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The Development of a Violinistic Idiom in Early Violin Music:

Violin Music and its Composers in the Early 17th Century in Italy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree:

Masters of Music in Violin Performance

by

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to trace the emergence, development, and use of violinistic idioms within written violin music in Italy from the end of the 16th century to the mid-17th century. The aim of this study is to render a concise and integrated narrative of how the Italian violinist composers in early and middle 17th century created, developed, and used violinistic idioms within violin music.

This study's time frame starts with the emergence and early development of instrumental and early violinistic idioms during the end of the 16th century. The time frame concludes with the middle decades of the 17th century when the first 'violin virtuosi' in the Mantuan violin school – the first 'violin school' – displayed far more advanced and specific violinistic idioms within their violin music.

The study has two elements: A historical aspect and an analytical aspect. The historical aspect discusses the historical and musical aspects of the development of violinistic idioms within violin music at the time. In the analytical aspect of the study, musical examples from the works of the pertinent violinist composers are discussed in order to exam how violinistic idioms were utilised and development within their violin works.

The study reaches the conclusion that:

the early 17th century was an active period in the history of the development of violinistic idioms within violin music. Within a matter of decades, the violin grew from being one of various accompaniment instruments in the late 16th century to being the most popular treble instrument for musical expression, that even rivalled the voice by the middle decades of the 17th century. Throughout the early 17th century, the observable trend was that of an idiomatic development which lent itself to the pursuit of virtuosity and technical display.

By the middle of the 17th century, a more advanced and complex awareness of the violin's capabilities allowed violinist composers to expand virtuosity, technicality, and expression within violin music. This expansion – especially observable through the violin music of the Mantuan violinist composers – formed the foundation for the transformation of development within violin music towards the late 17th century and onwards.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Research Question

This study examines the emergence and development of violinistic idioms as utilised within the violin music written by Italian violinist composers spanning from the beginning of the 17th century to mid-17th century. It begins by discussing Claudio Monteverdi's utilisation of string writing in vocal forms and concludes with the virtuosic violin writing of the virtuosi violinist composers from the first 'school' of violin playing: the Mantuan school.

In its discussion of the development of violin music and violin composers based in Italy during the early 17th century, this study examines:

1. The emergence and development of violinistic idioms within written Italian violin music during the late 16th century and the early to middle 17th century.
2. How these violinistic idioms related to the already prevalent vocal idioms, developing instrumental idioms, and the *stile moderno*.
3. How such violinistic idioms were utilised by violinist composers for expression and virtuosic means.
4. How, within the context of violin music written by Italian violin composers, the notion of 'virtuosity' was developed by the early 'violin virtuosi' Mantuan violinists.

Apart from a few exceptions – which will be appropriately discussed – the study will examine the music of composers who were specifically violinists themselves. These types of compositions would prove to be the most beneficial sources of pertinent material for the examination of this topic, as the focus of this study is the development of written violin music and violinistic idioms within the stated contexts and time frame. It stands to reason that those composers who were professional violinists themselves were best capable of utilising and exploring the technical and expressive capacities of the instrument.

The first half of the 17th century has been selected as the time frame for the study, as it was a prolific, fascinating, and significant period in the emergence and development of violinistic idioms within violin music. The geographical parameter was based on the evidence that Italy was the

epicenter of the production of violins, professional violin players, and violin music during the late 16th century and early 17th century.[1]

2. Study Parameters

This study examines the music of specific composers in order to gain an understanding of the development of violin music and idioms within the contexts, time frame, and geographical area discussed in the introduction chapter. To effectively select which composers would be most pertinent to the study's data pool, certain criteria have been used to determine their selection as well as to sufficiently focusing the scope and size of the study. The criteria used are as follows:

The composer himself must have been a violinist in some professional capacity. The aim of this study is to examine the emergence, development, and use of a violinistic idioms within violin music. Therefore, it is logical that composers who were violinists themselves would have had the best understanding of how to utilise and expand the instrument's technical and expressive capacities. The two exceptions to this parameter included in the study are Giovanni Gabrieli and Paolo Cima. These non-violinists are included in the discussion as they played significant roles in the rising status of the violin in written music of the 17th century. For example, the earliest known dated ensemble sonata to specify use of the violin was composed by Gabrieli in 1612, and the earliest known dated work for solo violin and basso continuo was composed by Cima in 1610.[2]

The composer's works discussed must have served a palpable role in advancing written violin music and violinistic idioms. It is important to delineate that this study specifically encompasses the violinist composers, works, and elements that were central driving forces in the innovation and development of violin music and idioms, and not necessarily the consolidators of these innovations as well. The reason for this decision is primarily to limit the study to a practical scope. The purpose and aim of the study is to give a concise 'cross-section' view and narrative of the core driving forces displayed by Italian violinist composers in early-17th century and their development/use of violinistic idioms within their written violin music.

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[1] John Walter Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 322

[2] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 78.

The composer's works must be within the study's intended time frame – late 16th to middle 17th century. This study is specifically focused on examining the emergence and development of violinistic idioms during the end of the 16th century and the early 17th century.

The composer's musical style, life, and career must have been focused within the study's geographical parameters – Italy. This study is specifically focused on examining the emergence and development of violinistic idioms within Italy. The reason for this is that Italy was the major center in the production of violins, violin music, violin players/virtuosi, and violin composers during the late 16th century and early to mid-17th century.

The examination of the resulting body of composers that fall within these parameters will aim to systemically discuss a 'cross-section' and core narrative of the development of violin music and idioms during the early 17th century in Italy. Furthermore, it will aim to portray how the development of violin music and the use of violinistic idioms led to the emergence of the early violin virtuosi as an entity going into the latter part of the 17th century and even into the 18th century. The discussion of the composers and their works will be split into three 'sections' into order to facilitate a systematic and logical discussion/narrative of the early 17th-century Italian violin music.

3. Aims and Methodology of Study

The aims and purpose of examining and discussing the music from this selection of composers is to assess how a violinistic idiom within written violin music was applied, developed, and used through in the early 17th century. This examination of the development of written music and a writing style particular to the violin necessitates a discussion of what is delineated by the term 'idiomatic' and what is defined as 'idiomatically' specific to the technical and expressive capacities of the violin.

In his book *The History of Violin Playing* (1965), David Boyden describes the term 'idiomatic' as "involving those traits which are particularly characteristic or 'agreeable' on the violin."[3] He differentiates between elements of a violin idiom that can be indicated in the written music and those elements that cannot be indicated in the written music. He lists elements such as melodic lines, figurations, double stops, and certain special effects such as scordatura and tremolo as directly observable in the written music. Elements of a violin idiom that cannot be directly observed in the music are elements such as tone qualities, timbre, and varieties of tone colour in different registers.

[3] David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins To 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 121-122.

When using the term 'idiomatic' it is usually the elements directly observable in the music that are being referred to, although issues of tone colour and timbre do form part of a violin idiom *in toto*.[4]

Idiomatic writing for the violin in terms of melodies and figuration developed quite rapidly after 1600 and actually preceded the manifestation of instrumental forms such as the sonata. When players and composers began to turn their attention to the violin as a medium of expression, writing in a violinistic idiom was exploited just as much in vocal music as in abstract instrumental music and even before abstract[5] instrumental forms had been firmly established.[6]

Although the tone and cantabile properties of the violin were among its foremost characteristics, it was not until the late 17th century that composers like Corelli showed a consistent fascination with making use of singing melodies within violin music.[7] Before the middle of the century composers of violin music appear to have concentrated more on figurations and scale passages, expanding the range of the violin, and on special effects such as tremolo and scordatura.[8]

In her thesis "Instrumental Duos and Trios in Printed Italian Sources 1600-1750"[9], Sandra Mangsen highlights that there may be either a comparative or exclusive element implied by the term 'idiomatic' as used regarding a specific instrument's style. She describes her understanding and use of this term as "the strength and exclusivity of the relation between instrument and style."[10] In the comparative sense a piece may be playable on several instruments and yet more suitable or agreeable to the one than the other. In the exclusive sense a piece may be suited to only one instrument and a futile, awkward endeavor on other instruments.[11] Boyden points out that 'idiomatic' in and of itself does not by default imply exclusivity or uniqueness to a specific instrument; double stops are definitely idiomatic to the violin, but they are also idiomatic to other string instruments such as the viol. However, there are certain double stops that are not only idiomatic to the violin but are also uniquely suited to it and not to other string instruments due to issues of fingering and string tuning.[12] The exclusivity of an idiom to a particular instrument therefore needs to cater to the specific technicalities inherent to that instrument.

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[4] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 121-122.
[5] Note: 'abstract' meaning musical expression without the use of text/vocal expressive context.
[6] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 123.
[7] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 125.
[8] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 125.
[9] Sandra Mangsen, "Instrumental Duos and Trios in Printed Italian Sources 1600-1675" Ph.D., Cornell University, 1989.
[10] Mangsen, "Instrumental Duos and Trios," 376-377.
[11] Mangsen, "Instrumental Duos and Trios," 376-377.
[12] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 122.

In his article "The Violin Technique of Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century"[13], Piotr Wilk touches on both Boyden's and Mangsen's delineations of the term 'idiomatic' and goes on to delineate the specific properties that can be regarded as constituting a violinistic idiom in relation to the violin's particular technicalities.[14] The elements that Wilk goes on to examine and discuss are:

- Issues of detailed scoring. This pertains, in particular, to the 'competition' between the cornetto and the violin as soprano instruments in the first half of the century.
- Range.
- Timbral organisation.
- Left hand issues of positions and fingering.
- Violin motifs, multiple stops.
- Ornamentation and diminution formulae, figuration.
- Right hand issues of bowing and articulation.

Wilk's approach of identifying and systematically examining these specific elements is particularly effective in delineating and observing a violinistic idiom within written violin music. Due its effectiveness, the approach of examining specific elements to see how they are used within written violin music and how they display idioms or techniques specific to the violin will be used in this study where relevant. This study will thus aim to give an integrated narrative of how violinistic idioms in written music were developed and used in the early 17th century. It will also aim to give context on how these developments emerged and how these developments precipitated future development within violin music, expression of violin music, and violinistic virtuosity.

4. Structure of Study

Chapter 2 discusses the historical context of the violin itself, the development of instrumental music relating to the violin, and musical forms more specifically related to the development of violin music. Understanding this historical context is significant to discussing the development of violin music in the subsequent chapters. This initial discussion of the historical context of the violin and violin music during the end of the 16th century and beginning of the 17th century also illustrates the importance of the study's specific geographical area.

Chapter 3 discusses the context of violin and instrumental music and idioms at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century. This will constitute a starting point for examining how and to

[13] Piotr Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," *Musica Iagellonica*, 2011.
[14] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 163-166.

what extent violinistic idioms within written music emerged in ensemble, orchestral, solo, and dance music at the beginning of the century. Monteverdi provides an initial platform to discuss the links between vocal traditions/practices such as figuration and their influence on violin music. As he was a proficient violinist himself, the string writing in his works is particularly instructive and it exhibits highly developed violin figuration long before the sonata genre was crystallized.[15] The sonata genre and its relation to the development of violin music is discussed separately in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses Venice and Brescia as centers of instrumental music as well and the first dated sonatas specifically scored for violin, which were written by the composers Giovanni Paolo Cima and Giovanni Gabrieli. Although they were organists and not professional violinists in their own right, they are both significant for being the contributors of the first dated solo sonata (with basso continuo) and trio sonata respectively that were specifically scored for violin.

Chapter 5 discusses the violinist composers of Mantua, which constituted the first 'school' of violin playing. The chapter encompasses many of the early founders of the violinist idiom and examples of writing for the violin as specific to it as an instrument. Salome Rossi and Giovanni Battista Buonamente are included in this chapter as they were violinists together with Monteverdi in Mantua. Along with Paolo Cima, Biagio Marini, Salome Rossi and Giovanni Battista Fontana, Buonamente is also referred to as one of the earliest composers to cultivate writing music for the violin.[16] Mention is also made of Bartolomeo Montalbano as being one of the founders of writing idiomatically and specifically for the violin as seen in the violin music at the time.[17] Carlo Farina and Biagio Marini will more specifically be discussed as significant figures in the development of violin music and violinistic idioms as well as being two of the earliest professional violin virtuosi. Farina's sonatas for violin and continuo utilised much expansion and innovative use of violinistic idioms within violin music, making them one of the summits of violin playing at the time.[18] Marini, who was

[15] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 123.
[16] Stephen Bonta, "Buonamente, Giovanni Battista," *Grove Music Online,* 2001; Accessed 18 Mar. 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000004326.
[17] Paolo Emilio Carapezza, and Giuseppe Collisani, "Montalbano [Mont'Albano], Bartolomeo," *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed 18 Mar. 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018996.
[18] Nona Pyron and Aurelio Bianco, "Farina, Carlo," *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed 18 Mar. 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009308.

also a violinist under Monteverdi in Mantua, was one of the earliest violin virtuosi as well as one of the first and most significant composers for the violin in the early 17th century.[19]

The Mantuan violin composers – most specifically Marini and Farina – will be the endpoint of the study as the first virtuosi violinists. Their violin works very clearly show how violin music and violinistic idioms had developed within the early 17th century in Italy and how violinistic idioms became an aspect of virtuosity of the instrument.

5. Literature Review

The aim of the study is to integrate various literature sources into a succinct narrative and discussion of written violin music emergence and development in the early 17th century in Italy. Many of the available literature sources discuss specific topics or facets of this, as opposed to a more integrated discussion, which is what this study aims to do. David Boyden's book *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761*[20] serves as a general discussion of violin history – this book, however, does not include any analytical discussions about the written musical scores as found in other sources. John Walter Hill's book *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750*[21] also has useful information regarding the development of the violin and violin music in the 17th century, but similarly does not discuss more detailed issues such as the specific musical scores of violinist composers and the development of a violinistic idiom therein. The *Grove Music Online* serves as a source regarding the history of specific composers and certain terminologies (such as 'sonata', 'sinfonia', etc.). William Newman's book *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*[22] and Peter Allsop's book *The Italian Trio Sonata: From its Origins Until Corelli*[23] are both valuable sources to understanding the development of the sonata and sonata schools in the early 17th century. These sources further highlight how this affected the works of violinist composers in Italy at the time, although they do not offer abundant information on specific issues regarding the development of violin music and the emergence/development of violinist idioms within written violin music.

Detailed discussions and analyses of violin music in the 17th century – specifically violin sonatas – are found in Wilk's two articles, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century"[24] and "Chordal Playing in the 17th-Century Violin Repertoire".[25] Due to its effectiveness, Wilk's

[19] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 135.
[20] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*.
[21] Hill, *Baroque Music.*
[22] William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972).
[23] Peter Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata: From its Origins Until Corelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
[24] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas," 2011.
[25] Piotr Wilk, "Chordal Playing in the 17Th-Century Violin Repertoire," *Musica Iagllonica*, 2004.

structure of analysing the violin's technical abilities within written violin music as found in his article "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," is specifically utilised in this study. Boyden's book, *The History of the Violin*, and Sandra Mangen's dissertation "Instrumental Duos and Trios in Printed Italian Sources 1600-1675"[26] provide useful discussions regarding what constitutes a 'violinistic idiom' within written music.

Willi Apel's book *Italian Violin Music of the Seventeenth Century*[27] provides information on the more specific works and music of violinist composers in the 17th century.[28] Lindsey Darlene Strand-Polyak's dissertation "The Virtuoso's Idiom: Spectacularity and the Seventeenth Century Violin Sonata"[29] presents valuable insight into the social history and development of violinist composers in the 17th century and how this may have influenced aspects of their violin works. She specifically discussed what she names the 'Spectacle Sonata', as manifested in the works of virtuoso violinist composers. Various other articles relating to aspects of violin history, instrumental music history, violin music, and the history of violinist composers have been cited due to the integrated nature of this study. These multiple sources discuss several aspects and facets of the development of violin history, but many only examine one or two specific aspects of the discussion in details. This is to be expected, as the history of development of violin music is a huge and intricate field.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to integrate the existing literature that contains various aspects pertinent to the scope of this study into a structured and comprehensive discourse that will benefit future readers and violinists. This approach will systemically integrate aspects of the development of violinistic writing within violin music in Italy during the first half the 17th century into a practical and comprehensive narrative. This is achieved by discussing and analysing both the various secondary literature sources and significant works by pertinent violin composers within the study's parameters.

[26] Mangsen, "Instrumental Duos and Trios."
[27] Willi Apel, *Italian Violin Music of the Seventeenth Century*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).
[28] This is an older source, however, so more updated book such as Boyden's book are cited regarding dating and historical matters.
[29] Lindsey Darlene Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom: Specularity and the Seventeenth Century Violin Sonata* (Ph.D Diss, University of New York University, 2013), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qc6h9vq.

Chapter 2: Historical Context of the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries

1. Historical context of the violin

The prolific development of violinistic idioms within written music during the 17th century was closely linked to the growing independence of instrumental and abstract music. It is worth noting that this was in the context of the already prevalent vocal traditions that permeated musical production and practice at the end of the 16th century and beginning of the 17th century. The practice of 'violin' music as written music specifically intended for the violin was only verifiably established towards the end of 16th century leading into the 17th century. There is very little surviving written violin music from the 16th century, which was the formative period of the violin's development as an instrument.[1]

The 17th century was a particularly fertile and significant period in the development of violin music, violinistic idioms, and the increasing use of violin idioms within written music. In order to articulate and discuss this period and development, it is necessary to have an understanding of the position that the violin and violin music occupied during and coming out of the 16th century. It is also necessary to understand that Italy was the major center – both geographically and musically – of this prolific period regarding violin music. This was due to Italy being the most active center in the production of violins, violin players, and composers of violin music in the late 16th century and throughout the 17th century.

The earliest datable surviving instruments that correspond in a detailed sense to the modern violin date from about the mid-16th century and were made by Gasparo da Salo (1540-1609)[2] in Brescia and Andrea Amati (born not later than 1511 and died before 1580)[3] in Cremona.[4] The patterns and dimension of the violin had been fairly fluid amongst makers in the 16th century, but the work of Andrea Amati established a settled standard for the 17th century.[5] During the 1550s and 1560s entire ensembles of violinists from Brescia were hired by various regions (Parma, Venice, and

[1] David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 63.
[2] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 34.
[3] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 19.
[4] John Walter Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 76.
[5] Robin Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9-10.

Dresden).[6] The first widely noted travelling violin virtuoso, Giovanni Battista Jacomelli (ca1550-1608), hailed from nearby Brescia.[7] Jacomelli first strove for perfection on the viol da gamba and later turned to the harp – during the 1580s he became prominent as one of the earliest violin virtuosos.[8] The first two violinists to become well-known composers for the instrument, Biagio Marini and Giovanni Battista Fontana, also hailed from Brescia.[9] Marini and Fontana will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Early in the 17th century, violin-family ensembles were established in several cities in the plain between the Alps to the north and the Apennines to the south. The earliest composers for such ensemble came from these same cities, where the earliest depictions of violins are also preserved. In the first half of the 17th century instrumental ensembles, especially violin ensembles, began to spread outwards from this Po Valley epicenter. During the second half of the century the Po Valley remained the most prominent center for violin making and violin music. The regions of Emilia – with Bologna and Modena as its main centers – and the Venetian Republic – including Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, and Venice – continued to produce the most important composers of violin music while the finest string instruments also came from these same cities.[10] All of these factors illustrate Italy's significance in the violin's history, and consequently that of the music written for the instrument.

Despite having been standardised by the work of da Salo and Amati, the violin was still ranked in a relatively low social position and a 'subservient' musical position at the end of the 16th century. It was used largely as a professional instrument for dance music, as the more direct and strident tone of the violin – as opposed to the viol's less powerful projection – rendered itself well to music for dance and entertainment, although the violin did also feature in court spectacles and church music.[11] Socially the position of the professional violinist employed for the making of dance music was regarded as lower middle 'working' class – as were musicians in general at the time.[12]

Throughout the 17th century, however, the violin began to be accepted and employed in many ranks of society, thus potentially raising the status of the individual violinist depending on the stature of the employer.[13] At the time instrumental music was still largely under the shadow of vocal music, as

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[6] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 76-78.
[7] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 76-78.
[8] Pierre M. Tagmann and Iain Fenlon, "Jacomelli [Giacometti; Del Violino], Giovanni Battista" from *Grove Music Online,* 2001. Accessed 8 Aug. 2021. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011060.
[9] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 76-78.
[10] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 76-78.
[11] Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion*, 47.
[12] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing,* 105.
[13] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing,* 105.

abstract musical forms – such as the sonata – were yet to be fully developed and codified. In its earliest stages the violin served two principal functions – to play for dancing or entertainment and to double vocal music or accompany it – with no substantial evidence to suggest that these functions changed before 1600. [14]

The 17th century was significant because it saw an idiomatic transformation of violin music as well as a transformation in the social role/position of the violin. The development of an instrument-specific way of writing for the violin was related to the ongoing process of instrumental music gaining independence from dance and vocal music.

2. Historical context of instrumental music and forms relating to violin music

The major forms of instrumental music in use during the late 16th century include dances, variation forms (such as the ricercar and fantasy), and the canzona. The first half of the 17th-century was a period of transition and evolution for instrumental music; hence the forms and categories of instrumental music were consequently also in a state of flux.[15] Instrumental music came to the foreground after having been subjected to the traditions and practices of vocal music. This resulted in vocal music exerting a certain amount of influence on early violin music. Early 17th century violin music exhibits notational practices that in the 16th century belonged to what were at that time unwritten traditions linked to vocal improvisation.[16] There were several kinds of instrumental performance *all'improviso* reflected in the early written repertoire of violin music.[17] One example of this, which can be observed in Fontana's *Sonata 6*, is the combination of diminution figuration against sustained notes or chords in the continuo and a lack of form-building devices such as recurrence or points of imitation. These elements can also be seen in the early collections of Marini's violin music. Written variation on familiar tunes or standard chordal-bass patterns also exhibited elements of improvisation; one such example is Marini's variations on the song "La Monica" in his Op.8 collection. Many of the early 17th-century echo sonatas, in which two or three violins take turns playing ornamental figurations over a continuo accompaniment, appear to reflect improvisatory elements.[18]

[14] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing,* 50.
[15] John G. Suess, "New Introduction and Notes" in *Anthology of Instrumental Music from the End of the 16th Century to the End of the 17Th Century*, Joseph Wilhelm von Wasielewskied. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), vi.
[16] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 78.
[17] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 80.
[18] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 80.

The dance music contained within early collections of violin music is worth mentioning, as dance music was traditionally the function of the early violin. Although dance music contributed little to the development of violinistic idioms within written music, it did command articulated and 'mannered' bowing disciplines.[19] This is particularly visible in French dance music. The French were mostly interested in dance music – only displaying notable interest in the sonata genre after around 1690 – and as mentioned before, although this type of music did not contribute to the development of specifically violinistic idioms it required a highly disciplined manner of bowing in order to satisfy the rhythmic elements required for the particular dances.[20]

In addition to the violin's specific connection to dance music, dances and collections of dances were highly popular forms of composition for composers of instrumental music in the first half of the 17th century. Early collections of violin music contain many simple dances, which historically belong to a category of music that was often improvised. The earliest examples of such dances for violins and basso continuo, and trio setting with two violins and continuo, are found in Salome Rossi's 1607 collection, which contains binary dances such as *balletti* and *gagliardes*.[21] Marini, one of the most significant composers of violin music in the 17th century included early dance suites in his 1620 collection *Arie madrigali et corenti*.[22]

The creation of new genres and the cross-pollination of genres were prevalent in 17th century written instrumental music. This was partly due to unwritten or only partially notated practices and traditions being brought into musical notation, where after these earlier practices and traditions were then influenced by the more learned forms of written music.[23] This creation of new genres and constant frequent cross-pollination was largely a result of the previously mentioned 'state of flux' that instrumental musical forms were in during the 17th century. One fundamental difference between vocal music and instrumental music was that in instrumental music the composers did not have a text to use as a foundation for musical organisation. This gave rise to the need to utilise principles of musical organisation intrinsic to the music itself such as the abstract unifying musical concepts of repetition, variation, and recapitulation.[24] During this period of flux the canzona, and consequently the sonata, came to the forefront as the most suitable form for experimentation with the formal organisation these musical concepts.[25]

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[19] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 213.
[20] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 212.
[21] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 80-81.
[22] Suess, "Introduction," vi.
[23] Hill, *Baroque Music*, 83.
[24] Suess, "Introduction," v.
[25] Suess, "Introduction," v.

The canzona usually used more voice parts and a more conservative instrumental style of writing than the sonata.[26] The canzona was sectional, but its sections were played without a defined break in between them as is found with the movements of a sonata; in sonatas distinct movements developed and the internal dimensions of these movements gradually expanded in length. The texture of the canzona was not strictly delineated – it could be homophonic or contrapuntal; usually imitative if the latter was the case. As it evolved and crystalized, the sonata gradually reduced the number of voices used in the canzona which resulted in the trio sonata and solo sonata settings.[27] Over time the technical and expressive abilities of the violin were realized and the use of violinistic idioms within written music increased, which will be the primary area of interest for this study.

The predominant form examined in this study (although not exclusively so) is the sonata, as the sonata was the primary 'vehicle' utilised in the exploration and development of violin music and subsequently a violinistic idiom and virtuosity. It is thus necessary to briefly discuss the origins of the sonata genre in the 17th century.

The origins and development of the sonata were almost inextricably linked to the rise of instrumental music within the same era. Over time the sonata became particularly associated with Baroque chamber music, but throughout this development it crossed or touched paths with almost every mainstream instrumental genre of the time. This therefore leads to confusion or equation of the term 'sonata' with various other terms throughout different stages of the Baroque era.[28] During the first half of the 17th century, the term most closely allied and interchanged with that of 'sonata' was the term '*canzona.*' The canzona or *canzon francese* first appeared not later than about 1520 as an Italian transcription of a French or Flemish chanson, with original compositions in predominantly Italian and German keyboard and ensemble music gradually replacing the transcriptions. After its rise and its decline around the mid-17th century, it survived chiefly as the fugal movement in ensemble sonatas.[29] The canzona was one of the most significant categories of instrumental music in the early 17th century. At the time both the canzona and the newer Baroque sonata were flexible terms which allowed composers to create a variety of solutions before the sonata was clearly codified, which led to a level of confusion and interchangeability between the terms 'canzona' and 'sonata' during the first half of the century.[30]

[26] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 134.
[27] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 134.
[28] William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 19.
[29] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 20.
[30] Suess, "Introduction," vi.

