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**Musical Messaging
in the Early Piano Correspondence
between Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann**

Erica Ablene Vezeau

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the MA degree in
Musicology with a Specialization in Women's Studies

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ABSTRACT

Clara Wieck (1819-96) was a particularly successful nineteenth-century musician. Unlike many of her female contemporaries, and contrary to her social conditioning, she occupied space within the male dominated public sphere of music making, as both a performer and composer. Her participation in dichotomous social realms was unique, and affected the normalcy of her personal life and relationships. Accordingly, during their courtship, Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann (1810-56) were forced to communicate their love through a means that departed from the nineteenth-century norm—music. This thesis argues that many of their early piano works, spanning the decade of the 1830s, were written with some intention of correspondence or message to the other party. Three main conceptual frameworks are employed for musical analysis: firstly, the characteristics of sentiment, social context, mood, and gender as betrayed by genre; secondly, the overt relevance of musical quotation; and finally, the perceived relevance of titles and dedications. Wieck and Schumann's music and courtship is explored herein to determine the extra-musical communicative potential of music for solo piano.

~Chapter 1~

Introduction and Theoretical Background

Often recognized solely as the wife of Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Clara Wieck Schumann¹ (1819-1896) is gaining recognition as one of the most strong and successful musical women of the nineteenth-century. Contemporary scholarship strives to understand the many interesting facets of her life, from her intense training as a child, to her relationships with Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), to the forces that enabled her success within an otherwise domineering patriarchal society.

Clara's achievements in public music making demonstrate the fact that she defied the prescribed gender norms for white, middle-class, German women. One must wonder then, if she was able to perform and dominate in the male-centered public sphere while still conforming to the social roles and femininity expected of her in the private realm? Was she able to straddle both worlds successfully?² Although to answer this question in its entirety is beyond the scope of this project, I herein consider the issue where it affects one particular aspect of Clara's life: her unconventional courtship with Robert Schumann.

Statement of Purpose

It is my contention that Clara's unusual upbringing, and her presence in two opposing social realms, forced Clara and Schumann to communicate their love through

¹ Writing on Clara Wieck Schumann seems to vary the use of her name. Some scholars write Clara Wieck, others Clara Schumann, and still others simply write Clara. To avoid confusion, I will hereafter refer to Clara Wieck Schumann as "Clara" as is done in most current scholarship. This distinguishes between "Schumann," her eventual husband, and "Wieck," her father. Where I do use her last name, I have here preferred to write Clara Wieck, as the historical period I am examining is before her marriage to Schumann.

² I have borrowed the term "straddling" to describe this concept from Judith Tick's book, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

alternative means: music. I believe that many of their piano works were written with some intention of correspondence or message to the other party. Accordingly, this thesis explores some of their early piano literature, spanning the decade of the 1830s, as examples of the extra-musical communicative potential of textless piano literature.

The early relationship between Clara and Schumann is no longer much of a mystery, thanks to the publications of Nancy Reich and other noted Wieck-Schumann scholars.³ However, looking to the music itself as evidence of communicative and emotional content adds a new dimension to the facts already pieced together from surviving and recovered correspondence. If music did form a part of their courtship ritual, then examining their musical methods of conveying meaning will reinforce historical facts and contribute to understanding their social and cultural role negotiation.

The initial bond between the young virtuoso, Clara Wieck, and the maturing, emotionally fraught, Robert Schumann, developed through their mutual interest in piano performance. It is, therefore, not surprising that the bulk of communicative pieces written by these future lovers were for solo piano. Their compositions are laden with suggestive genres, codes, quotations, titles, and dedications. As purely instrumental piano music, the pieces I examine have no direct or obvious meaning, and could be therefore classified “absolute.”⁴ However, the subsidiary purpose of this thesis is to contend that instrumental music can convey meaning through compositional messaging, even when no external references are publicly or overtly apparent.

³ Scholars of note include Anna Burton, Joan Chissell, Berthold Litzmann, and Gerd Nauhaus, among others. Research on Clara Wieck Schumann also appears in publications on Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms, most notably those by John Daverio, Peter Ostwald, and Anthony Newcomb. The accompanying bibliography lists more detail on these authors and their relevant texts.

⁴ The debatable concepts of “absolute” versus “programmatic” music will come under more detailed discussion in chapter 3.

The remainder of this introduction is comprised of four sections that provide background for this study: 1) brief detail on the foundation and nature of my research fields (musicology, and feminist musicology); 2) an overview of my theoretical framework, including influential scholars; 3) my proposed methodology and research procedures; and 4) a chapter outline.

Positioning within Current Musicological Scholarship and Literature Review

Musicology is broadly defined as a branch of scholarly research that studies music, it is “a field of knowledge having as its object the investigation of the art of music as a physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon.”⁵ Although the study of music has been part of general educational curricula for centuries, it was not until the mid nineteenth-century that the independent discipline of musicology began to take shape. In 1863, Karl Chrysander, a German philosopher and music critic, “contended that musicology should be treated as a science in its own right, on a level equal to that of other scientific disciplines.”⁶ Consequently, musicology developed, and applied the techniques and research of established scientific disciplines to the study of music. Methods traditionally employed in the fields of philosophy, philology, and the social sciences (including, among others, tracing historical development, text analysis, comparisons, the study of ancient texts, human and social relations, and the study of nature and knowledge) became the building blocks of this new academic region of study.

⁵ Vincent Duckles and Jann Pasler, “Musicology: History,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 17, 488.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 489.

The latter half of the twentieth-century saw a resurgence of interest in musicology, which led to academic increased involvement and a diversification of scholarly interests. Though the methodological approach of current scholarship is still based largely on established historical foundations, musicologists are now incorporating newer methods from a wider variety of disciplines, and focusing more detail on social and cultural aspects of music and its participants.

The shift from music as a product (which tends to imply fixity) to music as a process involving composer, performer and consumer (i.e. listeners) has involved new methods, some of them borrowed from the social sciences, particularly anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, sociology and more recently politics, gender studies and cultural theory.⁷

The inherent interdisciplinary nature of musicology has resulted in successful studies of musicians as understood from within their historical and cultural background. However, traditional musicology, like many other scientific disciplines, has focused almost exclusively on male accomplishments. Educational curricula, concert repertoire, radio broadcasts, academic literature, and music publications are still dominated by the compositions and influence of men.

Feminist Musicology:

Since the 1970s, musicological scholarship has become more inclusive of women: both as scholars and as subjects of study. Many researchers are discovering the fascinating stories and musical literature of female composers throughout the centuries. Books surveying the historical contributions of female musicians, such as *Women in Music* by Karen Pendle, *Women in Music*, edited by Carol Neuls-Bates, and *Women Making Music*, edited by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, have become textbook-like

⁷ Ibid., 488.

reference manuals. However, though this type of book has recognizable value, becoming aware of female musicians hidden in the past is only part of the battle. As recognized by Marcia Citron, these types of anthologies risk the “danger of essentializing women: of ascribing to women innate characteristics and thereby diminishing the importance of social context and individual difference.”⁸

This initial focus to “add women”⁹ to music history and research evolved into what is now known as feminist musicology and gender studies. Feminism, though a thriving movement on its own, and within many other academic disciplines, was late in having an effect in the field of musicology. The 1980s and 90s saw the first appearances of books and articles making bold proclamations and advocating a new, feminist, and inclusive way of thinking in musicology. As this subfield is still in its infancy, methodologies have been very exploratory and unique to each researcher’s purpose and topic. It is both common, and necessary, to borrow the “tools” of research from other disciplines to support this type of work. Particularly influential books include *Gender and the Musical Canon* by Marcia Citron, *Musicology and Difference* edited by Ruth Solie, *Feminine Endings* by Susan McClary, and *Cecilia Reclaimed* edited by Susan Cook and Judy Tsou.

Feminist musicology stresses the importance of learning how women were affected by the male dominated systems they strove to enter. Historical research must be sensitive to the fact that women were influenced by different social and cultural factors and responsibilities. It is, therefore, not appropriate to apply contemporary bias to places

⁸ Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7.

⁹ I have borrowed the term “adding women” from Sandra Harding’s book, *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987).

and times when other systems of sanctions and rewards were operative, nor should we approach women's studies from a traditionally male-oriented understanding and method of research. As explained by Susan McClary, "because we now have a clearer picture of the figures, their contexts, and accomplishments, it has become possible to study in greater detail the circumstances that simultaneously enabled and restricted the careers of some of these women."¹⁰ Currently, research concerns and interests lie in establishing gender identity in music. Scholars ponder whether music by women is actually different than music by men, and if so, how and why? Additionally, questions revolving around the differences of women's experiences and social conditions are of primary concern.¹¹

This unique branch of musicology offers a wealth of opportunity for emerging academics. In 1990 Marcia Citron expressed her view that graduate students are becoming more exposed to alternative research methods and theories during their University studies. She suggested, "the profession at large will be much better equipped than previous generations to formulate the questions and grapple with the issues in embarking on a truly feminist musicology."¹² Though this statement was written more than a decade ago, Citron's observation continues to apply. Feminist musicology is progressing rapidly, but there is much more to be achieved.

Some individual women composers have attracted enough attention to become the subject of independent study. Of these women, Clara Wieck is arguably one of the most popular and thoroughly studied from a musical standpoint. Contrary to most women of

¹⁰ McClary, Susan. "Forward: Ode to Cecilia," in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, eds. Susan Cook and Judy Tsou (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), x.

¹¹ For an analysis of women's differences in music, see Ruth Solie's *Musicology and Difference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹² Marcia Citron, "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," *The Journal of Musicology* VIII/1 (Winter 1990), 116.

her time, she was remarkably independent and successful in the male-dominated public sphere. She made her mark on the music community not only as a fantastic piano performer, but also as a competent composer. She attracted positive commentary from her contemporary critics, earned steady employment income, and was able to support her family by the wages gained from her own concerts. However, though she was recognized and popular during her own lifetime, history has left her memory and accomplishments hidden in the past until recently.

The paucity of Clara-specific literature is stunning – especially considering that many of her male contemporaries have been subject to continual study and musical exposure. Two books on Clara were published in the 1980s: *Clara Schumann: A Dedicated Spirit*, by Joan Chissell, and *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, by Nancy Reich. Since its first publication in 1985, Reich's book has enjoyed such success that it was reprinted in 2001. Reich has since become the leading world authority on Clara and is responsible for writing many other interesting articles and encyclopedic entries on the same subject. Additionally, Clara has been the topic of several journal articles and minor studies.

Research on Clara is often preoccupied with biographical particulars and musical details in connection with Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms. It seems that, though feminist musicology has moved beyond chronological documentation of women's participation, the study of individual women is still treated in a biographical fashion. To my knowledge, there is little research focusing on Clara's emotional and personal expressions as exemplifiers of cultural and social pressures. I predict this type of psychological exploration will become the focus of a new phase within the discipline of

feminist musicology. Hopefully, the trends of neglect will dissolve as feminist musicology becomes increasingly recognized and more emphasis is placed on women musicians, both past and present.

Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned, feminist musicology does not have a set research system, procedure, or method. An aspect of this interdisciplinary field is to utilize research and tools from neighboring disciplines while basing analysis firmly within musicology. Although I will look to external influences for theoretical paradigms, my conceptual framework is closely aligned with those authors writing from within the fields of feminist musicology and musical gender studies, most importantly Marcia Citron, Jeffery Kallberg, and Nancy Reich.

Marcia Citron:

I identify strongly with the approach set out by Marcia Citron in her book *Gender and the Musical Canon*. Citron believes that music can represent gendered discourse. She suggests, “music embodies gendered codes that participate in the narrative and communicative properties of music. It also implies music as a site for gendered discourse about music. “Discourse” connotes the ability of music to function as a means of cultural conversion and hence construct as well as reflect social values.”¹³ I take this statement a step further by suggesting that music is not only representative of its culture and society, but of the author itself (in this case Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann). I was strongly influenced by Citron’s concentration on nineteenth-century subjects and examples for her

¹³ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 10.

analytical procedures. Using Citron as a model provides me with a strong historically based, gender sensitive, and narrative-appropriate approach to my own research.

Jeffery Kallberg:

Similarly, Jeffery Kallberg uses nineteenth-century subjects and reception history as a basis for theorizing gender. I rely on Kallberg as a model for musical analysis as he focuses more on the historical constructions and surface features of a piece, rather than on a detailed harmonic and theoretical approach. He stresses that these surface details can be equally as telling in analysis as any other traditional musical features. However, Kallberg is most important in assisting with my exploration of genre as a signifier of gender. He states, “genre is a communicative concept shared by composers and listeners alike, one that therefore actively informs the experience of a musical work. Construing genre as a social phenomenon requires an investigation into the responses of the communities that encountered a particular genre. ...who makes up those communities?”¹⁴ I build on Kallberg’s line of inquiry by extending it into an examination of Wieck and Schumann’s personal experiences, where I believe that their compositional genre choices (small dance forms and character pieces) reveal private elements of their courtship.

