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Clementi's *Didone abbandonata* Piano Sonata Op. 50, No. 3

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Young Ah Ha

2012

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Clementi's *Didone abbandonata* Piano Sonata Op. 50, No. 3

by

Young Ah Ha

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Antonio Lysy, Chair

Muzio Clementi was a highly respected keyboard musician and composer who also made a significant contribution to the physical development of the pianoforte. Unfortunately, his musical contributions are overshadowed today by those of his contemporaries Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. This paper will re-emphasize Clementi's historical reputation and works, especially his only programmatic instrumental music and one of the late piano sonatas, *Didone abbandonata*.

Clementi titled his last sonata (Op. 50, No. 3, published 1821) after Metastasio's often-set opera libretto of the same name. Clementi responds to the tragic story of Virgil's heroine as it is presented in this libretto. As a work of instrumental music, this sonata does not have the benefit of any verbal laments, nor did Clementi borrow from the music produced for its various settings by other composers.

Clementi's late three piano sonatas, Op. 50 represent his later style, which has been characterized as "lyrical, confident, stormy, and witty."<sup>1</sup> The *Didone abbandonata* sonata will be

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Sealey, *CD Review*. <http://tinyurl.com/8gdqgwm>.

briefly analyzed here, along with the other two sonatas of the same opus number, which include the much more Romantic characteristics typical of nineteenth-century music.

Clementi gave detailed performing directions as to pedaling and certain metronome markings in the *Didone abbandonata*. Specific performance practice issues posed by this sonata will be examined in depth using variants between the manuscript (the facsimile edition) and other editions. In addition, available recordings of this sonata will be compared to see how performers take these performance practice principles into account in their performances.

The first chapter of the dissertation discusses Clementi's historical reputation and the pianoforte of his day. The second chapter explores the background to Clementi's *Didone abbandonata* including his other two sonatas from Op. 50 and Clementi's approach Metastasio's libretto. The third chapter examines certain performance practice issues in the *Didone abbandonata*, including tempo, rhythm, dynamics, articulations, and pedaling. This chapter arose out my desire to perform the *Didone abbandonata*, and gives my experiences of and solutions to the performance practice issues. The fourth chapter compares the variants between the facsimile and other editions of the *Didone abbandonata*. This discussion will help guide performers form a better understanding of Clementi's intentions, as well as help them select a reasonable edition for performing the sonata.

The dissertation of Young Ah Ha is approved.

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2012

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## Chapter One:

### Clementi and the Pianoforte of his Period

Muzio Clementi's (1752-1832) life and work stretched from the end of the Baroque period (its exponents Bach and Handel having died in 1750 and 1759, respectively), through the Classical period, and into the beginning of the Romantic period. He was a successful composer, pianist, piano manufacturer, music publisher, and keyboard teacher. Clementi was born in Rome and enjoyed the direct influence of Baroque music in his childhood. As a keyboard virtuoso, he tied with Mozart in a piano competition held in Vienna in 1781. Clementi also performed alongside Haydn in the stage of London's Hanover Square Concert Rooms in 1790s. In 1807, he also successfully negotiated with Beethoven and he became the composer's principal English publisher. In addition, he attended Franz Liszt's London debut in 1824. Clementi made his living as a music publisher, piano manufacturer, and was an eminent, admired, and handsomely paid piano teacher in London. His success may have inspired an envy-laden remark Mozart expressed in a letter to his father Leopold Mozart in which he described Clementi as a "*ciarlatano*" (a charlatan), that he had "not the slightest expression or taste, still less, feeling."<sup>2</sup>

Although Muzio Clementi was one of the most prominent composers, piano teachers, and pianists of his time, he has not been studied and advocated as thoroughly as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, nor are his piano sonatas frequently performed in concerts today. Yet he composed distinguished works for the keyboard and was innovative in advancing sonata form; he influenced other composers, including Beethoven. Anton Schindler, in his book *Beethoven As I*

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<sup>2</sup> William Youngren, *The Atlantic online*. <http://tinyurl.com/9u2oseq>.

*Knew Him*, stated, “Beethoven had the greatest admiration for Clementi’s piano sonatas, considering them the most beautiful, the most pianistic of works, both for their lovely, pleasing, original melodies and for the consistent, easily followed form of each movement.”<sup>3</sup> Also, Clementi developed the piano sonata form innovatively, but more cautiously than Beethoven.

Although Clementi and his music are less-often studied and programmed today than during his own time, Clementi was highly renowned and respected musician in his time, as attested to by writers and critics. Accordingly, Reinhard G. Pauly states, “though this stature may not be generally acknowledged today... it was recognized during Clementi’s lifetime: thus Breitkopf & Härtel published a collection of his keyboard music as “*Oeuvres Complètes*” commencing 1803, on a subscription basis — something they had previously done only for Haydn and Mozart.”<sup>4</sup> Beethoven, in particular, showed respect towards Clementi’s works. For example, Schindler notes that “Beethoven recommended Clementi’s school of piano playing to others and thought highly of Clementi’s style of piano playing — a cantabile manner, based on vocal models.”<sup>5</sup>

A virtuosic pianist, Clementi composed keyboard works that were considered remarkable achievements in the classical keyboard literature. According to Leon Plantinga, a musicologist whose studies have greatly influenced Clementi scholarship, “Clementi’s name and reputation have long been inextricably associated with the piano. The major under-takings of his adult life — as a composer, performer, teacher, arranger, publisher, and manufacturer — all had to do with

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<sup>3</sup> Anton Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him: A Biography*. p.379.

<sup>4</sup> Reinhard G. Paul, *Music in the Classic Period*. p.122. (Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism*, pp.15ff., gives reasons.)

