

# Anthology of 17th-Century Italian Instrumental Music

## General Introduction

### Rationale and Scope of the Anthology

The period ca. 1600–1700 witnessed the emergence and development of a new type of instrumental music for one to three instruments with and without basso continuo. This new repertory employed a variety of often interchangeable names: sonata, canzona, sinfonia, dances (“da camera” and “da ballo”), sometimes forming suites. It is the scope of this anthology to reflect the richness and diversity of this repertory, which encompasses works by well-known composers such as Rossi, Marini, Castello, Frescobaldi, Fontana, Buonamente, Uccellini, Cazzati, Vitali, Legrenzi, Bononcini, and Corelli. Many of the works by these composers are now available in modern editions. Consequently, the anthology’s primary intention is to supplement these available works with lesser known or unknown compositions and composers. We wish to bring much of this valuable music to light to be performed again, as well as help to provide more comprehensive historical insight into this rich century of instrumental music.

### Editorial Procedures

#### Clefs

Clefs used in the transcriptions are the G2 clef, C3 clef when convenient for the viola register, C4 clef when convenient for cello, trombone, and bassoon, and the F4 clef. The anthology does not use a transposing G clef. The original clefs are given as incipits on prefatory staves.

#### Barlines

Generally, barlines are absent in the sources except for continuo parts, where they may occur, but often occasionally and irregularly. Therefore, regular barlines have been introduced editorially in accordance with the mensuration signs (time signatures) and following modern conventions, *i.e.*, most often in  $\mathbf{c}$  and  $\mathbf{c}$  a whole-note barring is used. Double barlines have been added to indicate subdivision between duple and triple meter sections and are not annotated in the Critical Notes.

#### Mensuration signs

The original mensuration signs are retained. The relationship between sections in duple and triple time is often uncertain in this historical period, and a mathematically proportional relationship is not always necessary. Further confusion results from composers and printers often notating both *tripla* ( $3$  or  $\frac{3}{1}$ ) and *sesquialtera* ( $\frac{3}{2}$ ) with the same time signature of simply  $3$ . Such problems will be discussed and explained in the Performance Notes to the pieces in question.

#### Note values and pitches

The original note values are retained, except for a final *breve* or *longa*, which is substituted by whatever value will fill the final measure, with a fermata added above the final note.

In the Critical Notes pitches are identified according to the Helmholtz system, where middle C is  $c'$ .

## Beaming

Generally, the original beaming is retained, when the sources are manuscripts and engraved prints. In transcriptions from moveable type prints (where beaming is rare) beaming generally follows modern practice in accordance with the time signature of the music.

## Key signatures

The original key signatures are retained except for the omission of redundant flats and sharps.

## Accidentals

The purpose of the anthology is to combine a scholarly approach with practical performance usage, and this has determined the editorial policy with regard to the use of accidentals. Early seventeenth-century composers pose ambiguities for modern performers in the application of *musica ficta* and other editorial accidentals to their music. The performer may take a linear approach, treating each line separately even if such an approach leads to a number of cross-relations among the parts. This way of treating the *musica ficta*-problems has in several instances been the preference in the editions of this anthology. However, each ensemble will have to work out for itself its own preferences, keeping in mind that the composers themselves may not have been particularly concerned about cross-relations.

The anthology uses two types of staff (non-continuo) accidentals: 1. Normal-size accidentals on the staff. These are source accidentals or their modern equivalents. 2. Normal-size accidentals within parentheses on the staff. These are editorial additions.

1. All source accidentals, except for errors, are placed as normal-size accidentals on the staff. The common seventeenth-century convention, where an accidental remains in force only until a new pitch appears, is converted into modern notation; that is, any accidental introduced on the staff is valid for the remainder of the measure unless cancelled. This often requires: a) adding accidentals not found in the sources, in cases, for example, where modern notation requires the naturalization of a note which earlier in the same measure was inflected with an accidental in the source, or where adding barlines to an unbarred source makes it necessary for a note that has been inflected to be inflected again as it starts the next measure, b) deleting accidentals where modern practice makes some source accidentals redundant. Original flats and sharps of cancellation are rendered as naturals according to modern practice. Such alterations have been made tacitly throughout the anthology and are not reported in the Critical Notes.

