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FESTIVAL DE **lanaudière**



A BAROQUE CELEBRATION

PRESENTED BY

 **Desjardins**

Théotime Langlois de Swarte,
baroque violin

William Christie, harpsicord

AUGUST 2, 2022 | 8:00 PM

Église de Sainte-Mélanie

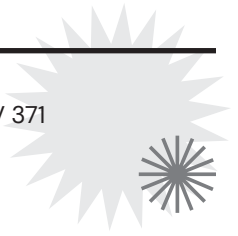
A BAROQUE CELEBRATION

PROGRAM

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Sonata for Violin and Continuo, Op. 1 No. 13 in D major, HWV 371

- I. Affettuoso
- I. Allegro
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegro



Jean-Baptiste Senaillé (1687–1730)

Sonata for Violin Op. 1 No. 5 in G minor (Book 1)

- I. Preludio : Largo
- II. Allemanda : Allegro
- III. Adagio
- IV. Gavotta : Allegro

Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764)

Sonata for Violin Op. 1 No. 5 in A major (Book 1)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Sarabanda : Largo
- III. Giga : Presto

Jean-Baptiste Senaillé

Sonata for Violin Op.1 No. 5 in C minor (Book 1)

- I. Preludio : Adagio
- II. Gavotta
- III. Giga : Allegro

Jean-Baptiste Senaillé

Sonata for Violin Op. 3 No 10 in D major (Book 3)

- I. Adagio
- II. Allemanda : Allegro
- III. Gavotta : Largo
- IV. Allegro assai

Jean-Marie Leclair

Sonata for 2 violins Op. 3 No. 5 in E minor (transcription)

- I. Gavotte : Andante grazioso

Jean-Marie Leclair

Sonata Op. 2 No. 2 in F major (Book 2)

- I. Adagio
- II. Allegro ma poco
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Jean-Baptiste Senaillé

Sonata Op. 4 No. 5 in E minor (Book 4)

- I. Largo
- II. Corrente : Allegro
- III. Sarabanda : Largo
- IV. Allegro

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Sonata Op 5 No. 12, *La Folia*

THÉOTIME LANGLOIS DE SWARTE, VIOLIN

WILLIAM CHRISTIE, HARPSICHORD

PROGRAM NOTES

The Baroque sonata and the illustrious Corelli

Instrumental music saw an unprecedented surge in the Baroque period (1600 to 1750). Music for instruments rivaled with vocal music, which up to that time had almost completely dominated the Western European repertoire since the Middle Ages. Now, vocal forms had to vie with new ones showcasing virtuoso instrumentalists. Broadly speaking, this was the context in which the sonata emerged during the early decades of the 17th century. At first, the sonata genre was rather loosely defined in terms of both instrumentation and structure, gradually arriving at a fixed standard. It was only toward the end of the century that the sonata crystallized in the works of Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli, who was phenomenally influential in all parts of Europe despite his relatively limited in volume contribution to the repertoire in respect of volume (only 6 opus numbers). Corelli's sonatas enshrine the violin as the cardinal Baroque instrument and command a structure that subsequently became the norm: a sequence of several discrete movements that alternate between slow and swift tempos. While some sonatas comprise 3 or 5 movements, the archetypal structure consists of four: slow—fast—slow—fast.

Most of the sonatas heard on today's program follow this four-movement structure, including George Frideric Handel's Sonata in D major (HWV 371). It is not surprising that Handel should follow in Corelli's footsteps, considering that the two musicians met in Rome in 1706 and even performed together. It was chiefly in England, where Handel spent most of his career, that the cult of Corelli's works flourished and endured: his sonatas were printed there, played, and studiously imitated by local composers. An author of the time noted the "exquisite pleasure" of listening to Corelli's pieces. Ironically, the only work on the program that breaks with the tradition of the multi-movement sonata is a piece by Corelli himself! The twelfth and last sonata of his opus 5 is, instead, a series of variations on the theme of *La Folia*, of Renaissance origin. The relatively simple sequence of chords in *La Folia* became a veritable standard in the Baroque period, one that all musicians worth their salt could improvise on. Thus, many composers displayed their inventiveness and ingenuity using the theme of *La Folia* in this way, and Corelli's offering stands among the most accomplished, with its numerous changes of tempo and metre and its dialogues between the instruments. In addition to demonstrating the full breadth of Corelli's genius, this work opens a window on the improvisational gifts and technical brilliance of one who is often regarded as the first great master of the violin.

France and the "goûts réunis"

Unlike England and other European countries, France tenaciously resisted the charms of Italian music. The French maintained a national opera that eschewed any foreign influences, and because of this stance, it was in the sphere of chamber music that the Italian style gradually flowed into France—needless to say, via Corelli's compositions. Rather than fully embrace the new Corellian practices, however, French composers undertook a fusion of styles. François Couperin's collection *Les goûts réunis* (1724) makes explicit this desire to consolidate the best elements of French and Italian national styles. The collection concludes with a piece titled *L'Apothéose de Corelli*, not merely an imitation, but more of an homage demonstrating that Italian and French flavours do indeed pair well.

This ideal of "goûts réunis" ("blended tastes") is wonderfully exhibited in violinist and composer Jean-Baptiste Senaillé's five collections of violin sonatas. Senaillé was firmly established in the French musical tradition: in 1713, he assumed the position that his father had held before him as one of the 24 Violons du Roy, a famous and distinguished French musical institution. His sonatas certainly embrace Corelli's four-movement structure, but they also retain their strong French identity. In fact, before the advent of the sonata, the instrumental genre *par excellence* in France was the dance suite. Hence, not only do most of the movements in Senaillé's sonatas bear the conventional Italian tempo indications (Allegro, Adagio, Largo), but they also cite the kind of dances on which they are modelled (Allemanda, Corrente, Sarabanda, Gavotta, Giga). Despite their Italianized names, reflecting the ever-expanding influence of Italian music, these sonatas are essentially traditional French dance suites. The recourse to dance suites as a model for sonata movements shows the centrality of the choreographic art in France throughout the Baroque period and permitted a fusion of the two national styles.

Jean-Marie Leclair is considered as the first great French violin virtuoso, a reputation he enjoyed during his lifetime. His music harnesses all the instrument's technical capacities, but such virtuosity always benefits and supports his refined and elegant musical discourse. Leclair's catalogue is more extensive and varied than Senaillé's, comprising fifteen opus numbers of instrumental pieces (violin sonatas, trio sonatas, concertos), and an opera. The direct influence of Corelli, which we can clearly discern with composers of the previous generation such as Senaillé, gradually faded with Leclair. If anything, Leclair brought to completion his predecessors' ideal of a synthesis of Italian and French national styles. So consummately did he integrate these various influences that one of his contemporaries wrote, "Leclair is the first person who, without imitating anything, created beautiful and new things which he could call his own."

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Benoit Brière

A passionate spokesperson

Mr. Brière is basically wedded to classical music, given that his spouse is a cellist—and in addition, Joliette-born. “A person who marries must adopt their wife’s hometown.” One might say that our Spokesperson is steeped in classical music everyday from morning to night!

“Don’t search for me this summer: I’ll be at the Festival de Lanaudière.”

Get to know him, his passion for acting and the importance of music in his everyday life. [READ+](#)

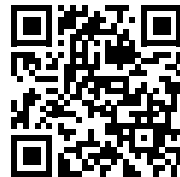


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