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Program Notes For A Viola Recital

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PROGRAM NOTES FOR A VIOLA GRADUATE RECITAL

by

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B.A, Western Illinois University, 2012

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Music

Department of Music

in the Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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Graduate School
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TITLE: PROGRAM NOTES FOR VIOLA GRADUATE RECITAL

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Metiney Moore

This research paper provides extended program notes relating to the pieces performed on Victoria Moore's Graduate Viola Recital, which was presented on May 12, 2016. Pieces performed on the recital were Darius Milhaud's *Quatre Visages for Viola and Piano Op. 238*, George Enescu's *Concert Piece for Viola and Piano*, Henri Vieuxtemps *Sonata for Viola and Piano in B-flat Major Op. 36*, and Jean-Marie Leclair's *Sonata for 2 Violins in B-flat Op. 12 Op. 6 (arr. for 2 Violas)*.

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CHAPTER 1

QUATRE VISAGES FOR VIOLA AND PIANO OP. 238

By Darius Milhaud

Darius Milhaud was a Jewish composer born in Aix-en-Provence, France on September 4, 1892. His introduction to music stemmed from his family's musical background. His mother was a great contralto singer and his father, an amateur pianist. Starting at the age of three, Milhaud was able to play piano duets with his father, which he noted gave him "a sense of rhythm."¹ At age seven, Milhaud began violin lessons, quickly advancing to a level in which he was playing second violin in his teacher's quartet. Deeply inspired after playing a quartet by Claude Debussy, Milhaud took up theory and composition lessons in 1905. Although he grew to great success as a violinist in his youth, Milhaud chose to dedicate himself to his true passion – composition.²

Milhaud studied composition and violin at the Paris Conservatoire with composers Paul Dukas and Vincent d' Indy. It was at the Conservatoire where he became highly skilled in the use of French counterpoint. He also was greatly impacted by his exposure to works by Fauré, Ravel, Koechlin, Satie, Bloch, Magnard, and Wagner. Magnard had the greatest impact on Milhaud as a composer. In his autobiography, Milhaud states "...[the music of] Magnard helped me to find my own path."³ In 1918, after spending two years in Brazil due to World War I, Milhaud returned to

¹ Darius Milhaud, *Notes without Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953) 14.

² Grove Music Online, s.v. "Darius Milhaud," (by Jeremy Drake), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/1864> (March 14, 2016).

³ Darius Milhaud, *Notes without Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953) 14.

Paris where he eventually became a member of a varied group of French composers named Les Six.⁴

In the wake of World War II, Milhaud fled to the United States where he accepted a teaching position at Mills College in 1940. He also taught at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, and at a summer school, now known as the Aspen Music Festival, in Aspen Colorado.⁵ In addition to his position at Mills College, Milhaud also accepted a position at the Paris Conservatory after 1947 dividing his time between both countries.

Milhaud wrote over 400 compositions, including 12 symphonies, 18 string quartets, two major works for piano, several vocal works, and music for radio, film, and theatre. His compositions can be found in almost every genre. Milhaud's compositional style is not as simple to define due to his many inspirations from different styles, folk music, and experiences from different countries.⁶ During the two years he spent in Brazil, he composed several works inspired by Brazilian folk music. *Le boeuf sur le toit*, and *L'Homme et son désir* are two of his most popular works during his stay in Brazil. In remembering the Holocaust, Milhaud composed *Le château de feu*, his most dramatic work. Milhaud also used his birthplace of Provence as settings for his ballet *Le carnaval d' Aix*, and the opera *Les malheurs d'Orphée*; his rendition of the popular baroque opera *L'Orfeo* by Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi.

From 1920 to 1926 Milhaud was heavily influenced by American jazz. His first introduction of jazz happened in London while listening to Billy Arnold and his jazz band. After hearing black jazz in Harlem, NY he was in awe of how “against the beat of the drums, the

⁴ Naxos Music Library, “Darius Milhaud,” Accessed April 10, 2016, <http://libsiu.naxosmusiclibrary.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/composer/btm.asp?composerid=24635>.

