

1990

The Trio Sonata in Pre-Corellian Prints: When Does 3 = 4?

Sandra Mangsen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr>



Part of the [Music Practice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mangsen, Sandra (1990) "The Trio Sonata in Pre-Corellian Prints: When Does 3 = 4?," *Performance Practice Review*. Vol. 3: No. 2, Article 4. DOI: 10.5642/perfpr.199003.02.4
Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol3/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Current Journals at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Performance Practice Review by an authorized editor of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

The Trio Sonata in Pre-Corellian Prints: When Does 3 = 4?*

Sandra Mangsen

"How many performers does it take to play a trio sonata?" A common answer would be two for the upper parts, and two to realize the continuo. But there are several common seventeenth-century scorings, the most prominent being *SBbc*, *SSbc*, *SSB*, and *SSBbc*.¹ Italian composers of instrumental duos and trios published before 1675 distinguished between two possible bass-line scorings: chordal *continuo* with melodic bass and chordal *continuo* alone. This corpus of instrumental music for small ensembles offers convincing evidence that modern performers and scholars should not equate these specific scorings in the belief that the *basso continuo* must always be played by melodic and chordal instruments together.²

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society in Austin, Texas, October 27, 1989.

1. In William S. Newman's *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 4th ed. (New York: Norton, 1983), capital letters *S*, *T*, *B* (soprano, tenor, bass) refer to melodic instruments, and *bc* to the continuo. For the purposes of this paper, *bc* will always designate only the chordal continuo instrument. Other duo and trio scorings found in the printed sources include *SSSbc*, *STBbc*, and *BBbc*.

2. 112 volumes published in Italy between 1607 and 1675 were examined. They contain works by Italian or foreign-born composers and include at least one piece for two or three melodic instruments with or without continuo.

Frescobaldi's single collection of ensemble canzonas (S1628j)³ may serve to illustrate the various duo and trio scorings found in these sources (see Table 1).

Table 1. Scoring in Frescobaldi's *Il primo libro delle canzoni, ad uno, due, trè, e quattro voci*.

à 1	à violino solo o cornetto	Sbc
à 2	à due canti	SSbc
	à due bassi	BBbc
	à due, canto e basso	SBbc
à 3	à tre, canto e due bassi	SBBbc
	à tre, due canti e basso	SSBbc
à 4	due canti e due bassi	SSBBbc
	canto, alto, tenore, e basso	SATBbc

In this volume, solo canzonas are for one violin or cornetto; duos are for two melodic instruments; and so on. A continuo part, or *basso ad organo*, is provided for each canzona, but is never included in the enumeration of parts; it often acts as a *basso seguente*, following or simplifying the ensemble's melodic bass part, or (when there is no melodic bass instrument) providing simple harmonic support. For Frescobaldi, then, the scorings *Sbc* and *SBbc* are not the same: one is a solo canzona, the other a duo. Similarly treble duos with continuo, and trios for two trebles, bass, and continuo, are distinct scorings.

Standard definitions of the trio sonata are too restrictive to encompass all of the seventeenth-century instrumental trios in Frescobaldi's collection (including *SBBbc* as well as the more common *SSBbc*), and fail to distinguish between particular duo and trio scorings (for example, *SSbc* and *SSBbc*). According to the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, a trio sonata is

written in three parts — two upper lines, normally in the same register, and basso continuo — it often includes a concertante bass as well. It requires four performers: two melody instruments for the top lines, normally violins; a melody bass instrument (bass viol,

3. Dates given in this format refer to citations in Claudio Sartori, *Bibliografia della musica strumentale italiana stampata in Italia fino al 1700*, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1952, 1968).

violone, cello) that either reinforce the bass line of the continuo part or, as a concertante part, participates in imitations with the upper parts; and a chord-playing instrument such as organ, harpsichord, or theorbo to realize the harmonies of the continuo.⁴

Such a description suits eighteenth-century examples of the genre, where much evidence suggests that cello and harpsichord ordinarily played the bass line together. But the roots of the trio sonata are in the early- and mid-seventeenth century — in collections like those of Frescobaldi, Salamone Rossi, and Giovanni Battista Buonamente — where the bass line was not ordinarily doubled.

Several earlier studies have questioned the relevance of bass-line doubling to seventeenth-century repertoires. Tharald Borgir has shown that in seventeenth-century Italy a melodic instrument did not ordinarily double the chordal continuo,⁵ Niels M. Jensen that our modern terminology of *solo sonata* and *trio sonata* is inadequate for seventeenth-century sacred and secular instrumental repertoires precisely because of its failure to distinguish the roles of chordal *continuo* and melodic bass,⁶ Graham Sadler that Lully's dances may ordinarily have been performed by strings alone, without chordal *continuo*.⁷ Moreover, Corelli's title pages and partbook labels from the 1680s suggest that his practices were still closely related to those of earlier seventeenth-century composers. His church trio sonatas appeared in four partbooks with two bass partbooks labelled respectively *violone o arcileuto* and *basso per l'organo*⁸; the chamber trio sonatas were printed in three partbooks, with the bass labelled *violone o cembalo*.⁹ In fact there is very little evidence in the Italian sources of instrumental duos and trios from Rossi to

4. Stephen Bonta, "Trio Sonata," in *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, edited by Don M. Randel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 873.

5. Tharald Borgir, *The Performance of the Basso Continuo in Italian Baroque Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1987).

6. Niels M. Jensen, "Solo Sonata, Duo Sonata and Trio Sonata: Some Problems of Terminology and Genre in Seventeenth Century Italian Instrumental Music," in *Festschrift Jens Peter Larsen*, edited by Nils Schjørring, Henrik Glahn, and Carsten E. Hatting, 73-102 (Copenhagen: W. Hansen Musik-Forlag, 1972).

