

BYRON SCHENKMAN was voted "Best Classical Instrumentalist" by the readers of the *Seattle Weekly* in 2006. He performs as a soloist, chamber musician, and as harpsichordist with the Seattle Baroque Orchestra. A recipient of the Erwin Bodky Award from the Cambridge Society for Early Music, Schenkman has recorded more than thirty CDs of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century repertoire, including recordings on original instruments from the National Music Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. As a pianist he has been a featured guest with the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston, the Daedalus Quartet, the Northwest Sinfonietta, and Philharmonia Northwest. He has played solo piano recitals in Boston, New York, Peterborough (NH), Portland (OR), Seattle, Vancouver, Winston-Salem, and on a Chilean tour sponsored by Partners of the Americas. His CD of Haydn sonatas on modern piano (Centaur CRC 2806) has been acclaimed for its "elegance, wit, and refinement" (*American Record Guide*), "imaginative, cleanly

articulated form" (*Seattle Times*), and "astonishing sense of humor" (*All Music Guide*). In 2009 he participated in the Haydn and Mendelssohn bicentennial celebrations with performances at the Frick Collection in New York and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Schenkman is a graduate of the New England Conservatory and received his Master of Music degree with honors in performance from the Indiana University School of Music. For more information: www.byronschenkman.com

MUZIO CLEMENTI

BYRON SCHENKMAN, piano



CRC 3078

DDD

Twelve Monferrinas, op. 49	(23:27)
1 no. 1 in G Major	1:27
2 no. 2 in C Major	2:07
3 no. 3 in E Major	1:52
4 no. 4 in A Minor	2:03
5 no. 5 in A Major	2:25
6 no. 6 in D Minor	1:11
7 no. 7 in D Major	1:11
8 no. 8 in E-flat Major	1:21
9 no. 9 in G Major	2:10
10 no. 10 in C Major	2:17
11 no. 11 in F Major	1:51
12 no. 12 in C Major	3:28

Sonata in G Minor, op. 50, no. 3 "Didone abbandonata: Scena tragica"	(24:23)
13 Introduzione:	
Largo patetico e sostenuto	2:29
14 Allegro con espressione	9:28
15 Adagio dolente	4:39
16 Allegro agitato e con disperazione	7:45
Sonata in D Major, op. 25, no. 6	(9:38)
17 Presto	3:13
18 Un poco andante	2:16
19 Rondo: Allegro assai	4:08

Total Time: 57:29

Recorded September 2009 in the Fraser Performance Studio at WGBH Boston. Produced by Peter Sykes. Engineered by Frank Cunningham assisted by Antonio Oliart. Edited by Daniel Cassin. Executive producer: Victor E. Sachse. Cover Photo: William Stickney. Special thanks to Carol Salisbury Culbertson, Rob DeLine and Alan J. Knue, Maia Rose Klevjer, Tom Lewandowski, Heather Stacey Mackler, Peggy Monroe, and Ann Briggs Stickney.

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Muzio Clementi enjoyed a long life and an illustrious career. He was older than Mozart yet he outlived Beethoven and Schubert; and although he was born in the time of Handel and Scarlatti, he lived long enough to hear a performance by Franz Liszt, the great piano virtuoso of the nineteenth century. Clementi was an extraordinary pianist in his own right and a prolific composer whose works include symphonies, songs, chamber music, and dozens of piano sonatas, in addition to the easy sonatinas and other pedagogical pieces for which he is best known. Clementi was also a brilliant entrepreneur who ran his own piano factory and his own publishing company, selling and distributing pianos and piano music to the general public throughout Europe. More than any other individual, he was responsible for the important role piano music has played in western culture for the past 200 years. If you grew up in a home with a piano, if you took lessons as a kid, if you are at all familiar with classical piano

repertoire, you owe that in part to the efforts of Muzio Clementi.

On the title page to his **Twelve Monferrinas, op. 49**, Clementi stated that "a Monferrina is a dance peculiar to the state of Monferrato." Since Clementi was born in Rome and lived in England from the age of fourteen on, it is more likely that he would have been familiar with the English Country Dance version of the Monferrina than any authentically Northern Italian dance. Perhaps he thought the regional Italian reference would be more appealing to his customers -- after all he was a very good businessman. In any case these are small keyboard dances along the lines of Schubert's waltzes or Chopin's mazurkas, with some hints of Beethoven's *Bagatelles* and Schumann's *Papillons* as well.

Clementi's last published work is the **Sonata in G Minor, op. 50, no. 3**, subtitled *Didone Abbandonata: Scena Tragica*. This work simultaneously looks backward to Baroque operas and cantatas based on Greek and Roman mythology

(especially those involving tragic heroines), and forward to Romantic programmatic music, wordless instrumental works intended to depict extramusical scenes. This sonata is inspired by the tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage, who threw herself into a burning funeral pyre after being seduced and abandoned by the Trojan warrior Aeneas. Clementi uses classical sonata form but fills the score with emotional descriptions such as *deliberando*, *meditando*, *lamentando*, *languente*, and *con furia*. He also uses musical tricks to depict emotions, for example in the recapitulation of the first allegro (bars 360-367), where the opening theme is displaced from its accompaniment by one beat. Thus the music seems to be coming apart just as we experience the heroine Dido breaking down emotionally.

In contrast to the late "Dido" Sonata, Clementi's much earlier **Sonata in D Major, op. 25, no. 6**, stays entirely within the bounds of classical style and taste. It is as charming and unabashedly happy as the later sonata is stormy and tragic.

Clementi uses the most straightforward versions of the typical forms for each movement: sonata form for the first movement, da capo form for the second, and rondo form for the third. This is a good example of a late 18th-century keyboard sonata -- simple, elegant, and fresh.

- Byron Schenkman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in Clementi began with an invitation from Rebecca Allan, Head of Education at the Bard Graduate Center, to participate in a concert in conjunction with an exhibition of works by James "Athenian" Stuart. Since Stuart was a pioneer of neoclassicism in late 18th-century England, Rebecca and I put together a program which included Clementi's *Didone Abbandonata* and Haydn's cantata *Arianna a Naxos*, works on classical themes by two of the most important composers active in England around that time. I am always inspired by interdisciplinary connections in art, culture, and history; and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know Clementi's work in that context.

My recording of music by Clementi has been made possible by generous contributions from Joan Algarin, David Chui and Alex Stone, Stuart Cohn, Carol Salisbury Culbertson, Rob DeLine and Alan J. Knue, Bruce Garetz, Bernard Gelb, Tom

Hulscher, Joseph Madden, Peggy Monroe, William Whipple Neely, Joan Rasken and Myles Bradley, Nancy Sharp, Ann Briggs Stickney, Lee Talner, Janice van Cleve, and Lynne Cady White and Matthew Kearney.

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