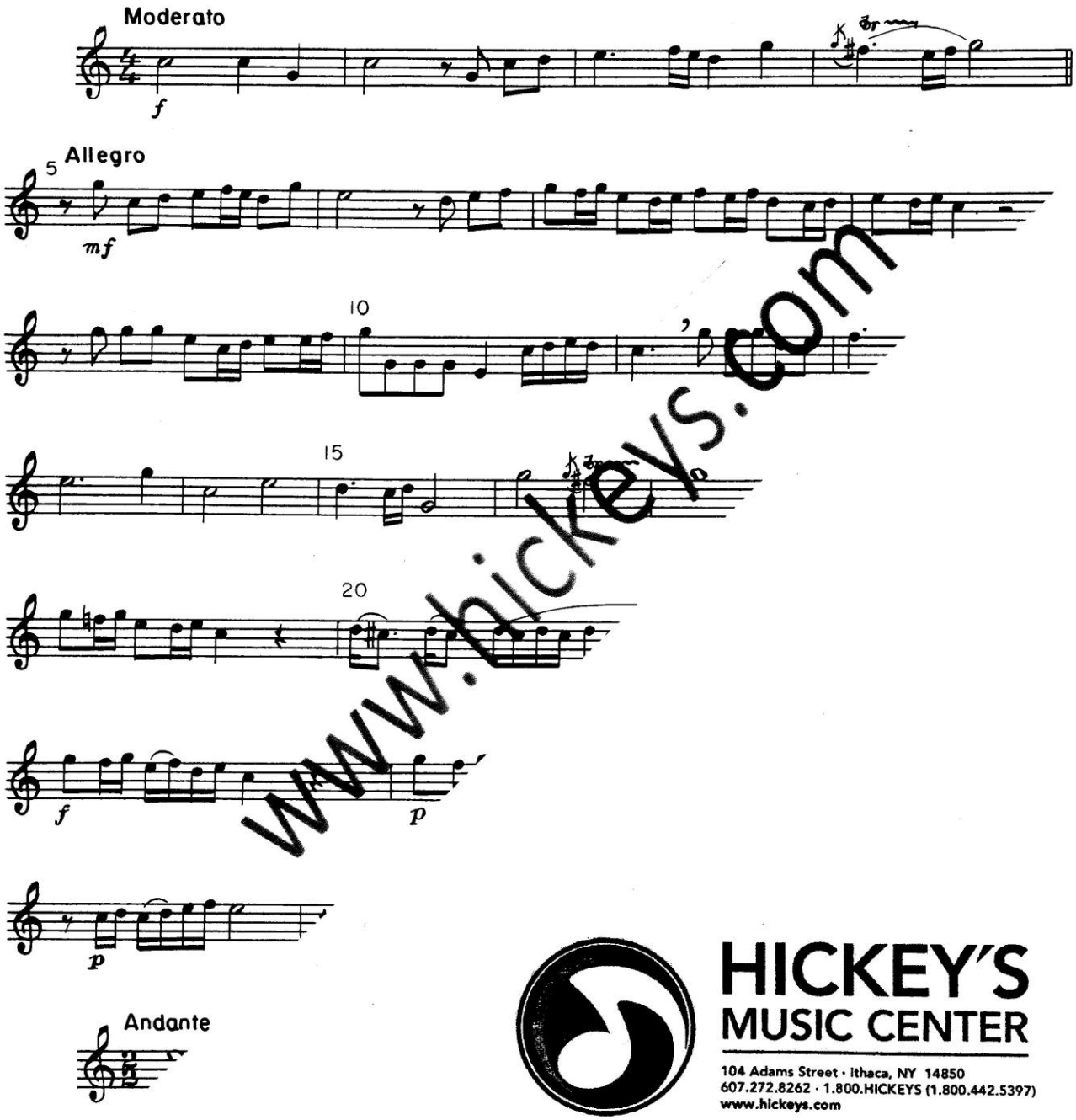
THREE SONATAS for TRUMPET

from *Modo per Imparare a Sonare di Tromba,* Frankfurt, 1638

B♭ Trumpet

Girolamo Fantini
keyboard realization by Carl A. Rosenthal

