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## MR. CLEMENTI.

*The following brief and rapid Sketch of the Life of CLEMENTI, a Man who so honourably maintains the great fame he has so justly acquired, cannot fail to interest every true Lover of the Art.*

**M**UZIO CLEMENTI was born at Rome in the year 1752. His father was a worker in silver of great merit, and principally engaged in the execution of embossed vases and figures employed in the Catholic worship. At a very early period of his youth he evinced a powerful disposition for music, and as this was an art which greatly delighted his father, he anxiously bestowed the best instructions in his power on the improvement of his son. BURONI, who was his relation, and who afterwards obtained the honourable station of principal composer of St. Peter's, was his first master. At six years of age he began sol-fa-ing; at seven he was placed under an organist of the name of CORDICELLI for instruction in thorough bass; at the age of nine he passed his examination, and was admitted an organist in Rome. This examination consists in giving a figured bass from the works of CORELLI, and making the scholar execute an accompaniment; after which he is obliged to transpose the same into various keys. This CLEMENTI effected with such facility that he received the highest applause from his examiners. He next went under the celebrated SANTARELLI, the last great master of the true vocal school. Between his eleventh and twelfth year he went under CARPINI, the deepest contrapuntist of his day in Rome. A few months after he was placed under this master, he was induced by some of his friends, and without consulting his preceptor, to write a mass for four voices; for which he received so much commendation, that CARPINI expressed a desire to hear it. It was accordingly repeated in church in the presence of his master, who being little accustomed to bestow praise on any one, said to his pupil, after his dry manner, "Why did you not tell me you were about to write a mass. This is very well, to be sure, but if you had consulted me it might have been much better."

Under CARPINI he was practiced in writing fugues and canons on the canto fermo, and his master was frequently heard to say, that had

CLEMENTI remained under his instruction a year longer, he might have past his examination in counterpoint.

During these studies he never neglected his harpsichord, on which he had made so great a proficiency between 13 and 14, that MR. PETER BECKFORD, nephew of the Alderman of that name, who was then on his travels in Italy, was extremely desirous of taking him over to England. The declining riches of the Roman Church, at this period, not giving much encouragement to the talents of his father, he agreed to confide the rising talents of his son to the care of MR. BECKFORD, and soon after this CLEMENTI set off for England.

The country seat of MR. BECKFORD was in Dorsetshire, and here, by the aid of a good library and the conversation of the family, CLEMENTI quickly obtained a competent knowledge of the English language.

The plan of study adopted by a man who, independently of the great celebrity he has acquired by his own art, has made so uncommon a proficiency in the dead and living languages, and in the whole circle of Belles Lettres, would furnish a highly instructive lesson to the rising generation; and we regret that it is not in our power to communicate any particulars on so interesting a subject. With regard to his own art, we have learnt from good authority, that his early studies were principally employed on the works of CORELLI, ALEXANDER SCARLATTI, HANDEL's harpsichord and organ music, and on the sonatas of PARADIES. His efforts to acquire pre-eminence on the harpsichord were in the mean time as indefatigable as they were successful; and at the age of eighteen he had not only surpassed all his contemporaries in the powers of execution and expression, but had written his opera 2, which gave a new æra to that species of composition. Three years afterwards this celebrated work was submitted to the public. The simplicity, brilliancy, and originality which it displayed, captivated the whole circle of professors and amateurs. It is superfluous to add what all the great musicians of the age have uniformly allowed, that this admirable work is the basis on which the whole fabric of modern sonatas for the piano-forte has been erected. The celebrated JOHN CHRISTIAN BACH\* spoke of it in the highest terms; but, although one of

\* JOHN CHRISTIAN, called BACH of MILAN, and afterwards of LONDON, was the son of JOHN SEBASTIAN, by his second wife. He became a popular composer, and was universally admired in his time.

the most able players of his time, he would not attempt its performance; and when SCHROETER arrived in this country, and was asked if he could play the works of CLEMENTI, he replied, "that they could only be performed by the author himself or the devil." Yet such is the progress which executive ability has made, that what was once an obstacle to the most accomplished talent, is now within the power of thousands. At the same time it should be remarked, that merely to execute the notes is very far from expressing the intention of the author, which can only be effected by a powerful hand, guided by a still more powerful mind. Those who have heard these compositions from the hand of the author, and some of his best scholars, will readily acknowledge the justness of this remark.

