

INTRODUCTION

The Composer and the Music

The future composer, cellist, and singer was born in Bologna on February 18, 1632.¹ He studied with Maurizio Cazzati and joined the musical staff of San Petronio in 1658. He participated in Bolognese musical academies and for a year was *maestro di cappella* of the church of S. Rosario. In 1674 he moved to Modena and served at the Este court until his death, which occurred back in Bologna on October 12, 1692.

His work for voices includes oratorios, psalms, and cantatas.² Fourteen collections of instrumental music by him survive, of which four contain sonatas. John Suess credits him with creating "a more unified style for an entire work...without losing the individual character of each movement" as well as an "intensive application of the principle of variation to all the movements of a sonata."³

It is notable that the Venetian edition of Vitali's Opus 9, published in 1684, makes no mention of a dedicatee or patron, whereas the edition published the same year in Amsterdam contains an effusive dedication to the emperor Leopold I of Austria, the same monarch to whom Pirro Albergati would dedicate his Opus 5 three years later.

¹ John G. Suess in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. s.v. "Vitali, Giovanni Battista".

² For a list of works see Suess, 798. See also Alessandra Chiarelli, *I codici di musica della raccolta estense : ricostruzione dall'inventario settecentesco* (Firenze : L.S. Olschki, 1987). For a study of Bolognese instrumental music of the late seventeenth century, see: Gregory Barnett, *Bolognese Instrumental Music, 1660-1710. Spiritual Comfort, Courtly Delight, and Commercial Triumph* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

³ The sonatas are discussed in great detail in Suess' dissertation, "Giovanni Battista Vitali and the Sonata da Chiesa", (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1962).