⁵ Grove Music Online, s.v. “Darius Milhaud,” (by Jeremy Drake), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/1864> (March 14, 2016).

⁶ Ibid.

melodic lines crisscrossed in a breathless pattern of broken and twisted rhythms.”⁷ Milhaud’s *La création du monde* is a mixture of jazz and classical characteristics and has a prominent fugue section, and his works *Kentuckiana* and *Carnival à la Nouvelle-Orléans* feature elements of American tunes.

Darius Milhaud’s *Quatre Visages* (Four Faces) for viola and piano Op. 238 (1942-43), was dedicated and commissioned by his good friend Germain Prévost, the founding violist of the Pro Arte Quartet. Prévost was a native Belgian, and graduated from the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles.⁸ Milhaud wrote this piece “because [Germain] loves friends, youthful faces, and music.”⁹ The pieces are based on four imaginary women – inspired by places both men traveled to in their life: California, Wisconsin, Brussels, and Paris. The first face, *La Californienne* (The Californian), portrays the feeling of Californian lifestyle. Figure 1 shows the opening melodic line in the viola part that alternates between ascending and descending lines in a gliding motion.¹⁰

Figure 1



The piano part accompanies the viola with a “waltz – like” feel and has its own melodic line that parallels the viola (see figure 2).

⁷ Grove Music Online, s.v. “Darius Milhaud,” (by Jeremy Drake), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/1864> (March 14, 2016).

⁸ Katherine Black, “Selected Works for Viola of Darius Milhaud (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1999) 14.

⁹ Darius Milhaud, *Notes without Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953) 302.

¹⁰ Katherine Black, “Selected Works for Viola of Darius Milhaud (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1999) 14.

Figure 2

The image shows a musical score for Alto and Piano. The tempo is marked "Modéré" with a quarter note equal to 76 (♩ = 76). The Alto part is in treble clef and the Piano part is in bass clef. Both parts feature continuous sixteenth notes. The Alto part starts with a piano (p) dynamic. The Piano part starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes a fermata over the first measure.

The Wisconsinian, marked “*Vif et gai*” (bright and gay), consists of continuous sixteenth notes. Milhaud may have associated this movement with “...the industriousness of the European farmer settlers of that Midwestern state.”¹¹ *La Bruxelloise* is another example of Milhaud’s use of polytonality. It is also a slow movement that could be analyzed as being constructed in a ternary form. The first A section is from mm.1-16. Milhaud writes this melody as a fugue. The piano begins the movement with the melody, and then the viola enters in m. 2 with the same melody (see figure 3). This fugue-like melody continues until the beginning of the B section in m. 17.

¹¹ Katherine Black, “Selected Works for Viola of Darius Milhaud (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1999) 25.

Figure 3

Figure 4 shows the beginning of the B section where the viola takes control of the new melody. The piano accompanies the viola line with steady chromatic ascending and descending eighth notes alternating between the two hands of the pianist.

Figure 4

Milhaud made some alterations in the return of the A section. When the viola enters with the melody in m. 30, still in the same fugue form, the melody is written two octaves lower. In mm. 38-39 the viola the melody jumps up a fourth (f-natural to c-flat), rather jumping down a fourth

(g to d-flat) in mm. 10-11. At the end of the movement, Milhaud inserts a small section (mm.50 – 55) that has the same melodic characteristics as the end of the Belgium National Anthem.¹²

The last movement, *La Parisienne*, is very energetic and flashy. Milhaud writes this movement in a more traditional style. The rhythmic pulse is steadier, and the harmonic construction is more centered. Milhaud masks the “simple” framework by including a lot of advanced compositional techniques, which give the movement its sparkle. Milhaud’s use of the time signature is considered one of the techniques used in this movement. It moves back and forth between 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4, which sometimes makes the rhythmic pulse unclear. He also layers this with complex rhythms, alternating clefs, dynamic changes, false harmonics, and various ornamentations.

