

# CLEMENTI

## Keyboard Sonatas

Op. 33, Nos. 2 and 3 • Op. 46

Op. 25, Nos. 1 and 3

Stefan Chaplikov, Piano



## Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

**Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 33, No. 3**

**Piano Sonata in F major, Op. 33, No. 2**

**Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 46**

**Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 25, No. 1**

**Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 25, No. 3**

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, 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 time 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 and 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.

Three sonatas, *Op. 33*, were published in London by Longman and Broderip in 1794. The third of these, the *Sonata in C major, Op. 33, No. 3*, may be derived from an earlier piano concerto, or, as some have suggested, be the work from which a piano concerto had been arranged. The

concerto is found in a 1796 copy by Johann Baptist Schenk. If it is the work of Clementi in this form, it may be taken as representative of concertos that formed part of his concert repertoire in the 1780s, no other example of which has survived. It opens with a brilliant sonata-form movement which includes demands for virtuosity, with due place found for a cadenza. The second of the three movements, marked *Adagio e cantabile, con grand' espressione* and in F major, provides an operatic aria that would be worthy of Mozart's Vienna, concluding with a brief cadenza. The sonata ends in a *rondo* that offers chances for virtuoso display.

The preceding sonata of the set, the *Sonata in F major, Op. 33, No. 2*, also offers opportunities for technical display, with its use of octaves and the occasional run of thirds. It opens with a slow introduction, followed by a contrasting *Allegro con fuoco*. The second of the two movements, *Presto, legato assai*, is again replete with scale runs, contrasting with the *sostenuto* principal theme.

It was after a gap in sonata publication of some 15 years that, in 1820, Clementi published his *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 46*, which he dedicated to the pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner, based at that time in London. The first

movement opens with a slow introduction, followed by a rapid *Allegro con brio*, the whole work in the classical language of which Kalkbrenner proclaimed himself the last master. The second movement, *Adagio cantabile e sostenuto* in E flat major, additionally marked *Sempre legato*, leads to a final *Allegro con fuoco*, its rapid progress only occasionally broken by pauses for breath or dramatic effect.

Clementi's *Op. 25* sonatas, a set of six, were first published in London in 1790. The first of the group, the *Sonata in C major*, finds a significant place in its opening sonata-form movement for chains of rapid thirds, a feature so belittled by Mozart. The F major slow movement, with its customary elaborate ornamentation, leads to a lively final *Rondo*. The third of the set, the *Sonata in B flat major, Op. 25, No. 3*, is in two movements, a sonata-form *Allegro* and a *Rondo*, both demonstrating Clementi's lucid style of writing, within the conventions of his time, the second movement bringing its own surprises as sudden pauses mark its progress.

**Keith Anderson**

### **Stefan Chaplikov**

Born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Stefan Chaplikov began his musical studies with Elena Velcheva and made his concert debut in Sofia at the age of eleven as a soloist with the Sofia Soloists chamber ensemble. He studied at the Conservatoire de Paris with Michell Béroff and was a Rebanks Family Fellow at The Glenn Gould School under the tutelage of John Perry. He was awarded an Artist Diploma at Yale School of Music, where he studies with Peter Frankl, and is now a doctoral student in Leon Fleisher's studio at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. His career as a pianist has taken him to venues throughout Europe and North America. Recent highlights include performing Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4* with the Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Dian Chobanov. He has recorded an album 'Brahms: Variations' for the 'Young soloists' collection of the Conservatoire de Paris.

Photo © Chengcheng Yao



With a European reputation second only to Haydn's during his lifetime, Muzio Clementi was highly regarded by Beethoven as a composer and his impact on music in general and the piano in particular as a performer, publisher and innovator cannot be ignored. With its cadenzas and dazzling virtuoso display, the *Sonata Op. 33, No. 3* has the expressive range of a piano concerto, including an aria-like *Adagio* worthy of Mozart's Vienna. Clementi was noted for his technical brilliance with runs in thirds, a hallmark found in the *Op. 25* sonata alongside surprisingly operatic pauses, and a captivatingly lucid style of writing that always sounds freshly minted.

**Muzio  
CLEMENTI**  
(1752–1832)

<p><b>Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 33, No. 3 (1794) 18:33</b></p> <p>1 Allegro con spirito 9:08</p> <p>2 Adagio e cantabile, con grand' espressione 3:56</p> <p>3 Presto 5:26</p> <p><b>Piano Sonata in F major, Op. 33, No. 2 (1794) 11:01</b></p> <p>4 Adagio – Allegro con fuoco 7:10</p> <p>5 Presto, legato assai 3:51</p> <p><b>Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 46 (1820) 21:08</b></p> <p>6 Larghetto cantabile – Allegro con brio 8:43</p> <p>7 Adagio cantabile e sostenuto 6:13</p> <p>8 Finale: Allegro con fuoco 6:11</p>	<p><b>Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 25, No. 1 (1790) 13:52</b></p> <p>9 Allegro di molto 6:23</p> <p>10 Adagio 3:43</p> <p>11 Rondo: Presto 3:44</p> <p><b>Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 25, No. 3 (1790) 8:59</b></p> <p>12 Allegro 5:08</p> <p>13 Rondo: Vivace 3:51</p>
---	---



**Stefan Chaplikov, Piano**

Recorded: 12–14 June 2016 at Morse Recital Hall, Yale School of Music, New Haven, Connecticut, USA  
 Producer: Eugene Kimball • Engineer and editor: Matthew LeFevre • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson  
 Cover image: Fountain in Regent's Park, London (© Photo London UK / Dreamstime.com)



8.573712

DDD

Playing Time  
73:42



Made in Germany  
[www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com)

© & © 2018 Naxos Rights US, Inc.  
Booklet notes in English