

ROSETTI Concertos for Oboe and Orchestra: in C; In D; In F. • Lajos Lencsés, oboe; Bohdan Warchal, conductor; Slovak Chamber Orchestra. • cpo 999062-2 [DDD]; 57:10. Recording supervisor: František Poul. (Distributed by Koch International.)

I'll bet you thought that [Francesco] Antonio Rosetti (1746-1792) was an Italian composer. So did I, before I read the excellent notes accompanying the present disc, which informed me that Rosetti was actually Franz Anton Rössler, a native of Bohemia. We know most Bohemian composers from that era by their German names, and why Rössler should be any different is not explained (but wouldn't his name at birth have been František?). The notes also say that Rössler/ Rosetti was born in 1750 (1746 is given on the cover). Checking the usual sources, I found c 1750 in both *Norton/Grove* and *The Oxford Dictionary*, but an unequivocal 1746 in *Thompson's* {*Thompson's* even specifies a birth day as well as year.) At any rate, Rössler began his studies as a candidate for the priesthood but was diverted to a musical career during his late teens, adopting his Italian moniker around that time. In 1773, playing the double bass, he joined the Wallenstein orchestra, whose most distinguished members, before their move to Paris, were the Reichas, Josef and Antonin. The Wallenstein orchestra had ties to the famous Mannheim ensemble of the Stamitzes and F. X. Richter, also Bohemian expatriates, Rosetti's proficiency in conducting and composition was quickly recognized, and he was eventually named *Kappellmeister* in 1785. Prior to that appointment he had enjoyed a great success during a visit to Paris, where his compositions met with great favor with both public and his fellow professionals. Rosetti composed in many genres, writing thirty-odd symphonies, and as many as fifty concertos, as well as numerous choral, chamber, and solo piano works.

In 1789 he left Wallenstein for a more remunerative position in Mecklenburg, and in 1792 he was afforded the singular honor of a commission from the city of Prague for a Requiem to honor the memory of Mozart. Shortly after conducting his Requiem in the Czech capital he met his own premature death. He was either forty-two or forty-six, depending on which source you chose to accept. The cause of death is not given in any of my references; the Requiem, alas, has been lost. The Mozarts visited Wallenstein in 1777, and Rosetti undoubtedly met young Wolfgang then, but his primary musical influence came from Haydn. Six oboe concertos are now known to exist, the F-Major Concerto having been rediscovered as late as 1982. The concertos on this disc share the customary three-movement structure: a dramatic Allegro, a melodious slow movement, and a spirited rondo. Only the second is dated (1778), but presented here in presumed chronological

order, they reveal a talented musician finding increasingly complex and sophisticated solutions to the same principles of thematic contrast and development that occupied Haydn throughout his career. Here is further evidence that Haydn and Mozart did not exist in a vacuum. These concertos, especially the one in F Major, should be welcome additions to any oboist's repertoire, and as played here by the distinguished Hungarian oboist, Lajos Lencsés, they should be a welcome addition to any collection. Warchal and the Slovak Chamber Orchestra, who have championed the cause of Czech pre-Classicalists in other fine recordings, provide sympathetic support. This is the first disc that I've heard from cpo, which apparently stands for "classic produktion Osnabrück." It sounds just fine, and it can be warmly recommended.

George Chien

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ROSETTI *Partitas*: in F, MV B18; in E \flat , MV B13; in D, MV B2; in D, MV B21 • Amphion Wind Ens • PAN 10194 (64:53)

Apart from Thuringia and Saxony, which gave the Bachs to the rest of the world, few small territories have exported as many musicians to the German-speaking world (and beyond) as Bohemia. Among composers such as Biber, Zelenka, Dussek, and Heinrich, we may place Francesco Antonio Rosetti (1750–92), aka Franz Anton Rössler.

