallen out.

Despite this latter turn towards theatrical music, Leclair's output was dominated by works written for his own instrument: 13 collections of sonatas and violin concertos as well as duo and trio sonatas. His output, relatively modest for the day, and the high technical and musical level of his writing won him acclaim as a French Corelli. The 12 concertos recorded here follow in the footsteps of Vivaldi. Even though they were not the first of their kind written in France, they represented a significant advance on examples by the likes of Aubert and Boismortier.

In the typical Italian style, each concerto falls into three movements, alternating tutti and solo sections. Quick movements betray the influence of Vivaldian collections such as *L'Estro Armonico*, *La Stravaganza* and *Le Quattro Stagioni*, for example the finale of Op.7 No.2. Leclair based his themes on repeated notes, syncopation, the 'Lombardian style' based on the tonic chord, with sequential development being derived from abrupt and impetuous unison passages. French inspiration can be beard in the lilting airs and gentle dances of the slow movements in Op.7 Nos. 1 & 6, and Op.10 Nos 1, 4 & 6, while other slow movements are typically Italian, such as Op.7 Nos. 2-4, and Op.10 Nos. 2, 3 & 5. Twice he summons the shadow of Corelli, at the beginning of Op.7 No.2 and the end of the slow movement of Op.7 No.5.

Leclair was no mere epigone of Vivaldi, however, and develops his material much more extensively. The solo violin is more often placed in combat with the orchestra than as a colleague. The solo parts abound in sophisticated technical challenges: arpeggios, double and triple stops, bariolages, leaps and virtuoso figuration. At these points Locatelli's influence is manifest, especially in the first movements of Op.7 Nos. 2, 3 & 6, and Op.10 Nos. 2 & 5. The orchestral writing is grand and weighty in character, the inner voices finely wrought, and Leclair handles counterpoints in assured fashion in the Allegro non troppo of Op.7 No.2.

However, for all his deep familiarity with Italian music, Leclair remained French to the core. His technical prowess never descends into mere virtuosity for its own sake, making his music a telling embodiment of 'les Goûts réunis', or the 'reunited tastes' of French and Italian styles, which became an aesthetic rallying-cry for the age. Few French musicians of the 18th century were as appreciated, admired and hailed during their lifetime as Leclair. In 1753, he was held up in *Mercure de France* as 'the most famous artist that France has had for purely instrumental music'. Key to his success, perhaps was the consistency of his style, which was as advanced in 1723 as it was old-fashioned in 1753.



Founded by Igor Ruhadze, Violini Capricciosi is a European ensemble dedicated to performing virtuoso violin repertoire. The members of the ensemble are well-known musicians active in Europe in the field of historical performance practice who have received prizes in national and international competitions. The combination of knowledge of historical performance practice with versatility and technical ability enables Violini Capricciosi to perform music of different styles and periods, from the Baroque through to the present day. The musicians play on original instruments or exact copies, as well as on modern instruments, depending on the requirements of the music. The repertoire of Violini Capricciosi focuses on well-known but rarely performed music as well as composers almost forgotten in the present day. **Igor Ruhadze** graduated from the Moscow Central Music School and the Moscow State Conservatory with distinction in 1996. Since 1999 Igor Ruhadze has resided in the Netherlands. In 2002 he graduated cum laude from the Amsterdam Conservatorium with a specialty in baroque and classical violin.

At the age of 12 he began his career as a solo violinist, performing the Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No.5 with the Odessa Symphony Orchestra. He has performed as a soloist with various orchestras and ensembles performing repertoire from early Baroque to contemporary. His interest in baroque music led him to become concertmaster of the first baroque orchestra in Russia, the Moscow State Classic Capella, a position he held for seven years. As a member of the Taneyev Trio, Igor Ruhadze was in 1996 awarded first prize as well as a special prize for the best trio. The ensemble was also awarded the public prize in the International Taneyev Chamber Music Competition. In 1997 he won third prize at the Locatelli Baroque Violin International Competition in Amsterdam and in 1999 the Diploma of the Musica Antiqua competition in Bruges.

In 1996, he became a teacher of solo violin at the Moscow Conservatoire and the Moscow Central Music School and in 2002 he began teaching baroque violin and baroque orchestra there. In 2006, Igor Ruhadze worked as a guest teacher at the Amsterdam Conservatorium. Igor Ruhadze has performed throughout Europe and the USA. In addition, he is concertmaster of Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg and The Bach Orchestra of The Netherlands, with whom he recorded the St Matthew Passion by Bach for album and DVD, and took part in the Dutch film *Erbarme Dich* directed by Ramón Gieling. *Erbarme dich* has been shown throughout European cinemas and on Dutch TV.

Igor Ruhadze is a member of several chamber music ensembles and is the founder and leader of Violini Capricciosi. Igor Ruhadze has recorded numerous albumss of both chamber music and solo repertoire for a number of labels. His collaboration with Brilliant Classics has yielded well-received albums of Locatelli (94358) and Biber (95291), impressing listeners with his warm tone and virtuoso playing on scordatura violins. He plays a violin by C Jacobs, Amsterdam 1693, kindly provided by Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds (NMF).