7. Graham Sadler, "The Role of the Keyboard Continuo in the French Opera Orchestra 1673-1776," *Early Music* 8 (1980): 148-57.

8. *Sonate a tre, doi Violini, e Violone, o Arcileuto, col Basso per l'Organo . . .* (Rome, S1681a); a subsequent Italian edition duplicated this title, but substituted *Tiorba* for *Arcileuto* (Bologna, S1682h). Here *violone* means an instrument of the violin family at 8-foot pitch; see Stephen Bonta, "Terminology for the Bass Violin in Seventeenth-Century Italy," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 4 (1978), 5-43.

9. Early Italian editions of Opus 2 are all entitled *Sonate da Camera a tre, doi Violini, e Violone, o Cimbalo . . .* (Rome, S1685a; Bologna, S1685b; Modena, S1685c); however, foreign editions often had titles indicating optional or expected bass-line doubling (see note 30).

Corelli for the practice of bass-line doubling in Italy, and what evidence there is relates to special circumstances of particular pieces, composers, or institutions. Our failure to appreciate the seventeenth-century implications of the term *basso* (*B*) and *continuo* (*bc*) has led us to impose eighteenth-century conventions of bass-line doubling on earlier sonatas, and to confuse what were originally distinct textures. For most of the century the only trios to require four performers were specifically scored for three melodic instruments and chordal continuo (usually, *SSBbc*); the only duos to require three performers were for two melodic instruments and chordal continuo (usually *SSbc* or *SBbc*).¹⁰

Nonetheless, our conception of the trio for four is so entrenched that instead of revising it, we often go to some length to explain away disturbing counter-evidence. One example of such evidence is in the common partbook label, *violone o cembalo*, used by Corelli and by most other composers from the Bologna-Modena region beginning in the 1660s. *The New Grove Dictionary*, for example, appends the following explanation for the problematic "or" in the scoring "violone or harpsichord" to its definition of *trio sonata*:

Trio sonatas, generally, were to be played by four performers rather than three (two for the continuo part), although publishers commonly issued them with an indication that the bass was to be played 'by a violoncello or harpsichord' in order to sell the maximum number of copies ("Trio sonata," 19: 152).

Taken at face value, the indication *violone o cembalo* would suggest that some trios are actually for three performers — two violins, and melodic "or" chordal instrument, but not both. Only by reading the "or" as "and" can we retain our usual view of the trio for four performers.

Modern scholars and performers, who *know* that the bass line is ordinarily to be played by chordal and melodic instruments together, cleverly avoid the trap laid by these unscrupulous publishers. The weighty authority of C. P. E. Bach is often invoked in support of the position that trio sonatas are invariably to be played by four instruments:

10. The melodic bass part is sometimes scored for theorbo (alone, or as an alternate to the cello). Parts for theorbo (in addition to the usual continuo part) are sometimes figured (for example, by Uccellini and Corelli), and one might expect simultaneous realizations of similar bass parts by theorbist and harpsichordist. The issue is not, then, the nature of the parts played by instruments for which partbooks were provided, but whether or not "extra" instruments were added as a matter of course. We will, nonetheless, use the term *melodic bass* for such parts, usually scored for bowed string, and less often for bassoon, trombone, or theorbo.

Thus, no piece can be well performed without some form of keyboard accompaniment . . . Some soloists take only a viola or even a violin for accompaniment. This can be condoned only in cases of necessity, when good keyboardists are not available . . .¹¹

Thus, Bach does not seem to have acknowledged the existence of the string trio (two violins and cello). Let us note in passing that this frequently quoted view was penned in Germany in the mid-eighteenth century; the repertory in question here was published in Italy before 1675. But with Emanuel Bach's dismissal of pieces performed without a keyboard, we quash our fleeting suspicion that the string trio may have been common in the Baroque era and return to the security of a world to which we are accustomed, where three does equal four and bass-line doubling is standard.

In seventeenth-century Italy, however, trios were not always performed by four players. At least one important composer of string trios was active in the early seventeenth century. In three collections (S1626d, S1629a, S1637d), Giovanni Battista Buonamente scored for two violins and viola da gamba (*basso di viola*) or bass violin (*basso da braccio*), neither mentioning the continuo nor providing figures in the single bass partbook.¹² In another volume, Buonamente scored for two or three melodic instruments, in both treble and bass range, with figured continuo provided in a separate partbook.¹³ Looking inside these volumes, one discovers that Buonamente and Corelli had similar ideas about bass-line scoring. Indeed, Buonamente and his contemporaries employed distinct duo and trio scorings in compositions of different types (see Table 2): those with bass parts scored for both melodic bass and chordal continuo tend to be confined to canzonas and canzona-style sonatas (*SSBbc* and *SBbc*), while those in which the bass is scored for only one instrument (melodic or chordal) turn up in variation sonatas and dances (*SSB* and *SSbc*). Often, as in the trio collections of Buonamente and Corelli, one

11. "Man kann also ohne Begleitung eines Clavier-instruments kein Stück gut aufführen . . . Einige lassen sich beim Solo mit der Bratsche oder gar mit der Violine ohne Clavier begleiten. Wenn dieses aus Noth, wegen Mangel an *guten* Clavieristen, geschieht, so muss man sie entschuldigen, . . ." C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin, 1753 and 1762). Translated by William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1949), 173.

12. For example, in *Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, & brandi per sonar con due violini, & un basso di viola* . . . (Venice, S1626d). There are very occasional figures in one of the partbooks in question. See Bonta, "Terminology," for evidence on the Italian terms for bowed string instruments in the bass register.