Newman comments in his book *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* that, "The violin may be said to have made its debut, reached a first peak in both construction and technical exploitation, spread from Italy, and attracted some of the great instrumental virtuosos, all primarily as a vehicle of the sonata."[31] The connection between the violin and the sonata in the 17th century thus bears considerable significance to the development of a violinistic idiom during in the 17th century, hence the time spent discussing and delineating the origins of the sonata and the relationships to its neighbouring forms in the beginning of the century.

The settings of the sonata in which the violin was used by composers were primarily the 'trio' sonata and the 'solo' sonata. The trio sonata usually consisted of two violins and one or two basso continuo instruments while the solo sonata consisted of a single violin with the basso continuo. The 'solo' sonata which utilised only one instrument, the *sonata senza basso*, was relatively rare. The first dated solo sonata for unaccompanied violin was composed by the German composer Biber in 1664, later in the 17th century.[32] This falls outside of this study's time frame and geographically parameters – hence it is not discussed in any more detail – but it is worth noting.

The trio sonata originated in northern Italy in the early 17th century and seems to have largely been the result of the influence of monody upon pre-existing instrumental music.[33] The rise of polarization between melody and bass, along with the stabilization of the *basso continuo*, provided significant impetus for the solo and trio sonata. The 'solo' sonata has a direct link to vocal tradition through the instrumentally accompanied solo song and monody, while the trio sonata and ensemble sonata appear to have close links to dialogue and *concertato* concepts.[34] The canzona and sonata genres were thus important vehicles of the continuing development of violinistic idioms.

Trio sonatas constituted a large part of the majority of 17th-century sonata literature from 1620 onward.[35] The solo sonatas for a single melody instrument and basso continuo were more demanding than most trio sonatas. Such sonatas were included in several early published volumes by Carlo Farina, Biagio Marini, and Bartolomeo Montalbano who were among the first to publish solo sonatas.[36] The solo sonata for a single instrument and continuo was published considerably less frequently than the trio sonata until the end of the 17th century. However, by the mid-18th century

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[31] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 54.
[32] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 19.
[33] Suess, "Introduction," vi.
[34] Suess, "Introduction," vi.
[35] Sandra Mangsen, John Irving, John Rink, and Paul Griffiths, "Sonata" in *Grove Music Online,* 2001; Accessed 13 Apr. 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026191.
[36] Mangsen, Irving, Rink, and Griffiths, "Sonata" in *Grove Music Online.*

the solo sonata had come to possess a substantial repertory and to supersede the popularity of the trio sonatas and sonatas of larger settings.[37]

A type of solo sonata, christened by Lindsey Darlene Strand-Polyak as the 'Spectacle Sonata', will be specifically pertinent to the discussion of violinistic idioms. These type of solo sonatas can be seen in the sonatas of early 17th century violinists such as Marini, Fontana, and Farina.[38] Spectacle sonatas were 'one-offs' in that they were specially created for singular experiences; they are full of 'abundant invention' and constitute a kind of sonic scenery that frequently changed to delight and awe an audience.[39] These Spectacle Sonatas were iconic in that they displayed more development and more advanced use of violinistic idioms within written music and showed expressive and theatrical elements.

The 17th-century solo sonata and *sonata senza basso* literature is considerably less sizeable than the trio and ensemble sonata literature; this an interesting point of discussion, as it may be viewed as an indication to the connection and symbiosis between the early soloistic literature and the pinnacle of early violinistic virtuosity. The independence of instrumental music, and consequently instrumental virtuosity, was still in the process of being crystallized during the first half of the century. It stands to reason that the more soloistic forms, which were the vehicles for this relatively new virtuosity, would not yet be as ubiquitous until instrumental virtuosity had become more firmly established.

Another facet of discussion in the development of early violin music is how the development of violinistic idioms may have differed in the ensemble repertoire vs. the soloistic repertoire. The violin was prolifically used in the ensemble literature because as an instrument it was well suited, but the soloistic literature was specifically utilised for the exploration and expression of the violin's capabilities. This early flowering of instrumental technicality and virtuosity is a fascinating phenomenon for examination, as it grew out of relative obscurity in the late 16th century and early 17th century to become a somewhat idolized and almost "superhuman" ideal in later centuries. The element may be mentioned in the following chapters, but it is not the main focus of this study.

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[37] Sandra Mangsen, "Solo sonata" in *Grove Music Online,* 2001; Accessed 13 Apr. 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026166.

[38] Lindsey Darlene Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom: Specularity and the Seventeenth Century Violin Sonata* (Ph.D Diss, University of New York University, 2013), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qc6h9vq, 30.

[39] Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom*, 30.

Chapter 3: Violin Writing in The Early Part of the 17th Century

1. The Context of the Early 17th-Century Musical Environment

The musical environment into which the violin entered in the early 17th century Italy was one of experimentation and stylistic change. Vocal aesthetics were shifting as the expression of human emotions and the moving of the *affetti* – or the 'affections' – came to the foreground of musical and vocal style. The new *seconda prattica* style and the theatrical *stile rappresentativo* were significant factors in this aesthetic shift, and they in turn influenced aspects of the developing instrumental style. The *seconda prattica* is also here referred to as *stile moderno*, but this is usually when referring to instrumental music as opposed to vocal music in the new style. The *seconda prattica* style of the late 16th and early 17th century was subjective, dramatic, and expressive.[1] It was significant that the rise of the expressive *seconda prattica* style coincided with the emergence of abstract instrumental music as an independent composition medium, as certain elements of the newer expressive style are observable in the musical language of the developing instrumental music of the time. The dynamic backdrop of this aesthetic shift towards a more expressive style in vocal music and its influence on the musical language of developing instrumental music idioms was in turn an important factor in the violin's blossoming as a virtuosic and expressive force in the early part of the 17th century.

The violin possessed great undeveloped potential for expression throughout a wide and diverse range of uses.[2] In the late 16th century this potential was still far from realized in written music for the violin. Although it may have been exploited in unwritten or improvised traditions, the violin's expressive and virtuosic potential was not realized in written music until the 17th century when the Italians began exploring idiomatic writing in the sonata and abstract instrumental forms.[3] The violin gained prominence during this time as the instrument best capable of matching the voice in this new expressive aesthetic.[4] Once the violin's potential was realized, its music and idiom underwent exponential growth throughout the century. In the beginning of the 17th century vocal music was regarded as the standard which instrumental music had to aspire to but by the early 18th century this

[1] Simon McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46.
[2] David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins To 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 100.
[3] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 53.
[4] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 46.

status quo was altered, and vocalists were expected to be capable of rivalling the figurations of violin music.[5] This significant shift in the violin's status speaks to its considerable expressive and technical potential, and the rapid expansion thereof within the space of one century.

By the end of the 16th century a distinct instrumental idiom had not yet emerged due to the vocal idioms still being heavily dominant and the instrumental forms not having yet crystallized. The first decade of the 17th century was a transitional time for instrumentalists and due to vocal forms and genres being the primary paradigms of expression, instrumentalists drew heavily from vocal style, practices and repertoire.[6] With the advent of *seconda prattica* they faced the challenge of reconciling the old style and practices with the new and fashionable trends within the developing *stile moderno* instrumental idiom.[7]

There were thus two notable shifts happening at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century: The first was the aesthetic shift from *prima prattica* to *seconda prattica*, or from *stile antico* to *stile moderno*. The second, which occurred after the advent of the first, was the shift of abstract instrumental music moving away from being so heavily subject to the vocal paradigm and subsequently emerging as its own expressive medium. This chapter will discuss how these shifts were relevant to the development of violin music and idiomatic writing in early 17th century Italy.

2. Pioneers of Violin Writing in the Early Decades of the 17th Century

2.1 Claudio Monteverdi (1567 - 1643)

The early violinist composers who were significant driving forces in the composition of written violin music were primarily associated with northern Italian cities.[8] Claudio Monteverdi was one of the earliest figures to use the violin more expressively, independently, and idiomatically than it had been before. He played a significant role not only as a leading figure in the *seconda prattica* style within vocal music, but also as a professional string player who contributed to string writing within both larger and smaller vocal forms. His writing contains the best examples of the violin's use in forms involving the voice and is especially insightful due to his being a proficient string player himself.[9] He specified a number of violinistic technical devices previously not used such as two-fingered pizzicato

[5] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 46.
[6] Timothy A. Collins, "Musica Secreta Strumentali: The Aesthetics and Practice of Private Solo Instrumental Performance in the Age of Monody (Ca. 1580 - Ca. 1610)," *Internation Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 35, No. 1 (2004), https://www.jstor.org/stable/30032135, 61.
[7] Collins, "The Aesthetics and Practice of Private Solo Instrumental Performance in the Age of Monody," 61.
[8] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 48.
[9] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 132.

(using the directions '*si strappano le corde con duoi deti'* and *'si streppa la corda con due deti'*), measured tremolo, and specifically instructed use of particular bowings and articulations (one of which was a type of sforzando directed as *forte arcata sola piano* meaning *forte* to *piano* in a single stroke) for expressive purposes.[10]

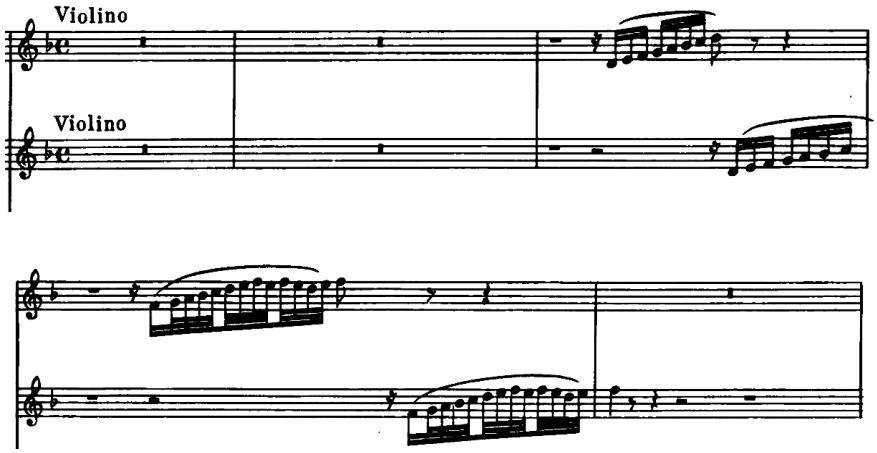
In his later music he combined the violin and voice in varying and inventive ways and he appears to have either invented or popularized several string scorings that later became ubiquitous, such as the modern string quartet layout.[11] It is significant that Monteverdi's string writing – particularly in *Orfeo* of 1607 – exhibited considerably well-developed violin figurations early in the 17th century well before the sonata form had crystallized or abstract instrumental music as an independent expressive medium had become established.[12] He emphasized dramatic and descriptive effects of the text through the employment of violinistic technical devices, and he associated the violin with certain emotional states – albeit indirectly or by inference.[13] Monteverdi's use of the violin in an independent, idiomatic, and expressive sense indicated a shift towards the violin becoming a more independent means of conveying expression in its own idiom as opposed to being merely a supportive force in vocal and dance music.

[10] Peter Holman, "Col Nobilissimo Esercitio Della Vivuola: Monteverdi's String Writing," *Early Music* Vol. 21, No. 4 (1993), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3128367, 557.
[11] Holman, "Monteverdi's String Writing," 557.
[12] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 132.
[13] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 132.

The following examples from *Orfeo* display figurations within the violin parts that were quite complex given that instrumental forms, idioms, and the violin sonata had not yet crystallized. The ritornelli especially display how Monteverdi used that violin in an expressive and virtuoso capacity as opposed to just doubling vocal lines. In Example 1, the violins use scale figuration to create a decorative effect.

Examples 1 to 3: Score extracts from Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607).[14]

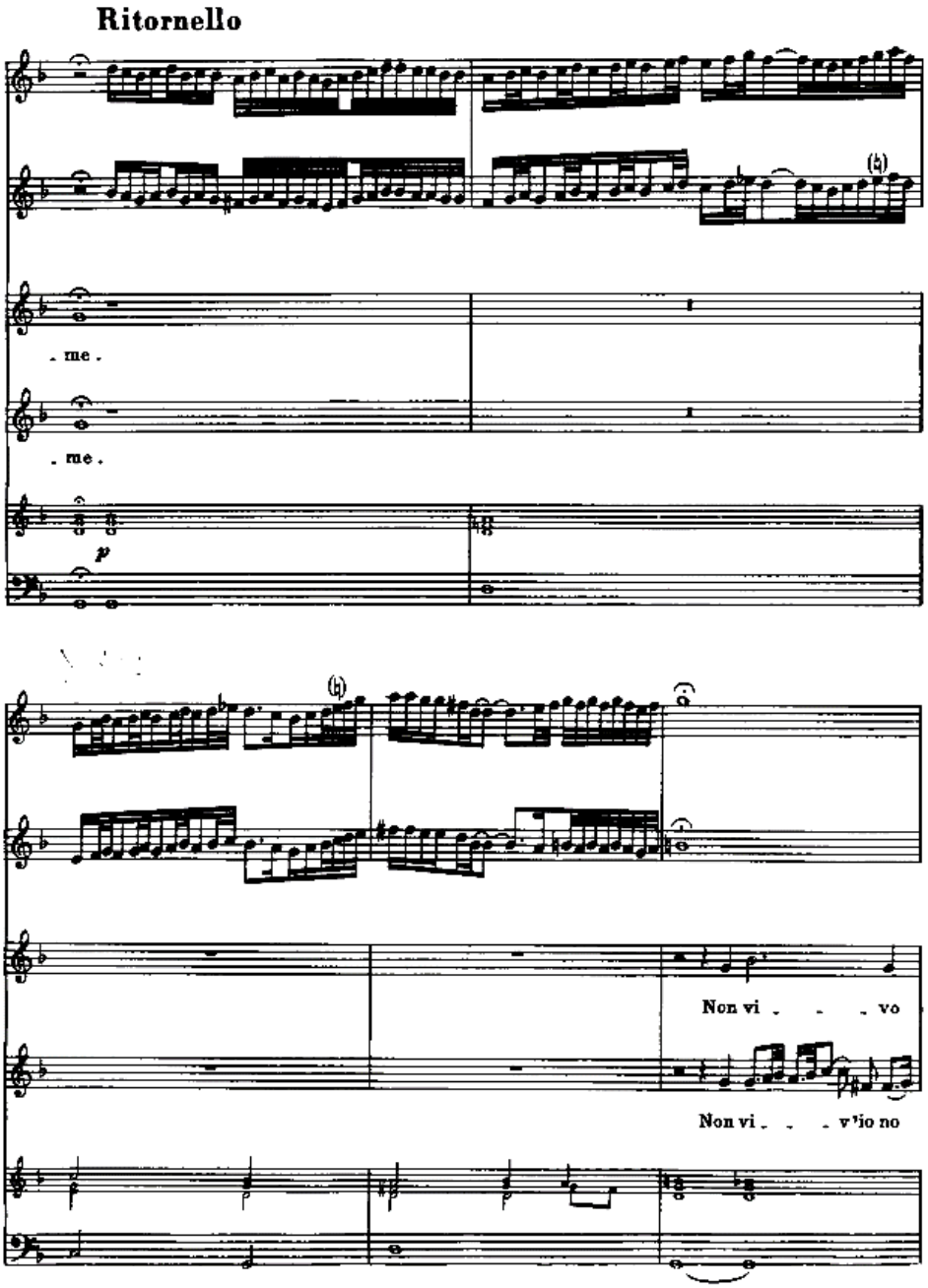
Example 1



[14] Claudio Monteverdi, *Orfeo*, (1607). Ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1930). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/L'Orfeo%2C_SV_318_(Monteverdi%2C_Claudio)

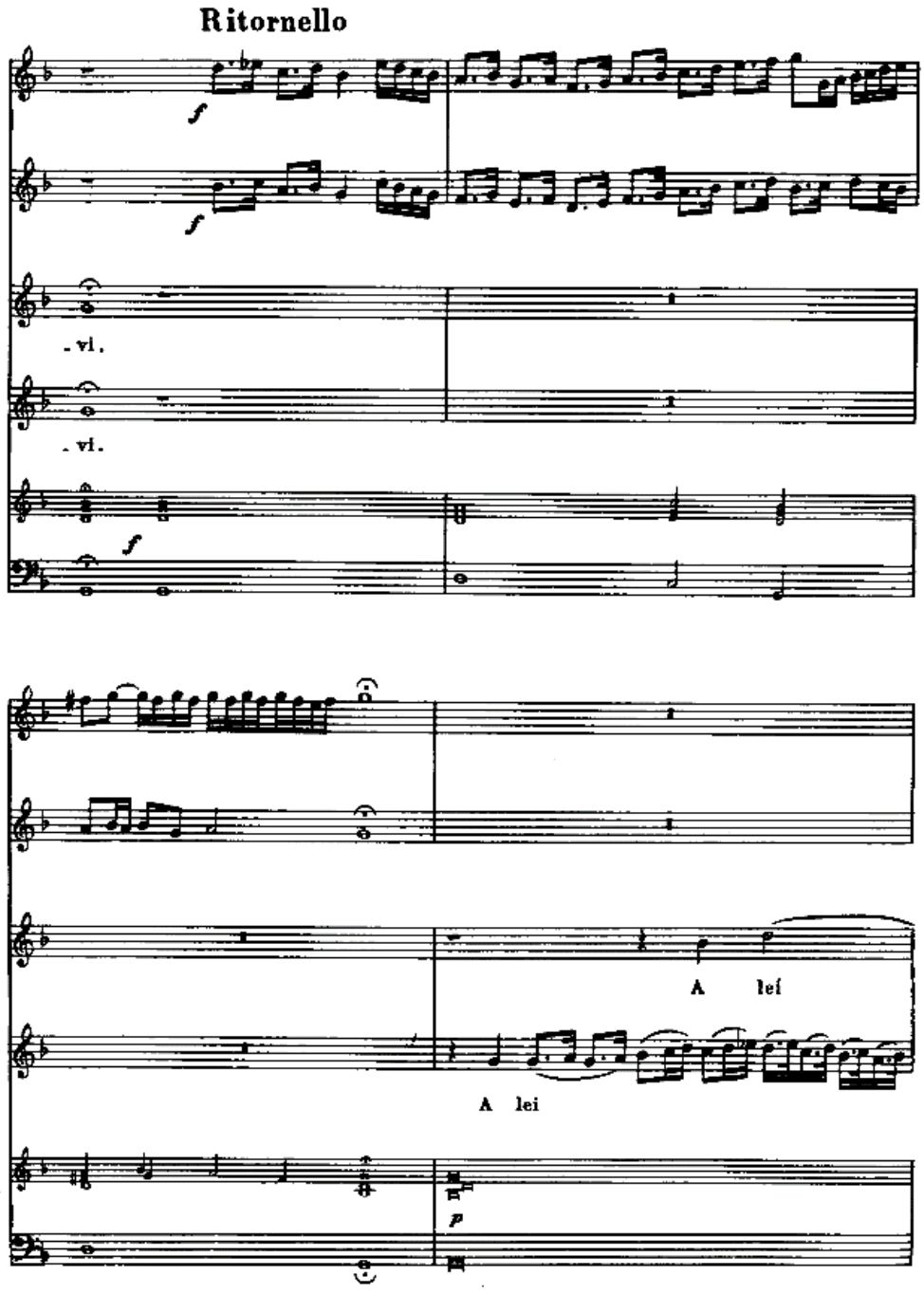
Example 2 clearly displays the violin parts using figuration in a rather virtuosic capacity. It is interesting to note that in this figuration the expression is rather vocal in its idiom – it uses stepwise movement and “trill-like” motifs as opposed to more violin-specific idioms such as interval leaps and broken thirds. This shows a glimpse of how Monteverdi began to start using the violin in an expressive and virtuositic capacity, while still within the tradition of vocal forms and idioms. This capacity of the violin to emulate vocal figuration and virtuosity was one of the most important aspects that lead to the violin’s growing popularity in the 17th century.

Example 2



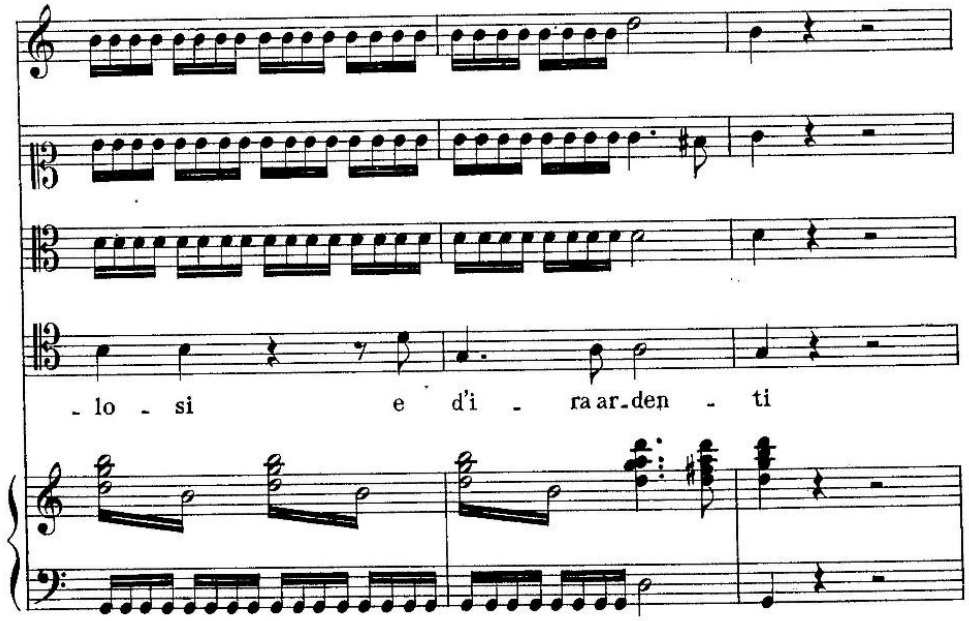
Example 3 displays how the violin parts are integrated into the vocal score while still displaying virtuosity and even emulating the virtuosity of the vocal line.

Example 3



Example 4: An extract of Monteverdi's use of measured tremolo in *e Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1638). [15]

Example 4



Monteverdi claimed in 1638[16] that he invented the technique of measured tremolo – which was used to express warlike passions in a '*style excitato'* – but Biagio Marini had already used a type of similar tremolo years before in the *La Foscarina* Op.1 of 1617.[17] Marini drew attention to his use of the technique by adding the subtitle *Sonata a 3 con il tremolo* to the title of his *La Foscarina* sonata.[18] He advises the performer as to the bow technique by adding an instruction in the violin parts instructing to *tremolo con l'arco* or "tremble with the bow."[19] Slurred tremolo was originally intended as an imitation of the organ tremulant – early sources suggest a Venetian origin – and it was to be performed by repeating several (usually four) notes of the same pitch in the same bow stroke, lightly articulated with a gentle pressure of the finger on the bow; left-hand vibrato may have accompanied the slurred tremolo.[20]

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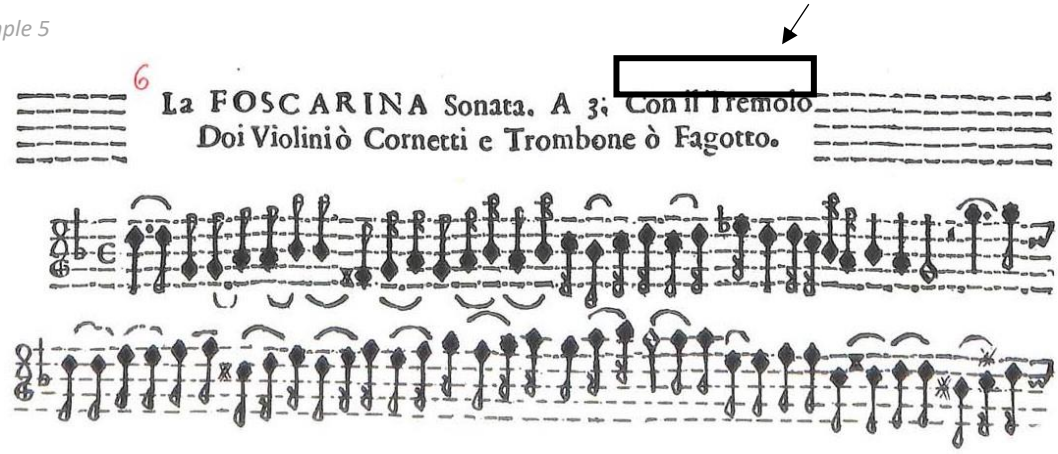
[15] Claudio Monteverdi, *e Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1638). Ed. Luigi Torchi (Milan: G. Ricordi, 1908). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Combattimento_di_Tancredi_e_Clorinda%2C_SV_153_(Monteverdi%2C_Claudio)
[16] Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi,* (Venice: Alessandro Vincenti, 1638). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Madrigals%2C_Book_8%2C_SV_146%E2%80%93167_(Monteverdi%2C_Claudio) Modern edition: Claudio Monteverdi, *Tutte le opera*, ed. G.F. Malipiero, viii (Vienna, 1967), p.[v.].
[17] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 129.
[18] Stewart Carter, "The String Tremolo in the 17Th Century," *Early Music* Vol. 19, No. 1 (1991), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3127952, 43.
[19] Carter, "The String Tremolo," 43.
[20] Carter, "The String Tremolo," 56.

Examples 5 and 6: Marini's La Foscarina Sonata for two violins and trombone or bassoon plus continuo from his *Affetti Musicali, Op.1* (1617). [21]

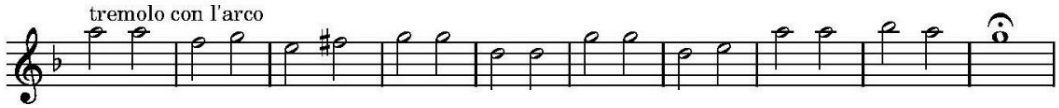
Example 5 shows the first edition of Marini's La Foscarina's Sonata in which he uses the term 'tremolo'; note the instruction "*Con il Tremolo"* next to the title.

Example 5



Example 6 is from a tremolo section from *La Foscarina Sonata* in modern notation.[22] These few bars show the first violin line in La Foscarina in modern notation. It includes the instruction "*tremolo con l'arco"* referring to the tremolo technique discussed.

