

APPENDIX C: LECTURE RECITAL SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to my doctoral lecture recital. For my project, I transcribed Jean-Marie Leclair's *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2 for the modern oboe and provided an accompanying research paper with suggestions for appropriate French Baroque performance practice on the modern oboe. I chose this work of Leclair's as a means of highlighting his importance as a transitional composer during the late-Baroque period. By balancing both the French and Italian national styles, Leclair offers an accessible work for those who are more familiar with the Italian Baroque style and wish to begin exploring some aspects of the French Baroque style. I would like to begin this lecture with a brief overview of the late-Baroque during Leclair's time.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Late-Baroque and the Influence of Louis XIV and Louis XV

There are two distinct musical periods in which the French Baroque can be defined, coinciding with the reigns of Louis XIV (1661-1715) and Louis XV (1715-1774). These periods are respectively known as the *Louis Quatorze Style Period* (to c. 1726) and the *Louis Quinze Style Period* (after c. 1726). Leclair was a composer of the *Louis Quinze Style Period*.

The reign of Louis XIV was marked by his fixation with supreme control over all things including music and the arts. This control was reflected in the French Baroque compositional style, featuring music that was marked by refinement, elegance, and restraint. The emphasis during this style period was clarity of articulation and fine control in executing various ornaments rather than virtuosity. Though he was supportive of music during his reign and had a strong influence on French music making, Louis XIV's time on the throne was quite oppressive and restrictive, keeping foreign musical influences at bay.

The death of Louis XIV in 1715 further accelerated the direct change in French musical

style, which took place gradually from 1700 to 1730. Immediately after his death, an unexpected shift and favoritism towards the virtuosic music of the Italians occurred, prompting French composers to start pressing the demands of solo instruments in their new compositions. The absence of the domineering Louis XIV encouraged some French court composers to look beyond their own interests, marking a significant time of transformation and growth fueled by their intrigue with foreign musical styles and genres.

Louis Quinze Style Period

Louis XV became king at the age of five in 1715 after the death of his grandfather, Louis XIV. Due to his young age, he was not crowned until 1723. Soon after the coronation of Louis XV, musical performances shifted from the court to public concerts. One particular venue, the *Concert Spirituel*, became the principal location of non-operatic works in Paris. The *Concert Spirituel* allowed the Parisian public to hear music and performers who had previously only been heard at the royal court. Additionally, the *Concert Spirituel* introduced new genres and artists from abroad to public audiences. During this period, Italian virtuosity was dominant throughout Europe with many Italian musicians traveling and performing throughout the continent.

The accessibility of Italian Baroque musicians and their performances fueled French curiosity toward creating works that showcased the brilliance demonstrated by the Italians. One genre that was influenced by the Italian arrival was the French solo sonata. There was a major shift in which the French sonata took on a new form similar to the Italian sonata. This new sonata followed the slow-fast-slow-fast four-movement Italian *sonata da chiesa* scheme, and it featured a combination of lightness, nonchalance, and frivolity with grace. These new style characteristics were in direct contrast to the depth and sincerity of the old *Louis Quatorze Style*. The *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2 is firmly rooted in the *Louis Quinze Style* due to its mixture of French and Italian national styles.

The Life of Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764)

Jean-Marie Leclair was born in Lyon on May 10, 1697, the oldest of six siblings, five of whom were musicians. He is often referred to as “the elder” to distinguish him from his younger brother who was also known as Jean-Marie. Leclair spent his formative years as both a dancer and violinist. In 1726, Leclair’s travels took him abroad to Turin where he studied violin under Giovanni Battista Somis, who was a former student of Corelli. Leclair also traveled to Amsterdam where he had contact with the Italian violin virtuoso Pietro Locatelli. Jean-Marie Leclair’s encounters with these Italian violin virtuosos likely had a profound impact on his use of the Italian style in his French Baroque compositions.

During the late-Baroque, the idea of mixing French and Italian styles was not a foreign procedure. French contemporaries of Leclair such as François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau were borrowing the elegant lyricism of the Italian style and incorporating it into the melodies of their instrumental and vocal works. However, Leclair’s inclusion of the virtuosic Italian violin writing into the French solo sonata was exclusive to his compositional style. Most of Leclair’s works are instrumental pieces that feature the violin as the primary instrument. His publications span the years 1723-1753 and consist of thirteen opus numbers.

