

INTRODUCTION

Sonate a Violino e Violone a Cembalo Opera Prima

Pietro Castrucci

Pietro Castrucci was born in Rome in 1679 and supposedly studied with Corelli. He came to England in 1715 with his brother Prospero as a servant of Richard, Earl of Burlington, and remained in his household at least until 1721. He quickly became a familiar figure in London's concerts, and in 1720 was appointed leader of the newly formed orchestra for the Royal Academy of Music, the Italian opera at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. In addition to playing the violin, he also developed and played the *violetta marina*, a viola d'amore-like instrument used by Handel in several of his operas. According to Charles Burney, he was 'more than half mad' and was the model for Hogarth's print 'The Enraged Musician'. He led the opera orchestra until 1736, when, according to Sir John Hawkins, Handel decided to replace him:

[Castrucci] growing old, Handel had a mind to place a young man, named John Clegg, a scholar of Dubourg, at the head of his orchestra; Castrucci being in very necessitous circumstances, and not in the least conscious of any failure in his hand, was unwilling to quit his post; upon which Handel, in order to convince him of his inability to fill it, composed a concerto [the Concerto in C major in *Alexander's Feast*, HWV318], in which the second concertino was so contrived, as to require an equal degree of execution with the first; this he gave to Clegg, who in the performance of it gave such proofs of his superiority, as reduced Castrucci to the necessity of yielding the palm to his rival.

Despite Hawkins's assertion that Castrucci 'immediately sank into oblivion', he was a member of the Society of Musicians from 1739, and appeared in a number of Dublin concerts in 1750 and 1751, stating on one occasion that he had been '24 years first Violin to the Royal Opera House in London'. He died in Dublin on 7 March 1752.

The subject of this facsimile, the twelve *Sonate a Violino e Violone a Cembalo*, op. 1, seem to have been published soon after Castrucci arrived in England; it was dedicated to his patron, the Earl of Burlington. The title-page states that it was issued by Jeanne Roger, who took over her father Estienne's business in September 1716. Like her father, Jeanne Roger did not date her editions, but since it is known that her plate numbers ran from 420 in 1716 to 490 in 1721, it is likely that Castrucci's op. 1, numbered 435, appeared in 1717. It is not clear whether the 'Twelve Sonatas for the Violin' by Castrucci advertised by the London music sellers Richard Meares and Peter Bressan in *The Post Boy* on 15 January 1718 was a separate English edition or just imported stock of the Roger edition, though John Walsh certainly produced his own edition, *XII Solos for a Violin with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsicord or Bass Violin*, in London in about 1725. Castrucci's other music includes a second set of solo violin sonatas op. 2 (1734), a set of twelve Concerti Grossi op. 3 (1736) and two sets of solo flute sonatas (1723 and c 1725).

The point of departure for Castrucci's violin sonatas, like those of most of his Italian contemporaries, was Corelli's op. 5 sonatas, published in 1700. However, Castrucci demands a more advanced violin technique than his presumed teacher, using high positions, multiple stops, and, in the last sonata, a *scordatura* tuning. In places, such as the first movement of Sonata no. 4 and the second movement of Sonata no. 5, he writes a more active accompaniment than in Corelli, so that the bass is virtually an equal partner in a duet. Castrucci tended to blur Corelli's distinction between *da chiesa* sonatas, with fugues and largely abstract movements, and *da camera* sonatas, which are largely dance suites. There are no formal fugues, and, although all the sonatas have at least one dance-like movement, only no. 1 consists entirely of dances – an Allemanda followed by a jig-like Allegro Cantabile. Castrucci also reflects the trend among Corelli's followers to reduce the number of movements in their sonatas: no. 1 has only two, while a majority of the others either have just three movements or three with just a very short punctuating Adagio.

SONATA I

Allemanda

Adagio ma non troppo

The musical score is written for a single instrument, likely a lute or guitar, as evidenced by the presence of fret numbers (e.g., 6, 7, 8) and natural harmonics (marked with 'x'). The notation includes a variety of rhythmic values and articulations. The tempo is marked 'Adagio ma non troppo'. The piece is in a minor key, indicated by the one flat in the key signature. The score is divided into six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.