13. *Sonate, et canzoni a due, tre, quattro, cinque et a sei voci* . . . *libro sesto, nuovamente dato in luce, con il suo basso continuo*. (Venice, S1636).

finds entire volumes favoring the "secular" scorings (*SSB* and *SSbc*), and others the "sacred" scorings (*SBbc* and *SSBbc*).¹⁴

Table 2. Usual scoring of duos and trios in printed Italian sources 1600-1675.

<u>duos</u>	<u>trios</u>	<u>duo/trio</u>	<u>context</u>
SB bc	SSB bc	SS[B]bc	church
SS bc	SSB	SS B/bc	chamber

As the century wore on, the treble-bass duo (*SBbc*) became less popular and the treble duo (*SSbc*) infiltrated and finally dominated the canzona-style or church sonata collections (beginning with Uccellini's earliest publication in 1639), so that the line between sacred and secular scorings became less firm.¹⁵ But even in 1675 the division between what are primarily secular and sacred repertoires favoring different duo and trio textures is still recognizable in the scoring of the bass part.

Early seventeenth-century Italian sources illustrate with remarkable consistency the traditions of instrumental scoring on which Corelli drew. Many *secular* pieces were intended for three instruments. In four instrumental collections, Salamone Rossi (S1607c, S1608h, S1613k, S1622b) specified two violins and chitarrone for his sinfonias, dances, short sonatas in binary form, and longer variation sonatas constructed over a borrowed melodic line (see Example 1). Just as the two singers are equals in Monteverdi's *Zeffiro torna*, the violins here act as equals; the chitarrone accompanies them. Rossi's four collections were each published in three partbooks, for the violins and chitarrone; only in the last collection was the bass part figured. Since the chitarrone (or theorbo) was capable of playing chordal or melodic parts, one cannot be sure exactly how it was used in Rossi's pieces (whether or not there are figures); the texture of these pieces may be *SSB* or *SSbc*. They are labelled *a tre* in the first two collections, which would suggest that Rossi

14. Many volumes of duos and trios avoid mixing genres appropriate to distinct social contexts. Of the 112 volumes examined, nearly one-half (54) include sonatas and canzonas but exclude dances; one-fourth (28) include dances but exclude sonatas and canzonas; the rest include both (21) or neither (9). These figures take the terminology for the various genres at face value; the situation is even clearer when the variation and short binary sonatas included along with dances by Rossi and Buonamente in five volumes early in the century are distinguished from the more common canzona-style sonatas. This arrangement of pieces in separate sacred and secular collections is not so surprising when one considers the inconvenience attached to carrying volumes between home and church.

15. And very gradually, the true solo sonata (*Sbc*) began to receive more attention; Uccellini (S1649b) was responsible for one of the earliest collections devoted entirely to solo sonatas.

imagined three melodic instruments; in the last two volumes, the instruments are simply named. In either case they are apparently meant for three performers, without bass-line doubling.

Example 1. Salamone Rossi, Corrente 6, 1613k/R1623a, mm. 5-8.



Buonamente (singer, violinist, and *maestro di capella* in Assisi before mid-century) had his instrumental music published in at least seven volumes, only four of which survive. Three of these four collections (S1626d, S1629a, S1637d) are similar in content to those of Rossi, whose music Buonamente may have known in his birthplace, Mantua. The "sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente" and various other dances are presented in three part books, one each for the violins and one for the bass. In place of Rossi's chitarrone, Buonamente employed a bowed string, *basso di viola*, or (in the final volume), *basso di viola o da braccio*.¹⁶ In these three volumes there are hardly any figures, nor is there any mention of a chordal instrument. Buonamente may have come to appreciate the virtues of the string trio during his years in Vienna (1626-29 or later), where he was when the first two of these three collections were published; but surely Rossi provided the model for the sonatas, all of the variation type (see Example 2). Again the violins are an indivisible unit over a somewhat slower-moving bass; in occasional variations the bass has its opportunity for virtuosic display while the violins revert to simpler material. Like Rossi, Buonamente labelled these pieces *a tre* (S1637d), or simply named the instruments, as in *Il Quinto Libro de varie Sonate, Sinfonie, Gagliarde, Corrente, & Ariette per sonar con due Violini, & un Basso di Viola* (S1629a).

16. That is, viola da gamba or bass violin. One should note that all but the first of these secular volumes were published by Vincenti, apparently without Buonamente's knowledge, according to the preface signed by the publisher.

Example 2. Giovanni Maria Buonamente, *Sonata sopra Bella che lieghi*, 1626d, mm. 37-39 and 85-88.

Violin

Violin

Basso di Viola

This musical system contains measures 37-39. It features three staves: two Violin staves and one Basso di Viola staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). In measure 37, the first violin has a whole rest, while the second violin and viola play eighth-note patterns. In measure 38, the first violin enters with a sixteenth-note pattern, and the second violin and viola continue their patterns. In measure 39, the first violin plays a descending eighth-note line, while the second violin and viola play quarter notes.

This musical system contains measures 40-42. It features three staves: two Violin staves and one Basso di Viola staff. In measure 40, the first violin plays a half note, while the second violin and viola play eighth-note patterns. In measure 41, the first violin plays a half note, and the second violin and viola continue their patterns. In measure 42, the first violin plays a half note, and the second violin and viola play quarter notes.

85

This musical system contains measures 85-88. It features three staves: two Violin staves and one Basso di Viola staff. In measure 85, the first violin plays a half note, while the second violin and viola play eighth-note patterns. In measure 86, the first violin plays a half note, and the second violin and viola continue their patterns. In measure 87, the first violin plays a half note, and the second violin and viola play quarter notes. In measure 88, the first violin plays a half note, and the second violin and viola play quarter notes.