Leclair was 46 years of age when he published his final collection of solo sonatas, the *Fourth Book of Sonatas for Violin and Basso Continuo*, Op. 9. He was at the height of his career as a violinist and composer. Each sonata in the *Fourth Book of Sonatas for Violin and Basso Continuo*, Op. 9 features extreme technical difficulty of the violin part and the most adventurous harmonic complexity Leclair had attempted at the time of its publication in 1737.

The Opus 9 sonatas, including the *Sonata in E minor*, present a distinctive French flavor characterized by simple rhythms and textures, use of binary form with sectional repeats, and comparatively little sequential passage work. Many of the works in Opus 9 demonstrate a preference for dance-inspired forms such as the *Allemande*, *Sarabande*, and *Minuet*. Leclair incorporates Italian elements such as the Corellian virtuosic and florid writing and ornamentation

in the two fast movements and models the sonata after the four-movement Italian *sonata da chiesa* form. This pronounced expressive subjectivity placed Leclair on a pedestal of his own as a French solo sonata composer and made it difficult to solely label him as a late-French Baroque composer. The sonatas in Leclair's Opus 9 are for solo violin or occasionally solo transverse flute where indicated.

LECLAIR'S SONATA IN E MINOR, Op. 9 no. 2: AN OVERVIEW

The *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2 incorporates surprising turns in the melodic line, fragmented cadences, and unexpected modulations. The influence of the Corellian and Italian violin virtuoso style of training can be seen and heard throughout the *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2, juxtaposed with the French national style and musical elements.

I will now explain and demonstrate some of the Italian and French elements, along with any pre-Classical "surprises" in each movement of the *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2.

Overview of Predominant Italian Elements Used in Leclair's Sonata in E minor, Op. 9 no. 2

→ (MOVE TO SLIDE 2- LIST OF ITALIAN ELEMENTS)

The list of Italian elements used in Leclair's *Sonata in E minor* overshadows the amount of French elements used in the *Sonata*. These traits illustrate the profound influence the Italian style had on his compositional writing. Throughout the *Sonata*, Leclair uses:

- binary form
- chains of suspensions, triplets and sequences
- individual motivic themes for each movement
- Italian expression and tempo markings
- written out ornamentation
- repetitive motor rhythms
- virtuosic violin writing
- clear, diatonic harmonies with few borrowed chords
- movement-specific traits.

Overview of Predominant French Elements Used in Leclair's Sonata in E minor, Op. 9 no. 2

While Leclair was primarily writing in the Italian style during the latter part of his life, it was apparent that he still valued his French nationality and roots, taking the liberty to precisely indicate the way he intended this work to be performed. The Italian style emphasized a freer,

more improvisational approach to performance while the French style was strict and more refined. Leclair honored his heritage by providing written instructions in his foreword to the *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2: → (TAB TO SLIDE 3, ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF LECLAIR'S *AVERTISSEMENT*... READ THIS)

All those who should be desirous of executing this work in the spirit of the author should endeavor to seize the character of each piece, as well as the true tempo and the quality of sound, which is appropriate to the various movements. One important point, upon which one cannot insist too greatly, is to avoid that confusion of notes which one adds to vocal and expressive compositions, and which only serve to disfigure them. It is no less ridiculous to alter movements consisting of two complementary rondeaux, playing the major more quickly than the minor: it is indeed felicitous to enhance the major by the manner in which it is played, but this may be done without forcing the tempo...
-- Jean-Marie Leclair (1738 in Paris)

The “confusion of notes” Leclair refers to could be interpreted as his description of the improvisational and florid embellishments of the Italian style. While he employed the Italian practice of writing out the ornamentation, Leclair nevertheless used and kept the spirit of the short, refined French *agréments* in his works. The use of *agréments* is just one aspect of the French style that Leclair uses throughout the *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2.

→ (MOVE TO SLIDE 4 ON PREDOMINANT FRENCH ELEMENTS)

Along with the use of *agréments*, Leclair includes the French practice of largely stepwise melodies, dance-themed movements in open binary form (meaning that the first section cadences on the dominant), and *notes inégales*. He also uses the French language for performance instruction of the piece in his *avertissement*. I will now highlight and demonstrate the way Leclair uses both Italian and French national styles in each movement of the *Sonata*. → (MOVE TO SLIDE 5 HERE FOR THE FIRST MOVEMENT)

First Movement- *Andante*

Andante (Italian for walking)

(A movement in moderately slow tempo, perhaps not as slow as an adagio)

In the first movement, Leclair uses a motivic theme based on a recurring rhythmic pattern. The use of a motivic theme for each movement is a trait specific to the Corellian/Italian style of writing. Regarding the French elements, I will discuss and demonstrate the main *agrément* and its variations that are realized in this movement: the *tremblement* (or trill) and the variations—the *tremblement ouvert*, *tremblement fermé*, and *cadence pleine*.

