



CLEMENTI

Piano Music

**5 Variations on a Minuet by Mr Collick
The Black Joke • Musical Characteristics**

Nicholas Rimmer, Fortepiano



Muzio
CLEMENTI
(1752–1832)
Piano Music

5 Variations on a Minuet by Mr Collick, WoO 5 (1793)

1	Theme: A tempo di ballo	5:58
2	Variation 1	1:03
3	Variation 2	0:59
4	Variation 3	0:54
5	Variation 4	0:55
6	Variation 5	1:05
		1:01

Sonata in D major, Op. 25, No. 6 (pub. 1790)

7	Presto	12:30
8	Un poco andante	5:19
9	Rondo: Allegro assai	2:42
		4:25

‘The Black Joke’ with 21 Variations, WoO 2 (1777)

10	Theme	20:25
11	Variation 1	0:40
12	Variation 2	0:44
13	Variation 3	0:43
14	Variation 4	0:49
15	Variation 5	0:41
16	Variation 6	0:44
17	Variation 7	0:41
18	Variation 8	0:45
19	Variation 9	0:40
20	Variation 10	0:38
21	Variation 11	0:40
22	Variation 12	1:38
23	Variation 13	0:37
24	Variation 14	0:37
25	Variation 15	1:44
26	Variation 14 (da capo)	1:00
27	Variation 16	0:53
		1:11

28	Variation 17	1:16
29	Variation 16 (da capo)	0:37
30	Variation 18	0:45
31	Variation 19	0:45
32	Variation 20	0:44
33	Variation 21	0:54

34 Variations on ‘Batti, batti’ from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, WoO 10 (1820) 6:47

**Musical Characteristics
or A Collection of Preludes and Cadences, Op. 19 (1787) 29:17**

35	Preludio I: Haydn	1:59
36	Cadenza: Haydn	1:10
37	Preludio II: Haydn	1:24
38	Preludio I: Koželuch	2:21
39	Cadenza: Koželuch	1:00
40	Preludio II: Koželuch	1:49
41	Preludio I: Mozart	1:39
42	Cadenza: Mozart	1:16
43	Preludio II: Mozart	2:03
44	Preludio I: Sterkel	2:09
45	Cadenza: Sterkel	0:47
46	Preludio II: Sterkel	1:27
47	Preludio I: Vaňhal	2:12
48	Cadenza: Vaňhal	1:13
49	Preludio II: Vaňhal	1:08
50	Preludio I: Clementi	1:31
51	Cadenza: Clementi	1:13
52	Preludio II: Clementi	2:35

53 Canon for Cherubini, WoO 29 (1821) 3:47

Original instrument from the workshop of Muzio Clementi, London,
serial number 504, built c. 1806, length 230 cm.
Straight-strung, triple-strung throughout, compass 5 2/3 octaves, F1 to c4.
Bass F1 to G#, brass strings; mid-range and descant A to c4, iron strings.
English action with leather-covered hammers.

The instrument was restored in England during the 1970s; the extent of the repairs undertaken at this time is unknown. In 2017 the piano was re-strung using historically correct materials and the action was regulated.

Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Piano Music

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, who himself was the author of the Gothic novel *Vathek* and builder of the remarkable folly, Fonthill Abbey. Peter Beckford, as he himself claimed, in 1766 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, Beckford having promised the Pope that he would not attempt to convert the boy to Protestantism. In his *Familiar Letters from Italy to a Friend in England*, published in London in 1805, Beckford gave an account of Clementi's reluctance to ride ten miles or so to the Catholic chapel nearest the Beckford estate. In 1773 Beckford married Louisa Pitt, whose later behaviour gave rise to gossip. It has been suggested that it was as a result of a suspected liaison with Clementi that the latter, in 1774, 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 he 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 & 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 four years.

