
Le Clavier bien tempéré II

collection des préludes et fugues de

Jean Sébastien Bach
(1685–1750)

arrangées pour le piano à quatre mains par

Henri Bertini jeune
(1798–1876)

41.^e prélude et fugue
en la bémol majeur

Primo

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.

41.^e en la bémol majeur

Prélude

Andante con moto.

J.S.Bach

arr. H.J.Bertini

4

7

10

13

f *p* *f* *p* *cres.* *f*

16

p *ff* *p*

19

f *p*

22

cres. *f*

25

p *f* *p*

28

f *p*

31

pp *cres.*

34

f *p* *f*

37

p *cres.*

40

p

43

46

49

52

55

58

61

64

p

poco a poco cres.

67

ff

p

71

cres.

74

ff

ff

pp rall.

tr

Fugue à 4 voix
Lento.

p legato.

3

p

5

7

9

12

Measures 12 and 13 of a piano piece. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 12 features a melody in the right hand with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line in the left hand with eighth notes. Measure 13 continues the melody with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and includes an accent (>) over the final note.

14

Measures 14 and 15. Measure 14 has a continuous sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 15 features a sustained chord in the right hand and a sixteenth-note melody in the left hand.

16

Measures 16, 17, and 18. Measure 16 has a melody in the right hand starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an accent (>) over the first note, and a bass line. Measures 17 and 18 show the right hand continuing the melody while the left hand rests.

19

Measures 19, 20, 21, and 22. Measure 19 includes fingerings 1, 2, 1 under the first three notes of the right-hand melody. Measures 20 and 21 continue the right-hand melody with accents (>) over the first notes. Measure 22 shows the right hand resting and the left hand entering with a melody.

23

Measures 23 and 24. Measure 23 features a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 24 continues the right-hand melody with a sustained chord and the left hand continues its bass line.

25

27

29

31

34

37

39

p

41

cres.

43

f

45

ff *fz* *fz*

48

rall. *tr* *Adagio.* *pp*