

While very little is known of Rosetti's early life, it seems that he was born in 1750 in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz, Northern Bohemia). Originally destined for the priesthood, he probably received his musical training from the Jesuits. According to recent discoveries, in the early 1770s he was employed by a Russian "Count Orlov".

In November 1773 he entered the service of Prince Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein (1748–1802). By 1780 he was already known as a composer, whose works were regularly performed in Paris' 'Concert spirituel' series. At the end of October 1781 the Prince financed a journey to the French metropolis, where for several months Rosetti studied concert and opera culture and made contact with music publishers. From his return in May 1782 (at the latest), he functioned as musical director of the Wallerstein court orchestra – at first together with Joseph Reicha (1752–1795), who left in spring 1785. From 1786 on, his symphonies also featured regularly on the programmes of the great London concert series.

His international reputation notwithstanding, Rosetti was permanently in financial difficulties. In July 1789 he left Wallerstein for the far better remunerated post of *Capellmeister* at the court of Duke Friedrich Franz I von Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1756–1837) in Ludwigslust. In December 1791 his Requiem in E flat major (RWV H15) was performed at the funeral service for Mozart in Prague. In early March 1791, the oratorio 'Jesus in Gethsemane' (RWV G2) and the 'Hallelujah' Cantata (RWV G7) were performed at the Berlin castle at the request of King Friedrich Wilhelm II, who invited Rosetti to participate. By this time the composer, who had always suffered from poor health, culminating in a "malignant cough", was fatally ill. He died at Ludwigslust on 30 June 1792.

For the two noble houses he served, Rosetti created a steady stream of symphonies, concertos, wind partitas, chamber and vocal music – over 400 compositions in total, of which more than half were published during his lifetime. Charles Burney ranked him among the most important composers of his time, mentioning him in the same breath as Haydn and Mozart. His mature works, in particular, reveal a keen feeling for contrapuntal work, with most imaginative orchestration and a rich harmonic and tonal palette, at times anticipating Romanticism.

Rosetti's wind band output features some 20 works, probably all composed during his last ten years in Wallerstein. The Partita in E flat major, RWV B11, for pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons, probably dates from the early 1780s. It survives in several manuscript copies and undated sets of parts. One of them is held in the music collection of the former Donaueschinger Hofbibliothek (now Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe) as

part of a handwritten convolute of parts (Mus. ms.1597) that includes Partitas by Ignaz Pleyel, Peter von Winter, Vinzenz Maschek and Joseph Mysliveček. The present edition is based on this source; because of the many musical connections between the court of Prince von Fürstenberg in Donaueschingen and the Wallerstein court, it is considered the one most closely 'related' to Rosetti's lost autograph. As there is no manuscript source in the former Oettingen-Wallersteiner Hofbibliothek (now Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg), it may be that the work was written specially for the Fürstenberg court. Such a commission would not be surprising considering the many musical connections between the two courts, and the fact that Rosetti's compositions – in particular his wind band music – were very popular at the Donaueschingen court. Prince Joseph Wenzel (1728–1783) had established a wind band there at about the same time as Prince Kraft Ernst in Wallerstein. It was later enthusiastically extended and maintained by his son and successor Joseph Maria Benedikt (1758–1796). Two scoring details also suggest a commissioned work: one is the prominent role of the clarinets, for which the Wallerstein court had few suitable players in the early 1780s; the other is the use of two bassoons, despite the fact that Prince Kraft Ernst's orchestra first lists two bassoonists in 1785.

Some particularities make the work stand out from Rosetti's other wind band music: the composer chose a three-movement design (duration: circa 15 minutes) rather than the four movements usual in his other wind partitas. In addition, B11 is the only wind band piece by Rosetti of which there is a contemporary print. That edition appeared from Pleyel in Paris in 1796/97, about four years after the composer's death.

Like its sister work, the Partita B11 captivates us by its sheer inventiveness and subtle nuances of timbre. The three movements follow the slow/fast – slow – fast pattern, and have symphonic traits. Typically, there is even a (possibly autograph) version for strings, two oboes and two horns – number 'A26' in Murray's list of Rosetti's works. This too distinguishes the work from all his other Partitas. The extensive first movement, based on sonata form, is preceded by a slow introduction. The slow middle movement is a deeply felt Romance in E flat major. This is followed by a vivacious Rondo that once again illustrates Rosetti's affection for hunting calls in 6/8 time, interrupted here by a 30-bar Adagio interlude (*alla breve*) featuring oboe and horn solos.

In addition to the wind octet scoring, we recommend supporting the 2nd bassoon part by a double bass, a practice widely used in late 18th and early 19th centuries, and supported by many contemporary illustrations.

Günther Grünsteudel