A well-known popular air with variations, his operas 3 and 4, and a duet for two performers on one instrument, were the next productions of his youthful pen.

Soon after he had quitted Dorsetshire to reside in London, he was engaged to preside at the harpsichord, in the orchestra of the Opera-house; and had an opportunity, which he never neglected, of improving his taste by the performances of the first singers of the age.

The advantage which he derived from this species of study was quickly shewn by the rapid progress he made, beyond his contemporaries, in the dignity of his style of execution, and in his powers of expression. This also he carried into his compositions; and we have heard DUSSEK, STEIBELT, WOELFL, BEETHOVEN, and other eminent performers on the Continent, who had had no opportunity of receiving personal instructions from CLEMENTI, declare that they had formed themselves entirely on his works.

His ability in extemporaneous playing has perhaps no parallel. The richness of harmonic combination, the brilliancy of fancy, the power of effect, and the noble style of execution which he displays, make him stand alone in an age which has produced such a host of executive talent. We recollect being once present amongst many of the greatest musicians of the day, when CLEMENTI was prevailed upon to treat the company with a performance of this description. The inspiration which beamed in his eye, the bard-like enthusiasm with which he swept the keys, and the admirable effects which he produced, astonished and delighted every body. DUSSEK was afterwards requested to play; and we remember with pleasure the modest and just reply which he made:—"To attempt any thing in the

same style would be presumption; and what sonata, what concerto, or what other regular composition could a man play without falling into insipidity after what we have heard!"

His reputation, without the protection of any patron, rose with such rapidity that in a very short time he received the same remuneration for his instructions as J. C. BACH; and the fame of his works and of his executive talents, having spread over the Continent, he determined, in the year 1780, and at the instigation of the celebrated PACCHIBROTTI, to visit Paris.

In that city he was received with enthusiasm, and had the honour to play before the Queen, who bestowed on him the most unqualified applause. The warmth of French praise, contrasted with the gentle and cool approbation given by the English, quite astonished the young musician, who used jocosely to remark, that he could scarcely believe himself to be the same man. Whilst he remained in that capital he composed his Operas 5 and 6, and published a new edition of his Op. 1, with an additional fugue. Having enjoyed the unabated applause of the Parisians until the summer of 1781, he determined on paying a visit to Vienna. In his way there he stopped at Strasburgh, where he was introduced to the then Prince De Deux Ponts, the present King of Bavaria, who treated him with the greatest distinction; and also at Munich, where he was received with equal honour by the Elector.

At Vienna he became acquainted with HAYDN, MOZART, and all the celebrated musicians resident in that capital. The Emperor Joseph II. who was a great lover of music, invited him to his palace, where, in the latter end of the year 1781, he had the honour of playing alternately with MOZART before the Emperor, and the Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his Duchess.

At Vienna he composed 3 Sonatas, Op. 7, published by ARTARIA—3 Sonatas, Op. 8, published at Lyons—and 6 Sonatas, Operas 9 and 10, also published by ARTARIA.

On his return to England he deemed it necessary to publish his celebrated Toccata, with a Sonata, Op. 11, a surreptitious copy, full of errors, having been printed without his knowledge in France.

In the autumn of 1783, JOHN BAPTIST CRAMER, then about 14 or 15 years of age, became his pupil. He had previously received some not very profitable lessons from SCHROETER, and was studying counterpoint under AREL. CLEMENTI at this time resided in

Titchfield-street, and young CRAMER used to attend him almost every morning until the following year, when CLEMENTI returned to France.

