



In the right hands, *OHTT* will both restrain and liberate the future of topic theory both in and beyond the eighteenth century.

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STERLING E. MURRAY

THE CAREER OF AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KAPPELLMEISTER: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF ANTONIO ROSETTI

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With the publication of *The Career of an Eighteenth-Century Kapellmeister: The Life and Music of Antonio Rosetti*, Sterling E. Murray has accomplished his goal of providing ‘a comprehensive investigation of the composer’s life’ as well as ‘a basic understanding of his creative output’ (9). Moreover, he provides valuable material on two often overlooked but important German courts of the eighteenth century: Oettingen-Wallerstein under Prince Kraft Ernst, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin presided over by Duke Friedrich Franz I. Attention given to composers and music in the major capitals of Europe during this time has all but overshadowed such small German courts. Murray’s monograph helps correct this oversight and provides insights into the music and protocol of eighteenth-century courts and their highly structured way of life.

The book is evenly balanced between two parts: ‘Biography and Context’, with nine chapters, and ‘The Music’, with eight chapters. The final chapter places ‘Rosetti in Perspective’. The copious notes and extensive bibliography are followed by a comprehensive index. The book is further enhanced by a website, <<http://rosetti.sterlingmurray.com>>, which provides texts in the original languages for quotations in the book and supplements the generous number of musical examples. Via a further link to the website of the International Rosetti Society (<www.rosetti.de>) one can also access details of modern editions of Rosetti’s more than four hundred compositions, as well as a comprehensive list of currently available recordings.

For the frontispiece Murray has chosen an engaging oil portrait of Rosetti (c1790–1792, artist unknown), whom he describes as ‘an attractive man with an open and welcoming countenance’ (3). The Introduction also brings together a drawing, two silhouettes and one lithograph of the composer. The volume perhaps could have benefitted from a map pinpointing the composer’s field of activity, such as his probable birthplace and the two courts in which he held positions. Nevertheless, in the study that follows, Murray has painstakingly researched and documented Rosetti’s life, and his historical and archival scholarship is above reproach.

Rosetti’s early life remains cloaked in mystery. According to Murray, the most recent research indicates that he was born around 1750 in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), Bohemia (a city in today’s Czech Republic). From the age of seven Rosetti was educated in Prague at a Jesuit seminary. He eventually left his homeland, however, and served a brief stint as composer to a Russian militia unit. In November 1773 he became a member of a court with a long history of musical distinction. His employer, the twenty-five-year-old Kraft Ernst, Count of Oettingen-Wallerstein, had just come into his estates and was in the process of creating a *Hofkapelle*. Rosetti was among the first musicians he hired. Originally appointed as a liveried servant-musician and double bass player, he was soon promoted to *Hofmusik* and finally to Kapellmeister. He remained at the court for sixteen years.

The noble family had two places of residence in Bavaria, both still standing today. A watercolour of Schloss Wallerstein (c1740) and an engraving of Schloss Hohenaltheim by Johannes Müller (c1790) are each reproduced by Murray, courtesy of Moritz, Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein, a living descendant of Kraft



Ernst. The principal palace was in Wallerstein, forty-five miles north of Augsburg. From April to October the family spent time at Lustschloss, their summer residence in Hohenaltheim. In the eighteenth century the Oettingen-Wallerstein estates encompassed approximately 528 square miles of land.

Additional illustrations that enrich the text are four contemporary silhouettes by Joseph Widmann from the Oettingen-Wallerstein court. Depicted are Kraft Ernst (1789), a string quartet, chamber music with Rosetti at the keyboard (c1785) and *Harmoniemusik* (c1784–1785). An oil portrait of the prince by Philipp Friedrich Hetsch (1794) is also included, as well as a painting of the prince and his wife Princess Marie Therese by Martin Knoller, completed in 1776 after the death of the princess. Again, all are courtesy of the Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein, who, Murray acknowledges, allowed him to ‘view and make use of materials from the rich cultural heritage of his family’ (xvi).

The nineteen-year-old Princess Marie Therese died on 9 March 1776, following the birth of their first child. The prince chose Rosetti for the important task of composing a requiem (in E flat major) for the memorial service held two weeks later on 26 March. The grief-stricken prince went into an extended period of mourning, and no music was allowed at court for approximately three years. While many musicians left and found work elsewhere, Rosetti remained. Murray conjectures that the composer focused on writing chamber music and fulfilling commissions outside the court. The prince’s earliest gestures toward a reconstruction of the *Hofkapelle* began in 1779. By the autumn of 1780 he had finally brought together an accomplished orchestra, which included several fine wind players.