Example 6

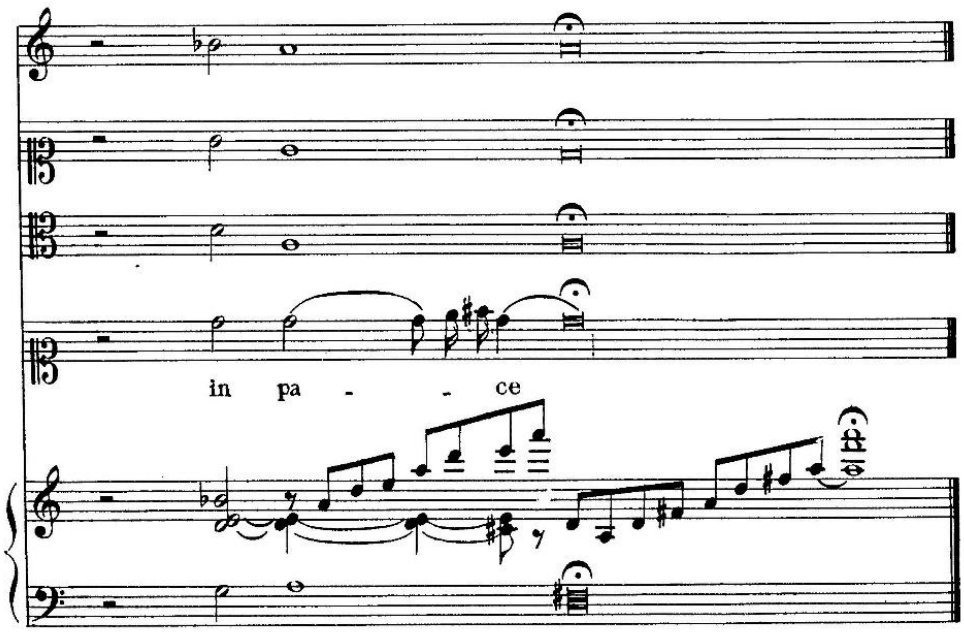


In this example, the note values delineate the duration of the 'tremolo' in this passage. It should therefore be kept in mind that each note is not simply held but is 'tremulated' for the delineated duration.

[21] Biagio Marini, *Affetti Musicali, Op.1* (1617). First edition (Venice: Bartolomeo Magni, 1617). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Affetti_musicali,_Op.1_(Marini,_Biagio).
[22] Carter, "The String Tremolo," 43.

Example 7 is from the end of *e Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* where Monteverdi instructs the violins to use smooth strokes (*arcate soaue*) to accompany Clorinda's dying words and to fade away on the last note (*questa vltima nota va in arcata more[n]do)*.[23] This shows Monteverdi's utilisation of violinistic technicalities and sonic capabilities to achieve artistic and expressive purposes. This development of using technical capabilities for expressive purposes within the sphere of violin music would grow into the theatricality of 17th century violin composers such as Marini, Farina, and Fontana.

Example 7



2.2 Heightened expression in violin music

After Monteverdi's expanding the use of the violin's capabilities in his writing, the violinist composer to next play a highly significant role was Biagio Marini. A virtuoso player himself, Marini was arguably the most significant composer for the violin in the early 17th century.[24] He was one of the earliest violin virtuosi and served under Monteverdi in Venice from 1615.[25] Marini was a significant innovator in that he notably expanded the use of the violin's capabilities of dramatic and expression display; this elevated the violin role's to that of a more expressive and virtuosic entity as opposed to

[23] Holman, "Monteverdi's String Writing," 557.
[24] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 108 and 135.
[25] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 48.

merely being a 'producer of sound' and accompaniment.[26] Monteverdi had begun to use the violin in a more expressive capacity within vocal forms, but Marini realized the violin's expressive potential in the realm of abstract instrumental music and to a more advanced, overt extent.[27]

In Marini's music the *stile moderno* aspects of 'affective' expression and heightened theatricality are observable together with an expansion of the violin's technical capabilities and idiomatic language. These elements of drama and display are displayed in a particularly vivid manner by the numerous technical novelties used in the iconic and theatrical *Capriccio Stravagante* by Carlo Farina - one of Marini's contemporaries.[28] Farina was another of the early violin virtuosi and was one of a group of violinist composers associated with the Mantuan court in the early 17th century.[29] This group will be discussed in Chapter 5. The heightened technical experimentation reached by early 17th-century Italian violin virtuoso composers such as Marini and Farina was part of a search for the widest range of expression – a search which was taking place on the opera stage and in vocal forms as well as in violin music.[30]

2.3 The growing use of *stile moderno* within violin music

In the 1620s the violin's technical, sonic, and expressive possibilities began to be explored as its capacity for "affective" expression was realized and its dramatic potential expanded.[31] There are relatively few extensive descriptions of instrumental music theories and performance practices from the 17th century, but the compositions themselves contain various elements indicative of the stylistic shifts taking place within the repertoire.[32] The music of Marini, Dario Castello, and Salomone Rossi, contain pertinent examples of this. All three of these composers use the term *moderno* to refer to both individual and collected compositions: the use of this term by three composers prolific in the realm of instrumental music (Marini particularly so in the area of violin music) can be seen as

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[26] Rebecca Cypess, "Esprimere La Voce Humana: Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers of the Early Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 27, No. 2 (2010), https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jm.2010.27.2.181, 200.

[27] Marini and Farina are briefly mentioned in this chapter in order to give context regarding the *stile moderno* and growing expressiveness of early violin music. The more specific works and contributions to violin music of Marini and Farina will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 together with a discussion of the Mantuan violin composers.

[28] Note: Farina's writings are sometimes excluded from studies of 17th century Italian music due to his working in Germany for an extended period of time, but they are included in this study with the view that his compositions exhibited a distinctly Italian style, as pointed out in pages 209-210 of "*Esprimere la voce humana*: Connections between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers of the Early Seventeenth Century" by Rebecca Cypess.

[29] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 48.

[30] McVeigh, "The Violinists of the Baroque and Classical Periods," 48.

[31] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 182.

[32] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 182.

strongly indicative of the shift towards a new style in instrumental music.[33] Marini and Castello both use the terms *affetto* and *affetti* in their instrumental works to identify sections that require emotive execution, creative ornamentation, or both. Castello's two volumes of *Sonate concertante in stil modern* (1621 and 1629) and Marini's 1626 volume *Sonate, sinfonia, canzone, opera ottava* both utilise virtuosity (quick passagework, double and triple stops, scordatura, and other novel techniques) and musical contrast, which suggests an association of these traits with the instrumental *stile moderno*.[34]

3. The Connections Between the Instrumental and the Vocal

3.1 Connections between the *stile moderno* instrumental style and the earlier vocal style

At the beginning of the 17th century there was a strong pre-existing connection between instrumental music and vocal music. Vocal music had long been the standard against which instrumental music was measured, and the developing instrumental forms drew many elements from the pre-existing vocal forms. The fundamental differences between instrumental and vocal music lay in the matters of idiomatic style and the organisation of music materials/forces. The main reason for the latter, as already mentioned, was the abstract nature of instrumental expression as opposed the text-based nature of vocal expression.

As a violinistic idiom began to develop from Monteverdi and Marini onwards into the 17th century, this idiom was not isolated from vocal style and influence. Despite the rising autonomy of instrumental music, this autonomy was far from unaffected by the surrounding and pre-existing influences. Even after purely instrumental performance had established itself as a viable medium for musical expression, a certain vocal expressivity remained both the ideal to which performers aspired, and against which they were measured.[35]

The connections between the contemporary *seconda prattica* vocal style and the developing *stile moderno* instrumental style were significant to the development of violinistic music and idioms, given that one of the primary reasons for the violin's rise to prominence was its capability to match the expression of the human voice both aesthetically and technically. The musical language of instrumental music was affected by the aesthetic of *seconda prattica* in vocal music – music was

[33] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 182-183.
[34] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 183.
[35] Timothy A. Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso. Instrumental Ornamentation Practice and the Stile Moderno," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 32, No. 2 (2001), https://www.jstor.org/stable/1562263?seq=1, 147.

meant to be subject to emotional expression and the moving of the listener's *affetti.* This was a contrast to the earlier 16th-century style/aesthetic of musical expression being subject to the correctness of theoretical music procedures. This entailed that the musical language being transferred to the violin was more expressive than that which had previously been required from the violin. This led to certain qualities/ traits becoming embodied in developing violin music such as a quasi-improvisational style created by metric freedom, the use of dissonances, and a greater impression of immediacy or theatricality. These embodied qualities were in turn manifested within the technical aspects that needed to be exploited in order to achieve the expression of these qualities in a violinistic realm as opposed to a vocal realm. The drama and expression of the opera stage and its vocal virtuosi were beginning to be commanded of the violin and its music.

Instrumental music thus acquired a new role not previously required by the dance music and accompaniment roles in which it had formerly resided: to engage the audience through moving of the *affetti*. The instrumental sonata came to the forefront in this role as being able, through its capricious and expressive musical language, to move the emotions and imaginations of listeners.[36] Abstract instrumental music thus established its ability to conjure feelings and images that in vocal music would have been made explicit through text.[37] The violin proved to be the instrument most capable of matching the vocal aesthetic, and the sonata proved to be the instrumental form best capable of utilising an expressive musical language. Thus, the violin and the sonata came to be closely linked together due to the sonata being one of the primary vehicles through which the technical and expressive capacities of the violin were explored. As the century proceeded, the technical boundaries of the violin were pushed to accommodate virtuosity and to achieve a height of expression to match that of vocal virtuosity and the prevailing expressive aesthetic.

It should be noted that while the sonata was the primary vehicle through which the violin's expressive and technical capacities were explored and expanded, it was not the only instrumental form in which innovative music for the violin was written. The majority of instrumental ensemble music composers at the time wrote dances as well as sonatas, canzonas, and other forms.[38] The variation, an older form, served the violin well as technical variations such as figuration could be effectively explored in this format.[39] The *ostinato* forms were a species of variation, and the

[36] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 185.
[37] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 185.
[38] Suess, "New Introduction and Notes," vi.
[39] Suess, "New Introduction and Notes," vi.

ostinato-inspired forms such as the *romanesca*, *chaconne*, and *follia* also made appearances in the 17th century violin literature.[40]

3.2 The connection of theatricality

There were two specific areas of overlap between the *stile moderno* instrumental style and vocal music in ways that were pertinent to and influential on the development of violin music and idioms. They have already been alluded to, to some extent, but the following section will discuss them in more depth.

The first of these was the common ground of theatricality, which was embodied by certain musical elements and devices. A common element seen in both the vocal and instrumental music in the early 17th century was a metric flexibility which lent an air of immediacy to the music and highlighted the emotional or "affective" qualities of the music.[41] In vocal music this was particularly prominent in the vocal recitative style, which was entirely dependent on the emotional content of the text for the convenience of expression.[42] A prominent example of this being adopted in violin music is Marini's *Sonata Variata*, in which the elements of metrical freedom and spontaneity are adopted in a manner idiomatic to the violin.[43] The musical language used by Marini was highly expressive and highlights the relationship between metrical freedom and the quasi-improvisatory idiom of the *stile moderno*.[44] The overt presence of these elements of metric freedom and quasi-improvisatory character in both vocal and instrumental spheres illustrate a larger, overarching commonality: theatricality. One of the most effective and vivid examples of this theatricality in violin music is Carlo Farina's *Capriccio Stravagante*. Like Marini, Farina uses technicality and virtuosic tricks to contribute to a theatrical mode of instrumental performance.[45] (This will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.) It is a significant work in that it calls for the instrumentalist to fulfil the role of an actor to some extent – arguably to a greater extent than any other preceding works of the period.[46] This shared ground of theatricality between the instrumental and vocal spheres would suggest an influence on the instrumental *stile moderno* by the vocal *stile rappresentativo*, which was prevalent in operas, ensemble madrigals, and solo songs in the early 1600s.[47] Thus, the heightened level of theatricality taking place within the violin music of Marini and Farina, two of the early violin virtuosi

[40] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 133.
[41] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 184.
[42] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 191.
[43] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 194.
[44] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 194.
[45] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 207.
[46] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 210.
[47] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 184.

and composers of the 17th century, was directly in line with the vocal aesthetics of the time. This theatricality was increasingly embodied in instrumental music by contrast and changeability – two hallmark elements of the developing 'instrumental' *stile moderno*.

3.3 Ornamentation, virtuosity, and unannotated improvisation practices

The second area of overlap linking the developing violin idiom and vocal music was the aspect of virtuosic ornamentation by use of diminution style or *passaggi.* This area, like that of theatricality, had implications for the idiom, aesthetic, and virtuosity of developing violin music. Virtuosic ornamentation had played a role in the violin's rise to pre-eminence. The ability to perform virtuosic ornamentation was a highly valued quality in vocal music and this was consequently the case in the instruments during the late 16th and early 17th centuries that sought to emulate the qualities of vocal music.[48] Due to this the violin, which had previously inhabited primarily the spheres of dance music, came to be in a more favourable position as the instrument best capable of matching the voice in the proficient execution of such ornamentation.[49]

Passagi was a virtuosic ornamentation style which featured elaborate intervallic and rhythmic diminutions. This style flourished in both vocal and instrumental spheres during the period of 1580-1620 and reached its apex in the last decade of the 16th century – roughly around the same time frame that the declamatory vocal style of the *seconda prattica* began to exert its influence in musical and dramatic expression.[50] Ornamentation played a role in delineating the older style, which focused on virtuosic elaboration, from the newer style, which was more declamatory in its dramatic expressiveness. Prolific ornamentation, such as *passaggi*, and elaborate devices were trademarks of the old style, while more subtle ornamentation and expressive/affective devices were found in the new style.[51]

The violin's ability to match vocal prowess in elaborate and virtuosic ornamentation gave it a distinct advantage over other instruments – even its close competitor the cornetto. However, it should be noted that an instrument's potential for virtuosity does not by its very nature alone determine what is completely idiomatic to that specific instrument.

The violin was proficient at performing virtuosic ornamentation as utilised by vocal styles, and while this was an important step toward a violinistic idiom being realized through the use of virtuosity, this in and of itself wasn't strictly speaking violinistic virtuosity. In light of this it is interesting to note that

[48] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 146.
[49] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 146.
[50] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 138.
[51] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 138.

the decline of *passaggi* practice largely coincided with the rise of the *seconda prattica's* declamatory style and the wholly idiomatic instrumental genre of the sonata.[52] The compositional language of the instrumental composer increasingly came to consist of instrumental idioms, of which many were based actually on ornamental figures.[53] Pertaining to the violin idiom, it is significant that the composers who were driving forces behind the evolution of idiomatic writing for the instrument were proficient players themselves. For this reason they were capable of virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity, but they were also able to understand beyond this what would be virtuosity specifically idiomatic to the violin and be able to achieve an expressive end.

The success of the sonata was influenced by this trend of moving away from vocal models and the overtly florid vocal ornamentation of the older styles towards idiomatic writing directed specifically and ostensibly at instruments.[54] The medium of the abstract instrumental sonata was a significant development in that it was able to be inherently idiomatic to instrumental writing instead of the mere adaptation of vocal style and forms to instrumental writing. This aspect of the sonata presented composers with fewer technical limitations and a wider and more dynamic musical spectrum than had its vocal precursors.[55]

In the early 17th century, overwhelming majority of the pedagogical literature on ornamentation and diminution was written for both vocalists and instrumentalists and not specially for instrumentalists, as the instrumentalists at the time still relied quite heavily on the vocal idioms.[56] In 1620 Francesco Rognoni – a Milanese conductor, violinist, and violin teacher – published a separate volume for ornamentation and diminution formulae specifically suitable for instrumental use.[57] Rognoni's manual *Selva de varii passaggi* was the first publications of its kind in the 17th century to highlight the specificity of an instrumental as opposed to the vocal idiom, and he was the only author of practice manuals on the topic to add an extensive commentary on selected performance problems with specific reference to the violin.[58] There were two pedagogical works published in the 16th century – Silvestro Ganassi's *Regola Rubertina* (1542) and Diego Ortiz's *Trattado de Glossas* (1553) – but these publications were written for the viol and not the violin.[59] Rogoni's instrumental figurations used wider interval leaps, arpeggiated chords, and tremolo as opposed to the vocal

[52] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 146-147.
[53] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 147.
[54] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 147.
[55] Collins, "Reactions Against the Virtuoso," 147.
[56] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 190.
[57] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 190.
[58] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 190.
[59] These two publications are not discussed in this study as they fall before the time frame of this study.

figurations.[60] The violin idiom in sonatas early in the 17th century consisted of many interval leaps, broken thirds, sixths, and octaves.[61] Closer to the later decades of the century, semiquaver figurations also became increasingly common and such figurations were seen in passages on arpeggiated chords, bariolage, tremolo, and recurring formulae consisting of four semiquavers.[62]

4. Conclusion

The environment inhabited by the violin at the beginning of the 17th century was one of experimentation and change. There was a significant aesthetic shift in the prevailing vocal music practices toward a more expressive *seconda prattica* style. Amid this general search for greater expression and theatricality, instrumental music was gradually gaining its own autonomy. In a technical and idiomatic sense instrumental music had to diverge from vocal music, although in an aesthetic sense it was following the same expressive trends as vocal music. This was manifested by certain traits in *stile moderno* instrumental style, and an increased sense of theatricality within both instrumental and vocal music.

Within the new expressive aesthetic, the violin came to fore as the instrument best capable of rivalling the human voice, particularly in the aspect of ornate ornamentation. As such it was the prime instrument wherein a meeting point between the expressive theatricality of the *seconda pratticca* and the development of an abstract instrumental medium of expression could be found. Thus, both the *stile moderno* instrumental sonata and the instrumental violin virtuoso came to fore as new entities.

There was a fundamental shift in not only in the violin's perceived capacities but in its very musical function. Cima and Gabrieli produced the first known dated solo and ensemble works for violin respectively, showing the violin's progression in the sphere of purely instrumental music. Monteverdi began to use the violin more independently and expressively within vocal forms while also exploring violin idiomatic capabilities such and particular bowings and articulations. Marini considerably expanded not only the violin's technical capabilities, but also its dramatic and theatrical capacity, as did Farina. In Marini's music the violin became more than a mere 'sound force' but also a device of dramatic expression of the same theatricality found in vocal music, but in a style specifically idiomatic to the violin.

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[60] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 191.
[61] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 191.
[62] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," 191.

It became no longer merely a question of virtuosity being achievable on the violin, but also a question of the dramatic and expressive intent/role being achieved through this instrumental virtuosity. The meeting of theatrical expression and expanded technical capacity within an autonomous instrumental style and a specifically violinistic idiom paved the way for the prominence of the violin virtuoso throughout the rest of the 17th century.

Chapter 4: The Violinist Composers of Venice and Brescia

1. Context: Sonata Schools in the Early 17th Century and their Connections to Violinist Composers

The previous chapter discussed the shift of musical and expressive style in instrumental and vocal music as well as their links to each other in Italy at the beginning of the 17th century. These shifts formed the background against which the emergence of independent instrumental music and the subsequent emergence of idiomatic writing in relation to the violin took place. Understanding this complex background and its influence on the development of abstract instrumental music and idiomatic violin writing at the start of the 17th century is necessary in order to have a clear departure point for examining the early 17th century. From this established departure point, the study will proceed to examine the development of violinistic idioms in the written violin music of Italian violinist composers in the early 17th century and the early violin virtuosi.

The book *Sonata in the Baroque Era* by William Newman highlights the close relationship shared by the violin and the sonata form; Newman makes the statement that "The violin may be said to have made its debut, reached a first peak in both construction and technical exploitation, spread from Italy to other, originally less receptive lands, and attracted some of the first great instrumental virtuosos, all primarily as a vehicle of the sonata."[1] Thus, sonata development in the early 17th century will serve as a useful framework for the discussion of the contributions/innovations of significant violinist composers, the development of the violin idiom, and the development of violinistic virtuosity.

During the first part of the 17th century in Italy, the early 'schools' of sonata composition resided in Venice, Brescia, and Mantua.[2] The affiliations of 17th-century Italian violinist composers to various schools would have played a palpable role in shaping their individual styles. Viewing their styles and innovations within the context of these schools – both stylistically and chronologically – will thus contribute to an informed understanding of the development of style within the advancement of a violinistic idiom.

As already stated earlier in Chapter 2, the sonata was not the only genre used by violinist composers, but the sonata and its related forms were indeed the primary vehicles used by violinist composers to

[1] William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc, 1972), 54.
[2] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 95.

explore innovations in the writing of violin music during the 17th century. Forgoing forms – such as dances, variation forms, and canzona forms – serve more to show pertinent aspects within older forms than to display the drive of new and progressive innovations. These other forms, however, contain value in how they were utilised in relation to the writing of music for the violin. For instance, the preference for violin scoring in dance forms and music was clear since the start of the 17th century whereas the sonata had for a long time been subject to diverse instrumentalist scoring – it was only a few decades later in the century when the violin became solidified as the most popular treble scoring for the sonata.[3]

Baroque sonata production in Italy can be designated into three rather clearly defined periods[4] – the first of which will be discussed within this study.[5] The first half of the century was marked by scattered publications – chiefly in vocal collections in which sonatas appear as instrumental appendages (as in the case of Paolo Cima's instrumental sonatas) or instrumental collections in which they are mixed in with a variety of differently titled pieces.[6] The sonatas in this period were of a markedly innovative nature and were highly diverse in form; only to a limited extent did their composers fall into perceivable schools, as in Mantua and Venice.[7] These schools did, however, play an important role towards the development of a violinistic idiom in the early 17th century, as did the violinist composers within them. The schools of Venice and Brescia will be discussed in the chapter while the Mantua violinist composers will be discussed in the following chapter.

2. Venice and Brescia

Venice and Mantua were the two foremost centres of violinist composer activity as well as sonata production and development in the early 17th century. The Venetian school embodied the clearest link between the older Renaissance style and the newer 17th-century styles.[8] Overall, the Venetian school played a greater role in the development of abstract instrumental music style than it did in the development of written violin music, as discussed in the previous chapter. The two composers to produce the earliest dated written ensemble and the written solo (with continuo) works for violin respectively were Gabrieli and Cima, and they were both influential constituents of the Venetian

[3] Piotr Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," *Musica Iagellonica*, 2011, 185.
[4] From Newman's *The Sonata in the Baroque, 95:* first period: 1597-1650, second period: 1650-1700*,* third period: 1700-1750.
[5] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 95.
[6] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 95.
[7] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 95.
[8] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 99.

school. Gabrieli, in particular, was regarded as the head of the Venetian school of sonata composers in the beginning of the 17th century.[9]

3. Early Violin Sonatas

3.1 Giovanni Paolo Cima (*c*1570 - 1630) and Giovanni Gabrieli (between 1554 and 1557 - 1612)

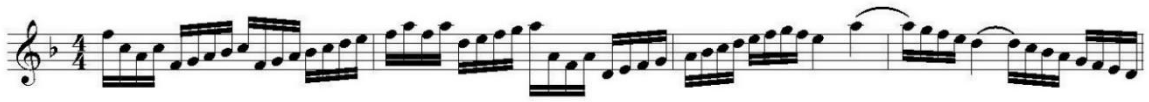
The first period of significant innovation and experimentation in written music explicitly involving violin scoring within the sonata form was undertaken by Italian composers between approximately 1610 and 1640.[10] Giovanni Paolo Cima's *Sonata violin e violone* (1610) is the earliest dated work for solo violin and basso continuo while Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sonata con tre violini* (1612) is the earliest dated instrumental ensemble work to specify the violin in its scoring.[11] Although neither Cima nor Gabrieli were violinists themselves, these works are pertinent to the development of violin writing for the role they played in the development of early 17th century instrumental music in general, but particularly that which utilised the violin.

The most technically virtuosic and violinistic sections in Cima's *Sonata con violin e violone* occur within bars 36-39 and bars 69-72. Examples 6 and 7 exhibit idioms that are characteristic of the violin sonatas in the early 17th century. In addition, idiomatic figurations such as interval leaps and arpeggio motifs would be difficult to rival treble instruments such as the cornett thus making these passages more specific to the violin idiom.

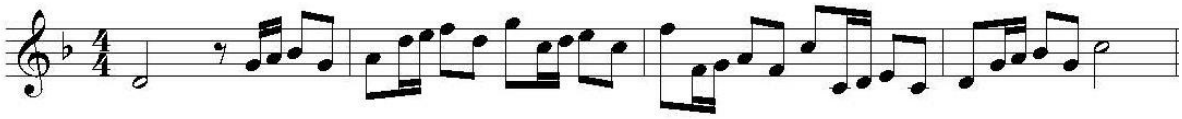
[9] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 98.
[10] Cypess, "Connections Between Vocal and Instrumental Music by Italian Composers," 182.
[11] John Walter Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 78.

Examples 8 and 9: Cima's *Sonata con violin e violione* (1610) for one violin and continuo.[12]

Example 8



Example 9



Examples 8 and 9 display figurations in semiquavers using passing notes and leaps in thirds, fourths, fifths, and occasional octaves. These figurations of frequent leaps, broken thirds, arpeggios, and chord motifs are characteristic of a violinistic idiom.[13] Physically, these passages are comfortable for violin playing as the motifs lie easily within the first position and the string crossings are not awkward for bowing. In Example 8, the use of open A and E-strings could even help the timbre of the passage by making it brighter.

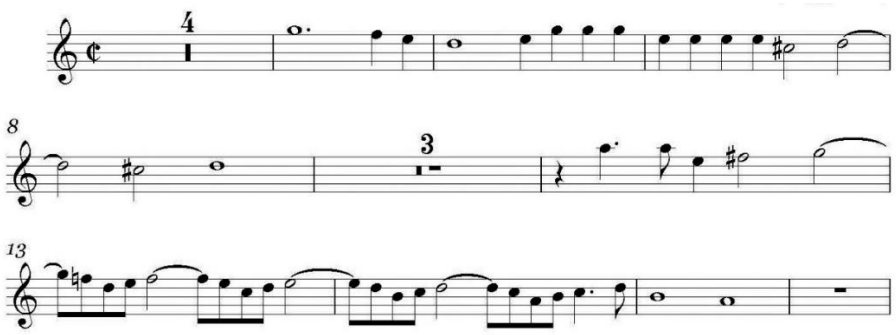
The range of this sonata is limited – *c* to *a''*. In terms of range, it could be played by a cornett, but the figuration shows that it is quite clearly meant for a more violinistic idiom and would be rather awkward on the cornett. The cornett had a slightly more limited range than the violin but judging by the range used in many violin sonatas of the 17th century (especially early in the century), range cannot be the sole criterion to decide whether a composer employs a violinistic idiom of not.[14]

[12] Giovanni Paolo Cima, *Sonata con violin e violone,* (1610). Ed. Andrea Friggi, (2004). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_for_Violin_and_Violone_(Cima%2C_Giovanni_Paolo)
[13] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 166.
[14] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 166.

