

INTRODUCTION

The Composer and the Music

Born around 1580 in Milan, Serafino Patta took his vows as a monk of the Benedictine order in 1605 in Pavia.¹ He became active as an organist and composer of sacred music in the first two decades of the new century in the regions of Northern Italy (*e.g.*, Cesena, Reggio nell'Emilia, Pavia). Our scarce knowledge of his life and work is taken from title-pages, prefaces, and dedications of his music prints, all of them printed in Venetian publishing houses between 1606 and 1619. His last dedication (in *Psalmi integri cum duobus canticis Beatae Mariae Virginis ad vespas totius anni quinque vocibus in organo concinendi*) is dated November 1, 1619.

His only known instrumental music comprises six “canzoni da sonare” with continuo, five *a2* and one *a4*. They are all found in his second motet book 1613, *Sacrorum canticorum*, from which the five two-voiced canzonas are edited here. Each of the canzonas has a separate name: “La Lampugnana,” “L’Oliva,” “La Castiona,” etc. Such names, referring to specific individuals of the composer’s acquaintance, were commonly applied to instrumental canzonas in this period.

The overall structures of Patta’s canzonas are based mostly upon sectional repetitions – a reminiscence of the old *canzone francese*, and the interplay of the melody parts relies heavily upon soloistic passages, echo effects, dynamic contrasts, and dialogue- and *concertato*-textures, influenced by his monodic sacred songs in the same collection.²

1. Francesco Lora, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* online, s.v. “Patta, Serafino” (accessed February 5, 2016).

2. See Franco Piperno, “‘Concerto’ and ‘concertato’ nella musica strumentale italiana del secolo decimo settimo”, *Recercare*, 3 (1991), 184.