

THE PEDAL PIANO



Roberto Prosseda uses a special system, conceived and built in 2012 by Italian organ builder Claudio Pinchi, that enables a pedal piano to be created from any two grand pianos. This set-up allows him to tour with his pedal piano repertoire. The Pinchi pedal-board has 37 pedals that operate 61 wooden 'fingers', which depress the lowest 61 keys of the piano, giving an overall range of five octaves. In addition, three independent stops add octave doublings, which can be combined (allowing triple octaves) to enrich the sound palette of the pedal-board. Earlier this century, Italian piano maker Luigi Borgato built the first modern pedal piano, the Doppio Borgato, and Prosseda is currently developing a virtual pedal-board that could be attached to a regular piano, equipped with infrared and optical sensors to capture the motion of the performer's feet and translate them into sounds, and even lights and colours. ('Not for showmanship,' says Prosseda, 'but as a new creative tool to composers and artists'.)

needed to write those books to become a better pianist.”

Prosseda is also the founder of Donatori di Musica, a network of volunteer doctors and musicians that organises concerts in the oncology departments of Italian hospitals. He says: 'I saw the miraculous effects when my friend and CD producer Gian Andrea Lodovici was diagnosed with cancer, and he organised a series of

concerts in the hospital. Doctors, nurses, patients and their families were able to meet informally and playing there was an incredible experience for me. You forget about your ego and focus on sharing the beauty of music. Now, at regular concerts, I try to regain that feeling.'

In 2012, Prosseda embarked on another daring and innovative project together with Teo Tronico, a robot with 53 fingers

that can play any work from the piano repertoire on any normal piano. The robot played Chopin's Polonaise Op 22 with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, with Prosseda as a 'ghost' pianist playing a digital piano backstage. 'This brings interesting insights for the public into the human element of performance and the differences between reproduction and interpretation, going beyond what is