It is interesting that Gabrieli's *Sonata con tre violini* – though specifically scored for violin – is rather less violinistic that Cima's. This can be seen in the first two phrases of the first violin part:

Example 10: Gabrieli's *Sonata con tre violini* (1612) for three violins and continuo.[15]

Example 10



There is little use of figuration or ornamentation apart from the quaver motifs, and in general much larger note values are used as opposed to in Cima's sonata. The range of interval leaps and the melodic curve is rather more limited with that of Cima's.

Gabrieli's sonata is instrumental in style and concept as opposed to vocal, as it uses short phrases and sequences.[16] However, it is in a generalized instrumental style and not in the more specific idiom of the violin – it could be played quite comfortably on another treble instrument or even sung.[17]

Cima's solo and duo sonatas demonstrate certain devices definitive of the new *stile moderno* style such as melodic and harmonic expression of *affetti*, speech-like rhythms, and chromatic effects.[18] Certain hallmarks of *seconda prattica* vocal music (melodic contours and rhythmic articulations akin to inflections of natural speech, rhetorical figures and phrasing, and the use of dissonance) had started to become part of instrumental music's vocabulary by around 1610 through either direct usage or assimilation.[19] This assimilation suggests the evolution of a *stile moderno* instrumental music style palpably in alignment with the contemporary *seconda prattica* style of vocal music. This transfer of stylistic and expressive language into instrumental music in the early 17th century would in turn influence the later refinement of the musical language used in instrumental genres that

[15] Giovanni Gabrieli, *Sonata con tre violini*, (1612). Ed. Grimbald. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_XXI_'con_tre_violini'%2C_Ch.214_(Gabrieli%2C_Giovanni) Also available here: https://wwnorton.com/college/music/Hill/
[16] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 126.
[17] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 126.
[18] Timothy A. Collins, "Musica Secreta Strumentali: The Aesthetics and Practice of Private Solo Instrumental Performance in the Age of Monody (Ca. 1580 - Ca. 1610)" in *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 35, No. 1 , (2004), 60-61.
[19] Collins, "Aesthetics and Practice of Private Solo Instrumental Performance," 60-61.

would be conceived in an expressive and 'affective' manner but be purely abstract in expressive content and distinctly idiomatic to instruments.[20] The development of an instrumental style that could potentially be as expressive as the vocal music that had preceded it, but do so in a way that was idiomatic to instrumental writing, was a vital step toward the violin's capabilities being realized and utilised by 17th-century violinist composers.

While Cima's works exhibited elements of a nascent *stile moderno* instrumental style, Gabrieli's works reflected innovations in the use of abstract musical ideas as a means of controlling musical materials.[21] This was significant as the musical materials and forces in purely instrumental music could not be centred around a text to generate expression as was the case in vocal music – a fundamental difference. Gabrieli's music for instrumental ensemble consisted primarily of canzonas and sonatas, and they exploited the large acoustic forces available for church music contexts.[22] His music engaged with acoustical problems closely associated with antiphonal practices and as well as formal organisation in abstract music through the unifying musical concepts of repetition, variation, and recapitulation.[23] These innovations, along with his development of dynamic contrasts and dialogue mark Gabrieli as a major contributor to the development of abstract instrumental music in Italy.[24]

3.2 Venetian and Brescian Styles

Venetian trio sonatas shared certain features which differentiated them from developments elsewhere.[25] The most blatant of these was a distinct bent toward virtuosity, which was built upon the traditions of improvised embellishments and division manuals set down in the 16th century.[26] This bent toward virtuosity is most observable in the many 'solo' sections of the Venetian trio sonatas, with many of these solos following patterns which stemmed from pre-existing embellishment practices.[27] The improvisational traditions and treatises of the previous century provided the forerunners of *stile moderno* instrumental idioms as well as a large repertory of the

[20] Collins, "Aesthetics and Practice of Private Solo Instrumental Performance," 60-61.
[21] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 63.
[22] David Bryant, "Gabrieli, Giovanni" in *Grove Music Online,* (2001), https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040693.
[23] John G. Suess, "New Introduction and Notes" in *Anthology of Instrumental Music from the End of the 16th Century to the End of the 17Th Century*, Joseph Wilhelm von Wasielewskie. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), vi.
[24] Suess, "New Introduction and Notes," vi.
[25] Peter Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata: From its Origins Until Corelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 91.
[26] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 91.
[27] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 92.

types of figurations that required a high level of manual dexterity and virtuosity.[28] The Venetians were also notably more precise than other schools in their notation of both specific instrumental idioms – such as bowings, slurs, and tonguings – but also of standard embellishments such as *gruppi* and *trilli*.[29]

The combination of a pre-existing tradition of instrumental virtuosity, as opposed to other more conservative styles at the time, with the opposition of acoustical forces that stemmed from Gabrieli's innovations led to Venetian small ensemble sonatas having a distinctive style of their own.[30] The 'extroverted' Venetian style was marked by an emphasis on virtuosity, a wide vocabulary of sequential and repeated rhythmic patterns, and a strong sense of harmonic motion.[31] The style also exhibited unexpected changes of mood, rhetorical outbursts, and mosaic-like structures which lent a sense of unpredictability to formal procedures.[32]

The Venetian school displayed a distinctly 'soloistic' conception of the trio sonata medium, and this was arguably the most influential contribution of the Venetian school to sonata development in the 17th century.[33] This contribution would in turn wield influence in the arena of violin music on two fronts. Firstly, the violin was idiomatically well-suited to figurations and embellishments. This precocity at executing figuration and embellishment, even before a specifically violinistic idiom had crystalized, played a significant role in the violin's emergence at the forefront of instrumental music. Secondly, the virtuosity of the Venetian style would influence violinist composers of Brescian origin – such as Marini and Fontana – who later wielded influence within the Mantuan group of violinist composers.[34] These two violin composers were of the first widely recognized violin virtuosi and they played significant roles in the development of early 17th century violin music.[35]

Brescia was another notable music hub and had close musical ties with Venice in the early 17th century.[36] It held significance as the cradle of early fine violin making, as it was the home of Gasparo da Salo and his pupils.[37] Marini and Fontana were both born in Brescia and were active in Venice and Mantua later in their lives. Marini was active in Venice at the time of his first and last publications,

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[28] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 91.
[29] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 91.
[30] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 94.
[31] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 95.
[32] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 95.
[33] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 94.
[34] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 95.
[35] John Walter Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 78.
[36] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 115.
[37] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 115.

which were 38 years apart.[38] Fontana presumably spent much time in Venice, as his fame as a violinist in the city was well-documented.[39] Both violinist composers represented a fusion of Brescian and Venetian characteristics; they were both strongly influenced by and aware of the Venetian style, but they retained certain elements of the more conservative Brescian style.[40]

Marini participated in the first emergence of the Venetian *stile moderno* sonata, and the influence of the Venetian style is palpable in the overall structure of many of his sonatas.[41] It is interesting that Marini did not utilise the trio sonata as a vehicle for his noted prowess as a violinist as is apparent in his solo compositions.[42] This differs from the usual Venetian practice which utilised lavish technical display in the ensemble sonatas as much as in the fewer printed solo sonatas.[43] Marini's most significant achievements lay in the development of violinistic idioms in his works for solo violin and continuo during a period when that specific medium was poorly represented in extant Italian sources.[44] His progressive works for solo violin and continuo existed next to canzonas of a more conservative Brescian bent – most of his trio sonatas generally suggest a compromise between the more virtuosic Venetian style and the more conservative Brescian style.[45]

Like those of Marini, Fontana's sonatas represented an incorporation of modern elements into the more conservative style of the Brescian canzona.[46] Fontana's works displayed a more soloistic conception of the trio sonata which is revealing of the influence the Venetian style had on him, but it was tempered by the use of repetitive schemes and frequent recourse to variation.[47] In addition, the distinctive "echo" dialogues characteristic of Venetian style hardly ever occurred in his works.[48]

4. Conclusion

Venice, Brescia, and Mantua were the chief Italian centers of violin music production within the early 17th century. The instrumental styles of these centers were palpably influenced by the newer *stile moderno* as discussed in the previous chapter. Instrumental music was being influenced by the more expressive and virtuoso aspects of the *stile moderno.* Around the same time, violin music found a more specific vehicle in the form of the sonata, which saw the few dated sonatas specifically scored

[38] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 102.
[39] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 95.
[40] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 100.
[41] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 96.
[42] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 97.
[43] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 97.
[44] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 99.
[45] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 99.
[46] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 102.
[47] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 102.
[48] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 102.

for the violin by Cima and Gabrieli. The next few decades of the century would see the further development for a violinistic idiom and expression in the works of the Mantuan violin composers as well the rise of the violin virtuoso through the careers and work of violin composers such as Farina, Fontana, and Marini. The violin music of these composers will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: The Violinist Composers of the Mantua School

1. Mantua

Mantua was next to Venice in significance, if not in quantity, of its sonata composers.[1] In the first half of the 17th century, Venice was entering its greatest period while Mantua was ending its greatest period of music and art which it had seen under the patronage of the powerful Gonzaga family.[2] However, Mantua and Venice shared a notable bond musically through Monteverdi – he served around twenty years at the Gonzaga court before relocating to in 1631 to become the *maestro di cappella* at St. Marks in Venice.[3] Despite the extensive use of instrumental forces in the various entertainments of the Gonzaga court, Mantua's contribution to the developments of free instrumental sonata in the first three decades of the 17th century was not extremely sizeable.[4] Of the 130 or so known pieces in Marini's instrumental publications, less than 20 have direct relevance to the development of the sonata, although they do confirm the growing popularity of the small ensemble during his lifetime.[5] Salamone Rossi and Giovanni Battista Buonamente – another two of the violinist composers associated with Mantua – shared a common interest in variation rather than the sonata which rather separated them from the Venetian school, as the variation form was a branch of composition largely neglected by the Venetian school.[6] Variation forms, whether based on popular tunes or standard base patterns, constituted some of their most impressive contributions.[7] The characteristic melodic extension and evolution of melodic material produced a coherence of homogeneity which was more closely associated with Brescian practice than with the more 'mosaic-like' and diffuse Venetian *stile modern* sonata.[8] However, the use of regular divisions in connection with reiterated rhythmic motives as well as the use of increases in rhythmic complexity between adjacent sections were features which were aligned with the Venetian trends toward contrast.[9]

Although Venice surpassed Mantua in terms of sonata production, Mantua was a hub for multiple violinist composers who wielded considerable influence in the development of violin writing and idioms. The first 'school of violin playing' was constituted of violinist composers centered in Mantua,

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[1] William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 110.
[2] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 110.
[3] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 110.
[4] Peter Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata: From its Origins Until Corelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 106.
[5] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 96.
[6] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 107.
[7] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 107.
[8] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 107.
[9] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 107.

and quite a few of these composers shared a connection with Monteverdi in that they had served under or with him to at least some extent.[10] Monteverdi, discussed in the previous chapter, was a strong link between Venice and Mantua as he served some 20 years at the Gonzaga court in Mantua before accepting an appointment at St. Mark's in Venice in 1613.[11] This group or 'first school' of violinist composers essentially constituted the early 'founders of violin technique' which included Biagio Marini, Carlo Farina, Giovanni Battista Fontana, Salamone Rossi, and Giovanni Battista Buonamente.[12] Marini and Farina were discussed in the previous chapter in relation to the links between vocal music styles and the development of violin music in the early decades of the 17th century; in this chapter they are discussed more specifically in relation to this Mantuan 'school' of violinists.

2. The Violinist Composers of the Mantua: The First "Violin School" in Italy

(In chronological order.)

Salomone Rossi (1570?-1630?)

Salomone Rossi[13] – together with Marini, Farina, and Buonamente – began the early part of his career as a violinist under Monteverdi in Mantua.[14] Rossi published a total of 13 collections of music between 1589 and 1628 under the service of the powerful Gonzaga family.[15] Out of these collections, four of them are instrumental. These four instrumental collections were first published in 1607, 1608, 1613, and 1622, and they were followed by many reprints.[16] His 1622 collection contains what was possibly the first dated compositions scored and written specifically for four violins – the *Sonata a quattro Violini e due Chitarroni.*[17] (Although this piece is significant from a historical point of view, it avails little in terms of technical violinistic developments.) Subsequent observation of his instrumental works shows that increasing importance was given to the sonata form in the successive collections.[18] In the last books – each printed twice by 1642 – the sonatas developed significantly in size, definition, and traits of the *stile moderno*.[19] Rossi was a progressive figure in anchoring the newer abstract instrumental forms by tangible means, such as and more

[10] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 110.
[11] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 110.
[12] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 110-111.
[13] Dates from Newman, 110.
[14] David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins To 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 135.
[15] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 111.
[16] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 111.
[17] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 24.
[18] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 111.
[19] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 111.

specifically the variation principle.[20] For the recurring ideas in his variation forms, he used some of the popular melodies that are often found in 17th century Italian sonatas.[21]

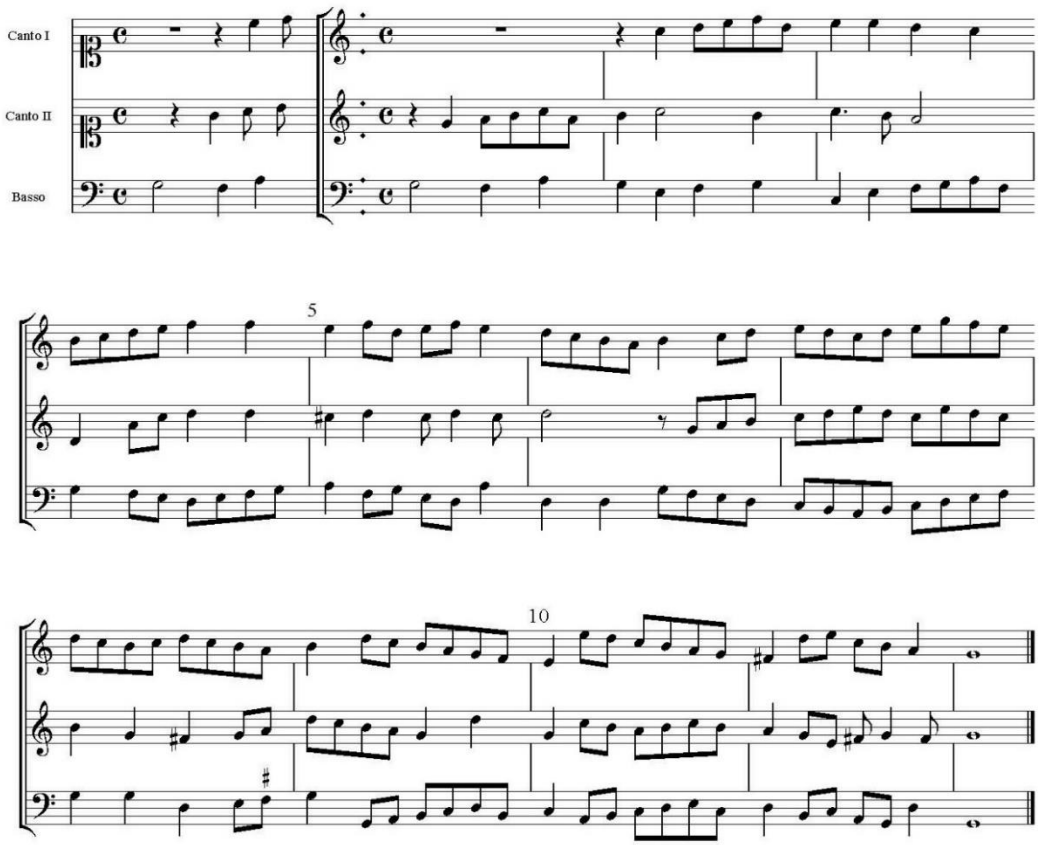
The first three of the four instrumental collections were written for viol and the fourth written for violin, but their content and style are closely related.[22] Rossi's *Libro Quarto* contains possibly the earliest composition specifically written for four violins.[23] From the standpoint of musical history, the 55 sinfonias - 22 of which are in the *Il primo libro* – are the most significant items in the four books.[24] With them, Rossi created a new type of violin music – short and attractive pieces which consist of two sections each repeated. These short pieces revealed Rossi to be masterful at writing 'miniature art', and this type of violin music was cultivated further by other composers.[25]

[20] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.
[21] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.
[22] Willi Apel, *Italian Violin Music of the Seventeenth Century*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 24.
[23] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 24.
[24] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 24.
[25] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 24.

Example 11: Extract from Rossi's *Sinfonia Tertia* for two viols and continuo from *Il Primo Libro* (1607).[26] This sinfonia is from Rossi's earliest instrumental collection.

This example displays how Rossi's sinfonias were 'miniature' and attractive pieces – a new form for instrument and violin music. While instrumental in style, there is nothing significant technically regarding violin idioms. This collection was, after all, written for viol as opposed to violin. The range is quite limited – just over an octave in both treble lines – and for the most part, stepwise movement and small intervals are used. The significant aspect here is the concise form if this short work.

Example 11

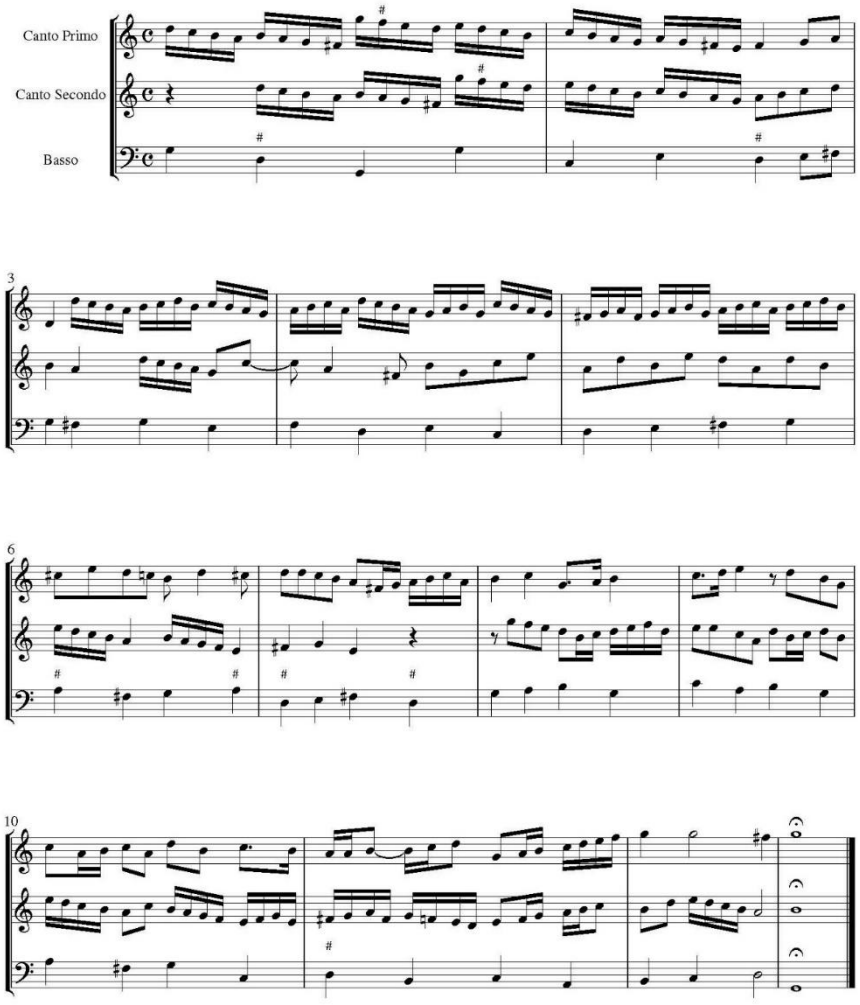


[26] Salomone Rossi, "Sinfonia Tertia" from *Il Primo Libro delle sinfonie et gagliarde,* (1607). Ed. Ulrich Alpers. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sinfonie_et_gagliarde%2C_Libro_1_(Rossi%2C_Salamone)

Example 12: Extract from Rossi's *Sinfonia Quarta* for two violins and continuo from *Il Quarta Libro* (1622).[27] This sinfonia is from the last of Rossi's instrumental works. Unlike his three earlier instrumental collections, this collection was written for violin instead of viol.

Example 12 still exhibits the 'miniature' and attractive characteristics of the previous example, but it is more interesting in terms of texture and violinistic idioms. The use of scale-like figurations and semiquaver sequences is far more violinistic as opposed to Example 1. Although the range is also rather limited, the individual parts are more complex with the second line using larger intervals of fourths in bars 4 and 5 while the top line plays semiquaver sequences.

Example 12

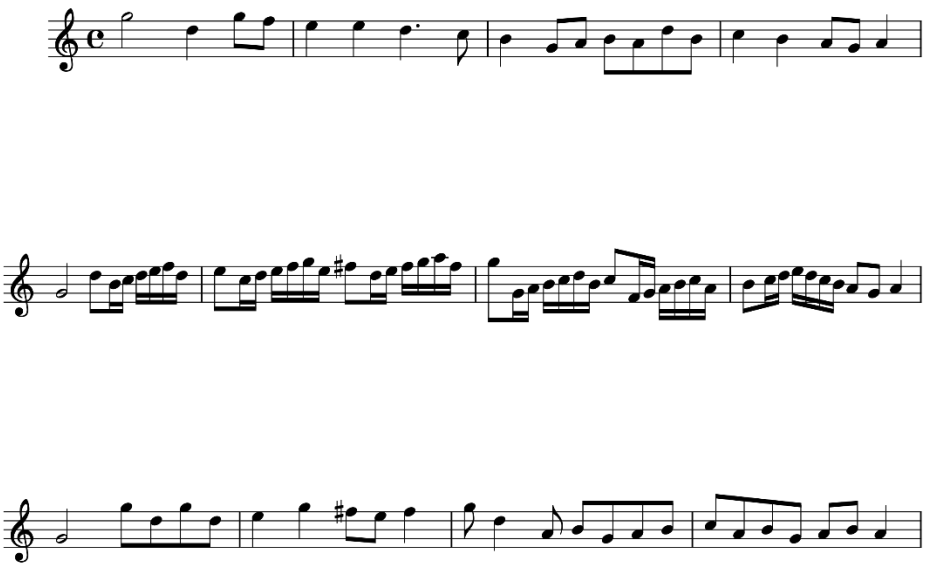


[27] Salomone Rossi, "Sinfonia Quarta" from *Il Quarta Libro de varie sonate, sinfonia, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente per sonar due violini et un chitarrone o altro stromento,* (1622). Ed.Lorenzo Girodo, (2010). Available online:
https://imslp.org/wiki/Varie_sonate,_sinfonie,_gagliarde,_brandi,_e_corrente,_Libro_4_(Rossi,_Salamone)

Examples 13 and 14: Extracts from Rossi's *Sonata Sopra la Bergamasca* for two violins and continuo from *Il Quarta Libro* (1622). [28] This extract is from the first violin line.

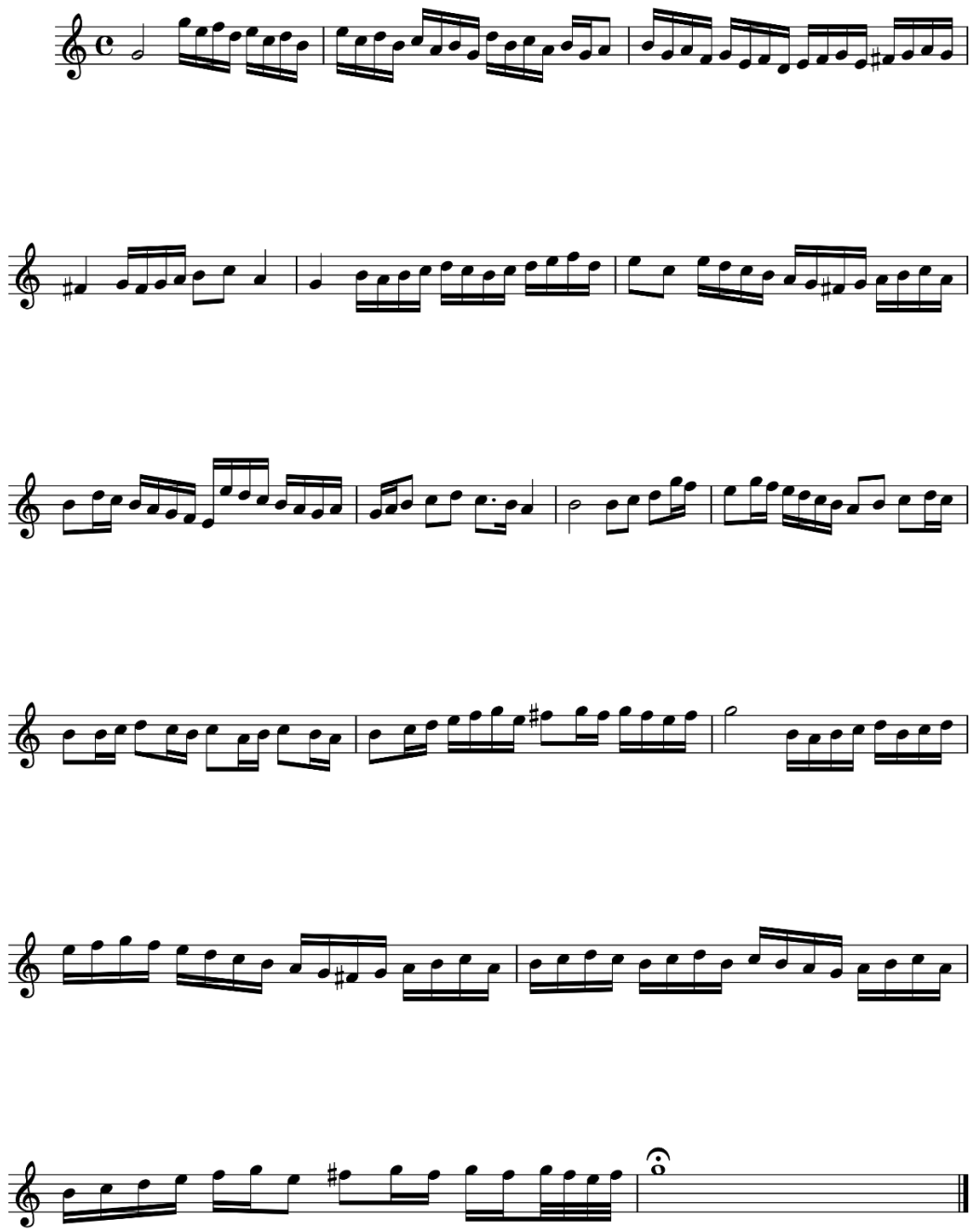
The sonatas in his 1622 collection are longer and more violinistic. Examples 13 and 14 display violinistic idiom such as semiquavers runs, sequences, sequences of broken thirds, and a short decorative figuration of demisemiquavers at the end, not unlike a vocal figuration. The range is much the same as examples 11 and 12 – no higher than *g*'' and the lowest string (*g* below middle *c*) is avoided.

