

INTRODUCTION

The Composer and the Music

“A member of the famous college of San Petronio and the Academy Filaschese” is how Francesco Prattichista describes himself on the title page of his *Concerti Armonici di Correnti, e Balletti*.¹ The twenty pieces in this collection are his only surviving compositions. The dedication of the print is dated 30 November, 1666, the dedicatee being the “most illustrious Marco Antonio Maria Lupari,” a senator of Bologna.

In contrast to the paucity of biographical information concerning Prattichista, his publication contains an unusual amount of information on performance practice, at least in regard to his own work, but perhaps also in regard to the musical environment at San Petronio in Bologna as well.

Highly detailed tempo indications abound as do frequent requests for *tremolo*: not the fast, unmeasured type as practiced today, but measured, repeated pitches on a single bowstroke. In some works, the same music is first performed in a slow or moderate tempo and then repeated at a faster pace. Ten of the works may be played without the second violin part.

Although termed *Correnti e Balletti* on the title page, the pieces are referred to as “questi sonate” in the “Letter to the Reader” that follows the list of works on the last page. The *Balletti* would be those pieces in quadruple meter while the *Correnti* are those in triple meter. The two representatives of the former genre included here are extreme opposites with regard to tempo: “L’Albergati” is a slow adagio, dedicated to the wealthy businessman, arts patron, and composer Pirro Albergati. “La Mantacheti,” on the other hand, is to be played “as fast as possible”. A happy medium is struck with the *corrente* “La Tanara” where the tempo is to be “not too fast”.

¹ “Mansionario della Perinsigne Collegiata di S. Petronio & Accademico Filaschese.” “Mansionario” is defined in Cassell’s Italian Dictionary as “beneficed priest,” but here could simply mean “member.” The Accademica Filaschese was a musical organization founded in 1633. No birth or death dates for Prattichista have yet been found, or at least published. There are no entries on the composer in either *Grove Music* or *MGG*.