Italian Elements: → (SHOW SLIDE 6 WITH EXAMPLE FROM M. 1 of the *ANDANTE*)

Melodically speaking, Leclair employs the Italian practice of using a single motivic idea for each movement. In the case of this particular movement and the second movement, Leclair is using a small rhythmic motive. For the *Andante*, the rhythm is a quarter note slurred to two eighth notes by two small sixteenth notes. The small rhythmic motive acts as a storytelling device, adding a sense of drama through the sequencing that occurs in the harmony. The harmonic sequences help propel the tonality forward as seen in measures 27 through 32 of the *Andante*.

→ (SHOW SLIDE 7 HERE) **PAUSE**

French Elements: → (SHOW SLIDE 8 HERE)

The *tremblement*, or trill as it is referred to in modern musical terminology, is a quick oscillation between the principal note and its upper auxiliary. The *tremblement* is the most frequently used *agrément* in French Baroque music, often indicated by a stenographic “plus” sign (+) that appears above the note in Leclair’s *Sonata in E minor*.

Depending on the spirit and context desired in the moment where the *tremblement* is used, there are different ways in which this ornament could be interpreted, performed, or described. *Tremblements* were occasionally initiated on the principal note or the upper auxiliary. The matter of when to use an upper note or main note *tremblement* remains a controversial issue. Baroque scholars Frederick Neumann and Robert Donington had differing opinions on the issue.

Neumann supported the frequent use of main-note trills and argues against the "rule" of the upper auxiliary start while Donington believed the upper auxiliary start of the trill was the norm for mid-to-late baroque performance. This degree of uncertainty led to a wide variety of *tremblement* classifications available during the French Baroque. One principle remained true throughout: no matter the point of initiation, one must not repeat the same *tremblement* twice in a row. Leclair's *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 9 no. 2, uses both main-note and upper auxiliary trills, along with the following classifications of *tremblements*: the *tremblement ouvert*, the *tremblement fermé*, and the *cadence pleine*.

The *tremblement ouvert* is a *tremblement* with suffix notes that lead upward and connect to the next note with a *tour de gozier*. The *tremblement fermé* differs from the *tremblement ouvert* by direction; the two notes following the *tremblement* descend and connect to the next note with a *chûte* (French for "falling"). → (MOVE TO SLIDE 10)

The *cadence pleine* occurs when the upper auxiliary is expressed in ordinary notation as seen in this example. The note value and length of the upper auxiliary establishes the length in which the auxiliary is to be held before resuming the oscillations. This allows for a main-note trill to occur. In order to better hear this example, I will demonstrate it for you now. (PLAY EXAMPLE ON OBOE ONLY)

I will now perform the *Andante* in its entirety. → (PERFORM *Andante* HERE)

→(MOVE TO SLIDE 11 FOR SECOND MOVEMENT OVERVIEW)

Second movement- Allemanda: Allegro ma non troppo

Allemande: (French/German... Italian = Allemanda)

In solo violin music, the *Allemande* is a binary form dance movement in quadruple meter beginning with one or more upbeats and proceeding to cadences on downbeats in phrases of irregular lengths. The mood is serious and the tempo moderately slow. The Corellian *Allemandas* in Italy (and in the case of Leclair's *Sonata in E minor*) were more imitative and varied broadly in tempo from largo to presto.

The *Allemanda* in Leclair's *Sonata* is primarily rooted in the Italian style. Elements of the *canzona* are prevalent throughout including a clear subject with marked rhythmic character, alternation between polyphonic and homophonic sections, use of imitation, and slight variations at later subject entrances. Again, Leclair incorporates the reserved French *agréments* throughout this movement, but this time the attention will be focused toward the *port de voix*, *coulé*, and *coulades*. → (MOVE TO SLIDE 12)

Italian elements:

The *Allemanda* features elements of the fugal style *canzona*. Leclair presents a clear subject with a marked rhythmic character → (SHOW SLIDE 13 WITH RHYTHMIC MOTIVE) immediately at the opening of this movement, which was typical of the *Allemanda* design.

