Paris program and notes

Julie Andrijeski, violin
Steven Zohn, flute
Beiliang Zhu, viola da gamba
Michael Unger, harpsichord
Deborah Fox, theorbo

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767):
Nouveaux Quatuour #1 in D TWV 43:D3 (Paris 1738)
- Prélude – Vivement
- Tendrement
- Vite
- Gaiement
- Modérément
- Vite

Marin Marais (1656-1728):
Suite No. 3 in F Major, Book 4 (1717)
- Prélude
- Allemande
- Gavotte
- Gigue
- Chaconne

Michel Blavet (1700-1768):
Sonata op. 2 no. 2 in d minor (1732)
- La Vibray. Andante
- Les Caquets. Gavotta. Moderato
- Sarabanda. Largo
- Allegro

Louis Couperin (c.1626-1661):
- Allemande "La Précieuse" (Ms. Bauyn, c.1660)
- Chaconne

Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729):
Sonata #3 in F major (1707)
- [untitled]
- Presto
- Aria
- Adagio

Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764):
Chaconne *from* 2ème Recreation de Musique, op. 8 (1737)

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Program Notes

Welcome to the start of our season! We start our musical year in Paris in the decades around the turn of the 18th century, in the reigns of Kings Louis XIV and Louis XV. Paris was a growing urban center, soon to become the second largest city in Europe. As the city expanded to accommodate an influx of people from all classes, it was a study in contrasts: mansions and palaces for the wealthy and the nobility were being constructed, as well as beautiful public monuments, parks, and squares. On the other hand, ordinary citizens lived in crowded conditions and suffered under the increasing inequalities of French society and the economy, which would lead to the Revolution at the end of the century.

Along with the surge in population, there was an accompanying surge in the humanities and the arts, and a growth in intellectual trends with the ideas of the Enlightenment and the expansion of the Academy of Science. Our program today reflects the variety and artistry of the period. Much of it, of course, was fueled at the **court** in Versailles, outside of Paris, by the musicians in royal service, including Marin Marais. But the home ***salon*** became a favorite activity in Paris, as an intellectual gathering to discuss the new ideas of the Enlightenment, and for the latest entertainment from musicians in the city; Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's salons were well known and it is entirely likely that the sonata we will hear today was first performed in her salon in the early 1700s. In another important development, one of the first **public concert series**, the *Concert Spirituel*, was founded in 1725, and indeed, the Telemann Quartet on our program was first performed there.

As a self-styled "grand partisan de musique française," **Georg Philipp Telemann** had long desired to visit Paris when the opportunity finally arose in the fall of 1737. Now in his mid-fifties and well established as Director of Music in Hamburg, he undertook the journey at the invitation of "leading Parisian virtuosos," as he recalled. Telemann appears to have regarded his seven-month visit (spanning October 1737–May 1738) as the capstone to his career—though he would continue to live and compose for almost thirty more years. Another purpose for the trip was undoubtedly to stem the flow of unauthorized reprints of his music that had been appearing for years. To this end, the composer obtained a twenty-year royal publishing privilege, with which he issued three sets of instrumental music. He also composed a Latin motet that was performed twice at the Concert Spirituel series to great effect, and composed a number of other vocal and instrumental works that have since been lost. The most significant of his Parisian publications was the *Nouveaux quatuors* for flute, violin, viola da gamba or cello, and continuo ("new," because they were a sequel to a set of earlier quartets). Telemann observed that these works "found exceptionally attentive listeners at court and in the city, and quickly earned me a nearly universal honor, which was accompanied by great courteousness." They sold well, too. Among the hundreds of subscribers to the publication were many prominent musicians, including Johann Sebastian Bach. As French dance suites, the *Nouveaux quatuors* naturally appealed to a Parisian audience. But it was probably their Italianate stylistic elements—then all the rage in the French capital—that may have won them the most adherents. The first suite opens with a prelude that alternates improvisatory music with concerto-like solo writing for the three melody instruments. Among the following dances, only some reference the standard ballroom types, and none are identified as such. Telemann is more interested here in musical contrasts between movements, and highlighting the instruments through ever-shifting alliances. As a result, the music is equally enjoyable to play, listen to, and watch. (SZ)