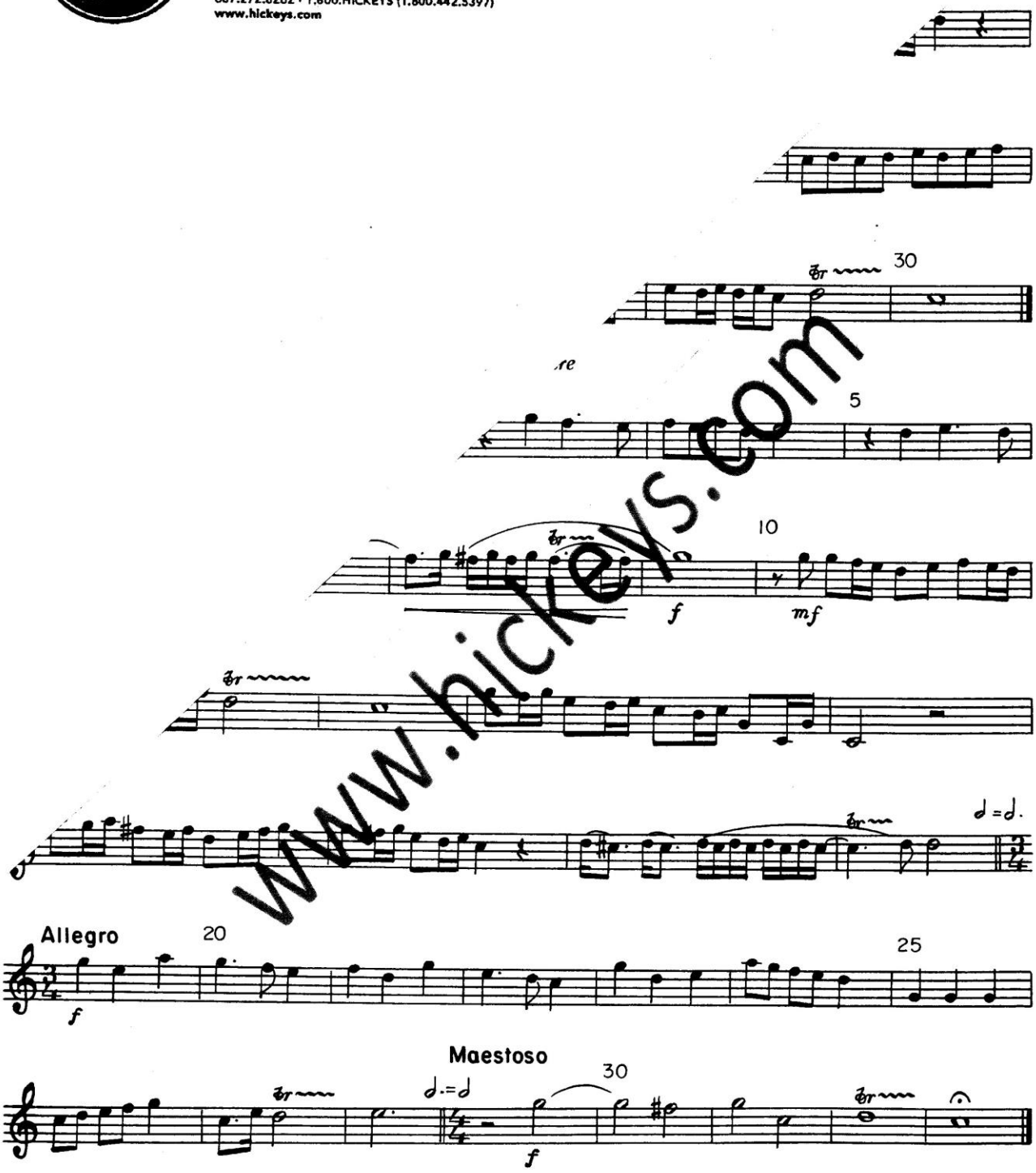
I. Colloreto



www.hickeys.com

HICKEY'S
MUSIC CENTER
104 Adams Street · Ithaca, NY 14850
607.272.8262 · 1.800.HICKEYS (1.800.442.5397)
www.hickeys.com

