

**Jean-Marie Leclair: Sonatas
Troisième Livre de Sonates op. 5
Sonatas Nos. 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8**

John Holloway: violin; Jaap ter Linden: violoncello; Lars Ulrik Mortensen: harpsichord

ECM New Series 2009

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This is playing that fizzes with intelligence, combining intensity, percipience and drama in equal measure.

Peter Quinn, International Record Review, reviewing John Holloway's recording of the complete unaccompanied works by Bach (2006)

Lacemaker, dancer, ballet master, violinist, composer. Founder of the French violin school and a typical exponent of the "mixed tastes" of Italian and French compositional styles. Wayfaring virtuoso and victim of a never fully elucidated murder in his own garden in Paris: Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764) is one of the most fascinating figures in French music history. He was famous for the rare beauty of his sound on the violin and for the originality of his compositions in which, according to his contemporaries, he created "new things which were entirely his own." In today's concert life, though, Leclair is all but forgotten.

John Holloway now offers a strong plea for Leclair's violin sonatas. "The best violinist-composers write things for the instrument which non-violinists normally don't trust themselves to do, they explore colours and shades in a quite unique way", says Holloway in an interview for this CD's booklet. Leclair is a logical step after his exemplary recordings of works by Corelli, Schmelzer, Biber, Veracini and others. However, conceiving of his trio as a partnership among equals, it is not the demonstratively virtuosic pieces Holloway is most interested in, but, rather, sonatas with elaborate chamber music qualities and ambitious contrapuntal settings. Thus Leclair can be discovered here as a remarkable composer of truly universal works which reach far beyond the confines of specialists' violin music.

Holloway: "What I find most fascinating with Leclair is his sense of colour through harmony. In his opus 5 he achieved his ultimate synthesis, especially the first seven or eight sonatas for me form the peak of his writing for violin and basso continuo. While the later works are much more interested in technical display, in the early ones he still seems to be finding his way." Born in Lyon, Leclair absorbed the Corellian sonata model through his studies with Giovanni Battista Somis in Turin but imbued the form with a distinctly French flavour. In John Holloway's words, "Leclair is French in his attention for sheer beauty, in a way of saying things of great seriousness in a light and beautiful way but also in his interest in slightly uneven phrase lengths which produce interesting harmonic possibilities."

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The Holloway-trio's discography has so far encompassed a multiple award-winning recording of the complete chamber music by Dietrich Buxtehude (Da Capo) and a selection of sonatas by Francesco Maria Veracini on ECM New Series.

John Holloway (born 1948) is one of the great pioneers in the field of baroque music; his extensive work as leader of the London Classical Players and his years as featured soloist with the Academy of Ancient Music, the Taverner Consort and the Freiburger Barockorchester established him as a major voice. Holloway's ECM recordings with works by Biber, Schmelzer and Muffat won general critical praise, the 2004 release "Der Türken Anmarsch" was Gramophone Editor's choice. His most recent release was the complete sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin by Johann Sebastian Bach (ECM New Series 1909/10; 2006). In 1999 Holloway was appointed professor for violin and chamber music at the Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber in Dresden.

Danish harpsichodist **Lars Ulrik Mortensen** (born 1955) studied with Trevor Pinnock and collaborated with artists such as Emma Kirkby before embarking on a successful career as a conductor. He is artistic director of both Concerto Copenhagen and of the European Baroque orchestra. Like Holloway a multiple prize-winner, he too commands a staunch following.

The Dutch cellist **Jaap ter Linden** (born 1947) enjoys a stellar reputation as one of the most prominent interpreters of baroque music. He was a co-founder of the ensemble Musica Da Camera and principal cellist of the Musica Antiqua Köln, the English Concert and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. He performs chamber music with pianist Ronald Brautigam, violinists Elizabeth Wallfisch and Andrew Manze and harpsichordist Richard Egarr. Japp ter Linden teaches at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, at the Amsterdam Conservatory and at the Hochschule für Alte Musik in Würzburg.

Useful Links:

<http://www.johnholloway.org/>

<http://www.jaapterlinden.com/>