¹² Katherine Black, “Selected Works for Viola of Darius Milhaud” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1999) 25.

CHAPTER 2

CONCERTSTÜCK “CONCERT PIECE” FOR VIOLA AND PIANO

By George Enescu

George Enescu (French spelling - Georges Enesco) is known for being one of the most prominent Romanian violinists and composers of the 20th century. His compositions reflect his deep-rooted love for Romanian folk traditions, and his admiration for the styles of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner.

Enescu was born on August 19, 1881 in Dorohoi, Romania. Described as a child prodigy, by the age of six he had learned to play the violin and piano and started his first compositional work. At the age of seven, he began his studies at the Conservatory of Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. There, Enescu took theory and composition lessons from Robert Fuchs. He also learned how to play the cello and the organ. Enescu later attended the Paris Conservatoire in 1895 at the age of thirteen.¹³ Throughout his career, he was able to play and collaborate with some of the greatest musicians and composers. This includes Brahms, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Eugene Ysäye, and Ravel.¹⁴ In addition to his success as a violinist and composer, he also grew to great acclaim as a conductor. Enescu’s American conducting debut was with the Philadelphia Orchestra in the early 1920s.¹⁵ Enescu lived in both Paris and Romania before World War I, which later forced him to permanently move to Paris, where he died in 1955.

¹³ Grove Music Online, s.v., George Enesco (by Noel Malcom and Valentina Sandu – Deiu) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08793> (March 14, 2016).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Melia Watras, “Short Stories,” Melia Watras. 2008. Accessed April 10, 2016. <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/31880/4267.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

Enescu compositions can be found in a variety of genres and obtain elements of his blend of influences. He wrote “having a German education as a main building block, and living in Paris which I love with all my heart, being a Romanian by birth—I am essentially international”.¹⁶ Not everyone took an interest in his compositions. Enescu wrote:

Some people were intrigued and bored that they weren't able to catalogue and classify me in the usual way. They couldn't exactly establish what sort of music I was writing. It wasn't the French one, Debussy-style, it wasn't exactly the German one, they said. To make it short, although it doesn't sound foreign, it doesn't resemble too much with anything familiar, and people are bored when they cannot classify someone.¹⁷

One the contrary, Enescu's Concert Piece is one composition that removes the ambiguity from his compositional style. It depicts his virtuosic techniques and melodic language derived from his Romanian folk-heritage. One of these folk songs is called *Donia*, “... a type of meditative song, frequently melancholic, with an extended and flexible line in which melody and ornamentation merge into one.”¹⁸ To further reiterate his obsession with the melodic line, Enescu states, “I'm not a person for pretty successions of the chords... a piece deserves to be called a musical composition only if it has a line, a melody, or, even better, melodies superimposed on one another.”¹⁹

Enesco composed the Concert piece for viola in 1906 as a showpiece for a competition he was invited to judge by Gabriel Fauré, one of his composition teachers at the Paris

¹⁶ Renea, Simina Alexandra, “*George Enescu's Concertstück for Viola and Piano: A theoretical Analysis Within the Composer's Musical Legacy*,” PhD diss., Southeastern Louisiana University, 2011) 5, Google Scholar.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ Grove Music Online, s.v., George Enesco (by Noel Malcom and Valentina Sandu – Deiu) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08793> (March 14, 2016).

¹⁹ Renea, Simina Alexandra, “*George Enescu's Concertstück for Viola and Piano: A theoretical Analysis Within the Composer's Musical Legacy*,” PhD diss., Southeastern Louisiana University, 2011) 5, Google Scholar.

Conservatoire. It was dedicated to the viola professor, Théophile Laforge, who was also the principal violist of the Paris Opera.²⁰ This piece is very technically demanding and exhibits the full range of the viola.

