

Three cellists enjoy meeting up occasionally; searching for suitable music to play, they can choose from numerous transcriptions and arrangements of popular works. However, hardly more than a dozen original pieces for cello trio have been published to date.* The present first edition of the 18 Sonatas for three cellos by Ermenegildo del Cinque is therefore a welcome addition to the genre.

Who was Ermenegildo del Cinque? We know little about his life and activities, there are no extant autographs of his works, and even the year he died is uncertain – 1770 or 1773. What is certain is that he was a clergyman. In 1722, volume 9 of the Collections of lyric, dramatic and dithyrambic epics by the Accademia dell'Arcadia features on page 281 a sonnet he wrote, referring to him as an abbot and recording his pseudonym Pomildo (as was usual for Accademia members.)

We owe the few extant works by Ermenegildo del Cinque to 19th century copyists. Del Cinque had a preference for the cello, which he must have played himself, as one official register also calls him a violoncellista. This is also supported by the fact that besides 18 sonatas for three cellos, 50 sonatas for two cellos have survived. A clue to his practical experience of cello playing is his use of the tenor clef for the first and second cello in the sonatas for three cellos. This notation, used for higher passages on the cello, was not yet customary in mid-18th century. At this time the violin clef, to be played an octave lower, was the norm. The notation in tenor clef, much easier for the performer, became the norm only during the first half of the 19th century.

The 18 sonatas are written in church sonata form. They are short, their movements usually slow-fast-slow-fast. This music is based on the dialogue of the two first voices, held together by the third voice. Despite their standard structure, these sonatas are varied, original and melodious.

It is entirely thanks to the copies by the Vatican priest and church musician Fortunato Santini (1777–1861) that these 18 sonatas by Del Cinque have survived. In the course of his life, Santini, besides his own compositions, collected numerous manuscripts and an even larger amount of works by Italian composers of the 16th to the 18th century. He sold his entire music library to the Diocese of Münster in Westphalia in exchange for an annuity,

stipulating that the collection not be moved to Münster until after his death; it is still there today, its circa 20 000 music titles a main part of the Diocesan library. This collection includes Santini's copy of all 18 sonatas, titled *XVIII Sonate | per 3 Violoncelli | del Cavaliere | Ermenegildo Delcinque Romano | messa in partitura da Fortunato Santini. Del Cinque mori nel 1770* (shelfmark: SANT Hs 1140). A second copy in Santini's hand is preserved in the library of the Moscow Conservatoire (Naučnaja muzykal'naja biblioteka, shelfmark: XI-415), . There also exists a further, very accurate copy of the score in an unknown hand, though only of the first three sonatas, in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, under shelfmark Mus.ms.3690. That copy features the same errors and mistakes as Santini's Münster manuscript. For example, in both copies, 14 bars before the end of the last movement of the 3rd sonata, the third cello part lacks the change of clef from tenor to bass clef. It could be that they either used the same model, or were copied from each other.

The basis for this first edition is the Santini copy held in Münster. We have kept the continuous tenor clef for first and second cello, even though some notes or short passages on the G string will strike today's cellists as rather unusual. The few dynamics in the manuscript have been standardized in the parts. Articulations, too, have been adjusted in the parts, with only a few less realistic ones removed, e.g. staccato on whole notes. The writing of appoggiaturas has been simplified throughout, with acciaccaturas in front of sixteenth and appoggiaturas in front of longer notes. Generally speaking, it is left to the players to find their own way to interpret these sonatas.

The editor wishes to thank the Diocesan Library Münster for kindly allowing us to publish these works. Publisher and editor hope that many cellists will be intrigued by these sonatas and will enjoy them as much as did the editor and his fellow musicians.

Erik Harms

* WALTHER AESCHBACHER: op. 27, Amadeus BP 524
GIACOMO BASSEVI CERVETTO: 6 Trios, Amadeus BP 730
FRIEDRICH DOTZAUER: op. 104, Amadeus BP 1766
JOSEF HARTINGER: Trio brillant op. 2, Amadeus BP 2683
FERDINAND THIERIOT: Suite und Choral, Amadeus BP 1246