Though neither of these authors extensively studies Clara Wieck or her music, she has served as the basis for smaller points of analysis for both authors. Citron references Clara as a theoretical example several times in her book, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, and Kallberg examines the writing of Clara and Fanny Hensel in his article “The Harmony of the Teatable.” These particular writings were of invaluable use, as they

¹⁴ Jeffery Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne,” *Representations* 39 (Summer 1992), 103.

introduced me to the potentials of genre analysis, especially as it affects nineteenth-century subjects.. From Citron, and Kallberg, I have attached significance to the terms “discourse,” “gender,” “genre,” and “narrative.” Though my analysis will not necessarily delve into these concepts in detail, they were certainly terms I considered relevant while conducting my research and pondering aspects of my writing.

Nancy Reich:

Unquestionably, my most valuable biographical resource for this project is Nancy Reich’s research, particularly her book entitled *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*. This biography is detailed, wonderfully written, and thoroughly researched. Additionally, she considers external influences on Clara, analyzes each of her compositions, provides a detailed catalogue of works, a timeline, and lists Clara’s concert schedules.¹⁵

I must note here that my readings on the subject of Clara Wieck, feminist musicology, feminist analysis, gender studies, and musical analysis have been varied and lengthy. Feminist musicology is still developing, which means that all writing on the subject is relevant. I have made every effort to familiarize myself with as much literature as possible. I must stress that my resources and thought provocations have come from a wide variety of sources, and are therefore too numerous to credit extensively here. Instead, I have chosen to credit particular influential authors alongside the writing they

¹⁵ Incidentally, I have referred to Clara’s compositions using the numerical and titular documentation provided in Reich’s catalogue of works. The reader will notice that Clara’s titles appear in German or French. Reich followed the language of the original manuscripts or first publication when she documented these pieces.

inspired me to produce. Accordingly, most of the following chapters contain a literature review and overview of previous scholarship on the chosen subject.

Methodology

The term *method* denotes systematic procedures of conduct or, as in research, “techniques for gathering evidence.”¹⁶ Method indicates a procedure, while a methodology involves the approach used to employ these methods. “The purpose of methodology is to describe and to examine the logic of composition of research methods and techniques, to reveal their powers and limitations, to generalize successes and failures, to find domains of appropriate application, and to predict possible contributions to knowledge.”¹⁷ Many contemporary feminist methods cannot be easily applied to historical research projects. Interviewing, case studies, surveying, and statistics are obviously not appropriate for historical subjects. It is not possible to retroactively interview Clara Wieck, nor may I engage in discussion groups, or conduct action research. However, as stated by Shulamit Reinharz, “feminism supplies the perspective and the disciplines supply the method. The feminist researcher exists at their intersection. Her feminist perspective is continuously elaborated in the light of the changing world and accumulating feminist scholarship.”¹⁸ Thus, I return to my roots in musicology, where a major portion of research is conducted through archival research and musical analysis.

¹⁶ Sandra Harding, “Introduction: Is There A Feminist Method?” in *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issue*, ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Milton Keynes [Buckinghamshire]: Open University Press, 1987), 2.

¹⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), 10-11.

¹⁸ Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 243.

Archival Research:

Archival research, or content analysis (as it is termed in sociology and feminism), is one of the most rewarding method of historical discovery, and perhaps the most common research tool in musicology. Feminist content analysis involves “intertextual deconstruction” of original source documents in hopes of discovering “contradictions within or between texts that illustrate the pervasive effects of patriarchy and capitalism.”¹⁹ Finding and identifying continuities and discontinuities among texts can serve to highlight important aspects of the author’s intentions. Letters and diaries “have a unique combination of assets, because they were unintended for stranger’s eyes, yet attempted to communicate something of the author’s selves. No other historical source is more likely to disclose women’s consciousness.”²⁰ Fortunately, large bodies of Clara’s personal documentation (letters, diaries, journals, compositions, concert programs, and household bills) are still on deposit in museums, archives, and private collections.

Difficulties with Archival Research:

Archival research of primary personal documents is accompanied by a host of methodological problems. Firstly and most importantly: not all of Clara’s diary entries and letters are existent. Some were discarded or burnt during her lifetime in order to ensure privacy, while others were unintentionally lost. In addition, her estate has not released some of her more personal writings, or has edited them for content before their release. Even the most complete record of Clara’s childhood diaries, recorded and

¹⁹ Ibid., 149.

²⁰ Ibid., 157.

published by Berthold Litzmann, is not an entirely accurate representation of her personal documents:

A review of the original sources...reveals many nuances overlooked by Litzmann, who omitted much information, perhaps to protect the persons involved or perhaps because he believed it was not worth consideration. The translations suffer even more, less from the language conversion than from the shortening of the biography by one-third and of the correspondence by half.²¹

Evidently, Clara's correspondence alone does not construct a complete and accurate portrait of her life and personal recollections. Each document must be read with the understanding that it comes from an incomplete body of work, and may, therefore, be misinterpreted within its larger context.

Difficulties with Translated Documents:

Many of Clara and Schumann's correspondences have been translated into English. However, the complexities of translating are a major methodological problem. Significant nuances and inflections of an individual language can be lost in its conversion. For example, the German language differentiates between personal and formal manners of speech. The German "du" is a very personal form of address used between close family and lovers, while in English, the use of "you" does not differ depending on its usage. Litzmann's translations do not recognize the significance of "du" in the correspondence between Clara and her future husband.²²

Similarly, the emphasis of the written text can also be lost in transcribed printed versions. Schumann's original writing is reportedly well emphasized with frequent use

²¹ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), xiii.

²² I must thank Nancy Reich for illuminating this point of interest in her book, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, 53.

of block letters and underlining (varying from one line to several). Translators are only recently recognizing the value of these stresses and devising methods to convey equal stress within their printed translations. Peter Ostwald, the English translator of Clara and Schumann's marriage diaries, recognized the complications of his task, stating,

My initial desire had been to do a rather free translation, modern sounding, fairly colloquial, and devoid of the many clumsy, archaic expressions found in the original. We must remember that the Schumanns were using a Saxon dialect and writing in a now outdated German. I soon discovered, however, that updating the style, which might have been easier on the reader, would have disguised the authors' personalities and destroyed many of their idiosyncratic ways of self-expression. The fascinating contrast between Robert Schumann's more journalistic and rather pedantic style and Clara Schumann's rambling and at times even incoherent writing would have been lost.²³

Thus, analysis of translated primary documents can never be as telling as the originals themselves. Even the type of paper and ink used in the original documents contribute to puzzling life histories together. These methods are not as specific to Clara's biography, as we are sure of her whereabouts through most of her life. However, for a composer with less primary documentation, or a much earlier place in history, these methods of "forensic" musicology would likely prove rewarding. Although it is important to realize the possible and likely problems with primary documents, they are still by far the most accurate sources of information and insight.

Clara's Personal Correspondence (diaries and letters):

Clara's personal diaries are unusual, in that they are not entirely private. Throughout her life, Clara's writings were influenced by the men in her life, first by her

²³ Gerd Nauhaus, ed. *The Marriage Diaries of Robert & Clara Schumann: from their Wedding Day Through the Russia Trip*, trans. Peter Ostwald (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), xvi.

father, and later by Schumann. Her earliest entry is actually written by her father, beginning: "I was born in Leipzig, September 13th, 1819, in the house called *Hohe Lilie* in the *Neumarkt*, (to which my parents had moved at Easter, 1818) and received the name of Clara Josephine...."²⁴ Friedrich Wieck continued assuming her identity in the diary until she began writing the entries herself (under his guidance). His motivations to cultivate a world famous piano performer are recognizable in this early attempt to document the life story of a child protégée. Her teenaged diaries are often written in her own hand, but even some entries from this period are credited to Wieck (though he always signed Clara's name). Additionally, he made habit of perusing her writing.

Her letters to Schumann during their courtship were kept very secret from Wieck. Their clandestine love affair survived through letters passed between an intricate web of friends, so as to not arouse suspicion. These letters are personal, but they are also shared documents – still not examples of Clara's intimate recordings. Furthermore, after their marriage, Clara and Schumann partook in a "marriage diary," something Schumann insisted on initiating. Dating September 13, 1840 (her birthday, and the day after their marriage), Schumann wrote:

This little book, which I inaugurate today, has a very intimate meaning; it shall be a diary about everything that touches us mutually in our household and marriage; our wishes, our hopes shall be recorded therein; it should also be a little book of requests that we direct toward one another whenever words are insufficient; also one of mediation and reconciliation whenever we have had a misunderstanding; in short, it shall be our good, true friend, to whom we entrust everything, to whom we open our hearts.²⁵

The marriage diary does contain some very intimate feelings and concerns expressed by both contributors, but it cannot be supposed that these were Clara's

²⁴ Joan Chissell, *Clara Schumann, A Dedicated Spirit: A Study of her Life and Work* (London: H. Hamilton, 1983), 1.

²⁵ Nauhaus, *The Marriage Diaries*, 5.

innermost confidential thoughts. The marriage diary was not even maintained through the whole of their marriage - it only lasts about four years. Reich does mention that Clara resumed diary writing after Schumann's death, but many of these documents were either destroyed or lost. She did correspond extensively with her closest friends (Brahms is the most fascinating of these relationships), but, again, few other mature writings exist.

Though this lack of personal content may seem an obstacle in research on Clara, it also provides considerable insight into her life. It is obvious that male forces, beginning with her father and ending with Schumann's death, dominated half of her life. Wieck played an inordinately active role in her early development: he personally regulated her practice regimes, subjected her to exhausting technical exercises, and forbid her any unscheduled social encounters. Schumann was not this overpowering, but he did limit her composition and practice time and forbid some of her potential tours. And both men made practice of reading her diary entries, thus removing an element of the personal.

Methodology and Difficulties Encountered in this Thesis:

As mentioned in my statement of purpose, this thesis makes two contentions: that Clara's dual social participation necessitated courtship through music, and that this instrumental music is capable of expressing extra-musical meaning. Addressing these subjects requires two general methodological approaches. Firstly, historical research and literature reviews address the social, cultural, and gender norms for nineteenth-century Germany and for Clara Wieck, and, secondly, musical analysis examines the potential presence of communicative message in music.

Although I detailed the intricacies of archival research, and the problems with translating and lost documentation above, these are not reflective of my personal experiences. I believe it is important to be aware of these aforementioned research difficulties, but the size and scope of this project did not allow me to consult any of Clara or Schumann's documents directly, as they are housed almost entirely in Europe. Accordingly, much of my writing on the historical and cultural aspects of Clara's life is derived from reading translated original documents and secondary sources materials, such as scholarly historical publications, music history books, and analysis of German social conventions.

Additionally, I must alert the reader here to the subjectivity of my chosen line of inquiry. Musical messaging is not an issue that can be easily supported with proof. I do not have any detailed original documents that confess the communicative nature of these compositions.²⁶ However, even if precise evidence may be lacking, this does not negate the possibility that messaging still exists. Since I do not have the luxury of factual proof as a starting point for my investigation, I have opted to rely on an inductive approach to logic, whereby my conclusions are drawn through the accumulation of many particular instances of supportive evidence. In order to support my contentions, my analysis sections will move from the specific to the general. My research on covert compositional practices must rely on small details of the compositions, reception communities, and social positioning. Through the accumulation of quantities of this suggestive and supportive material, coupled with known biographical detail, I am able to draw analytical conclusions and speculate on the relevancy of musical messaging.

²⁶ Although, as I will argue in chapter 5, the meaning in some of the pieces I examine is made clearer by the presence of corroborating suggestive titles and dedications.

This methodology also provokes a moral dilemma. Is it right for me to assume aspects of the Clara-Schumann courtship based on an accumulation of suggestive data? Should I be permitted to speculate on the internal meaning of compositions that was meant for private consumption? For that matter, is it appropriate at all that the public now has access to their personal diaries and letters? The immediate answer seems a resounding “no!” However, as historical figures, Clara and Schumann are unprotected subjects for critique, analysis, and suspicion. As historians, musicologists must reconstruct the lives of the figures that influenced the course of our musical history.

It is with this in mind that I approach my intimate subject. Though the musical elements I consider important may not have been intended for public consideration, I am asserting my right to examine these details here. Admittedly, my conclusions may not carry the weight of validity I may have achieved if studying overt examples of meaning in music (examples that are publicly acknowledged by their composers). However, I contend that my research and subjective conclusions do offer some plausible insight into the courtship and musical communication between Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann.

Furthermore, the reader must be aware that the compositions I consider in this thesis are merely a small sampling from the large number of allusive compositions noted by myself and other scholars. I could not possibly include reference to every suggestive composition within the space limitations of this project; accordingly, I selected a small sampling of pieces that illustrate my chosen methods of analysis to the best of their potential (see Figure 1.1). This music was also selected because each piece contains more than one type of suggestive referencing. Therefore, I am able to refer to this music

throughout this thesis from the perspective of different points of analysis – thus solidifying their relevance.

