

## Preface

The Italian organist and composer Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690) was comfortable with all the musical styles of his time. He wrote operas, oratorios, sacred and instrumental music and his influence extended beyond his era and the borders of his country. His melodies can be found for example in works by Torelli and Vivaldi, even by J. S. Bach, whose Fugue BW574 is considered to be based on a theme by Legrenzi – although the source has not yet been discovered<sup>1</sup>.

Five of the larger instrumental works published during his lifetime are still extant. “La Cetra”, a collection of sonatas, was first printed in 1673 in Venice. It contains 6 two-part, 6 three-part, and 6 four-part sonatas with continuo. They were intended to be played on violin(s), viola and cello. The last two of the four-part sonatas, however, bear the designation “à quattro viole da gamba ò come piace” in the table of contents. We herewith present these two sonatas for viola da gamba in a new edition: **Sonata quinta** (order number G025) and **Sonata sesta** (order number G026). Both of these sonatas were written to be played either in a higher or lower version (difference of a third), as can be seen by the double clef sign in the original manuscript. Our edition includes both transpositions.

The present publication is based on a copy of the 1673 edition kept in the Academia Filarmonica di Bologna (I-Baf FA 1 46). We also had access to a copy of the second printing (Venice, 1682) housed in the Diocese Library in Münster (D-MÜs Sant Dr. 470). A comparison of the two editions shows only minimal differences even though the music was set anew for the second edition<sup>2</sup>.

The original editions contained five parts marked “Violino Primo”, “Violino Secondo”, “Terza Parte”, “Viola”, “Basso Continuo” (no score). This is the case even for the pieces specifically notated as being for viola da gamba. In our edition the parts are designated “Viola da Gamba 1-4”. Both transpositions can be played in the usual consort formation SATB, the higher version also works well with SSAB.

In our opinion it is not necessary to have an added stringed instrument augment the continuo line since the material often runs parallel with one of the other parts. More likely the continuo part was intended to be played by a keyboard or plucked instrument alone, with the option of leaving it out entirely.

Our edition follows the original as closely as possible. Discrepancies have been corrected and in important cases made clear with footnotes or dotted lines. We have assumed that the accidentals in the original apply only to a single note, with the following exceptions: repeated notes, even those continuing beyond a bar line, alternating notes, and certain cadence motifs<sup>3</sup>. Any editorial suggestions within this context have been set in parentheses. In certain cases the figures in the continuo part were not very precisely placed over the notes. We have set them according to the proper harmonies of the upper voices without further comment.

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Translation by Lynn Dickinson

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Sadie (editor), *The New GROVE Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Volume 10, London 1980

<sup>2</sup> Obvious errors in the first edition have not been corrected in the second edition. Example: Sonata Sesta, basso continuo, bar 17, second note: figure “76” should read “7b”. Existing differences are confusing. Example: Sonata quinta, second part, bar 61, first note: 1673: e sharp, 1682: d. It should read, d sharp, however, considering context and thorough bass.

<sup>3</sup> See also the introduction in Stephen Bonta, “The Instrumental Music of Giovanni Legrenzi, *La Cetra*, Sonate a due, tre e quattro stromenti, libro quattro, Opus 10, 1673”, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1992.