Example 13



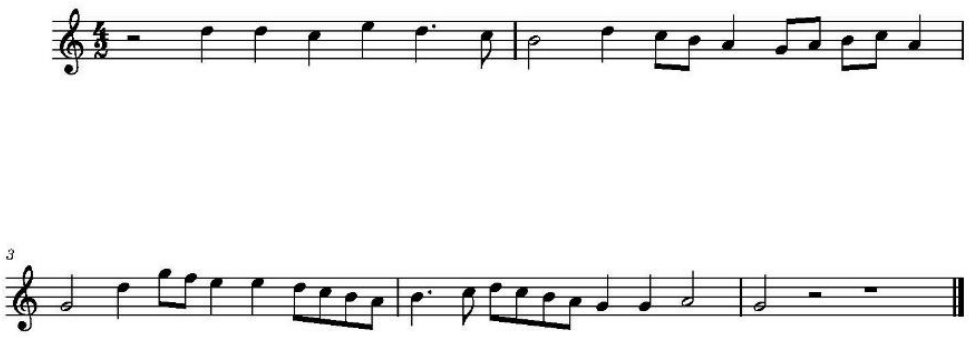
[28] Salomone Rossi, "Sonata Sopra la Bergamasca" from *Il Quarta Libro de varie sonate, sinfonia, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente per sonar due violini et un chitarrone o altro stromento,* (1622). Ed.Lorenzo Girodo, (2010). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Varie_sonate,_sinfonie,_gagliarde,_brandi,_e_corrente,_Libro_4_(Rossi,_Salamone)

Example 14



Apart from writing specifically for the violin, Rossi was a significant figure in developing and anchoring the new, abstract instrumental forms.[29] His longest sonatas were those based on variation principles, and in some of his variation-based works he used popular 17th-century melodies for the recurring ideas.[30] These recurring melodies only appear in the bass throughout his third instrumental collection, but they do appear in the top line in at least some instances in the fourth collection such as *Sonata Sopra la Bergamasca*.[31] As seen in Example 4 and Example 5, Rossi's variation treatment gives more opportunity for exciting and ornate figuration than can be found in the shorter and earlier works. The *Sopra la Bergamasca Sonata* used a recurring tune/theme throughout seen below.[32] Example 15 shows the original '*Bergamasca'* tune used throughout Rossi's *Sopra la Bergamasca Sonata*.

Example 15



[29] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.
[30] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.
[31] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.
[32] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 112.

Giovanni Battista Fontana (ca1589-1630 or 1631)

Giovanni Battista Fontana[33] was a native of Brescia, but was also active in Rome, Venice, and Padua, where he died.[34] His extant works were published within a single collection that was posthumously published in 1641, together with a dedication that praised Fontana as 'one of the most singular virtuosos the age has seen.'[35] The publication of this posthumous collection was brought out by the *maestro di cappella* in the Brescian church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, where Fontana had served at one time.[36]

Fontana and Biagio Marini were significant figures in that they were both imminent virtuosos and were two of the first violinists to become well-known composers for their instrument.[37] Fontana was one of the important composers of early Baroque violin music.[38] He was masterful at writing both the virtuoso style and the cantabile style, and he was able to use a style of sudden and surprising changes as well as consequential development.[39] Fontana's publication contains eighteen sonatas; his sonatas display broad, long, and unified forms, advanced use of the violin (for the time), and lines extended in the cantilena fashion.[40] His style exhibits a strong inclination towards lyrical elements, often favouring conjunct writing in the florid *passaggi*.[41] While Fontana's writing displays stylistically and violinistically attractive features, it is only his solo sonatas that would be considered advanced in a violinist sense, through the exploitation of elements such as string crossings.[42]

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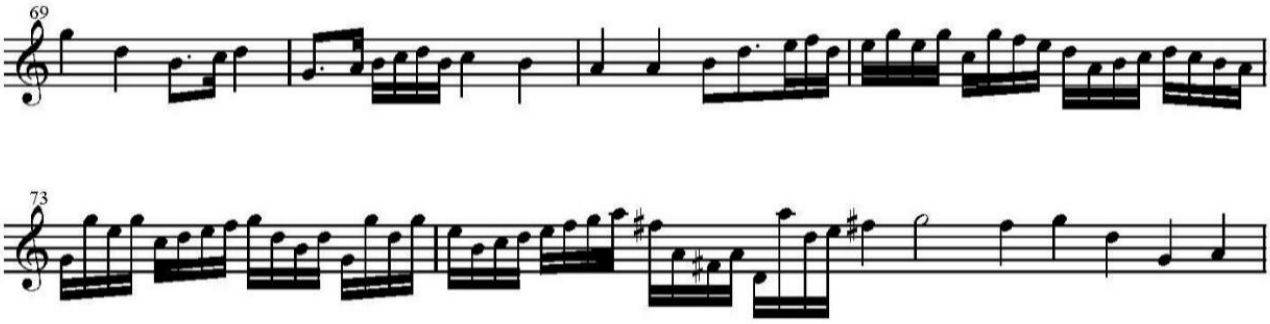
[33] Dates from John Walter Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History: Baroque Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 78; Newman, 108.
[34] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 42.
[35] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 42.
[36] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 108.
[37] Hill, *The Norton Introduction to Music History*, 78.
[38] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 44.
[39] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 44.
[40] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 108.
[41] Peter Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century: Italian Supremacy or Austro-German Hegemony?" *Il Saggiatore Musicale* Vo. 3, No. 2 (1996): 238, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43029389.
[42] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 238.

Example 16: Fontana's *Sonata Prim*a for solo violin and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento* (1641). [43] Examples 16 and 17 are extracts from the solo violin line.

This example displays Fontana's exploitation of string crossings, as well as large intervals (octave and larger) as well as arpeggiation and semiquaver figuration. The 4th beat of bar 74 in particular shows the interval of a compound 5th, and in this context the player would not only have to cross strings, but cross from the D-string to the E-string leaving the A-string untouched. This procedure of 'skipping over a string' requires some agility in the bow arm.

Example 16

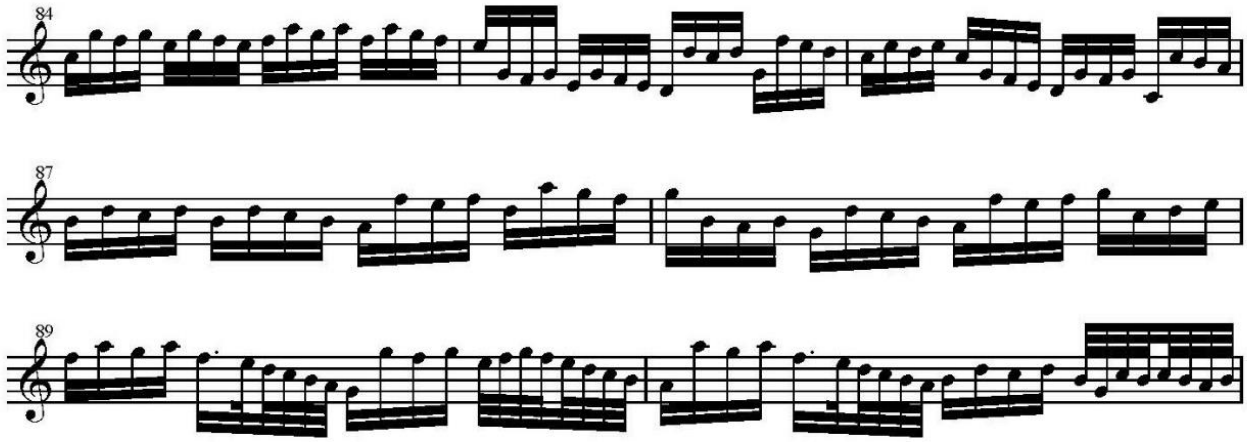


[43] Giovanni Battista Fontana, "Sonata Prima a Violino solo" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento,* (1641). Ed. Andrea Friggi, (2005). Urtext. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Violin_Sonata_in_C_major,_F_1475.01_(Fontana,_Giovanni_Battista)

Example 17: Fontana's *Sonata Terza* for solo violin and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin…* (1641). [44]

This example displays string crossings, semiquaver figuration and sequences, as well as decorative ornamentation consisting of demisemiquavers in bars 89 and 90. It is interesting to note that although both examples exploit large intervals and string crossings, the general range avoids the lowest string.

Example 17

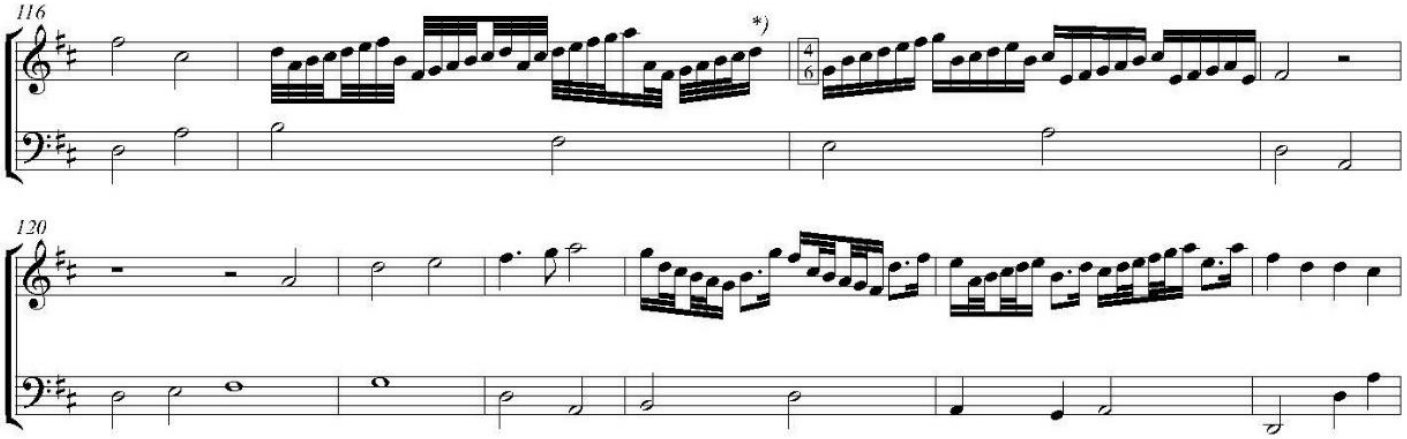


[44] Giovanni Battista Fontana, "Sonata Terza" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento,* (1641). Ed. Andrea Friggi, (2005). Urtext. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Violin_Sonata_in_C_major,_F_1475.03_(Fontana,_Giovanni_Battista)

Fontana clearly used novel and innovative elements that created a trend towards unusual, surprising, and fantastic passages.[45] His work was thus dominated by frequent changes of ideas, by unexpected passages, and especially by the sudden eruption of highly virtuoso passages during quiet motion.[46] This can be seen in the solo violin line of Example 18, where the solo violin part suddenly plays a flurry of demisemiquavers in bars 117 to 118 after having played only minims in bars 116 and 119. Much the same can said of bars 123 to 124 – the bars before and after those two virtuosic bars consist of much larger note values.

Example 18: Fontana's *Sonata Seconda* for solo violin and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin…* (1641).[47]

Example 18

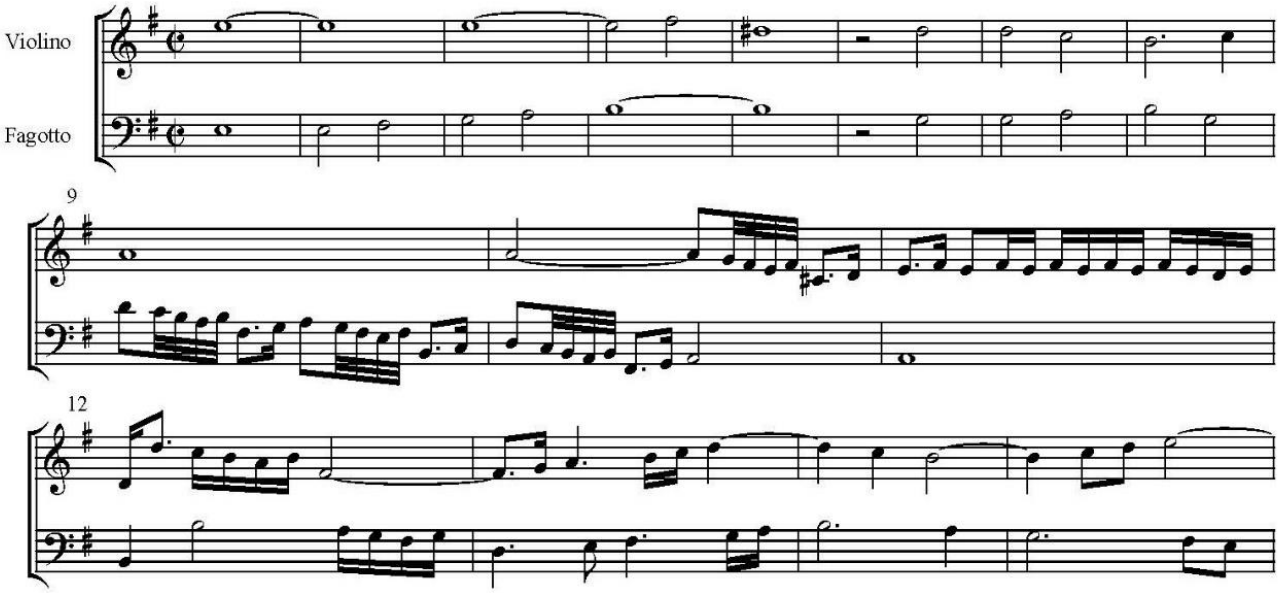


[45] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 44.
[46] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 44.
[47] Giovanni Battista Fontana, "Sonata Seconda" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento,* (1641). Ed. Lupiáñez Javier. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/18_Sonatas_in_1%2C_2%2C_3_Parts_(Fontana%2C_Giovanni_Battista)

Alongside such surprisingly and innovative passages though, Fontana knew how to develop and extend melodic threads, more so than did his predecessors.[48] In his duo and trio sonatas – as opposed to the sonata with only solo violin and basso continuo – Fontana was able to weave melodic material into multiple parts. This is seen in Example 19 – material is woven into both the violin and bassoon parts. The more fantastic and virtuosic passages were more frequently seen in the solo violin sonatas.

Examples 19 to 21: Fontana's *Sonata Decima* for violin, bassoon, and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin…* (1641).[49]

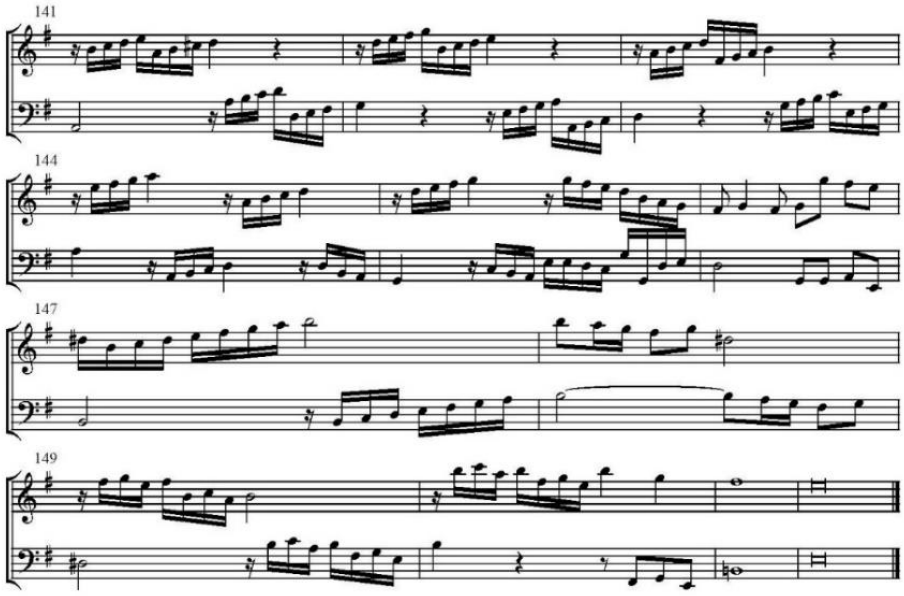
Example 19



[48] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 44.
[49] Giovanni Battista Fontana, "Sonata Decima" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento,* (1641). Ed. Hans Mons. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/18_Sonatas_in_1%2C_2%2C_3_Parts_(Fontana%2C_Giovanni_Battista)

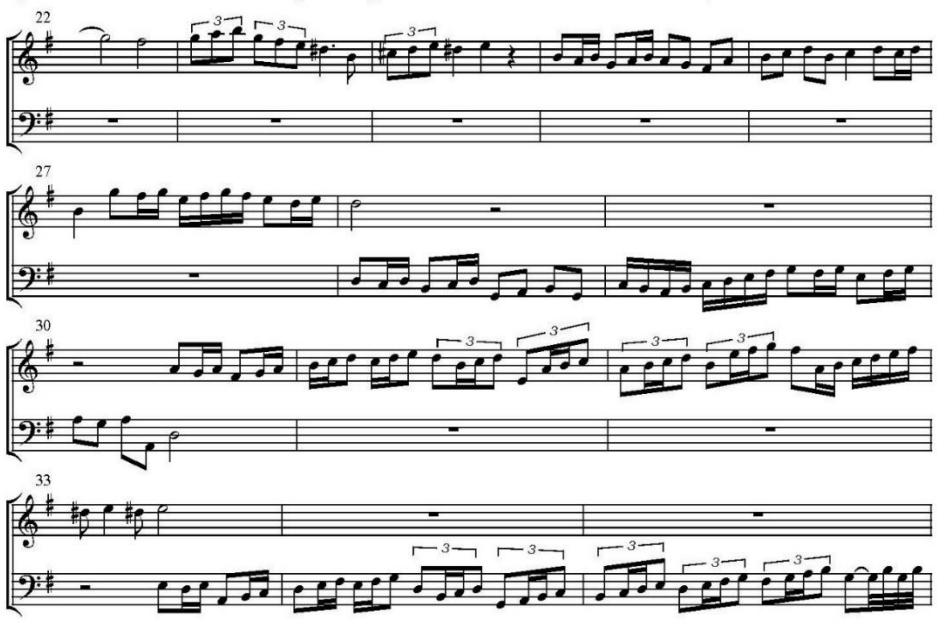
In Example 20, the melodic content is continually threaded through both the violin and bassoon lines.

Example 20



In his duo- and trio sonatas, the instruments are treated in a rather 'concerto' like style with the different instruments having solo passages of their own of various lengths.[50] This style can be seen in the violin and bassoon lines both Example 21 and Example 22.

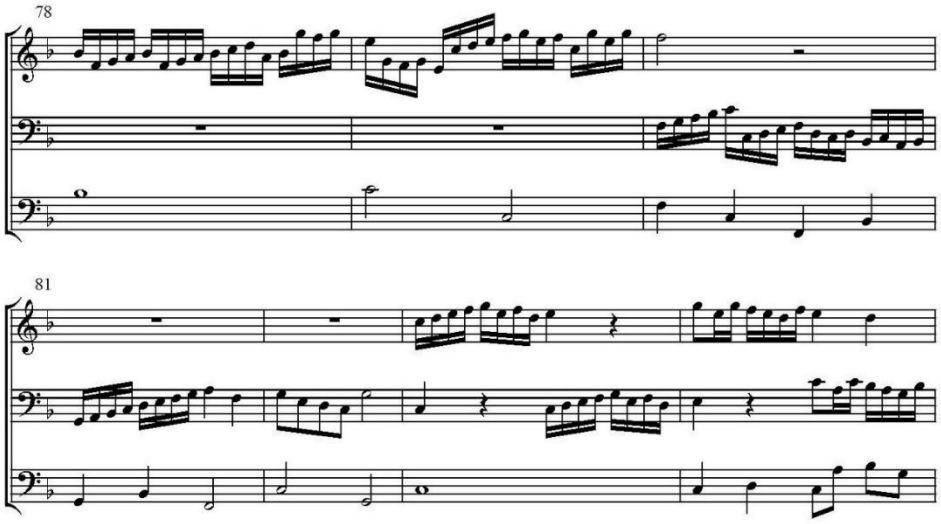
Example 21



[50] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 43.

Example 22: Fontana's *Sonata Duodecima* for violin, bassoon, and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin…* (1641). [51]

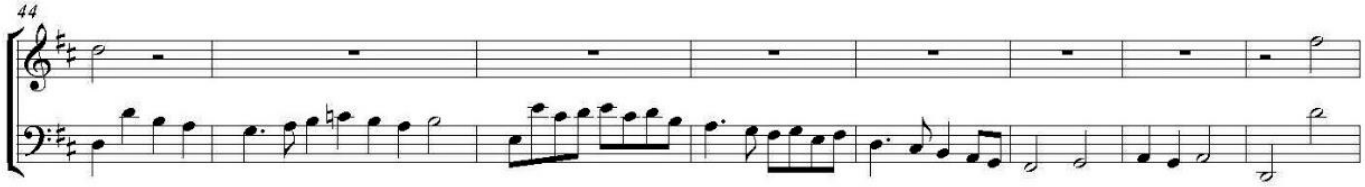
Example 22



In the sonatas for solo violin and continuo, even the continuo line surfaces as a 'solo' instrument when the violin line has the occasional rest.[52] This can be seen from Example 23.

Example 23: Fontana's *Sonata Seconda* for solo violin and continuo from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violin…* (1641).[53]

Example 23



[51] Giovanni Battista Fontana, "Sonata Duodecima" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento,* (1641). Hans Mons. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/18_Sonatas_in_1%2C_2%2C_3_Parts_(Fontana%2C_Giovanni_Battista)
[52] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 43.
[53] Fontana, "Sonata Seconda" from *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. Per il violin, a cornetto, fagotto, chitarrone, violoncino so simile altro istromento.* Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/18_Sonatas_in_1%2C_2%2C_3_Parts_(Fontana%2C_Giovanni_Battista)

Biagio Marini (1587-1655)

Biagio Marini[54] was arguably the most important composer of violin music in the early 17th century.[55] He was born in Brescia – the hometown of Fontana as well as the center of violin making in Italy. In 1615, Marini was appointed as a violinist at the San Marco in Venice, where Monteverdi also worked. By 1620 he had moved back to Brescia to take up the position of *maestro di capella* at the Chiesa di San Eufemia and was also appointed the director of music for the newly formed Accademia degli Erranti. In 1623, Marini travelled across the Alps to the court of Duke Wolfgang Wilhelm at the Wittelsbach court in Neuburg – a town in Germany.

Marini had a highly privileged place in the Duke's court and was invited back to the Duke's Wittelsbach court twice more in 1640 and 1644. Marini spent time in Brussels and Dusseldorf and returned to Italy at various times (1634, 1649, and 1652) working in Brescia, Padua, Ferrara, Milan, and Venice. By the time that Marini left Neuburg, he had several high-profile publications in print and his fame was so acclaimed that he could return to St. Marks's as one of the highest instrumentalists at the time. He finally took another *maestro di capella* position in Milan at *Santa Maria della Scala* and stayed there until he died.

Marini's earliest music (Op. 1 in 1617) consisted of dances, sinfonias, canzonas, and sonatas for a variety of instruments including the violin.[56] Marini endeavoured to write in a specifically violinistic style, making him a significant figure in the 17th century violin literature.[57] His Op.8 collection features some of the most adventurous instrumental music – from both a musical and a publishing perspective – that had yet been put to print by any composer of the time.[58] The Op.8 contains 69 compositions, making it one of the most extensive collections of violin literature of the 17th century. Nine pieces are written for wind instruments (recorder, cornetto, bassoon, trombone) and the violin participates in all the remaining compositions. It was one of the first instrumental music collections in which works are designed as being for specific instruments. His Op. 8 was unique in that his instrumentation was intentionally exclusive, by narrowing from *ogni sorte di insturmneti* down to

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[54] Dates from Lindsey Darlene Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom: Specularity and the Seventeenth Century Violin Sonata* (Ph.D Diss, University of New York University, 2013), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9qc6h9vq, 35. There are some discrepancies in the older sources regarding Marin's dates of death.

[55] Biographical information in the following paragraph stems from the following sources:
Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 47.
Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 135.
Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom*, 35-39.

[56] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 135.

[57] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 54.

[58] Information on the Op. 8 collection stems from the following sources:
Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 51.
Strand-Polyak, *The Virtuoso's Idiom*, 38-39 and 61.

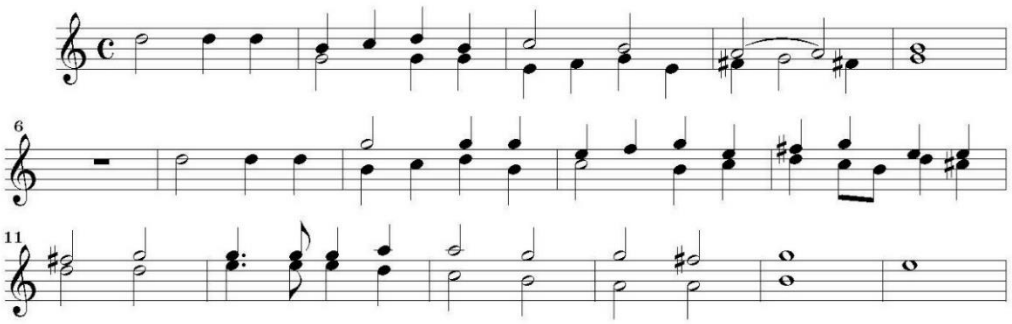
one instrument, and then introducing unheard-of technical innovations for that instrument – the violin. The most important of the violin works are the seventeen compositions called *Sonata* and the two *Capricci*. In most other instrumental music, a composer sought to create music for as wide an audience as possible, as opposed to making it more exclusive. Marini was a unique case in that he had the support of his patrons to finance a piece that was very idiomatic, rather exclusive, and very expensive in terms of printing. The Duke co-sponsored the publication of Marini's Op. 8 with the Archduchess Isabella of Austria, which made it financially possible to afford a work that required the use of newer printing technologies due to some of Marini's more radical techniques (such as extensive chordal writing) which were more difficult to print.

