

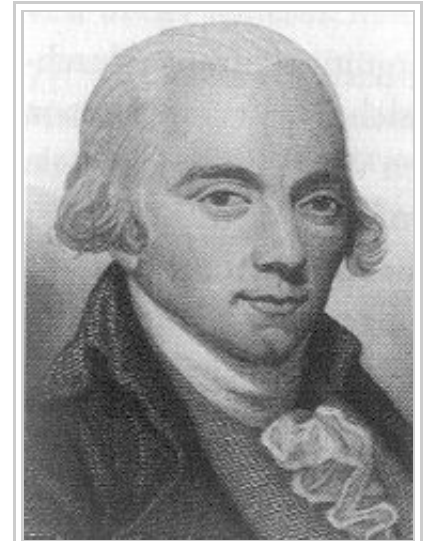
Muzio Clementi

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Muzio Clementi (24 January 1752 – 10 March 1832) was an Italian composer, pianist, pedagogue, conductor, music publisher, editor, and piano manufacturer. Born in Rome, he spent most of his life in England.

Encouraged to study music by his father, he was sponsored as a young composer by Sir Peter Beckford who took him to England to advance his studies. Later, he toured Europe numerous times from his long-time base in London. It was on one of these occasions in 1781 that he engaged in a piano competition with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Influenced by Domenico Scarlatti's harpsichord school and Haydn's classical school and by the *stile galante* of Johann Christian Bach and Ignazio Cirri, Clementi developed a fluent and technical legato style, which he passed on to a generation of pianists, including John Field, Johann Baptist Cramer, Ignaz Moscheles, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Carl Czerny. He was a notable influence on Ludwig van Beethoven.



Muzio Clementi

Clementi also produced and promoted his own brand of pianos and was a notable music publisher. Because of this activity, many compositions by Clementi's contemporaries and earlier artists have stayed in the repertoire. Though the European reputation of Muzio Clementi was second only to Joseph Haydn in his day, his reputation languished for much of the 19th and 20th centuries.^[1]

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Life

Childhood

Muzio Filippo Vincenzo Francesco Saverio Clementi (baptized Mutius Philippus Vincentius Franciscus Xaverius), was born in Rome, Italy, on 24 January 1752, and was baptized the following day at S. Lorenzo in Damaso. He was the eldest of the seven children of Nicolò Clementi (1720–1789), a noted silversmith, and Madalena, née Caisar (Magdalena Kaiser), who was Swiss. Nicolo soon recognized Muzio's musical talent and arranged for private musical instruction with a relative, Antonio Baroni, the maestro di cappella at St. Peter's Basilica.^[2]

Education

At the age of seven Clementi began studies in figured bass with the organist Cordicelli, followed by voice lessons from Giuseppe Santarelli. A few years later, probably when he was 11 or 12, he was given counterpoint lessons by Gaetano Carpani. By age 13 Clementi had already composed an oratorio, *Martitio de' gloriosi Santi Giuliano*, and a mass. When he was 14, in January of 1766, he became organist of the parish San Lorenzo in Dámaso.^[2]

Move to England

In 1766, Sir Peter Beckford (1740–1811), a wealthy Englishman and cousin of the novelist William Thomas Beckford, twice Lord Mayor of London, visited Rome. He was impressed by the young Clementi's musical talent and negotiated with his father to take him to his estate, Steepleton Iwerne, north of Blandford Forum in Dorset, England. Beckford agreed to provide quarterly payments to sponsor the boy's musical education until he reached age 21. In return, he was expected to provide musical entertainment. For the next seven years Clementi lived, performed, and studied at the estate in Dorset. During this period, it appears, Clementi spent eight hours a day at the harpsichord, practicing the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, George Frideric Handel, Domenico Scarlatti, Alessandro Scarlatti and Bernardo Pasquini. His only compositions dated to this period are the Sonatas WO 13 and 14 and the *Sei Sonate per clavicembalo o pianoforte, Op. 1*.^[2]

In 1770 Clementi made his first public performance as an organist. The audience was reported to be impressed with his playing, thus beginning one of the outstandingly successful concert pianist careers of the period.