An early interest in becoming a priest was followed by an even shorter career in the Russian army. By 1773, Rosetti had left his homeland and sought his fortune elsewhere in the empire, in his case, in Bavaria and, eventually, Berlin, initially as a professional contrabassist. He wrote over 40 symphonies, a number of cantatas, and at least 20 pieces of *Harmoniemusik* for extended woodwind octet. We all know one of Mozart's ventures into this territory, his serenade in B \flat , the Gran partita (K 361), but we often forget that this was a popular instrumental combination at the end of the 18th century. No duke worth his salt would want to be without one. The standard *Harmonie* consisted of two each of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, but these were often supplemented by extra instruments, mostly basset horns and a double bass, and sometimes by extra horns and bassoons.

Though it never had a hard and fast form or a specific number of movements, by the late-18th century the partita had come to mean little more than a collection of short pieces. Even its connections to dance, which we can still hear in Bach's violin partitas, disappeared, except for the minuet, which was beginning to find its

way into the new-style symphony. Rosetti uses four movements; a quick opening (sometimes preceded by a brief slow introduction) is followed by a slower movement. The third movement is usually a menuet, and the last something fast to round things off in high spirits. Clearly, we have here the general shape of a symphony, though he is not much concerned with the sonata form that seems to drive the first movements of many early symphonies.

What catches the ear here are two things, the first of which is the originality of the music. Much of this originality lies in the ways in which he combines the various instruments. Though the program is loosely organized around the theme of the hunt (the first partita ends with a bang), it is not obsessed by puling horns and other conventions of hunting music. Though two of the menuets are described as "fresco," this is not program music in the usual sense of the word. It is, however, cheerful and not for those for whom each piece of music must have "meaning," preferably dour and solemn.

The second thing to delight the ear is the fresh playing. The Amphion Wind Ensemble clearly enjoys this music. What especially attracted me was the clarity of line with which they play, and they have an enviable sense of internal balance though not having a conductor. This is supported by a transparent recording. Five of Rosetti's partitas, though not these, are played by the Consortium Classicum on a cpo recording available through Amazon. The sound clips on that site suggest a dryer recording and a somewhat more dutiful performance. The numbering of the pieces is taken from Stephen E. Murray's 1996 critical thematic catalog of Rosetti's works. **Alan Swanson**

This article originally appeared in Issue 31:2 (Nov/Dec 2007) of *Fanfare* Magazine.

Rosetti String Quartets - Op. 6 w/ Ariosos Quartett - no reviews found, but 5* by the Amazon Reviewers

NOTE - Apex offering is 2-CDs - below Fanfare Review of first disc (second deserves same!)

ROSETTI Sinfonias: in G Minor, KI:27, MA41; in Eb, KI:23, MA28; in Bb, KI:25, MA49; in Eb, KI:32, MA27. • Concerto Köln. • TELDEC 4509-98420-2 [DDD]; 67:52. Produced by Uwe Walter.

This is a revelatory disc. Antonio Rosetti aka Franz Anton Rosier aka František Antonín Rosety was born in Litmerice, Bohemia, around 1750. His early career seems to be surrounded by scholarly disagreement, for the booklet notes by Sterling E. Murray (the M of the catalog numbers listed above) claim that Rosetti

left his homeland in 1773, by the end of that year finding employment as a double bass player at the small but highly cultivated court of the Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein. There he rose swiftly through the ranks, becoming Kapellmeister in 1786, a position he held until moving to take up a similar post at the Mecklenburg-Schwerin court in Ludwigslust three years later. Sadly, Rosetti had little time to enjoy his new job, for he died in Ludwigslust at the early age of forty-two in June 1792. Thus the gospel according to Murray. But if one turns to H. C. Robbins Landon's monumental *Haydn Chronicle and Works* we find Rosetti listed as a *violinist* in the Esterháza orchestra from 1776 until 1781, when he was dismissed by Prince Nicolaus for what amounted to insubordination, only then taking a post at Wallerstein. Thereafter Murray and Robbins Landon are in accord about his subsequent career. Since it seems unlikely that more than one Rosetti is involved, the discrepancy is a mystery. Perhaps someone out there can solve it?