→ (SHOW SLIDE 14) Additionally, there are points of imitation between the solo line and the continuo, which further emphasizes the Italian flavor of the *Allemanda*. → (SHOW SLIDE 15) **PAUSE** → (SHOW SLIDE 16) Lastly, a variation of the opening rhythmic subject (the sixteenth-to-quarter note rhythm) can be seen here in measures 29 – 31 where the marked rhythmic character is persistently restated in the continuo. This adds to the character and dramatic effect of the movement by interrupting the forward harmonic motion and melody.

French elements: → (SHOW SLIDE 17 OF FRENCH ELEMENTS OVERVIEW)

In the interest of keeping a certain amount of restriction toward the ornamentation of this movement, Leclair enlists the use of French *agréments* again. In this movement, I will specifically discuss and demonstrate the following ornaments: the *port de voix*, the *coulé*, and the *coulade*.

→ (SHOW PORT DE VOIX SLIDE 18)

The *Port de Voix*

The *port de voix*, indicated in Leclair's *Sonata* as a small grace note, functions as a transitional *agrément*. The *port de voix* is executed by repeating the preceding note then slurring

to the main note as a means of “carrying the voice” to the next tone. This ornament should preserve any accidentals indicated on the preceding note.

It should be noted that the *port de voix* does not introduce any supplementary notes that are not already specified in the score; it only encompasses the main note and the preceding note. The *port de voix* itself is susceptible to infinite rhythmic variations and is governed by the French principle of *le bon goût*, meaning to perform the *agréments* in a way that preserves “good taste.”

Rhythmic interpretation of the *port de voix* was varied during the French Baroque. Some played it before the beat while others performed it entirely in the time of the main note. The *port de voix* acts as a harmonic intensifier, creating dissonance when performed on the beat. It is therefore my opinion that an on-beat interpretation of the *port de voix* would be appropriate for Leclair’s music.

Concerning the rhythmic performance of the *port de voix*, the period authors are rather ambiguous. Of this uncertainty, Baroque scholar Putnam C. Aldrich suggests “the ambiguity cannot always be laid to the inability of the authors to calculate the correct time values of the notes; the ambiguity is frequently intentional, introduced with the express purpose of allowing the performer a certain latitude in their interpretation of the ornament.” Exact rhythmic precision of the *agréments* was not as important to the French as it was to the Italians. The principle of *le bon goût* remained prevalent and performers were expected to exercise good judgment in their rhythmic realizations of the *agréments*. To further clarify, one could not obtrusively distort the time, meter or phrase; to do such would be considered “bad taste.” Therefore, all rhythmic realizations of the *agréments* in this demonstration should be used as a consideration and not as the final say. → (MOVE TO SLIDE 19 ON COULÉ)

Coulés

The *coulé* is a descending appoggiatura indicated in Leclair's compositions as a small grace note. This *agrément* appears in two forms in instrumental music: The first, the standard *coulé*, is a repetition of a preceding note at some other interval above the main note. The second, the *tierce de coulé*, acts as the middle note between two notes of the melody that form the interval of a descending third. Like the *port de voix*, the function of the *coulé* is one of transition. Melodically, the *coulé* is an appoggiatura, but rhythmically and harmonically it behaves similar to a passing tone. It does not receive any stress or emphasis that is customarily heard with the *port de voix*, and the *coulé* is always slurred to the following note. Leclair uses both types of *coulés* in his *Sonata*. An example of the *standard coulé* can be seen on the fourth beat of measure 1 in the *Allemanda*. An example of the *tierce de coulé* can be seen on the third beat of measures 43 and 44.

The *Coulade* → (MOVE TO SLIDE 20)

The *coulade* is an instrumental scale passage that joins two distant tones to connect them more pleasingly. The *coulade* can ascend or descend and is often illustrated in the music using large notes. An example of this ornament from Leclair's *Sonata* can be seen in measures 43 and 44. I will now perform the *Allemanda* in its entirety. → (PERFORM ALLEMANDA)

Third movement- Sarabanda: Adagio

Sarabande: French (Italian = Sarabanda)

→ (MOVE TO SLIDE 21 FOR OVERVIEW)

The *Sarabanda* is a baroque dance movement in triple meter. In France and Italy, it was slow and majestic, characterized by an accented dotted note on the second beat, beginning without an upbeat and cadencing on the third beat. It was normally in binary form with regular four or eight measure phrases and simple melodies that invited florid ornamentation.