2. All other editorial changes regarding accidentals, caused first of all by seventeenth-century remains of the *musica ficta*-practice, or caused by inconsistencies due to the composer or publisher, are placed in parentheses on the staff and reflects the editor's policy and judgment; they affect only the notes in front of which they stand.<sup>1</sup> Inconsistencies or exceptions from the basic convention that an accidental affects only the note in front of which it is placed are numerous, *e.g.*, the retrospective force of an accidental.

Precautionary accidentals are not used.

## Ties, slurs, articulation marks, dynamic marks, ornaments, fermatas, tempo indications

Editorial ties and slurs are indicated by dashed markings. Articulation marks, dynamic marks, ornaments, fermatas, and tempo indications are rendered as they appear in the sources. If a

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1. Examples of the remains of *musica ficta*-practice are given below in Jeffrey Kurtzman's paragraph on Performance Practice, pp. v-vi.

fermata does not appear in all of the parts at the same point in the partbooks the missing fermata(s) are added and annotated in the Critical Notes.

### **Colorations and ligatures**

Colorations are indicated by the double hooked dashed line. Ligatures, if any, will be indicated by the standard closed brackets.

### **Basso continuo**

The basso continuo is rendered without realization, and figures are placed below the staff for the continuo. The anthology retains the original basso continuo figures but normalizes inflected figures tacitly to figures with the accidental placed to the left (e.g., #4 and ♭6).

Editorial figures are placed in brackets and are added **only** in pieces where figures are already present in the sources. They are added sparingly and mainly in order to correspond to editorially added accidentals in the upper voices or where the original figures are incomplete, inconsistently used, or ambiguous in the source. In this music the chord preceding the final chord of a cadence with the bass falling a fifth or rising a fourth should always have a major third, even if figuration is lacking; if the minor third was desired, it was normally figured in the source. The final chord of a medial cadence may in many cases have a major third. The final chord of the final cadence typically contained a major third (Picardy third). Cadential figures are moved, if necessary, to their appropriate location.

### **Performance Practice** (*Jeffrey Kurtzman*)

Performance practice for music of the seventeenth century is a vast and complicated topic about which specialists have been writing for many years. Performance practice in music of this period encompasses the revival of the instruments themselves, with their sonorities and techniques of playing very different from their modern counterparts; tuning pitch and tuning systems different from current practice; interpretation of a notation whose meaning is sometimes unclear and ambiguous to us; unnotated accidentals, improvisation of harmony over the basso continuo; and improvised ornamentation in the melody instruments. The open-ended nature of seventeenth-century music, dependent far more on options and choices by performers than music of later periods has led to much study in trying to resurrect what this music must have sounded like in the hands of experienced seventeenth-century musicians. The bibliography at the end of this introduction lists the most readily accessible sources in English with information and recommendations on performance practice as well as philosophical aspects of early music performance for those who wish to learn more and try to reproduce the principal characteristics of this music.

Performance of seventeenth-century Italian instrumental music involves choices by the players that are based not only on the general characteristics of music of this period, but that also respond to the immediate musical situation: which instruments to use, questions and demands raised by a particular note, a particular notation, a particular continuo figure, a particular meter signature (mensuration sign) and its relation to others in the piece; whether to raise or lower a note at a cadence, or how to apply the traditional rules of *musica ficta*, still operative in the early part of the century.

