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I Solisti Ambrosiani have dedicated a period of study and research to the figure of Bartolomeo Bernardi (ca 1660 – 1732), Baroque composer and violinist from the Bologna area. They have published an album which aims to provide a recording of material which has been unreleased so far and completes the corpus of the composer, which came to us after the fire in Copenhagen (UraniaRecords, "Qual di feroce tromba", 2CDs, 2020). Some features of **Bartolomeo Bernardi** are shrouded in mystery, as his biographical notes are nowadays still poor. He was from Bologna and lived between the XVII and the XVIII century: as violinist, Bernardi first worked in Bologna and Mantua and then moved to Copenhagen as a composer and violinist and later as Kappellmeister at the court of the King of Denmark and Norway. Bernardi lived in Copenhagen for the rest of his life, reaching a fair popularity which provided him the chance to see his works performed at the Castle of malienborg and at the National Theatre of Prague. **As regards vocal production, only three Cantate survived**, whereas a fourth has been cited by mistake from certain sources with bookmark, though there is no trace of its existence. Two of the three Cantatas are preserved at the Royal Danish Library, namely "Belle d'amore nemiche" and "Sorta era l'alba", transcribed by a later copyist. Yet, the manuscript of the Cantata "Qual di feroce tromba" is by a coeval copyist and it is currently preserved at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

The **Sonatas Opus 3** could have been conceived for a sacred context, because of the alternation of many movements and of the fact that the first movements are slow. The **daring use of the harmony** and the rudeness of certain passages contribute to transmit a new perspective of the definition of Baroque Music, making these Sonatas a remarkably original work.



Bernardi, SONATA III Op. 3 Allemanda

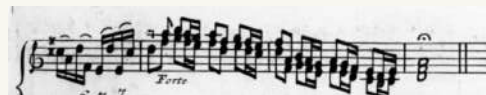
His technic style was among Corelli and Paganini

Bernardi was clearly a violin virtuoso and he could allow himself to write many passages characterized by very rapid double notes, in combination with picchettato (tapping) and balzato (ricochet bowing), which made some passages even more complex.

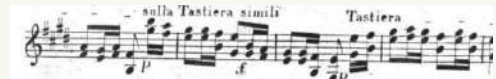


Bernardi, SONATA IV Op. 3

Regarding the melody, there is a clear inspiration to **Corelli**, even though both the density of writing in fugue-like passages and the technique required to perform rapid passages (scales in thirds, sixths etc.) anticipate **Paganini**.



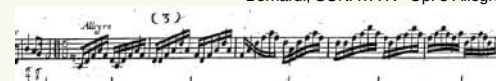
Bernardi, SONATA II Op. 3 Fuga - Allegro



Paganini, CAPRICCIO Op. 1 n. 9



Bernardi, SONATA IV Op. 3 Allegro



Corelli, SONATA I Op. V Allegro

An accurate revision work about the cantata's text "Vdite" is not "Volite", and it means "hear!"

On the texts of the cantatas, before proceeding with the recording, a necessary, careful revision of the text was carried out, particularly as regards the two cantatas "Belle d'amore nemiche" and "Sorta era l'alba". Today in fact remain of them, preserved in the Danish Royal Library, only copies compiled in a subsequent period respecting the one in which Bernardi lived. Although not autographed, the manuscript of the *Cantata per l'armi di Cesare* "Qual di feroce tromba", currently preserved at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, under the signature Mus.ms 30182, is instead the work of a contemporary copyist.

In the two cantatas transcribed in a late period, there are several evident errors of interpretation of the text, probably favored by the non-Italian origin of the transcriber. In the opening recitative of the cantata "Belle d'amore nemiche" he writes for example - taking care to divide it into syllables, but obviously not

understanding the meaning of what he transcribes - the term **"vo - li - te" instead of "u - di - te"** (evidently it was "v-di-te" in the printed copy he had consulted and unfortunately lost today), confusing the ancient graphics of the letter **"u"** and the belly of the letter **"d"** for the syllable "vo" and transforming the shaft of the "d" into the letter "l". From the late Middle Ages to at least the second half of the seventeenth century, most of the printers in fact, distinguished the initial "u" of a word, written as "v", from the internal or final "u" of a word, written according to modern usage.

In the following examples, we can readily see how, at the time of Bernardi, use graphics "v" instead of "u" for the first letter of the word, was common in the texts, including the opera librettos.

1. *U* o mia diletta amante.
Sik *V* ditate i se riman viuoi Titanno
Vurpera pur auco

2. *G*ra *V* ditate v ditate al Padre
Cine peronno vi perdonate anco

Thus a word is introduced by the modern transcriber that in Italian language - even if it was the seventeenth-century one - and particularly in the sentence considered here, has no meaning, in place of the correct term, which conversely goes well with the meaning of the recitative: "udite i sensi a cui ragion vi chiama" means in fact "hear the senses, to which reason calls you". This and some other transcription errors have been corrected in this edition, while trying to preserve as much as possible the letter of the original text, which in its metric and aesthetic characteristics fully responds to use of the time.

Tullia Pedersoli