Enescu composes the piece in Sonata Allegro Form:

1. Exposition-*Assez animé*
2. Development-*Anime*
3. Recap- mm. 134-189
4. Coda-mm .190- to the end.

It starts with a quick two bar introduction in the piano before the viola enters as part of the main theme in measure 3. Enescu divides the first main theme in three different sections – *Grave*, *Gracieux*, and *Bein Morque*. Each characteristic change moves from long legato line to a faster dance-like material, which is made apparent in the piano part.²¹

Figure 5

The image shows a musical score for Viola and Piano. The top system is for the Viola, and the bottom system is for the Piano. The Viola part starts with a two-measure introduction, followed by a main theme in measure 3. The score is divided into three sections: 'Assez animé', 'Grave', and 'Gracieux'. The Viola part is in the upper staff, and the Piano part is in the lower staff. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, mp, p), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (Ped., *).

The exposition and recapitulation display all the elements of the *Dania* influence as well as his virtuosity. The first main theme consists of a melancholy lyrical melody, which shows flexibility with shape and rhythm, and measures 10 and 13 (Figure 6) act as the ornaments

²⁰ Renea, Simina Alexandra, “George Enescu’s Concertstück for Viola and Piano: A theoretical Analysis Within the Composer’s Musical Legacy,” PhD diss., Southeastern Louisiana University, 2011) 95, Google Scholar.

²¹ Ibid., 96.

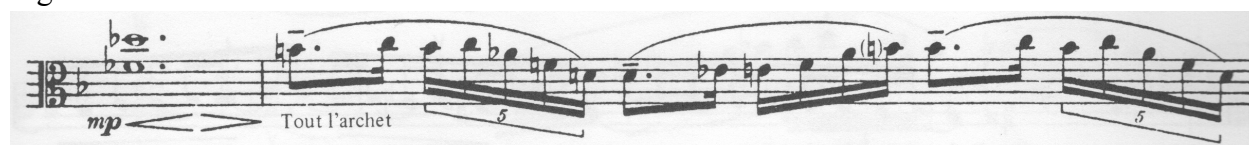
merged into the melodic line. Enescu adds a fast chromatic triplet passages to conclude the thematic material and dazzle the audience. The same construction appears in the second theme's appearance in m. 58. Some alterations were made in the second theme. The melodic line is infused with an accompanying voice in the form of chords, and the ornamentation in mm. 70 – 71 is more clearly defined.

Figure 6



Throughout the piece, there are portions of the viola part that “...contain many tone-color effects reproducing the sound of woodwind and plucked instruments.”²² The transition from the first theme to the second theme could arguably pose as an example of a woodwind sound, specifically the sound of a clarinet. Enescu creates this sound by adding the dynamic marking of *mezzo piano* under the measure with the chord, and indicating *Tout l’archet* “all bow” in the next measure. The chromaticisms, and the upward and downward arch of the passage adds to the effect.

Figure 7



The “plucked instrument” effect mentioned earlier, could arguably come from the opening three measures of the development section, *Animé*. The first four eighth-notes are played at the heel of the bow, *Au talon*, while the rest of the passage is to be played at the tip of the bow in a

²² B. Kotlyarov, *Enesco*, (Neptune City, New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1984) 218.

hammered fashion – *Martelé, de la pointe*. The hammered bow resembles the sound of the performer plucking the notes rather than using the bow.

Figure 8



In addition to the previous mentioned techniques, Enescu also includes false harmonics, and unique bowings patterns. Enescu placement of accents makes the melodic pulse feel uncertain and almost “free formed” although the piece is clearly mark in 3/2 time. This is another example of Enescu’s use of the *Donia* style.