From a musical point of view, Marini's style can make rather conflicting impressions; many good ideas and interesting constructions are seen together with trivialities that may diminish the whole.[59] His significance was far more in the form of a virtuoso who wrote specially for the violinistic idiom as opposed to the formal and musical aspects of the violin 17th century literature.

Examples 24 to 27: Extracts from Marini's *Capriccio che due Sonana quattro parti* for two violins and continuo from his Op. 8 (1629).[60] Examples 24 and 26 are extracts from the first violin line while examples 25 and 27 are extracts from the second violin line.

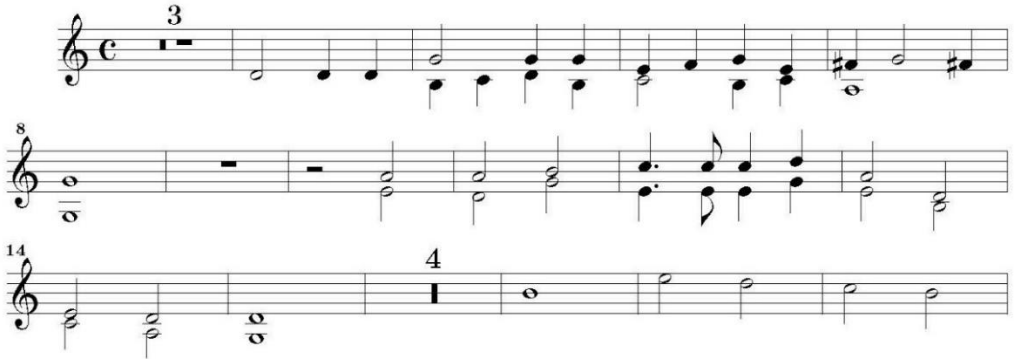
These examples display innovative exploitation of double stops and chords. A rather polyphonic element is observable in the part as both voices simultaneously voice elements of the main melody.

Example 24



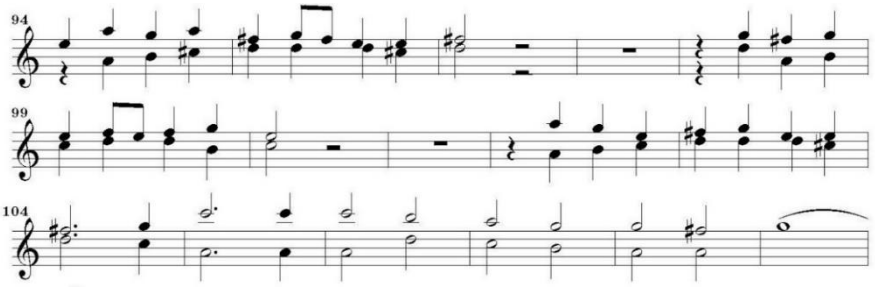
[59] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 51.
[60] Biagio Marini, "Capriccio che due Violin Sonana quattro parti" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Johan Tufvesson. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Capriccio_for_2_Violins%2C_Op.8_No.14_(Marini%2C_Biagio)

Example 25



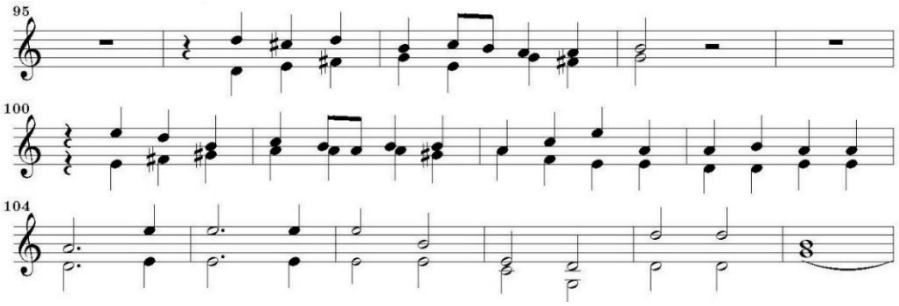
It is worth noting that the intervals in bars 5 to 8 in the second violin part are just the inversion of the intervals in bars 2 to 5 in the first violin part (Example 24). The second violin used a lower range than that of the first violin part and used two open lower strings. It is interesting to observe that Marini used both open lower strings, as earlier in the century the lower string had been often avoided due to the poorer sound quality of thicker strings with gut strings.

Example 26



Example 26 uses a wider ranger than the other examples – observable in bars 94, 102, and 105-108. The highest note in the section in the *c'''* in bars 105 and 106, which have to have been played with a stretched fourth finger in the first position or in second or third position.

Example 27

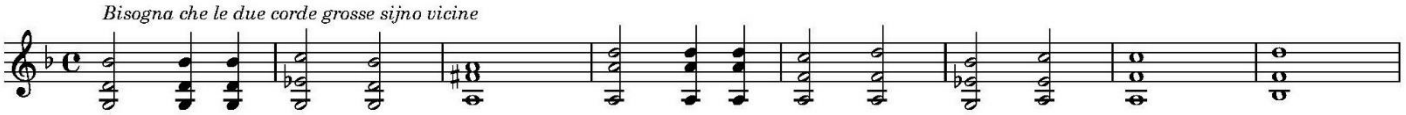


In example 27 the second violin part also used a wider range seen in certain bars 96, 100, and 104-108. In bar 106 the two lower open strings are once again used. In bar 101 a discordant 2nd interval

is used. Interestingly, the use of the open A -string would have the discordant 'brighter' and even more dissonant in an audible sense.

Examples 28 and 29: Extracts from the violin solo line of Marini's *Capriccio con il violino solo a modo di lira* for solo violin and basso continuo from his Op. 8 (1629). [61]

Example 28



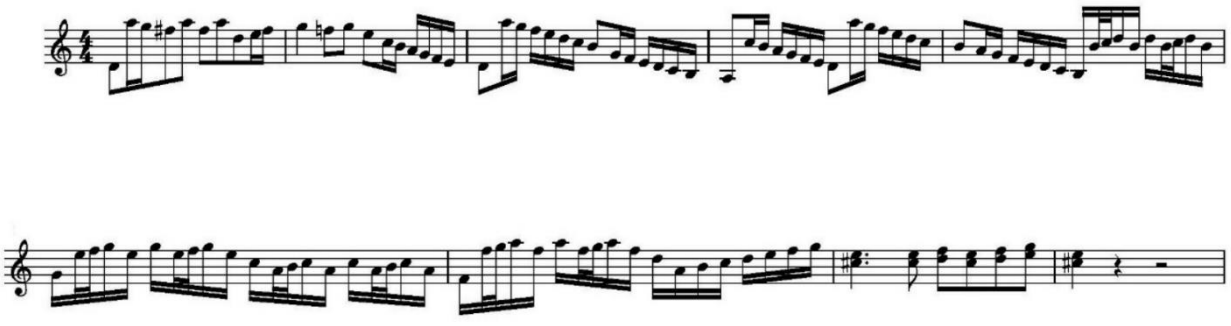
Example 29

Example 28 shows a very chordal type of writing while example 29 shows a more melodic approach of chordal writing.

Examples 30 to 32: Marini's *Sonata in Eco con tre Violini* for three violins and continuo from his Op. 8 (1629). [62]

Example 30 displays semiquavers sequences, large intervals of more than an octave, string crossings, and double stops in bars 62 and 63. This example shows an extract of the first violin line.

Example 30

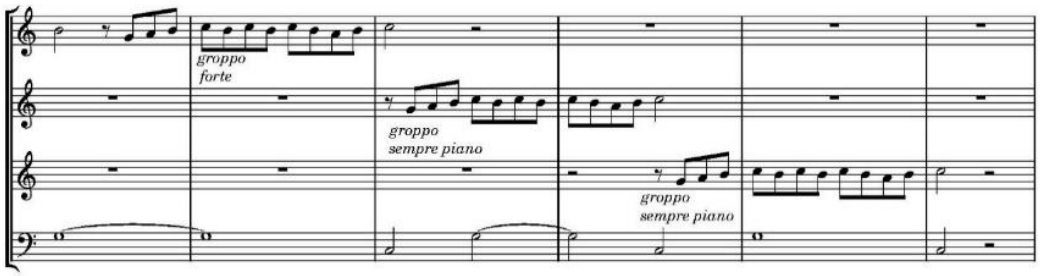


[61] Biagio Marini, "Capriccio con il violino solo a modo di lira" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2015). Available online: https://ks.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/43/IMSLP435434-PMLP306780-MARINI_Capriccio-per_violino_a_modo_di_lira.pdf

[62] Biagio Marini, "Sonata in Eco con tre Violini" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Grimbald. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_in_ecco%2C_Op.8_No.44_(Marini%2C_Biagio)

Example 31 shows how Marini used a very clear ‘echo’ effect in this Sonata; this is especially effective in Example 32 where the ‘echoes’ die away, thus leaving the third violin, the last echo, to sound the last note. Musical effects such as this show the growing theatricality of instrumental music, and especially violin music, during the mid-century.

Example 31



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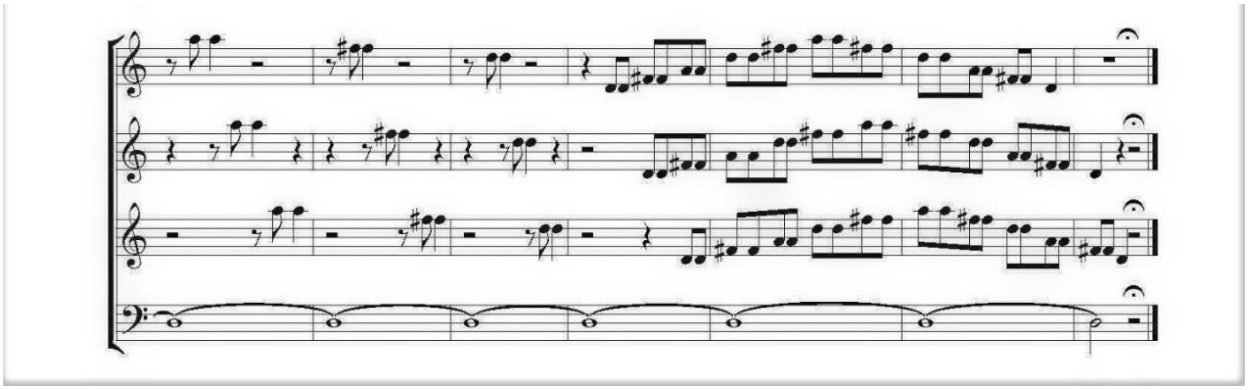
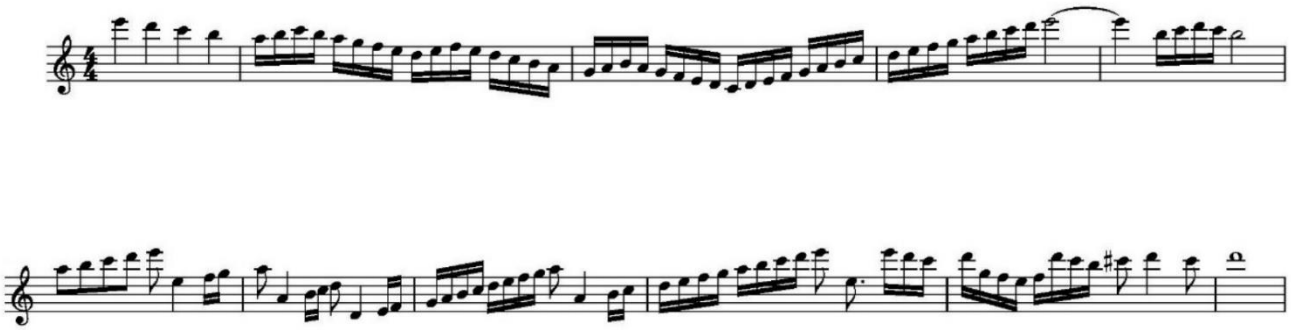
Example 32



Examples 33 to 37: Marini's *Sonata Variata per il Violino* for solo violin and continuo from his Op.8 (1629). [63] These examples show extracts from the solo violin line.

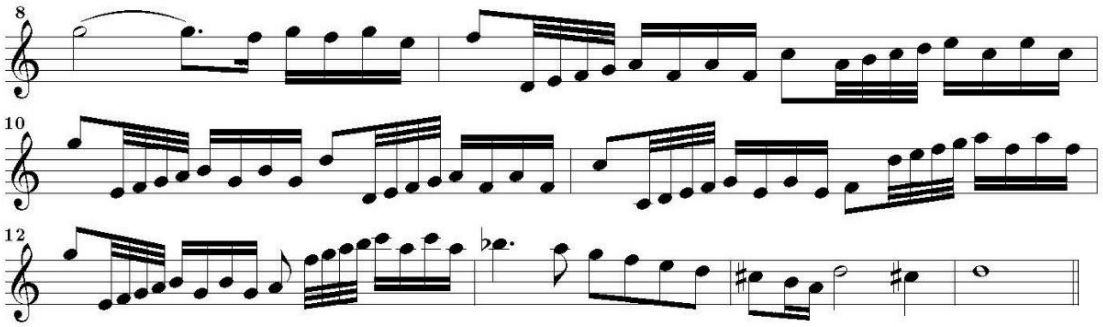
Example 33 displays a noticeable extension upwards of range, with the highest note being a high *e'''* in the fourth position.

Example 33



Examples 34 through 36 display much figuration, broken thirds, figurations in small note values, and string crossings.

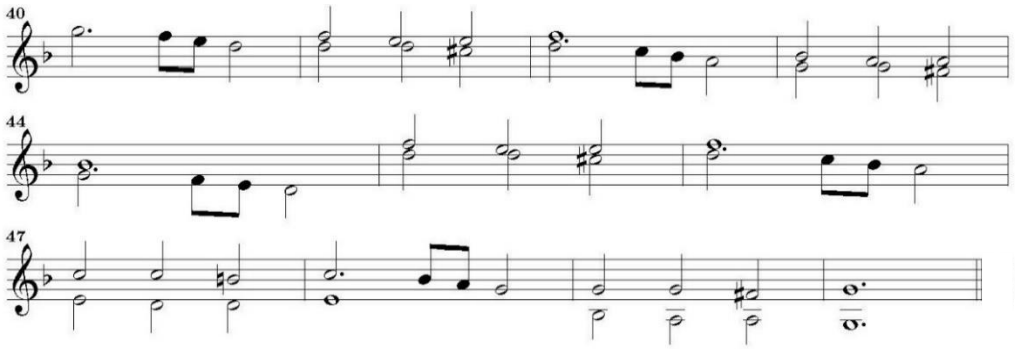
Example 34



[63] Biagio Marini, "Sonata Variata per il Violino" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Johan Tufvesson. Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_variata%2C_Op.8_No.58_(Marini%2C_Biagio)

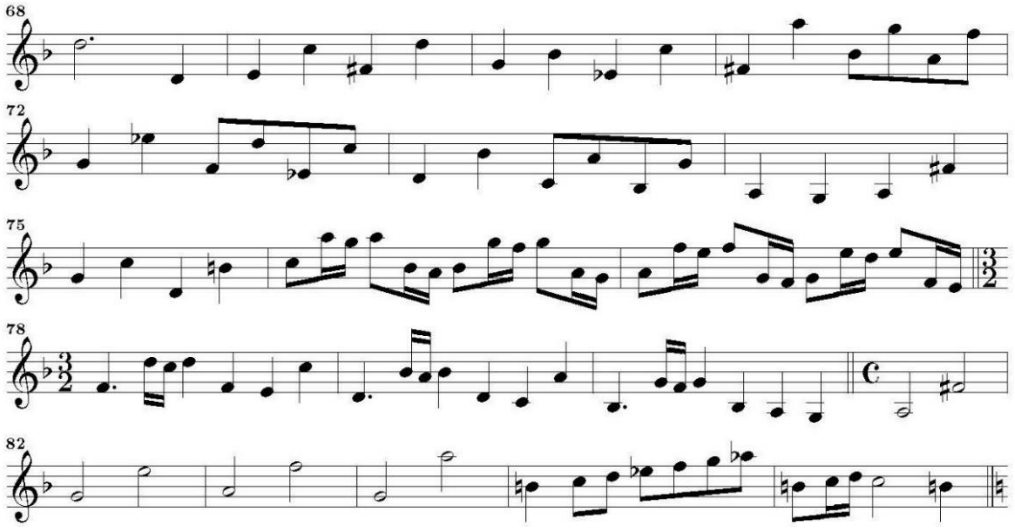
Example 35 once again displays Marini's utilisation of double stops. It is very melodic and the two voices that are written very close together for the most part, even displays discordant 2nd intervals in bars 41 and 45.

Example 35



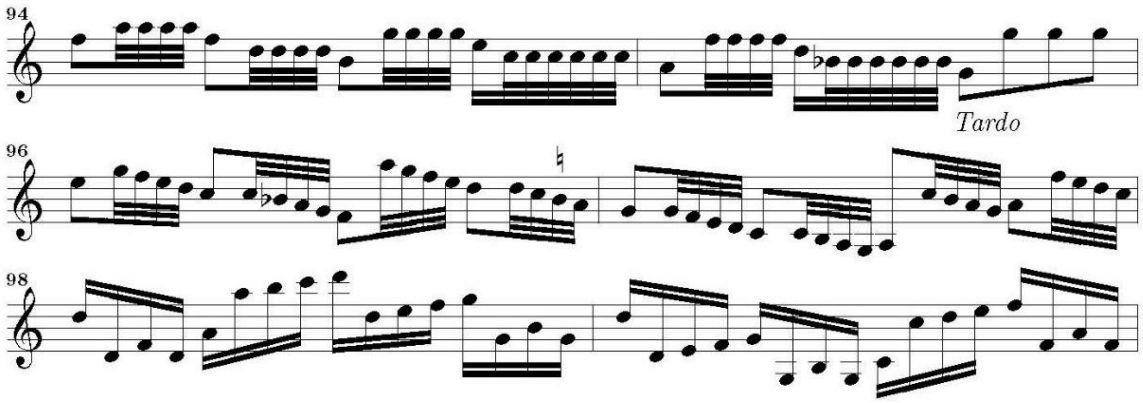
Example 36 shows very clearly and prolific use of string crossings and large intervals – highly specific to a violinistic idiom. On the violin, this passage is physically possible and an opportunity for the player to display technical proficiency, but any woodwind instrument would find this passage highly problematic technically and physically awkward.

Example 36



Example 37 displays figuration, large intervals, sequences, and string crossing – even leaping over open strings. The first line of the extract demonstrates the type of measured tremolo used by Marini and Monteverdi.

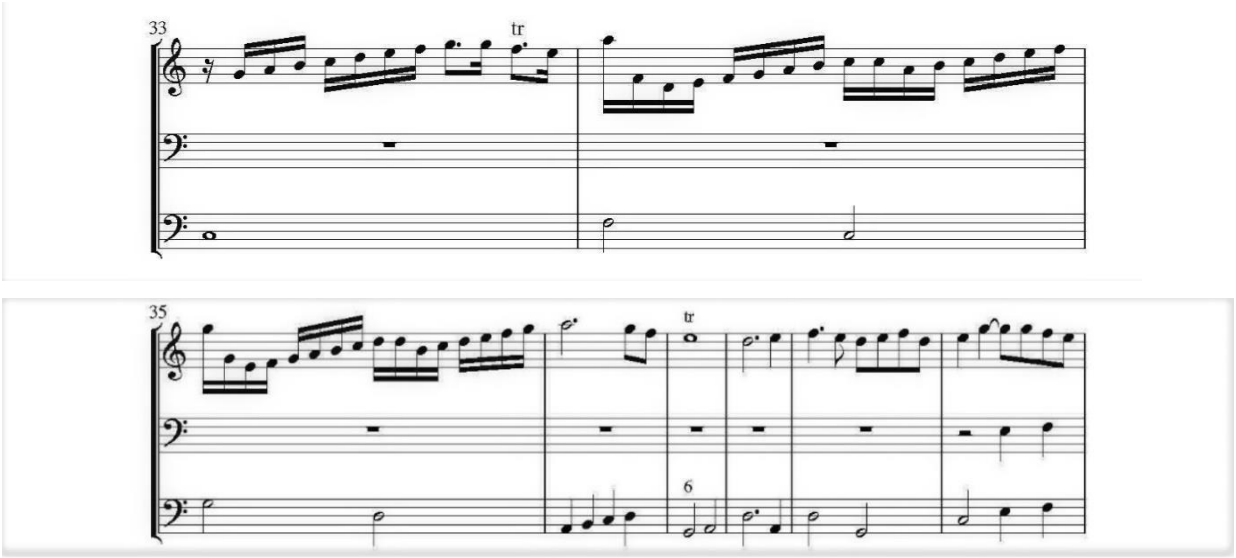
Example 37



Examples 38 and 39: Marini's *Sonata Duodecima per Violino, Trombone e Basso Continuo* for violin, trombone, and continuo from his Op.8 (1629).[64]

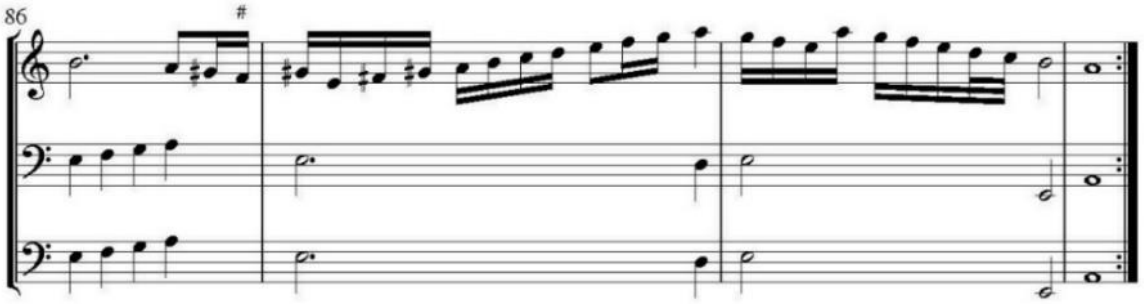
These examples show how the violin was used in a virtuosic way – even within the context of an ensemble sonata – with decorative passages.

Example 38



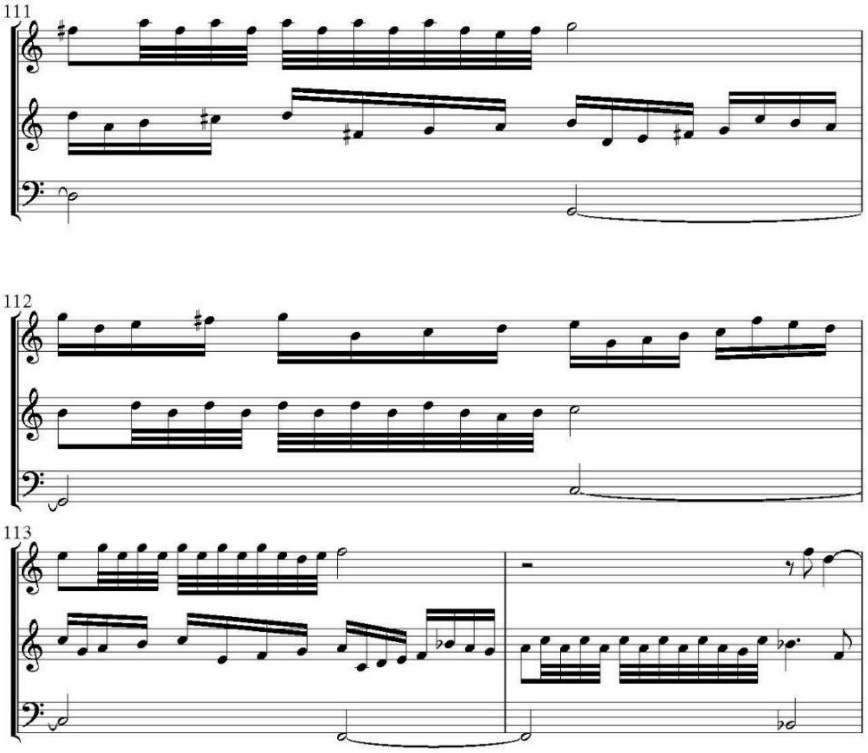
[64] Biagio Marini, "Sonata Duodecima per Violino, Trombone e Basso Continuo" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2015). Available online: https://ks.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/0/0a/IMSLP431988-PMLP306780-MARINI_Sonata_12_per_violino_trombone_e_b.c._1629.pdf

Example 39



Example 40: Marini's *Sonata Prima a due violini a basso continuo* for two violins and continuo from his Op. 8 (1629). [65]

Example 40



Example 40 displays how both violin parts are equally virtuosic and interchange material at various points. The virtuosic writing also creates an element of 'written out' improvisation as seen in the trill

[65] Biagio Marini, "Sonata Prima a due violini a basso continuo" from *Sonate, symphonie, canzoni, passe'mezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde e ritornello, Op. 8*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2015). Available online: https://ks4.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/a/ac/IMSLP431723-PMLP306780-MARINI_Sonata_prima_a_2_violini_e_basso_1629.pdf

motifs in both parts. The use of motifs containing leaps in 3rds and 4ths is typical for violin writing at the time.

