



# CLARA SCHUMANN



| Timeline                                 |  |  |  |  |                       |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| 1819                                     | 1825   | 1828                                     | 1838   | 1840   | 1856                  | 1870-1880  | 1878   | 1896   |
| Clara Weick is born in Leipzig, Germany. | Clara's parents divorce and she stays with her father who teaches her to play music. | Clara performs her first concert aged 9. | Performs in front of sell-out crowds in Vienna, Austria. | Clara marries famous composer Robert Schumann. | Robert Schumann dies. | Clara Schumann tours and performs around Europe. | She becomes a music teacher in Frankfurt, Germany. | Schumann dies in Frankfurt, Germany aged 76. |

## Key Compositions

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|---|---|
| Piano Concerto                              | 1836 - Her first piano concerto completed at the age of 16, filled with ideas and originality.  |
| 4 Pièces Caractéristiques                   | 1836 - This was written for solo piano and was performed often during her early career.   |
| Liebesfrühling (Love's Spring)              | 1841 - A set of works, 9 of which were Robert Schumann and three of which were Clara's work.  |
| Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, Op. 16, No. 1 | 1845 - Modelled on the compositions by Bach which she changes halfway through.  |
| Piano Trio in G Minor                       | 1846 - Building on her earlier works this composition has a dramatic finale and a journey of light and dark.                                  |
| Drei Romanzen                               | 1853 - Considered to be one of her finest works. This is a complicated with a range of musical styles.  |
| Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann    | 1855 - The Schumanns were very close and she kept a diary about their marriage. This composition explores her emotions within their marriage. |



At the young age of just 13, Clara was one of the first pianists to perform from memory. This has now become standard practice for most professional pianists.

## The Importance of Clara Schumann

Child Prodigy  
Starting young, she was a child prodigy (a young person with exceptional qualities or abilities). Her father made her practise for two hours a day alongside her daily piano, violin, singing, theory, harmony and composition lessons. Much of her childhood was spent travelling and performing with her father.

Being a Female Musician  
Clara Schumann earned most of the money in the Schumann household which was extremely unusual for the time. Clara's work has often been pushed aside by people claiming her husband was the 'real' composer behind her works. The couple worked together on some songs, but her pieces were in fact more popular than his at the time. It was not an easy task to become a famous female musician in a very male-dominated world, but she did become very successful.

War of the Romantics  
The Schumanns (along with Brahms and Joachim) believed in ABSOLUTE music - music has no other meaning than the notes on the page and should be traditional. Others (like composer Richard Wagner) believed in PROGRAM music - music as a response to stories, images and characters. This led to disagreements and even hissing at concerts. Each side believed that the art of music was being ruined by the other. Wagner became famous for operas and libretto performances with characters, stories and set designs. Brahms and the Schumanns became famous for their traditional classical music.

## Key Events

Marriage to Robert Schumann  
Many of Clara's compositions were actually gifts to her husband. He encouraged her to compose, and she in turn edited his works. In her music, the influences of Robert can be heard, but she also created her own, unique sound. He sadly died at the young age of 46. They had 8 children together! Clara was key in getting the works of Robert Schumann appreciated by promoting his works tirelessly throughout her life.

Johannes Brahms  
The composer Johannes Brahms was in love with Clara Schumann - but unfortunately for him, she was married to the composer Robert Schumann, one of Brahms' best friends. Both musicians influenced each other's works greatly.

Concerts with Joseph Joachim  
After Robert Schumann's early death, she continued her concert tours in Europe for decades, frequently with the violinist Joseph Joachim and other chamber musicians. Over her career, Schumann gave over 238 concerts with Joachim in Germany and Britain.