<sup>5</sup> Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*. p. 414.

this instrument.”<sup>6</sup> During his time, Clementi was “ variously called ‘father of the pianoforte,’ ‘father of pianoforte playing,’ ‘father of the pianoforte sonata.’”<sup>7</sup> Clementi’s piano sonatas delightfully musically, yet the technical difficulties of performance were substantial and comparable to the Beethoven’s piano sonatas. While Clementi’s works appealed to Beethoven, acclaim was not uniform: Mozart disapproved of passages in thirds and sixths for one hand and considered Clementi’s style insufficiently graceful and easy.<sup>8</sup>

Clementi and his keyboard music influenced many composers of the early nineteenth century including Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Chopin, and Liszt. According to Plantinga, the fact that “the piano composers of the 1820s and 1830s modeled their keyboard idiom — whether directly or indirectly — more on Clementi than on Beethoven seems indisputable.”<sup>9</sup> Clementi’s music also affected the piano style of the period, as “his keyboard writing reputedly exerted a decisive influence upon piano styles of the early nineteenth century.”<sup>10</sup>

Clementi had a successful life as both a musician and a keyboard composer. However, today his music is not practiced or studied to the extent it was in the past. In contrast, musical works by the Viennese school, which include Haydn, Mozart, and especially Beethoven, who admired the work of Clementi are performed and studied by many authors, critics, and performers. This has resulted in their works being easily accessible to researchers, while there has been only a minimal effort in regard to organizing and cataloging Clementi’s works.

Clementi also made a significant contribution to the physical development of the piano as we know it today. According to Sandra Rosenblum, “...Clementi wrote for a range of five and

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<sup>6</sup> Leon Plantinga, *Clementi: His Life and Music*. p.286.

<sup>7</sup> Plantinga, p.285.

<sup>8</sup> Oscar Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*. p.208.

<sup>9</sup> Plantinga, p.313.

<sup>10</sup> Plantinga, p.286.

half octaves (with a range of FF to c4). He also added the new high notes, along with pedal signs and other changes...while the keyboard compass before the 1790s was generally five octaves, sometimes four and a half. A five-octave range remained the most usual on the Continent into the first few years of the nineteenth century.”<sup>11</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, there were two well-defined schools of the pianoforte making. The English piano kept a square shape and pedals, while the Viennese piano had a more traditional grand piano shape with knee levers or hand stops, which only could be achieved the pedal effect for several measures. The actions of each were quite different except that they both had escapement mechanisms and leather-covered hammers.<sup>12</sup> Rosenblum has noted that the English piano had “slightly wider keys, thicker strings, larger hammers made with more layers of leather and a carefully selected striking point.”<sup>13</sup> Oscar Bie argues that the English pianoforte was favored in the school of Clementi because of a wider dynamic range and “its heavier but richer touch than that of Hummel the Viennese, with its lighter tone, which lends itself more easily to effects.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, Eric Blom considered Clementi’s English pianoforte a derivation of the English pianos, which needed “a much heavier touch” with “an entirely new technique” making use of blasting power from forearm to wrist to a hand “scarcely lifted from the keyboard” to play, and this playing method could deliver “a richer, more impulsive and varied style of composition” on the English pianos in “the more voluminous tone.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications*. p.32.

<sup>12</sup> David Rowland, *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*. p.22-26.

<sup>13</sup> Rosenblum, p.45.

<sup>14</sup> Bie, p.190.

<sup>15</sup> Eric Blom, *The Romance of the Piano*. p.158.

Even though the English pianofortes had a much heavier touch than the Viennese one, they were of much lighter construction and had an easier touch compared to the modern concert piano.<sup>16</sup> This is something that modern pianists have to consider when performing Clementi's works, since, as Charles Rosen relevantly mentioned, "the thicker sound and stiffer action of the modern piano also induce slower speeds in the quick movement."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rosenblum, p.32.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*. p.106.

## Chapter Two:

### The Sonata *Didone abbandonata* in G minor

Clementi's music constitutes part of the solid foundation of the keyboard music history. One can say that Clement's piano works were the most distinguished amongst his musical works, which also include his symphonies. Clementi contributed to the development of the "Sonata form" itself, and his music exhibited bright clarity, clear texture, and demanded great technical skills, as he was, after all, a virtuosic pianist. The four pieces in Op. 46 and Op. 50 are classified as his later sonatas. They are distinguished from his early sonatas by their contrapuntal and canon style, chromatic progressions, and lyrical characters, reflecting the general development of the pianoforte during the period.

Clementi's Op. 50 encompasses three sonatas, the third of which is the subject of this paper. As large-scaled sonatas, the three pieces in Clementi's Op. 50 represents Clementi's late style with its chromaticism and thick, canonic, contrapuntal manner. The second, in D minor and the third, in G minor (the *Dido* sonata) are passionate and strong while the first sonata in the A Major is distinctively different with a transparent texture and lyrical melody.

Regarding the first movement of the D minor sonata, Plantinga noted that the first movement the "first tonic pedal" runs throughout the course of the first theme. The left hand plays a variety of "broken octaves," which are accompanied by a "murky bass" chiefly in the development. When the relative F major section appears, Clementi incorporates an abrupt chromatic change with ornaments that were used regularly in his late lyric style. Lastly, like his



other minor key movements containing major key themes, the music of this section is more full and satisfying when it is restated in “the recapitulation in its tonic minor.”<sup>18</sup> Both of the D minor and the *Dido* sonatas show “Clementi thoroughly in command of his materials, and that contributes a strong ending to a convincing sonata.”<sup>19</sup>

Clementi titled the G minor sonata Op. 50, No. 3 *Didone abbandonata*, after the opera of the same name, composed by Domenico Sarro, with libretto by Pietro Metastasio, and premiered in 1724. The libretto presents the tragic story of Virgil’s heroine. Dido was Queen of Carthage and the main character of “*Dido and Aeneas*” from the fourth book of Virgil’s “*Aeneid*.” In this libretto, Dido was engaged to King Larbas, but she fell in love with the Trojan warrior Aeneas who attacked her city. After the Trojan’s victory, Dido desperately wanted and persuaded Aeneas to become her husband and King. Although Aeneas reciprocated her advances and fell in love with her, he decided to leave her to satisfy obligations to his people in Italy. Dido became heartbroken and grief-stricken — when she realized and accepted that she could not be with Aeneas, she committed suicide. Clementi responds to this tragic story of Virgil’s heroine, but he does not adopt any of the music produced for its various settings.

