

Clara Schumann Biographical essay
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Since the beginning of ancient civilizations, music was created to help us communicate with each other in a form other than speaking. Music has always had the same 5 elements of music: Melody, Harmony Rhythm, form, and expression. And through each age of music, the styles tend to change but the five elements are always present. During the Classical age, the world of musical was defined by order and fully embraced this form of music instead of focusing on emotionally driven music. However, near the end of the 19th century, musical styles gave way for romantic styles which rejected Classical era ideologies and encouraged many composers to write compositions that involved emotional ideas. The musical styles were based upon stories that opposed the idea of order and reason.

Around this time period, one of the greatest composers from Germany was greatly successful for her works during the romantic era. Clara Wieck was well known for being one of the greatest piants in Germany and throughout Europe as well. Similarly to other famous composers, her talent was proven to be above others at a very young age. She would be most notably known as Clara Schumann after she married another famous composer Robert Schumann. Above all, Clara is most notably known for giving over 230 unique concerts with fellow violinist and

professional partner Joseph Joachim. From all of these, Clara proved that even in the 19th century she could be at the level of male composers (since the 19th century had few female composers).

The life of one of the most influential composers began on September 13, 1819. Clara Wieck was born in Leipzig, during the reign of the German confederation which was made up of 39 German-speaking states. Her parents were Friedrich Wieck and Marianne Wieck (formally Tromlitz). At the time of Clara's birth, Marianne was a famous singer in Leipzig at the time and was singing solos almost every week. Her father, was a noted German piano teacher, owned a piano store and wrote many different musical essays!

The Wiecks were divorced in 1824, due to an affair between Clara's mother and Friedrich's friend Adolph Bargiel. Clara (then at 5 years old) moved to Berlin with her father. This in turn reduced the amount of contact between Clara and her mother. The only way Clara and her mother communicated was through letters and a visit every couple of years. Clara's musical career, like many other famous musicians at the time, was discovered at an early age. She was considered a "child prodigy". Her early life was carefully laid out by her father. Clara would receive 1 hour lessons

in piano, violin and singing. On top of this she also practiced 2 hours per day using teaching method her father created. Besides focusing on music, Clara studied religion and language all under Friedrich Wieck. In 1828, her first major performance was held at the Leipzig home of Dr. Ernst Carus, director of a mental hospital: Colditz Castle. At this exact location she met her future husband, Robert Schumann who was several years older than her. Robert Schumann and Clara started to develop bond through the many years following her performance.

1830 really marked the official start of Clara Schumann's career as a pianist. At the age of eleven, Clara went on her first concert tour to Paris via other European cities along with her father. This was significant because it was one of the very first performances that she gave all by herself. From Gewandhaus to Weimar, she performed numerous compositions and solos that amazed everyone. When performing in Paris however, the attendance was very slim due to an outbreak of cholera. When Clara was 18, she traveled to Vienna and performed numerous recitals.

Clara Wieck became Clara Schumann when she married another brilliant composer named Robert Schumann. He was significantly older

than Clara and became a piano student under Clara's father. He moved into Clara's household in 1830. Robert Schumann proposed to Clara on 1837 when Clara was only 18 years old. She accepted however Friedrich didn't approve of Robert at all. Crazy thing is, Clara and Robert went to court to sue Friedrich to get married! The judge went in favor of the couple and they got married on September 12, 1840. Despite being married, Clara continued to perform and compose several different musical pieces which was rare for a woman living in 19th century Europe. She gave birth to 8 children between 1841 and 1854. It was actually impressive how Clara was able to balance her domestic duties along with her musical career.

Unfortunately, Robert soon suffered from severe mental issues as well as an attempted suicide. He then had to be sent off to an asylum due to his deteriorating health. He passed away in 1856 due to syphilis. Many of Clara's children passed away pretty early with only a few reaching adulthood. Besides continuing her musical career, she was also forced to raise many grandchildren as well. She later passed away at the age of 76 in 1896.

During Clara's lifetime, she wasn't known only in Europe for her music; she had a great influence on people all over the world. There have

been an estimated 1300 programs she often performed between 1831 and 1889. She often appreciated and embraced Robert's ideas as well as many fellow musicians as well. In her early works, the songs she played were "mainstream" and popular at the time as well as some of her own compositions. One of her most notable "team ups" were with a violinist named Joseph Joachim. She met him when Joseph was only 14 years old. During her career, Joseph and Clara gave over 230 concerts in Germany as well as Britain. The two played a lot of Beethoven sonatas. In her later years, Clara was appointed to be a teacher of piano lessons at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. She played here last public concert on March 12, 1891. It was Johannes Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn in duet format with another musician James Kwast. Her legacy was initially rejected after her death due to many controversies surrounding her as a composer. Despite the circumstances, she helped make Robert's work famous as well as hers.

Clara Schumann hands down was one of the greatest pioneers of music during the romantic era as well as the world of music. She also displayed great feats of feminism proving that even a woman can rise up to

the levels of other great composers. Without her works in the music world,
the music today would've been completely changed.

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