COMPOSER	DATE(S)	COMPOSITION
Clara Wieck	1831-33	Romance variée, Op. 3
Clara Wieck	1834-36	Soirées musicales, “Mazurka” Op. 6, No. 5
Clara Wieck	1834-36	Soirées musicales, “Notturmo” Op. 6, No. 2
Robert Schumann	1833	Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5
Robert Schumann	1837	Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6, No. 1
Robert Schumann	1838	Novelletten, Op. 21, No. 8

Fig. 1.1 – Proposed Pieces for Analysis of Musical Communication

Chapter Outline

Feminist theory teaches that it is essential to approach a topic from a historical viewpoint, rather than imposing current cultural observations and values onto the voices of a different generation. “The goal of a feminist history is not only to determine what women have done and thought and experienced in the past – it is also to investigate the context in which these women lived and how that context shaped their development...”²⁷

Following this contention, I began Chapter 2 with a background of nineteenth-century historical frameworks and social norms for women, and for women in music. If Clara and Schumann’s musical correspondence was a direct product of the social, cultural, and personal pressures imposed on their interactions, then understanding Clara’s temporal surrounding and social discourses is essential to this study. The chapter concludes with a biographical overview of Clara’s life, especially through childhood and her adolescent interactions and love affair with Schumann. As their relationship is the

²⁷Ruth-Ellen Joeres and Mary-Jo Maynes, “Introduction,” in *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Ruth-Ellen B Joeres and Mary-Jo Maynes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), xvi.

foundation of my research and the cause of their narrative output, some inquiry into their courtship is necessary. However, this is not an in-depth overview of the Wieck-Schumann acquaintance and marital history, rather, it is examined only where it affects the study of the pieces in question.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 make up the analysis section of this thesis where I combine aspects of traditional musical analysis, gendered analysis, and feminist musicology. Specifically, I follow the models of Marcia Citron and Jeffery Kallberg, who incorporate traditional theoretical analysis with external theories. As exemplified by Kallberg, I concentrate most of my analysis on the surface details, extramusical content, and historical positioning of my chosen pieces. Though I acknowledge that harmonic and structural analysis are important, and may indeed reinforce aspects of my hypothesis, I do not dedicate a large section of my study to this type of examination.

In chapter 3, I focus on the significance of the genres used in compositions written by Clara. Her choice of genres, namely the nocturne, romance, and mazurka, may serve as indicators of her feelings for Schumann and the status of their courtship. Using an analytical model established by Jeffery Kallberg, I argue that these genre types convey three different sorts of meaning: the nocturne depicts images of femininity and gender roles, the romance indicates a mood and sentiment, and the mazurka represents social courtship and dance. I conclude this chapter by addressing the expressive potential of the new nineteenth-century piano, especially since piano music brought the couple together, and can, in itself, be considered a genre.

The development and treatment of musical quotation is the subject of chapter 4. Scholars John Daverio and Kenneth Hull influence my questioning of the relevancy and

possible meaning of ciphers, and the identification and “intentionality” of musical quotation. The chapter concludes with analysis of two significant musical quotations of Clara’s themes found in music written by Schumann. It is important to establish the presence of these quotations, because this overt method of musical allusion supports the argument that instrumental music can express meaning, and that Schumann intended to convey that meaning to Clara through use of her themes.

In Chapter 5, I examine the importance of titles and dedications, using several compositions as examples. I also explore the debatable distinctions of programmatic and absolute music in this chapter because of its inherent connection with musical titling. Although titles and dedications are minor surface details of composition, I believe these elements are very suggestive of communication as they serve as a sort of textual, and public, proof of the intended recipient, particularly on published compositions. Because titles and dedications act as a sort of textual proof of intent, I positioned this chapter last in my analysis, so that it may reinforce the links I establish in connection to genres and quotation.

The Epilogue serves as a conclusion to this thesis. Here I summarize my research and relevant findings, speculate on the plausibility of musical messaging, and consider the role of music production in the courtship of Clara and Schumann. Using the results from my inquiry into social discourses, the personal history of Clara Wieck, analysis of genre, quotation, titles, and dedications, I piece together the conclusive elements that suggest the potential of musical messaging in order to support my hypothesis that these secret lovers were united through music. I conclude this chapter by speculating on the relevancy of research into musical messaging, and its place within musicology.

~Chapter 2~

Nineteenth-Century Historical Positioning and Biography of Clara Wieck Schumann

In Chapter 1, I established the principle underlying this thesis, that historical research necessitates an analysis of the temporal surrounding of the characters in question. Accordingly, this chapter provides the background necessary to understand Clara Wieck better. In order to interpret her compositions in the socio-historical contexts in which they were written, it is important to consider the following issues: 1) the nineteenth-century German middle-class, and specifically the role of women; 2) nineteenth-century music and the role of gender in the production of that music; 3) the specific contexts of Clara Wieck's upbringing, engagement, social status, and involvement with music.

The Nineteenth-Century German Middle-Class and the Role of Women

The nineteenth-century was a period of turmoil and change in Europe, bearing witness to many transformations in social, political, and cultural realms. The geography of the European continent experienced considerable transformations and border shifts in the early decades, particularly in central Europe and the German speaking districts. The resulting changes in political, economic, and land control affected the culture and values of the people, especially the middle-class, which was to be the new elite.

The French Revolution had brought forth a "new-spirit" to these recently advantaged people, as they gained in influence and social standing. The empowered middle-class "became increasingly aware of itself...defining itself not only through a

political aspiration which complemented its economic status, but also through its growing influence on the formal culture of Europe.”¹ The Industrial Revolution made the “new-spirit” possible by increasing efficiency, productivity, and wages in industry. New wealth was flaunted and commercial manufacturing boomed. Middle-class families now had more money to spend, especially on luxury items, such as instruments for the home. The increasing middle-class desire for culture and luxury had impact on music production and reception, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Difficulties of Historical Criticism and Study of Women’s Social Roles

The way women were treated by their society can be historically understood by reading journals, books, and didactic texts written by male authors throughout the time in question. These documents enable the historian to understand the social roles that women were meant to emulate. However, history has not documented the intimate lives and trials of women very accurately, as published texts rarely revealed any sort of personal detail because they were usually written by men, and from the standpoint of the male bias.

There would be an unfortunate paucity of information concerning women’s lives had it not been for their recovered diaries, travel logs, and personal correspondences. Through these documents, scholars can gain insight into the personal experiences of historical women. However, relying on these materials for information is problematic, as not all women had the skill to write, and many more lacked the time. Therefore, much research is only representative of selected, or privileged, groups of women.

¹ Jim Samson, “Music and Society,” in *The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War I*, ed. Jim Samson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 4.

For example, for her research on nineteenth-century German women, Juliane Jacobi-Dittrich studied the personal writings of several nineteenth-century female German authors in order to gain a clearer understanding of the cultural and social pressures on them.² True, Jacobi-Dittrich does unveil many nuances of women's intimate lives, however, since the source documents were all written by female authors, the information revealed may be somewhat tainted, since these were women who already resisted the gendered roles expected of them by becoming writers. One must, therefore, question how the details of these selected women's lives would reflect those lives of women who abided by gendered norms and functioned from within the private realm.

These research hurdles make the feminist project difficult. It is necessarily harder to determine norms and accepted practice from diverse, and often conflicting, texts. One feminist wrote, "the proliferation of case studies in women's history seems to call for some synthesizing perspective that can explain continuities and discontinuities and account for persisting inequalities as well as radically different social experiences."³ It is imperative that scholars be aware of the dominant social and cultural expectations of a historical character before interpreting her participation and resistance to discourses.

Middle-Class Women's Status and Conduct, as Enforced by Gendered Social Norms

Although nineteenth-century society had become more accommodating and liberal for white middle-class men, women of this same class were still expected to

² See Juliane Jacobi-Dittrich, "Growing up Female in the Nineteenth-Century," in *German Women in the Nineteenth-Century*, ed. John C. Fout (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1984).

³ Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91/5 (December 1986), 1055.

devote their lives to domestic duties and social requirements, and generally cater their lives to household chores and child rearing.⁴

In the rapidly changing social order of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, an intense effort was made to prescribe and enforce woman's "proper" role in the reproductive sphere of home and family, to separate private from professional life. The development of new work patterns and the establishment of a "productive" sector outside the domestic sphere were bolstered by the propagation of theories which attributed the division of labor by sex to psychological, rather than physiological traits which limit woman's participation in the world of "real work." But not only did such theories support woman's exclusion from the productive sector of the economy; by attaching sentimental instead of economic merit to her work, they also trivialized the labor she continued to do in the domestic sphere and ultimately awakened her desire for liberation from the cult of house and family.⁵

Gender norms were indicators of the socially accepted conduct women emulated in their own lives. "The construction of gender norms in German society...[was enforced by] the state, the church, social institution, the law and the community, and conformity and resistance by individuals and groups to the norms guiding female and male behaviour."⁶ Popular literature, conduct manuals, and other social dictations trained women to understand their social roles as subservient and catering to men. Remarkably, these conduct books can also be viewed as "indicators of women's resistance to...discourses. [They are] evidence of the great difficulty which women found in inhabiting the discursive structures laid out for them which stressed their duties and

⁴ It is important to remind the reader here that this brief, socio-historical overview focuses on the lives of white middle-class women for the purposes of understanding the social class occupied by Clara Wieck. Women of the lower class and other racial backgrounds were necessarily part of the labour force, since the limited income from the husband working in industry was often not enough to support a family. These women of lower status were subject to many more extreme conditions, hardships, and different social expectations that cannot even be addressed here.

⁵ Patricia Herminhouse, "Women and the Literary Enterprise in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Ruth-Ellen Joeres and Mary-Jo Maynes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 80.

⁶ Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey, "Introduction: Gender and Gender Relations in German History," in *Gender Relations in German History*, eds. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 2.

obligations as wives and mothers and did not hold out space for them to negotiate their own pleasures.”⁷

Jacobi-Dittrich, mentioned above, noted that some nineteenth-century women felt they were sexually repressed and exploited. Puberty, in particular, was difficult for girls, as their transition into womanhood was publicized, marked the commencement of domestic and marital training, and often entered them into marriage negotiations with men they did not love. The pressures to conform to ideals established by their patriarchal society often dominated women’s lives. Accordingly,

marriage, the household and production were closely entwined and both the personal and the economic relationship between man and wife were predicated upon a gender hierarchy that defined women’s tasks as “reproduction” and men’s work as “production”. A man’s position within the community was dependent upon his productive role, his ability to provide materially for his wife and family.⁸

Some women intimately felt the stresses of conforming to society. However, their social positioning left them unable to resist, become individuals, or gain a sense of self worth. “In reality, most of these women’s childhoods were without dreams, adventures, other forms of sexuality, or any close friendships other than what was acceptable.”⁹ Like the many centuries before them, nineteenth-century women were perceived as having lesser status to men. Their gendered role was to cater to the wills and desires of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Values such as modesty, purity of body and mind, domestic skill, and refined beauty were just some of the most prized characteristics of the idealized woman.

⁷ Sara Mills, *Discourses: The New Critical Idiom* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 90.

⁸ Abrams and Harvey, “Introduction,” 6.

⁹ Jacobi-Dittrich, “Growing up Female,” 215.

Girlhood Education as a Preparation for Marriage

Many male philosophers and writers publicly preached their views of the “weaker sex,” and these views were adopted and practiced by the public. On the issue of women’s education, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, “the education of women should always be relative to men. To please, to be useful to us, to make us love and esteem them, to educate us when young and to take care of us when grown up, to advise, to console us, to render our lives easy and agreeable – these are the duties of women at all times and what they should be taught in their infancy.”¹⁰

Accordingly, women were traditionally denied access higher education. The fear was that women with higher education, professional pursuits, or talent in the arts, would neglect their domestic duties. Though often admired or prized for betraying some intellectual capacity, it was not appropriate to contest or surpass the knowledge of men. Above all, women were not to engage in any activity that would negatively affect her role as mother, housewife, and supporter.

Girls were permitted to attend private schools for general learning, however they were usually forced to abandon their schooling around the age of thirteen. The withdrawal from education at this young age was in order to prepare for their destinations as mothers and housewives. “Girlhood ended for these women either with marriage or with their decisions to pursue higher education or a career. There was clearly an opposite pattern for middle-class men in the nineteenth century. The search for a wife seldom coincided with education.”¹¹ Public school education was also designed to prepare girls for womanhood. Studies were very gender specific, and often of poor academic quality.

¹⁰ Marcia J. Citron, “Women and the Lied. 1775-1850,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition*, eds. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 225.

¹¹ Jacobi-Dittrich, “Growing up Female,” 210.

Courses included the study of literature, religion, languages, and history, but rarely covered any aspects of sciences or mathematics.¹² “Even in school...boys were being educated for making a living, girls for making a marriage.”¹³

The Institution of Marriage

According to the aforementioned conduct manuals and didactic texts, women were encouraged to partake in small musical gatherings, dances, and delicate craft within the private sphere of the household. It was deemed “lady-like” to possess some feminine skills, as it often heightened a girl’s desirability to potential suitors by appealing to men through their beauty, modest entertaining skills, and dowry. Typically, girls of means were paraded for show at balls and other public gatherings where it was hoped that a young man of considerable worth would find her interesting.

The successful and lucrative marriage of daughters was the primary objective of many middle-class families. Innocence and purity were major bargaining points when discussing the virtues of marriageable girls.