HICKEY'S
MUSIC CENTER
104 Adams Street · Ithaca, NY 14850
607.272.8262 · 1.800.HICKEYS (1.800.442.5397)
www.hickeys.com



www.hickeys.com

In 1638, Girolamo Fantini published in Frankfort a trumpet method, *Modo per Imparare a sonare DI TROMBA TANTO DI GUERRA Quanto Musicalmente in Organo, con Tromba Sordina, col Cimbalo, e ogn'altro istrumento* ("Method for learning to play the trumpet, in a warlike way as well as musically, with the organ, with a mute, with the harpsichord, and every other instrument"). From the fine engraved portrait of Fantini, whose age is given in the portrait frame as 36, we deduce that he was born around the year 1600 and in Spoleto, as the inscription in the frame further states.[1] Fantini was not a composer by profession, but rather a trumpeter, having served from 1630 onwards as "*trombetta maggiore*" (chief court trumpeter) to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando II. He must have been highly gifted as a performer, for laudatory poems included at the beginning and end of his method are lavish in their praise. In addition, we know that he once performed in Rome with the celebrated organist Frescobaldi; we will return to this historic performance below.[2]

Fantini's method contains a short but important preface, tonguing exercises, battle signals, "*ricercate*" for trumpet solo, a number of dance movements for trumpet and basso continuo (presumably harpsichord) including one-movement "*Sonate*", seven duets for two trumpets, and at the end, preceding two final exercises in tonguing and "*passaggi*", eight sonatas for trumpet with organ accompaniment ("*di Tromba, et Organo insieme*"). It is these eight sonatas which are reproduced in the following edition. All bear titles doubtless referring to important families, and all are in C major, the key of the Italian natural trumpet of Fantini's time.

The only other original compositions of the Italian Baroque for trumpet and organ known to the editor are the two sonatas printed in 1678 by Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani, published by Musica Rara as MR 1182.

* * *

Fantini's eight sonatas are all quite short, ranging from 30 to 73 measures in length. As far as their form is concerned, a tripartite structure is the rule. The three parts, moreover, are often subdivided into still shorter sections—a heritage of the canzona, from which the sonata itself evolved. The first of the three sections, for example, is usually broken down into a slow introduction and a faster-moving section in which the "classical" canzona rhythm of long-short-short, together with the fast tempo we associate with the canzona, can often be found. (The best example is given by Sonata No. 8, bars 1–10, 11–35.) The middle section of the tripartite pieces is invariably a passage in triple meter beginning with but one exception in the organ, with a motif which the trumpet imitates a few measures later. (See Sonatas No. 3, 4, 5, and 8, bars 18, 33, 19, and 36 respectively.) The final section is generally a short conclusion in the character of an Adagio, often with a majestic cadential flourish in the trumpet (Sonatas No. 3, bars 42–45, and 4, 54–63).

His melodic writing, dependent of course on the valveless solo instrument for which he was writing and the tones of the harmonic series which it could produce, is diatonic, never chromatic. Some of the lively motifs in eighths and sixteenths (such as in Sonata No. 1, bars 6–9) will be used to good advantage in the second half of the 17th century by the composers of the Bologna school.

Two elements of Fantini's melody are worth particular mention: certain recurring melodic formulae, and the use of notes in the trumpet part foreign to the harmonic series.

A particular melodic formula calls attention to itself, since it occurs time and time again in the course of the eight sonatas in virtually identical form. With only the slightest of modifications, this cadential formula starts with a twice-repeated Lombard rhythm, progresses through eight sixteenth-notes, ending with a trill and its resolution. It is most commonly to be found leading into g'' (Sonata No. 2, bars 9–11; No. 4, 10–12; No. 7, 27–29). It is also used on other pitches: c''–d'' (No. 1, 21–22), even $c\sharp''$–d'' (No. 5, 17–18), d''–e'' (No. 4, 14–16), and g''–a''' (No. 4, 60–61). When we add to this phenomenon the fact that Fantini sometimes transplants snatches of melody from one sonata to another (particularly Sonata No. 2, bars 12–17, *vs.* Sonata No. 4, 33–39), the result is a curious patchwork effect constituting a definite weakness in his compositional technique.

[1] Research conducted in the Archivio di Stato, Spoleto, by the musicologist Lorenzo Bianconi has unfortunately been unable to reveal particulars of Fantini's birth.

[2] The biographical information and much of the following analytical material was brought forth by the editor in his article "Original Italian Baroque Compositions for Trumpet and Organ", in *The Diapason* (April 1970), 27–29. We wish to thank the editors of this journal for permission to reproduce the material in question.