

EXAMPLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLEMENTI'S FOUR-HAND PIANO SONATA

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SUMMARY. Muzio Clementi exploits the possibilities of duet texture more, individualizing the middle voices as a separate layer. However, it cannot compete with the refinement of the interweaving of voices in Mozart's duets. The bass and middle voices often provide a supporting function for the melodic material concentrated in the primo part. Clementi's four-hand sonatas are among the earliest significant works of four-hand piano in musical history. They reflect the composer's individual and intense journey through the genre and the variety of his approaches.

Keywords: Muzio Clementi, Sonata, piano four-hands, development

Introduction

Almost all of M. Clementi's sonatas composed before 1780 were in two parts, including Op. 3. The two-movement sonata was typical for England at the time: about 80% of keyboard sonatas were of this type. The use of three-part sonatas was the result of continental influences, perhaps even a necessity for the sake of publications and sales. The Op. 6 and Op. 14 sonatas are in three movements, except for the second sonata in Op. 14, which is in two movements. This is probably because M. Clementi considered this opus to be a cycle. M. Clementi conceived this opus as a cycle, and the compact sonata in the middle of the cycle was conceived as an "interlude". The basic principle of the cycle structure in the four-hand sonatas is one of contrast. In the two-part sonata cycle, the first movement in sonata form is followed by a rondo in a somewhat slower or faster tempo than Allegro; in the three-part cycle, a slow middle section follows. M. Clementi's treatment

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of the cycle suggests a typical tonal relationship between movements: tonic-subdominant-tonic (T-S-T), which is true of the three-part sonatas in Op. 6 and No. 1 Op. 14. The middle movement in the dominant key (D) of Op. 6 and Op. 1 is written in the middle part of Sonata No. 3 or No. 14.

The purpose of this research is to explore and analyze the wealth of intrinsic value that is to be found in M. Clementi's sonatas written for piano duets (two performers at one piano). This research is concerned with the literature for piano duets which is of a caliber transcending pure pedagogy. Another object of this research is to show what a remarkable amount of art has been cast in the form of piano duets literature of M. Clementi.

It is to be hoped that, after extensive study of the M. Clementi's sonatas, will be thoroughly, convinced that music for piano duets is of considerable scope and importance, and it is to be hoped that the existence of professional duet teams will be encouraged. In very recent years performing artists have become aware of the worth of the extensive literature for four hands. Ralph Berkowitz says that "for a truly rewarding experience pianists should, of course, play and study this type of ensemble music for themselves".²

Features of the Sonata – Form, Development and Thematism

M. Clementi was a virtuoso pianist. He composed works for the piano that are considered outstanding in the classical piano literature. "Clementi's name and reputation have long been inextricably linked with the piano, says Leon Plantinga, a musicologist whose studies have greatly influenced research on Clementi. The major themes of his adult life - composing, performing, teaching, arranging, publishing, and producing - were all related to the instrument."³

During his lifetime, Clementi has been called "the Father of the Piano, the Father of playing the piano, the Father of the piano sonata". M. Clementi's piano sonatas are musically delightful. However, the technical difficulties of performance were considerable and comparable to those of L. v. Beethoven's piano sonatas. Although M. Clementi's works appealed to L. v. Beethoven, the assessments were not unanimous: "Mozart disapproved of passages consisting of thirds and sixteenths written for one hand and found Clementi's style insufficiently graceful and easy."⁴

The creation of M. Clementi's works has always been centered around the genre of the sonata, with the composer going through all the stages of development of the sonata within the classical period. According to

² Berkowitz, Ralph. 1944. "Original Music for Four Hands". Etude 62, no. 1, p. 61.

³ Leon Plantinga, Clementi: His Life and Music. p.286

⁴ Oscar Bie, A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players. p.208.