The prolonging of a girl’s childishness was the best way to guarantee her spiritual purity. “One of the superstitious axioms of a normal education was the conviction that innocence, grounded in ignorance and destroyed during the first hour of marriage, represents the true spiritual beauty of a young girl and her greatest charm”...To say “My daughter is still no more than a child” was the highest praise a mother could bestow when describing her already grown-up, marriageable daughter.¹⁴

Those families who were more substantially wealthy were not always so preoccupied with flaunting the features of their daughters. These girls were essentially

¹² Ibid., 211.

¹³ Herminhouse, “Women and the Literary Enterprise,” 85.

¹⁴ Renate Möhrmann, “The Reading Habits of Women in the *Vormärz*,” in *German Women in the Nineteenth-Century*, ed. John C. Fout (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1984), 109.

guaranteed a marriage, and therefore it was not such a priority to attract a man – there would inevitably be interest because of her financial background. However, these girls often found it more difficult to have access to education and training since petty skills were not as necessary to attract a suitor.¹⁵

Most marriages were arranged for the convenience of financial stability, political connections, or family prestige. “At the centre of this web of economic and sexual relations was marriage, in which order was supposedly based on patriarchal authority and female subjection sanctioned by the law, the state and the church. Thus, heterosexual relations have commonly been regarded as the most fundamental site of female oppression...”¹⁶ German Civil Code legitimized women’s subordination within the marriage contract. She was to have little or no financial, political, or social power, and was not granted the status of a “legal person.” Under this contract, the husband was understood to be head of the household. He had legal ownership of his wife, children, and home, regardless of the nature of his character, be it abusive, philandering, or neglectful. According to one author’s interpretation of the German Civil Code,

the law was the very foundation of women’s subordination within marriage. He [the husband] is the political, moral and economic representative of her political, moral and economic position. She is nothing, he is everything. He is the custodian of her property and at the same time, her guardian...Legal protection of the female is a constitutional saying...the man in fact holds all the power, he is the representative of political sovereignty, of absolute monarchy, or autocratic government.¹⁷

¹⁵ Jacobi-Dittrich, “Growing up Female,” 210-214.

¹⁶ Abrams and Harvey, “Introduction,” 3.

¹⁷ Lynn Abrams, “Companionship and Conflict: the Negotiation of Marriage Relations in the Nineteenth-Century,” in *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 103.

Marriage for love was rare. Though “companionate” or “affectionate” marriage was becoming more common in the nineteenth-century, it was not normal practice. This type of marriage “incorporate[d] attributes such as companionship, mutual affection and respect, and equality...”¹⁸ However, even in these unions, where fairness and equality seemed more attainable, the public-private split continued to dictate gendered roles and social conduct. Women who married for love were still expected to maintain her duties as devoted mother and housewife while her husband participated in politics, economy, and social luxuries. These types of marriages “did not exclude (and often assumed) a hierarchy of the sexes. That is, a harmonious and respectful marriage still required the wife successfully to fulfill her allotted role and still permitted the husband to punish transgressions with a “modicum” of physical abuse.”¹⁹

Resistance to her socially defined role as housewife did typically result in abuse. While women’s attempts to assert more influence into matters of the home and family were rising in the nineteenth-century, so too were the occurrences of domestic violence. Since men were given legal authority over their marriages, wives generally had little recourse when they were “punished” for transgressions outside of the norm. Accordingly,

a wife was increasingly judged according to her ability to adhere to the new standards of domesticity and this became a node of conflict within marriages. The majority of violent incidents occurred within the home and we frequently find women’s household management being scrutinized, criticized and challenged by husbands as a prelude to an outburst of abuse.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 102.

¹⁹ Ibid., 104.

²⁰ Ibid., 112.

Women's Deviance and Resistance to Social Norms²¹

Of course, there are exceptions to every established norm. Indeed some women chose to pursue a life of professionalism and creativity over the social custom of domestic responsibility. Patricia Herminhouse, an author on nineteenth-century German women, pointed out that, historically, women who showed creative productivity were typically unmarried, without children, or of such a high class that she did not need to perform many household duties because of servants.

It is clear that nineteenth-century girls and women were destined to perform one role within their society, but this role did not necessarily fulfill the desires of all women. Girls spent their childhood and adolescence training to excel in the private sphere and any deviance to the norms jeopardized chances of a good marriage. Middle-class women were not encouraged to study, work, or produce in excess of "feminine" interests.

Women's Employment:

Society cultured women to distance themselves from professional pursuits. Middle-classed women were not expected or encouraged to make money, even in the arts, as income and employment were negative indicators of a women's class. "Female gainful employment was still regarded as a kind of family disgrace which detracted from the credit and reputation of the father, lessened the daughter's chances of marriage, and was, as far as possible, kept secret."²² Furthermore,

nineteenth-century...guilds devalued all productive activity associated with women's work...defined occupations as skilled or unskilled

²¹ In feminist studies, "deviance," or "deviant," is used to describe women's difference, or acts of resistance, to social norms. However, there is no negativity or condescension associated with this term, contrary to many other contexts within the English language.

²² Möhrmann, "The Reading Habits," 63.

according to the gender of the workers rather than the level of training, dexterity and expertise required, and promoted the notion that women were the source of disorder and dishonour so that so-called “masterless” women – those who worked for wages but were not married or did not live in a male-headed household – were treated suspiciously and sometimes ordered to live with their parents, employer or some other male guardian.²³

Oftentimes, if the family experienced some financial distress, wives would become more involved in the income of the household. Many women took on borders or apprentices, would work in the family business, or manage the household resources. However, “when women’s labour became crucial to the survival of the household they threatened the husband’s position and thus contributed towards an imbalance within the marriage relationship.”²⁴ Perhaps men prevented their middle-class women from earning money because it would liken their status to women of the lower, working-class. By extension, income after marriage was especially discouraged, as it disrespected the authority of her husband and took time away from her household and motherly chores.

Evidently, white, middle-class women were not accepted within professional public spheres in nineteenth-century Germany. Work and income lessened her status and conflicted with the authority and social positioning of her husband and family. Accordingly, there are few examples of middle-class women participating in professional moneymaking fields. However, there are select occurrences of women persisting with creative output in the arts.

Women’s Participation in Artistic Endeavors:

Sadly, many professionally or artistically inclined family women simply did not have the time to devote to the perfection of their skill - considering the time commitment

²³ Abrams and Harvey, “Introduction,” 6.

²⁴ Abrams, “Companionship,” 112.

and responsibility necessary for running a home and raising children. Even Clara Wieck was reported to feel the pressures of social conformation. As expressed by her husband, “children and a husband...do not go well with composition. She [Clara] cannot work at it regularly.”²⁵

History has documented many female writers from this century. It would seem that most women did make time to write letters, journals, or travel logs, and these documents are crucial for the reconstruction of the female participation in society. However, though it may appear that there is a high number of female authors proportional to other artistic endeavors, this fact may be due to the nature of their creative output: authors write, and this writing has been preserved.

However, “whether women remained unmarried or childless in order to devote themselves to their art or whether they became writers because of the lack of husband or child, they tended to depreciate the depth of their own commitment...”²⁶ The presence of women’s dissatisfaction with their own creative production indicates the dominance of social beliefs. The insidious nature of gendered restrictions even affected the ambitions of women defiant enough to attempt serious writing.

Significantly, those women who did create work for publication, whether literary or musical, were belittled for their “feminine” contributions. The result is a loop of frustration: women were denied access to the institutions that offered quality training, then ridiculed for their lack of quality production. “Sex-linked criticism is the norm, not the exception, even in the case of a female critic who feels compelled to tie her admiration for a woman’s literary achievement to “her impressiveness as model wife,

²⁵ As quoted in Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 154.

²⁶ Herminghouse, “Women and the Literary Enterprise,” 87.

mother, and housewife, her inexhaustible kindness towards the suffering and the poor, her untiring obligingness”.”²⁷ It is only natural for history to praise women for their sacrifices, domestic hardships, and unaccredited service to society. The woman that accomplishes these expectations, while dually participating in the public sphere, does remain truly inspiring.

Nineteenth-Century Music and the Role of Gender in the Production of that Music

The changes experienced in nineteenth-century social and political realms, mentioned above, also affected music. Music was transferred from a private and upper class form of entertainment, to a pleasure available to, and enjoyed by, the common public. The early nineteenth-century saw the emergence of concert halls, opera theatres, public concerts, and increased access to public and private music education. This shift also resulted in increased industry for music publishers, instrument manufacturers, and teachers, as common people now had need for scores, instruments, and music tutors in their home. Smaller salon music gatherings were also becoming increasingly popular. “In short, music, which had so long been the handmaiden of religion and provided entertainment for royalty and nobility, now addressed a largely self-made bourgeoisie and its ever-widening interests and aspirations, whether aesthetic, ethical, political or strictly material.”²⁸

This century produced a wealth of great composers and masterpieces that will forever maintain prominence in the musical hall of fame. However, in examining this

²⁷ Ibid., 89.

²⁸ Alexander Ringer, “The Rise of Urban Musical Life between the Revolutions, 1789-1848,” in *The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions: 1789 and 1848*, ed. Alexander Ringer (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991, 1990), 8.

musical output there is an obvious paucity in the number of women composers and their comparatively low public status. The reasons for this scarcity are obvious to current scholars who have the benefit of historical hindsight to understand the restrictions and pressures upon women's participation.

Women's Musical Participation and Sociological Factors of Repression

In contrast to men, women's music remained destined for private consumption. As was the case with many other activities of personal or intellectual growth, women were discouraged from becoming too deeply involved. The principles of appropriate musical conduct for women were enforced by:

- 1) prescriptive literature that told women which kinds of musical behavior were right or wrong for them to engage in;
- 2) slurs cast on women who crossed over gender-ascribed boundaries of one type or another – for example, gossip and ridicule directed at women who liked to sing;
- 3) allegations of easy virtue made about women who chose a musical career – particularly one associated with the theater; and
- 4) descriptions of the female musician as the personification of sensual intoxication.²⁹

However, girls and young women were encouraged to learn an instrument, as it heightened their social desirability and marriage prospective.

Prosperous and aspiring bourgeois families discovered that music lessons for their daughters could be an asset in their climb to social acceptance. The leisure created by new technology and industry afforded middle-class girls and women the opportunity to cultivate music to improve their marriage possibilities as well as to provide entertainment.³⁰

²⁹ Jane Bowers, "Feminist Scholarship and the Field of Musicology: I," *College Music Symposium* 29 (1989), 85.

³⁰ Nancy B. Reich, "European Composers and Musicians, ca. 1800-1890," in *Women & Music: A History*, ed. Karen Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 98.

It was acceptable for women to possess talent for a hobby and for private entertainment, or, as Abraham Mendelssohn put it, “an ornament.”³¹

Even some women living at the time understood the position female musicians were being reduced to. Helen Clarke, writing in 1895, after mentioning the unfairness of unequal education, stated, “the nature of music is such that certain conditions in the past have militated greatly against her highest development in the art.”³² Similarly, Friedrich Meadows-White in 1882 wrote that women could equally attain musical ability, but have not had the chance because of social restrictions and the continual responsibilities of a housewife.³³

Acceptable “Feminine” Instruments and Tutelage

Even the instruments deemed acceptable for female study were determined by the patriarchal society: the piano, harp, guitar, and voice were deemed appropriately “feminine.” On these instruments, and in small social gatherings, women were deemed ladylike and cultured, while they were often ridiculed and discouraged from attempting other instruments. It was believed that they lacked the physical strength to play the larger wind, brass, and stringed instruments. One critic stated, “women can’t play wind instruments, they lack the lip and lung power to hold notes which deficiency makes them always play out of tune...women cannot be depended upon for rehearsing and the hard work demanded of musicians.”³⁴ In addition, men believed that the performance of these larger instruments ruined the good looks of women, as she could not maintain composure

³¹ Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music*, 146.

³² *Ibid.*, 212.

³³ *Ibid.*, 215.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

or beauty when contorting the body to hold or use any larger instrument. Many believed that orchestral instruments should have no place in the lives of the female sex.

Girls took private lessons with tutors to learn their modest instrumental skills. Where it could be afforded, some women also took lessons in composition and theory. But, as suggested previously in accordance to general education, women were not to develop any significant or marketable skills in such regions. If they composed at all, their efforts were restricted to insignificant smaller pieces, meant for personal entertainment only. According to Nancy Reich,

Upper- and middle-class women were discouraged from taking music too seriously. Even the most competent were forbidden by husbands or fathers to appear in public, to publish music under their own names, or to accept fees for their teaching lest these activities reflect badly on the social status of the family. The advice and support of a man was still a necessity in the musical career of a woman no matter how talented she was.³⁵

Male Dominance in Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Music Production

As in most areas of nineteenth-century society, men and their influences dominated the world of music. Opportunities existed for the male musician and composer that were not acceptable or made available for women. Marcia Citron has researched and written extensively on this topic, detailing particularly the methods of women's musical repression and the obstacles that prohibited her from attaining canonized works.³⁶ Citron's concentration on these topics of exclusion has served greatly to identify women's challenges in music and to justify the need for research into women's musical history and canon formation. The following section relies on Citron's

³⁵ Reich, "European Composers," 98.

