

PREFACE

The Geminiani sonata consists of the four traditional movements: an *Introduction*, with the austerity of a Bach prelude; a *Fugato*, one of the earliest written by the Lucchese master; a tender *Affetuoso*; and a lively, rhythmical somewhat capricious *Giga*. As was customary in the period, Geminiani supplied only a harmonic background for the *Introduction*, leaving to the performer the task of filling in a realization. This has been done here by the editor.

This composition very likely belongs to an early stage in Geminiani's career, when he was still under the influence of Lonati's teaching. It is worth noting that the Milanese Carlo Ambrogio Lonati composed the first important Italian work for violin alone, his *Fantasia a Violino Solo*, outstanding both for its technical boldness and musical substance.

In addition to its musical value, Geminiani's sonata has an importance in the history of violin literature that cannot be disregarded. Remarkable for mastery of form as well as for wealth of inspiration it also represents one of the earliest and best specimens of composition for unaccompanied violin prior to Bach's immortal achievements. Whether Bach knew the Geminiani sonata it is difficult to say. The fact that the mss. copy exists in the Dresden collection seems to indicate that it was well known in Germany at an early date.

Be this as it may, this Sonata occupies a place of its own among pre-Bach compositions for violin alone. It has all the characteristics of Geminiani's best style. It certainly ought to be better known, both to the music lover, who will find in it a work rich in musical significance, and to students, for whom it will provide a preliminary step to the study of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for unaccompanied violin.

ADOLFO BETTI