

SIX PROGRESSIVE SONATINAS FOR THE PIANO FORTE, OP. 36

("With Considerable Improvements")

By Muzio Clementi (1752-1832)

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PREFACE

Why a New Edition?

Errors

Ascertaining a composer's intentions has been, for quite some time, considered the gold standard for critical editions. But what happens when the composer and/or engraver – undoubtedly due to haste or carelessness – fails to catch extensive errors before publication?

It appears that virtually every edition – without exception, past and present – of these pedagogically invaluable *Sonatinas* has considerable errors (both slight and egregious) and discrepancies (intentional and inadvertent). That includes the six editions that Clementi himself published in his day! The good news, however, is that most errors were ones of omission, which are clarified once *all* the primary sources are carefully scrutinized.

A comprehensive and definitive edition is long overdue and, in this case, has been over two decades in the making. This edition takes into account *every* primary source – not to mention quite a few secondary ones, for good measure. Copious footnotes – historically informed, creative, and singularly befitting my "joie de vivre" relationship to musicology and life – are also included.

At worst, many of the current popular editions have numerous spurious editorial markings and little or no regard for primary source fidelity. At best, the editions with a modicum of textual integrity are based on *only one* error-ridden primary source – either the 1801 First Edition (most commonly) or the Sixth Edition (c. 1820). This edition considers Clementi's Fifth Edition (c. 1815) the relatively most reliable and determinative primary source – one that has apparently been largely, if not completely, overlooked in the issuance of editions since Clementi's day.

Clementi's "Considerable Improvements" (original version vs. revised version)

Muzio Clementi's *Six Progressive Sonatinas, Op. 36* was first published in 1797 by Longman & Broderip. Clementi later reissued the *Sonatinas* in his First through Fourth Editions, which form the basis for almost all current editions. These original editions are collectively referred to herein as Clementi's original version – the popularity of which makes it known worldwide to virtually every pianist who has advanced to an intermediate level. Around 1815, however, Clementi issued a Fifth Edition with stunning revisions, unknown to many, if not most, pianists today. Clementi boldly wrote "*With Considerable Improvements by the Author*" on the cover page of this revised edition. Many details (e.g., notes, dynamics, tempos, and articulations) were altered – sometimes subtly, sometimes significantly. Numerous passages were transposed up one octave to exploit the greater range of the evolving piano. Clementi also introduced intriguing damper pedal markings (wholly absent in the original editions).

To the best of my knowledge, no other revised version of all six of the *Sonatinas, Op. 36* is commercially in print at the time of this publication. There are current publications containing individual movements, and one edition that includes both the fourth and sixth *Sonatinas* (*Sonatinen Für Klavier II Klassik, Henle Vol. 340*). However, other revised version editions are based solely on Clementi's Sixth Edition (for the most part, a reissue of the Fifth), published around 1820. On the face of it, it would seem logical to assume that Clementi's last publication of the *Sonatinas* would be his best and final version. Regrettably, however, his Sixth Edition has many errors (mostly of omission) that can only be corrected by careful comparison with the preceding Fifth Edition, which is generally – but not always – more trustworthy. Furthermore, Clementi appears to have omitted a number of important details (e.g., dynamic indications) from *both* his revised (Fifth and Sixth) editions. These illuminating details can only be discovered by examining the original version sources (First through Fourth Editions) as well....

SOURCES AND CHRONOLOGY

Original version editions

- The autograph of Op. 36 is lost. Longman & Broderip, instrument makers and music publishers, issued the first publication in London. Clementi was a partner in this firm. This publication was entered at Stationers Hall on March 27, 1797. [Source: the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.]
- Messrs. Longman & Broderip declared bankruptcy in 1798. Clementi entered a new partnership with John Longman. Longman later left the partnership; Clementi then headed the new firm of Clementi, Bangor, Hyde, Collard, & Davis (later calling the firm simply Muzio Clementi & Co. or Clementi & Co.).

In 1801, Clementi asserted the teaching value of his *Sonatinas* by including them as a supplement to his INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF PLAYING ON THE PIANOFORTE. At about the same time, Muzio Clementi & Co also published the *Sonatinas* separately. This is referred to as the First Edition printing (despite being preceded by the 1797 printing), since it was for the first time issued by Clementi's own firm. [Source: the Interlibrary Services and the Sidney Cox Library of Music and Dance at Cornell University.]

- The Second Edition was issued by Clementi around 1805. It is an exact reproduction of the 1797 edition as published by Longman & Broderip. [Source: the Music Reproductions department of the British Library, London.]
- George Gough published the *Sonatinas* in Dublin, c. 1801-1807. [Source: the Music Reproductions department of the British Library, London.]
- Clementi issued The Third and Fourth Editions sometime between approximately 1806 and 1814. [Source: the Harvard University Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library.]
- The *Sonatinas* were included in volume XI of *Oeuvres complètes de Muzio Clementi* in Leipzig by Breitkopf & Härtel, c. 1803-1819. [Source: the Sibley Music Library of the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester.]

Revised version editions

- Clementi issued his highly revised Fifth Edition ("With considerable improvements by the Author" boldly stated on the cover page) around 1815. [Source: the Music Reproductions department of the British Library, London. Audrey Raymond supplied another copy, which likely originated from an old royal family in England. For more information see Sonata 3, footnote (C).]
- The Sixth Edition was issued by Clementi around 1820. It generally follows The Fifth Edition but, regrettably, introduces numerous typographical errors. [Source: the Music Reproductions department of the British Library, London.]