³⁶ In particular, Citron's article "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," and her book *Gender and the Musical Canon* are very influential and persuasive.

research and reviews areas of male dominance in education, composition, publication, and performance: all aspects of music production that cultivated acceptance, popularity, and learned compositional output.

Women's Denied Enrollment at Musical Education Facilities:

Education facilities throughout much of the nineteenth-century only allowed men to enrol in their music courses and programs. Score reading, theory and counterpoint, composition and orchestral classes were taught by male teachers to male students. Admittedly, schooling does not necessarily create a good musician. However, training at these larger types of institutions allowed students to broaden their naturally established skills. Additionally, these schools were an invaluable resource for securing contacts, meeting other performing musicians, and possibly becoming involved in extraneous musical gatherings.

“Women faced a distinct disadvantage: regular and systematic denial of access to the full range of compositional training.”³⁷ By controlling women’s admission to educational institutions and contacts, men were effectively securing her smaller ability. Denial of education ensured that women would have little more understanding of music than was offered to them at private soirees. They had no access to learning diverse instruments and instrumentation, complex theoretical or orchestral study, or business contacts for performance or publication.

In the case of Cécile Chaminade, an aspiring musician from France, her father forbade her to study music at a Conservatory, as it was a “violation of normative codes

³⁷ Citron, “Gender, Professionalism,” 105.

for young women.”³⁸ Without the necessary comprehensive background, women of the nineteenth-century faced an obstacle that would forever repress them from achieving compositional complexity equal to that displayed by their educated male counterparts.

Men’s Compositional Skills Perceived as “Superior”:

Women were particularly hindered in composition because of their lack of serious education. Apparently, many men believed that women did not possess the capability for composition because it required intense musical understanding and theoretical knowledge that was beyond their learning ability and mental capacity. Additionally, theories of biological or psychological inferiority justified her “inability” to compose. “Woman lacked the ability to control emotion with logic and reason, masculine attributes requisite for composition.”³⁹

Though many women did compose smaller parlour works, they refrained from attempting larger genres – which also contributed to the stigma of their feminine composing style. “Composing in small forms was deemed a decidedly lesser activity. Reviewers regularly made a gender/genre association and as a result invariably cast negative aspersions on pieces in smaller forms. The term “salon music” became virtually co-terminous with “woman’s music.” As such it implied amateurism and hence a lesser creative worth.”⁴⁰ Regrettably, this stigma was difficult to deny, since women’s lack of training and conformity to societal norms ensured they would continue composing smaller “amateur” music.

³⁸ Ibid., 105.

³⁹ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 110.

Publication as an Industry Dominated by Men:

Publication of musical compositions was almost exclusively limited to male output. This century saw an increased desire for published music, as many families now owned instruments, especially the piano. Additionally, increased public concerts brought music to the people, and many wished to recreate their experience through performing the same works (though often less complex) in their homes. The greatest need was for simple piano reductions of large-scale orchestral pieces, arias, and other operatic works. Thus, musical popularity was often a prerequisite to publication, which was “inextricably linked with the sustainability of a piece, that is, repeat performance.”⁴¹

As women’s compositions were generally smaller forms that were performed on private occasions, they did not often become popular, because they rarely had the opportunity to be publicly exposed. Generally, women did not have the recognition, status, or forged contacts to sell scores for the printed music market.⁴² However, even if a woman did have a potentially successful work, it was still socially inappropriate for her to publish or for her to gain income from sales.

Of course, some women resisted social restraints by composing accomplished music or literature. However, very few had works published under their own names (Clara Wieck being an exception). Some women resorted to publishing under the name of a male friend or relative, while others published under a masculine pseudonym, such as literary writer Aurore Dudevant publishing by the name of George Sand.⁴³ The very nature of this practice illustrates the reality of gender related bias in the nineteenth-century music industry.

⁴¹ Ibid., 106.

⁴² The exceptions here were often operating under the aegis of male family members or patrons.

⁴³ This phenomenon may be noticed more clearly in literature than in music.

While the very assumption of a pseudonym may signal a realistic assessment of the possibilities open to women who wanted to attempt the leap from the private sphere of the female to the public sphere of the male, it also served to perpetuate cultural biases which denied women's creative potential. Johannes Scherr was certainly not alone in his opinion that "the contingent of females, who force themselves on the public without being asked, consists either of ugly old maids...or of slovenly housewives and undutiful mothers."⁴⁴

The presence of male pseudonyms is another indicator of women's deviance and acts of resistance. Knowing that they would not be publicly accepted, or even offered a chance, women chose this venue for denying their femininity. For example, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel had works published under the name of her brother, Felix Mendelssohn, though he himself was opposed to the idea of a woman, even his gifted sister, publishing. While commenting on some of Fanny's new pieces, Felix wrote, "but to persuade her to publish anything I cannot...because this is contrary to my views and to my convictions."⁴⁵

Male Dominance of the Performance Industry:

In performance, women were also typically denied access to the public venue. Women's instrumental skill was not often advanced enough to be featured at concerts, especially since the quality of her private music lessons prepared her for the simple intimacy of the salon gathering, not for the brilliance and technical virtuosity of public performance. The exception to this rule can be observed in vocal music. Here, many nineteenth-century women were championed as performers and divas of the entertainment industry.

⁴⁴ Herminghouse, "Women and the Literary Enterprise," 84.

⁴⁵ Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music*, 148.

Yet, concert repertoire rarely featured compositions by women. Audience satisfaction and steady public support was essential for the profitable revenue of the concert organizers. Larger orchestral works and forms, such as the symphony, concerto, and string quartet, were the preferred listening of the public, and therefore were the pieces chosen for performances.

Citron refers to performance and acceptance as “critical reception.” She contends that favorable critical reception is the key element required to achieve musical success. Unfortunately, “women composers were criticized as being true to their sex if their music exhibited supposedly feminine traits, yet derided as attempting to be masculine if their music embodied so-called virile traits.”⁴⁶ Here again we can observe the gendered restrictions women faced that overtly inhibited their access and potential success in the public sphere of music.

The Social Tendency of Discouraging Women’s Participation in Music

Women’s persistent attempts in music were stifled by constant ridicule, and her restricted access to public music arenas. Such is the case of Fanny Hensel. Her father forbade her to publish or perform in public, and purposely steered her away from the world of contacts and advancement opportunities. Both her father and brother openly stated that they believed it inappropriate and contrary to their views and convictions for a woman to publish. In a letter to his daughter, Abraham Mendelssohn stated that music for a woman “must only be an ornament, never the root of your being and doing...you

⁴⁶ Citron, “Gender, Professionalism,” 109.

must become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the only calling of a young woman – I mean the state of a housewife.”⁴⁷

Regardless of how successful or popular a piece of woman’s music, it was always obscured by the achievements of men. Women “acquiesced to the male-defining music system, and their creations were absorbed into the masculine tradition, which resulted for instance in Clara Schumann speaking disparagingly of her own music.”⁴⁸ Even Clara, who enjoyed considerable fame through her performance skills, routinely belittled her own compositions. This led her to write in her diary,

I once believed that I had creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not wish to compose—there never was one able to do it. Am I intended to be the one? It would be arrogant to believe that. That was something with which only my father tempted me in former days. But I soon gave up believing this. May Robert always create; that must always make me happy.⁴⁹

Women would never live up to men’s precedented standards of large-scale form, complexity, and orchestration. This continually resulted in discriminatory reviews and comparisons. Certain musical characteristics, genres, and venues were even assigned gendered functions, which resulted in further stereotyping and prejudice.

“Masculine” and “Feminine” Musical Characteristics:

Gendered interpretation of music is not just a contemporary construct. Indeed, even in the nineteenth-century, “masculine” musical characteristics were valued, and enjoyed public popularity and requests for repeat performance. The desires of the listening public “establish hierarchies that are linked with gender: maleness with the

⁴⁷ Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music*, 146.

⁴⁸ Eva Rieger, “I Recycle Sounds: Do Women Compose Differently?” in *Source Readings in Music History, Vol 7*, ed. Oliver Strunk (New York: Norton, 1998), 147.

⁴⁹ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 216.

large, the non-functional, and the intellectual, which are valued; femaleness with the small and the functional (and the private), which are devalued.”⁵⁰

It is worth noting here that Susan McClary thoroughly developed the concepts of “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics, as pertaining to qualities in music, in her book *Feminine Endings*, dating from 1991. Though history shows that certain musical features, such as cadences, have been previously designated by this gender reference before, McClary examined this practice to new depth. Her pivotal work in feminist musicology considers the differences between male and female writings and discusses the signifiers of each.⁵¹ For example, aspects of harmony, harmonic progression, melody, thickness of texture, counterpoint, and accompaniment are all elements that may be subjected to gendered analysis.

Other authors writing under the aegis of feminist musicology use gendered analysis in their consideration of certain compositions. Here I am thinking specifically of Ruth Solie’s article on Schumann’s song cycle, *Frauenliebe und –leben*, and Suzanne Cusick’s analysis of Francesca Caccini’s *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall’isola d’Alcina*.⁵² Jeffery Kallberg has also extensively researched historical incidences of gendered criticism. In his article *The Harmony of the Teatable*, he provides an overview

⁵⁰ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 122-23.

⁵¹ Indeed, McClary’s writings can be viewed as the beginning of the feminist musicology movement. Many scholars draw on her research. McClary also has a reputation of being extremely candid and provocative in her writing style – something that often incites as much debate as it does acceptance.

⁵² Ruth A Solie, “Whose Life? The Gendered Self in Schumann’s Frauenlibe Songs,” in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Suzanne G Cusick, “Of Women, Music, and Power: A Model from Seicento Florence,” in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1993.

of some of the “feminine” characteristics noted by nineteenth-century writers, including brevity, surface detail, dance, coquettish and small designs, and ornate melodies.⁵³

Generally, characteristic elements of masculine music are large-scale works with structural logic, powerful effect, bold lines, and complexity in harmony and counterpoint. Conversely, nineteenth-century women’s compositions are typically smaller, feminine, and intimate genres destined for the private sphere of entertainment. This feminine music, displaying lyrical themes and delicate graceful melodies, was said to lack the powerful gestures and complexity of texture to satisfy the ear of the listener. Some authors even suggested that woman’s nurturing and provisional qualities and “fundamental urges... to be beautiful, loved, and adored” transformed themselves into lyricism and beauty on the staff.⁵⁴

While it is important to consider such signifiers, especially when conducting gender sensitive research, it is equally important to understand the origins and reasons for these gendered traits. It is my opinion that women’s music has displayed delicate, simple, and feminine qualities over the centuries because they have not traditionally had the education, facilities, or encouragement to progress further. Because of their social restrictions and limited access, women exited the nineteenth-century with comparatively little to show for themselves in the world of music. These historical and social based factors directly affected the intellectual quality of women’s music.

The nineteenth-century female composer faced many obstacles to her success, including limited support, lack of education, and sociological repression. The women who broke through these barriers are truly inspiring to the modern musician who does not

⁵³ Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Teatable,” 107-109.

⁵⁴ Citron, “Gender, Professionalism,” 111.

face such a magnitude of prejudices and active hindrances. Clara Wieck Schumann did overcome her imposed social barriers to become a successful musician, not just for a woman, but also as compared to men. The remainder of this chapter will provide a background of Clara's early life.

Clara Wieck Schumann

Born in Leipzig on September 13, 1819, Clara became the next of a generations-long tradition of musicians in her family. Her father, Friedrich Wieck, taught piano, repaired pianos, and ran a music-lending business in Leipzig. Through his reputation as a piano teacher he met Clara's mother, Marianne (nee Tromlitz). She was a skilled pianist and soprano, was instrumental in helping Wieck with his business, and also became a well-known piano teacher. They had five children together, but domestic disputes led to their divorce in 1824, when Clara was only five.⁵⁵ After their divorce, the children were left to the care of Wieck, as was customary in German tradition. Children "belonged" to men in this society and Clara was "legally his property."⁵⁶ Marianne soon remarried to Adolph Bargiel, fellow piano teacher, and continued her modest career in Berlin.

Marianne Bargiel's Influence on Clara:

Clara did see her mother periodically, but Wieck took great offence to these encounters and they eventually dwindled until Clara was almost twenty, when she began visiting on her own. Though she was rarely present in Clara's early life, many

⁵⁵ This fact in itself is uncommon for the time. Women were not often granted permission to divorce. See Abrams and Harvey, *Gender Relations in German History*, for more information on the marriage contract.

⁵⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 9.

contemporary writings seem to overlook the influences Marianne may still have had on her daughter. To see her mother thrive as a successful musician and public figure must have affected Clara's own aspirations and eventual career.

The strong female character was not common in this social realm. As Clara became more celebrated and publicly renowned, she likely looked to her mother's career path for inspiration and confidence. "Students of women's history know that female influences, even in the lives of prominent women, are usually overlooked...the place of Clara Wieck's mother, Marianne, and her significance in the life of the young pianist has never been explored."⁵⁷ Marianne's strength and determination is reflected in Clara's stubborn and tough character, especially obvious later, when Clara also had the strength to deny Wieck.

