

PROGRAM

Ouverture in G major, Op. 13, No. 1 (1753) Jean-Marie Leclair
for two violins and basso continuo (1697–1764)
Grave–Allegro, Andante, Minuetto: Non troppo Allegro

Sonata in G major, WK 155 Carl Friedrich Abel
for viola da gamba solo (1723–1787)
Allegro, Adagio, Menuet, Adagio

**Remarks on the work of New Hope International
by George Brown, President
and Alexandra MacCracken, director of Ensemble Gaudior**

Sonata in E minor, Op. 3, No. 5 (1730) Leclair
for 2 unaccompanied violins
Allegro ma poco, Gavotta: Andante gratoso, Presto

Suite No. 3 in D minor (1682) Robert De Visée
for guitar solo (c. 1655–1732/33)
Prelude, Allemande, Courante,
Sarabande, Menuet, Bourée

Trio Sonata in D major, Op. 13, No. 2 (1753) Leclair
for two violins and basso continuo
Adagio, Allegro, Sarabanda: Largo, Allegro assai

New Hope International partners with churches in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to help them fulfill the Great Commission by strengthening families, making disciples of children and youth, and caring for orphans. The main countries where New Hope is active are Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine. New Hope believes that by God's design, families are the primary influence in nurturing and guiding the next generation toward maturity and that the church is the second most important influence. Thus, New Hope works closely with churches to provide support, training, and resources for establishing successful marriages and families.

New Hope has been welcomed for years into public schools in Eastern Europe to speak with youth about substance abuse and abstinence. Ever since Communist times, New Hope has had an active program of Christian summer camps in East European countries. New Hope is also one of the largest publisher of Sunday School materials in Eastern European languages. As members of God's family, reconciled by the cross, New Hope wants to contribute to unity within the Church and pursues its ministry work across denominations.

You are invited to visit the information table in the narthex to learn about New Hope's ministries and short-term mission opportunities. Contributions are welcomed and may be made in the narthex by cash, credit card, or check to New Hope International.

New Hope would like to offer special thanks to Reverend Mark Shaltanis and Secretary Linda Fekete of St. Paul's Lutheran Church for their hospitality in hosting this concert, as well as to the three churches sponsoring it: Heritage Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, Virginia, Vienna Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia, and National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.

PROGRAM NOTES

Our concert is built around three pieces of chamber music written in France during the early decades of Louis XV's long reign by one of the country's leading violin virtuosos at the time, Jean-Marie Leclair, who died 250 years ago last October. Interspersed between these are unaccompanied solos for the members of our basso continuo team, inevitably by other composers because Leclair himself never wrote pieces specifically featuring either the viola da gamba or plucked-string instruments such as the guitar.

After a period of study in Italy with a pupil of the great Arcangelo Corelli, Leclair returned to France, where he soon became an internationally-famous performer and composer, at various times employed at the courts of France and the Netherlands as well as by a wealthy Dutch commoner and a member of the French nobility. From 1733 to 1737 Leclair held the position of *ordinaire de la musique du roi*, before resigning in a dispute with his rival, Jean-Pierre Guignon, over the directorship of the king's orchestra. (The two initially agreed to alternate monthly, with Leclair leading off, but after the first month he resigned rather than, quite literally, play second fiddle to Guignon.)

Leclair's Opus 13, the final collection of his music published during the composer's lifetime, contains three sonatas and three overtures, all scored for two violins and basso continuo. Four of the six pieces are known to be reworkings of earlier compositions, while the remaining two overtures are thought to have been written for performances at the private theater of the Duc de Gramont, for whom Leclair was working at the time they were published, in 1753. The Overture in G major begins with a classic French overture (in which a slow introduction is followed by a lively fugal section), continues with a through-composed slow movement, and concludes with a pair of minuets, the second in a contrasting minor key.

Carl Friedrich Abel is often described as the last professional soloist on the viola da gamba before that instrument finally yielded in popularity to the cello during the second half of the eighteenth century. Born in Germany (where his father had recently been a colleague of J. S. Bach at the princely court of Cöthen), he spent most of his career in England, where he was especially known for his skill at improvisation. Although most of his chamber music is scored for flute or violin, the several dozen surviving unaccompanied solos for his own instrument probably represent written-down versions of some of those spontaneous inventions with which he dazzled both noble and middle-class audiences.

Leclair's two collections of violin duets were dedicated to wealthy amateur violinists who studied with him. As in his solo sonatas, these pieces often include double stops (two notes played simultaneously on adjacent strings) and chords, which give them a fuller texture than many other such works; however, they lack the technical displays typically found in the more public genres of accompanied sonatas and concertos. Rarely heard today either in concerts or on recordings, these duets are usually in three bipartite movements, sometimes including one based on a dance rhythm, such as the central Gavotte of the present Sonata in E minor.

Robert de Visée was appointed chamber musician to Louis XIV about 1680, and two years later published a book of compositions for the guitar, noting in its dedication to the king that "my pieces have had the good fortune to be heard favorably by His Majesty and his whole court." By the time a second volume appeared, in 1686, de Visée had become one of the king's favorite musicians, performing regularly in his private chambers; starting in 1695 he also gave guitar lessons to his royal employer, though he did not receive the official title of *Maître de guitare du roi* until 1719, by which time the very young Louis XV had succeeded his great-grandfather on the French throne. Although De Visée also played and composed for the lute and theorbo, he is most highly regarded for his guitar music, which has been called "the apex of the French Baroque guitar literature." The pieces heard this evening are taken from his 1682 publication and include examples of some of the most common dance types of the period.

We conclude with another selection from Leclair's Opus 13, a trio sonata in D major originally published some 25 years earlier as part of his Opus 2 set of (mostly) violin sonatas. There his preferred scoring was for flute or violin, solo viola da gamba, and basso continuo, but for the revised version he transposed the gamba part up an octave to create a second violin part. In form, the piece follows the typical baroque pattern of four movements in alternating slow and fast tempos, with the third being once again based on a standard dance rhythm, in this case the sarabande.

—Thomas G. MacCracken