Previous to his undertaking this second journey, he was engaged at the nobilities' concerts, and had published his Opera 12, upon one of the sonatas of which work both DR. CROTCH and MR. SAM. WESLEY afterwards gave public lectures in London.

In the year 1784 he again came back to England, and soon afterwards published his Operas 13, 14, and 15. From this period, to the year 1802, he remained in England pursuing his professional labours with increasing reputation; and wishing to secure himself sufficient time for the prosecution of his studies, he raised his terms for teaching to one guinea per hour. His fame, however, was so great, that this augmentation of price rather increased than diminished the candidates for his instruction. The great number of excellent pupils, of both sexes, which he formed during this period, proves his superior skill in the art of tuition; the invariable success which attended his public performances, attest his pre-eminent talents as a player; and his compositions from Opera 15 to Opera 40, are a lasting proof of his application and genius.

Before the publication of this last work he had produced one, the advantages of which have been and are still felt and acknowledged by almost all the professors of our time—we mean his excellent and luminous “Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte.”

About the year 1800, having lost a large sum of money by the failure of the well-known firm of LONGMAN and BROADRIP, 26, Cheapside, he was induced, by the persuasions of some eminent mercantile gentlemen, to embark in that concern. A new firm was accordingly formed, and from that period he declined taking any more pupils. The hours which he did not thenceforward employ in his professional studies, he dedicated to the mechanical and philosophical improvement of piano fortes, and the originality and justness of his conceptions were crowned with complete success.

The extraordinary and admirable talents of JOHN FIELD must be still fresh in the memory of a great number of our readers. These talents CLEMENTI had cultivated with unceasing delight; and he has often been heard to say, that such was the quickness of conception, retentiveness of memory, and facility of execution which this highly-gifted boy possessed, that he seldom had occasion to make

the same remark to him a second time. With this favourite pupil, in the autumn of 1802, he paid his third visit to Paris, where he was received with unabated esteem and admiration. This pupil delighted every one who heard him; and what is still more worthy of remark, he played some of the great fugues of SEBASTIAN BACH with such precision and inimitable taste as to call forth, from a Parisian audience, the most enthusiastic applause.

From Paris he proceeded to Vienna, where he intended to place FIELD under the instruction of ALBRECHTSBERGER, to which his pupil seemed to assent with pleasure; but when the time arrived for CLEMENTI to set off for Russia, poor FIELD, with tears trembling in his eyes, expressed so much regret at parting from his master, and so strong a desire to accompany him, that CLEMENTI could not resist his inclinations—they therefore proceeded directly to St. Petersburg.

In this city CLEMENTI was received with the greatest distinction: he played extemporaneously in the society of the principal professors with his accustomed excellence, and to the admiration of his audience; and having introduced FIELD to all his friends, soon afterwards left Russia, in company with a young professor of the name of ZEUNER.

A short characteristic anecdote of PALSCHAU, of St. Petersburg, who is perhaps the most exact fugue player in existence, may not be unacceptable to our readers. When FIELD had one day performed several of SEBASTIAN BACH's fugues, in his exquisite manner, and to the inexpressible delight of all present, PALSCHAU turned dryly round to CLEMENTI, and said, in a grave tone, "*Ma foi, il a bien étudié.*"

ZEUNER was the principal piano forte player and teacher in Petersburg, and having received some instructions from CLEMENTI during his residence there, he became so attached to his master, that he left all his scholars for the sake of accompanying him to Berlin. In the latter city CLEMENTI played both extemporaneously and from his works, before all the most eminent musicians, with his wonted vigour and effect; and after remaining there two months, took ZEUNER with him to Dresden, the place of his birth, where he left him well prepared to acquire the reputation which he afterwards obtained.