Clara's Youth: Rigorous Training and an Unusual Childhood

Throughout her childhood, Wieck concerned himself with making a concert pianist out of his daughter. His intent was to *create* a child protégée. When his first child, Clara, was born, it did not concern him that she was female – he set to work cultivating a genius. "Convinced that gender was no handicap in the race for artistic greatness, he gave Clara the instruction and musical understanding that carried her beyond the ranks of the merely gifted to a position in the constellation of the great nineteenth-century virtuosi."⁵⁸ This determination led to the disregard of his other children, and later to his second wife and their subsequent children. It also compromised

⁵⁷ Ibid., xv.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

Clara's extra-musical activities. Her education on general subjects was incomplete, and her access to other children and "fun" was almost non-existent.

Her meagre general education was squeezed into the hours between the piano and the daily walks. For six months beginning in January 1825 she attended a neighbourhood primary school...and then she was sent to...a larger establishment, for perhaps another year. Wieck deliberately limited her hours of school attendance; he gave her a lesson every morning before school and often an additional one in the afternoon. The months at the two primary schools constituted her only formal education. Thus she lacked the usual opportunities for social intercourse with her contemporaries, obviously not an important consideration for the father.⁵⁹

However, her musical education was superb, and indeed very unusual for a woman. She studied rigorously with her father and took additional lessons in violin, theory, harmony, orchestration, counterpoint, fugue, and composition with well-known and influential teachers throughout Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin.⁶⁰ Admittedly, Wieck's persistence and training did pay off. It is certain that Clara would not have achieved her success without the help of her father. He was instrumental in securing her musical education, public concerts, first publications, tours, and popularization.

Whether Clara wanted this rigorous and stressful public life is an unanswered question. She was never offered the chance to choose another path. Without any female figures in her life, she did not have the opportunity to learn domestic routines – a fact that would later bother her in marriage.⁶¹ Wieck essentially steered Clara away from having a

⁵⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁶⁰ Nancy B Reich, "Clara Schumann," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 22, 755.

⁶¹ Clara's nanny, who raised her, was released around the same time her mother left. Clara lost her two womanly influences in close succession. Though Wieck did remarry, Clara was never close with her step-mother, Clementine. In fact, there was some animosity between them because Clara always had Wieck's undivided attention and they were frequently away on tour. Additionally, Clara had little respect for the older woman because she lacked musical talent, and, according to Clara, superior intellect. Clementine was often left alone with the young children. Wieck even missed the birth of one of his children because of Clara's touring.

normal life, which directly led to her success as a female concert soloist, but sadly, also left Clara wanting in many other facets of life. His constant guidance also made her reliant on praise – again, something she missed when separated from Wieck. In hindsight, it is little wonder that she developed such a strong and dependant relationship with Schumann. He was one of her only close friends and he gave her the tenderness, approval, and recognition she yearned from her father.

Clara's Adolescence: Rise to Popularity, Compositions, and Performance Tours

Much of her teenaged life was spent on tour – beginning after her first solo appearance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus at age 11. As a performer, her skill and technical wizardry were compared to such greats as Liszt, Thalberg, and Rubenstein. But she also possessed characteristics that made her playing sing: spirit, beauty, and poetic interpretation. These characteristics earned her the label “the Queen of the Piano.”⁶² She was one of the first pianists to perform without music, and to perform solo piano concerts. During an Austrian tour in 1838,

she received the greatest honor Austria could bestow: she was named *Königliche Kaiserliche Kammervirtuosin* (Royal and Imperial Chamber Virtuosa), a distinction without precedent for an eighteen-year-old who was, moreover, a Protestant, a foreigner, and a female. On March 21 the emperor dubbed her *Wundermädchen* and assured her that he had made the award with great personal satisfaction.⁶³

For what may have been one of the first times in music history, a female musician had reached almost equal status to men.

⁶² Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3.

Through these teenaged years, she also wrote the bulk of her compositions. Most are for solo piano, so that she could feature them in her performances, where she played at least one of her own works at each concert. Her desire to show off her skill, as both composer and performer, is evident, as these early works were often bold expositions of technique, virtuosity, and grandeur. Her multiple Scherzo's, the *Variationen über ein Originalthema*, the *Romance variée*, and the *Souvenir de Vienne* are typical of this showy, performance-oriented style. However, in this early part of her career, she also wrote "imaginative, poetically conceived character pieces."⁶⁴ Examples of these shorter works include her *Trois romances*, *Soirées musicales*, and the *Quatre pièces caractéristiques*. These works echo the musical trends that were being explored by her contemporaries, such as Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Schumann. Her compositions were well met, and most were published during her own lifetime through the persistence of her father, and later with the help of Robert Schumann.

Enter Robert Schumann

Fate brought Robert Schumann into her life. In an effort to bring his piano skills to performance level, Schumann studied and boarded with the Wieck's sporadically from 1828 to the mid 1830s. She was a nine-year-old virtuoso; he was eighteen, and had given up law school in pursuit of a performance career. However, though Schumann's admiration for Wieck was paramount, he soon became frustrated with his lessons. "He was irked by his slow progress and by Wieck's insistence that he begin with finger exercises, "like a beginner." His irritation was exacerbated by the daily example of the

⁶⁴ Reich, "Clara Schumann," 756.

little virtuosa who achieved everything so effortlessly. He compared his playing with hers...”⁶⁵

Though Wieck had consented to open his home and teach piano to this budding young man, he grew to dislike Schumann and his social practices. Apparently, Wieck took offense with small details of Schumann’s character, such as his handwriting, rather than observing the successes and potential of Schumann carried. He also did not approve of Schumann’s shady reputation involving drugs, drink, and women. This may have been justly so – that Schumann was fond of women is certain.

At eighteen, Robert was in love with every pretty woman he saw, including his three sisters-in-law. His letters and diaries chronicle adolescent enthusiasms for girls, poetry, music – all the emotions fervidly recorded. He also enjoyed drinking (often to excess) and smoking, and, to add to the list of adolescent misdemeanors, was totally irresponsible about money. His letters to his mother and brothers are the typical calls for help of the impecunious student.⁶⁶

Through his late teens and twenties he was involved with many women – some of whom he proposed to – before attempting a relationship with the young dotting Clara.

In 1835, Schumann gave up on his performance dream due to a persistent hand injury and a dampened spirit. Instead, he went on to devote his life to composition and music criticism. He championed “new ideals” as set out by his small group of preferred musicians, the Davidsbünd. This “league of David” was attended by other well known musicians, such as Mendelssohn, Wieck, Julius Knorr, Clara, and several of Schumann’s alter-egos: Florestan, Eusebius, and Raro. These musicians shared opinions on the shallow quality of virtuosic showy music, as exemplified by composers such as Liszt. “The Davidsbündler idea became the generating force behind Schumann’s journalistic

⁶⁵ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 41.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

endeavors in the mid- and late 1830s. Schumann's partly real, partly imaginary band of crusaders against musical philistinism made its official debut between December 1833 and January 1834..."⁶⁷ Schumann eventually established a journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, which became quite popular and influential, even during his own lifetime. Clara's music and performances were featured in several articles – which did well to bolster her career and reputation.

The Bond Between the Young Musicians:

The friendship between Clara and Schumann began innocently and playfully. While boarding with Wieck, Schumann reportedly enjoyed spending time with the children and entertained them regularly. The evenings, in particular, after all practicing was done, were spent playing games, charades, and telling stories. Schumann was "the biggest child of all and brought something of the sunshine of childishness to the serious life of his little friends. One can imagine how she loved him."⁶⁸

However, Schumann eventually turned his attentions into something deeper. He grew to love the young Clara, who was only nine the first time he saw her perform. The flirtation was not one-sided: Clara also developed a great affection and dependence on her musical companion. While she was away on an educational trip, Clara wrote to him for his twenty-fourth birthday, "Is this permitted, H. Schumann, to pay so little attention to a friend and not write to her even once? Every time the mail arrived, I hoped to receive a little letter from a certain Herr – Enthusiast, but alas, I was disappointed..."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ John Daverio, "Robert Schumann," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 22, 766.

⁶⁸ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 40.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Clearly she sought his affection as readily as he gave it (though admittedly, at the date of this letter he was entertaining another woman).

The Wieck-Schumann Courtship

It is not difficult to understand the nature of their relationship. She was a young woman who had been robbed of her childhood, and was intentionally segregated from others her age, both male and female. Schumann offered her the semblance of a “normal” relationship that did not involve rigorous routines, practicing, or lessons. He was a supportive male influence in her life: he gave her attention, made her laugh with stories and games, and regarded her intellect and skill as a feature rather than a commodity. Schumann must have also found it hard to resist her girlish dependence on him. She was beautiful, successful, and could converse with him on serious music topics. Plus, we know that Schumann did not find it hard to fall in love. “...in the margin of Philipp Spitta’s 1882 biography of Robert Schumann... Spitta had written, “As far as we know, a special affection [between Robert and Clara] first was apparent in the spring of 1836.” Clara corrected the entry: “Already in 1833.” With the advantage of hindsight and awareness of the girl’s preadolescent longings, we might date it even earlier.”⁷⁰

Their romantic interests fluctuated during the years. At times Schumann would turn his attentions to other ladies, and Clara would be equally flirtatious with other men she met at musical soirees. However, it is clear that she was smitten with Schumann by the time of her sixteenth birthday. She was sensitive to his every gesture, and read great meaning into the gift he gave her on that occasion. This was the beginning of their relationship in seriousness. Schumann wrote in his diary, “Clara’s birthday on September

⁷⁰ Ibid., 45.

13....Clara's eyes and her love....The first kiss in November....Lovely hours in her arms in the evenings in the Wieck house."⁷¹ Their romances continued, but soon her father recognized what was taking place. Foolishly, Schumann assumed he would be welcomed into the Wieck family, since Friedrichh Wieck had acted as a father figure and supported Schumann's dreams and career.

However, Wieck was furious about the relationship, and was especially angered about Schumann's breach of trust. Schumann was devastated by the unexpected reaction of his tutor. He believed that Wieck would learn to accept the union and would eventually welcome Schumann into the family. However, Schumann's persistent pressing of the issue did little to comfort Clara or to pacify her father.

In February 1836, Wieck's rage erupted at Clara for the first time. He threatened to shoot Schumann if she should meet him again. He entered his thoughts on their deceitful behavior in her diary. All the insults, threats, and fury that she had seen visited on her brothers (and perhaps, in the dim past, on her mother) burst upon her now. From beloved pupil and protégée, source of all Wieck's artistic and personal gratification, she had suddenly become the enemy.⁷²

Wieck's impulse was to take Clara away on tour, thus removing any opportunity for the young couple to interact. During this tour, Clara and Schumann did not see each other for well over a year. They only learned of their whereabouts through gossip and news from common friends. Clara did not, and could not, write about her feelings for Schumann. Her diaries were still monitored by her father, so any mention of his name would have triggered his rage. However, they were united through their music. Wieck did not seem to object to musical reminders of Schumann, so his music was frequently under her fingers at salon gatherings and practices. Meanwhile, Schumann was fervently

⁷¹ Ibid., 47.

⁷² Ibid., 48.

composing, and several of his piano pieces from this period were dedicated to her. Unfortunately, Clara was not permitted to respond to the dedications, and any letters received from Schumann were returned, unopened. Wieck must have been very hurt by Clara's apparent betrayal. His letters home to his wife were increasingly terse wherein he spoke of Clara, but only as a commodity, and only regarding her performances and their respective revenue. Contrary to his previous letter, her well-being, health, and activities were no longer of interest to him, and did not need to be reported to Clementine.

Clandestine Courtship:

Despite Wieck's opposition to any interaction with Schumann, a clandestine courtship took place between Clara and Schumann, beginning around 1837. Upon Clara's initiative, they arranged to have their intimate correspondences transferred to one another through an intricate web of friends and acquaintances. On August 14, 1837, Clara agreed to a secret engagement proposed in one of Schumann's letters, which read,

Are you still *firm* and true? As indestructible as my belief in you is, yet even the strongest spirit loses confidence when nothing is heard of the one who is loved more than anyone else in the world. And you are that to me. I have thought it all over a thousand times, and everything says to us, "It must be, if we wish it and if we act." Write me just a simple "yes" if you will give your father a letter from me on your birthday. Just now he is well disposed toward me and will not reject me if you add your pleas to mine.⁷³

Intentions of Marriage:

Wieck ardently refused to allow the marriage. He forbade their union openly, forcefully, and publicly. He made every effort to keep the two apart and attempted to

⁷³ Ibid., 53.

stop their correspondences. In the process, he alienated many of his own friends, who believed he was being irrational and domineering. Poor Clara endured the most difficult hardships, as she was wedged between the two quarreling men. She was dependent on her father to provide the necessities of life and secure her tours; yet, she was in love with Schumann.

She suffered pressure from both men – each offering a different type of stability and lifestyle. She maintained this strange positioning for many more months – with each month finding it more difficult to deny either man. Clara feared for her financial security and successful concert life if she became Frau Schumann. She even occasionally spoke of postponing their wedding because she did not want to lose her father’s support. Naturally, Schumann was extremely sensitive to any remark on this subject, as the social onus was on him to provide for her. He took offense if her letters were infrequent, and understood her comments regarding finances to be personal attacks. She longed for the men to reconcile their differences so that she could live without tension between her two most loved supporters. “Because of Wieck’s rigidity and obduracy, the lovers were forced to resort to lies and deception. Even their friends were caught in the web. ...the courier of their secret letters, was put in one compromising position after another.”⁷⁴ These secret letters and the music they composed for one another were their only methods of communicating.

