

CLEMENTI

Keyboard Sonatas

Op. 1, No. 6 • Op. 1a, Nos. 1, 4 and 5
Op. 13, No. 4 • Op. 24, No. 1 • Op. 26

Soyeon Kate Lee, Piano



Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Keyboard Sonata in E major, Op. 1, No. 6

Keyboard Sonatas, Op. 1a – No. 1 in F major; No. 4 in A major; No. 5 in A minor

Keyboard Sonata in B flat major, Op. 13, No. 4

Keyboard Sonata in F major, Op. 24, No. 1

Keyboard Sonata in F major, Op. 26

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, the cousin of William Beckford, who was the 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 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.

The *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 24, No. 2* had been played in the contest between Clementi and Mozart. The *Sonata in F major, Op. 24, No. 1*, seemingly published in Paris in 1784, has enjoyed less fame. The brilliant first movement, with its hand-crossing, is in due Classical form,

followed by a B flat major *Adagio*. The *Sonata* ends with a theme and variations in a movement that finds a place for a cadenza, before moving into a lively 6/8.

The six sonatas that make up *Op. 1* are dedicated to Sir Peter Beckford and are dated 1771. These pieces were later revised, appearing in a French edition dedicated to Madame Duvivier. The *Sonata in A major, Op. 1a, No. 4* offers two movements, both *Larghetto* and *Tempo di minuetto*, with melodic interest chiefly in the right hand. The *Sonata* is included in the revised version, *Op. 1a*. The fifth work in the revised version is a four-voice fugue in A minor, which is included in the *Gradus ad Parnassum, Op. 44, No. 69*. The first sonata in the revised *Op. 1a* is a *Sonata in F major*, the second of its two movements a set of variations on a melody popular in France at the time, *La pantoufle*.

The *Sonata in E major, Op. 1, No. 6* ends the first set of sonatas.

The *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 13, No. 4* is one of a set of six, published in 1785. It opens with an energetic *Allegro con spirito* which includes chances for technical display. The following *Adagio* is in E flat major, while the rapid final *Allegro assai* is broken by sudden pauses, before the re-emergence of the principal theme.

The *Sonata in F major, Op. 26* was published in 1791. The first movement is in the customary sonata-allegro form and is followed by a *Rondeau* in which dotted rhythms have a recurrent part to play, both movements models of the Classical form in which they are framed.

Keith Anderson

Soyeon Kate Lee

First Prize winner of the Naumburg International Piano Competition and the Concert Artist Guild International Competition, Korean-American pianist, Soyeon Kate Lee has been rapturously received as guest soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as many symphony orchestras across the US. On the international stage, Lee has appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra and the Ulsan Symphony Orchestra (South Korea), the Orquesta de Valencia (Spain) and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (Dominican Republic), including performances under the batons of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jahja Ling, Jorge Mester and Otto-Werner Mueller. As an active chamber musician, she frequently collaborates in many chamber music festivals throughout the US. Soyeon Kate Lee is a Naxos recording artist. Her discography spans Domenico Scarlatti *Keyboard Sonatas, Volumes 8 and 21* (8.570010, 8.573795), Liszt *Transcriptions and Arrangements* (8.572589) and two volumes of *Piano Music* by Scriabin (8.573527, 8.573528), with forthcoming releases of Clementi *Sonatas*. A graduate of The Juilliard School, Lee was awarded every prize available to a pianist at Juilliard, including the William Petschek Piano Debut Award at Lincoln Center and the Arthur Rubinstein Award. She is a Yamaha Artist and an associate professor of music in piano at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. www.soyeonkatelee.com

Photo of Soyeon Kate Lee © Lisa Marie Mazzucco



Muzio Clementi was born four years before Mozart and outlived Beethoven by the same span. His legacy to pianists as a composer and teacher was a significant one, introducing new virtuosity and exploring the expressive possibilities of the piano, a recently developed instrument. Clementi dedicated his youthful *Op. 1* sonatas to his benefactor Peter Beckford, and the brilliant *Sonata in F major, Op. 24, No. 1* is the partner work to *Op. 24, No. 2* played in the famous contest between Clementi and Mozart. In her recording of Scarlatti's *Keyboard Sonatas* (8.573795) Soyeon Kate Lee 'applies her playful imagination to each one, polishing it into a unique gem' (*The WholeNote*).

Muzio CLEMENTI (1752–1832)

Keyboard Sonata in F major, Op. 24, No. 1 (1784) 17:38		Keyboard Sonata in E major, Op. 1, No. 6 (1771) 9:50	
1 I. Allegro assai	8:56	9 I. Moderato	6:32
2 II. Adagio	3:56	10 II. Rondeau: Grazioso	3:13
3 III. Arietta con variazioni	4:42	Keyboard Sonata in F major, Op. 1a, No. 1 (1771) 6:21	
Keyboard Sonata in A major, Op. 1a, No. 4 (1771) 5:45		11 I. Andante	3:08
4 I. Larghetto	3:21	12 II. Allegro	3:12
5 II. Tempo di minuetto	2:18	Keyboard Sonata in A minor, Op. 1a, No. 5 (1771) 6:17	
Keyboard Sonata in B flat major, Op. 13, No. 4 (1785) 13:24		13 I. Fugue: Allegro	
6 I. Allegro con spirito	6:06	Keyboard Sonata in F major, Op. 26 (1791) 14:28	
7 II. Adagio	4:38	14 I. Allegro	9:39
8 III. Allegro assai	2:32	15 II. Rondeau: Allegretto	4:47



Soyeon Kate Lee, Piano

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Playing Time
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