The *Dido* sonata, dedicated to Luigi Cherubini, was published in 1821 when Clementi was sixty-eight years of age, nine years before his death. Interestingly, Clementi did not mention the dates of composition for his last four sonatas. According to Plantinga, Clementi’s three new sonatas, presumably thought of as Op. 46 and three sonatas from Op. 50 that Clementi referred to in 1804 and 1805, were not to be published by Nägeli or any other publisher for some time. Clementi sometimes refused to publish his compositions, or music composed after 1802 might

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<sup>18</sup> Plantinga, p.262-63.

<sup>19</sup> Plantinga, p.263.

lay unpublished for long period; and apparently, Clementi often discarded autographs of his music once published.<sup>20</sup>

Plantinga also mentions that “a correspondence report from Italy in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of 1807 that referred to several major new compositions which Clementi determined not to release to the public until he has satisfied himself that they are perfect.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the composition of his last four sonatas might have been initiated and largely completed in the very early 1800s.

As one of his last piano sonatas, the *Dido* sonata displays Romantic characteristics typical of nineteenth-century music, in contrast with his early works and was probably the most familiar and popular sonata of the time. Plantinga mentions that “these latest sonatas of Clementi seem to have been something of a bellwether of nineteenth-century keyboard style.”<sup>22</sup> He also stated that Clementi’s late piano sonatas had a tendency of being so excessively expressive that he drove the melody to extremes, especially in Op. 50.<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Temperley has noted in regard Op. 50 that “the three sonatas Op. 50 are some of the finest, as well as the best known, of all Clementi’s works, showing his mature mastery of form and at the same time encompassing his full range of idioms — the lyrically expansive, the austere contrapuntal, the profoundly mystical.”<sup>24</sup> These characteristics of his late sonatas were new and innovative, distinguishing these pieces from his early works, even though some early sonatas such as “the sonatas of Op. 12 (1784) contains many characteristics of the mature Classic piano style, such as full, chordal writing, rhythmic

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<sup>20</sup> Plantinga, p.217.

<sup>21</sup> Plantinga, p.221. (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* ix 1807, 787.)

<sup>22</sup> Plantinga, *Muzio Clementi Studies and Prospects. Introduction*, xxiv.

<sup>23</sup> Plantinga, p.260.

<sup>24</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *The London Pianoforte School 1766-1860*, Vol. 4, *Introduction to This Volume*. xiv.

vigor, dynamic contrast, and great range.”<sup>25</sup> According to Plantinga, “most lavish of all in their praise of Clementi’s music were the reviews in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine* that happened to refer to the Op. 50 sonatas.”

Clementi’s works, especially his keyboard sonatas, were highly acclaimed in his lifetime, but some reviewers, perhaps inevitably, would criticize his output. One, as critical as he was of Clementi in general, found at least some merit in his *Dido* sonata, even if “damning with faint praise.” Bie also mentioned that Clementi’s sonatas and sonatine were very instructive, and emphasized the *Dido* sonata as “only one, which can today attract us by its originality or genius.”<sup>26</sup>

As for overall structure, the *Dido* sonata follows a typical three-movement format (fast-slow-fast), except for an introduction to the first movement. Glyn Pursglove says that, “its brief introduction functions like an overture... we are presumably intended to imagine the raising of the curtain in this mental theatre.”<sup>27</sup> This short introduction, *Largo patetico e sostenuto* (subtitled “*scena tragica*”) functioned as an opera overture, given that the sonata was based on Metastasio’s opera libretto “*Didone abbandonata*.” As story telling music, “it is indeed a work of almost unrelieved tragic quality — even the slow movement is in G minor.”<sup>28</sup>

The introduction is a series of descending steps with thick chordal texture typical of keyboard music in the 1820s. This contrasts with the *Allegro ma con espressione* that follows the introduction. The second movement is a rhapsodic, harmonically digressive *Adagio dolente*, which leads straight into the strongest movement of this piece, the *Allegro agitato, e con*

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<sup>25</sup> Pauly, p.122.

<sup>26</sup> Bie, p.210.

<sup>27</sup> Glyn Pursglove, *CD Review*. <http://tinyurl.com/9npsbbq>.

<sup>28</sup> Temperley, xiv.

*disperazione*. Clementi's emblem can be seen in its opening theme, "a falling melodic line with a dactylic rhythm that places a long note and a strong dissonance in the beginning of each bar."

The majority of this movement has a one-way feature from a uniform rhythmic motion and recurring cadences characteristic of Scarlatti's keyboard music. Clementi's last sonata is original, but it endorses the style and expression that he had revealed throughout his entire musical career as a composer.<sup>29</sup>

As previously mentioned, Metastasio's original libretto, *Didone abbandonata* is based on the story of Dido, the Queen of Carthage. Why did Clementi choose this libretto as the only instrumental music of his own to which he supplied a programmatic title? Plantinga commented on a very long review of this work in the *Quarterly Magazine and Review*, "a review that may, as we shall see, originated from Clementi himself — makes some show of connecting the sonata with its title."<sup>30</sup> One can question if there is any connection between Clementi's *Dido* sonata and Giuseppe Tartini's violin sonata, Op. 1, No. 10, composed in 1734, to which Tartini attached the same title and used the same key of G minor. Riccardo Allorto also mentioned the possible connection in his book *Le Sonate per piano-forete di Muzio Clementi*, "Allorto alludes to a possible influence of the Tartini sonata."<sup>31</sup> However, Plantinga refuted, "The review in the QMM mentions no such connection, citing as the source of the programmatic title only the story of the unhappy Queen of Carthage, which is too well known to need any comment."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Plantinga, <http://tinyurl.com/8qs9z2a>.

<sup>30</sup> Plantinga, p. 263.

<sup>31</sup> Plantinga, P.283. from Notes. Riccardo Allorto, *Le Sonate per piano-forete di Muzio Clementi*, p.61.

<sup>32</sup> Plantinga, p.282.

## Chapter Three:

### Performance Practice Issues in Sonata Op. 50, No. 3

Plantinga, the author of “*Clementi His Life and Music*,” asserted that Clementi tried to give more detailed and special indications to the first edition of his Op. 50 sonata than his other sonatas.<sup>33</sup> These specific performance directions would presumably help performers understand the composer’s intentions. However, performers must often consider the course of performance practice over the last two hundred years, as well as the development of the piano itself. Thus, Temperley stated the importance of the performance practice in the *The London Pianoforte School 1776-1860: Introduction to the Series*.

The piano changed radically during the period covered by these volumes, and even in any one decade there was a wide variety of types in use, both domestically and on the concert platform. If these pieces are played on a modern instrument, it should be remembered that dynamics, articulation, and (especially) pedaling had quite a different effect on a Broadwood or Clementi piano of the period.<sup>34</sup>

This chapter will discuss performance practice issues with musical examples, with hopes of helping performers better understand the relationship between Clementi and the piano of that time.

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<sup>33</sup> Plantinga, p.267.

<sup>34</sup> Temperley, *The London Pianoforte School 1776-1860: Introduction to the Series*, Vol. 4, x.

## Tempo and *Affeckt*

Tempo is one of the most significant considerations in performance. In particular, a composer's tempo markings are of utmost importance in forming a musical interpretation. Beethoven evidently considered the tempo as the first priority for performance of his works. According to Schindler, "when a work by Beethoven had been performed, Beethoven's first question was always, 'How were the tempi?' Every other consideration seemed to be of secondary importance to him."<sup>35</sup> Clementi similarly considered tempo very important and indicated the metronome markings on his late piano works including the *Dido* sonata. Plantinga remarked on these tempi,

Each movement (except for the introductory Largo of the third sonata) is given a metronome marking. After Maelzel had perfected his famous mechanism about 1814, Clementi almost immediately began to specify metronome markings for his new publications, beginning with the first volume of *Gradus ad Parnassum* in 1817. And in the case of the opus 50 sonatas, for once, the metronome indications a composer has given his own music seem eminently reasonable.<sup>36</sup>

Besides the metronome markings, Clementi gave detailed instructions for the tempi for the *Dido* sonata rather than simply offering the general tempo markings such as *Largo*, *Adagio*, and *Allegro*. He also intimately connected the tempi to the storytelling in this more programmatic work. For instance, the introduction to the first movement opens with *Largo patetico e sostenuto*, in which a metronome marking is not given. One can describe the *Affeckt* of the introduction like slowly walking through a secret and dark place, as an interpretation of the texture and the manner of Clementi's writing. For example, Pursglove said about the

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<sup>35</sup> Anton Schindler as quoted in William S. Newman, *Beethoven on Beethoven: Playing His Piano Music His Way*. p.84.

<sup>36</sup> Plantinga, p.267.

introduction, “the music is densely chordal, with a largely descending melodic shape that finishes with a sense of promising more than it has yet delivered.”<sup>37</sup> The way the music was written, with the delaying dots and descending line, is best realized in a freer manner, so thus no tempo marking. Plantinga had this to say about the introduction: “the introductory *Largo patetico*, constructed entirely upon a distinctive stepwise descending motive, quickly reaches an impassioned *fortissimo* climax and the unlikely key of the subdominant minor.”<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, the introduction should start with a slow walking speed with a lagging step as the descending motives move. Following the introduction, the *Allegro, ma con espressione (diliborando e meditando)* section includes Clementi’s metronome marking of dotted half = 76. Pursglove articulated a connection between the first movement and the story of the libretto, “the ensuing allegro is by turns gently melancholy and passionately disturbed, surely intended as a musical representation of the conflicting passions in the mind of the abandoned queen as she moves to understand what has happened to her and moves, of course, towards eventual suicide.”<sup>39</sup>

The abandoned queen, *Dido* depicts her sorrowful feeling in the next movement, *Adagio dolente*, which is rhapsodic and harmonically digressive in the same key, G minor. The manner of Clementi’s writing for the second movement comprises rests on down beats, written-out ornamentations, sustained pedal, quick dynamic changes, and abrupt harmonic changes. All of this makes the music elegiac. In a time signature of 6/8, Clementi marked an eighth note at = 108 for this slow movement, clearly showing that the eighth note gets the beat, thus, performers must

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<sup>37</sup> Pursglove, *CD Review*. <http://tinyurl.com/9npsbbq>.

<sup>38</sup> Plantinga, p.264-65.

<sup>39</sup> Pursglove, *CD Review*.

keep an even count of 1-2-3-1-2-3 beneath the lyrical, ornamented, and perhaps fanciful melodies. The *Dido*'s doleful aria ends with a fantasia-like cadenza that may be presented freely, and it is in contrast to the storming, forceful and furious music following *Attacca subito*.

Clementi gave a metronome marking for the last movement, *Allegro agitato e con disperazione*, as a half note at = 80 in a time signature of 2/4. Although the modern performer should respectfully follow Clementi's metronome marking, the last movement, in particular, could be performed slightly slower than marked. Since the music is designated *agitato*, the music will flow rapidly and feel faster than the typical Allegro speed even a slightly under the tempo. To emphasize the *agitato* designation, Clementi marked the dissonances of the downbeats with '*fz.*'

Fig. 1, Clementi Piano Sonata in G minor, *Didone abbandonata* 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 1-6. (New York: London pianoforte school 1766-1860, Garland Publishing, Vol. 4, 1984-.)<sup>40</sup>

52

♩ = 80

ALLEGRO  
AGITATO,  
e con  
DISPERAZIONE

*f* *fz* *rinf* *fz*

<sup>40</sup> All musical examples are from the *Dido* sonata.



## Rhythm

According to Malcolm Bilson in his lecture, *Knowing the Score*, a dotted note should be played properly, and could be differently interpreted from the general meaning of the notation depending on the music.<sup>41</sup> Clementi wrote double dotted notes throughout the introduction of the *Dido* sonata. Presumably, the reason why Clementi put the double dotted rhythm was to make sure a dotted rhythm be clearly played outside the triplet beneath. More specifically, it would deliver an *Affeckt* of “*patetico e sostenuto*” by playing the thirty-second note in the dotted rhythm slightly after the triplet, thereby giving a more weight to the short note. Pianist Richard Burnett recorded the *Dido* sonata on an early piano, “...the well-recorded sound of a Grand Pianoforte, dated 1822, by Clementi and Co. A piano, that is to say, made by Clementi’s own company.”<sup>42</sup> Burnett plays the shorter note of the dotted rhythm as short as possible, almost like an ornament to the next downbeat, and he seems to try to play it as written in the score. On Clementi’s pianoforte, these short notes are heard reasonably well. If performers play the short note value as written a thirty-second note on the modern Steinway piano, it would produce a quite different sound from that of the early piano. Based on my experience, these short notes are barely executed on the modern pianos when they are treated as the thirty-second notes, due to the difference in the modern piano from the early ones. The different effect of the modern piano might also interrupt the concept of the *Affeckt* that mentioned earlier.

According to Rosenbaum, “pianofortes had a far lighter construction throughout and a much easier touch than the modern piano...in line with the light construction, the keys were narrower, the key dip was considerably shallower, and the action was much lighter than those of

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<sup>41</sup> Malcolm Bilson, *Knowing the Score: How to play dotted notes properly?*

<sup>42</sup> Pursglove, *CD Review*.

modern pianofortes.”<sup>43</sup> The performance practice issues lie in the differences between pianos of the nineteenth century and those of modern times. It is a duty of the modern performer to appreciate the differences, and they must interpret and perform the music correspondingly. Another example to consider concerns measures 113, 115, 422, and 424 of the first movement, where eighth notes are followed by two sixteenth notes (Fig. 2). It is impossible to play these in the written tempo on the modern piano, mainly due to the differences between early and modern pianos. Even though the English pianos that Clementi preferred had a heavier action than Viennese ones, the action of English pianos was still much lighter than modern pianos. To get around the problem, Howard Shelly and Olivier Cavé interpret these passages as a triplet, instead of the rhythm as written, in their recording that on the modern piano. Similarly, measures 98, 100, 371, 373, and 375 of the last movement, may have to be played as a quintuplet on the modern piano.

Fig. 2, 1<sup>st</sup> mov., mm. 113-15.



Fig. 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov., mm. 98-99.



<sup>43</sup> Rosenblum. p.32.

As mentioned earlier, Clementi's piano had keys with much lighter action than modern ones. Clementi wrote his keyboard music for his instrument and could not possibly have anticipated how his music might be interpreted on instruments of the future. For example, this quick-broken chord cannot be performed on the modern piano as quickly as it could have been on the early piano. Rosen cautions, with regard to the action of the modern piano, "the thicker sound and stiffer action of the modern piano also induce slower speeds in the quick movements."<sup>44</sup> Performers should treat these more as blocked chords for an effect, especially when they appear on the downbeat a measure.

Fig. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov., mm. 13-14 and 15-18.



Another example of this "chord" effect:

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<sup>44</sup> Rosen, p.106.

Fig. 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov., mm. 7-9, 39-42, 135-36, and 152-55.



This quick rhythm appears at the end of the short phrases in the main theme, throughout the last movement. Pianist Cavé interprets and plays the example very quickly in his recording. It delivers a unique sound, rather like a chordal effect on the modern piano. It is completely suitable for the *agitato* music here.

## Dynamics and Articulation

Clementi scored a very range of dynamics for his *Dido* sonata. He kindly indicated *crescendo* markings to make the melody very natural as they tend to increase with rising pitches. Performers must consider these dynamics, and how the markings will translate from the keyboards of Clementi's time to the modern concert piano today. In general, the dynamics are much more easily expressed on the modern piano than the early one.

### The first movement

Fig. 6, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 24-29 and 330-33.



This passage would be naturally sound like a *crescendo* as the melody ascends to higher pitches. Perhaps Clementi needed to make a point of the *crescendo* sound on the piano of his time. As modern pianists on modern instruments, we should see the *crescendo* as a natural *crescendo*, as the pitch rises, and avoid too much dynamic emphasis on such a simple theme.

Since there is a limited expression in performance on the early piano, Clementi probably meant this passage to be sounded with just a natural *crescendo-diminuendo*. The sound will be

too lyrical if performers take it too seriously on the modern piano. Note that this kind of *crescendo-diminuendo* purposefully presents a natural sound with the pitch's move, a much more Classical approach unlike the tremendous dynamic range of the later Romantic composers.

Fig. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 78-90, 124-25, and 235-43.



### The second movement

In Beethoven's writing, there are abundant "*subito piano*" markings following "*f*." Beethoven's scoring of huge dynamic changes reveals his intention of creating sudden effects. On the contrary, Clementi never indicates "*subito piano*" in the *Dido* sonata, and the performer should be careful to stay within a more Classical dynamic range. At least this "*p*" marking, in particular for this example, should not be interpreted as a "*subito piano*."

Fig. 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 1-4.



Clementi's written ornament appears here for a fantasia-like arpeggio with forced long pedaling. Clementi presumably marked the “*p*” marking so that he could add a fantasia character for the beginning of the second movement. However, the first “*p*” marking, which is on D Major chord in measure 2 could be interpreted in opposition to the general meaning of the “*p*.” It would deliver a much more dramatic effect if the first arpeggio in D Major chord played with greatly extended sound compared to the following one in G minor chord in measure 4.

### The third movement

Pianist Olivier Cavé recorded the *Dido* sonata on the modern piano, and his interpretation is quite unusual and remarkable. For example, in measure 128 in the third movement, he completely ignores the “*p*” marking, and in general brings more to the sound of “*p*.” The pitch is descending in the canon style, which makes sense for it to be played from “*f*” to “*p*.”

Fig. 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 128-34.



The most effective and remarkable usages of articulations in the *Dido* sonata are *sf*, *rf*, *sfz*, and *fz*, and they appear often. Alfred Brendel stated that *rinforzando* meant “a cantabile emphasis on one or several notes, usually in a lyrical context.”<sup>45</sup> Clementi often used the *rinforzando* on a specific note in his *Dido* sonata, and most of them are intended to set a desperate and stormy atmosphere for Dido’s tragic story. For instance, in between measure 43 and 44 of the first movement, both of two *rinforzandos*, which are written on a scale in the left hand, makes the atmosphere.

Fig. 10, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 43-47.



Brendel states, “in general, *forzando* indicates a more vigorous and sudden attack than does the *fp* marking, and is written most often to accent already loud passages.”<sup>46</sup> However, two other aspects of the *forzando* are presented in the *Dido* sonata that Clementi often marked *forzando* on passages that he wanted to make expressive, rather than accenting them. For

<sup>45</sup> Alfred Brendel, *Music sounded out: essays, lectures, interviews, afterthoughts*. p.33.

<sup>46</sup> Brendel, p.145.



example, beginning with measure 54 of the first movement, the main theme finally repeats in the left hand.

Fig. 11, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 54-60.



The other aspect of *forzando* gives more weight on dissonances or unexpected harmony changes.

Fig. 12, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 67-73.



Note that Clementi used more *forzando* markings for a general meaning to emphasize and accent notes in louder passages as well.

## Pedaling

According to Temperley in his suggestions for performance, Clementi adequately, yet differently used the sustaining pedal in his *Dido* sonata. The “blurring of harmonies” in the high octaves was accepted as the tone would disperse quickly; and in a lower note, if it was refuted by another low note, it did not interfere with the new harmony. In contrast, the modern pianos have to clear the sound before the change of harmony, while maintaining and balancing the pedal sound. Temperley has suggested that “elsewhere it may be best to preserve Clementi’s pedaling, despite the blurring, because the romantic *misterioso* effect is a planned feature of the music.”<sup>47</sup>

The performer should be careful about pedaling in Clementi’s piano works, since the pedaling on modern pianos will create a much more sonorous but perhaps unwanted effect than the old pianos in Clementi’s time, which had a much more limited resonance. However, his pedaling markings such as “*Continua il Pedale,*” intended for a special effect, would be presented well as they stand on the modern concert piano.

Examples for “*Continua il Pedale:*”

### The first movement

Thirteen measures of pedal on the bridge to the recapitulation:

Fig. 13, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 317-30.



<sup>47</sup> Temperley, *The London Pianoforte School 1766-1860: Suggestions for Performance*. xxi.



### The second movement

Note that the nine measures of long pedaling intended for holding all of resonance of the D Major chord and the g minor chord in the chromatic descending passage, to create an atmosphere of fantasy. This passage conjures the scene in which Dido, the abandoned queen, soliloquizes her dolorous emotional state. The groaning melody lying atop the gradually descending accompaniment incorporates rests seemingly depicting her sorrowful breathing. While the rests in the score seem to interrupt the melodic line, the obligation of the performer is render a groaning feeling throughout a diminishing melody, without arriving at an exact ending. Clementi used his long pedaling here not only for the resonance of the harmonies, but also to express Dido's emotional state.

Fig. 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 1-9.



### The third movement

Fifteen measures of pedal leading to the recapitulation:

Fig. 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 265-80.



As mentioned above, Clementi, as a piano maker, was absorbed in the mechanics of the instrument and contributed tremendously to the piano's development. His late keyboard sonatas were the perfect vehicle with which he could experiment with the advances of the pianos he

produced. The following examples of pedaling are good examples of effects now possible on the new piano.

### The first movement

*Misterioso* effect in harmony changes:

Fig. 16, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 187-90.



### The second movement

Chord-like holding effect:

Fig. 17, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 13-18.



Special effect, the sound up in the air with unexpected harmony progressions (no resolution):

Fig. 18, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 32-36.



### The third movement

Special effect, the sound up in the air with *tenuto*/*decrescendo*:

Fig. 19, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 201-7.



Fig. 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 70-71 and 347-48.



Here is another example of Clementi's innovative pedaling. He often connects two or three measures of long pedaling as a bridge, smoothly leading to a new section.

### The first movement

Three measures of pedal with *diminuendo* (leading G minor to G Major section):

Fig. 21, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 394-97.



### The second movement

Creating fantasy effect and slightly moving into a beautiful *dolce* section:



Fig. 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 37-38.



Dramatic lead in to the last movement with *Attacca subito*:

Fig. 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., m. 71 to the end.



Based on these examples, Clementi seems to have wanted a more stormy and forceful sound via pedaling than could be achieved on his piano, and thus he prescribed abundant pedaling to attempt to create his intended sound. The modern concert piano, however, has much richer resonance than the early one, and thus performers have less difficulty achieving this wash of sound than performers in Clementi's time did.

Clementi adds more pedaling for a passionate and forceful effect in the ending section:



Fig. 24, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., m. 403 to the end.

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Clementi's Op. 50, spanning measures 403 to the end. The score is written for piano and is divided into four systems, each consisting of a right-hand and left-hand part. The first system begins with a forte dynamic (*ff*) and the instruction *con fuoco*. The second system features a fortissimo dynamic (*ff*) and the instruction *con Passione*. The third system includes dynamics ranging from fortissimo (*ff*) to piano (*p*), with the instruction *Cres* (Crescendo). The fourth system concludes with a fortissimo dynamic (*ff*) and the instruction *ten* (tension), followed by *gva* (glissando) and *loco* (ad libitum). The score is marked with several asterisks (\*) and the word "Ped" (Pedal) in various positions. The piece ends with the word "FINE" in large, bold letters. The title "CLEMENTI Op. 50." is printed at the bottom of the page.

## Chapter Four:

### Variants between the Manuscript and the Editions

There is no such thing as an “original text” of any piece of old music, unless either there is only one source or all the sources give identical readings.<sup>48</sup>

Might the modern performers be able to better approach the *Dido* sonata if Clementi had left behind an autograph? According to Alan Tyson in his book, *Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Muzio Clementi*, “none of the autographs from which his published works were engraved appears to have survived, and doubtless he (or his publisher) simply threw them away. In general it can be said that the survival of an autograph represents some sort of failure on Clementi’s part.”<sup>49</sup> Therefore, performers can consider the first published edition of the *Dido* sonata as the closest they will ever approach the original manuscript. Also, Tyson has noted that,

An edition of the *Dido* sonata published by André of Offenbach around 1856 contains a preface by Anton Schindler which discusses the nature of the work and the way to perform it. The opinions there expressed are said to have been gained from a visit which Schindler paid to Clementi in Baden in summer of 1827, when Clementi explained in detail his intentions concerning the sonata, and annotated Schindler’s copy.<sup>50</sup>

The André edition is therefore presumably the best edition of the *Dido* sonata, the closest to Clementi’s intentions. Unfortunately this edition is not included in the edition list in this paper since no copy of it could be located. However, the other historical edition of the sonata, edited by

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<sup>48</sup> Walter Emery as quoted in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*. p.37.

<sup>49</sup> Tyson, *Thematic Catalogue of the works of Muzio Clementi*. p.112.

<sup>50</sup> Tyson, p.95.

Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), published by Hallberger of Stuttgart around 1857, will be discussed.

These following information is cited from Tyson's *Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Muzio Clementi*.

The copy of the First Edition of the 'Dido' Sonata is in Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Published by Clementi & Co in London. (June 2, 1821, but not published till Oct. 15)

Parallel Edition of op. 50: Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig.

Copy: Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna; Naderman, Paris.

Copy: Dr Nicholas Temperley, Urbana, Illinois.

Several editions of Clementi's *Dido* sonata exist today, including the Henle, Peters, Litolffs, Hallberger, Kalmus, and The London Pianoforte School. The most reliable edition is the last, edited by Nicholas Temperley, because according to the editor, "nothing has been done to modernize notation...editorial additions have been kept to a minimum and are generally only amplifications of the composer's stated intentions."<sup>51</sup>

Source: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. RISM C3125

Other sources: Parallel editions appeared in Paris and Leipzig

1766-1860: Clementi, Dussek, Cogan, Cramer, Field, Pinto, Sterndale Bennett, and other Masters of the Pianoforte. Edited by Nicholas Temperley. 20vols. (New York: Garland, 1984-87.)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Temperley, *The London Pianoforte School 1766-1860: Introduction to the Series*, x.

<sup>52</sup> Temperley, *Critical Notes*, xix.

The London Pianoforte School edition is the most authentic adjustment of the London 1821 First edition. It is a facsimile of the 1821 edition (henceforth regard to as the facsimile edition) on which the 'Henle' edition is based. The Clementi Society annotates the currently available London Pianoforte School's edition as follows: "a facsimile edition of Clementi's complete solo piano works is found in books 1-5 of Nicholas Temperley's 20 volumes *The London Pianoforte School 1766-1860*, published by Garland Publishing in the 1980s."<sup>53</sup>

The Henle edition indicates editor's notes for the differences in markings from the first editions particularly the French one. Apparently, the *Dido* sonata of the Henle edition is similar to the facsimile edition in phrasing, dynamics, articulations, and most of pedal markings although a few changes were made in pedaling and dynamics with the editor's notes.

Compared to the Henle edition, the Peters edition includes numerous changes and additions in phrasing, articulations, dynamics, pedaling, and notations. Perhaps the most significant difference of the Peters edition from the facsimile edition and others is the phrasing. The Peters edition generally denotes longer phrasing slurs than found in the facsimile edition. In addition, dynamics and pedaling has been tremendously added and changed according to the editor's preferences or discretion.

Except for the facsimile and Litolffs editions, other editions contain various fingering recommendations. Hans-Martin Theopold is identified as the source of the fingerings in the Henle edition, and others have printed with the editors' fingerings. However, Clementi himself did not indicate fingerings in the facsimile edition. Therefore editions with fingerings should be regarded as having editorial additions.

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<sup>53</sup>Clementi society, <http://www.clementisociety.com/Clementi-lifeandwork.html>.

## The first movement

There is a discrepant note in the main theme of the first movement from the copy of the facsimile edition. In measure of 51, the 'F' of the facsimile edition does not sound correct; it might have been a misprint or coarsely published missing a sharp. All of other editions have corrected the F to F-sharp without any editorial explanation.

Fig. 25-1, Clementi Piano Sonata in G minor, *Didone abbandonata* Op. 50 No. 3, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 51-52. (New York: London Pianoforte School 1766-1860, Garland Publishing, Vol. 4, 1984-.)



Fig. 25-2, Clementi, Op. 50 No. 3, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 51-52. (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1978.)



The Henle edition follows a few dynamics and pedaling markings in the French first edition. For instance, the *ff* marking in measure 363 and pedaling marking in measure 480-489 have been copied.

Fig. 26, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 360-63 and 480-89, Henle.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at measure 360, features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting accompaniment. The tempo is marked *p dolce*. The second system, starting at measure 480, is marked **Più allegro** and *ff*. It shows a more rhythmic and complex texture with triplets and dynamic markings like *fz* and *rit.f.*. The third system, starting at measure 487, continues the *ff* dynamic and features a melodic line with a cross-stroke eighth note.

As mentioned, the Peters edition also includes many critical changes and additions in phrasing, articulations, dynamics, pedaling, and notations. These changes and additions are so significant as to alter the composer's intentions. Among the many alterations, a few important ones are mentioned here.

A small sixteenth note written as an appoggiatura in the facsimile edition, for example, in the introduction, has been altered to an eighth note with a cross stroke in most later editions. (The Henle and Moscheles editions retain the appoggiatura of the facsimile edition.)

Fig. 27, Clementi, Op. 50, No. 3, mm. 1-3. (Frankfurt, New York: Peters, 1940.)



The small note can be played either on a downbeat or slightly before it.

Another consideration in the Peters edition is the written ornament. In the facsimile edition, in measures 67, 68, and 73, an appoggiatura is written as the first note of the rhythm. However, the Peters edition, and most of the others have treated it as part of four sixteenth notes.

Fig. 28, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 67, 68, and 73, Peters.



The Peters edition also does not indicate *Attaca Subito* at the end of the introduction. It shows a deliberated separation between sections, which might cause a performer to interpret the transition differently than might be implied in the facsimile edition, away from Clementi's intention. Furthermore, many markings are added by the editor such as *portando*, *accent*, *tenuto*, *staccato*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, *forzando*, *smorzando* and so on.

An interesting metronome marking in the introduction is suggested by Moscheles in the Hallberger Edition. If this suggested metronome marking means a triplet = 92, it would be

extremely fast for the *Largo* of the introduction. Also, it would be still fast even though the metronome marking is interpreted as an eighth note in the triplet = 92.

Fig. 29, Clementi Op. 50 No. 3, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., mm. 1-2. (Stuttgart: Eduard Hallberger, n.d., ca.1860.)

(Public domain)



### The second movement

As mentioned earlier, it seems that the Henle edition replicates the facsimile edition of the London first edition. There is, however, an exception for pedaling, "*Continua il Ped.*," in measures 55-59 of the second movement. Note that the pedaling is based on the French first edition.

Fig. 30, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 55-59, Henle.

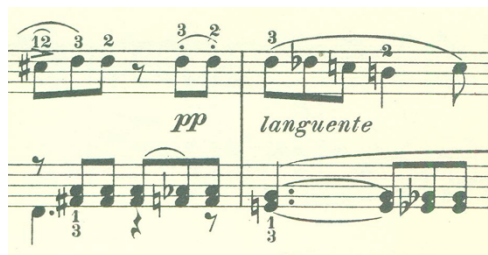






In contrast, the edition Peters does not write “*Continua il Ped.*” here, nor even a pedal marking.

Fig. 31, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 55-59, Peters.



The main theme of the slow movement repeats here with the pedaling, “*Continua il Ped.*,” clearly implied by the main theme before the pedaling by Clementi. Therefore, it would make more sense to include the pedaling from the French first edition in this section.

At the end of the slow movement, most of the editions except for the Henle edition notate a modernized “roll” sign instead of the original notation from the facsimile edition.

Fig. 32-1, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 71-73, Henle.

This musical score for Henle's edition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, measures 71-73, features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part begins with a *cresc.* marking and a forte *f* dynamic. The vocal line starts with a *fz* dynamic and includes a *dim.* marking. The tempo is marked *rallentando* with the word "do" under the final notes. The score concludes with an *Attacca Subito* instruction and a double bar line.

Fig. 32-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt., mm. 71-73, Peters.

This musical score for Peters' edition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, measures 71-73, features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part begins with a *cresc.* marking and a forte *f* dynamic. The vocal line starts with a *ten.* marking and includes a *dimin.* marking. The tempo is marked *rallentando*. The score concludes with an *attacca subito* instruction and a double bar line.

### The third movement

It is interesting that the Hallberger Edition does not indicate any *rf*, *fz* markings at all. It has been corrected to *sf* in places, with a correspondingly different execution and sound. The *rinforzando* plays an important role throughout the *Dido* sonata, producing a particular atmosphere. That is to say, it would be improper to disregard the *rf*.

Fig. 33-1, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 5-6, Facsimile.



Fig. 33-2, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt. mm. 5-6, Hallberger.



Fig. 34-1, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 28-30, Facsimile.



Fig. 34-2, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 28-30, Hallberger.



The Henle edition makes few additions including *fz* markings in measures 158 and 327, and *piu f* sign in measure 339. This little change does not affect the performance of this piece significantly, whereas the additions of the Peters edition are likely to produce major, undesirable change in performance.

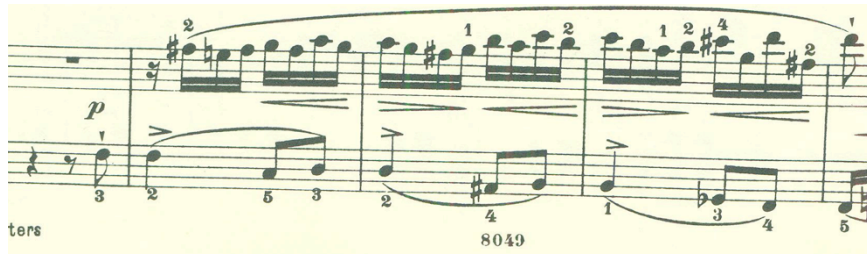
Likewise other movements, countless editorial additions of the Peters edition have been made in the last movement. For example, phrasing, *staccato*, *accents*, *crescendo-decrescendo*, *dim.*, *cresc.*, *piu f*, and pedaling.

The addition of *crescendo-decrescendo* marking in between measures 132 and 133 may, however, be reasonable since the same material after the recapitulation appears with the marking in the first editions.

Fig. 35-1, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 132-34, Peters.



Fig. 35-2, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., mm. 348-51, Peters.



Also, the editor's pedal markings added in Peters edition in the ending section dramatically lead to the stormy and forceful ending (verses the facsimile, p.33).

Fig. 36, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt., m. 403 to the end, Peters.



Modern performers benefit from the published editions such that they can quickly understand and better approach the composer's intention in the music. They can further compare the editions for differences and make interpretive decision as to which aspects to incorporate in their performance. It is important that performers recognize, however, that some editorial additions likely distort the composer's intentions. Nevertheless, the various editions provide plentiful ideas for performance of Clementi's music in distinctive ways.

Examples discussed in this chapter compare not only the variants among the manuscript and other available editions of the *Dido* sonata, but also offer some options for the performers so that they can better realize Clementi's intentions in their own interpretations. It is my hope that this paper may aid modern performers to broaden recognition of Clementi and his works, in particular his *Dido* sonata.

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