Giovanni Battista Buonamente (late 16th century -1643)

Giovanni Battista Buonamente[66] was a direct successor to Rossi in both style and form.[67] Buonamente lived in Mantua, where he would most likely have been acquainted with Rossi.[68] Working in Mantua and within the milieu of Monteverdi – together with Marini, Farina, and Rossi – it is not surprising that Buonamente dedicated the first sonata of his seventh book (*Libro settimo*) to Monteverdi.[69]

Buonamente's four extant instrumental collections were published in 1626, 1629, 1636, and 1637.[70] Buonamente served at the Gonzaga court in Mantua until 1622, after which he proceeded to go to Vienna where he served under Emperor Ferdinand II in Vienna.[71] During that time he wrote the fourth and fifth of his collections, but during the publication of his sixth collection he returned to Italy and settled in Assisi, where he died several years later.[72]

Buonamente's sonatas are characterised by a regular development and consistency, although they are not always intricate or active in a technical sense.[73] His works in general do lack the technical complexity found in the works of other Mantua violinist composers, but he merits significance as the first violin composer to make use of devices of counterpoint such as inversion, augmentation, and stretto.[74] Buonamente is not without interest from the point of view of violin playing, but his significance was more as a composer as opposed to being a violin virtuoso such as Marina and Fontana. Buonamente's sonatas do not make use of sudden eruptions of virtuosity as in Fontana's sonata for example, but they do display an exceptional clarity within his methods of composition that would become a characteristic of all later violin sonatas.[75]

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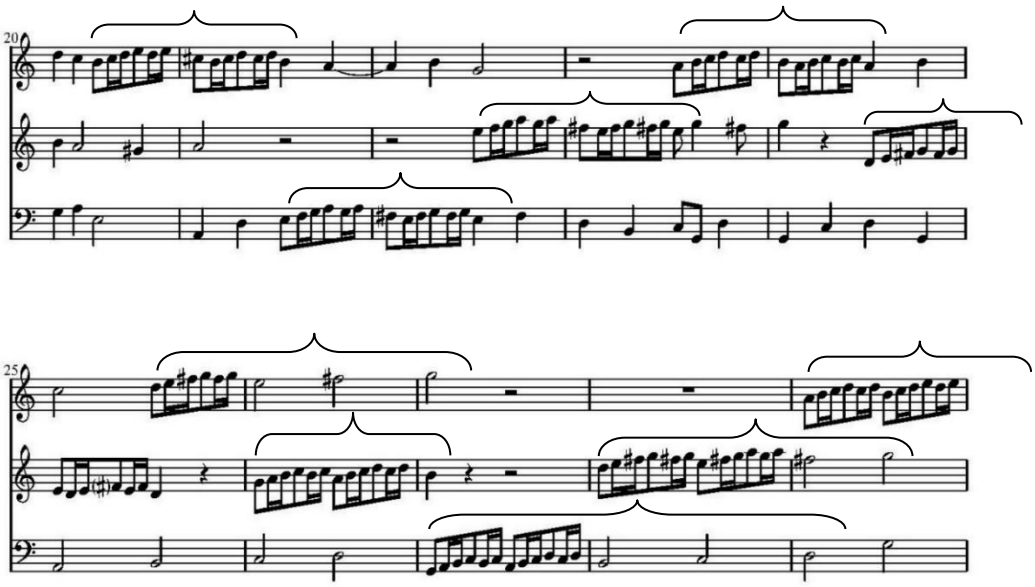
[66] Stephen Bonta, "Buonamente, Giovanni Battista" in *Grove Music Online,* (2001), https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000004326.
[67] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 113.
[68] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 75.
[69] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 113.
[70] These four collections are titled through four to seven – *Libro quarto* to *Libro settimo* – so it is supposed that there were three earlier collections which have since been lost.
[71] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 113.
[72] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 113.
[73] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 77.
[74] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 77.
[75] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 77.

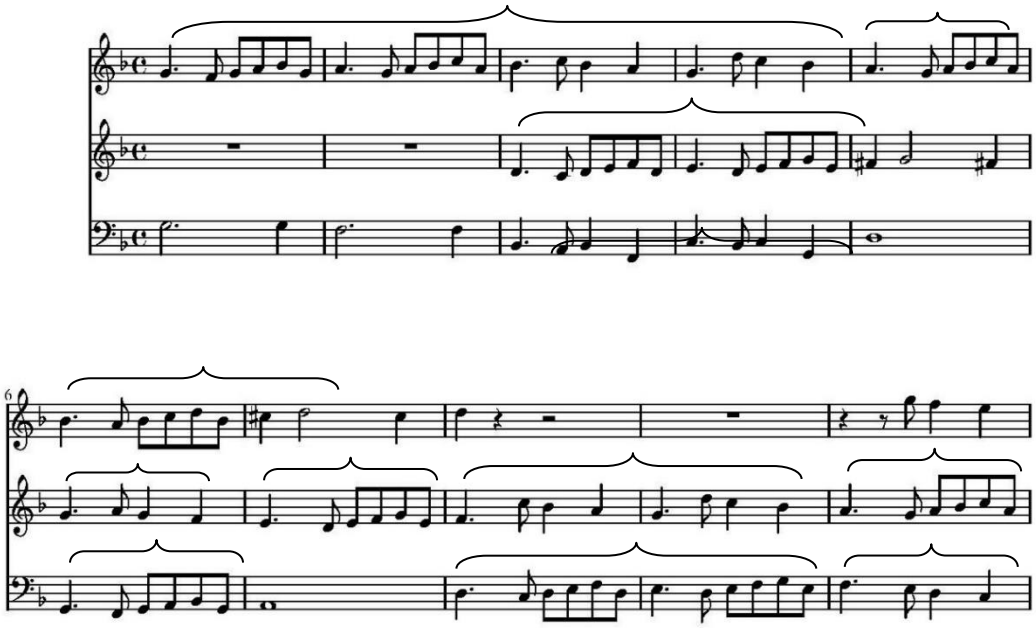
Examples 41 and 42 clearly show Buonamente's systematic way of using a more polyphonic texture and counterpoint techniques such as inversion, augmentation, and stretto. Although there is little to say regarding violinistic idioms in his violin music, his use of the counterpoint technique was significant to the development of violin music in the 17th century.

Examples 41 and 42: Buonamente's *Sonata Prima* and *Sonata Seconda* for two violins and continuo from *Il Quarta Libro* (1626).[76] These two examples show extracts from the two sonatas respectively.

Example 41



Example 42



[76] Giovanni Battista Buonamente, "Sonata Prima" and "Sonata Seconda" from *Il Quarta Libro de varia sonate*, (1626). Ed. Maurizio M. Gavioli, (2010). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Varie_sonate,_Libro_4_(Buonamente,_Giovanni_Battista)

Bartolomeo Montalbano (1598 – latest 1651)

Bartolomeo Montalbano[77] was one of the main innovators to develop the use of violinistic idioms within violin music along with other discussed violinist composers.[78] He was born in Bologna and in 1619 he entered the Franciscan order where he settled at the monastery of San Francesco, Bologna. A few years later, after a journey to Rome, he was taken to Palermo. He became *maestro di cappella* there and it was here, in 1629 where he published his only known volume – *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini, a due, e Trombon, con il partimento per l'Organo, con alcune a quattro Viole*. In 1633 he was once again in Bologna and there he was *maestro* from 1642 until his death.[79]

His only published volume contained thirteen sinfonias; despite the use of the term 'sinfonia' all of these compositions are actually sonatas.[80] This ambiguity of the 'sinfonia' term was discussed in Chapter 4. The volume consists of four sinfonias for solo violin and continuo; two sinfonias for two violins and continuo; two sinfonias for two violins, trombone, and continuo; and five sinfonias for four viols.[81]

The works for solo violin plus continuo and the works for two violins plus continuo are the more interesting works.[82] They are structurally free, display virtuosity, use contrasts of presto and adagio as well contrasts of *forte* and *piano* in echo, and they use detailed indications of phrasing. The figurations used are purely instrumental in conception and, more specifically, they are derived from the violin's tuning in 5ths.[83]

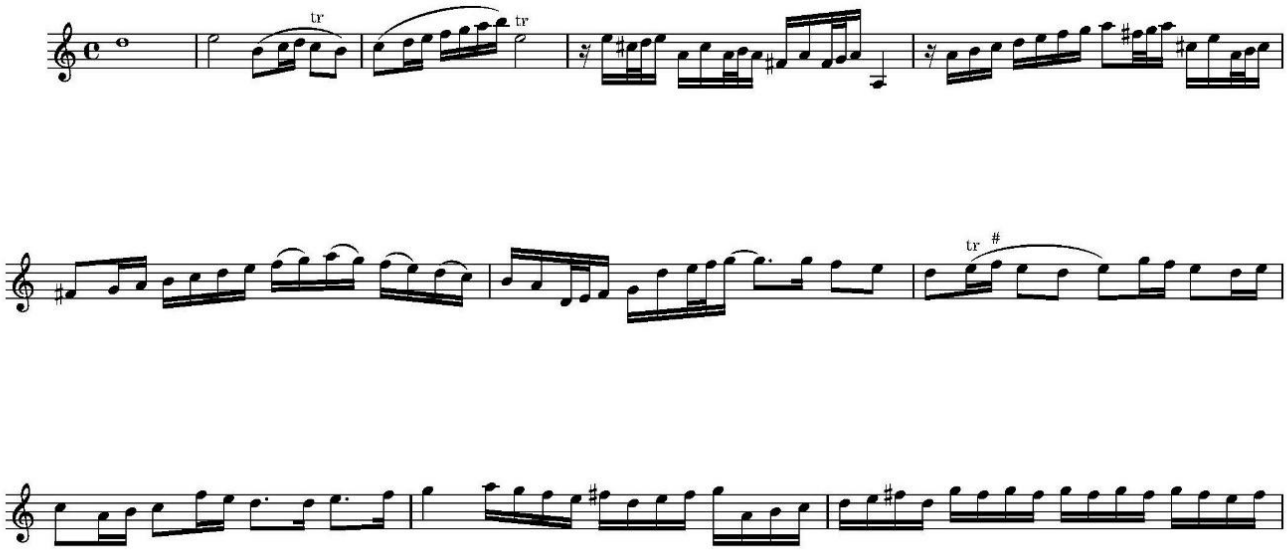
The works for two violins (with or without trombones) differ noticeably from the works for solo violin.[84] While the works for solo violin are virtuosic and colourful, the works for two violins display Montalbano's skills in counterpoint and fugue – probably skills he acquired in Bologna. The violin

[77] Paolo Emilio Carapezza and Giuseppe Collisani, "Montalbano [Mont'Albano], Bartolomeo" in *Grove Music Online,* (2001), https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018996.
[78] Carapezza and Collisani, "Montalbano" in *Grove Music Online.*
[79] Carapezza and Collisani, "Montalbano" in *Grove Music Online.*
[80] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 90.
[81] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 90.
[82] Carapezza and Collisani, "Montalbano" in *Grove Music Online.*
[83] Carapezza and Collisani, "Montalbano" in *Grove Music Online.*
[84] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 91.

parts of the four solo works display virtuosic passages similar to those of Fontana as well as numerous short motifs similar to those frequently seen in Marini's works.[85]

Example 43: Montalbano's *Sinfonia Prima Arezza a Violino solo* for violin and continuo from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini, a due, e Trombon, con il partimento per l'Organo, con alcune a quattro Viole* (1629).[86] The extract shows an extract from the solo violin line.

Example 43



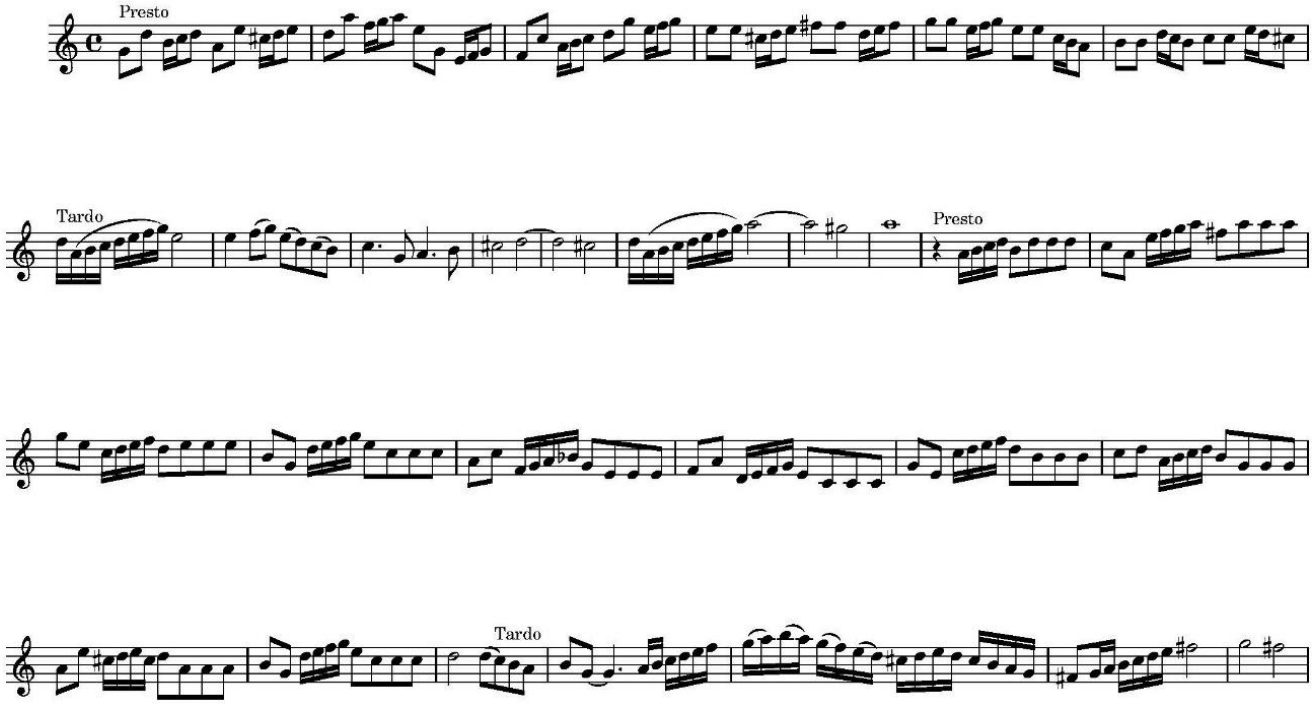
Example 43 displays the violinistic virtuosity in Montalbano's writing through the use of runs, figurations in thirds, and leaps as well as the rather 'free' style of writing. The detailed figuration and ornamentation give the impression of an improvisational virtuosity simply written out – quite understandable given to violin's known abilities to perform such figurations and ornamentation. The figurations are done in such a way that remarkably accommodates the hand and the open 5th strings of the violin. This is especially seen in bars 4 and 5; although the figurations look complex at a glance it is actually very comfortable because of how the figures fit well in the frame of 1st position on the A-string and E-string. The range is small enough to fit comfortably within 1st position and it uses all three higher strings, only using the G-string once, in bar 4.

[85] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 91.

[86] Bartolomeo Montalbano, "Sinfonia Prima Arezza a Violino solo" from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini, a due, e Trombon, con il partimento per l'Organo, con alcune a quattro Viole*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2003). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sinfonie_ad_uno%2C_e_doi_violini%2C_a_doi%2C_e_trombone_(Montalbano%2C_Bartolomeo)

Example 44: Montalbano's *Sinfonia Terza Sghemma* for violin and continuo from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini…* (1629).[87] This extract shows an extract from the solo violin line.

Example 44

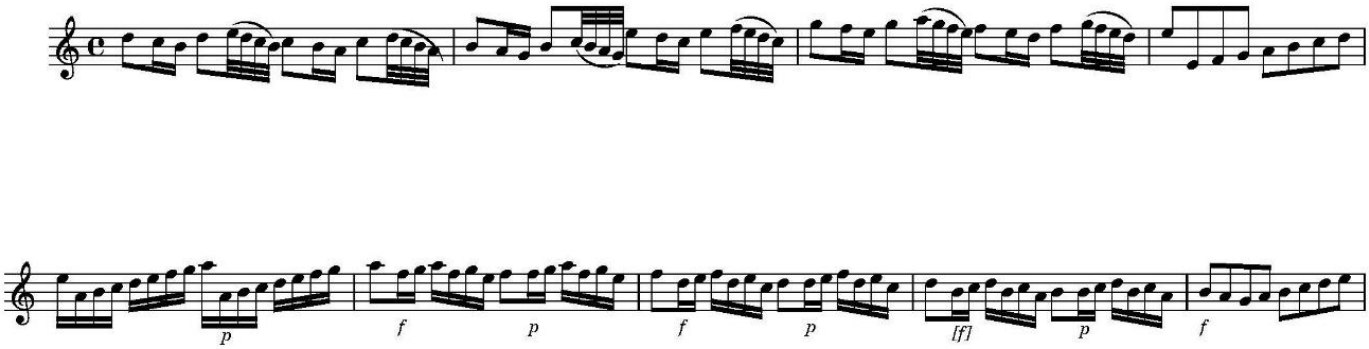


Example 44 again displays how well the figuration has been made to fit into a violinistic idiom by ensuring that the figures fall comfortably into the hand of the first position frame; this is especially displayed in first 6 bars of the example. The violinistic idiom and use of 3rds and 5ths within the figurations are also very prominent in this example. The range is also rather limited, falling easily within the first position and only using the G-string once (bar 20 of the example). This example also displays Montalbano's use of tempo contrasts, seen in the use of *presto* and *tardo* throughout the example.

[87] Bartolomeo Montalbano, "Sinfonia Terza Sghemma a Violin solo" from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini, a due, e Trombon, con il partimento per l'Organo, con alcune a quattro Viole*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2003). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sinfonie_ad_uno%2C_e_doi_violini%2C_a_doi%2C_e_trombone_(Montalbano%2C_Bartolomeo)

Example 45: Montalbano's *Sinfonia Quarta Geloso a Violino solo* for violin and continuo from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini…* (1629).[88] This extract shows an extract from the solo violin line.

Example 45



Example 45 displays much of the same aspects as Examples 43 and 44 – very violinistically runs, figurations, and leaps with a slightly 'improvisational' bent to them. This example also displays Montalbano's use of dynamic contrast in the use of *f* and *p* contrast in the second line of the example.

[88] Bartolomeo Montalbano, "Sinfonia Quarta Geloso a Violino solo" from *Sinfonie ad uno e due Violini, a due, e Trombon, con il partimento per l'Organo, con alcune a quattro Viole*, (1629). Ed. Lorenzo Girodo, (2003). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Sinfonie_ad_uno%2C_e_doi_violini%2C_a_doi%2C_e_trombone_(Montalbano%2C_Bartolomeo)

Carlo Farina (ca.1600-ca.1640)

Carlo Farina[89] was born in Mantua and, for the early part of his career, worked in the Mantuan group of violinists together with Rossi, Marini, and Buonamente.[90] In 1625 he went to Dresden where he worked as the concertmaster at the court.[91] During his time in central Germany, he also closely worked with the great German violinist Heinrich Schütz.[92] In 1637 he was living in Danzig and returned later to Italy, where he died.[93]

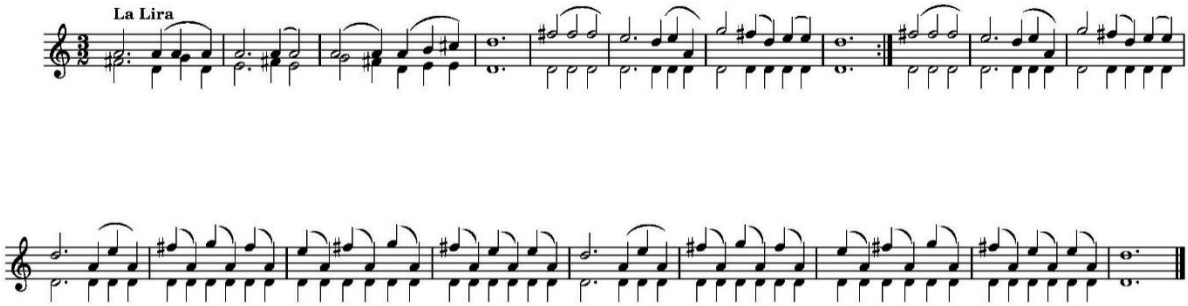
Farina is chiefly remembered as a significant figure in the innovation and development of violinistic writing – specifically in the use of violinistic idioms within violin music.[94] He published five books, but his most significant contribution to violin music was the *Capriccio Stravagante* in his second book (1627).[95] It is a lengthy composition and within it, Farina used an assortment of technical tricks to imitate various animals and other instruments. The sections that imitate instruments and animals form only part of the whole text of the *Capriccio*; the remaining text is devoted simply to generic four-part consort music and is very similar in compositional style to the dance pieces seen together with the *Capriccio* in Farina's 1627 volume.[96] The most novel devices – such as the use of glissando, col legno, tremolo, pizzicato, and sul ponticello – are used less in the sonatas than in the *Capriccio Stravagante*, although the sonatas are still often programmatic in their nature.[97]

[89] Dates from Newman, 207.
[90] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 207.
[91] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 71.
[92] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 71.
[93] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 71.
[94] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 207.
[95] Apel, *Italian Violin Music*, 71.
[96] Andrew Bonner, *Curious Inventions: Carlo Farina's Capriccio Stravagante* (Ph.D Diss, University of North Carolina, 2013), 5.
[97] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 207.

C. Farina – *Capriccio Stravagante (1627)*

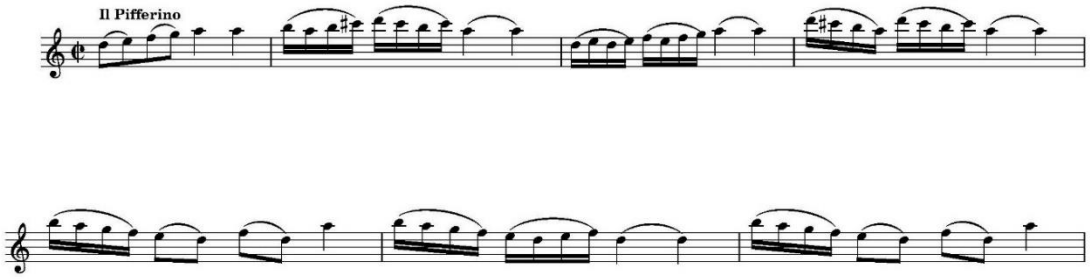
Examples 46 to 57: The first violin part of Farina's *Capriccio Stravagante* from *Secondo Libro a 4* (1627).[98]

Example 46



***La Lira* – 'the lyre'**: This is the first title section of the work.[99] The term 'lira' is vague as it could refer to multiple stringed instruments.[100] However, it does denote an instrument with open string drones and a polyphonic style – a highly probable interpretation would have been the hurdy gurdy.[101]

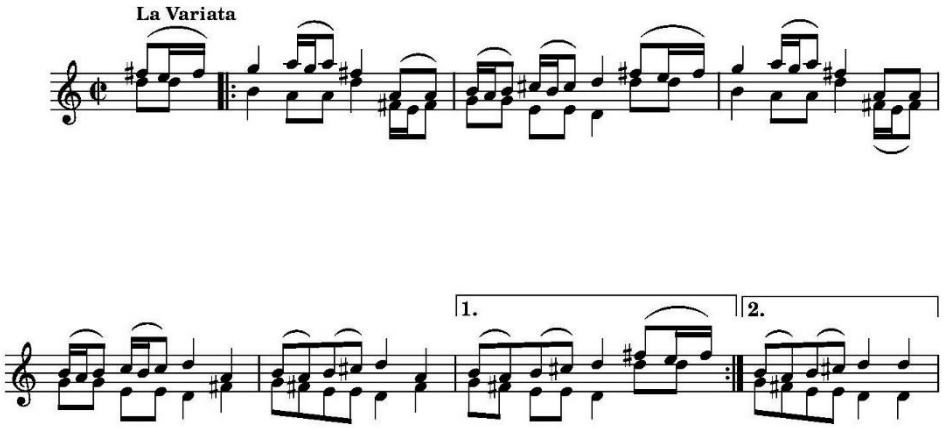
Example 47



***Il Pifferino* – 'the small pipe' or small shawn':** In the earlier centuries, the term *piffero* was indicated in reference to the 'shawn' but it was also sometimes used to indicate the *traverso* flute in the early 17th century.[102] Farina's *avertimenti* specifies that the *Pifferino* – as well as the *Flautino* – section should be played *ponticello* with varying degrees of bow weight and distances from the bridge.[103] In this instance, it was more likely that the *traverso* flute was being referred to as the thinner, 'fluty' sound of playing *sul ponticello* would give that effect.

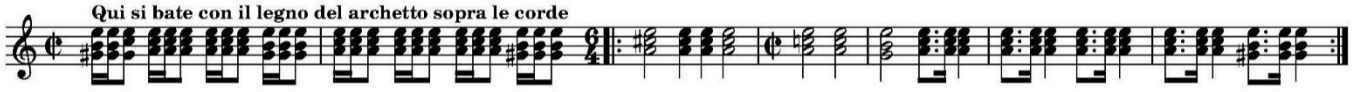
[98] Carlo Farina, "Capriccio Stravagante" from *Secondo Libro a 4,* (1627). Ed. Snakewood Editions, (2019).
[99] Translation the 'titles' of the titled sections taken from: Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 4.
[100] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 90.
[101] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 90.
[102] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 109-110.
[103] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 5-6.

Example 48



***Lira Variata* – 'the varied lyre' or 'the altered lyre' or 'another style of lyre':**There are differing theories regarding the meaning of the *La Variata* section.[104] One theory is that 'variety' of this section could be referring to the actual instrument – a different kind of 'lyre' being used. Another theory is that it was the style of writing – as opposed to the instrument used – that was 'varied' in the section. Both explanations are likely, but there is a noticeable difference in the writing of the *La Variata* section, in that instead of open-string drones, the violin part displays a clearly more agile variety of double stops.[105] This gives the impression of two 'voices' being played rather than one melodic 'voice' merely accompanied by a drone.

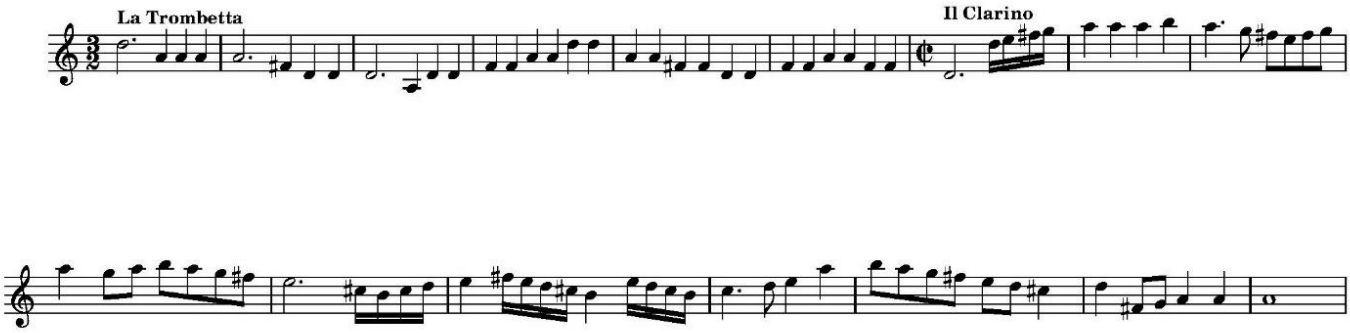
Example 49



***Qui si bate con il legno del archetto sopra le corde* – 'Here one strikes with the wood of the bow upon the strings':** This *col legno* section is one of several unusual playing techniques Farina utilises within the *Capriccio Stravagante*.

