

INTRODUCTION

The Composer and the Music

Born in Verona in the second half of the sixteenth century (date of birth unknown), Marc'Antonio Negri may have belonged to a family of musicians that included the two brothers Giuseppe Negri (d., Bonn 1676) and Massimilio Neri (b., c. 1621, d., after 1670) as well as Francesco Negri (b., Verona 1609).¹ Negri received his education in his native town, and after having taken holy orders went to Venice to become a singer in the musical chapel of the Basilica of San Marco. In 1612 he was appointed *vice maestro di cappella* there, and worked for another six years as an assistant to Monteverdi after the latter's appointment as *maestro di cappella* of the basilica in August 1613. Negri resigned from his position in 1619 in order to take up duties as abbot at a monastery on the Croatian island of Veglia (now Krk), — a post which had already been given to him by the doge in 1616. He died there in 1624.²

Our knowledge of Negri as a composer is based on four publications of his music. Prior to his arrival in Venice he had published two collections with secular songs: *Affetti amorosi, Libro primo* (Venice: Angelo Gardano, 1608)³ and *Libro secondo* (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino, 1611),⁴ and during his employment at San Marco two collections with his sacred vocal music were issued: *Il primo libro delli salmi a sette voci con li salmi che si cantano alle compiete*, Op. 3 (Venice: Angelo Gardano, 1613)⁵ and *Cantica spiritualia in missis et vesperis solennibus senis vocibus* (Venice: Bartolomeo Magni, 1618).⁶

While all the songs in Negri's first book of *Affetti amorosi*, which appeared in partbooks, are for three voices and basso continuo, the second book is a one-volume edition; it contains 16 pieces for solo voice (the last one is by his pupil Lucia Quinciani) and three for two voices, as well as three sonatas and five sinfonias.⁷ The collection ends with a pastoral dialogue, "Baci affettuosi et iscambievoli", with two five-part madrigals as its conclusion and with the sinfonias serving as ritornelli between the vocal sections.

The five sinfonias are shorter than the sonatas, comprising no more than 7–9 measures, and are presumably intended for the same ensemble as the *Sonata prima* and *Sonata seconda*. The sonatas frame the entire complex of the dialogue, the first serving as an introduction and the third as the conclusion. The second sonata is placed between the two final five-part madrigals. The text of the dialogue is a canzone by Negri's favorite poet, Giambattista Marino, and is one of Marino's *canzoni de' baci*.⁸

1. See *Enciclopedia della musica*, vol. 3 (Milano: Ricordi, 1964), s.v. "Negri, Marc'Antonio", 263.

2. The date of his death has now been established, see Günther Morche, *MGG II*, vol. 12, s.v. "Negri, Marc'Antonio", column 966–7, and Roark Miller, *Grove*, s.v. "Negri, Marc'Antonio" (accessed January 10, 2011), with references.

3. RISM A/I N362.

4. RISM A/I N363.

5. RISM A/I N364.

6. RISM A/I N365.

7. Facsimile-edition in *Italian Secular Song 1606–1636. A Seven-Volume Reprint Collection*, ed. with introductions by Gary Tomlinson (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986), vol. 5, 109–51.

8. See *Italian Secular Song 1606–1636*, vol. 5, xi.