Once Kraft Ernst’s period of mourning ended, music again pervaded life at court and served as entertainment for ‘birthdays, name days, weddings, banquets, and balls, as well as ceremonial music . . . honoring visiting dignitaries, wind music for activities surrounding the hunt, *Tafelmusik* as a backdrop for dining and card parties, outdoor serenades for warm summer evenings, and church music to accompany the celebration of Mass’ (76). Every Sunday evening at 6 p. m. the orchestra and soloists performed for the prince in his residence. According to his one-time secretary, Ritter von Long, all court officials were required to attend, and conversation was prohibited. Rosetti, an active participant in these musical activities, composed a serenade in D major to celebrate Kraft Ernst’s fortieth birthday.

The *Hofkapelle* at Wallerstein was supervised by the intendant, Ignaz von Beecke, who provided a link between the musicians and their patron. The court orchestra averaged about twenty-five instrumentalists. The musicians themselves formed a close-knit group, spending much of their time together. Murray conjectures that despite their constant financial concerns, their daily life appeared to be pleasant. Many were related through marriage and, like Rosetti, shared a Bohemian heritage.

Despite working at a court with countless opportunities for composing, Rosetti experienced a number of difficulties during his tenure. He received a salary and certain extra benefits, but Kraft Ernst was frugal, and Rosetti’s repeated requests for additional salary were often ignored. Although promised an appointment as *regens chori*, the prince neglected to name him to a position that would have alleviated some of his financial concerns. His fragile health was exacerbated by his indebtedness. Even as Kapellmeister, he never owned a home and resided with his family in his father-in-law’s inn *Zum Schwarzen Adler* (The Black Eagle).

On the other hand, in 1781 the prince granted Rosetti a six-month leave to journey to Paris, where he came into contact with some of the leading composers of the day. Murray has documented Rosetti’s sojourn in Paris primarily through six letters sent to the prince and others in Wallerstein. The first three, all written on Wednesday 12 December 1781, were rediscovered by the late Volker von Volckamer (see ‘“à Paris ce 12 Dec: 1781”: Drei nach Wallerstein gerichtete Briefe von Antonio Rosetti’, *Rosetti-Forum* 3 (2002), 5–17). The last three – all addressed to the prince – were written in the following year and ‘have long been part of Rosetti research’ (121). In these six letters Rosetti reports that he was impressed with the orchestra of the Prince de Rohan-Guéméné (1726–1800), considering it the ‘best and most excellent orchestra’ in Paris (123). At the same time he praises the Wallerstein orchestra as being superior based on their ‘subtle expression and ensemble playing’ (124). During his Paris sojourn Rosetti’s own music gained wider distribution through publication by such firms as Le Menu et Boyer and Sieber. Moreover, his compositions were included in



private concerts, and his symphonies received repeated performances at the Concert Spirituel, beginning with a concert on 7 December at the Chateau des Tuileries.

Murray also documents the high esteem in which Kraft Ernst held the music of Haydn. The composer's symphonies were part of the court music collection during the 1770s, and the prince sought to put together a complete library of these works as he restructured his *Kapelle*. In December 1781, while Rosetti was in Paris, Haydn offered the prince six new string quartets at the special subscription price of six ducats. The prince, his Viennese agents and Haydn maintained correspondence for a decade, and during the 1780s and 1790s the *Hofkapelle* purchased Haydn's music with regularity, according to *Hofkassa* receipts.

Following Rosetti's return from Paris, his study of Haydn's formal structures, stylistic traits and orchestration had a noticeable effect on his own compositional language. Murray provides numerous examples throughout the book of Haydn's influence on Rosetti as a composer, including the older man's use of humour. One looks forward to a future study in which Murray elaborates on similarities and differences in their music. There was unquestionably a strong reciprocal link between the two composers, as demonstrated not least by the performance of Rosetti's symphonies at London's so-called 'Salomon' concerts, featuring Haydn and his music: four of them in 1791, and another one in 1794.

In comparison with his close links to Haydn, Rosetti had a minimal, yet significant connection to Mozart. Mozart and his mother spent one night at the court in Wallerstein in 1777. As chance would have it, the prince's moratorium on music was still in effect, and Rosetti was temporarily away from the court. Following Mozart's death in 1791, however, Rosetti's 1776 requiem was chosen by his friend the conductor Joseph Strobach for a commemorative ceremony in Prague; this was the Requiem that had been composed fifteen years earlier for Princess Marie Therese of Oettingen-Wallerstein.

In the years following Rosetti's return from Paris his career began to flourish, and he intensified his compositional activities. At the same time, he came to the realization that his financial situation at Wallerstein would never change, and so he set out to find another position. In 1789 he applied for and obtained the post of Kapellmeister at the court of Friedrich Franz I, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. In 1767 the court had moved from Schwerin, which lies 213 kilometres northwest of Berlin, to a palace – still standing today – in Ludwigslust, about thirty-two kilometres south of Schwerin.

