

Introduction

The Composer and the Music

Biagio Marini was born in Brescia on February 3, 1594. The earliest known document concerning his musical activity is dated April 26, 1615 and is the official record of his hire as a *musicco* at San Marco in Venice. His first published collection, the *Affetti musicali*, was dedicated January 28, 1617.⁶ The titles of virtually all the pieces in the collection refer to socially prominent individuals or families in Venice and Brescia, a practice the composer would continue with the instrumental works in his Opera 2 and 3. By 1620 Marini was back in Brescia, working as maestro di capella at the church of Santa Eufemia and as music director of the Accademia degli Erranti. On January 30, 1621 he was hired as *musicco e sonator di violino* at the Farnese court in Parma and remained there until early 1623. In the latter part of that year he moved to Germany to serve as maestro de concerti at the Wittelsbach court at Neuburg an die Donau. During this period he produced three collections of music that rank among the most imposing from the third decade of the seventeenth century: *Per le musiche di camera Concerti*, Opus 7, a collection of thirteen concertato madrigals dedicated September 1, 1624; *Sonate. Symphonie. canzoni, pass'emezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde, & retornelli*, Opus 8, a vast compendium of sixty-two instrumental works, dedicated in July, 1626 to Archduchess Isabella, Regent of the Netherlands; and the *Madrigaletti*, Opus 9, twenty-three pieces for one to four voices and continuo. In December, 1628 Marini requested a leave of absence from his position. He may have had a position in Milan between September, 1631 and November, 1632. Ultimately, Marini returned to Wolfgang Wilhelm's service, working in Düsseldorf and Neuburg from around 1640 until early 1645. He was again in Milan in 1649, as maestro di cappella at Santa Maria della Scala.¹⁶ He was also briefly employed again at San Marco in Venice, from the beginning of 1652 to early the following year, when he left without official leave, perhaps because he was also concurrently working as maestro di capella of the Accademia della Morte in Ferrara. The last position for which we have documentation was maestro di camera for Bishop Cornaro in Padua. He died in Venice on November 17, 1663. Marini was a multifaceted musician whose career spanned almost half a century and surviving compositions reveal a steady development of skill and imagination.

The *Arie, Madrigali, et Corenti A 1.2.3.* was printed in 1620 when Marini was “Maestro di Capella in Santa Eufemia, & Capo della Musica de gli Signori Accademici Erranti in Brescia”. It comprises seventeen works for voices and six instrumental pieces. One of the latter, “La Chizola,” is an instrumental version of the opening piece in the collection, “Tirinto mio.” The print was dedicated to a Ludovico Baitello, who has been described as “a Brescian nobleman,

prominent in law and politics in Brescia and Venice.”¹ Most, if not all of the individual pieces in the print are dedicated to persons from Brescia or Venice.

The use of bar lines varies among the works in Opus 3. All the works for voices have regular barring. *La Martinenga* has some barring in the *Canto primo* and one bar line at the opening of the *Basso* part. The next four pieces have no barring at all. The final *Romanesca* has barring, but of irregular lengths. This may have been because the work was partially intended as a teaching piece for a young violin student.

¹ Margaret Anne Mabbett, "The Italian Madrigal, 1620-1655," PhD Dissertation (King's College London, 1989), Volume 2, p. 7.