In 1774, Clementi was freed from his obligations to Peter Beckford. During the winter of 1774–1775 he moved to London, making his first appearance as a harpsichordist in a benefit concert on April 3, 1775. He made several public appearances in London as a solo harpsichordist at benefit concerts for two local musicians, a singer and a harpist, and served as conductor (from the keyboard) at the King's Theatre (Her Majesty's Theatre), Haymarket, for at least part of this time.

Mozart

Clementi started a three year European tour in 1780, travelling to Paris, France, where he performed for Queen Marie Antoinette; Munich, Germany; and Salzburg, Austria. In Vienna, he agreed to enter a musical contest with Mozart for the entertainment of Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II and his guests on 24 December 1781, at

the Viennese court. The composers were called upon to improvise and to perform selections from their own compositions. The Emperor diplomatically declared a tie.

January 12, 1782, Mozart reported to his father: "Clementi plays well, as far as execution with the right hand goes. His greatest strength lies in his passages in 3rds. Apart from that, he has not a kreuzer's worth of taste or feeling - in short he is a mere mechanicus." In a subsequent letter, he wrote: "Clementi is a charlatan, like all Italians. He marks a piece presto but plays only allegro."

Clementi's impressions of Mozart, by contrast, were enthusiastic. Much later, the pianist Ludwig Berger recalled him saying of Mozart: "Until then I had never heard anyone play with such spirit and grace. I was particularly overwhelmed by an adagio and by several of his extempore variations for which the Emperor had chosen the theme, and which we were to devise alternately."

Despite later attempts to portray the two as rivals, there is no evidence that their meeting was not cordial. At the time Clementi was exploring a more virtuosic and flamboyant style, and this might explain Mozart's disparaging attitude. One of the pieces he performed was his Op.11 toccata, a display piece full of parallel thirds. It would appear that later on Mozart's opinion might have undergone some modification. As noted by Hermann Abert in his "W. A. Mozart", the set of variations K.500 of 1786 "includes a handful of novel pianistic effects that are foreign to Mozart's earlier style and that clearly reflect the influence of Clementi".^[3]

Mozart used the opening motif of Clementi's B-flat major sonata (Op. 24, No. 2) in his overture for *The Magic Flute*. It was not unusual for composers to borrow from one another, and this might be considered a compliment. Though Clementi noted in subsequent publications of his sonata that it had been written ten years before Mozart's opera—presumably to make clear who was borrowing from whom—Clementi retained an admiration for Mozart, as reflected in the large number of transcriptions he made of Mozart's music, among which is a piano solo version of the *Zauberflöte* overture.

Teaching

From 1783, and for the next twenty years, Clementi stayed in England, playing the piano, conducting, and teaching. Several of his students include: Johann Baptist Cramer, Ignaz Moscheles, Therese Jansen Bartolozzi, Ludwig Berger (who went on to teach Felix Mendelssohn), and John Field (who, in his turn, would become a major influence on Frédéric Chopin).

Publishing and piano manufacturing

In 1790 Clementi made the decision to give up his performing career, possibly in order to bolster his reputation as a composer.^[2] In 1798 he took over the firm Longman and Broderip at 26 Cheapside (then the most prestigious shopping street in London), initially with James Longman, who left in 1801.^[4] Clementi also had offices at 195 Tottenham Court Road from 1806. The publication line, "Clementi & Co, & Clementi, Cheapside" appears on a lithograph, "Music" by W Sharp after J Wood, circa 1830s.

Clementi also began manufacturing pianos, but on 20 March 1807 a fire destroyed the warehouses occupied by his new firm in Tottenham Court Road, resulting in a loss of about £40,000.^[citation needed] That same year, Clementi struck a deal with Ludwig van Beethoven, one of his greatest admirers, which gave him full

publishing rights to all of Beethoven's music in England. He edited and interpreted Beethoven's music but has received criticism for editorial work such as making harmonic "corrections" to some of Beethoven's scores.