Murray provides a well-documented account of the court and environment in which Rosetti carried out his duties as Kapellmeister at Ludwigslust. More than forty musicians made up the *Hofkapelle*, a larger group than what Rosetti had known at Wallerstein. In addition, the strings were more skilled, but the winds less so. The *Hofkapelle* also had a full body of trained singers. Although the composer's additional responsibilities compromised his already frail health, he now enjoyed a generous salary and was provided with a house and garden near the palace. He had direct access to the duke and when necessary advised him on musical matters. It was here that Rosetti would spend the rest of his career, aside from a trip to Berlin in the spring of 1792, at the invitation of Friedrich Wilhelm II, to conduct performances of his passion oratorio *Jesus in Gethsemane* and the *Halleluja* cantata. The excursion contributed to his declining health, and the forty-two-year-old Rosetti died – at the height of his creative powers – on 30 June 1792.

The eight chapters in Murray's 'Part Two: The Music' include discussions of the various genres in which Rosetti composed. A complementary reference work is Murray's 830-page *The Music of Antonio Rosetti (Anton Rösler) ca. 1750–1792: A Thematic Catalogue* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park, 1996). The catalogue not only gives an overview of his complete output but also clarifies the numbering system Murray has used to identify the works.

Rosetti was primarily a composer of instrumental music, and Murray assigns the first three chapters to the composer's symphonies, concertos and *Harmoniemusik*. The symphonies received widespread distribution and formed 'the backbone of Rosetti's oeuvre' (189). Forty-three symphonies that bridge the years from approximately 1773 to 1792 can be safely attributed to the composer. Unsurprisingly, Murray has focused more attention here and in earlier publications on this genre. He skilfully documents the composer's growth over time as a symphony composer, and in the works written after 1780 for the Wallerstein court, he notes



that Rosetti's music displayed greater 'structural cohesion', an expansion of his harmonic language, more contrapuntal interest and a greater participation by wind instruments. Rosetti's concertos were designed to display the special talents of members of the *Hofkapelle* and featured wind instruments (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn) as well as violin, viola and keyboard. Murray points out that *Harmoniemusik*, unlike the symphony and concerto, 'was not a public type of music and individual compositions were unlikely to gain a wide circulation' (269). Of the twenty works Rosetti composed for wind ensembles, just over half were created specifically for Kraft Ernst's *Harmonie*. The *Harmoniemusik* silhouette alluded to earlier shows nine wind players and one bassist in livery, standing in groups of two.

Rosetti wrote chamber music throughout his career, and Murray devotes a chapter to his string trios and quartets, accompanied and unaccompanied keyboard sonatas (together with a few pieces with mixed instrumentation), noting that it was through printed editions that this music 'reached its largest audience' (348). On the other hand, Murray points to the relatively minor role that music for the Roman Catholic Church played in the composer's creative output. Problems of attribution afflict this repertoire, and only nine of the thirteen settings of the Mass Ordinary ascribed to Rosetti can be counted as authentic works.

Rosetti's 'Nonliturgical Music for Voice and Orchestra' (chapter 13) includes two oratorios, a cantata, a chamber opera and a set of choral variations. The oratorio *Der sterbende Jesus* was written for the Wallerstein court during the winter of 1784–1785. Murray regards his second oratorio, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, to be a superior work and the 'high point' of Rosetti's compositional output for the Protestant court at Ludwigslust. Indeed, he describes it as 'one of the crowning glories of Rosetti's creative imagination' (306). Rosetti's contribution to domestic music for amateur musicians consisted primarily of sixty-nine lieder and fifty-six short keyboard pieces such as dances, romances, rondos and capriccios. According to Murray, 'the challenge of this repertoire was to produce quality music within the capabilities of dilettante musicians' (377). The compositions appeared in the musical weekly *Blumenlese für Klavierliebhaber*, published by Heinrich Bossler between 1782 and 1784.

In the final chapter, 'Rosetti in Perspective', Murray observes that 'critics praised his music and placed him on a level with Haydn and Mozart' (385). With this volume, which sets the seal on his long-term study of the composer, Murray has succeeded in bringing 'Rosetti and his music out of the shadows and into the same scholarly light as his best-known contemporaries' (390). At the same time he has provided a solid foundation for other scholars to build upon.

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NANCY NOVEMBER

BEETHOVEN'S THEATRICAL QUARTETS: OPP. 59, 74 AND 95

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This is the third volume in the Cambridge University Press series 'Music in Context', which has 'specific musical works, repertoires or practices' at its heart but insists on their illumination in particular contexts; above all, the 'decontextualisation of traditional aesthetics and music analysis' is always to be avoided. Nancy November does not disappoint in this valuable study of the five string quartets which are traditionally understood as Beethoven's 'middle-period' works in the genre. As her title implies, the principal context in which her readings are grounded is that of theatre, more specifically Beethoven's engagement with the