Whatever the truth, there is no doubting that the Wallerstein orchestra was one of the finest in Europe, among their admirers being no less than Haydn, who is reputed to have said that no other orchestra played his symphonies with such precision. Rosetti's autograph scores testify that this was not only due to the outstanding players the band boasted (it was particularly strong in Bohemian wind players), but the meticulous way in which he prepared his performances, his markings being unusually detailed for this period. Of some thirty-odd symphonies, the majority were composed for the Wallerstein orchestra during the 1780s, including three of those included on this disc, the odd man out being his last symphony, Kaul 1:32 M A27, which dates from the last year of the composer's life. All are four-movement works in the mature Classical style, their relative brevity being accounted for not by any inability to develop themes, but the extreme economy with which Rosetti handles his concise motifs—there is not a note wasted anywhere. Each has an opening sonata form allegro movement with short but highly charged development sections, and recapitulations which invariably introduce further variation. Contrapuntal interest is at a high level, as are the dynamic contrasts, one of the composer's favorite tricks being a carefully graded *perdendosi* effect, the music just trailing away into thin air, as it does particularly strikingly in the otherwise bucolic chasselike finale of the earlier Eb Symphony. Possibly most remarkable of all is Rosetti's treatment of the wind section, which he handles with a fluency equaled during this period only by Mozart; certainly Haydn had yet to attain equal facility at the time these works were written. The horn writing in particular is often thrillingly virtuosic, their brazen snarling in the opening movement of the intense G-Minor Symphony lingering long in the mind. Concerto Köln brings to these terse, urgent works playing of fiery commitment, and indeed some may find their attack a little too fierce at times, but I'm sure they are pieces which demand this kind of no-holds-barred treatment. They also employ a wide dynamic range, producing *pianissimo*?, which contrast highly dramatically with rich full orchestral sonorities—the massive pedal climax in the Andante of the Bb Symphony is but one especially noteworthy example. Of the

works here, it is only in his final essay in the genre that Rosetti writes a genuine slow movement, and here Concerto Köln's strings grasp a rare opportunity to produce some lovely, veiled cantabile playing in the outer sections. But how typical it seems of the composer that such repose should frame a restlessly agitated central section for full orchestra. Teldec's recording is a match for the music and performances, catching every nuance of the playing and placing the prominent wind writing in airy spaciousness. It seems nearly unbelievable that these marvelous symphonies have lain neglected for so long, and one can only hope and pray that Concerto Köln will give us further installments—if there are many others of this quality, the history books are going to have to be rewritten!

Brian Robins

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Classical-Music dot com Review

COMPOSER(S): Rosetti **WORKS:** Symphony in C, A9; Symphony in D, A12; Symphony in F, A33; Symphony in G, A40 **PERFORMER:** London Mozart Players/Matthias Bamert

LABEL: Chandos **CATALOGUE NUMBER:** CHAN 9567

PERFORMANCE: 5*/5* **SOUND:** 5*/5*

Imitating Haydn symphonies became a European speciality in the last three decades of the 18th century. Literally hundreds were written, by composers from Carlos Baguer in Catalonia to Joseph Martin Kraus in Sweden. Dozens were published under Haydn's name. It was no wonder that even a cultivated listener in Paris (the centre of the music publishing world at that time) would have found it difficult in 1790 to define Haydn's symphonic style. Antonio Rosetti (born Franz Anton Rösler in German-speaking Bohemia – it was better business to sport an Italian name) lived from c1750 to 1792 and began to write popular and successful neo-Haydn symphonies in about 1773, when he entered the service of the Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein in Germany. He remained there until 1789, when he became Kapellmeister to the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Rosetti is very well served with both these recordings, one on period instruments by the celebrated Concerto Köln (the second volume in a series of Rosetti symphonies), and one on modern instruments brilliantly conducted by Matthias Bamert. It's a pity that both discs include two of the same works. Your choice will probably depend on your view of period versus modern instruments; both CDs are highly recommended. HC Robbins Landon

ROSETTI Violin Concertos: in D (C6/III:9); in d (C9/III:5). Symphonies: in G (A39/1:16); in B^b (A45/1:14) • Johannes Moesus, cond; Anton Steck, vn; Kurpfälzisches CO. • cpo 777 028 (76:08)

Francesco Antonio Rosetti (c. 1750-1792) was born Anton Rössler. He was but one of numerous exceptional musicians and composers whose homeland was Bohemia, a region that produced more than its fair share of talent (including Vanhal, Stamic, and Jirovec) in the 18th century. While in his twenties, Rössler turned his back upon the clergy, embraced music, and chose the Italian spelling of his name.