Wieck’s Withdrawal from Clara’s Life:

With every effort to separate them seeming more futile than the last, Wieck decided to refuse participation in her concert life, and forced her to tour alone for the first

⁷⁴ Ibid., 62.

time to Paris in the early months of 1839. With this malicious gesture, he hoped to sway her emotions by demonstrating his power and proving how much she needed his support.

He hoped for her failure and counted on her return from what he predicted would be an ignominious defeat. Fury at her defiance and independent spirit outweighed pride in her success; this man would be vindicated at any cost. But in counting on her need for him as teacher, father, protector, Wieck ignored all she had learned from that same source: practicality, self-confidence, and a particular hardheaded stubbornness.⁷⁵

Instead, Clara's first solo tour was a success. She gained confidence in herself through organizing concert venues and traveling on her own. The outcome of Wieck's sad plan was to only make her more aware of his tyranny and control. She returned from this tour in August 1839 with the intention of marrying Schumann, despite her father. Much to her shock, though perhaps anticipated, Wieck withdrew his support. He had requested that she sign a document denouncing Schumann, and, when she did not, he would not allow her to return to his home – all of her possessions remained behind his lock and key.

When she refused to give up plans to marry Robert Schumann, Wieck sought revenge by sending defamatory letters about her to Berlin and Hamburg, where she was about to perform. The letters, which circulated among influential musicians and music lovers, described Clara as a “demoralized, shameless girl who has opposed her father in the most unnatural and shocking manner,” and warned that other girls should be guarded lest they be “poisoned” by her. And his efforts to besmirch the name of Schumann continued even after Clara had become Frau Schumann.⁷⁶

The Marriage

As a result of Wieck's actions, the young couple submitted documents to the court in order to gain legal support of their marriage in the Fall of 1839. Since Clara still theoretically belonged to Wieck, they had to contest his ownership. The court case

⁷⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 15.

unfolded over the course of a year – with several counter suits by each man. Clara stayed with her mother during this year of court proceedings. This was to be one of the hardest years of her life. The Bargiel's struggled with finances, and the addition of Clara to their household stretched their resources even further. Clara could not assist their family, as she had no access to her belongings or her hard earned money. Schumann endured serious bouts of depression following his act of defiance, and Wieck became increasingly slanderous and rude. Many thought he was losing his mind, and certainly his perspective.

Finally, the older man lost the case, as decided by the court in July 1840. Wieck was forced to pay the legal costs, give up custody of his first daughter, and award Schumann and Clara with an amount of money. The Schumann's were wed on September 12, 1840, the day before her twenty-first birthday. Her mother and several close friends joined the celebration. Her last diary entry as a single woman read:

Now a new life is beginning, a beautiful life, a life in which love for him is greater than all else, but difficult duties are nearing as well. Heaven grant me the strength to fulfill them faithfully, as a good wife should – He has always stood by me and always will. I have always had great faith in God and will preserve that faith forever.⁷⁷

Though Clara obviously suffered at the hands of her tyrannical father, she never lost confidence in his love. She believed that he would eventually accept their marriage. And, several years later, Wieck did request their reunion. Though Clara welcomed his apologies, the relationship between Wieck and his young disciple remained strained.

Married Life and Children:

Theirs was an interesting marriage: one of particular closeness, intense emotion, and collaborative genius, but also of tragedy and hardship. “The two musicians studied

⁷⁷ Ibid., 79.

scores together and read poetry for possible settings; she arranged many of his instrumental works for piano and acted as rehearsal pianist for groups he conducted. Robert Schumann paid homage to her in the many quotations from her works that appear in his own.”⁷⁸ Upon their marriage, Schumann began a “marriage diary”⁷⁹ to record their feelings and activities. “For the Schumanns...such a venture was particularly apt, since both had difficulty expressing their feelings in speech...He always spoke best with his pen; writing was his mode of expression, for words as well as music, and the marriage diary was to be the primary avenue for intimate communication between the two.”⁸⁰ Close looks at these writings reveal the intense feelings of love and devotion they felt towards each other and their marriage. Many of Clara’s entries voice her desires to make him happy, proud, comfortable, and to support his ambitions fully. Schumann expressed himself in much the same way.

Their first child, Marie, was born a year after their marriage. Marie gave Clara renewed joy in her wifely and motherly duties. They had seven more children over the next thirteen years: Elise, Julie, Emil, Ludwig, Ferdinand, Eugenie, and Felix. Of these children, Emil died at only one year of age, and three of the others died in middle age - before their mother. However, according to Nancy Reich, the children subsequent to Marie were not as well loved, nor very welcomed. Clara, who had never been conditioned for the private life, found little joy in domestic duties. Through the course of their marriage, the Schumann’s lived in Leipzig, Dresden, and Dusseldorf – always moving for reasons of Schumann’s health or employment.

⁷⁸ Reich, “Clara Schumann,” 755.

⁷⁹ According to Nancy Reich, marriage diaries were not uncommon in nineteenth-century Germany. Other musical couples with these joint diaries were Felix and Cecile Mendelssohn, Liszt, and the Countess d’Agoult. Reich, 80.

⁸⁰ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 80.

Clara's Reluctance to Give-up Performance and Composition:

In some respects, their family life was spoiled by Clara's passion to perform. She was most happy on tour – because of the praise, the financial security, and the normalcy that touring life offered her. However, Schumann clearly disliked the idea of her touring for a multitude of reasons: her security, his comfort, his jealousy, and his anxiety. He also required silence when composing – which meant she rarely had time to practice. Mixed with the duties of homemaker and hostess, Clara felt her skills were becoming unappreciated. As the years progressed, she felt the weight of her children was hindering her career, so she employed servants, wetnurses, and the help of relatives to assist with the chores and raising of the children. In this way, she was eventually able to start touring again, and did so frequently through much of their marriage – despite Schumann's disagreement. She expanded her reputation and her touring base and premiered many of Schumann's compositions.

Though he encouraged her compositional output, Clara always felt that his was the priority. She frequently wrote that she longed to practice or to compose, but could not for fear of disturbing Schumann while he worked – which was often until very late at night. Some of her entries into the marriage diary even express her feelings of inadequacy as a composer. Apparently, she was not immune to the common social sentiments about women as creators of “serious” music. Still, she did find time to compose during their marriage – compositions that were obviously influenced by Schumann. Like her husband, her focus became the lied. Their marriage diary reports that they spent much time reviewing and choosing lieder texts together. Some of her lieder were jointly released with her husband, as opus 37/12, while others have not been

published until recently. She also wrote some larger chamber works in these years, including the *Sonata in G minor*, the *Three Preludes and Fugues*, and the *Piano Trio, op. 17* – one of her more famous and lasting compositions.

Schumann's Illness and Demise:

Tragically, Schumann suffered from a mental illness that worsened through the years of their marriage. In his later years, Schumann confessed to having contracted syphilis in 1832.⁸¹ This disease may indeed have been the cause of his mental deterioration, hallucinations, eventual auditory disorders, yelling, and paranoia. Some scholars even suggest that his lost mobility, or “injury” of his fingers during the years of study with Friedrich Wieck, were a poor reaction to mercury treatments for his syphilis, but this theory has not yet been irrefutably or medically proven.⁸²

He also suffered from constant hypochondria, malaise, fears of insanity, and suicidal thoughts, which can be traced to letters as early as 1830-31. These are symptoms of a very troubled man. He often wrote of his fears in letters to Clara, especially when she was away on tour – when he would become sick with anxiety about her welfare and the sincerity of her love.

The fact remains that they struggled in the later years, and Schumann was finally driven to the edge. After his unsuccessful suicide attempt in 1854 he was self-admitted to a mental institution in Endenich. He spent the last two years of his life there with the occasional company of his musical compatriots, Brahms and Joachim. The doctors

⁸¹ Daverio, “Robert Schumann,” 791.

⁸² For more on Schumann’s hand injury and other related “hypochondriacal” worries, see Peter F. Oswald, “Florestan, Eusebius, Clara, and Schumann’s Right Hand,” *19th Century Music* IV/1 (Summer 1980): 17-31.

feared that Clara's presence would worsen Schumann's condition, which meant that she was never permitted to visit him until two days before his death on July 29, 1856. With the assistance of her closest friends, namely Joachim and Brahms, Clara rebuilt and continued with her life. She did not earnestly compose again⁸³, but she did support her family by performing and teaching until her death on May 20, 1896.

Epitaph:

Clara Wieck Schumann is remembered as one of the greatest performers of the nineteenth-century. Her mastery of piano technique and her poetic ability to bring music to life imprinted her image into music history. However, her other life achievements are only recently coming into focus. Her compositions have enjoyed a renewed interest, but only since the 1970s. Scholarship about Clara Schumann has also recently become important in the field of musicology. As described by Reich: "the tragedies suffered by this courageous woman far outweighed the triumphs, ...her life can more accurately be described as a story of great talent, struggle, and survival."⁸⁴

As more scholars work to collect and present their findings, more about the life of this amazing women can be pieced together and understood. Clara should be remembered in music history, but not only as a performer – her skill as a composer and teacher should not be ignored. But most of all, it is important to remember that Clara was a woman – a woman who persisted in her goals until she broke through the socially

⁸³ She did write a *Marsch*, a *Praeludien und Vorspiele*, and a cadenza in 1879, 1895, and 1868 respectively. None of these writings were published. There are no other documented writings after Schumann's death.

⁸⁴ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, x.

constructed barriers that traditionally limited women of her stature to the halls of obscurity.

Clara's Social Role Negotiation

As a woman in the nineteenth-century, Clara was subjected to the social discrimination that “determined” her expected capabilities, prescribed her role as wife and mother, and possibly affected her own self-worth and achievements. However, as a professional musician, she achieved as much success during her own lifetime as many of her male counterparts. Given the circumstances, the question must be posed: how was she able to straddle both worlds successfully – the private sphere of woman, and the public realm of men? Was Clara in some way sanctioned for her deviance from culturally constructed roles? Was she considered socially deviant at all? Was she ascribed male characteristics, or considered less of a “proper” woman because she was recognized within the male-dominated world of music? The remaining section of this chapter is comprised of my speculations on these questions.

Clara's Participation in the Public Sphere of Music Making:

As the oldest surviving child of Marianne and Friedrich Wieck, Clara was subjected to Wieck's long established desire to create a masterpiece. His many years of teaching piano culminated in a decision to put his systematic study regime to test on a subject he could daily, and hourly, monitor. Clara was the result of this regime. As it was a test, it did not matter to Wieck that Clara was female. However, as she showed increasing talent and signs of potential success, he took the process further. From an

early age, Clara was educated and trained, not only by Wieck, but by many prominent scholars and theorists in Leipzig and elsewhere.

This type of education, rare for women of the same middle-class social standing, was not the first element that separated Clara from the typical nineteenth-century girl. Here I direct the reader to recall that Clara's parents divorced before she was five years old, which left her with few female role models to emulate. Indeed, even before the divorce, her father was the primary influence on her life and this continued well into her teenaged years. The result was that Clara found herself always surrounded by men: her father, her brothers, Schumann, and all Wieck's musical friends who frequented the family home for musical gatherings.

Wieck also assigned duties to Clara that were not typically feminine. He had her read every piece of financial documentation, tour related correspondence, and publishing details, and sometimes even transcribe them into her diary. This tedious practice was invaluable to Clara once her father ceased to help her concert life – she completed several successful tours on her own because of this learned education. Accordingly, Clara learned skills in business, sales, and public relations. From the beginning, she was not a “normal” woman. Her social participation with men was constant and straightforward. Perhaps this unusual upbringing can be partly credited for her success in the public realm: since she never knew differently, Clara possessed a comfort level with men and public negotiations that gave her an advantage over other women aspiring for careers.

Clara's male proponents were a major factor in her status, popularity, and deviations to social norms. Her unusual, albeit difficult, upbringing allowed her the luxury to fraternize with men, accomplished musicians and teachers, and business

contacts. Clara would have remained in the culturally accepted role of parlor musician if she were not raised through Wieck's regime. Thus, it was not Clara who was deviant, but her father, who did not balk at the prospect of creating a female superstar.

Even her relationship with Schumann served to bolster her reputation. He often wrote of her prowess and skill in his prominent *Neue Zeitschrift*. Clara was also able to establish a wealth of musical contacts and an esteemed reputation through Schumann's connections. After their marriage, Schumann took on her father's old task of ensuring her works were published, even jointly publishing some of her lieder with his own. She also premiered many of his, and later Brahms's, compositions, which guaranteed her position in the spotlight. I am not trying to belittle Clara's individual talent, because it certainly existed, but I doubt she would have had the same success without male support.

Is it fair then, to put the weight of her cultural deviance on her shoulders? Perhaps her successes were so readily achieved and publicly accepted because they were championed by influential and persuasive men. It is possible that her deviance was overlooked because it was the method in which she, and her contacts, were accustomed to receiving her. Her continual participation in the public sphere from childhood is understandably different from a "proper" woman who would necessarily contradict her entire upbringing and social negotiation to enter into the public realm at a mature age.

