

CLEMENTI

Monferrinas

WoO 15–20 and Op. 49

Dominic Cheli, Piano



Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Sonata in A flat major, WoO13 • Allegro and Finale, WoO22-23 • Rondo • Canon ad diapason Tarantella • Arie Russe • Six Monferrinas, WoO15-20 • Twelve Monferrinas, Op. 49

Harpisichord Sonata in A flat major, WoO 13	17:48	Twelve Monferrinas, Op. 49	22:33
1 Allegro ma non troppo	6:20	15 No. 1 in G major: Allegro	1:39
2 Larghetto	7:28	16 No. 2 in C major: Allegro non troppo	1:33
3 Allegro assai	3:57	17 No. 3 in E major: Allegretto con espressione	1:56
Allegro and Finale in E flat major, WoO 22–23	9:45	18 No. 4 in C major: Allegretto con molto	1:48
4 Allegro	9:23	19 No. 5 in A major: Allegretto con grazia	2:02
5 Finale (fragment)	0:17	20 No. 6 in D minor: Allegro	1:38
6 Rondo in B flat major, WoO 8	5:12	21 No. 7 in D major: Allegro vivace	1:32
7 Canon ad diapason in C major, WoO 11	1:37	22 No. 8 in B flat major: Vivace assai	1:04
8 Tarantella in A minor, WoO 21	1:09	23 No. 9 in G major: Allegro moderato	2:02
Six Monferrinas, WoO 15–20	9:50	24 No. 10 in C major: Allegro moderato	2:00
9 No. 1 in C major: Allegro con brio	1:02	25 No. 11 in F major: Allegro non troppo	1:51
10 No. 2 in F major: Moderato	1:53	26 No. 12 in C major: Allegro moderato	3:18
11 No. 3 in E flat major: Allegretto	1:46	27 Fourteen Melodies of Different Nations,	
12 No. 4 in G major: Allegro	0:37	WoO 9: No. 5 Air russe	2:10
13 No. 5 in B flat major: Allegramente	1:12		
14 No. 6 in D major: Allegro con grazia	2:57		

Muzio Clementi was born in Rome in 1752, the son of a silversmith. By the age of thirteen he had become proficient enough as a musician to be employed as an organist at the Church of S. 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 of Italian opera from the keyboard.

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 and Broderip and from 1798, after the firm's bankruptcy, with Longman, and others. In the earlier years of the nineteenth 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.

Clementi's *Sonata per cembalo in A flat major* is his earliest surviving work, dated 1765, unpublished in the composer's lifetime, but noted on the manuscript as 'No. 20', suggesting Clementi's prolific activity as a composer by the age of thirteen. In three movements, the sonata, typical in many ways of its period, demonstrates Clementi's early technical competence, with an opening classical *Allegro*, followed by a contrasting slow movement and a rapid finale.

The *Allegro in E flat major, WoO 22*, is a complete sonata movement, perhaps intended for inclusion in the *Gradus ad Parnassum*. The *Finale, WoO 23*, survives only as a fragment, possibly originally intended for the same purpose. The *Rondo in B flat major, WoO 8*, dates from 1802, a year in which Clementi began a period of travel

abroad, largely concerned with business affairs. The *Rondo* is a good example of the various technical devices Clementi had mastered as a keyboard-player, characterised by his use of octaves and of brilliant passages in thirds. The movement is partly based on the second movement of Clementi's *Sonata, Op. 2, No. 5*.

Canon ad diapason in C major, WoO 11, was completed in 1829, and dedicated to Giovan Battista Cramer (Johann Baptist Cramer), his former pupil, who followed his teacher's example as a pianist, and then as a music publisher and instrument manufacturer in London. The title indicates a canon at the octave, the second of the two voices entering in canonic imitation an octave below the first. The *Tarantella in A minor, WoO 21*, is a simple example of the energetic popular Neapolitan dance.