Performers experienced in music of this period have already dealt with these problems and questions in every piece they have played, and have no need of assistance from the editor of the score or from me. But in an online format such as this anthology, there will be many less

experienced performers or even instrumentalists, especially students, who will be encountering music of this period for the first time. Many instrumentalists consulting this anthology will not have access to replicas of historical instruments, but will be reading this music on modern instruments, either out of curiosity, out of the search for new repertoire to perform, or simply to become acquainted, perhaps because of a class assignment, with music they have never experienced before. This anthology is just as much for them as for experts in the field.

To help serve these less experienced readers, I have provided performance practice notes and suggestions with each piece—specific to the issues raised in that particular piece. Even expert performers of this music disagree with one another on such questions as tempo, the relationship between separate sections in duple and triple meter, the nature of the continuo accompaniment (which varies with the type of continuo instrument) and the amount and character of improvised ornamentation. Thus, the observations and recommendations I make for each piece are not inscribed in stone, but rather to be taken into consideration by performers who feel unequipped or uncomfortable in making all these choices on their own. I hope these observations and recommendations will stimulate thought and experimentation so that performers can gain a sense of the options available to them, and, as they become more acquainted with music of this period, make their own, increasingly well-informed choices.

The most common continuo instruments used in Italy in this period were lutes, archlutes, chitarroni (the latter two both bass lutes), guitars, harpsichords of various sizes, and organs. Melody and bass instruments consisted most frequently of cornetti, recorders (*flauti*) of various sizes, transverse flutes, violins, violas (*viola da braccio*) of various sizes, violoni and trombones. When specified in the music, the most commonly indicated instruments are violins, cornetti and trombones, but treble and bass instruments were also readily interchangeable, substituting violins for cornetti, or a bass string instrument for a trombone (or vice versa).

In the performance notes I have not tried to explain how to play from the basso continuo. A very general idea of continuo playing at its beginning around 1600 may be derived from Lodovico Viadana's instructions to organists who accompany the voices in his *Cento Concerti Ecclesiastici* of 1602: "The organist is bound to play the organ part simply, and in particular with the left hand; if, however he wants to execute some movement with the right hand, as by ornamenting the cadences, or by some appropriate embellishment, he must play in such a manner that the singer or singers are not covered or confused by too much movement."<sup>2</sup> To this can be added Agostino Agazzari, *Del sonare sopra 'l basso con tutti li stromenti* of 1607: "One must play with great judgement, keeping one's attention on the body of voices; for, if they are many, one must play full harmonies and use more stops, but, if they are few, reduce the stops and play in few parts only, playing the work as simply and correctly as possible, and not with many florid passages and runs; but, on the other hand, supporting the voices by occasionally doubling the bass in the lower octave."<sup>3</sup> Continuo playing in the seventeenth century did not always involve the more elaborate four-part playing of the eighteenth century, but was often, as Agazzari tells us, depending on the size of the ensemble, only in three parts and sometimes in just two, and even parallel fifths and octaves were tolerated. In the Performance Notes to individual pieces, I have confined my observations and suggestions to specific questions raised by the harmony or the movement of parts in particular passages, including the application of *musica ficta* that is not already notated.

2. English translation from F. T. Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass*, 2 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1965, vol. 1, 11.

3. English translation *ibid.*, 70.

Tempo in this period was generally determined from the character of a piece or a section of a piece. Meter signatures could also be suggestive of tempo, with  $\text{C}$  usually implying a faster tempo than  $\text{c}$ . However, there is a distinction between tempo and pacing. Tempo is related to meter, but pacing is related to the size of note values. Therefore the perceived speed of a composition or passage will depend on both the tempo and the note values employed. There can be a wide variety of tempos from one piece to the next, and even a variety of tempos within an individual piece. I have only rarely made general tempo suggestions. Players should consider the nature of melodic lines, the rate of harmonic change, and the complexity of part writing in determining a suitable tempo. With respect to tempo relationships between sections of a piece in duple and triple meters, no theoretical treatise of the seventeenth century claims that they must be in a proportional temporal relationship to one another, although it is quite likely that performers often did establish such proportional relationships as part of their conception of the overall movement of a piece. In the Performance Notes for individual pieces, I have addressed the question of possible tempo relationships and how, if performers wish to consider such relationships, they might be practically applied in that piece.

