

CLEMENTI

Keyboard Sonatas

Op. 2, Nos. 2 and 6 • Op. 7, Nos. 1 and 2
Op. 9, No. 2 • Op. 12, No. 1

Sun-A Park, Piano



Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Keyboard Sonatas, Op. 2 – No. 2 in C major; No. 6 in B flat major

Keyboard Sonatas, Op. 7 – No. 1 in E flat major; No. 2 in C major

Keyboard Sonata in C major, Op. 9, No. 2

Keyboard Sonata in B flat major, Op. 12, No. 1

Muzio Clementi was born in Rome in 1752, the son of a silversmith. By the age of 13 he had become proficient enough as a musician to be employed as an organist at the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso and to attract the attention of an English visitor, Peter Beckford, cousin of William Beckford, author of the Gothic novel *Vathek* and builder of the remarkable folly, Fonthill Abbey. Peter Beckford, as he himself claimed, bought Clementi from his father for a period of seven years, during which the boy lived at Beckford's estate in Dorset, perfecting his ability as a keyboard player, and, presumably, his general education. In 1774 Clementi moved to London, where he began to take part in professional concert life as a composer and performer, playing his own sonatas, some of which were published at this time, and directing performances from the keyboard at the Italian opera.

Clementi's success as a performer persuaded him to travel. In 1780 he played for Queen Marie Antoinette in France and early in 1782 performed for her brother, the Emperor Joseph II, in Vienna. Mozart met Clementi in January, when they were both summoned to play for the Emperor. Mozart had a poor opinion of Clementi's musical taste and feeling, but grudgingly admitted his technical ability in right hand playing of passages in thirds, otherwise dismissing him as a mere mechanicus. It should be added that Mozart was often disparaging about the abilities of his contemporaries, as he was of Clementi on a later occasion. In a letter to his father in June 1783 Mozart describes Clementi as a *ciarlatano*, like all Italians, accusing him of marking movements as *Presto* or *Prestissimo* but actually playing them *Allegro* – according to Mozart all Clementi could do were passages in thirds, while completely lacking in expression, taste or feeling. Clementi was more generous in his assessment of Mozart, and as a publisher was later of service to Beethoven, who had a high regard for Clementi as a composer.

In 1785 Clementi returned to England, winning a reputation for himself there as a performer and teacher, although as a composer he was eclipsed in the 1790s by the presence in London of Haydn. It was in these years that he involved himself in piano manufacture and music publishing in London, first with Longman and Broderip and from 1798, after the firm's bankruptcy, with Longman, and others. In the earlier years of the 19th century he travelled abroad in the interests of the business, accompanied at first by his pupil John Field, who served as a demonstrator of Clementi's wares and later left a somewhat prejudiced account of his experiences after he parted company with Clementi in Russia.

From 1810 Clementi was again in England, where he was much respected, not least for his teaching compositions, his *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Piano Forte* of 1801, revised in 1826, and the famous *Gradus ad Parnassum*, completed and published in the latter year. He retired from business in 1830, settling first in Lichfield and then in Evesham, where he died in 1832, to be buried in Westminster Abbey. His legacy to pianists was a significant one, both through his compositions and his teaching, an introduction to a new virtuosity and exploration of the possibilities of a newly developed instrument in a society that had changed greatly since his own childhood in Italy. Born four years before Mozart, he outlived Beethoven by five years.

Clementi's four sonatas and a duet *Op. 12* were published in London in 1784 by John Preston at his business in the Strand, with a dedication to a Miss Grose. The first work, the *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 12, No. 1*, opens with a brilliant *sonata-allegro*, replete with octave passages and a considerable amount of hand-crossing. It is followed by an F major *Larghetto* with a final set of variations. These latter take as a theme the melody earlier used by Mozart for a set of variations, the romance from the

original music for *Le Barbier de Séville* by Beaumarchais, composed by Antoine-Laurent Baudron. The theme has Count Almaviva introducing himself as a student – *Je suis Lindor* ('I am Lindoro').

Clementi's *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 2, No. 6*, a two movement work, was first published in London by Welcker and later revised by the composer, with a final version issued by Artaria in Vienna in 1807. The opening *Allegro di molto* finds room for chains of thirds and rapid octave passages. It is coupled with a *Prestissimo*, while both movements indulge in rapid chains of thirds, suggesting Clementi's technique grudgingly observed by Mozart at their meeting in Vienna.

