









This sonata, which Clementi composed in 1795 at about the same time Beethoven wrote his first three sonatas (Op. 2, Nos. 1-3), exhibits some of the pre-Romantic qualities evident in Beethoven's works of a slightly later period. The slow introduction packs the entire movement's thematic material into a capsule of ten measures. The movement as a whole has a broad, almost symphonic, sweep in which the individual elements are dramatized through unconventional modulations, audacious harmonies, and abrupt changes of dynamics, texture, and mood. The Largo e sostenuto introduction, for example, begins as a grotesque fugue. The subject is normal enough, but it is answered at the major seventh below; the subject's descending perfect fifth becomes a diminished fifth in the answer, and a major sixth in the next entry. A similar fugato opens the Allegro con fuoco; the slightly transformed subject is now escorted by a countersubject, and the second and third entries are compacted into a single simultaneous one. Like some of Beethoven's later fugues, this one suddenly explodes with a fortissimo into purely homophonic writing.

In the development section, the Largo returns in C major just after the most distant modulation—to E major—has been achieved. The subject is now stripped of its fugal garb and dressed instead in a rather common "oom-pah" operatic homophony.

The movement anticipates nineteenth-century practices in its vacillation between major and minor. In the exposition, the secondary thematic group is in Bb major, while the closing section is mostly in Bb minor, though it ends in major. In the development too, the C major of the Largo's return is followed immediately by C minor.

The coda (measures 236–79), almost a second development section, has the character of a concerto cadenza. Another unusual feature is that the secondary theme is recapitulated in El major toward the end of the development section but is absent in the recapitulation proper.