Giovanni Maria Bononcini's first publication (S1666c) presents further evidence of the distinct scoring practices in church sonatas and dance music. The volume contains both sonatas (*SSbc*) and dances. No particular continuo instrument is specified for the sonatas, and only one bass partbook is provided, suggesting that bass-line doubling was not expected. At the beginning of the dance portion of the print the following heading appears:

Brando Arie Corrente
a due Violini, e Violone
ò vero Spinetta
Per Camera

Surely this instrumentation is meant to contrast with that for the sonatas, for two violins and continuo, presumably organ. The dances are playable as string trios or as pieces for two violins and chordal continuo, represented here by the harpsichord.

The secular collections of Rossi and Buonamente, and these three-part dances in Bononcini's first volume present the same two performance options as do Corelli's chamber sonatas: two violins and a single melodic or chordal instrument to play the bass (*SSbc* and *SSB*). The tradition of scoring secular pieces for two trebles and melodic bass or chordal continuo, but not both, was carried on by Gandini (S1655b) and Uccellini (S1639b, S1642a, S1645f) at mid-century, and is reflected in the 1660s and 1670s in several volumes of dances for two violins and *violone o spinetta* (in Table 2 this option appears as the last of the chamber scorings, *SSB/bc*). The composers Giovanni Maria Bononcini, Giuseppe Colombi, Pietro degli Antonii, Oratio Polaroli, Francesco Prattichista, and Giovanni Battista Vitali produced between them at least eight such collections in the decade before 1675.¹⁷ One example must suffice. Giovanni Battista Vitali worked at San Petronio as a cellist before moving to Modena in 1674; his published collections of dances invariably appeared in three partbooks, for two violins and *violone o spinetta* (see Example 3). One might note in passing that the bass of Vitali's corrente is figured and has a somewhat more active contrapuntal role than was common in most earlier dances.

17. S1666a, S1666b, S1666c, S1667d, S1668e, S1670b, S1673d, S1674c.

Example 3. Giovanni Battista Vitali, Corrente 3, 1666a, mm. 1-24.

Violin

Violin

Violone o Spinetta 6

9

4 3

14

9 4

9 7

5 4 3

9 4



While most of the secular instrumental duos or trios in sources printed before 1675 conform to this same tradition, wherein three instruments play three parts (*SSB* or *SSbc*), a few early volumes require further comment. Unlike Rossi, Biagio Marini provided identical melodic bass and chordal continuo parts for secular pieces in *Affetti Musicali* (S1617c) as well as in *Opus 8* (1626m), where both bass parts are figured. Francesco Turini provided a melodic bass as well as a continuo part for two variation sonatas and a sinfonia in a collection devoted primarily to madrigals (S1621d). But Turini spent his early life in Prague and Marini's experimental bent, apparent before he had any personal experience outside Italy, was to be lifelong. They each stand somewhat apart from the more usual northern Italian practice.

In the middle of the century there is occasional evidence for bass-line doubling without the provision of an extra partbook: Uccellini indicated in one of his early volumes (S1642a) that doubling the chordal continuo with a *violone* would improve the *armonia* of certain arias. The arias in question are similar to the secular variation sonatas of Buonamente and Rossi; that is, they have especially active bass parts. The recommendation for doubling applies only to these specific arias and not to the other pieces in the volume. No separate partbook is provided, but Uccellini must have felt that such active bass parts would simply be better heard if played on a bowed string in addition to the chordal instrument. These active bass lines contrast markedly with the simpler continuo bass parts in the rest of the volume, which contains both sonatas and dances.

Marini and Turini had provided two bass partbooks; Uccellini relied on a special instruction; in neither case should one conclude that an extra bass

instrument is to read from a single part *ordinarily*. Such doubling was still exceptional in Italian instrumental music of the mid-seventeenth century. Uccellini may well have worked under Buonamente in Assisi, and borrowed from him not only the practice of writing variation sonatas (or arias, as he called them), but the idea that a bowed string was the proper carrier of such an important and sometimes quite active part, not only in sacred music, where such scoring was standard, but in this secular context as well. The harpsichord alone was evidently not sufficient for these particular pieces, but neither did Uccellini suggest a string trio.

Other examples of bass-line doubling do not form a coherent counter-tradition: in each case the volume or the composer stands apart from the consistent northern-Italian practice we have been examining. In 1669, Giovanni Antonio Pandolfi-Meali's collection of dances¹⁸ and an Antwerp reprint of Uccellini's volume of *sinfonie*¹⁹ had single bass partbooks calling for bowed string and chordal continuo. Cazzati's 1660 collection of balletto-corrente pairs has two identical bass partbooks, labelled *spinetta* and *violone ò tiorba*.²⁰ In a volume of dances (S1669c), Elzeario Pizzoni called for a bowed string in addition to the basso continuo. Unfortunately, only the continuo part (*per spinetta or tiorba*) survives, shedding little light on the reasons for bass-line doubling in these pieces. Andrea Falconiero's single extant collection of ensemble music (S1650a) includes some dances and *sinfonias* in the texture *SSbc*, in which the identical *basso* and *basso continuo* parts are both figured. That collection was published in Naples, where the lutenist-composer had returned after work and travel in northern Italy, France, and Spain: again the collection is somewhat removed in content as well as scoring from the tradition we are examining. Bononcini and Cazzati published volumes of dances (S1669a, S1673i) for one to four strings, in which all but the first violin and a bass instrument can be omitted *ad libitum*. In performances that included a bowed string playing the bass line, the chordal continuo may have been doubled or omitted: the two sources

18. Pandolfi-Mealli (S1669i) called for optional *viola* to double the organ continuo in an entire volume of dances (*SS[B]bc*), labelling the one bass partbook *organo e basso di viola*. He had worked outside of Italy (two earlier volumes of solo sonatas were published in Innsbruck), and the collection was published in Rome, so that its relation to the practice in the more numerous northern publications is not clear.