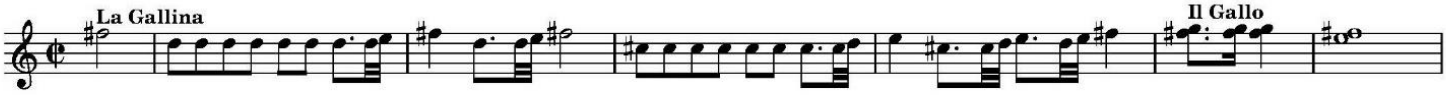
[104] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 106-108.
[105] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 106-108.

Example 50



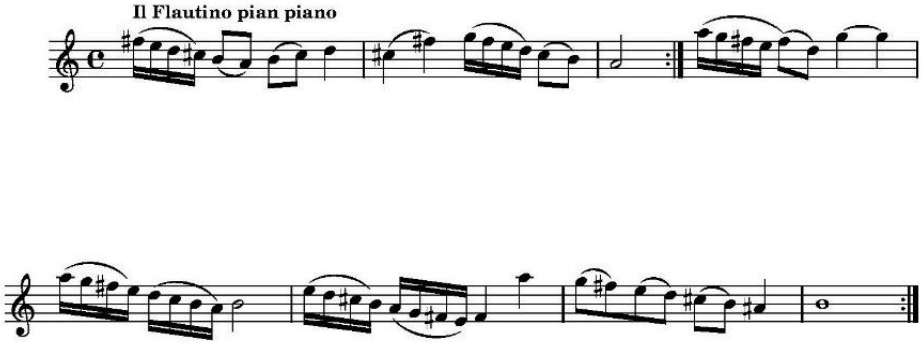
***La Trombetta, Il Clarino* – 'the trumpet, the clarino':** Trumpet playing in the beginning of the seventeenth century was largely an unwritten art. However, the first of the very few contemporary works on Baroque trumpet playing appeared only twelve years prior to the Capriccio.[106] The 'trumpet' section mimics the 'fanfare' of a trumpet melody while the more melodic 'clarino' section mimics the melody of the *clarino* woodwind.

Example 51



***La Gallina* – 'the hen'** and ***Il Gallo* – 'the rooster':** The short motifs of the 'hen' section mimics the clucking of hens while the 'rooster' section used a dotted rhythm and the discordant sound of minor and major 2nd intervals to mimic the crowing of a rooster.

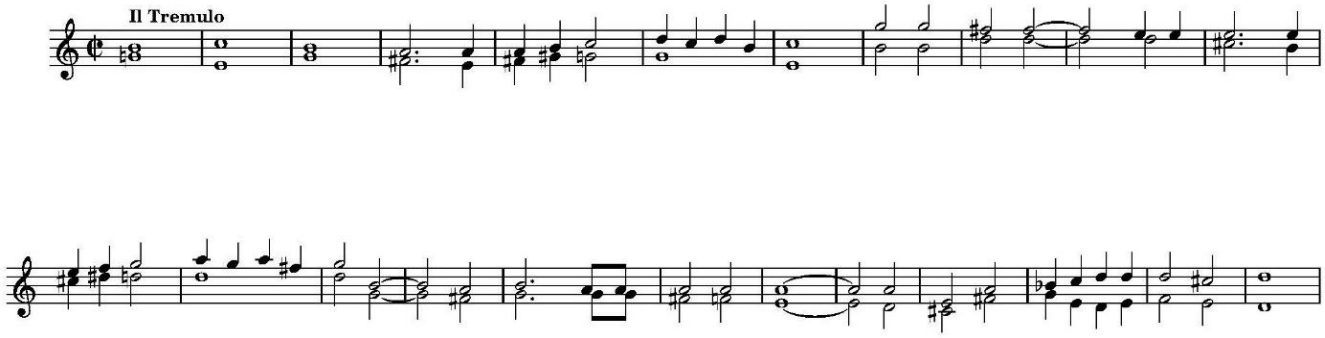
Example 52



[106] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 113.

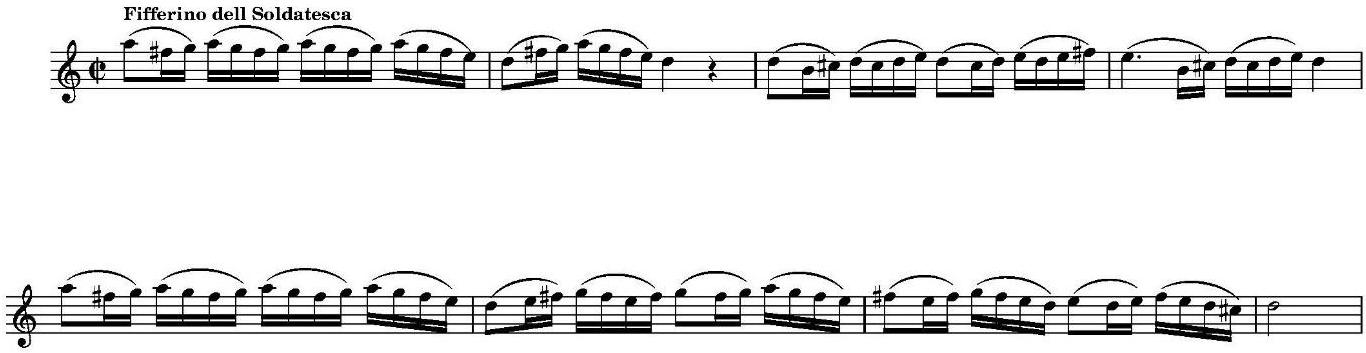
***Il Flautino pian piano* – 'the small recorder' or 'the very quiet recorder':** The term *flautino* simply designated 'flute' and could mean not only recorders but also other duct flutes, some folk varieties, as well as the *flauto traverso* or 'transverse flute' from which the modern flute is derived. However, the *traverso* was usually specified as such, and *flauto* was generally understood to designate recorders.[107] This section used mostly scale-like motifs to mimics the melody of a woodwind instrument such as a flute. This section is to be played *ponticello* according to Farina's *avertimenti* – this would create a rather 'reedy' and 'thin' tone which would help mimic a small or quiet recorder.

Example 53



***Il Tremulo* – 'the tremulant':** As with the *La Variata* section, there is some ambiguity regarding the term *tremulo* and its specific meaning. One theory surmises that the use of the term *tremulo* is in relationship to an early version of the modern string technique of tremolo.[108] Another theory surmises that the term is relating to the imitation of another instrument – or a technical device native to a different instrument – as opposed to the imitation of one specific string technique.[109] The latter theory thus surmises that this section could be an imitation of the 'tremulant' setting of an organ.[110]

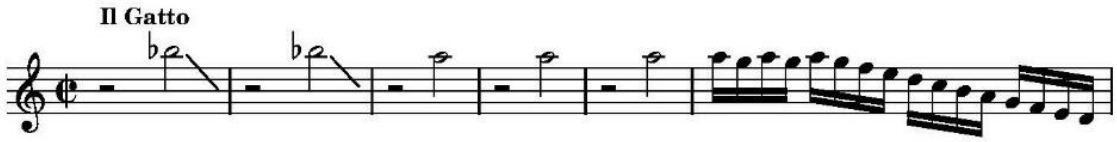
Example 54



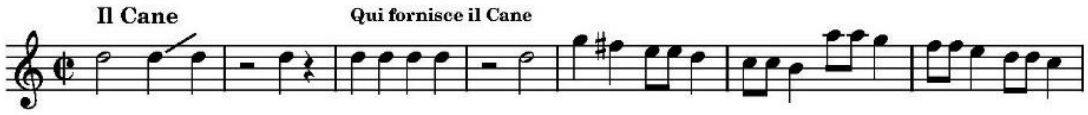
[107] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 119.
[108] Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing,* 130.
[109] Stewart Carter, "The String Tremolo in the 17Th Century," *Early Music* Vol. 19, No. 1 (1991), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3127952, 43-59.
[110] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 122.

***Fifferino della Soldatesca, Il tamburo* – 'the soldier's fifer, the kettledrums or soldier's drum':** This section divides the Canto from the other three voices, with the Canto presenting the *fifferino,* a military fife, and the lower voices combining to form *il tamburo*, the rope-tensioned field drum with which it was paired.[111]

Example 55

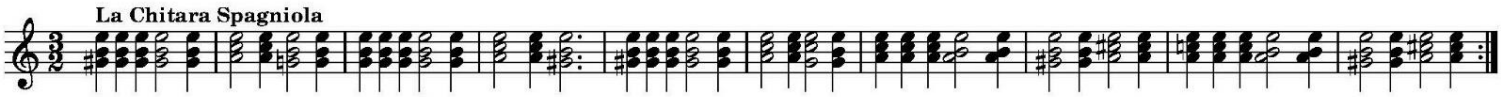


Example 56



***Il Gatto* – 'the cat'** and ***Il Cane* – 'the dog'**: Farina's *avertimenti* specifies that the *Gatto* and *Cane sections* should employ *glissandi* and that at the end of the *Gatto* section, the player should use some bowing on the "wrong" side of the bridge.[112] The *glissandi* would help to mimic the sounds of a cat meowing and a dog barking.

Example 57



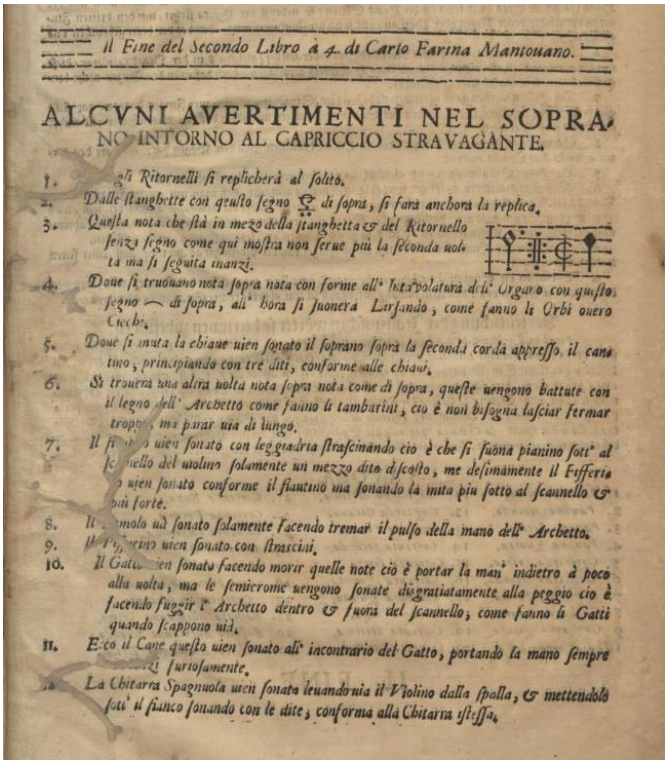
***La Chitarra Spagniola* – 'the Spanish guitar':** During Farina's lifetime, the guitar was in a period of transition. As well as the actual instrument being in a state of change, the playing style of the guitar also saw a gradual shift from a strummed style, driven by chordal progression and rhythmic pattern, to a 'mixed style' that combined chords with singly plucked melodic lines.[113] Although the Italian usage often called the instrument the 'Spanish guitar,' the majority of the guitar's output in the early

[111] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 128.
[112] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 5-6.
[113] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 132-133.

17th century was of Italian origin.[114] Farina's *'avertimenti'* instructs that the *Chitarra Spcagniola* section should be played pizzicato, with the violin held 'under the arm' like a guitar.[115]

Example 58: Images of the *'avertimenti'* from the *Capriccio Stravagante.*[116] The below example shows the Italian version of the specific playing instructions delineated by Farina.

Example 58



Il Fine del Secondo Libro à 4. di Carlo Farina Mantouano.

ALCVNI AVERTIMENTI NEL SOPRA-
NO INTORNO AL CAPRICCIO STRAVAGANTE.

1. [illegible]gli Ritornelli si replicherà al solito.
2. Dalle stanghette con questo segno 𝄐 di sopra, si farà anchora la replica.
3. Questa nota che stà in mezo della stanghetta & del Ritornello senza segno come qui mostra non serue più la seconda uolta ma si seguita inanzi.
4. Doue si truouano nota sopra nota con forme all'hora polatura de li Organo con questo segno ⁀ di sopra, all'hora si suonerà Lirfando, come fanno li Orbi ouero Ciechi.
5. Doue si muta la chiaue uien sonato il soprano sopra la seconda corda appresso il canto, principiando con tre ditti, conforme alle chiaui.
6. Si troueràuna altra uolta nota sopra nota come di sopra, queste uengono battute con il legno dell'Archetto come fanno li tambarini, cio è non bisogna lasciar fermar troppo ma parar uia di lungo.
7. Il [illegible] uien sonato con leggiadria strascinando cio è che si suona pianino sotto al scannello del uiolino solamente un mezzo dito discosto, me desimamente il Fifferro uien sonato conforme il fiautino ma sonando la muta piu sotto al scannello & più forte.
8. Il [illegible]molo uà sonato solamente facendo tremar il pulso della mano dell'Archetto.
9. Il [illegible]rino uien sonato con strasciui.
10. Il Gatto uien sonato facendo morir quelle note cio è portar la man indietro à poco alla uolta, ma le semicrome uengono sonate disgratiatamente alla peggio cio è facendo fuggir l'Archetto dentro & fuora del scannello, come fanno li Gatti quando scappono uia.
11. Ecco il Cane questo uien sonato all'incontrario del Gatto, portando la mano sempre [illegible]i furiosamente.
12. La Chitarra Spagnuola uien sonata leuando uia il Violino dalla spalla, & mettendolo sotto il fianco sonando con le dite, conforma alla Chitarra istessa.

The technical extravagances and the programmatic mimicking that appear in the *Capriccio Stravagante* were deliberately calculated to make an impact on an impressionable public that was eager for novelties.[117] Farina's other violin works and/or sonatas are less adventurous musically; their melody, harmony, and tonality are rather too restricted and repetitious in their treatment to justify some of the unprecedent lengths of the pieces.[118]

[114] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 132-133.
[115] Bonner, *Curious Inventions,* 5-6.
[116] Carlo Farina, *Ander Theil Newer Paduanen, Gagliarden, Couranten, franzosischen Arien*, first ed. (Germany: Gimel Bergen, 1627). Available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Ander_Theil_newer_Paduanen%2C_Gagliarden%2C_Couranten%2C_franz%C3%B6sischen_Arien_(Farina%2C_Carlo)
[117] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 237.
[118] Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 207-208.

What makes this work specifically significant is not its difficult levels of technicality, but rather its use of showcasing the violin's capabilities for timbral imitation and colour. This combination is how violinist composers used the *stile moderno's* theatricality in a violinistic context and a performance context.

3. Conclusion

Throughout the first half of the 17th century the general observable trend was that of an idiomatic development which lent itself to the pursuit of virtuosity and technical display. This trend matured and gained momentum under the violinist composers of Mantua going into the late 17th century and continuing into the 18th century.

During the decades leading up to the middle of the 17th century, violinist composers were commonly utilising idiomatic elements such as figurations, scale passages, double stops, and chordal writing. By the middle decades of the 17th century, violinist composers were increasingly utilising figurations with violinistic idiomatic elements (intervals leaps, broken thirds, arpeggios, and chord motifs), as well as more specialized violin techniques including directions for bow articulations (such as *sul ponticello*, *tremolo,* and *col legno*), and other violinistic techniques such as *pizzicato* and *scordatura*. Through the early decades the range of the violin was expanded both downwards and upwards as violinist composers began to use the lower strings more frequently and explored the higher positions; later in the 17th century violinist composers, such as Uccellini, would continue to expand the range of the violin upwards quite drastically.

There was also a physical element in the development of a truly violinistic idiom; a truly violinistic and idiomatic way of writing would allow a player to create the best execution of the music with the minimal amount of effort. As violinist composers in the 17th century became more aware of and advanced in the violin's capabilities – both aurally and physically – they began to write in a way that was sensitive to the physical limitations of the violinist and violin. This can most simply be seen in figurations and chords: Figurations and chords that were truly idiomatically suitable for the violin included writing these elements in a way that was physically the most 'economic' and most comfortable for the violinist's execution of them. This therefore required a knowledge and awareness of violinistic technical issues such as strings crossings, fingerings, and bowings.

With this more advanced awareness of the violin's tone-colour and technical capabilities, violinist composers – specifically the Mantuan violinist composers – observably utilised these violinistic elements to create more expressive and theatrical aspects within their violin works. This clear emergence and development of the use of violinistic idioms, together with violinistic expression and

theatricality within violin music in the early to middle 17th century paved the way for the violin virtuosi composers of the late 17th century, 18th century, and eventually the 19th century.

Conclusion

1. Summary of Chapters

The aim of this study has been to trace the emergence and development of violinistic idioms in written violin music in Italy from the end of the 16th century to the mid-17th century. This included discussions of the relevant contexts and aspects in which violinistic idioms and written music were emerging and maturing. The study's time frame began with the emergence of basic instrumental and violinistic idioms in the end of the 16th century when vocal music and idioms were the musical ideal. The study's time frame concludes with the mid-17th century when the first 'violin virtuosi' began to showcase new heights of expression as well as the use utilisation of violinistic idioms within violin music.

Chapter 3 discussed the context of violin music in the context of instrumental idiom vs. vocal expression at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century as well as the violin coming to the fore as the instrument best capable of rivalling the voice. This, together with the new *stile moderno* influencing instrumental music, led to a fundamental shift not only in the violin's expression and technical capacities, but also in a more independent musical function. Monteverdi was one of the first pioneers of writing in a more violinistic style – albeit mostly within vocal forms – and displayed this within his string music.

Chapter 4 discussed the violinistic centers of Venice of Brescia as well as the sonata as a vehicle for violin music, expression, and idiomatic development in the 17th century. Venice, Brescia and later Mantua were the chief Italian centers of violin music productions within the early 17th century. The Venice style would later influence violin composers of Brescia who would in turn influence the Mantuan violinist composers and virtuosi.

Chapter 5 discussed the violinist composers of Mantua as the first 'school' of violinists. Throughout the early 17th century violinistic idioms within violin music had been developing towards a pursuit of virtuosity, technical display, and theatrical expression. This development of a violinistic idiom and style matured and gained significance under the violinist composers of Mantua – the first violin virtuosi.

2. From Mantua to Modena and Bologna

After 1630, Modena replaced Mantua as a court-based epicenter of instrumental music production.[1] Modena had a continuous and homogenous tradition of violinist composers which was represented primarily by Marco Uccellini, Giovanni Bononcini, and Giuseppe Colombi.[2] A historical and chronological point of interest is that Marco Uccellini was the first Italian violin composer whose entire life fell within the seventeenth century.[3] He was among the most progressive of violin virtuosi and composers in the 17th century, and was one of the most prolific 17th century instrumental composers with a large output of free sonatas as well as a substantial body of dances and similar works.[4] He cultivated the solo sonata extensively and apart from one composition for two violins, his Op.5 collection was the first collection to consist almost entirely of works for solo violin and continuo.[5] Trio sonatas were also well represented in his output, and there was a later increase in sonatas of larger ensembles such as those constituted of four or five instruments and continuo.[6] It is interesting to note that the more progressive and virtuosic features of his style - such as the use of high positions and arpeggio figures - very rarely occurred in his trio sonatas.[7]

[1] Peter Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata: From its Origins Until Corelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 11.
[2] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 13.
[3] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 99.
[4] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 116.
[5] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 116.
[6] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 117.
[7] Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata*, 123.

3. The Use of Chordal Writing in the 17th Century Violin Repertoire

The techniques of double stop playing and chordal playing were specifically idiomatic to the violin as a string instrument as those techniques were simply not a physical possibility for the 17th-century 'competing' woodwind and brass instruments such as the bassoon or cornett. Later in the 17th century, the violin's capability to create polyphonic textures through the use of double stop playing and chordal playing would allow for the development of a more virtuosic and violinistic style of violin writing going into the 18th century. As double stop and chordal playing were so specific to a violin and string instrument idiom, it is worth discussing to at least some extent the development of this aspect within the 17th century violin repertoire.

Although chordal playing had long been practiced on string instruments before the 17th century, the application of chordal playing to the violin was specifically important to the development and use of violinistic music, idioms, and techniques within violin music during the 17th century.[8] Rapid divisions in instrumental writing during the early 17th century often produced a style that was frequently indistinguishable between the violin and the cornetto idiomatically speaking.[9] Because of this, the main factors to truly distinguish idiomatic writing between the violin and cornetto would have been the factors of double stopping, chordal writing, and range.[10] Specified cornetto parts fell within the range of middle *c* two octave above – although often using much less of their range – while violin parts could descend to the *g* below middle *c*.[11]

It is interesting that not many other violinists in Italy before 1630 appeared interested in the more radical idioms of Marini and Farina.[12] It stands to reason that chordal writing and double stopping were the more distinctly idiomatic hallmarks of the violin as the cornetto, its closest rival in popularity, did not have the ability for more than one tone at a time. However, it seems that the extant evidence would show that the majority of violin composers did not have much interest in experimenting with the technical capacities such as double stops, chordal writing, and scordatura in the middle decades of the century.[13] It was later, in the 1680s, that double stops returned to Italian violin music with the Bologna composers.[14]

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[8] Peter Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century: Italian Supremacy or Austro-German Hegemony?," *Il Saggiatore Musicale* Vo. 3, No. 2 (1996): 233, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43029389.
[9] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 236.
[10] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 236.
[11] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 236.
[12] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 238.
[13] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 241.
[14] David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins To 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 220.

The adoption of a chordal idiom in violin music in Italian print collections of the 1680s coincides with the introduction of the system of copper plate engraving.[15] Solo violin music, especially those with more radical idioms, was rarely published in Italy in the 17th century simply because it was not within the capabilities of the Italian presses with their outdated technology to produce it.[16] The few solo sonatas (in comparison to the prolific quantity of ensemble/trio sonatas) that were issued from the commercial presses cannot necessarily be representative of the advanced violin idioms of the period since composers would have been obliged to adapt their style to the limits of the typography which mostly rules out technical aspects such as chordal playing.[17]

However, the "reintroduction" of chordal playing later in the 17th century was not exclusively linked to the new printing technology even though it was a very valid aspect. Chordal playing in Italian violin music during the late 17th century was also linked to a composition element which saw a trend in more melodies present in the bass line; this imbued works with a fairly consistent dialogue of both (or more) instruments which led to the deployment of more polyphonic styles such as *concertato* and counterpoint.[18] Through the 'activation' of this more melodically engaged bass line, the violin took over some functions of basso continuo by appropriately filling in the middle voices that were harmonically missing or by feigning an imitative dialogue with the second violin.[19] This altered role of the solo violinist thus became a valid reason for the increasingly daring use of multiple stops late in the 17th century.[20]

Another reason for the avoidance of double stopping and chordal writing in mid-century (as opposed to late-century) Italian violin writing could have possibly been the traditions of style and performance adopted in the early 17th century.[21] Italian violinists were desired to measure up to the art of the virtuoso opera singers, as the violin's ability to compare itself with the qualities of the human voice placed itself in the position of the most popular instrument in 17th century Italy.[22] Initially, this meant that Italian composers saw the violin as an exclusively monophonic instrument for the most part, thus preventing the utilisation of chordal and double stop playing.[23] However, as the violin assumed new roles that did not depend wholly on a devotion to the vocal idioms, the melodic (or more 'vocal' idiom) changed with it and violin music was diversified to include chords,

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[15] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 246.
[16] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 257.
[17] Allsop, "Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century," 257.
[18] Piotr Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17Th Century," *Musica Iagellonica*, 2011, 188.
[19] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 188.
[20] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 188.
[21] Piotr Wilk, "Chordal Playing in the 17Th-Century Violin Repertoire," *Musica Iagllonica*, 2004, 163.
[22] Wilk, "Chordal Playing in the 17th-Century," 165.
[23] Wilk, "The Violin Technique of Italian Solo Sonatas in the 17th Century," 189.

fugues, arpeggios, and rapid figuring with hidden polyphony.[24] This new type of virtuoso violin sonata came to be cultivated in the musical centers of Bologna and Rome, and would subsequently become dominant in the century.[25]

[24] Wilk, "Chordal Playing in the 17th-Century," 168.
[25] Wilk, "Chordal Playing in the 17th-Century," 168-169.

4. Final Thoughts

Through the first half of the 17th century there was a growing emphasis on virtuosity in the styles and schools within which violin composers were composing music for the violin. Starting with the Venetian traditions of figuration and embellishment, which in turn influenced the Mantuan school of violinist composers, violinistic idioms emerged and developed to become more distinctive.

It is worth noting that the use of virtuosic and technically demanding writing within violin music varied in differing contexts. In the Venice school there was a stronger tradition and style of virtuosity within the trio and ensemble sonatas. However, in Marini's music the sonatas for solo violin and continuo had a distinctly more virtuosic style than did the trio and ensemble sonatas, which were of a more distinctly conservative nature and closer to the Brescian style. Later in the 17th century, Uccellini showed a similar trend in that the more progressive technical and idiomatic features of his style were distinctly less present in the ensemble sonatas than in the trio and ensemble sonata and sinfonias. This seems to indicate that a specific relationship was developing between the idea or "entity" of virtuosity and that of the soloist entity within the violin tradition – a relationship that eventually bore the fruit of idolized figures of virtuosity such as Tartini and Paganini in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the space of roughly half a century the violin had advanced from relative obscurity to being in the position of developing its own tradition of not only virtuosity, but specifically a soloistic virtuosity.

The early 17th century was clearly an extremely prolific period in the history of a violinistic idiom and style within and written violin music. In a matter of decades, the violin grew from being one of various accompaniment instruments to being the most popular treble instrumental for musical expression that rivalled the voice. This study aims to benefit readers – be it violinists or non-violinists – who wish to understand the early emergence and growth of violinistic idioms and style in an integrated, succinct, and holistic manner.

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