

Introduction

During his lifetime, Ignazio Albertini (ca. 1644–1685) was a highly regarded musician; among those who held him in esteem were the then famous violin virtuosi Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer. There are two reasons why he is hardly known to musicians today: 1) almost no information concerning his life has come down to us; 2) of his works only a single collection of sonatas, the *Sonatinæ XII*, has been preserved.¹ At the time of his early death – he was killed in a knife fight at the age of only forty-one – Albertini was chamber musician to the empress dowager Eleonora Gonzaga II, the third wife of Emperor Ferdinand III, in Vienna. As a letter from the art aficionado Prince-Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn to Schmelzer shows, Albertini was also active in Olomouc in 1671. In the letter, Castelcorn assured Schmelzer that he (Schmelzer) had no reason to apologize for Albertini’s inappropriate behavior, since he, Castelcorn, too, “had held the said Ignazio, on the basis of his outward appearance, for a fine human being.”²

The *Sonatinæ XII* were intended by Albertini to be dedicated to Emperor Leopold I. Through this, Albertini possibly hoped to receive a position in the emperor’s court chapel. To be sure, he was able to present the emperor with an exemplar,³ but an appointment did not come about due to Albertini’s unexpected death. Consequently, a first edition of the sonatas, of which no copies are extant today, appeared already shortly before his death in 1685.⁴ The only surviving exemplar of the second printing is found in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris with the altered title page and the date 1692. This exemplar is the basis of the present edition. In addition, there is a manuscript (XIV 726) in the music archive of the Minoritenkonvent in Vienna, which contains 102 sonatas by various composers, including copies of sonatas by Schmelzer, Bertali, and others that are only preserved in manuscript, as well as of four complete published works of the late seventeenth century by Biber, J. J. Walther, and Ignazio Albertini. This manuscript, which is not dated, but undoubtedly written shortly before or around 1700, is largely identical with the printed exemplar, and deviates only occasionally in the beaming. Since it is only a copy, we have relied on the printed, if later Parisian model for our edition.

Our edition follows the original musical text as exactly as possible. We have amended missing bar lines by means of dashed lines. In the original, an accidental is valid only for the note it precedes; in our edition, however, we follow today’s rules for accidentals, i.e., an accidental remains valid for the whole measure. Cautionary accidentals have occasionally been added. Editorial accidentals that deviate from the model are placed in brackets. Altered notes are annotated in footnotes; amended ties are given as dashed lines. The beaming within groups of notes corresponds to the source, even if this results in unusually long groups in terms of modern practice. Tempo markings, which are sometimes only given in abbreviated form in the source, have been amended (for example, in Sonata IV, at m. 20, an *A* appears in the model, which has been expanded to *Allegro* in our edition). The use of dynamic markings is not consistent in the source, and at times also not to be unequivocally assigned to specific notes. We have standardized the spelling of *p* and *f* as *piano* and *forte*, respectively.

Our edition is in four volumes:

Order number		Order number	
G195	Sonata I-III	G197	Sonata VII-IX
G196	Sonata IV-VI	G198	Sonata X-XII

¹ Other works by him were known earlier, but are now lost.

² Paul Nettel, “Die Wiener Tanzkompositionen in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts,” *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 8 (1921): 169ff.

³ In 1686, a year after Albertini’s death, his siblings asked the emperor for financial assistance to pay off the debts to the engraver, which Leopold I then granted in 1687. Nevertheless, the collection was not published until 1692 in Frankfurt by the Viennese engraver and publisher Philipp Fievet. See Herwig Knaus, *Die Musiker im Archivbestand des kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisteramtes (1637–1705)* 2, *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Kommission für Musikforschung* 8 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1968), 123.

⁴ Up to the end of the Second World War, an exemplar with the title *XII Sonate a Vioino solo col Basso cifrato* was in the possession of the Prussian State Library Berlin, which in contrast to the Parisian exemplar was not dated and had a slightly different title. See Robert Eitner, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon der Musiker und Musikgelehrten* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900), s.v. “Albertini, Ignazio,” and Friedrich W. Riedel, “Zur deutschen Violinsonate mit Generalbass um 1680,” in *Jakob Stainer und seine Zeit*, ed. Walter Salmen (Innsbruck: Helbling, 1984), 123.

Albertini's *XII Sonatinæ* are in the tradition and characteristic tonal language of the South-German–Austrian violin virtuosi (Pandolfi Mealli, Schmelzer, Biber), but distinguish themselves with rather daring harmonic turns. Sonatas IX (variations on an ostinato theme) and XII (chordal playing in the violin throughout) stand out as a result of their form. The compositions are not merely small sonatas, but extensive, multi-movement works. The structure, partly made up of short sections with numerous changes of meter, is typical of the solo music of the late seventeenth century.

With this edition, Albertini's 12 Sonatas are now accessible to a wider public again after three hundred years, and will hopefully soon assume their rightful place in the repertoire of virtuoso violin music.

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Beginn der Sonata I im Druck von 1692
Beginning of Sonata I in the print of 1692