W. Newman, as far as M. Clementi is concerned the sonata form is given a personal, flexible character. It is typical for this form to focus on a single idea. The aspiration towards completeness determined many of the form's peculiarities. In M. Clementi's Allegro sonata, the main and incidental parts are often based on the same sound material, the development usually contains no new material, and the boundaries between the development and the reprise (which does not always occur in the main key) are often blurred. In general, M. Clementi is characterized by thinking of motifs that renew and change throughout the form. His love of unexpected modulations and harmonic 'surprises' can be seen in his sonatas. M. Clementi's sonatas were of real interest to L. v. Beethoven, who appreciated them not only for their melodic freshness but also for their refinement and flexibility of form.

M. Clementi's experiments with thematic form pre-dated L. v. Beethoven by about 20 years. In this sense, M. Clementi was, if not the predecessor of L. v. Beethoven, then at least his forerunner. The main aspect that M. Clementi and L. v. Beethoven have in common is the tendency towards thematic unity and integrity of form.

Examples of the Development of Clementi's Four-Hands Sonata

The Sonata in C major No. 1 Op. 3 is characterized by unusual imagery and memorable themes. The Allegro spiritoso tonal plan of the first part corresponds to common practice: T-D in the exposition, T-T in the reprise. Like the recapitulation, the exposition ends in the piano key, which can be considered a general trend found in M. Clementi's other sonatas for four hands.

E.g. 1

Allegro Spiritoso

The musical score is presented in a grand staff format, with two staves for the Primo (right hand) and two staves for the Secondo (left hand). The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro Spiritoso'. The key signature is C major. The score shows the first four measures. The Primo part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. The Secondo part starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The score is written in a grand staff with two staves for each hand.

**M. Clementi, Sonata No. 1 op. 3, first movement,
primo and secondo, measures 1-4**

The repetition is conducted without the components of the first theme (impressively, how “flawlessly” Clementi sculpts this theme), but by the exhibition. In the development of the first movement, Clementi’s musical temperament comes through particularly well, revealed in virtuoso techniques such as arpeggios in the various variations, doubling, and imitations.

The Sonata in E flat major in many ways repeats the pattern of the first sonata. As in the earlier sonata, the reworking of the theme is not fully reproduced. There is another stable feature: the exposition with an extended final part, like the allegro, ends in piano.

The Sonata in G major Op. 3, though not as thematically vivid as other sonatas, reveals a tendency that indicates the composer’s inclination towards the cross-thematic process. This is the use of a common element within the main and secondary parts. This is represented by the repetition of a note in the intervals of the quatrain at the beginning of the main part. The material in the main part becomes an intense development and then flows smoothly into the second part played in tonic tonality.

The Sonata from Op. 6 is the first sonata in three movements; it continues established trends and gives rise to new ones. The main themes of the first section, whose beginning resembles the spirit of a symphony, arise from the main section, and have elements in common with it. The main themes of the first section stem from the main section and have elements in common with it (flowing movement, similar detentions), as can be seen in E.g 2. The sonata shows the tendency towards the thematic unity discussed above. Also, typical of Clementi, the development moves smoothly, in reprise.

E.g. 2

Allegro assai

The musical score shows the first four measures of the first movement. The tempo is marked 'Allegro assai'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major). The Primo part (treble clef) and Secondo part (bass clef) both feature a similar rhythmic and melodic pattern of arpeggiated chords and repeated notes, with accents marked above the notes. The Primo part starts with a chord of B-flat major (F2, B-flat1, D2, F2) and the Secondo part starts with a chord of B-flat major (B-flat1, D2, F2, B-flat2).

M. Clementi, Sonata No. 1 op. 6, first movement, measures 1-4.

The beginning of the solo sonatas op. 7-10 consolidates the trends found in the duet sonatas. They are characterized by an economy of thematic material, expressed in the work through motifs, and the fusion of development and repetition areas as a manifestation of an atypical approach to the interpretation of sonata form. Most illustrative in this respect is the first movement of Op. 7 No. 3 - *Allegro con spirito*, where both phenomena can be observed.