CHAPTER 3

SONATA FOR VIOLA AND PIANO IN B-FLAT MAJOR OP. 36

By Henri Vieuxtemps

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881) was born in Belgium and was primarily known for being one of the most prominent Romantic virtuoso violinists and composers of the 19th century. He was born into a musical family. His two younger brothers both played the piano and cello, and Vieuxtemps was first taught violin at the age of four by his father, who was an amateur violinist and violinmaker. After his first successful performance debut at age six, Vieuxtemps toured Holland and Belgium. In Brussels, he met the violinist Charles Bériot and later studied with him and Antonin Reich at the Paris Conservatoire. During his time at the Conservatoire, he spent his time listening and studying the great master violinists of his time. His favorite was the most prominent Italian virtuosic violinist of the early Romantic era – Niccolò Paganini. The majority of Vieuxtemps' life was dedicated to touring. He toured throughout Europe and three times to America. In 1871 he started teaching at the Brussels Conservatoire succeeding his friend and former teacher, Charles de Bériot. His most successful students were Eugène Ysaÿe, and Jenö Hubay. His performance career ended in 1873 after his first stroke paralyzed his right arm. He later died after his fourth stroke in 1881.

Throughout his performance career, Vieuxtemps won the hearts of many esteemed musicians and composers. His playing displayed beautiful tone and virtuosic right and left-hand technique. Hector Berlioz shared his thoughts on his playing in an interview stating that Vieuxtemps "... does things that I have never heard from any other; his staccato is brilliant, delicate, radiant, dazzling; his double-stop singing rings extremely true; he braves dangers that are frightening to the listener, but that move him not in the least, sure as he is of emerging from

them safe and sound; his fourth string sings with a voice full of beauty.”²³ The famous 19th century singer Pauline Viardot wrote, “ If we might permit ourselves a musical simile, we would say that [Vieuxtemps] is the Beethoven of all the violinists.”²⁴ Other well-know artists that praised his playing include Richard Wagner, Robert Schumann, and Niccolò Paganini.

Vieuxtemps mostly performed pieces that he composed for himself. In fact, he wrote 60 pieces for the violin, including seven violin concertos.²⁵ His compositional style combines virtuoso technique with heightened expressive melodic lines in both the solo instrument and orchestra/piano parts, pulling away from the 18 century classical concerto style which helped develop a new form – the romantic virtuoso style. In addition to his violin concertos, Vieuxtemps also wrote several smaller pieces for violin and piano, one opera, two cello concertos, and several chamber pieces. Vieuxtemps flourished on the viola as well as the violin. He often played viola in quartets while on tour, and transcribed cadenzas for solo performance. In his later years, he composed five works for viola. His biggest and most popular composition is the Sonata for Viola and Piano in B-flat major op. 36.

According to L. Ginsburg, the sonata genre is one of Vieuxtemps least favorite genres; he wrote only one violin sonata, and two viola sonatas – one is unfinished. The sonata form seemed too strict for his taste. The construction of his viola sonata in B-flat mostly follows the simply form and exhibits the virtuosic and romantic qualities as his other works.²⁶

The sonata has three movements: *maestoso- allegro*, *barcarolle*, and *finale scherzando*. The first movement of the viola sonata opens with a luscious, somber *maestoso* section. This

²³ L. Ginsburg, *Vieuxtemps* (Neptune City, New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1984) 24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57

²⁶ L. Ginsburg, *Vieuxtemps* (Neptune City, New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1984) 97.

section explores the deep rich timbre of the bottom two strings of the viola, the C and G string. From the very first note, the performer is presented with the virtuosic demands of the piece. Although the first nine measures consist of whole notes, Vieuxtemps indicates the tempo at quarter note equals 69, and gives a dynamic marking of *piano* (see figure 9). An advanced student would most likely start this movement in the third position on the C string with the least favorable finger, the fourth finger. This, combined with the dynamic and tempo marking at the beginning, creates a challenge when trying to produce the right tone quality and a sustained smooth bow for the melodic line in the right hand. In the restatement of this melody from mm. 26-35, Vieuxtemps adds a flashy turn-trill figure in m. 34.