19. The collection in question is Uccellini's Opus 8; the original Italian edition is not extant. The 1669 Antwerp reprint had a single bass partbook labelled *Basso continuo e violone*; the volume contains *sinfonias* probably composed for opera and ballet productions for the Farnese court in Parma where the composer had gone to work in 1665. Either the theatrical context or the non-Italian reprint may explain this departure from the normal scoring of few-voiced instrumental music.

20. These pieces all have theatrical titles (e.g., *Ballo delle Ombre*), and Cazzati was in any case particularly fond of doubling the bass in both sacred and secular collections, perhaps for orchestral performance.

are silent on this subject, but there is only one bass partbook. Bononcini provided a continuo part in a set of dances à 5 and 6 (S1671f) in which the relation of basso and continuo is parallel to that found in a church sonata. The same is true of Rosenmüller's 1667h *Sonate da camera*, à 3 or 5 (two inner parts can be omitted from most of the pieces in the volume). These and other examples do provide some evidence for bass-line doubling in secular duos and trios, but it seems not to have been widespread and lacks the consistency of the scoring tradition we have identified in collections of secular instrumental music from Rossi and Buonamente to the composers of the 1660s and 1670s in Bologna and Modena, who included "Arcangelo il Bolognese," or Corelli.

This scoring tradition for secular instrumental music differs from that found early in the century in collections of sonatas and canzonas intended for church use, derived from the sixteenth-century polyphonic canzona. In these volumes the most common textures for few-voiced instrumental pieces were *SBbc* and *SSBbc*. Buonamente's single surviving collection of canzonas and canzona-style sonatas (S1636) and Frescobaldi's collection of canzonas (S1628j) have already been mentioned. These are the pieces in which an "extra" player is required: duos for two melodic instruments and continuo, trios for three melodic instruments and continuo. In such pieces the melodic bass plays an active contrapuntal line in dialogue with the upper part or parts. The organist plays a simpler part, from a separate partbook, which often proceeds in the manner of a *basso seguente*.

Example 4. Maurizio Cazzati, *La Bernarda*, 1648, mm. 1-10.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Violin, Violone, and Organ. The score is written in common time (C) and consists of three measures. The Violin part is in the treble clef and plays a melodic line. The Violone part is in the bass clef and plays a similar melodic line. The Organ part is in the treble clef and plays a simpler, more rhythmic line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

4

Musical score for measures 4-6. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is a treble clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The third staff is a bass clef with whole rests. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes, including fingering numbers 6 and 5.

7

Musical score for measures 7-9. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The second staff is a treble clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The third staff is a bass clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes.

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is a treble clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff is a bass clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a melody of quarter and eighth notes.

The opening of Cazzati's Canzone *La Bernarda* (S1648), for two violins and violone with continuo, illustrates this scoring (see Example 4). The organ begins by doubling the lower of the two violins; the melodic bass is silent until it enters in imitation of the two violins in measure seven; later the organ part simplifies the bass, leaving the melodic instrument alone responsible for imitating the second violin. Buonamente's Canzone à due (S1636, see Example 5) for violin and *dolzaina* or *basso da braccio* (bass violin) shows similar simplification of the melodic bass line in the continuo part. But when the melodic bass rests Buonamente provides a real, if simple, bass line in the continuo part; occasionally (m. 23) the organ even supports the *dolzaina* itself by providing an independent bass line rather than a *basso seguente*. The point to be taken from these two examples is that when a melodic bass instrument is included in the ensemble, one can expect an active contrapuntal part in the bass register, played not by the continuo instrument but by the melodic bass. The organ or other chordal continuo instrument ordinarily follows or simplifies that bass part, and may similarly follow the lower of the two violin parts when the melodic bass rests.

Example 5. Giovanni Maria Buonamente, Canzone à 2, 1636, mm. 16-25.

The musical score for Example 5 consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system covers measures 16-19, and the second system covers measures 20-25. The staves are labeled: Violin (top), Dolzaina o Basso da Braccio (middle), and Basso continuo (bottom). The time signature is 3/4. In measures 16-19, the Violin and Basso continuo have active parts, while the Dolzaina rests. In measures 20-25, the Dolzaina and Basso continuo have active parts, while the Violin rests. The Basso continuo part in measure 20 is marked with a '76'.

repertory in Italy is nearly invariable. Contrapuntally active parts in the bass register are played by melodic instruments; the organ doubles or follows those parts in the style of a *basso seguente*. In pieces without melodic bass, the continuo bass is kept simple, and does not participate in contrapuntal dialogues with the melodic instruments. Even after mid-century, the roles of continuo and melodic bass remained distinct. The basso continuo doubles or simplifies the more active melodic bass part.²¹

Example 7. D[on] Marco Uccellini, Sonata à 3, 1660a, mm. 18-22.

18 Violin

Violin

Theorbo 4 #

Basso Continuo 4 #

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

21

Allegro

Uccellini, the first composer who began to cast his canzona-style sonatas more often in *SSbc* textures than in *SBbc* or *SSBbc*, still included a few

21. For example, in Cazzati's Sonata *La Fachenetta* (S1665a) the organ and the optional theorbo or contrabass double the lowest of the other three parts, 2 violins and violone.

sonatas for one or two violins and trombone, theorbo, or violone in his Opus 7 (1660d) that preserve the distinct roles of the melodic bass and continuo instruments. At the opening of the allegro in one such sonata (see Example 7), the theorbo rests and then presents its imitation of the violin; in the next measure the continuo line is a simplification of the theorbo part. The continuo provides a real rather than a *seguite* bass when the theorbo rests, but in other respects the treatment of the two bass instruments is similar to that in earlier sonatas and canzonas. In the later solo sections for each of the violins, the theorbo rests, leaving the organ continuo to accompany each of the violins; in turn, the theorbo has its own solo section, accompanied by the continuo instrument. In the slow sections, however, the theorbo has a figured part very nearly identical to the continuo.