FOOTNOTES (excerpts)

FIRST, A NOTE ABOUT REPEATS

Ten of the seventeen movements in *Op. 36* have indications for one or more sections to be repeated (repeat signs or da capo). Performers should strongly consider playing Clementi's original version (i.e., most editions in print) on the first time through, followed by his revised version (this edition) on the second time.

Here are three rationales for this:

1. It was common practice in Clementi's day to vary repeats to keep the listener's interest.* What better way to do this than to present both versions of these timeless masterpieces of sonatina form?
2. Listeners will have a better appreciation of the changes Clementi made if they hear the original version first, followed by his revised version. And if there are teachers who have grown weary of these often-played "student" pieces, the revised version may, in particular, breathe new life into these musical treasures.
3. The notion that *all* of Clementi's "considerable improvements" are, in fact, superior is highly subjective. Many – perhaps even most – of his revised edition changes indeed seem inspired and more interesting (e.g., the unexpected and rather poignant B Minor harmony in the second half of m. 64, first movement, *Sonatina No. 6*). On the other hand, can we assert that all of his many ascending octave transpositions are truly "improvements?" The recapitulation in the first movement of *Sonatina No. 6* is especially charming – see 6/i (J), mm. 58-62. But other octave transpositions (e.g., in 1/i), while delightfully different, are arguably not compositionally better. When asked if all of Clementi's revised version changes were truly improvements, the renowned musicologist Sandra Rosenblum alluded to Clementi's business acumen. In an email (dated 7/22/98), she wrote: "Clementi's revisions [were] motivated at least as much by potential sales as by artistic improvements." She went on to write this about Clementi's pianos: "Probably in 1797 it was 5 octaves; by 1810-12 it had grown to 6 octaves CC-c4. He [transposed up the octave] not because he had gotten a larger piano but because people were buying pianos with larger keyboards and he wanted to sell new editions..." Every new edition Clementi issued (whether it had trivial or significant changes) meant more sales of *Op. 36*. Nevertheless, it would be excessively cynical to attribute *all* his revisions merely to avarice. His revisions clarify, delight, fascinate, and – regardless of their relative merits – abundantly demonstrate that there need not always be one and only one "authentic" purist version.....

**One possible caveat: Clementi wrote that "the second part of a piece, if VERY LONG, is seldom repeated, notwithstanding the dots." However, can any Op. 36 movement be truly considered "VERY LONG?"*

Third movement: ALLEGRO DI MOLTO [Sonatina No. 3] excerpt:

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (measures 25-29) begins with a *g^{ua}* marking and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 30-34) is marked *loco* and *p*, featuring extensive fingerings and a *f* dynamic. The third system (measures 35-39) includes a *cresc.* marking and a circled *f* dynamic. The fourth system (measures 40-44) concludes with *dim.*, *p*, and *pp* dynamics, and a circled *pp* dynamic. A *3/5* time signature is indicated at the bottom left, and a *Fed* signature is at the bottom center. A dashed line above the first system indicates a repeat or continuation.

SONATINA III

Third movement: ALLEGRO DI MOLTO [Sonatina No. 3]

♩ = 108 – 132 (editorial suggestion; Clementi indicated no metronome marks)

(O): Original editions are marked ALLEGRO; Clementi added DI MOLTO to the revised editions. So his revised version tempo is definitely faster than his original version tempo. But how much faster? Leopold Mozart cited this slight difference between MOLTO and ASSAI: "MOLTO ALLEGRO is a little slower than ALLEGRO ASSAI." Clementi simply defined both ASSAI and DI MOLTO as "very." That said, it seems likely that Clementi would have also made Leopold Mozart's subtle distinction, for three reasons:

1. The original editions of 5/iii were marked ALLEGRO DI MOLTO, but in the revised editions Clementi changed it to ALLEGRO ASSAI. If MOLTO and ASSAI were identical, why bother to make this change?
2. Leopold Mozart's famous 1756 treatise (in which he cites the aforementioned tempo distinction) had far and wide influence in Clementi's day.
3. The Rondo of *Sonatina No. 5* has a more pronounced feeling of one beat to the bar than the Rondo of *Sonatina No. 3* (as evidenced, for example, by the one-bar slurs in the right hand melody). Therefore, it makes sense that 5/iii (ASSAI) should go somewhat faster than 3/iii (MOLTO).

Interestingly, the Theodore Baker dictionary contradicts Leopold Mozart by defining ASSAI, not MOLTO, as the slightly slower tempo; that dictionary, however, was issued about a century later, in 1895. Modern dictionaries rarely make a distinction between the two qualifiers. See also 1/i (A) regarding Clementi's hierarchy of tempos.

(R) [mm. 43-44]: Compositionally speaking, these two measures are unnecessary; Clementi could have proceeded from the dominant seventh harmony at m. 42 directly to its tonic resolution at m. 45. However, when dominant seventh chords are suspended via fermatas or rests (in this case, the downbeat eighth rest at m. 43), Classic period practice allows for the performer to extend and heighten the suspense of such unresolved chords by interjecting improvisatory "lead-in" passages, or *Eingänge* (literally, "entrances"), which transition back to the main theme. Clementi has, in essence, given us a written out "lead-in" flourish in mm. 43-44.

Clementi presented a simpler version of this lead-in (mm. 43-44) in his original version:

Original version, mm. 42-46:

In the revised version, one could conceivably extend Clementi's "lead-in" tastefully – e.g., as follows:

Possible two-bar extension at m. 43:

Or, perhaps a more frisky three-bar extension: