

MUZIO CLEMENTI  
1752 - 1832

# Gradus ad Parnassum op.44

The Art of playing on the  
PIANOFORTE,  
exemplified in a series of Exercises, in the  
Strict and in the Free Styles...

Complete Edition - Gesamteition  
Edition complète - Edizione completa  
Nos. 1-100 ter

Andrea Bacchetti, Bruno Canino, Luca Rasca  
Francesco Cipolletta, Maurizio Baglini, Paolo Zannini  
Gianluca Luisi, Enrico Pompili, Roberto Prosseda  
Marco Sollini  
*Piano, Klavier, Pianoforte*

Recording: Teatro Sperimentale, Ancona - (Italy) 7 - 2002

Production/Produktion

Directeur de la production/Direttore della produzione

Gian Andrea Lodovici

Sound Engineer/Tonmeister/Ingénieur du son/Tecnico del suono

Matteo Costa



Audiophile Recording 24 bit - 96 kHz - see details inside

47687 - 2

# MUZIO CLEMENTI

## GRADUS ad PARNASSUM op.44

### COMPLETE EDITION

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MARCO SOLLINI

24<sup>Bit</sup>  
96  
kHz



Un particolare ringraziamento a:  
*Many Thanks to:*  
**Comune di Ancona - Assessorato alla Cultura**

**THIS IS AN AUDIOPHILE RECORDING**

**This recording utilizes the advanced technology of 24-bit / 96 kHz.**  
24-bit 96kHz has a dynamic range that is up to 60 dB greater and has up to 20 times the resolution of standard 16-bit / 44,1 kHz recordings.  
The new sound experience can be fully appreciated utilizing a DVD sound carrier and player. The improved quality of this recording also lets you enjoy an unrivalled natural clarity and ambience in the usual CD version.

*Technical information:*

Recording: Teatro Sperimentale, Ancona, Italy, July 2002  
24 bit/96 kHz recording and editing: Eng. Matteo Costa, Gabriele Robotti, Padova  
Microphones: Schoeps MK-2S linear (2), B & K 4004 (2)  
Microphones Cables: Van den Hul MDC 403  
Digital Cable : Proel 8xAES-EBU  
On stage microphone preamplifiers: Millennia Media HV-3D  
On stage 24 bit/96 kHz/16 tracks AD converter: Prism Sound ADA-8  
Digital Recording, Mixing and Editing 24 bit/96 kHz: Studio Audio Artemis 32 v.4.02  
Monitor: ESB 2010P with four subwoofer ESB 2001 and supertweeter JBL; four ways electronic crossover Lake People; power amplifier Hafler; 24 bit/96 kHz DA converter: Prism Sound DA-2.

The signal was not compressed or equalized at any stage during production.

MUZIO CLEMENTI  
(1752-1832)

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**Gesamte Fassung - Edition complète - Edizione completa**

*Piano, Klavier, pianoforte*

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**CD 1****T.T.: 77.00****Volume I**

1	Ex. 1 in Fa maggiore / F major - <i>Con velocità</i>	1.45
2	Ex. 2 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Allegrissimo</i>	1.48
3	Ex. 3 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Vivacissimo</i>	1.15
4	Ex. 4 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Allegro ma con grazia</i>	2.48
5	Ex. 5 in Si bem.magg. / B flat major- <i>Andante allegretto con espressione</i>	2.38
6	Ex. 6 in Si bemolle maggiore / B flat major- <i>Allegro moderato</i>	5.04
7	Ex. 7 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Vivacissimo</i>	3.11
8	Ex. 8 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Allegretto moderato e con grazia</i>	2.53

**Suite de trois pièces**

9	Ex. 9 in La maggiore / A major - <i>Preludio. Vivace non troppo</i>	1.35
10	Ex.10 in La maggiore / A major - <i>Canone. Allegro moderato</i>	1.13

**Andrea Bacchetti**

11	Ex.11 in La maggiore / A major - <i>Allegro moderato e cantabile</i>	3.44
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**Suite de quatre pièces**

12	Ex.12 in Do maggiore / C major - <i>Preludio. Allegro</i>	1.26
13	Ex.13 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Fuga. Allegro non troppo</i>	3.00
14	Ex.14 in Fa maggiore / F major - <i>Adagio sostenuto</i>	3.44
15	Ex.15 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Finale. Allegro non troppo</i>	5.19
16	Ex.16 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Veloce</i>	1.41
17	Ex.17 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Veloce</i>	1.35
18	Ex.18 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Introduzione. Grave / Fugato. Allegro</i>	4.06
19	Ex.19 in la minore / A minor - <i>Presto</i>	1.12
20	Ex.20 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Allegro</i>	1.13

**Bruno Canino**

21	Ex.21 in Mi bemolle maggiore / E flat major - <i>Veloce</i>	1.30
22	Ex.22 in La bemolle maggiore / A flat major - <i>Allegro con spirito</i>	2.38
23	Ex.23 in Do maggiore / C major - <i>Presto</i>	0.56

24	Ex.24 in fa diesis minore / F sharp minor- <i>Presto</i>	2.31
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**Suite de trois pièces**

25	Ex.25 in si minore / B minor- <i>Introduzione. Adagio sostenuto - Fuga. Tempo moderato</i>	8.02
26	Ex.26 in si minore / B minor- <i>Canone. Allegro moderato</i>	3.04
27	Ex.27 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	3.50

**Volume II**

28	Ex.28 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Allegro</i>	1.56
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**Luca Rasca****CD 2****T.T.: 72.55**

1	Ex. 29 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Allegro non troppo</i>	4.30
2	Ex. 30 in mi minore / E minor - <i>Veloce</i>	2.41

**Luca Rasca**

3	Ex. 31 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Allegro con molto brio</i>	2.28
4	Ex. 32 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Allegro</i>	2.00
5	Ex. 33 in Do maggiore / C major- <i>Canone. Moderato</i>	2.31
6	Ex. 34 in la minore / A minor - <i>Presto</i>	2.59
7	Ex. 35 in La maggiore / A major - <i>Veloce</i>	1.23
8	Ex. 36 in La maggiore / A major - <i>Presto non troppo</i>	3.19

**Suite de cinq pièces**

9	Ex. 37 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Preludio. Allegro</i>	1.13
10	Ex. 38 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Allegro moderato</i>	8.17
11	Ex. 39 in Si bemolle maggiore / B flat major- <i>Scena patetica. Adagio con grand'espressione</i>	12.32
12	Ex. 40 in Fa maggiore / F major- <i>Fuga. Tempo moderato</i>	3.51

**Francesco Cipolletta**

9	Ex. 79 in sol minore / G minor - <i>Allegro moderato</i>	1.08
10	Ex. 80 in Sol maggiore / G major - <i>Capriccio. Presto</i>	5.11
<b>Enrico Pompili</b>		
11	Ex. 81 in Sol maggiore / G major - <i>Finale. Allegro</i>	1.19
<b>Suite de six pièces</b>		
12	Ex. 82 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Scherzo. Molto Allegro</i>	2.37
13	Ex. 83 in si minore / B minor- <i>Moderato</i>	0.49
14	Ex. 84 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Andante</i>	4.26
15	Ex. 85 in re minore / D minor - <i>Presto e vigoroso</i>	0.47
16	Ex. 86 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Allegro non troppo</i>	1.42
17	Ex. 87 in Re maggiore / D major - <i>Finale. Allegro molto vivace</i>	1.34
<b>Suite de cinq pièces</b>		
18	Ex. 88 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Andante con moto, ma cantabile</i>	1.39
19	Ex. 89 in si minore / B minor- <i>Presto</i>	0.43
20	Ex. 90 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Fugato. Allegro non troppo</i>	2.56
<b>Roberto Prosseda</b>		
21	Ex. 91 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Allegretto</i>	1.31
22	Ex. 92 in Si maggiore / B major- <i>Finale. Allegro vivace</i>	0.41
23	Ex. 93 in La bemolle maggiore / A flat major - <i>Allegro</i>	1.34
24	Ex. 94 in Fa maggiore / F major - <i>Stravaganza. Allegretto</i>	2.17
25	Ex. 95 in Do maggiore / C major - <i>Bizzarria. Vivace</i>	1.27
26	Ex. 96 in do minore / C minor - <i>Allegro agitato</i>	1.33
27	Ex. 97 in Do maggiore / C major - <i>Scherzo. Molto allegro</i>	1.31
28	Ex. 98 in fa diesis minore / F sharp minor- <i>Allegro vivace</i>	1.44
29	Ex. 99 in si minore / B minor- <i>Molto allegro</i>	1.50
30	Ex.100 in Mi maggiore / E major -- <i>Vivacissimo</i>	1.37
31	Ex.100 bis in Mi bemolle maggiore / E flat major -- <i>Allegro</i>	6.26
32	Ex.100 ter in Si bemolle maggiore / B flat major- <i>Allegro giocoso</i>	4.48

**Marco Sollini**

The **Gradus ad Parnassum** (literally "Step to Parnassus"), the seat of the Muses, who were the protectors of the arts in Greek mythology) was probably not new to Clementi as a title and clearly goes back to a work of the same name, which Joseph Fux (1660-1741) published in 1725 and 1742 in Vienna. Fux was a famous Austrian composer and teacher and his work represented a treatise on composition and counterpoint. With this immense opus, Clementi presumably intended to provide posterity with a compositional testament, and at the same time an encyclopaedia of his creative talent and his abilities as a pianist. The work consists of several titles and despite its publication in two ensuing epochs (part I and II in 1817, 1819 respectively, and part III many years later in 1826), it contains very different and in many cases perhaps chronologically far removed compositions. Furthermore, despite its title "Gradus ad Parnassum, or Art of playing the Pianoforte, exemplified in a series of exercises in the strict free style" etc., it is not to be regarded as a collection of études in the manner of gymnastic finger exercises, such as, for example the equally valuable contributions by Karl Czerny and Johann Baptist Cramer, but as "thoughts" regarding composition for the piano, which Clementi undoubtedly mastered. These "thoughts" reach from exercises for the hands (there are individual examples thereof) to studies on the formal structure of the sonata, and to the most tricky and scholarly polyphony of

different fugues and canons, which were partly derived from compositions during his youth. Clementi did not forget to apply to the piano those expressive and declamatory tensions which one could describe as "theatrical". In many respects it is similar to Beethoven's last five piano sonatas, the "narrative" style of which we also encounter again in the introduction to "Ode to Joy" of the ninth symphony. In an exemplary manner, Clementi draws on this style in his "Scena patetica", the expression of which in a theatrical sense is "declamatory and scenic". The subdivision into "suites", even though professed by Clementi himself, has nothing as such to do with a suite as a sequence of more or less idealised dances, like, for example the suites by Bach or other great classical composers, but is merely an indication to the interpreter, not to play the individual pieces as a "random sequence". Thus almost two centuries after its first publication, the "Gradus ad Parnassum" is a monument of the highest ranking, which concludes an epoch and at the same time begins another. It still remains the "stairway to paradise" (paradise of the intellect, hands and the heart), in allusion to a famous film with the British actor David Niven (For this Niven was knighted, a title which Clementi also would have liked). While the number of printed versions of the "Gradus ad Parnassum" were considerable in the 19th century – among them only the publication by Karl Tausig is referred

to -, only few attempts were made to produce a vinyl recording of it in its entirety. The recording presented here, almost entirely performed by young Italian musicians, should represent a contribution towards the understanding of Clementi's work and lead to a deeper appreciation of the creative and didactic abilities of this great Roman artist, who to a large degree remains unknown to this day and is rarely, not only as regards the piano, but in music history in general, regarded as the fundamental representative of the classical period.

MUZIO CLEMENTI

**Gradus ad Parnassum - CD 1  
Etudes 1-28**

On this first CD, dedicated to the first part of Gradus ad Parnassum, Clementi introduces the principles which all in all should become fundamental to the great opus as a whole. The work begins with three pieces which are technically orientated. The second piece, following a mechanistic, powerful first section, opens up into an extensive phrase full of emotiveness and tension. But immediately afterwards, in No. 4, the music gains the upper hand with a great sonata-like first movement. Particularly worth mentioning in No. 5, one of the most beautiful and musical pieces among the études, is the dense sixteenth-note counterpoint over an expressive and well-arranged melody in the left hand, which is covered by delicate arpeggios, passing

notes and chromatic movements, which are already reminiscent of Chopin. Numbers 6 and 7 are certainly pieces of a more technical character, however, they are broadly structured which applies particularly to the first two pieces. It uses imitative techniques which are embedded in a dense piano movement, and in particular causes muscle problems. This is also apparent in No. 7, where an attempt is made to make fingers 4 and 5 more flexible within a correspondingly constructed context. In No. 8, Alessandro Longo, one of the most important adapters of Clementi's great work, refers to Mozart. He does so because of the elegance and clarity of the general characteristic style, which despite the subdivision into three differing instrumentally-technical sections, gives the piece as a whole an expressive and stylistic elevation which would also have been absolutely worthy of Clementi's contemporaries Mozart, Haydn, Cherubini and Beethoven. No. 9 on the other hand, is a great, but by no means inexpressive run, imbued by tension and expressive heartbeats, flashing scales and arpeggios which run up and down the keyboard almost like an athletic pause required for warming the muscles. No. 10 is the first of a sequence of beautiful canons by Clementi. These pieces, characterised by the purest of intellectuality, manage, however, to overcome mechanical-contrapuntal artificiality, and are generally works of polished neo-classic grace. The canon in the lower seventh is most certainly primarily a

composition for the brain of the performer, who with much patience, pleasing sound and expressiveness, is required to keep separate the layered, interwoven, yet together identical lines.

Numbers 11 and 12 on the other hand, are pieces which clearly have the same technical starting point: one of the pieces plays with mutations of a group of notes in different keys and connections, thus making it the instrumental backbone of the movement. The other piece experiments in different ranges with wide swaying arpeggio movements, creating a romantic sound, which is even further enhanced by the liberal use of the pedal. The fugue in C major, no. 13, is the first of the extensively conceived, wide-ranging and well-developed fugues, which Clementi included in the Gradus. It is a reversion with "embellishments and improvements" of fugue op. 6 no. 5, which Bailleux published in Paris in 1780. Conducted in a masterly and perfect contrapuntal style, it comes close, like all the others too, to the fantasy and fugue in C major by Mozart, who also bowed and submitted to the omnipresent Bach, and attempted, if not to copy then at least to re-introduce the polyphonic movement of this great German master.

No. 14, a beautiful Adagio in F major and is a solo piano version of the second movement from the Duet op. 14 no. 1 for piano with 4 hands. It is affixed with a Virgil-quote: Tulit alter

honores (Another was given the honour). In the handwritten version for four hands, the following addition is also to be found: Nunc intellegitur, olim nominabitur. As far as I know, the meaning of this motto is unclear, and one has assumed that it could have been a very concealed allusion to Mozart, even though there is no evidence to support this. No. 15, referred to by Alessandro Longo as a "shining jewel of the work", is a brilliant sonata finale, which for certain is not made up from by-products, but is of such high musical and technical value, that we dream of the complete sonata for which it was in all probability written. Numbers 16 and 17 on the other hand are twins, and Clementi here is "at his best". Using to the full the natural movements of the five fingers, Clementi creates over related scales, at first for the right hand, then for the left, two small masterpieces of instrumental gymnastics, in which the progressions are cleverly embedded in a mesh of graceful harmonic excursions, and by this means testing all conceivable, or almost all conceivable positions of the hands on the keyboard. It is thus a famous and acknowledged educational masterpiece. The Introduzione and Fugato of No. 18 on the other hand, allow us to return once again to the formal melodious sound and the expressive purity of a perfect polyphonic movement for three voices. The subsequent group of pieces comprising numbers 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23, is developed by the use of a

technical principle: a continual movement of sixteenth notes in No. 19, which keeps returning to the miserable outer fingers of the right hand (4 and 5), a continuing use of repeated notes with change of finger in No. 20, a true wave of broken octaves in both hands in No. 21, which is made even more complicated by the use of melodic movements in contrapuntally separated lines, and finally the "splitting" of the right hand in two sections in No. 22, which already points ahead to a principle which Chopin used in his études, namely to allocate such different movements to one hand, such as melody and accompaniment. Without being musical masterpieces, these pieces of the Gradus nevertheless represent a considerable test and are of highest interest and most profound instrumental importance. The étude on the resolved octaves represents the ultimate of its kind so to speak, and is to this day of utmost importance in order to learn Beethoven's piano works, which often reach back to this technique. No. 24, which at first appears to be structured according to the same principle, is however different to its predecessors. The continuous arpeggio movements in the right hand and the melodic voice placements of the left hand, which are not melodies as such, create a typical romantic piano sound which would remain for decades as a means of expression of this instrument, even in several of Rachmaninov's preludes. In this étude, Clementi's genius won the

upper hand over a presumably original inventive process which was without any emotion. No. 25 represents the second fugue of the Gradus and also originated from op. 6 no. 6, which was published by Bailleux in 1780. Perfect and more moving within itself, also due to the use of the melancholic key of B minor, it successfully continues the series of Clementi's polyphonic movements. The subsequent No. 27 is broadly structured and once again is based on a technical aspect: repeated notes by both hands, together with sustained notes which meander through the most varied instrumental and harmonic levels, yet at all times remain delicate and atmospheric within the movement. Thus the first part of the Gradus comes to an end. The second part begins with a gust of quick, flying triplets by both hands, brilliant and symphonic (No. 28), which eventually gives way to a more gentle and softer polyphonic, almost an organ style, clearly intended to represent a contrast to the preceding firework, which if not a thoughtful pause, is certainly a moment of recollection of the native polyphonic tone.

#### **Gradus ad Parnassum - CD 2 Etudes 29-44**

The second CD begins with No. 29, a demanding yet at the same time expressive piece. It is conducted with four voices in a classical manner, is serious yet at the same time deeply expressive. If one so wishes, it is a work delicately chased as regards

polyphony, which almost appears to be a homage to the semi-organist style of the best church or instrumental music of the Bach tradition. The subsequent No. 30 is well-known and makes substantial use of the octave with internal thirds. It strictly adheres to this approach up to the end of the piece without a pause, yet at the same time creates, perhaps even without the composer noticing, a romantic, remarkable discourse within the continuously progressing melody, which rises and falls, rears and settles down again, with delicate harmonic progressions reminiscent of the instrumental sound of Chopin. No. 31, broadly structured and well-developed, is based on several piano motifs which continuously re-appear within a remarkable tonal and modulated journey. The piece is thus to be regarded as an étude with technical requirements, which nevertheless includes small expressive highlights provided by Clementi's genius, thus emphasising the outstanding musically-aesthetic value of the work. Subsequently we become acquainted with No. 32, an exercise for the muscles dedicated to trills. These are embedded into a polyphonic structure with four voices and melodic motifs underline the musicality of the piece. As a final idea at the end, the left hand also participates with a long trill over an octave interval between the left and right hand. Even if it is a graceful and musical piece, it nevertheless takes a didactic direction. In No. 33 we once again return to polyphony: we are

presented with a highly musical and perfect canon for four voices. The main theme by the soprano is followed by the alto in the lower sixth, the tenor in the lower fourth and the bass in the lower octave. Despite this daunting dovetailing, the movement nevertheless "flows" seamlessly and is surrounded by a touch of eloquent, delicate intellectuality, which is, however, certainly not free of inner tension. Numbers 34 and 35 have one thing in common: in this case once again the technical aspect. The first of these two études is based on a repeated note between two groups of ongoing sixteenth notes, and the second, nearly always adhering to a flawless movement comprising three or four voices, builds, as Clementi himself discovered, on the particularity of the suggested fingering, which forces the interpreter to continuously move the thumb underneath the other fingers. No. 36 is not dictated by a particular instrumental-technical idea, but is structured according to a type of piano movement as was cultivated by many composers towards the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Alessandro Longo quite rightly refers to similar passages in Beethoven's Kreutzer sonata for violin and piano. Therefore it is primarily a beautiful piece of music with continuously rotating hand and forearm, lively and consisting of select modulations. The piece does not exclude the left hand of the player, but incorporates it a great deal more, and uses it much like the right hand, thus

lending the piece a further technically interesting aspect. Compared to the preceding piece, No. 37 is certainly one of the most "gymnastically" demanding movements. It is developed from a single motif, an embellishment with a little arpeggio wandering through different keys, which is, however, not very imaginative. Nevertheless, its usefulness as a strengthening exercise cannot be denied. In contrast No. 38 is an extensive composition without a particular technical purpose, however with many different piano moods which are typically employed in the first movement of a sonata. This was presumably intended for a complete sonata which was either never completed or taken apart for use in various other works. To my mind it is without a doubt a composition of a great master, although, it seems, without the creative spark as would be permissible by a deeper inspiration. The "Scena patetica" No. 39 is very well known, however it is unfortunately performed on rare occasions only. It is one of the highlights of the Gradus and of Clementi's work. It is often associated with the "Scena tragica" of the sonata op. 50 no. 3 (Didone abbandonata), and judging by the opus number the swansong of the Roman composer. However, it distinguishes itself from this due to the extensive freedom of the formal structure, which almost makes it a symphonic composition for piano of by no means modest proportions. The description "Scena" conveys a theatrical idea, a great theatre in which heroes, gods and

superhuman beings roam. Here Clementi is most eloquent, grand and reserved at the same time, even if according to his epoch, neo-classicism, rhetorically euphemistic. Nevertheless he remains attached to the eternal beauty of the transfigured golden age of ancient Greece. With the subsequent No. 40, Clementi returns to the fugues printed by Bailleux in Paris in 1780, in this case the fugue op. 5 no. 5. Perfect progression and flawless counterpoint are also characteristic of this fugue, which has more movement than the preceding piece, even though its tempo is indicated as "Tempo moderato". It comprises almost entirely groups of four sixteenth notes. It successfully continues Clementi's small "Well-Tempered Klavier" within the Gradus and underlines his undoubtedly apparent compositional abilities, which in this case, however, are dictated by the iron rules of an invisible counterpoint. The two movements following this fugue, numbers 41 and 42 are of highest artistic value and serve a completely non-didactic purpose. The title "Finale" stated above the first of the two says it all. It is a brilliant and merry finale, both virtuoso and expressive at the same time, Clementi at his best, broadly conceived and beautifully developed over select modulations. The second piece on the other hand is an opening sonata movement in F minor, a key which Clementi had used in the greatest masterpieces of this genre, the sonatas op. 13 no. 6, op. 25 no. 6, op. 34 no. 2 etc. It lends Clementi's inspiration

a pre-romantic character. The fugue in F minor, which carries the number 43, appears not to have been composed earlier, but – based on current knowledge – expressly written for the Gradus. In any case it is a work of highest mastery and deep passion. The theme which to a large degree is based on repeated notes, almost gives the impression of being linked to a text. Could it possibly be an adaptation of a vocal work? Let us not forget that Clementi in his youth was organist at the Basilika San Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome. The following No. 44 on the other hand can be measured to Beethoven's outstanding artistic abilities. It is without a doubt a highlight within the Gradus and in Clementi's work as a whole. This piece, which bubbles with passion, progresses in the tragic key of F minor (like Beethoven in his op. 57, "Appassionata"), without a pause, until it crumbles so-to-speak in the final chord.

#### **Gradus ad Parnassum - CD 3 Etudes 45-70**

In No. 45, the opening piece of this CD, Clementi once again reverts to the fugue op. 6 no. 4, which was printed by Bailleux in 1780, and extends it by a beautiful introduction (piano, with much expression and extremely legato), which opens up into the theme like a portal of classical beauty, with which the fugue in the version of his youth began. One should point out that the theme consists of two different parts: the first of predominantly

rhetorical character and the second, consisting almost solely of progressing sixteenth notes, which run away like an unstoppable answer from the previously posed question in the opening theme. In numbers 46 and 47, Clementi suddenly reverts to technique: in the first piece the changing fingering of the right hand while playing sixteenth notes, and in the second the continued use of the weak fingers (this time the third, fourth and fifth fingers of the right hand). The instrumental aspect in this case as opposed to other examples is beautifully achieved and in this manner the composer presents us with two highly intellectual movements (let us now at last forget about the fingers to be trained and the demanding fingering which should become second nature), on the one hand of dark, almost pre-romantic colouration and almost passionate, on the other hand in the manner of a scherzo and merrily hopping along. No. 48 is based on a single figuration, broadly developed over a never-ending movement of sixteenth notes in groups of four, and allocated to the outer fingers of the right hand. From a musical standpoint, this piece is very remarkable and sounds almost like Schumann or early German romanticism. The end of the second volume of the Gradus – as is usually the case with Clementi – is contradictory, as No. 49 is a beautiful, stylish piece in the form of an opening sonata movement (even though there are not two themes as in the sonatas of Beethoven), while the étude No. 50 at

the same time almost breaks the fingers by forcing the right hand into impressive contortions. As foreseeable, the musical content stands behind the "athletic" aspect (which today seems somewhat theoretically far-fetched). No. 50a is still quite unknown. I discovered it in the seventies while intensively studying Clementi, and presented an edition entitled "Complete Symphonic Works" (Suvini Zerboni, Milan ca. 1972-1975). It is a "Canone finito a 3, per giusti intervalli", a canon for three voices of which three handwritten copies are handed-down. The first is kept in the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Framjade Stockholm, the second in the Yale University Library and the third in the British Library in London. A dedication to Cherubini can be found on two of the hand-written versions, a friend of Clementi whom he admired. On the hand-written version in Stockholm the following lines appear at the end of the piece: "N.B. written for Cherubini for his album. To ask him for permission to print it in the second volume of my Gradus." Thus this as always perfect and pleasant sounding canon, of which there exists a second version (for 2 violins and viola), which I also published with Boccherini & Spada, returns as No. 50 to its originally intended place in the Gradus, even though it still remains unknown why Clementi did not include it in the printed version of the work. The third part of the Gradus begins with No. 51, and is the most extensive as we will shortly discover. It includes

50 pieces as opposed to the 27 of the first and 33 of the second part. The difference in time of almost ten years between the publication of the first and second parts (1817 and 1819) and the third part (1826), does not substantially influence the character of the work. In the third part too, different compositional techniques are brought together on a high stylistic level and in a flawless form, as was typical of Clementi's genius. Thus numbers 51 and 52 are associated with each other as regards appearance, the first of which is an introduction to a noble and strict piece in fugal style for four voices, or more appropriately to an invention. In the subsequent No. 53, we return to a very short piece which is based on a precise technical purpose. The requirement here is to hold a note within arpeggiated harmonies, at times in the low register, then in the middle register and in the high register, while the left hand adds a little spice by taking on a double function: the bass and the melody line, by means of crossing the right hand above and below within its continuous movement. It is a brilliant example of how well Clementi's technique was conceived. Fugue No. 54, presenting two themes, is not a continuation of his earlier works from op. 5 and 6, all of which Clementi presented once again in the Gradus, but appears to have been composed at a later time. The piece provides further evidence as to how perfectly Clementi mastered the complicated counterpoint and the technique of a double theme. It is the

highlight of Clementi's mastery of polyphony, which is expressed by its flowing implication and several examples of virtuoso counterpoint, such as at the end of the piece where the theme and its retrograde are layered on top of each other, as Alessandro Longo had discovered. No. 55 belongs to the always select circle of final movements, hence to my mind movements conceived to conclude a sonata.

This finale, not too long, is piquant and clear, a charming piece of which I could hardly say any more. Numbers 56 and 57 are associated with each other. Once again Clementi takes up a fugue, namely that in B major op. 5 no. 6 (Paris, Bailleux 1780), although he perhaps felt the necessity to begin with a lovely "Adagio patetico", which introduces it with a dominant chord. It is somewhat strange that the Adagio is completely romantic (Alessandro Longo also compared it to the Largo of op. 27 no. 2 by Beethoven, "Moonlight Sonata"). Therefore a stylistic break is apparent in the subsequent fugue, strictly contrapuntal and conducted in the customary adeptness and highest polyphonic mastery. The fugue is followed by another finale (No. 58): a true sonata finale, a great work by Clementi at his best, of virtuoso character but also playfully brilliant (it carries an agogic note "Presto"). The finale is characterised by the quick unfolding of a canon, which is disguised as an instrumental bravura-passage. No. 59 is in the unusual key of G-flat major for classical music, and

has no specific technical purpose but represents a beautiful album piece, imbued by passionate intensity. The subsequent numbers 60 and 61 too are associated with each other: the first piece in E-flat minor is dedicated exactly by half to a technical exercise with double notes, initially for the right, then for the left hand. All of this together with melodic movements of utmost expressiveness, quite in the manner of the motto "utile et dulce". Everything serves the purpose to introduce an allegro con espressione, which is for certain an opening sonata movement of greatest value, impressive dimensions and the result of perfect artistic maturity. The beginning is restrained and light-footed, its implementation darker in colour, and just like in the greatest sonatas, includes technical difficulties of all kinds. In summarised form one could say that it is a work of considerable importance and particular significance. The three subsequent pieces, numbers 62, 63 and 64 are only very short, encompassing two pages each and are very different. The first piece, a pleasant-natured Allegro moderato, is preceded by a short introduction which leads into a very moderate canon, B major in duplets. It is the first time that Clementi uses the classical structure of a canon to achieve a technical purpose. And the result is without doubt sensational. In a perfectly conceived and technically perfect manner the piece introduces a physical and mental game, which is of Olympic standards in every respect.

The resulting humour, on the other hand, is sensational. It is followed by a Presto (No. 64), which is somewhat reminiscent of a scherzo, not in the tradition of Austrian-German orchestral and chamber music, but much more of an Italian nature, as a play of the fingers with three flying sequences of groups of four, which alternate between both hands. It is a short, very pleasant piece. It is followed by two pieces which are related as regards technique: the first (No. 65) is the famous octave-piece, in which following a simple beginning – at least to contemporary pianists, if one takes into consideration the subsequent developments in this field – is challenged with didactic perfidy by long sequences of falling chords consisting of thirds and sixths by both hands, the last of which is in the uncomfortable key of F major. But that is not all: at a particular point the ongoing octaves bring together both hands and the "sadistic composer" immediately thinks of two contrapuntal melodies divided on two separate systems, which not only cause the hands to falter, but the brain of the pianist too. Étude No. 66 is based on a quick mordent or trill (whichever one wishes to say), embedded in an uninterrupted sequence of groups of four sixteenth notes, and in a well-conceived manner, is first assigned to the right and then to the left hand (three times). At the end of the piece, this exercise is then replaced by normal movements. Furthermore, everything is characterised by intelligent and well-

conceived playing with modulations and forms, as is customary for such a diverse composer as Clementi. In No. 67 we are once again presented with a canon. What else can be said here following so many examples provided by Clementi for this particular form? Merely that in this case it is a "simple" canon in the octave. With No. 68 we return to muscle exercises: what should be practiced? Let us begin with the double notes (thirds and sixths) for both hands. Here too, as once said by Longo, "a lovely game with sound", however, no more than that. Certainly the aesthetic presentiment, the aesthetic instinct is recognisable at the heart of this piece, but certainly not the complete oblivion of the technical element, just as, on the other hand, in Chopin's exercise for sixths in op. 25 no. 8. In number 69, Clementi returns to the early fugues, this time however, not those from op. 5 no. 6, but from op. 1, second version, described as "Oeuvre 1 no 5" by Alan Tyson in his admirable Muzio Clementi work catalogue. Thus we can once again admire the polyphonic and contrapuntal achievements of the young Muzio. The latter had already in 1780 celebrated his debut in this field so to speak, together with his colleague, the French publisher Bailleux (Emprimeur du Roi) and without the support of his mentor, Peter Beckford, who had brought Clementi to England as a boy. At that time however, the young Italian had already ceased all forms of contact with Beckford. At least, so it appeared. The following "Scherzo" (No. 70) is by

no means a classical scherzo, but a piece of flowing character. It is possible, that here too it is a scherzo in the original Italian sense of the word. Clementi plays with the after world and towards the end of the piece, in bar 49, secretly includes the opening theme into the retrograde (Alessandro Longo already referred to this), perhaps ridiculously thinking that nobody would notice.

#### **Gradus ad Parnassum - CD 4 Etudes 71-100 ter**

The suite consisting of 6 pieces, with which this fourth CD continues with the Gradus, is not actually a "suite", but merely a collection of pieces with different aims and different dimensions. It begins with No. 71, a broadly structured and polished piece. A movement of moving polyphony, pianistic and with various difficulties as regards touch by means of differentiated playing of the double notes. It is followed by No. 72, a play of arpeggios and opposite movements of both hands. To say it clearly: while one hand moves into the upper region of the keyboard, the other hand moves down to the lower region and vice versa. Numbers 73 and 74 return to the most beautiful of Clementi's polyphony, at first with a canon in E major with opposing movements, i.e. the right hand is nothing more than the reversed shadow of the left hand, and then with a fugue (No. 74). Like the other pieces, the latter too originated from op. 6 no. 6 (printed in 1780 by Bailleux in Paris). This movement is

also based on two themes: the first forceful and overbearing, and the second rather appealing and obliging. With this fugue, Clementi once again gives evidence of his perfect, sovereign mastery in the use of polyphony and the perfect control of a mature voice-line. In No. 75 we are presented with another canon. In the key of E major, it is clear and flowing like a mountain stream and, of course, perfect, even though this time there are only two voices in the octave in order not to make things too complicated. Thus the piece offers us another example of a flawless piece of work of this kind. Numbers 76, 77 and 78 are all of a clearly technical nature, even though, we must not forget, the harmonic directions, the thrift of the dimensions and the accuracy of form always reveal the great master. Almost like a perpetual motion machine, No. 76 employs both hands in large movements in broken octaves. Towards the end of the movement we also come across leaps and counter-movements between the hands, which go beyond the octave into the double octave and seem to be reminiscent of John Field's finale in the Kamarinskaya-Variations, which almost go beyond the boundaries of the impossible. As is known, John Field was a student of Clementi, who protected him like a son. No. 77 battles with a flow of inverted mordents, which are allocated to both hands to the maximum possible. No. 78 is the famous étude in double thirds. Clementi was well-known to be a magician of thirds, and

Mozart who heard him during the famous concert performance as a duo for Emperor Joseph II of Austria, was so jealous that he wrote a letter to his sister saying, that his colleague must have sweated day and night in London to achieve this level of mastery. It is certainly true that Clementi had distributed various highly demanding passages of thirds in his works, and in the Toccata op. 11, also passages of fourths. The étude No. 79 is particularly dedicated to the left hand, but with complicated leaps, sudden crossings, trills and other devilish tricks of the right hand, which good old Muzio was hardly able to omit as his personal brand. No. 80 carries the title Capriccio. At this opportunity it is worth remembering that Clementi had written three versions of the Capriccio op. 17: the two capriccios op. 34 no. 3 and 4, as well as the two capriccios op. 47, which all belong to his most important works. This therefore is his Capriccio No. 8 and actually begins like a capriccio, with lightening-speed scales allocated to both hands and with meditative pauses, then moving into a certain "Assai Allegro", in which continuous movements of sixteenth notes are equally allocated to both hands, and expressive fractions are embedded only occasionally to loosen up. It is finally interrupted by an adagio, however, and resumes its stormy course again over a thousand harmonic detours (*allegro*) and concludes with a flying scale spanning the entire keyboard, which is similar to the beginning of the piece and is

derived from it. The Capriccio No. 80 is indeed a work of great value and technically demanding; even if it may not be a masterpiece, it is nevertheless close to being one. It could testify Clementi's improvisational skill, which appears to have been fantastic and on an equal level with his abilities both as composer and as a pianist. Together with No. 81, the end of the "Gradus ad Parnassum" draws closer. Once again it is a finale (I do not however consider it to be a finale of an unfinished or planned sonata). It is a piece of technical value in one movement, which leads to contortions and stretches between the fifth and second fingers of the left hand, and relentlessly continues without a pause to breathe to the end of the piece. The musical content is as usual of high quality, however to a certain degree subject to the technical objective. Similar principles also govern the musical inspiration of No. 82, which is based on familiar triplets and a rhythm consisting of an eighth note pause and lightly hopping from sixteenth note to sixteenth note. In this case the technical aspect is cleverly absorbed by a musically pleasing movement, which is merry and almost joyful. Numbers 83 and 84 are related to each other by a dominant chord: number 83 thus serves as an introduction, and is very well conceived and varied, of intensive passion, gaining liveliness by the rhythmical contrast of the accompanying sextuplets. These are allocated to the right hand, over the melody line which runs over groups of

four notes played by the left hand. All this serves as the portal to No. 84, which is in two parts. The first section (*andante*) is very communicative and contains several bars with double thirds which are entrusted to the left hand. Without any further pause it creeps into a great double canon for four voices, a contrapuntal monument, as Alessandro Longo quite rightly described it. The main theme, almost always in double thirds, is imitated in the lower octave and makes this piece a remarkable composition as regards contrapuntal knowledge (which it presents), and no less important as regards exercise for the hands, as it utilises the technical demands of the double notes (in this case thirds), which are woven into a dense movement for four voices. A varied reprise of the introduction brings the piece to a conclusion, which is undoubtedly of utmost musical and technical importance. In number 85 in D minor, and reminiscent of Beethoven, even if only to a small degree, the continuous movement of the left hand consisting of two sustained notes within a broken octave, give the piece a determined and solid sound, which would also not have been unworthy of the great composer from Bonn. It is followed in a merry and relaxed manner by numbers 86 and 87, which are two outstandingly beautiful pieces of music, flowing and without a complicated structure. As always, their right to exist is found (similar to No. 71) in the continuous use of the left hand, supplying the

background, even though it sometimes also supplements the upper and middle voices. No. 87 also presents a continuous movement of the left hand which face the well-shaped melodic progressions of the right hand, only joining the continuous sixteenth notes of the left hand in the last 12 bars. In summary, certainly two useful pieces, however without any special musical content. In the following étude No. 88, Clementi returns to the trill in a joyful and talkative piece, the first part of which is dedicated to a series of trills in the left hand, and the second part exactly the opposite: here he entrusts the series of trills to the right hand. All these trills, which bring to mind Verdi's Falstaff-fragment "E il trillo invade il mondo", are however embedded in a polyphony consisting of two or three voices, which creates a completely new tonal colouration; transparent and talkative, musically more rich in content as compared with Clementi's other exercise for trills in No. 32. The movement forms a contrast to the presto of No. 89, which continues the course of the Gradus in a rough and rhythmical tone almost like a tragic jig. The piece is in most parts for two voices, with the exception of the middle part, where the voices grow stronger in an impressive crescendo and finally become three. This piece can therefore act as a reminder of some of Johann Sebastian Bach's concluding jigs of the English Suites. The subsequent fugue (No. 90) leads us back to the fugues of op.1 (Oeuvre 1), op. 5 and of op. 6, reused by Clementi.

The key of B major and the movement with four voices, whose individual lines move gracefully and elegantly into a relaxed and cantabile climate, make this piece very attractive and pleasing. Number 91 is a short but very interesting composition: it consists of two independent melodies which are accompanied by a whisper of sixteenth notes, executed by the outer fingers (third, fourth and fifth) of the left hand. The piece is rich in content, depth and honest expressiveness. The didactic purpose of the composition is to provide the pianist with the ability to create three different tonal levels, two so to speak for the soloists and one restrained level as harmonic support. Finale No. 92 is not a finale for a lost or planned sonata, but a quick and familiar invention or two voices in which sixteenth note sextuplets are faced with a melodic motif, almost a thin line which is entrusted to the right hand. It appears to me however, that the piece is rather modest as regards aesthetic scope. This is not the case in the subsequent number 93, where the predominance of the left hand is embedded in a complex context. It is a piece in which the highest possible degree of command over scales and arpeggios is to be achieved, within a free and suggestive harmonically notable environment. "Stravaganze" is the title Clementi attaches to his No. 94. In actual fact this beautiful piece is nothing more than a theme with variations. The variations are connected in a free manner, creating well-conceived tonal movements. Its

technical purpose is more or less of expressive nature and aims at practising the "cantabile" touch in the style of Chopin. Within its modest dimensions, the piece presents the classical principle of the passacaglia and chaconne, based on the concept of variations, which in these cases should create a continuous musical discourse rather than a sequence of brilliant, contrasting and clearly separate blocks. In order to clarify this a little one should take into consideration the difference between the chaconne for violin, or the passacaglia for organ by Bach, as well as the 32 variations in C minor, or the Brahms, Handel or Paganini variations respectively. Clementi continues in the direction of extravagance and arrives at "Bizzarrie" (No. 95), a piece which plays with quintuplets and was very avant-garde for its time. The quintuplets skip merrily, flying lightly until becoming stronger in the minor key of the middle section and subsequently continuous quintuplets in both hands finally returning again to the light skipping manner of the opening section. No. 96 was conceived to practice the quick alternation between the first and fifth fingers of both hands by means of contra-moving octaves. The characteristic of this piece is both technically as well as tragically reminiscent of Beethoven, perhaps due to the key of C minor, which this composer used in his sonata op. 13 Pathétique, in Symphony no. 5, in the third piano concerto, in sonata op. 111, as well as other works during the time

of the Gradus (volume III). One should also not forget that Clementi was a friend of Beethoven's great works and their publisher in British territories. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that on Clementi's suggestion, Beethoven adapted his violin concerto for piano and orchestra. The concluding four études of the Gradus are pieces of great clarity and precision, however they do not end this great work with a climax. No. 97 is a "Scherzo" (not in the Viennese sense) and is pretty and well-composed, but nothing more. No. 98, on the other hand is of greater substance, almost an invention for three voices, with a gigue-rhythm, yet on the whole without a clear statement. The subsequent number 99 is an étude which is almost entirely dedicated to technique. It consists of thirds and sustained notes with secondary movements and presents itself in a less scientific and athletic manner than the others. Number 100 on the other hand, once again continues the theme of the stretching of the left hand, which is underlined by a simple melody in the right hand. It adds nothing of significance to the glorious Gradus and perhaps these pieces are already signs indicating a certain weariness of the composer towards the end of his vast opus. The Allegro in E-flat major and the Finale in B major at the end of the Gradus are two important compositions, the original handwritten versions of which are kept in the Library of Congress in Washington. According to Alan Tyson, thanks to

whom we are presented with the definitive order of Clementi's work, they were originally intended as numbers 61 and 63 but were removed at a later stage. The Allegro in E-flat major could have carried the number 61, then followed by an adagio which today is missing and replaced by an adagio which was put into print as No. 62, while the finale should have carried the number 63. The two pieces, which today could be called 100, 100a and 100b, are nevertheless of great importance and are among the best movements of this great composition. The first is an extensive, virtuoso opening sonata movement with an execution of great value due to its agility and characteristic contrapuntal-melodic lines. They come close to Beethoven and can be associated to the latter's piano concerto no. 5 in E-flat major "The Emperor". The finale is one of the most brilliant, virtuoso and effective pieces of the entire Gradus. With it, Clementi presents us with a further piece of high stylistic level and brilliant content. I initially published the two movements in 1972 with Edizioni Berben, Ancona. Besides the canon for Cherubini, they certainly represent a further monument of great interest as regards knowledge of Clementi's great work, not only from an aesthetic, but also from a historical point of view. Today one could easily think that following Clementi, the development of piano music was mainly attributable to the unbelievable contribution of Chopin, and subsequently also Liszt, and as far as

Debussy, Ravel and Prokofjev. However, today one has to regard Clementi as one of the great classical composers, like Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Cherubini and Schubert. Fate granted him a longer life than his famous contemporaries and friends and time to gain a level of experience and knowledge which was then unique. His significance relating to the history of the piano is so great, that we should not only regard him as a great composer of symphonies and sonatas, or as a teacher and interpreter during the time of transition from Vienna Classic to the beginning of Romanticism (in the latter he participated through his friend and student John Field, the inventor of the "piano-nocturne"), but – as is inscribed on his tomb stone in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey in London – also as "father of the piano".

*Pietro Spada  
Translation by Alan Bagge*

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