In works without melodic bass, the organ is still confined to a simple part, the sole function of which is to provide harmonic support, rather than to act as a contrapuntal partner. Thus, in Legrenzi's Sonata *La Mosta* (S1663b, see Example 8), the organ provides only simple harmonic support for the two violins.

Example 8. Giovanni Legrenzi, Sonata *La Mosta*, 1663b, mm. 1-8.

The musical score for Example 8, Giovanni Legrenzi's Sonata *La Mosta*, measures 1-8, is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1-3, and the second system contains measures 4-8. The score is written for three instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, and Organ. The key signature is G major (one sharp, F#) and the time signature is common time (C). In measures 1-3, Violin 1 plays a melodic line, while Violin 2 and the Organ provide harmonic support. In measures 4-8, the Violin 1 part continues with a more complex melodic line, and the Organ part provides a simplified harmonic support.



In this repertory of canzonas and canzona-style sonatas, the distinction between the various duo and trio scorings was reflected in the careful labelling of individual pieces and partbooks: the sonata *a due* is always for two melodic instruments and continuo (*SSbc*, *SBbc*), that *a tre* for three melodic instruments and continuo (*SSBbc*). The stronger the contrapuntal role of the bass line, the more likely it was to be scored for a melodic instrument. One might say that in the trio sonata for two trebles, bass, and continuo, the melodic bass rather than the continuo was regarded as the "real" (i.e., contrapuntal) bass of the sonata; to refer to the melodic bass as a concertante elaboration of the continuo distorts the composer's conception, for it is the *continuo* that simplifies the melodic bass.

By the late 1660s and 1670s, the distinct role of the melodic bass as contrapuntal partner in sacred works and of the bass or continuo as merely harmonic and rhythmic support in secular works was changing. Instead of acting as *basso seguente*, the organ more and more often plays an independent bass line when the melodic bass rests. But the melodic bass instrument still waits for its dramatic entrance in imitation of the

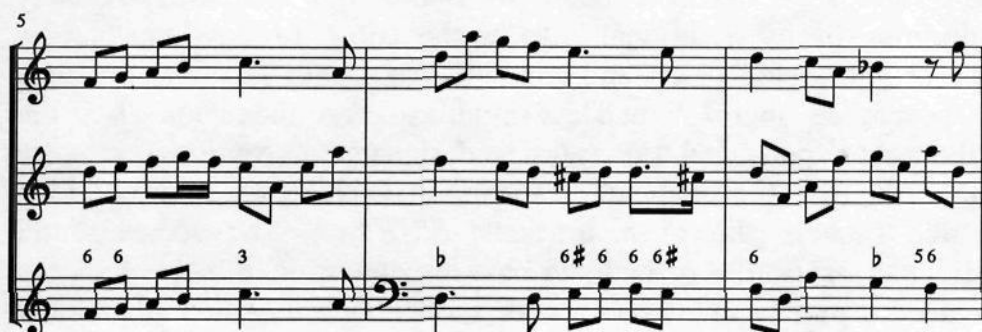
violins, and drops out occasionally to await a new imitative possibility, conforming to its traditional role in the trio. In slow movements, however, the melodic bass and continuo are usually identical. Even in fast movements, there is much less simplification of the melodic bass line in the organ part, and the cello is designated as optional in many volumes.²² (See the final church scoring in Table 2, where the optional melodic bass is shown in brackets, *SS[B]bc.*) Nevertheless, the traditional association of melodic bass instrument with active bass line remained a part of many composers' thoughts even as they abandoned scoring for the actual instrument. Thus Colombi, scoring for two violins and organ continuo, went so far as to compose his continuo part *as if* there were a melodic bass instrument behaving in the traditional way (see Example 9); that is, the organ at the outset doubles the lower of the violins, dropping to the bass register only for the "correct" imitation of the violin statements by the phantom cello in measure six.

Example 9. Giuseppe Colombi, Sonata 4, 1673a, mm. 1-9.²³

The musical score for Example 9 shows three staves: Violin (top), Violin (middle), and Organ (bottom). The Violin parts are in treble clef, and the Organ part is in treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is common time (C). The Organ part includes figured bass notation: 6# 5 6 6# 6.

22. For example, in a volume of sonatas by Mazzaferrata (S1674d). *Ad libitum* procedures in the duo and trio repertory are discussed at length in Chapter 6 of my "Instrumental Duos and Trios in Printed Italian Sources, 1600-1675," Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1989; see especially Table 6.6 which lists the volumes with *ad libitum* melodic bass parts.

23. While this article was in press, and long after I had puzzled over Columbi's compositional process in Op. 2 (see Example 9), I was able to study a set of manuscript parts for this collection (I Moe MUS F 289). In fact, the cello that I described as a phantom is actually present in these manuscript parts, which include both a figured organ part and an unfigured melodic bass part for Sonata 4. These originally separate folios are now bound into one bass partbook, containing melodic bass parts for five of the nine duos in Op. 2. The existence of such melodic bass parts suggests that publishers may have expected a homogenizing force with respect to the presentation (and the performance) of bass lines in this repertory.