That Beethoven, in his later life, started to compose chamber music specifically for the British market may relate to the fact that his publisher lived in London.

In 1810 Clementi stopped concertizing in order to devote his time to composition and to piano making. On 24 January 1813, together with a group of prominent professional musicians in England, he founded the "Philharmonic Society of London", which became the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1912. In 1813 Clementi was appointed a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music.

Meanwhile, his pianoforte business had flourished, affording him an increasingly elegant lifestyle. As an inventor and skilled mechanic he made important improvements in the construction of the piano, some of which have become standard in instruments to this day.

Final years

At the end of 1816 Clementi made another trip to the continent to present his new works, particularly at the Concerts Spirituels in Paris. He returned to London in June 1818, after stopping off in Frankfurt. In 1821 he once again returned to Paris, conducting his symphonies in Munich and Leipzig. In London in 1824 his symphonies were featured in five of the six programs at the 'Concerts of Ancient and Modern Music' at the King's Theatre.

In 1826 Clementi completed his collection of keyboard studies, *Gradus ad Parnassum*, and set off for Paris with the intention of publishing the third volume of the work simultaneously in Paris, London and Leipzig. After staying in Baden and most likely making another visit to Italy, he returned to London in the autumn of 1827.

On 17 December 1827, a large banquet was organised by Johann Baptist Cramer and Ignaz Moscheles in his honor at the Hotel Albion. Moscheles, in his diary, says that on that occasion Clementi improvised at the piano on a theme by George Frideric Handel. In 1828 he made his last public appearance at the opening concert of the Philharmonic Society. In 1830 he retired from the Society.

Clementi moved to the outskirts of Lichfield, Staffordshire, in 1830, and spent his final years in Evesham, Worcestershire, where, on 10 March 1832, after a short illness, he died. He was eighty years old. On 29 March 1832, he was buried at Westminster Abbey. Accompanying his body were three of his students: Johann Baptist Cramer, John Field and Ignaz Moscheles. He had been married three times and is said to have had four children.

Music

See also: List of compositions by Muzio Clementi

As a composer of Classical piano sonatas, Clementi was among the first to create keyboard works expressly for the capabilities of the pianoforte. He has been called "Father of the Pianoforte".^[5]

Of Clementi's playing in his youth, Moscheles wrote that it was "marked by a most beautiful legato, a supple touch in lively passages, and a most unfailing technique." Domenico Scarlatti may be said to have closed the old and Clementi to have founded the newer school of technique on the piano.

Debussy's piece "Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum" (the first movement of his suite *Children's Corner*) makes playful allusion to Clementi's collection of Etudes *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

Clementi composed almost 110 piano sonatas. Some of the earlier and easier ones were later classified as sonatinas after the success of his Sonatinas Op. 36. Erik Satie, a contemporary of Debussy, would later parody these sonatinas (specifically the Sonatina Op. 36, No. 1) in his *Sonatine bureaucratique*. However, most of Clementi's sonatas are more difficult to play than those of Mozart, who wrote in a letter to his sister that he would prefer her not to play Clementi's sonatas due to their jumped runs, and wide stretches and chords, which he thought might ruin the natural lightness of her hand.^[6]

In addition to the piano solo repertoire, Clementi wrote a great deal of other music, including several recently pieced together, long worked on but slightly unfinished symphonies. A likely reason that these later works were not published in Clementi's lifetime is that he kept revising them.