After obtaining a post at the court of Oettingen- Wallerstein, Rosetti's reputation as a composer began to spread far afield. In his early thirties, Rosetti, in Paris, writes that most of the symphonies performed in the French capital were either his or those of Haydn. And it was Haydn who suggested that Rosetti's symphonies be included in the London concerts managed by Johann Peter Salomon. Rosetti's catalog, while not as extensive as that of Haydn or Mozart, contains over 400 items (symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and vocal works), and more than half of these were published during the composer's lifetime. This serves to strengthen a 1784 comment by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart in *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* that Rosetti "was one of the most beloved composers of our time ... something easier, fuller of light, and more honey-sweet than the pieces of this man can hardly be imagined."

Indeed, Rosetti's toolbox was well stocked; it included an exceptional grasp of technique, not to mention extraordinary contrapuntal skill. He was also inventive in his use of the orchestral winds and liberally employed chromaticism, which doubtless raised more than an isolated eyebrow in the audiences of the era. Rosetti was one of the darlings of Classicism and many critics and performers were not shy about mentioning Rosetti in the same phrase as Haydn and Mozart. However, musical tastes, call them fads if you like, can and do change with the rapidity of the speed and direction of the wind, and by the end of the 18th century, Rosetti's music was old hat.

Rosetti's extensive catalog—already noted—included 44 symphonies and more than 60 concertos, including half a dozen for violin. The recipient of these works is unknown, but speculation is that they were composed for Johann Anton Hutti, who joined the Oettingen-Wallerstein musical establishment not long after Rosetti. We know a bit about Hutti's musical ability as his violin concertos—published in the 1780s by Breitkopf & Härtel—indicate he was a "well versed and capable performer." Both the violin concertos and symphonies on this recent arrival from cpo are exceptional in content. The former are on a high level of inspiration; they include all of the virtuoso's tricks of the trade and augur well for Rosetti's contemporary reputation. The latter—though less substantial than the symphonies

of either Haydn or Mozart—offer taut but never truncated structure and memorable melodic material. It's easy to see why the Parisian musical public and Haydn respected Rosetti's abilities.

One of the finest Baroque violinists active today, Anton Steck has recorded with Reinhard Goebel's Musica Antiqua Köln, Marc Minkowski's Les Musiciens du Louvre, and in 1997 became the leader of the Handel Festival Orchestra in Hallé. Since period instruments are not the domain of the Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester, Steck has put aside his gut-strung violin and opted for a Tiiman Muthesius instrument copied from a 1741 Guarneri del Gesù.

Exhumed from the shadowy recesses of oblivion, Rosetti's concertos receive passionate and well-deserved advocacy on this release. Steck's execution is flawless, his tone secure, and his sense of musicianship unflinching from first note to last. Johannes Moesus and his band prove they are more than equal to the task, both in the concertos and the symphonies, exhibiting model musicianship and many other qualities indigenous to many of the orchestra's better-known competitors. As for the sound, it's up to the usual high standards that we have come to expect from Burkhard Schrnigun and his colleagues at cpo.

This is an exceptional release, holding extraordinary music that is presented with enviable and commanding feel for the repertoire. If you like Mozart and Haydn, there's no doubt you'll quickly warm to this beautifully recorded and well-executed release.

Michael Carter

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Partitas for Winds - Classical Net Review - THUMBS UP!

- Wind Partita in D Major, Kaul II/8
- Wind Partita in D Major, Kaul II/9
- Wind Partita in D Major, Kaul II/11
- Wind Partita in D Major, Kaul II/14
- Wind Partita in F Major, Kaul II/15

Consortium Classicum

CPO 999961-2 DDD 72:11

A successful contemporary of Mozart, Antonio Rosetti (c. 1750 -1792) was quickly forgotten after his death. Those who wish to learn more about him have their work cut out for them; there isn't even agreement as to how his name should be given. He is believed to have been born in the region of Bohemia, and his name is sometimes erroneously given as Franz Anton (or František Antonín) Rössler (or Rösler). He was appointed to the court orchestra of a Prince Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein, first as a bassoonist, and eventually as its music director, a

post he held until 1789.