A sonata by Viviani for two violins, cello, and organ continuo (see Example 10, *La Vendramina*, S1673b) illustrates the typical use of instruments in the church sonata of the 1670s.²⁴ The organ supports the two violins and the violin solo sections with real, if simple, bass parts; the cello usually imitates the violins in the traditional way (although the entry we might expect in measure seven is lacking); cello and organ often play substantially the same part. Yet the cello has not become merely a member of the continuo team, or a concertante elaboration of the continuo part; like the violins it has its own solo section accompanied by organ, and throughout the sonata it engages in short points of imitation with violins; some of these imitations are eliminated in the organ part. The tradition remains clear, even if the two bass parts — melodic and continuo — are more similar in this sonata than in those of Castello from the 1620s or even Uccellini from the 1640s.

24. Note that in Venetian prints associated with Venetian composers, the term *viola* ordinarily implies cello (see Bonta, "Terminology").

Example 10. Giovanni Buonaventura Viviani, Sonata *La Vendramina*, 1673b, mm. 1-12.

[illegible]

4

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is written in the top two staves, with the right hand playing a more complex line and the left hand providing a simpler accompaniment. The bass clef staves show a simple harmonic accompaniment. The score is divided into two measures by a vertical line. The first measure contains the first half of the melody, and the second measure contains the second half. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune. The lyrics 'The Rose Tree' are written below the first staff, and 'The Rose Tree' is written below the second staff. The score is for a piano or keyboard instrument.

6

Musical score for 'The Rose Tree' in G major (one sharp). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of four measures. The first two staves are for the vocal melody, and the third staff is for the bass line. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune. The bass line provides a simple accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The time signature is 3/4. The score is written in a clear, legible font.

Thus the eighteenth-century practice of doubling the bass line was by no means standard in seventeenth-century sonatas and dances. In the canzona-style sonatas intended primarily for the church, the use of a melodic bass is reflected in the title of the volume and piece, as well as in the nature of the part itself. In the secular realm one instrument was ordinarily regarded as sufficient for the bass from the earliest printed trios of Rossi to Corelli. Most secular *violone o spinetta* bass parts from the 1660s and later are figured, but one must admit that these works may often have been played as string trios (or duos when optional second violin parts are omitted), without chordal realization of the bass.

Cazzati stands somewhat apart from this fairly coherent tradition; he apparently regarded one active melodic line, often played by two instruments from separate, but identical, partbooks, as sufficient in sacred and secular collections from 1656 through 1669. His balletto-corrente pairs from 1660 have already been mentioned. In a 1656 volume of sonatas, Cazzati had already made the violone or tiorba, and basso continuo parts identical (S1656c);²⁵ he continued to equate melodic and chordal bass parts in later collections of sonatas (1665a) and

25. In the only reprint for which all parts survive (1679c).

dances (S1669a). At a time when most other composers were still distinguishing between the harmonic and melodic functions of the bass line in their scoring practices, and doubling was not yet a normal procedure, Cazzati's style was idiosyncratic: he regarded one line as sufficient, yet he made sure that such a bass line would be doubled (that is, played by both melodic and chordal instruments) in both sacred and secular contexts. He provided identical parts for theorbo and organ, apparently because he liked the thicker sonority provided by a doubled bass line and simultaneous chordal realizations. In some cases orchestral performance may have made such doubling appropriate; Cazzati was *maestro di cappella* at San Petronio from 1657 to 1671, and many of his sonatas (for example *La Fachenetta*) are relatively homophonic, suited to the large resonant space of San Petronio. His is a "modern" treatment of *basso* and *basso continuo*, in which one figured melodic line is a full participant in the ensemble's thematic activity and yet is able (without losing its linear force) to support harmonic progressions.

Cazzati may represent the vanguard. By the mid-1660s the composer's view of the *basso* and the *basso continuo* parts was changing; whereas earlier sonata composers had regarded melodic and harmonic functions of the bass part as the property of melodic and chordal instruments respectively, many now thought that one and only one line, and often one instrument, could play both those roles. Earlier nomenclature was retained, as were some stylistic elements, and most of the duo and trio repertory from the 1600s is still separable into sacred and secular streams as a function of the number of bass partbooks. At least as an initial approximation, there is no reason not to regard pre-1675 trio collections (or individual pieces) in three partbooks with only one bass for melodic or chordal instrument (*SSB/bc*) as intended primarily for secular contexts, and to regard those in four partbooks with two basses, melodic and chordal (*SSBbc*), as intended for sacred use; one has to look at the content of volumes of treble duos with continuo (*SSbc*) to determine their function — perhaps it is not surprising then that *SSbc*, with bass-line doubling, became the standard "concert" trio sonata of the next century — without binding ties to church or chamber.²⁶

As the functions of contrapuntal play and harmonic support merged in a single bass line, the melodic bass could be made identical to the organ part, or eliminated entirely, even in the context of active bass lines, since

26. Of course some prints early in the seventeenth century attempted to appeal to both markets. Merula entitled his third volume (S1637a) *Canzoni overo sonate concertate per chiesa e camera*, but whether that designation applies to the entire volume or to individual pieces remains unclear.

the organ alone could carry both harmonic and thematic weight. Once the organ part had achieved this stature, the inclusion of a melodic bass became less critical, and the eighteenth-century practice of *ad libitum* bass-line doubling could develop. The merging of harmonic and melodic functions also reduced to one what had been two distinct accompanying practices — that of the organist providing a *segunte* accompaniment for an ensemble including melodic bass, and that of the instrumentalist providing a simple independent bass part (which might be chordal) to support the performer of solo or duo madrigals or of Rossi's *sinfonias*. These two scoring practices began to merge in the 1660s and 1670s just as the church and chamber sonatas themselves were becoming more closely related: dances and instrumental arias appeared in sectional sonatas derived from the polyphonic *canzona* tradition; dances were combined with the church-style *grave* and *canzone* sections in the Italian *sonata da camera*.