Clementi's *Op. 7* includes three sonatas, published first by Artaria in Vienna, with a dedication to Madame de Hess, née Leporini. The first of the set, in E flat major, presents a *sonata-allegro* movement with Clementi's usual clarity of form. The second movement, in A flat major, is marked

Mesto in the first edition and leads to a final *Rondo*. The second sonata, in C major, finds room again for chains of rapid thirds, octave passages and other technical feats. The second of the two movements has the suggestion of a *Minuet*, framing a *Presto* of rapid octaves, before the return of the opening section, followed by a brief coda.

Op. 2 is a set of six sonatas, published in London by Welcker in 1779, first revised by Clementi in 1795, with Nos. 2, 4 and 6 revised again in 1807 for Artaria in Vienna. Originally *Op. 7, No. 2* became *Op. 7, No. 1* in the revised version.

Clementi's *Op. 9* consists of three sonatas, published by Artaria in Vienna in 1783. The *Sonata in C major, Op. 9, No. 2*, starts with a *sonata-allegro* movement, characteristic, in its clarity, of the Vienna period of Clementi's career as a composer. This is followed by a slow movement, marked *Lento* and a *Rondo*, typical of the composer and the period.

Keith Anderson

Sun-A Park

Korean-American pianist Sun-A Park has won First Prize at the Olga & Serge Koussevitzky Young Artists Awards and prizes at the 4th Sendai International Music Competition and the 58th Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition. She has been a soloist with the Yale Philharmonia, the Sendai Symphony Orchestra, the Houston and Albany Symphonies, the Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento, the Castilla y León Symphony Orchestra, and other ensembles. Park began her early piano studies with Seymour Bernstein, completed her undergraduate and graduate studies at The Juilliard School with Yoheved Kaplinsky and Matti Raekallio. In 2014, she completed the prestigious Konzertexamen programme in Hannover Musikhoshule (Germany) in Bernd Goetzke's class. Park is a recipient of the Parisot Prize at the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Boris Berman from 2014 to 2017. Currently, she is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate under the tutelage of Boris Slutsky at the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University.



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Though Mozart was typically grudging, Beethoven had a high regard for Muzio Clementi's compositions. A leading soloist, Clementi was pivotal to the piano's development as a virtuoso instrument, but he was also a publisher and innovator. His sonatas combine clarity of form with moments of bravura brilliance, laced with scintillating hand-crossings and his trademark chains of thirds, on which Mozart commented. Infectiously exciting in *prestissimo* sections, his sonatas offer a compendium of how to exploit new advances in the development of the piano.

Muzio CLEMENTI (1752–1832)

Keyboard Sonata in B flat major, Op. 12, No. 1		Keyboard Sonata in C major, Op. 7, No. 2	
	20:53		15:02
1	I. Presto	9	I. Presto
	7:01		8:19
2	II. Larghetto con espressione	10	II. Andantino quasi allegretto –
	3:12		Presto
3	III. Lindor with variations		6:43
	10:40		
Keyboard Sonata in B flat major, Op. 2, No. 6		Keyboard Sonata in C major, Op. 2, No. 2	
	9:23		12:22
4	I. Allegro di molto	11	I. Presto
	5:54		7:14
5	II. Prestissimo	12	II. Rondo: Spiritoso
	3:28		5:08
Keyboard Sonata in E flat major, Op. 7, No. 1		Keyboard Sonata in C major, Op. 9, No. 2	
	11:55		9:43
6	I. Allegro assai	13	I. Allegro assai
	4:35		3:56
7	II. Mesto	14	II. Lento
	3:58		1:33
8	III. Rondo: Allegro	15	III. Rondo: Allegro spiritoso
	3:22		4:14

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Recorded: 15–16 March 2017 at the Morse Recital Hall, Yale School of Music, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

Producer, engineer and editor: Matthew LeFevre • Booklet note: Keith Anderson

Publisher: Orpheus Edizioni (1–5, 11–12), Boccaccini & Spada Editori (6–10), Braunschweig (13–15)

Cover photo: Gateway to Fonthill Estate, Wiltshire, UK © Fletcher934 / Dreamstime.com



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Playing Time
79:20



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