Clementi's *Six Monferrinas, WoO 15–20*, unpublished in the composer's lifetime, may have been intended as part of a further set of twelve, a companion to the earlier *Twelve Monferrinas, Op. 49*, published in 1821. The *Monferrina*, a dance in 6/8, originated in Piedmont, taking its name from Montferrat, but had by the early nineteenth century acquired wider popularity and various spellings. Clementi offers considerable variety within the limits of the form, exploring, as in Op. 49, No. 10, the higher range of the piano, and providing contrast in the central section of each dance. Only Op. 49, No. 6 is in a minor key, but considerable use is made of contrasting major and minor throughout each series, and, as in the last of the Op. 49 set, the lyrical and the dramatic.

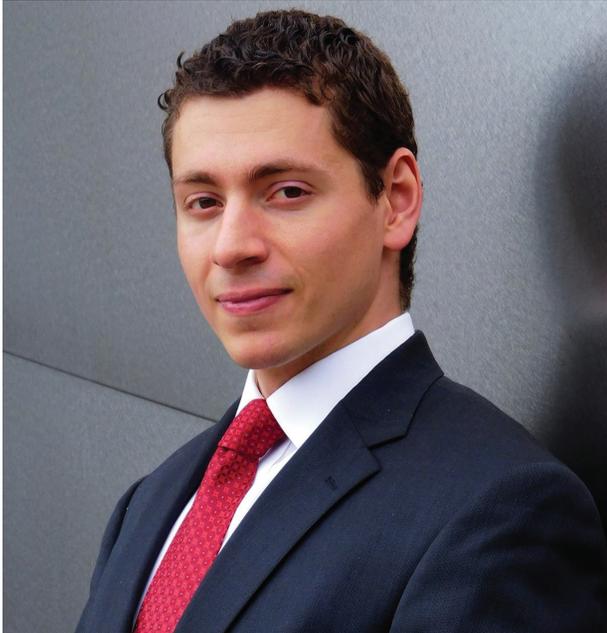
Fourteen Melodies of Different Nations, WoO 9, was published by Clementi in 1814, scored for voice and piano, with words by David Thomson, but equally performable on the piano alone. The Russian airs are bound to suggest the time Clementi spent in Russia, the source of his Russian melodies.

Keith Anderson

Dominic Cheli

Critically acclaimed pianist Dominic Cheli has performed at notable venues including Carnegie Hall in New York and the Sheldon Concert Hall in St. Louis. He received the Elizabeth Pariset Prize and the Charles S. Miller Prize from Yale University as well as the Harold Bauer Award from the Manhattan School of Music. Career highlights include performing Beethoven's *Fourth Piano Concerto* with the Metropolitan Orchestra of St Louis conducted by Dr. Allen Carl Larson. He began his musical training in St. Louis with Zena Ilyashov, received a Bachelor's degree from the Manhattan School of Music studying with André-Michel Schub, and a Master's degree from Yale University working with Peter Frankl. He continued his studies at the Colburn School with Fabio Bidini. www.dominiccheli.com

Photo: Gailla Kastner



Muzio Clementi achieved early success as a widely-travelled pianist, performing for nobility and meeting Mozart, his journeys reflected in the *Melodies of Different Nations*. The *Sonata in A flat major* is his earliest surviving work, and the incomplete *Allegro and Finale* may have been intended as part of the famous *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Naxos 8.572325-8). Based on a popular dance form, the delightful *Monferrinas* reveal Clementi's charming side, each one presenting a uniquely interesting character.

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(1752–1832)

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6	Rondo in B flat major, WoO 8	5:12
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8	Tarantella in A minor, WoO 21	1:09
9–14	Six Monferrinas, WoO 15–20	9:50
15–26	Twelve Monferrinas, Op. 49	22:33
27	Fourteen Melodies of Different Nations, WoO 9: No. 5 Air russe	2:10

Full track details will be found in the booklet



Dominic Cheli, Piano

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Playing Time
70:38



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