In Dresden, an unassuming but very able and excellent young

musician, of the name of **KLENGEL**, introduced himself to the acquaintance of **CLEMENTI**, and after obtaining some instructions, became exceedingly desirous of accompanying his master in his travels. **CLEMENTI** was so much pleased with his character and talents, which have since become well known to the public, that he consented; and after a few weeks residence in Dresden, he took him on to Vienna, where, during some months, his pupil worked very hard under his instruction.

It was at this time that he became acquainted with and cherished, by counsel and the frequent exhibition of his own powers on the piano forte, the rising talents of **KALKBRENNER**, who has since raised himself to such distinguished eminence.

During the following summer **CLEMENTI** took his pupil **KLENGEL** a tour through Switzerland, and returned immediately afterwards to Berlin, where he married his first wife. In the autumn he took his bride through Italy, as far as Rome and Naples; and on his return to Berlin, having had the misfortune to lose her in child-bed, he immediately left the scene of his sorrows and once more visited Petersburg.

In this journey he took with him another promising young pupil, of the name of **BERGER**, who had previously received instruction from him, and who is now the principal professor of the piano forte at Berlin.

At Petersburg he found **FIELD** in the full enjoyment of the highest reputation; in short, he might be said to be the musical idol of the Russian nation. Here he remained but a short time; and finding relief from the contemplation of his severe loss in the bustle of travelling, he again went back to Vienna.

The following summer, having heard of the death of his brother, he proceeded once more to Rome, to settle the affairs of his family. He then made short residences at Milan, and various other places on the Continent, where he was detained in spite of his inclinations, by the disastrous continuation of the war; and seizing a hazardous opportunity of conveyance, in the summer of 1810, he once more arrived in England, and the year following married his present amiable and accomplished wife.

Although during this period of nearly eight years he published only a single Sonata, Op. 41, his mind and his pen were still occupied in the composition of symphonies, and in preparing materials

for his *Gradus ad Parnassum*, of which we shall hereafter speak. His first publication after his return was the "Appendix" to his "Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte;" a work which has been of infinite use both to the profession and to the public, and the demand for which has constantly augmented in proportion as its excellence has been discovered and appreciated. He next adapted the twelve grand symphonies of HAYDN for the piano forte, with accompaniments for the flute, violin, and violoncello. This work was a great desideratum, since that which had already been published by SALOMON was awkwardly and imperfectly done. Before he went abroad he had adapted HAYDN'S *Creation* for the piano forte and voices; and he now published the oratorio of the *Seasons*, which he had done in the same manner. He afterwards adapted MOZART'S overture to *Don Giovanni*, besides various selections from the vocal compositions of the same author.

The Philharmonic Society having been now established he gave two grand symphonies, which were received there and at various other concerts with enthusiastic applause. We understand from good authority, that he has several other manuscript symphonies ready for performance, and we much regret that the public should have been deprived of the high gratification of hearing them this season.

We now come to mention a work, two volumes of which have already appeared, and by which the author must have established his fame as a composer of the first eminence, had he never written another note. We allude to his "*Gradus ad Parnassum*." This is a work on which he had long reflected; and before he left this country in 1802, in the presence of M. FISSENGER, the artist, he explained his plan to M. ERARD, the harp-maker, uncle to one of the principal music-publishers in Paris, who was anxious to print some of his most important compositions. He informed him his intention of calling it his "Studio for the Piano Forte;" but secrets are seldom kept when they are in the possession of more than one; and it is probable that this intention was communicated to an author who has since given that title to a well known publication. In consequence of this he was obliged to chuse another appellation, and he adopted "*Gradus ad Parnassum*," which had already been given by FUX to his celebrated treatise on composition. The public with ourselves must anticipate much pleasure from the knowledge

that there are, in the press, several new compositions from the fruitful and the inexhaustible pen of the accomplished subject of this memoir.

We must now close our hasty sketch of the life of this extraordinary man, whom we rejoice to see, on the verge of seventy, retaining all the vivacity, freshness, and vigour of intellectual strength, and in the enjoyment of a constitution which promises the musical world rich harvests still to come from the fertility of his incomparable genius.

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