Figure 9



This section then transitions into an *allegro* section constructed in the form of a scherzo. An unusual feature of this movement is that the first theme of the exposition is not presented until the 58th measure of the piece. Normally, one would find the first theme of an exposition within the opening of a sonata. The *maestoso* section, in addition to the first 22 measures of the *allegro*, acts as an introduction. Throughout this movement, Vieuxtemps includes many advanced playing techniques, which gives it its virtuosic character. For example, the eighth-note passage that is presented during the second theme from mm. 119-122 is later expanded on in the development from mm. 173-189 (see figures 10 and 11). This section, written under long slurs, requires smooth bow changes and difficult left hand shifts.

Figure 10

Figure 10 shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff begins at measure 115 and the bottom staff at measure 120. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte).

Figure 11

Figure 11 shows three staves of musical notation, starting at measure 172 and ending at measure 183. The music consists of continuous sixteenth-note passages, many of which are grouped in triplets. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo).

Vieuxtemps also includes various fast paced triplet passages. The first can be found at the beginning of the *allegro* section and throughout the movement. The second version can be found from mm.129-132 (see figure 12). The triplets are tied to a quarter note and should be played *sul C*, or on the c string, as indicated. Later in the recapitulation, the second version reappears with some alterations from mm. 271-274 (see bottom of figure 12). The passage expands beyond the c string and the separate notes are played staccato.

Figure 12

Figure 12 shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff, starting at measure 137, is marked *marcato* and *p* (piano), and includes the instruction *sul C* with a dotted line above the notes. The bottom staff, starting at measure 271, also begins with *p* and features staccato triplet passages.

Figure 13 shows the last virtuosic triplet passage that starts from mm. 137-141 and its reappearance from mm. 279-288.

Figure 13

Figure 13 shows a musical score in G minor, featuring various ornaments and dynamic markings. The score is divided into four systems of staves:

- System 1 (Measures 132-138):** Starts with measure 132, marked *p*. It includes a *cresc.* marking and a *f* marking. Measure 138 is marked *f*, *sf*, and *sf > p*.
- System 2 (Measures 276):** Starts with measure 276, marked *cresc.* and *f*.
- System 3 (Measures 281):** Starts with measure 281, marked *f*.
- System 4 (Measures 285):** Starts with measure 285, marked *energico*.

The second movement is a free flowing *barcarolle* in g minor.²⁷ Vieuxtemps wrote long lyrical melodies mixed with different ornamentations that sometimes make the viola part seem improvisational. This is illustrated in the opening theme of this movement.

Figure 14

Figure 14 shows a musical score in G minor, featuring various dynamic markings and ornaments. The score is divided into five systems of staves:

- System 1 (Measures 1-9):** Starts with measure 1, marked *Andante con moto* and *♩ = 48*. It includes a *p con melancolia* marking and a *dim.* marking.
- System 2 (Measures 9-17):** Starts with measure 9, marked *cresc.* and *dim.*.
- System 3 (Measures 17-24):** Starts with measure 17, marked *p* and *mf*.
- System 4 (Measures 24-30):** Starts with measure 24, marked *sf* and *mf*. Measure 30 is marked *pizz.* and *p*.

²⁷ L. Ginsburg, *Vieuxtemps* (Neptune City, New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1984) 97.

The last movement, *Finale Scherzando*, is where Vieuxtemps brings the complexity of his virtuosity to a close. After the introduction of the melody in the piano, the viola enters with a flashy eight bar passage filled with grace notes and chromatics leading into the opening theme. This gives the piece its playful characteristics.

Figure 15

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff, starting at measure 20, contains a fast chromatic passage with sforzando (*sf*) dynamics. The third staff, starting at measure 24, includes dynamics *p*, *con grazie*, and *pp*.

Fast chromatic passages appear frequently in this movement, usually used to connect one melodic idea to another. The end of the movement (figure 16), Vieuxtemps combines a variety of techniques leading to a rapid close. There are sixteenth note spiccato passages mixed with grace notes, slurred chromatic passages, all of which end with a 10-measure sixteen-note double-stop passage.