The 18th century was a time when the bass viol (or gamba) came into its own as a solo instrument, after the consort aesthetic of the renaissance period. **Marin Marais,** unlikely protagonist of the movie *Tous les matins du monde,* was even in his own day known as a virtuoso viola da gamba player. He spent nearly fifty years employed as a musician at the court in Versailles, playing in the various orchestras, and in chamber music for the nobles. Marais composed five books of music for 1-3 viols, comprising over 500

pieces arranged mostly in suites of dances and character pieces. Today's suite follows his typical form of an improvised-sounding prelude followed by several dance movements, and ending with a glorious chaconne.

Michel Blavet was the leading French flutist of his time, holding principal positions in Paris' Concert Spirituel, the Musique du Roi (King Louis XV's personal music ensemble), and the Paris Opéra. He appears to have acted as Telemann's Parisian publishing agent for the *Musique de table* (1733), and participated in the first performances of the *Nouveaux quatuors*. He was presumably among the "leading Parisian virtuosos" who invited Telemann to the city. In 1752, he published six of Telemann's duets for violins, flute, or oboes. As a composer, Blavet wrote mostly for flute (sonatas, duets, and a concerto), though he is also credited with four operas. The Italianate orientation of his Sonata for flute and continuo in D minor, published in his op. 2 (1732), is clear both from the movement titles and the music's style. However, the opening *Andante* and the third-movement *Gavotta* bear characteristic French titles, "La Vibray" possibly evoking the town of Vibraye in northwestern France, and "Les Caquets" ("chattering" or "cackles") likely referencing the almost incessantly running notes in the flute part. (SZ)

Louis Couperin, born in Chaumes-en-Brie, southeast of Paris, moved to Paris around 1650, most likely with the assistance and guidance of Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, a musician at the court of Louis XIV in Versailles. When Chambonnières was relieved of his duties at court (reportedly due to his refusal to play figured bass, or continuo), the position was offered to Couperin, who refused it. While Couperin played at Louis XIV's court on numerous occasions, his work was centered in Paris where he had been appointed organist at the church of Saint-Gervais in 1653.

Nearly ninety percent of Couperin's surviving works are dance movements, idiomatic to the sonorities of the seventeenth-century French and Flemish harpsichords, while also demonstrating an attempt to adapt lute style to the keyboard. The two principal surviving manuscript sources for his works date from after his death. The Bauyn MS is likely from the last decades of the seventeenth century, and is among the most significant sources for earlier seventeenth century harpsichord repertoire in France. (MU)

Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, from a musical family, was a child prodigy and was presented at court as a child, where she performed for the King, who "derived much pleasure from hearing her play the harpsichord". He put her into the care of his mistress the Marquise de Montespan, where she was educated and also performed often for the courtiers and the King. She played organ and harpsichord in the royal Chapel, and also likely in the concerts in the King's private apartments. The King favored her with his patronage throughout her life by allowing her to dedicate her published music to him. After 1680, she left the court to return to Paris, where she started a series of concerts, or *salons*, in her home. She was one of the first French composers to adapt the Italian sonata to the French style, and to publish a set of "sonates". The F-major sonata is slightly unusual in form, and reflects Jacquet de la Guerre's own unique musical style, beginning with a simple melodic F-major scale, and ending with a slow movement.

Known during his lifetime as the "French Corelli", **Jean-Marie Leclair** was renowned as both a virtuoso violinist and a composer. Leclair performed at the new public Concert Spirituel in Paris, and also worked at the court of Louis XV and for the Princess of Orange in the Hague. He met a brutal end with his unsolved murder, possibly by his ex-wife or a musical rival. His works include many violin sonatas for 1-2 violins, and theater music. His two *Recreations de musique,* from which this chaconne comes, are suites of dances which can be adapted for different instruments.
--- *DF, with SZ and MU*

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