

# Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36, No. 1, First Movement



**Composer:** Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)  
**Nationality:** Italian  
**Source/Date:** *Six Sonatinas*, Opus 36 (circa 1803)

Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36, No. 1, First Movement, is the first composition featured in Muzio Clementi's six-piece suite *Six Sonatinas*, Opus 36. This first Sonatina is often considered the most popular of the six and is now considered a model for keyboard composition.

Muzio Clementi was born in Rome in 1752. His contributions to music were lengthy, with experience in composition, teaching, performing, publishing, editing and conducting. Clementi shone from a young age and was sponsored by Sir Peter Beckford, who took him to England to advance his studies in composition. Throughout his lifetime he composed over 100 piano sonatas, many of which have now been reclassified as sonatinas, as well as several symphonies. Many believe that Clementi founded a new technique to piano playing, with his use of lively passages, chords and wide stretches.

## Preparation



Take time to learn each part separately at first, rehearsing at a much slower tempo to establish a reliable and secure finger pattern. Several of the right-hand patterns, such as the descending sequence of thirds from beat 4 of bar 6, through bar 7, can be easily converted into useful warm-up exercises.

Getting the balance right between hands is important. While the right-hand melodic line should shine out above the accompaniment provided by the left-hand part, there are moments where the bass line should be given more prominence, such as in linking phrases, e.g. the quaver (eighth-note) scalar pattern at the end of bar 4, or ending phrases such as the quaver arpeggio pattern in bar 15.

Breaking the piece down into four-bar phrases can be a useful way to organise your learning. However, it is also important to rehearse moving from one phrase to the next to produce controlled transitions. This is particularly helpful where there is a change of dynamics, mood, or when handling a repeat bar. Pay careful attention when moving from *forte* to *piano* as this can often be more challenging to control than when increasing the volume.

Much of the light-hearted and joyous character of the piece is brought to life by accurate observation of the constantly changing and varied articulations. Practise warming up beforehand with simple scale exercises that alternate between *legato* and a relaxed, *staccato* action. This piece requires a good degree of independence between hands and often utilises different articulations simultaneously in each part, for example the opening crotchet (quarter-note) is played *staccato* in the right hand but without *staccato* in the left. Again, scales and arpeggio warm-ups are a good way to develop your independent control using different articulations in each hand.

## Performance



To achieve a clean, bright sounding performance, the performer should aim for a light and confident touch. Although the performance direction is '*allegro*', meaning 'fast', the self-contained nature of the neat phrasing requires a good degree of control to maintain a quick but stable tempo. Use the articulation and dynamics information in the score to help create a piece full of interest, light and shade.

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By Muzio Clementi

Allegro [ $\text{♩} = 80-100$ ]

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, includes a *cresc.* marking, and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system (measures 9-11) continues the melodic line. The fourth system (measures 12-15) features a series of eighth-note patterns. The fifth system (measures 16-18) concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a repeat sign.

20

*cresc.* *f*

2 1 2 3 2 1

24

*p*

2 4 5 1 2 5 1

28

*cresc.* *f*

2 4 3 2 1 2 3 3 1 4 2 3 1 2 1 1 3 1

32

1 1 4 5

35

1 2 3 5 5 1 4 1 4 2 3 1 4

3 2 5 4 2