Italian elements: → (MOVE TO SLIDE 22)

The Italian element Leclair retains in the *Sarabanda* is the simply notated melodic line but without the elaborate ornamentation that was expected of the Italian style. Instead, Leclair uses the Italian practice of written out ornamentation, but the ornamentations are French *agréments*.

French Elements: → (MOVE TO SLIDE 23, then to SLIDE 24)

I have provided a view of the *Sarabanda* to visually highlight the French elements of phrase structure regularity (six phrases of four measures each) and the Sarabande rhythmic pattern that stresses the second beat. Out of all the movements in Leclair's *Sonata in E minor*, this movement is the most French in style and feel.

Pre-classical/Galant Elements:

The *Sarabanda* is the first movement where evidence of the Galant style can be seen. The melody is simpler and more song-like compared to the other three movements. Leclair was unaware of the so-called Galant style, which would eventually signify the end of the late-Baroque period, so I am marking his simplified, song-like melody as his own compositional experimentation.

I will now perform the movement in its entirety. → (PERFORM *SARABANDA*)

Fourth Movement- Minuetto: Allegro non troppo

Minuet: (French menuet... Italian: Minuetto) → (SHOW SLIDE 25 HERE)

Italian Elements:

The *Minuetto* in Leclair's *Sonata in E minor* is an elegant triple meter theme and variations dance movement in binary form. The theme → (SHOW SLIDE 26 HERE) from measures 1 – 20 is characteristic of the Italian minuet, featuring regular phrases constructed of four-measure units, beginning without an upbeat and cadencing on the strong beat. The straightforward melodic design did not encourage elaborate ornamentation or contrapuntal texture. The melody progressively becomes more virtuosic with each variation through

diminution of the rhythmic values of the previous theme. The first variation → (SHOW SLIDE 27) as seen here has been reduced to triplets while the second variation → (SHOW SLIDE 28) is further diminished to virtuosic sixteenths, typical of the Italian violin virtuoso writing style. The second variation was originally intended for violin, as indicated in the score, but optional flute cues were provided later as a means of making the variation more accessible for the flute. Many modern recordings omit the second variation as the virtuosic writing is suited more toward the violin and allows for few places to breathe. I have adapted the second variation to suit the modern oboe by tastefully moving some of the material to the continuo to provide opportunities to take breaths.

French Elements: → (SHOW SLIDE 29 HERE)

Notes inégales

The theme of the *Minuetto* is the only movement in Leclair's *Sonata in E minor* where the French practice of *notes inégales* could be implemented. → (SHOW SLIDE 30 HERE)

Notes inégales is the unwritten practice of performing sets of notes (usually eighth notes) in an uneven, long-short rhythmic configuration. The application of *notes inégales* is most suitable to eighth notes that proceed in a stepwise fashion. The performer would do well to embrace the flexibility and liberty inherent in the practice instead of attempting to execute the *notes inégales* in a rigid, mathematically proportionate manner. The practice of *notes inégales* can be compared to the modern practice of swinging notes in jazz. George Muffat's codification of *notes inégales* states that it is the first level of diminution (in this case, the theme of the *Minuetto*) that is subject to the inequality procedure.

With these guidelines in mind, *notes inégales* would only apply to the theme (mm. 1 – 46) of the *Minuetto*. I will demonstrate the measures where one could apply notes inégales. (PLAY EXAMPLES FROM MM. 1, 5, 19, 21, 24, 33, 35, 37, 39 – 42)

Leclair stays true to the spirit of the *Minuetto* and uses few *agréments* throughout. I will now perform the *Minuetto* in its entirety including the optional second variation as adapted to modern oboe. (PERFORM *MINUETTO*)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I encourage modern oboists to incorporate the music of Jean-Marie Leclair and other late-French Baroque composers into their repertoires. In order to create a historically informed performance of any work from the French Baroque, modern performers must not limit themselves to a rigid set of rules. It is unlikely that composers of the French Baroque performed their ornaments in the exact same way they instructed in their treatises and tutors. Rather, modern oboists would do well to embrace the flexibility of the late-Baroque period while honoring any performance guidelines provided by the composer. Before concluding, I would like to thank my accompanist, Dr. Lillian Buss Pearson for her collaboration and assistance in bringing this project to life. Thank you all for coming to my lecture recital this afternoon. We now have time for a few questions.