
Le Clavier bien tempéré I

collection des préludes et fugues de

Jean Sébastien Bach
(1685–1750)

arrangées pour le piano à quatre mains par

Henri Bertini jeune
(1798–1876)

*21^e prélude et fugue
en si bémol majeur*

Partition

Henri Jérôme Bertini 1798–1876

Henri Jérôme Bertini was born in London on October 28, 1798, but his family returned to Paris six months later. He received his early musical education from his father and his brother, a pupil of Clementi. He was considered a child prodigy and at the age of 12 his father took him on a tour of England, Holland, Flanders, and Germany where he was enthusiastically received. After studies in composition in England and Scotland he was appointed professor of music in Brussels but returned to Paris in 1821. It is known that Bertini gave a concert with Franz Liszt in the Salons Pape on April 20, 1828. The program included a transcription by Bertini of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A major for eight hands (the other pianists were Sowinsky and Schunke.) He was also admired as a chamber music performer, giving concerts with his friends Fontaine (violin) and Franchomme (cello). He remained active in and around Paris until around 1848 when he retired from the musical scene. In 1859 he moved to Meylan (near Grenoble) where he died on September 30, 1876.

Bertini concertized widely but was not as celebrated a virtuoso as either Kalkbrenner or Henri Herz. One of his contemporaries (Marmontel) described his playing as having Clementi's evenness and clarity in rapid passages as well as the quality of sound, the manner of phrasing, and the ability to make the instrument sing characteristic of the school of Hummel and Moscheles. Thomas Tapper, in the preface of his edition of the *Études* Op.100 published by Ditson, says:

He was in his time a shining example of the most admirable qualities of an artist. Living in an age of garish virtuosity, and hailed as a brilliant executant himself, he maintained nevertheless the most rigorous standards of musicianship in his playing, in his compositions, and in the music which he appeared before the public to interpret. This is the more remarkable when one considers that his manhood was reached during the luxuriant period of French romanticism and that the extravagances of the literary outburst were reflected in the musical movements of the time. Virtuosity was subjected to sore temptations and many succumbed. Bertini stood for the sounder qualities of the artist and gradually acquired an extended and remunerative *prestige*. His life was singularly devoid of incident and official distinction, but the legacy of pedagogic works which he has left to us and his honorable activity give it every right to be called a success.

Bertini was celebrated as a teacher. Antoine Marmontel, who devoted the second chapter of his work on celebrated pianists to Bertini, writes

He was unsurpassed as a teacher, giving his lessons with scrupulous care and the keenest interest in his pupils' progress. After he had given up teaching, a number of his pupils continued with me, and I recognized the soundness of the principles drawn from his instruction.

It is above all in the special class of studies and caprices, that Bertini's immense popularity is founded. It is here that he occupied a unique position and opened the path over which the next generation of composers was to rush after him. In each of his numerous collections of studies, embracing every degree of difficulty, he has insistently given to every piece, easy or difficult, brief or extended, a character of salient melody. The technical problem to be overcome presents itself as a song; even where the study is devoted to the problem of velocity the general contour falls into a melodic curve, and this is the first and transcendent cause of the universal success of these pieces, which are, furthermore, natural in respect to rhythm and carefully thought out harmonically.

Robert Schumann, in a review of a piano trio in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, comments that Bertini writes easily flowing harmony but that the movements are too long. He continues: "With the best will in the world, we find it difficult to be angry with Bertini, yet he drives us to distraction with his perfumed Parisian phrases; all his music is as smooth as silk and satin."¹ German sentimentality has never appreciated French elegance.

Bertini is best remembered today for his piano method *Le Rudiment du pianiste*, and his 20 books of approximately 500 studies.

For more information on the life of Bertini, see *Henri Bertini pianiste virtuose, compositeur de musique* (Grenoble, 1999) by Pascal Beyls (<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/pascal.beyls/bertini/bertini.html>).

¹ from Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, Second Edition, Volume 1, page 124.

21^e en si bémol majeur

Prélude
Vivace.

J.S.Bach
arr. H.J.Bertini

p leggiero.

staccato il Basso.

2a

4

f

5a

7

dim.

p cres. poco ritenuto.

8a

10 *f in tempo.* *ff fz*

12 *ff*

14 *ff*

16 *p* *cres.* *poco ritard.* *f fz*

18 *a tempo.* *p* *cres.* *sf* *dim.*

20 *p* *cres.* *rallent.* *ff ten.*

Fugue à 3 voix
Allegro.

177

Primo

Secondo

5

9

13

17

21

This musical score is for the 21st Prelude and Fugue in B-flat major from J.S. Bach's *Le Clavier bien tempéré*. The page shows measures 13 through 24. The score is written for a grand piano with three systems of staves. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a single bass staff. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major). The tempo is indicated as 'p' (piano). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 13-16) features a complex melodic line in the treble staff with many beamed sixteenth notes and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. The second system (measures 17-20) continues the melodic development in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing a more active accompaniment. The third system (measures 21-24) shows a continuation of the melodic and harmonic patterns, with the bass staff featuring more complex rhythmic figures. The overall texture is dense and characteristic of Baroque keyboard music.

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score is for four staves (two systems of two staves each). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 25: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 26: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 27: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 28: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) in measures 25 and 28.

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score is for four staves (two systems of two staves each). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 29: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 30: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 31: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 32: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) in measures 29 and 32.

33

Musical score for measures 33-36. The score is for four staves (two systems of two staves each). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 33: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 34: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 35: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Measure 36: Treble staff has eighth notes, bass staff has sixteenth notes. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) in measures 33 and 34.

37

41

45

p

f

ff *rall.*

tr

3 2

ten.

ff *rall.*