Rosetti wrote music in many genres, but his music for winds is particularly abundant and felicitous. In fact, he is credited with having written the world's first wind quintet. The five partitas included on this CD are likely to have been intended for outdoor use, because brass and woodwinds "carried" better than strings. A typical wind partita – for example, #8 on this CD – is scored for two oboes, two clarinets, two horns, one bassoon, and (presumably to buttress the music's harmonic foundations), one double bass. These works, each about fifteen minutes long, also are referred to as "wind serenades," and also as the "Wallerstein Serenades," as they were "dedicated with gratitude to His Highness Prince Moritz zu Oettingen-Wallerstein, the protector of the art of Rosetti."

Pop this CD in your player and collar any unsuspecting classical music aficionado and he is bound to say, "Aha, Mozart!" At his best, Rosetti reached Mozart's everyday standards; the only thing that Rosetti lacked was divine inspiration. However, to portray Rosetti as anything less than a competent, even gifted, composer would be to do him a great injustice. The music on this CD is always cheerful and gracious – very conducive to one's digestion! The variety of Rosetti's inspiration becomes even more impressive when one is reminded that flutes in the 1780s (when these works were written) could not be adapted to music in many different keys as easily as their modern counterparts can be.

The Consortium Classicum was founded in 1969 by clarinetist Dieter Klöcker, who remains associated with this ensemble. Its musicians continue to focus on music by composers who lived in central Europe during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Their playing on this CD, which was recorded early in 1993, is honey-smooth and excellently blended, but never bland. Kudos to Consortium Classicum, then, and also to the CD's engineers, who give the musicians an "open" sound that is eminently suited to the repertoire.

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5.0 out of 5 stars - Amazon Review - I agree w/ the comments and rating
First rate addition to the Rosetti revival

Reviewed in the United States on May 1, 2016

Verified Purchase

Rosetti, one of the many less famous contemporaries of Mozart has been very well treated in recordings, with a near complete collection of symphonies, a large selection of concertos and samples of vocal and chamber music available.

This well filled CD(78' 34") claims world premiere recordings, although the horn concerto is an earlier alternative version(and very similar to) the fairly well known d minor horn concerto C38.(which also exists in a version for solo violin).

That said, the horn concerto is still perhaps the highlight of the disc, largely due to the performance of the soloist, playing a valveless, natural hunting horn which is apparently a treacherous instrument even for experienced players. In this recording the rich earthiness and sometimes startling variety of sounds it can produce are perfectly captured and balanced to produce a performance that is virtuosic, never vulgar, and while on some discs natural horn soloists sound as though they are struggling just to hit the notes, Christian Binde leaves the impression of complete, effortless mastery.

The flute concerto is fairly short and elegant, and allows the soloist to display the range of their instruments possibilities without resorting to empty pyrotechnics.

The opening Sinfonia in C, scored for strings flute and horns in three movements, is structurally novel and sounds as if it could be music with a forgotten program or for a now unknown occasion. The Symphonia ex G also has three movements, and again is interesting in that the middle movement is a minuet instead of the stereotypical slow section. Finally the Sinfonia a 8, the only work here in four sections, and maybe the most conventional, includes a sonata form opening featuring a dramatic development section, and a vaguely hunting style finale, with the whole seeming very reminiscent of middle period Haydn.

Compagnia di Punto performs on period instruments, (strings, oboes, flutes, horns, and bassoon, without keyboard continuo) and they truly bring this music to life with careful attention to tempo, accents, dynamics and balance in the often unusual orchestrations, all so important in Rosetti's works.

Although none of these works are great undiscovered masterpieces, for those unfamiliar with Rosetti, this would be a fine introduction and for those who enjoy other recordings of his works, these accomplished performances make this disc one not to be missed.