Among Clementi's pupils in London Elizabeth Hatchett was reputedly outstanding. The only daughter of the well-to-do hair-merchant John Collick, and the subject of a portrait by Gainsborough, she married Charles Hatchett, a man of wide interests, an amateur chemist

and, in business, a coach builder. The Collicks were of French Huguenot origin, hence the less familiar family surname. Clementi's tribute to the Collicks was published in 1793, a set of five variations on a very simple *Minuet* by John Collick ranging from a version in triplets to a gentler fourth version in syncopation and a virtuoso ending.

The *Sonata in D major, Op. 25, No. 6*, the last *Sonata* in a set of six, was published in 1790, with a dedication to Mrs Meyrick, relict of Owen Putland Meyrick, of a well-known Welsh Anglesey family. The Annual Register for 1827 records the death, at the age of 72, of Mrs Meyrick, and, by an odd coincidence, the death in a shooting accident of Clementi's 20-year-old son. The *Sonata* has the expected Classical clarity of form and texture, with an opening *Allegro*, followed by a G major slow movement and a final *Rondo* that includes a minor-key episode.

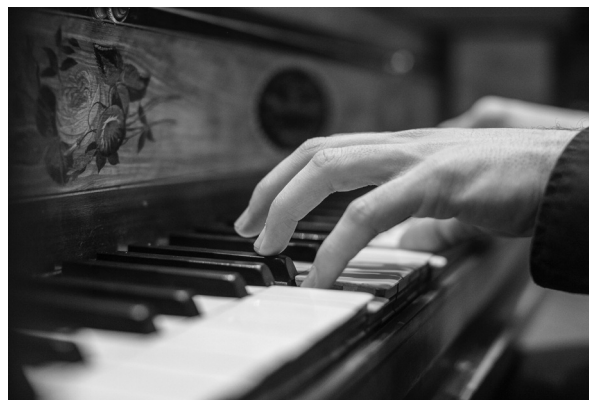
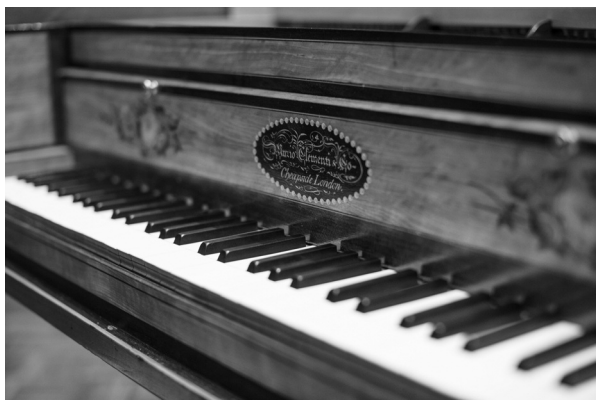
The *Black Joke*, originally with obscene words, enjoyed considerable popularity in the 18th century, whether as an interval tune in the theatre or as a bawdy tavern song, the latter to be seen in the Tavern Scene of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*. Clementi's 21 variations on the theme date from 1777 and presumably the melody here no longer held any improper reference. The 21 variations that follow the theme continue without a break, varied in the eleventh short variation as an *Andante* and moving to G minor in the fourteenth variation, marked *Andante con moto*, ornamented with more elaborate cadences, and repeated *da capo* after the fifteenth variation, a procedure followed with the sixteenth variation.

Clementi's *Variations on 'Batti, batti, o bel Masetto'* takes Zerlina's aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in which Zerlina tries to win back her lover, the jealous Masetto, suspicious of the behaviour of his beloved betrothed with Don Giovanni. Clementi's version, published in 1820, expands passages of the original recitative and aria, and is a virtuoso transcription rather than variations.