The principles of sixteenth-century *musica ficta* were still in effect in the early seventeenth century, though composers gradually came to notate accidentals more precisely, no longer leaving them up to the experience and discretion of the player. The most fundamental rules of *musica ficta* were four:

1. At cadences, intervals of a third contracting to a unison were performed as minor thirds, while intervals of a sixth expanding to an octave were performed as major sixths (seventh scale degree as *subsemitonum modi*), which may also entail sharpening the sixth degree of the scale as well.
2. When the fifth degree of the prevailing mode moved upward to the sixth degree and back again to the fifth, that sixth was performed as *fa*, that is, a minor sixth a half-step above the fifths (*una nota super la, semper est canendum fa*).
3. Descending motion from the *finalis* of a scale was typically a flat seventh degree.
4. Melodic and harmonic tritones (*mi contra fa*) should be avoided. However, depending on the contrapuntal and harmonic context, it was not always possible to avoid tritones (altering one tritone could generate a new one), and in the early seventeenth century composers began explicitly notating tritones for particular expressive purposes.

Ornamentation can be classified according to two general types: (1) *passaggi* (scale-orientated passages) of varying lengths that fill in the gaps between lower and higher notes; and (2) *grazie* (“graces”) that encompass a variety of short ornaments, including cadential trills, designed to enhance the expressiveness of an individual moment in a piece. I have not attempted to suggest ornamentation; there are so many viable possibilities that it would be fruitless to do so. Instead, players interested in trying out improvised embellishments should consult the bibliography for sources that illustrate the types and variety of ornamentation commonly practiced in this period.

The editors and I are very conscious of the fact that every piece in this anthology is likely to be used as a separate entity, downloaded and printed out individually. While the broader context of each piece is important, it is unrealistic to think that every user will ideally consult the General Introduction, companion pieces by the same composer, or a wide representative of pieces from the larger Anthology. Thus, the editors and I have concluded that each piece should

carry with it as complete information as possible regarding its source, editorial notes and performance notes. In that manner, users can print out an individual piece, and have all of the most relevant information there at hand accompanying the score itself. All editions published by the Web Library of Seventeenth-Century Music are made public under a Creative Commons license. Details about Creative Commons licenses may be found on their website. The default license used by the WLSCM is an "Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs" license which "allows others to download your works and share them with others as long as they credit you, but they can't change them in any way or use them commercially."

## Suggested Bibliographical Resources in English

### General

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### **Continuo Playing**

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Niels Martin Jensen

## List of Abbreviations

b.	beat
Grove	<i>Grove Music Online</i>
m.	measure
MGG I-II	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. I: Sachteil, II: Personenteil. Zweite, neubearb. Ausgabe, hrsg. von Ludwig Finscher. (Kassel etc.: Bärenreiter, 1994-2007)</i>
n.	note
Neue Vogel I-II	Emil Vogel et al., <i>Bibliothek der gedruckten weltlichen Vocalmusik Italiens aus den Jahren 1500-1700</i> , I-II (Berlin, 1892; reprint Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962)

4. Library sigla in parentheses are given according to RISM A/I and RISM B/I.

- RISM A/I                    *Répertoire international des sources musicales. Autorenkatalog. Einzeldrucke vor 1800* (Kassel etc.: Bärenreiter, 1971-2003)
- RISM B/I                    *Répertoire international des sources musicales. Recueils imprimés XVIe–XVIIe siècles. I. Liste chronologique.*(München – Duisburg: G. Henle Verlag, 1960)
- Sartori I-II                    Claudio Sartori, *Bibliografia della musica strumentale italiana stampata in Italia fino al 1700*, (Firenze: Leo.S. Olschki, I: 1952, II: 1968)