

INTRODUCTION

The Composer and the Music

Lelio Colista was born in Rome on January 13, 1629 and died there on October 13, 1680. His father's connections with the Vatican Library and the Rome University may have aided the quality of his musical education and the beginnings of his career. In addition to being a composer he was a performer on lute, theorbo, guitar. He is said to have known and performed with many of the eminent musicians of his day and was highly regarded and financially very well off.¹ He was reportedly a prolific composer, yet virtually all of his surviving music is in manuscript and within this corpus there are numerous issues of attribution.²

The source for the two pieces in this edition is the manuscript Giordano 15 in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Torino. This manuscript also contains music by Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, Alessandro Stradella and Archangelo Corelli.³ The pieces are in score format without instrumental designations.

The sinfonia in C consists of six sections. Although it would be incorrect to term it a variation work, most all of the sections are related both thematically and in terms of overall harmonic movement. The fifth section is perhaps the most contrapuntally developed and might be called an early "double fugue".

Five sections, framed by a short, rhetorical introduction and brief concluding coda, comprise the sinfonia in F. Here the most extensive contrapuntal development is in the second and fourth sections.

¹ Helene Wessely-Kropik, *Lelio Colista, ein römischer Meister vor Corelli; Leben und Umwelt* (Vienna, 1961), and *Lelio Colista: un maestro romano prima di Corelli* (Rome, 2002). The latter includes a thematic catalogue by Antonella D'Ovidio. Alberto Iesuè, "Lelio Colista," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 26 (1982). Online at: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lelio-colista_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/. Colista's church sonatas are discussed in Eleanor McCrickard, "The Roman Repertory for Violin before the Time of Corelli," *Early Music* 18 no. 4 (1990): 563–80, <https://doi.org/10.1093/earlyj/XVIII.4.563>.

² Peter Allsop, "Problems of Ascription in the Roman *Simfonia* of the late Seventeenth Century: Colista and Lonati," *The Music Review*, 50 (1989): 34–52.

³ A description of this source may be found in Wessely-Kropik, 133–4.