INTRODUCTION

The Composer
Bartolomeo Bernardi was born in Bologna around 1660, and by 1692 was a member of that city's Accademia Filarmonica.[1] In 1703 he moved away from Italy for the first time, and worked as a court composer and violinist in Denmark. He returned to Italy in 1705, but in 1710 became music director of the Danish court. He returned to Copenhagen and stayed until he died, in 1732. Much of his compositional output is vocal music, but most of these pieces were destroyed when Copenhagen burned in 1794. His surviving works are mainly instrumental music, including the opp. 1 and 2 collections excerpted here.

Bernardi's Instrumental Style
Bernardi's instrumental music may remind listeners of his more-famous Bologna contemporary, Arcangelo Corelli, but Bernardi's harmonic language, with its sudden shifts from major to minor, and his fondness for picardy thirds at internal cadences, harkens back to the early seventeenth century style in northern Italy. The integration of old-fashioned elements show Bernardi to be a conservative composer, but his substantial skill is evident in the convincing fusion of old and new, and in the strong structure, clever counterpoint, and beautiful harmony of these pieces.

Sonata Nona, from Sonate da camera a trè, due violini… Opera Prima. (1692)
The *Sonata Nona*, from Bernardi's Op. 1, consists of a *grave* prelude, an *allegro* allemanda (with a *grave* coda), and a *presto* giga. In the prelude and allemanda, the violoncello and cimbalo parts are identical, except for occasional differences of an octave (the cimbalo taking the lower octave), but in the giga, the violoncello has runs of eighth notes, participating in a three-part canon with the two violins, with the cimbalo plays a true bass line in dotted quarters.

Sonata X, from Sonate per camera a violino è violoncello di vari autori (1695)
This collection of violin and violoncello duets by various composers is engraved in a truly astounding set of two partbooks by Carlo Buffagnotti, a painter and engraver active in Bologna in the 1690s. Each page of the partbooks features a piece of music included in a larger scene, and the music is often presented in three-dimensional perspective. A look at the original is highly recommended, and scans are available to view online at the website of the Library of Congress.[2]

Sonata Setima, from Sonata a tre. Opera Seconda (1696)
Bernardi's *Sonata setima*, from Op. 2, intersperses short *largo* movements between extended *allegro* sections, almost like a late-century take on the *affetti* and *passaggi* of earlier 17th-century music.

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1. Michael Talbot, in *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Bernardi, Bartolomeo," published 2001. https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.02852

2. Carlo Antonio Buffagnotti, *Sonate per camera a violino è violoncello* (Bologna: 1695), RISM B/I 1695-16, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014572361/