In the Sonata op. 14 in C major, the overall theme brings together not only the themes of the *Allegro* sonata but also the outer sections of the cycle. The downward progression of the movement, which originates in *Secondo*, is taken as the basis for the second part of the first movement, as well as for the motive elements of the second thematic group in the first movement. Among the peculiarities of the form is the unfolding of the final part, already familiar to us from the earlier sonatas, which in the reprise takes on the significance of the second dramatic center after the development. The initial motive of the main part - the repetitive notes (E.g. 3) - grows to a dense and broad sonority.

E.g. 3

The musical score is for the first movement of M. Clementi's Sonata No. 1, Op. 14. It is written for two hands: Primo (right hand) and Secondo (left hand). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The key signature is one flat (F major). The time signature is 3/4. The Primo part starts with a treble clef and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Secondo part starts with a bass clef and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score shows the first four measures of the piece.

M. Clementi, Sonata No. 1, Op. 14, first movement, measures 1-4

The two-part Sonata in F Major (*Allegro - Allegro Assai*) is situated in the middle of Op. 14. In the first part, as in the finale of the Op. 6 Sonata, the tempo seems slower due to the lyrical nature of the melody. The *Allegro* form is built on tonal contrasts rather than thematic contrasts, the sonata is monothematic. The thematic and tonal content of the sonata form sections is unique. The sphere of the incidental part of the exposition is represented by the dominant tonality of the sixth treble in A-flat major, and in the reprise, the tonality of the sixth treble - D-flat major. In the reprise, the principal part of

the theme is absent, and the semantic part and the tonality of the semantic and tonal emphasis move to the second thematic group. The main theme is intensely developed having a dramatic effect through the dense linking of the sixteenthths in the secondo and the sequences that also cover minor keys. The development opens with a surprise tonality: it begins as if played in tonic tonality (this impression is maintained throughout the second part), but in the last octave of the second measure in F sharp, the theme unfolds in G minor. The theme only reappears in the tonic key at the end of the movement.

The first part of the final Sonata in E-flat major Op. 14 has features typical of Clementi's Allegro sonatas. These are represented by thematic completeness, an extended final part, and the lack of clear boundaries between development and respite (E.g. 4).

E.g. 4

M. Clementi, Sonata No. 3, Op. 14, first movement, measures 1-4

The Sonata as a whole and each of its movements are more complex than its predecessors. Thematically the sound material evokes associations with Beethoven's themes: it has a structure made up of motifs and consists of 'cells' composed of two beats. There is often a dynamic contrast between motifs of the same theme even within motifs. The structural peculiarities of this sonata include an introduction consisting of eight bars. The confluence of measures 1 and 2 becomes the intonational and thematic framework of the later movement (E.g. 5) of the allegro sonata which has a Beethovenian expression. It crystallizes the future 'motif of destiny'.

E.g. 5



M. Clementi, Sonata No. 3 op. 14, movement I, primo, measures 36-40

In the sonatas of this opus, we find that the repeated-note motif in the last sonata approaches the Beethovenian drama already used by Clementi in Sonatas No. 1 and 2, in the main and final parts respectively. The subtlety of Clementi's work lies in the fact that the thematic material is linked not explicitly but through allusions and commonalities, which ultimately contributes to the germination of thematic similarities in the musical material.

Middle and Final Parts

The final part of the Sonatas in two parts Op. 3 is written in the classical five-part rondo form (except for the finale of Op. 6, which uses the rondo sonata form). Clementi shows melodic inventiveness in various episodes, especially minor ones.

In the Rondo part of Sonata No. 1 op. 3 (Presto), the emotional mood is generally lower than in the Allegro, but this movement is notable for its dynamic variety. This movement has rich dynamic variety - it contains many juxtapositions of piano and forte. Particularly in the minor episode, it creates a great contrast with the introduction of the major key found in the first movement respectively.

The Rondo from Sonata No. 2 op. 3 (Andante) is thematically and mood-wise related to the first part. It reveals romantic features, manifested in the episodes between the choruses. The first of these is reverential, fragile, and dominated by the primo part. The theme of the second thematic episode is interwoven by a romantic link formed by sixteenth notes, evoking associations with F. Mendelssohn, F. Chopin, and R. Schumann. The musical texture is truly pianistic, attesting to the fact that these sonatas are primarily intended for the piano, despite Clementi's preference for the harpsichord. The rondo minor (Allegretto) episode is found in Sonata No. 3 op. 3.