The description of trios and quartets offered by Quantz sheds further light on the terminology for few-voiced instrumental music and on the character of the bass line. In the final chapter of the flute method, he offers the following comments:

A quartet, or a sonata with three concertante instruments and a bass, is the true touchstone of a genuine contrapuntist . . . A good quartet requires . . . [that] each part, after it has rested, must re-enter not as a middle part, but as a principal part, with a pleasing melody; but this applies only to the three concertante parts, not to the bass; if a fugue appears, it must be carried out in all of the four parts in a masterful yet tasteful fashion, in accordance with all the rules.²⁷

In a trio . . . both of the principal parts must be written in such a way that a natural and harmonious bass part can be placed beneath them. Should a fugue be introduced, it must be carried out, as in a quartet, both correctly and tastefully in all the parts, in accordance with the rules of composition . . . Finally the trio must be so created

27. "Ein Quatuor, oder eine Sonate mit drei concertirenden Instrumenten, und einer Grundstimme, ist eigentlich der Probiestein eines ächten Contrapunctisten; . . . Zu einem guten Quatuor gehört: . . . (8) Eine jede Stimme muss, wenn sie pausiret hat, nicht als eine Mittelstimme, sondern als eine Hauptstimme, mit einem gefälligen Gesange wieder eintreten: doch ist dieses nicht von der Grundstimme, sondern nur von den dreien concertirenden Oberstimmen zu verstehen. (9) Wenn eine Fuge vorkommt; so muss dieselbe, mit allen vier Stimmen, nach allen Regeln, meisterhaft, doch aber dabei schmackhaft ausgeführt sein." J. J. Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), chapter 18, paragraph 44. The translation is that of Edward R. Reilly, *On Playing the Flute* (New York: Schirmer and Sons, 1966).

that it is almost impossible to divine which of the two parts is the foremost.²⁸

For Quantz, the quartet consists of three concertante parts and bass; the trio, of two concertante parts and bass. Thus what Frescobaldi or Corelli would have called a duo (SS + a bass part unlikely to participate in concertante dialogues), Quantz called a trio; what the earlier composers called a trio, Quantz labelled a quartet. But the bass part was sometimes expected to participate actively, for example in fugal passages: in that case Frescobaldi and Corelli would have scored explicitly for melodic and chordal instruments on the bass line, and termed the works trios and quartets, respectively. Quantz included the bass part in his enumeration and allowed it a varying role (usually subsidiary to the principal parts, but participating equally during some contrapuntal sections). He seems to have worried less than did Corelli and Frescobaldi about the actual instrumentation of the part (*B*, *bc*, or both). Were the bass part to be played by one instrumentalist, Quantz's terminology would conform to the number of players in the ensemble; if played by two, an "extra" player would be required in every case. But the character of the bass part itself was no longer a determinant of the scoring. With conventional bass-line doubling, the trio sonata for four had already become the norm from Quantz and for Emanuel Bach.

It seems that mathematics must have gone awry only after Corelli, as three began sometimes to equal four. In 1703 Sebastien Brossard still treated the melodic bass and continuo as separable elements of the Italian sonata.

One finds there 1 - 8 parts, but usually [sonatas] are for one or two violins with basso continuo for the harpsichord, and often with a more active bass for the viola da gamba, the bassoon, etc.²⁹

According to Brossard, the melodic bass is often but not always present, and its part is more active than that of the single continuo instrument. Referring the reader to the sonatas of Corelli for examples, Brossard

28. "Es muss also in einem Trio . . . (6) Beide Hauptstimmen müssen so gesetzt sein, dass eine natürlich und wohlklingende angebracht wird, muss selbige, eben wie beim Quatuor, nicht nur nach den Regeln der Setzkunst richtig, sondern auch schmackhaft, in allen Stimmen ausgeführt werden . . . Das Trio muss endlich (9) so beschaffen sein, dass man kaum errathen könne, welche Stimme von beiden die erste sei." Quantz, *ibid.*, paragraph 45; translation by Reilly, *ibid.*, 317.

29. "On en trouve à 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. et 8 Parties, mais ordinairement elles sont à Violin seul ou à deux Violons différens avec une Basse-Continuë pour le Clavessin, et souvent une Basse plus figurée pour la Viole de Gambe, le Fagot, etc." Sebastien Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: 1703).

provides us with a description much more apt for the seventeenth-century Italian repertory than do the writings of Emanuel Bach, Quantz, or of modern scholars who have relied primarily on eighteenth-century models.³⁰ Emanuel Bach's version of Corelli (in which no piece can be well-performed without a keyboard accompaniment), or Corelli according to a Roger edition in early eighteenth-century Amsterdam (where two bass partbooks were provided even in the chamber sonatas),³¹ could well have involved trios for four performers. But that practice was not yet customary in the Bologna that Corelli knew in the 1670s.

30. Jensen, *Solo Sonata*, 73-139, provides an excellent summary of the writings of Riemann, Schering, Wasielewski, and more recent scholars.

31. SONATE DA CAMERA à Tre Due Violini e Violone Col Basso per l'Organo (Amsterdam, c. 1706). Hans Joachim Marx, in *Arcangelo Corelli: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der musikalischen Werke* (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1980), 106-119, lists known early editions of Corelli's Opus 2 in the *Supplementband*. The Dutch publishers were apparently the first to adopt the four-partbook format for editions of Corelli's Opus 2 (an earlier Roger edition from 1697 still had only three partbooks); English publishers such as Benjamin Cooke, John Young, and Richard Mearse followed suit in their editions from the 1720s. Parisian publishers stayed somewhat longer with the three-partbook format, but by mid-century most editions were in four partbooks, a sure indication that bass-line doubling had become the norm.