



The Italian pianist Roberto Prosseda is obviously a man of long-term tenacity.

In Germany, he attracted attention for the first time in 2006, when he started to record the complete piano work by Felix Mendelssohn. Meanwhile, this project is completed, and Prosseda's second encyclopedic endeavour is now drawing to an end, too.

In summer 2016, the first part of his recording series of all piano sonatas by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had been released, and now the last album, a double CD was published.

Prosseda's cycle of Mozart sonatas Christoph Vratz takes stock.

🎵 Fantasie C Minor_KV 475

A full, strong octave at the beginning. Then, like an enigmatic answer, it continues softly, with, at the end, two last breathings. That is how Mozart opens his Fantasie c-Moll KV 475.

🎵 Fantasie C Minor KV 475

With the first tone, Roberto Prosseda is diving deep into a gloomy-ominous atmosphere, evoking the „Don Giovanni“. Then, the dark sky temporarily brightens up – with a theme which is even strengthened in it's lovely nature by a perky rhythmic continuation.

🎵 Fantasie C Minor KV 475

Prosseda plays it song-like, like a mini-aria inbetween the disaster-foreboding minor-mode atmosphere. For: the first outburst is not to be long in coming.

🎵 Fantasie C Minor KV 475

„I wanted to deliver Mozart's indications for articulation and dynamics“, Prosseda says in the booklet, „by breaking in a very radical manner with a particular performance tradition looking for a smooth phrasing and the achievement of a lovely sound as an end in itself.“

This becomes also apparent in the abrupt beginning of the C Minor Sonata KV 457, often connected as an entity with the Fantasie we just heard.

🎵 Sonata C Minor KV 457

Without ‚lovely sound‘ even Prosseda cannot do it – on the contrary: his play has plenty of it, when he's rounding phrases, for example.

But this lovely sound is just not an end in itself, but is always precisely integrated into the dramaturgy. Such as the development of this movement, in which Prosseda integrates the beautiful moments into the raw sides of the music.

🎵 Sonata C Minor KV 457

As in the former parts of his Mozart edition, Roberto Prosseda plays again a Fazioli grand piano, tuned with the so-called Valotti tuning from the time of Mozart. That means an unequal temperament, different from the well tempered tuning normally used for modern grand pianos.

This way, the sound becomes more colorful, at some moments more intensely glowing, the harmonies have a more immediate effect.

As for example in the Allegretto of the F Major Sonata, in the middle section of which Prosseda connects the gentle melody of the right hand with almost dancing accents of the left hand – seldom heard like that!

🎵 Sonata KV 533/494

If we consider the whole cycle, already the first parts were convincing all around. And that is here seamlessly continued.

Prosseda's smoothly flowing, but also flexible touch, his utmost sparsely, almost ascetic use of the pedal, his lively articulation and the measured way historically informed playing is applied on the modern piano make of this recording one of the most exciting Mozart editions of the last years (at least on a modern piano, as Christian Bezuidenhout has recorded his Mozart on historical keyboard instruments).

How naturally and lively Prosseda succeeds for example to perform the Sonata C Major, often etude-like mechanized.

 Sonata C Major KV 545

This double CD includes six sonatas, completed by the Fantasie C Minor and one sonata movement KV 312.

One of the highlights is Prosseda's interpretation of the last sonata, no.18 KV 576.

 Sonata D Major KV 576

Here, Mozart works with remarkably spare material – and that's exactly what Prosseda makes use of for his interpretation: he doesn't make something exaggerated solemn out of it, but works with very delicate means. This way, the mixture of humour and elegance is fully emphasized.

 Sonata D Major KV 576

There are many pianists, who consider Mozart's piano *concertos* to be far more important than the sonatas, often arguing, the sonatas would only be little occasional works.

With his complete recording, Roberto Prosseda proves that these works are certainly much more.

The middle section of the slow movement is in no way inferior to the middle movement of the A Major concert.

 Sonata D Major KV 576

One might speculate, how many times Roberto Prosseda has invested to achieve this form of naturalness. He unites many elements required for a moving Mozart performance: liveliness and esprit, but also the art of forming shadows; a crystal-clear, sharply defined touch and the ability to build arioso lines, even without pedal.

 Sonata D Major KV 576 (complete)