E.g. 6

M. Clementi, Sonata No. 2 op. 3, 2nd movement, primo and secondo, measures 55-57

In the three-part Sonatas Op. 6, the compactness of the moving central part with the tempo marking *Larghetto con moto* contributes to a full perception of the sonata. The miniature section abounds in contrasts, and the climax played in fortissimo is sung in unison by both parts as an uplifting statement. In the Rondo part's finale, one can notice the major version of the moving lyrical perpetuum of the classical sonata finale as in J. Haydn's Sonata in E minor (Hob. XVI/34 or in Op. 31 No. 2 by L. van Beethoven. The refrain reveals the thematic features of the main Allegro part. Melodically intense fragments alternate with figurative ones, which is typical of the concerto genre. The middle sections of Sonatas No. 1 and No. 3 Op. 14 are

remarkable for their melodic flexibility and are reminiscent of Haydn. While the Adagio in the first C major sonata is quite short, the Adagio of the last sonata is the most expansive of all M. Clementi's four-hand piano sonatas.

The finale (Rondo) No. 1 op. 14 is a flowing part, a scherzo in 6/8. Here, too, Clementi applies the principle of the single theme – the refrain theme (E.g. 7) which contrasts with the refrain tonally and texturally. The mordent is accompanied by numerous chromatic passages that add dynamism to this compact but very intense movement.

E.g. 7



M. Clementi, Sonata No. 1, Op. 14, 3rd movement, primo, measures 1-7

In the two-part Sonata No. 2 Op. 14, the rondo is also built around the same theme in a similar pattern to the first sonata. This rondo is more contrasting than the previous one. The fragile material of the refrain is interspersed with extraneous elements, and the second episode becomes a climactic one.

The finale of Sonata No. 3 Op. 14 features an incomplete central refrain and an extension of the second episode. The latter becomes the dramatic center of the rondo. The sound of this episode is reminiscent of a fantastic scherzo: short, penetrating. The short, penetrating chords in combination with the pauses and contrasting dynamics create a mysterious and elusive image (E.g. 8).

E.g. 8



Sonata No. 3 op. 14, 3rd movement, primo and secondo, measures 140-146

Characteristics and Texture Features

Clementi received a brilliant musical education. His teachers were renowned professors such as A. Buroni (pupil of J. B. Martini), G. Cordicelli, and G. Carpani. Clementi's virtuosity is reflected in the texture of his solo piano sonatas and piano duets. While Clementi's melodicism is distinctive, the passages are closer to movement forms - a specific characteristic found in both the early and later duet sonatas.

The dynamics of both the early and later sonatas, full crescendo and diminuendo, as well as the texture of Clementi's sonatas, are designed for the peculiarities and possibilities of the piano. Typical pianistic techniques in the four-hand sonatas include, for example, legato-driven octaves and chord repetitions against a background of sustained basses. The texture of the first duet sonatas corresponds to the early classical "galant" style. The first part generally has a thematic function, while the second part has an accompaniment function. The texture of the Sonata in C major op. 3 creates conditions for the joy of communication between the performers - it is saturated with imitations and exchanges. The parts of the sonata are equal in complexity. The second part participates fully in imitations, but the thematic material is mainly concentrated in the first part. The rondo is built, as noted above, on dynamic contrasts, with the second part reproducing a motive set in ascending octaves in forte, thus giving it an individual role (in addition to participating in the many imitations initiated in the first part, as well as in the role of accompaniment).

In the Sonata in E-flat major, the dependence of the second part is more evident than in the other sonatas of the opus highlighted by its poor texture compared to the Primo part. In some fragments of the first movement there is a single voice, occasionally expressed in long durations. In the second movement, the parts are more tightly interwoven.

