


FEATURE REVIEW by [Colin Clarke](#)

 **PERRACHIO** *Nove Poemetti. 25 Preludi* • David Korevaar
(p) • MSR 1710 (68:28)



Luigi Perrachio: Piano Music - *Nove Poemetti* (1917/1920); *25 Preludi* (1927)

AUDIO CD

MSR Classics



Quite a find here—literally! Pianist David Korevaar, along with Laurie Sampsel, was investigating the collection of Ricardo Viñes scores at the University of Colorado and discovered Luigi Perrachio’s *Nuove Poemetti* (Nine Little Poems, 1917/20); they appear here alongside the *25 Preludi* of 1927.

Perrachio was born in Turin in 1883, earning a law degree there and a music degree in Bologna. He travelled to Paris, where he inevitably came across the music of Debussy and Ravel, and then returned to Turin, teaching there at the Liceo Musicale. Perrachio’s book *L’opera pianistica di C. Debussy* was published in Milan in 1924; in 1926, he published a tome on Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*. The music of the *25 Preludi* is identifiably Impressionistic, and performed with evident affection and a superb grasp of Perrachio’s world by Korevaar, whose Brahms on Ivory Classics I have previously enjoyed. The dynamic control is highly impressive: The end of the first piece (a movement dedicated to Casella) veers towards the inaudible, yet the control is impeccable. The portrait of “Zephyr” is remarkable; Korevaar’s admirable restraint when it comes to sustaining pedal enables clarity to triumph, yet the atmosphere is all there. Scampering lines, independent in themselves, sometimes cede to exquisite shards of melody. The

idea of dragonflies (“Libellule”) has something of the same skittishness, but notice how Perrachio makes the musical direction less predictable. The opening of the score of “Libellule” is reproduced on Korevaar’s website at davidkorevaar.com/shrouded-turin-praise-luigi-perrachio-1883-1966/.

Each movement is prefaced by at least one line of text and, in some cases, full poems, some unattributed and possibly by the composer himself. The enshrouded tones of “La note dei morti” (The Night of the Dead) are superbly prolonged; the slow procession of chords exposes the listener to Perrachio’s harmonic practices. There is a real sensitivity to both sonority and progression, both from composer and pianist, something one hears again, at a sustained low dynamic, in the penultimate piece, “Notte” (Night). The fascination of the ancients on the Impressionists is reflected in “Danzatrici a Lesbos” (Dancers at Lesbos); the stanzas printed with this piece are an apparent homage to Sappho. Korevaar draws a certain restrained grandeur from the stately melody in the tenor range. There is an obvious referend for “Pioggia” (Rain) in Debussy’s “Jardins sous la pluie” from *Estampes*; nevertheless, Perrachio’s voice is his own, his invention splendidly realized here by the pearly touch of Korevaar. Inevitably one thinks of Debussy’s *La mer* when encountering the title of the final piece, “Mare” (Sea), although for this listener if one is to parallel Debussy, it would be via “Ce qu’a vu le vent d’ouest.”

Korevaar identifies a more Neoclassical slant to the *Preludi*. All 25, not 24, of them: there is a Prelude in F# Major, and there is a Prelude in Gb Major, the composer pointing towards the different feel of the two keys despite their enharmonic equivalence. The score’s final page identifies this set as an homage to Bach, and indeed the mode of expression is more objective. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, shades of Busoni can be detected along the way (the third); but there is a very personal expression of exuberance from Perrachio in the brief sixth piece. The mistiness of the eighth (*Allegretto, con grande delicatezza*) is again a masterclass in control from Korevaar. As the cycle progresses, grandeur is encountered alongside bejeweled *tendresse* and a real Italianate *cantabile*. There is no recorded competition in this repertoire, but it is difficult to imagine a more sensitive, dedicated reading.

This is a fine recording, too. Korevaar plays on a beautifully prepared Shigeru Kawai at the University of Colorado at Boulder; a note on the disc tells us that this high-resolution disc has not been compressed and reproduces the music’s natural range, as intended by the performer, and there is indeed the full dynamic spectrum on display here. The contrast between the explosive penultimate Prelude (*Vigoroso, elementare*), and the final one (*Calmo, disteso*) is marked indeed. Unsurprisingly, there is not a lot of other Perrachio about; harpist Alessandra Ziveri includes three pieces on her disc of Perrachio and his exact contemporary,

Alfredo Casella, on the Tactus label. Korevaar's disc, then, is a major addition to the catalog; in fact, it is nothing short of revelatory. Luigi Perracchio could hardly ask for a better interpreter. One fervently hopes this opens the door to more recordings of Perracchio's music: Amongst his major works, I believe he composed a Piano Concerto (1931–32), a Violin Concerto (1932) and an opera, *Mirtilla* (1937–40). **Colin Clarke**

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