Clementi's influence extended well into the 19th century, with composers using his sonatas as models for their keyboard compositions. Ludwig van Beethoven, in particular, had the highest regard for Clementi. Beethoven often played Clementi sonatas and often a volume of them was on his music stand. Beethoven recommended these works to many people including his nephew Karl. The most accurate description of Beethoven's regard for Clementi's music can be found in the testimony of his assistant, Anton Schindler, who wrote "He (Beethoven) had the greatest admiration for these sonatas, considering them the most beautiful, the most pianistic of works, both for their lovely, pleasing, original melodies and for the consistent, easily followed form of each movement. The musical education of his beloved nephew was confined for many years almost exclusively to the playing of Clementi sonatas." (*Beethoven as I Knew Him*, ed. Donald M. McArdle, trans. Constance Jolly, Chapel Hill and London, 1966). Schindler continues with reference to Beethoven's fondness for Clementi's piano sonatas: "For these he had the greatest preference and placed them in the front rank of pieces appropriate to the development of fine piano playing, as much for their lovely, pleasing, fresh melodies as for the well knit, fluent forms of all the movements." In Moscheles edition of Schindler's biography he quotes Schindler as follows: "Among all the masters who have written for pianoforte, Beethoven assigned to Clementi the very foremost rank. He considered his works excellent as studies for practice, for the formation of a pure taste, and as truly beautiful subjects for performance. Beethoven used to say...'They who thoroughly study Clementi, at the same time make themselves acquainted with Mozart and other composers; but the converse is not the fact.' "

Carl Czerny also had the highest regard for Clementi's piano sonatas and used them successfully in his teaching of Franz Liszt. Czerny referred to Clementi as "the foremost pianist of his time."

Vladimir Horowitz developed a special fondness for Clementi's work after his wife, Wanda Toscanini, bought him Clementi's complete works. He recorded five of Clementi's Sonatas along with shorter pieces.

With ministerial decree dated 20 March 2008, the Opera Omnia of the composer Muzio Clementi was promoted to the status of Italian National Edition. The steering committee of the National Edition consisting of the scholars Andrea Coen (Rome), Roberto De Caro (Bologna), Roberto Illiano (Lucca — President), Leon B.

Plantinga (New Haven, CT), David Rowland (Milton Keynes, UK), Luca Sala (Paris/Poitiers, Secretary and Treasurer), Massimiliano Sala (Pistoia, Vice-President), Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald (Cambridge, UK) and Valeria Tarsetti (Bologna).

Notes

1. ^ <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/96may/clementi/clementi.htm>
2. ^ *a b c d* MuzioClementi.com (<http://www.muzioclementi.com/crono.php?l=ing>)
3. ^ W. A. Mozart, Hermann Abert, translated by Stewart Spencer , Yale University, 2007
4. ^ Michael Cole (10 October 2013). "Longman & Broderip" (<http://www.squarepianos.com/longman.html>). Retrieved 27 October 2013.
5. ^ "Father of the Pianoforte" (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mnwzz>). [bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk). Retrieved 12 May 2013.
6. ^ Letters of Mozart to his Family, 3rd Edition, 1966, ed. Emily Anderson, Norton: Letter No 491 to his Father, 7 June 1783 (page 850): Paragrabh 2, line 4

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- Tyson, Alan (1967). *Thematic catalogue of the works of Muzio Clementi*. Tutzing: Schneider. OCLC 457741.
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- R. Illiano, L. Sala, M. Sala (eds.): *Muzio Clementi. Studies and Prospects* (Bologna 2002)
- M. Sala, R. Bösel (eds.): *Muzio Clementi Cosmopolita della Musica* (Bologna 2004)
- R. H. Stewart-MacDonald: *New Perspectives on the Keyboard Sonatas of Muzio Clementi* (Bologna 2006)

External links

- www.MuzioClementi.com (English) (<http://www.muzioclementi.com/home.php?l=ing>)
- Muzio Clementi Society website (<http://www.clementisociety.com/>)
- Muzio Clementi Biography by Tel Asiado on [mozartforum.com](http://www.mozartforum.com) (<http://www.mozartforum.com/Lore/article.php?id=526>)
- Muzio Clementi Biography on LoveToKnow 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica (http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Muzio_Clementi)
- The Finished Symphonies - Muzio Clementi, by William H. Youngren on Atlantic Monthly 1996.05. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96may/clementi/clementi.htm>)
- Free scores by Muzio Clementi at the International Music Score Library Project
- Free scores (<http://www.mutopiaproject.org/cgi-bin/make-table.cgi?Composer=ClementiM>) at the Mutopia Project

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