The Op. 6 Sonata makes quite high demands on the technical abilities of the performers. It features various passages consisting of scales and broken arpeggios, many of which are performed simultaneously by both players. Finally, the overlapping thirds in both parts are interpretable, as are the passages set in octaves in places, so that both performers could shine. L. Plantinga finds that the stylistic changes, especially the compression of texture in Op. 5-6, are related to the fact that Clementi was studying the works of Johann Sebastian Bach at the time. Beginning with these opuses and continuing with the Viennese solo piano works, the texture of the sonatas becomes more varied and differentiated. Three or four layers can be distinguished.

Op. 14 differs from the earlier duet sonatas. Emphasis on the central voices - these become more independent than in Op. 3 and Op. 6.

Sonata No. 1 Op. 14 is appealing because of its grace, and the texture is not overwhelming and springy. The transparency and fluidity of the texture are helped by the deftly scored rests, which often occur on the first beat or in the first and third (in $\frac{3}{4}$ time). The virtuosity of Sonata No. 2 Op. 14 (here we refer mainly to the finale) contributes considerably to the artistic value of this work. The technical level of the rondo is quite high - both parts contain brilliant rhythmic passages and figures, which demand a filigree of fine technique as well as skill in the timing of performance. Even though the final sonata op. 14 demonstrates bold experiments in form, in contrast, the first movement seems strongly related to its op. 6 predecessors (they are united by their emphasis on virtuosity and the temperament of the artistic content). The Sonata is characterized by a concentration of thematic material mainly in the first part, frequent unison playing, and reduced activity of the secondary voices. Such as the duet characteristics of the sonata are less impressive than its complex structure, vivid imagery, and a clear realization of previously formed trends in motive development. The Adagio and Finale make up for this impression - their texture is layered and imitative.

Conclusions

Sonatas for piano four hands vary in complexity, content, and style. They undergo a certain evolution and, like the solo sonatas, become the material for the composer's creative experiments. The four-hand piano sonatas were written at a time when the composer had mastered the piano, an instrument that was gaining popularity at the time, replacing the harpsichord. If the "debut" duet sonatas op. 3 could be addressed to amateurs or serve as pedagogical material, then the sonatas op. 6 and op. 14 are virtuoso concert examples. The Op. 14 sonatas could very well be called a concert cycle, as these sonatas have similar structural characteristics (the typical features of exposition, development, and reprise in the Allegro sonata, as well as for the Rondo structure), but are figuratively opposed. The sonatas in the extremes are of significant size and differ in character. The lovely Sonata in C major opens the opus and ends with the expressive Sonata in E flat major. Between them is the Intermediate Sonata, which is compact and seems to set the stage for the "Beethovenian" character of the final sonata. In Clementi's four-hand sonatas, the tendency towards a mono-thematic sonata form (an essential characteristic of his style) is evident. Typical features also include the significance of the final part in the exposition and the fusion of development and reprise, in which the main part appears as if absorbed by the development and the reprise begins with a secondary part.

The texture of Clementi's duet sonatas is refined and rich in counterpoint - the parts often interact imitatively. One can trace an evolution in the approach to duet texture from Op. 3 to Op. 14 - in the later opuses the unison plays a less prominent role, Clementi exploits the possibilities of duet texture more. Clementi's virtuoso piano students undoubtedly wrote their duo sonatas, not without the influence of their teacher. The sonatas of Kramer, L. Dussek, and I. Moscheles develop Clementi's sound, perfected in his solo and duet piano sonatas. "Clementi is a direct predecessor of Czerny because of the luminous pianistic brilliance inherent in the texture of the sonatas. Clementi is a direct predecessor of Czerny because of the pianistic brilliance inherent in the texture of his sonatas.

The sonata remains a field of experimentation with the sound of the piano, exploring its dynamic and texture possibilities. The temperament and expression of Clementi's sonatas, combined with their virtuosity, make them concert works that can be performed to great effect on the contemporary stage. At the same time, they can be excellent teaching material for performers of various levels, a kind of Gradus ad Parnassum in the genre of piano duets.

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