

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 four-movement Partita B19 probably dates from the early 1780s, and survives in three copies and undated sets of parts, which reveal three different scorings: variant 1 in F major for 3 oboes, 2 horns, bassoon and double bass is from the former Oettingen-Wallersteiner Hofbibliothek (now Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg, D-HR III 4 ½ 4° 488); variant 2 in E flat major for oboe, 2 cors anglais, 2 horns and 2 bassoons is owned by the Gesellschaft der

Musikfreunde Wien (A-Wgm VIII 8538/II); variant 3, also in E flat major, as an octet for pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons, is held in the Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe (D-DO Mus. ms. 1679/1).

Variants 1 and 3, in particular, are deemed authentic on the basis of the manuscripts' provenance. As there already is a modern edition of version 1, we've chosen version 3 for the present edition. Its manuscript comes from the former Donaueschinger Hofbibliothek and is part of a convolute of parts containing six octet Partitas by Rosetti and one by Franz Anton Hoffmeister. From the 1780s, the music loving Princes Joseph Wenzel (1728–1783) and Joseph Maria Benedikt zu Fürstenberg (1758–1796) had their own wind band, which alongside that of Prince Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein was one of the most renowned of its kind in Southern Germany. Considering the many musical connections between the Fürstenberg and the Wallersteiner courts, it is quite possible that Rosetti created the octet variant of Partita B19 for the friendly court. Two scoring details suggest a commission: 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 Ernst's orchestra first lists two bassoonists in 1785. Among the Donaueschinger music in the Badische Landesbibliothek one finds ten wind band pieces by Rosetti.

The first movement begins quite experimentally: starting with clarinet I, each next lower instrument enters one bar apart, until this 'cluster' is completed by the highest (oboe I/II) and lowest parts (bassoon I/II) to produce the dominant seventh chord of E flat major. This same 'cluster' also signals the beginnings of the monothematic movement's short development section and reprise. The second movement, a spacious *Andante grazioso* in B flat major, in five sections, favours a playful dialogue between high and low voices. Note the virtuosic handling of the horns, sometimes even required to be as agile as the oboes, as well as their equal in solos. The following Menuet also features horn solos at formal intersections, their repeats subtly masking the transition from first to second Menuet section. The bassoons dominate in the Trio. The cheerful Rondo-Finale in 2/4 time starts the first interlude by quoting the 'cluster' from the first movement. In the minor part (c minor), a longer passage of ancient-sounding sequences leads to break-neck semiquaver runs and cascading triads from the horn players.

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.

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