Clementi's *Musical Characteristics or A Collection of Preludes and Cadences for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte Composed in the Style of Haydn, Kozeluch, Mozart, Sterkel, Vanhal and of the Author, Op. 19*, was published in London in 1787, its choice of composers reflecting the fashion of the day and musical life in Vienna. The set of pieces opens with a tribute to Haydn, here, as with the other composers featured, consisting of two *Preludes*, framing a *Cadenza*. Haydn was well enough known in London and was to become even better known with his two visits there in the 1790s. The Bohemian composer Leopold Kozeluch made his career in Vienna, succeeding Mozart in the latter's only court position. He was the natural choice of the Scottish publisher George Thomson to follow Pleyel and precede Haydn and Beethoven as setter of British folk songs. Sterkel was court chaplain and later Kapellmeister at Mainz, taking other positions until settling finally in Würzburg. Distinguished as a pianist, he had impressed and seemingly influenced Beethoven, when the latter, with fellow court musicians from Bonn, visited the Abbé Sterkel in Aschaffenburg and heard him play. The Bohemian composer Vanhal (Vaňhal) spent the greater part of his career in Vienna, where his associates included both Haydn and Mozart. The final element in Clementi's collection is the composer himself, who is given even more challenging pieces in which his virtuosity is displayed.

The *Canon for Cherubini* is included in Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, its slower *Introduction* leading to a fugal *Allegro con moto*, a demonstration of the composer's technical ability as a player and contrapuntal skill as a composer.

Keith Anderson



Nicholas Rimmer

Photo: Andrej Grlic



Nicholas Rimmer was born in England and studied in Cambridge, Hanover, Berlin and Cologne. A pianist with a keen interest in chamber music, Lied, as well as in historical keyboard instruments, he has appeared in many major concert venues such as Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle Zürich and the Philharmonie Berlin. He has appeared as soloist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie and the Swiss Chamber Orchestra CHAARTS. His varied discography numbers over 20 albums and includes three recordings for Naxos. His collaborative partnerships with Gabriel Schwabe and Tianwa Yang have resulted in acclaimed recordings of Brahms and Wolfgang Rihm; the latter (8.572730) received a Diapason d'Or, a *Pizzicato* Supersonic Award and an *International Record Review* 'Outstanding' Award. His ensembles include a piano trio, Trio Gaspard, and the Trio Belli-Fischer-Rimmer, a unique combination of trombone, percussion and piano. Nicholas Rimmer regularly collaborates with a diverse range of musicians including Maximilian Hornung, Nils Mönkemeyer, Simon Bode, Ronan Collett and Quatuor Hermès. He also performs live improvisation to silent movies together with percussionist Johannes Fischer. As of 2019 Nicholas Rimmer holds a professorship for piano at the Freiburg University of Music.

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Muzio Clementi's legacy to pianists lies not only in his teaching studies and in his exploration of new levels of virtuosity, but in compositions that were widely admired by contemporaries such as Beethoven. This album explores a variety of pieces, a number of which focus on variations. 'The Black Joke' was a popular English tune garnished by Clementi with 21 successive variations. *Musical Characteristics* captures the styles of leading figures of the time, including Mozart, Haydn and Koželuch, while the *Variations on 'Batti, batti'* is a virtuoso transcription. Nicholas Rimmer plays on an original fortepiano made in Clementi's own workshop around 1806.

Muzio
CLEMENTI
(1752–1832)

CO-PRODUCTION
WITH
BR
KLASSIK

- 1–6** 5 Variations on a Minuet by Mr Collick, WoO 5 (1793) **5:58**
- 7–9** Sonata in D major, Op. 25, No. 6 (pub. 1790) **12:30**
- 10–33** 'The Black Joke' with 21 Variations, WoO 2 (1777) **20:25**
- 34** Variations on 'Batti, batti' from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*,
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- 35–52** Musical Characteristics or
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Nicholas Rimmer, Fortepiano

A co-production with Bayerischer Rundfunk

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 27 February to 2 March 2018 at Bayerischer Rundfunk, Studio 2, Munich, Germany

Executive producer: Falk Häfner (BR)

Recording producer: Eckhard Glauche • Recording engineer: Jochen Fornell

Piano technician: Bernhard Greiner • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson

Cover: *Lichfield Cathedral* by CaronB (iStockphoto.com)

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