Figure 16

173 *cresc.*

177 *f*

183 *f* *sul C*

188 *dim.* *p*

192 *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

196 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

200

205 *più f*

209

213

CHAPTER 4

SONATA FOR 2 VIOLINS IN B-FLAT OP.12 NO. 6 (ARR. FOR 2 VIOLA)

By Jean-Marie Leclair

Before his 19th birthday, French composer Jean-Marie Leclair (1697 – 1764) had already conquered the skills of ballet, violin, and lacemaking. He became the principal dancer and ballet master in Turin, Italy in 1722. He also studied violin with Giovanni Battista Somis, one the great baroque era violinist and composers. Nicknamed “the Elder” Leclair was the oldest of 4 brothers who also made careers as composers and violinist. Leclair’s career as composer began in 1723 when he acquired patron Joseph Bonnier. During this time, he also completed his first publication of his Op. 1 sonatas, which were highly praised. “One person wrote Leclair is the first person who, without imitating anything, created beautiful and new things, which he could call his own.”²⁸ Leclair’s violin playing was also praised. Baroque writer J.W Lustig wrote the Leclair “played like an angel.”²⁹ He “employed extreme rhythmic freedom and moved is listeners by the beauty of his tone...”³⁰

In his arsenal of compositional works, Leclair has two books of sonatas for two unaccompanied violins, four books of sonatas for violin and continuo, five sets of recreations for two violins and continuo, and one opera. He his known for founding the French school of violin playing, combining the styles of the Italian and French sonatas. Specifically, his sonata construction resembles the works of Corelli and Lully. Leclair also developed left-hand and right-hand technique to include vibrato, double-stop trills, double stops, slurred bow staccatos,

²⁸ Grove Music Online, s.v. “Jean-Marie Leclair,” (by Neal Zaslaw), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/1622pg1?q=jean+marie+leclair&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

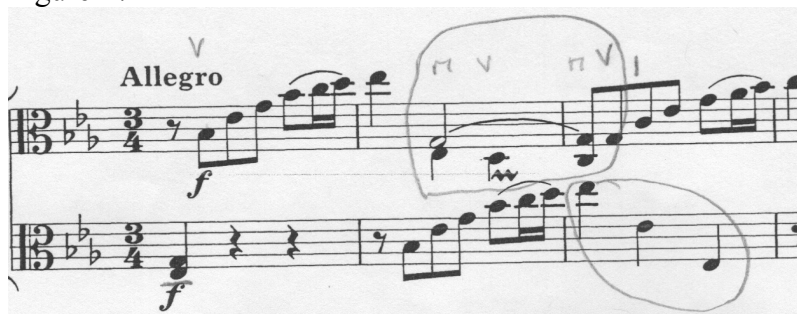
²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

and swift string crossings. He also “worked out his own ornamentations and sometimes required the use of notes [unequal].”³¹ Some of these techniques can be found in his Sonata for 2 Violin in B-Flat Op.12 No. 6 (arr. for 2 violas).

The sonata has four movements: *Allegro*, *Allegro moderato*, *Andante*, *Allegro non-presto*. Each viola line mimics the other almost like a fugue; the first viola always starts each movement and enters with the new thematic material. In the first movement there are several passages with double-stops, and swift string crossing in both parts. There are also double-stop trills, but Leclair only writes them in the first viola part throughout the movement. The second viola part is simplified (see Figure 17). The opening melody in the second movement is five measures long and consists of written-out ornamentations. The second movement, *andante*, contains ascending and descending scale passages while the last movement has an upbeat dance feel due to its 6/8 time signature.

Figure 17



³¹ Grove Music Online, s.v. “Jean-Marie Leclair,” (by Neal Zaslaw), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/1622pg1?q=jean+marie+leclair&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

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