Clara's Participation in the Male-Dominated Role of Money Making:

Unlike Schumann, Clara had become accustomed to "nice things": clothes, jewellery, and food. She had also been trained at a very early age about the importance of money. Her father's constant pushing for success was almost a greedy method for

lining his own pockets. He even sold “Clara memorabilia” at concerts to increase his revenue. “For him money was a powerful source of security and he impressed its importance on his young daughter, conveying in many ways the lesson that money could be equated with love.”⁸⁵ As I previously mentioned, she was encouraged to understand the transactions that took place to secure her concerts. Sadly, however, Wieck withheld all of her financial earnings when she chose a life with Schumann.

The money was legally his not only because he was her father but also because of Clara’s gender: social and economic restrictions on women remained in force longer in Germany than in most Western countries. Wieck claimed, moreover, that he had a moral right to this money, since – as he pointed out in her diary and in the letters she copied – he had neglected the education of her siblings and given up other pupils so that he could devote himself entirely to her education and career.⁸⁶

In the marriage diary, Clara expressed her desire to perform in order to financially support their family. On November 8, 1840, she wrote: “I want so much to travel this and maybe also next winter, and then to withdraw from the public, live for my home, and give lessons. We can then live without worries-think it over once more very thoroughly, my dear husband.”⁸⁷ Once again, Clara’s resistance to her socially determined role is apparent. Rather than accepting her position as subservient wife and doting mother, Clara preferred to perform, earn money, tour, and gain accredited success.

Pressures to Conform to Femininity:

Many successful nineteenth-century women did not have Clara’s same experience of straddling social realms. Aurore Dudevant, who was a well-popularized writer, wrote under the pseudonym of George Sand and reportedly wore male attire and smoked. This

⁸⁵ Ibid. 32.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁷ Nauhaus, *The Marriage Diaries*, 29.

was the image of a deviant woman. Her conduct was likely necessary, as she could no longer be approved as a conventional woman, but needed acceptance by men. George Sand did not have the shield of a man (Wieck) to hide behind, which may explain the necessities of her complete penetration into a male-dominated realm – both professionally and in personal conduct. However, despite her participation in the male dominated worlds of performance, publication, and touring, Clara was also encouraged to conform to femininity. Contrary to some other successful women from this century, she still played the part of the beautiful and compliant woman. She wore gorgeous gowns and jewelry for her concerts and was expected to maintain a clean, meek, and feminine reputation.

Clara's femininity is also especially noticeable in her interactions with Schumann. Her constant distress over trivialities in their marriage betrays her anxieties about "women's work." In an entry from their marriage diary, dating November the 22nd, 1840, Clara wrote:

Sunday the 22nd was a restless day, as always the day when one has guests for dinner, even if this is ever so simple. Throughout the entire noon [meal] I always endure a thousand anxieties [asking myself] whether the guests like the taste and [hoping] I don't bring dishonor to my husband.⁸⁸

Some entries in this joint diary stress over the frequent and "stupid" things she felt that she said. In other entries, she blamed herself for Schumann's composing trouble because he was now married to her!

Schumann played a part in ensuring Clara's femininity. It is obvious that she felt she could make their married lives more comfortable with money from her concerts, but Schumann had an excuse each time she suggested a tour. While he did not seem to object

⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

to her tours before their union, his behaviour afterwards reinforces his belief in the social stigma of married women earning income. It is probable that, with Clara making money, Schumann would have felt a lesser man – one that could not even provide for his own family. Additionally, touring and traveling was not lady-like, especially for a woman who should have been home raising children. Perhaps he felt threatened by her thriving career and popularity (a sentiment he frequently admitted to his diary in the years he studied with Wieck), maybe he was selfishly putting his career first, or, he may simply have been uncomfortable with her continuing with a career after marriage. She did begin to tour again in 1842, after two years of marriage, but Schumann's discomfort is a noticeable sign displaying the control of social expectations.

Despite her frequent participation within male-dominated arenas, Clara was still aware and sensitive to her social positioning as a woman. She once wrote to Joseph Joachim for advice on an issue, stating, “As a *woman*, I cannot act like you. It would seem very arrogant if I, a woman – as compared to a man – were to express my opinion openly.”⁸⁹ The pressures of social norms are also betrayed in her lack of confidence in her own compositional ability. “The prevailing expectation that women should maintain a modest demeanor, cultivate humility and avoid creative activities did not seem to affect her ambitions for a concert career but did add to her discomfort about composing.”⁹⁰ Evidently, she felt the social pressures dictating that she should want no more than to be humble and subservient to her husband. Here I again reproduce Clara's diary entry from November 25, 1839, as this demonstrates not only the belittling of her creative talent, as referred to on page 43, but also that she believed she should not possess this talent at all.

⁸⁹ This comment was regarding a concert organized in 1870, where she was invited to perform, but did not want to, because Liszt and Wagner were conducting. Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 161.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

I once believed that I had creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not wish to compose – there never was one able to do it. Am I intended to be the one? It would be arrogant to believe that. That was something with which only my father tempted me in former days. But I soon gave up believing this. May Robert always create that must always make me happy.⁹¹

Chapter Conclusions

I may not have come any closer to establishing Clara's individual voice. However, I do feel that, as more research is done to uncover her pressures and influences, more of her intimate details can be interpreted through these existing documents. However, feminist perspectives suggest that the point is not just to reconstruct her life or her thoughts, but to understand how she was affected by elements of her social and cultural standing.

Feminist challenges reveal that the questions that are asked – and, even more significantly, those that are not asked – are at least as determinative of the adequacy of our total picture as are any answers that we can discover. One distinctive feature of feminist research is that it generates its problematics from the perspective of women's experiences. It also uses these experiences as a significant indicator of the "reality" against which hypotheses are tested.⁹²

Clara was undeniably a remarkable woman. She was able to perform her gendered role, while also succeeding in the male-dominated world of music. Her accomplishments in both realms were exemplary models of success. From the perspective of women's history and women's studies, Clara represents a class of women that possessed skill, intellect, and drive, but were restricted by their sex. The fact that she was able to exist within both the public and the private social spheres is a testimonial to her determination, strength, and individuality.

⁹¹ Ibid., 216.

⁹² Harding, "Introduction," 7.

~Chapter 3~

The Significance and Implications of Genre

“No music – not even the most rhythmic, the most textural, on the one hand, or the most abstract, the most “syntactical,” on the other – is without a range of meanings that have become conventional, traditional, and to a certain degree arbitrary in relation to the homologous potentials and possibilities of the sounds through which it receives articulation and life.”¹

Although genre has been traditionally relegated to the mundane task of categorization, current genre analysis encompasses more detail than simple classification of musical style and form. It has indeed served as a useful exploratory tool in this thesis. This chapter studies how Clara Wieck used musical genre to communicate meaning. My interpretations of genre and theories of analysis are based on the models established by prominent scholar Jeffery Kallberg whereby he derives meaning from social reception and historical function of genres.

This chapter begins with a review of current research on genre definitions, applications, and meaning. Although I will not debate the logistics and aesthetics of genre, it is necessary to outline the current lines of thought as they pertain to music scholarship. I will also forge my own definition as an extension, and assimilation, of current scholarly trends. The central section of this chapter examines three specific genres used by Clara Wieck to exhibit three different types of meaning: the nocturne is associated with gender representation; the romance implies titular reference to a sentiment or mood; and the mazurka is representative of the social function of dancing and courtship. I selected these three genres for analysis because many of Clara's forays into these genres are linked to Schumann through themes, composition date, dedication,

¹ John Shepherd, “Difference and Power in Music,” in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 60.

or his later borrowing of thematic or melodic material (to be discussed in Chapter 4). Additionally, as contested by Jeffery Kallberg, these genres, among others, are socially significant. Kallberg states,

If genre conditions the communication of meaning from the musical work to the listener, if it is a rhetorical technique, then the proper concerns of generic studies are the manifold means by which this process occurs. The focus should include interpretation as well as the cataloguing of shared characteristics. Hence topics like responses – past and present, appropriate and inappropriate – signals, traditions, neighboring and contrasting genres, mixture, and mutability will all figure centrally in a study of genre.²

I conclude this chapter with a discussion that contemplates the expressive nature of the piano, which was used primarily by Clara and Schumann to convey their messages and solidify their bond.

Genre – Literature Review and Scholarly Definitions

Genre, a seemingly innocent word, is becoming the subject of much musicological questioning. When examining previous studies into genre, I came to the impression that research in the early part of this century accepted genre as a straightforward and unquestioned method of categorization. However, it has now evolved into a beast of ideological and critical contemplation. According to leading scholar Allan Moore, genre studies do not simply categorize based on musical form, but rather consider questions and “rules emanating from semiotic, behavioural, social, ideological, economic and juridical spheres.”³

² Jeffery Kallberg, “The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin’s Nocturne in G Minor,” *19th Century Music* XI/3 (Spring 1988), 246.

³ Allan Moore, “Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre,” *Music and Letters* 82/3 (August 2001), 433.

The word *genre*, pertains to a vast number of conceptions and is extremely vague in description. *The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary* defines genre as “a kind or style, esp. of art or literature.”⁴ When referring to genre in music, the definition is equally ambiguous. According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, genre is “a class, type, or category, sanctioned by convention.”⁵ Granted, this definition continues for several paragraphs to elaborate on genre typology and social practice, yet the fact remains that genre is difficult to describe without referencing the components deemed important by different specialized studies, namely style, form, and content.

“Genre” versus “Style”

One particular problem with genre discussion and definition is that it is often confused or used synchronously with the word *style*. These terms have similar definitions in the English language, and are further complicated by having varying usages and meanings throughout different fields of study. Returning to the dictionaries, the *Canadian Oxford* defines style as “a kind or sort, esp. in regard to appearance and form...the distinctive manner of a person or school or period, esp. in relation to painting, architecture, etc.”⁶ According to this resource book for the English language, there is a definite and definable difference between these two words. Similarly, the *New Grove* defines style as “a term denoting manner of discourse, mode of expression; more particularly the manner in which a work of art is executed...the term raises special

⁴ *The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary*, 2000 ed., s.v. “Genre.”

⁵ Jim Samson, “Genre,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001) vol. 9, 657.

⁶ *The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary*, 2000 ed., s.v. “Style.”

difficulties; it may be used to denote music characteristic of an individual composer, of a period, of a geographical area or center, or of a society or social function.”⁷

Despite the obvious terminological differences, these words are often confused in the field of music. In fact, the concepts of style and genre have become so entangled that many authors choose to evade the terminology altogether. Instead, scholars use substitute words, or avoid addressing the issue of genre even when it seems relevant and necessary to their topic of discussion. Strangely, many other academic fields (for example film studies, visual art, and literature) have had no problem distinguishing between the uses of these terms, and even place hierarchical importance on one term over the other.

Accordingly, some musicologists have begun investigating these concepts. Their research is aimed at developing working definitions that would assist the field to recognize the differences between these words. Consequently, they may be used more appropriately, precisely, and freely. Recent scholars of note in this field are Franco Fabbri, Allan Moore, Jim Samson, and Jeffery Kallberg.⁸

Franco Fabbri:

Fabbri is one of the forerunners of the resurgence of interest in this subject. In his paper “A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications,” his definition of genre occupies twelve pages of prose. From the sheer length of Fabbri’s pertinent writing, we can grasp the magnitude of the contradictory and elusive nature of the subject. In this paper, Fabbri

⁷ “Style,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians On-line*, www.grovemusic.com, accessed November 15, 2004.

⁸ German musicological authors have been writing on this subject since the mid twentieth-century. Walter Wiora and Carl Dahlhaus have published extensive and pertinent writings on the subject. However, in this portion of my literature review I focus on writing that is more recent. I do not suggest that these writers are more advanced or accurate in their thinking. Indeed, most of these current authors pay strong homage to the previously mentioned German scholars.

outlines several types of rules necessary for genre definition; he discusses the musical community involved in codification, and examines issues of codal competence.

I found his attention to the musical community intriguing. It is necessarily true that each participating community and its timeframe contributes to the development and reception of the current genres. He attests that genre is “defined by a community of varying structure which accepts the rules and whose members participate in various forms during the course of a musical event.”⁹ Though this writing dates from the early 1980s, Fabbri’s forays into the subject have become a stepping-stone for many more recent genre studies.

Allan Moore:

In his article “Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre,” Allan Moore seeks to determine the differences between style and genre in an effort to “stabilize” their definitions. He explores the topic by presenting a survey of varying and conflicting definitions provided by past and present multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholars. He states that, “both ‘style’ and ‘genre’ are terms concerned with ways of erecting categorical distinctions, of identifying similarity between different pieces (songs, objects, performances even, ‘texts’).”¹⁰

Though the focus of his paper is to understand these terms within music, Moore looks to many other fields as points of reference as he suggests that other newer scholarly disciplines, such as film studies and feminism, have a more concrete understanding of these words. Strangely, musicology struggles with the clear definition of style and genre,

⁹ Franco Fabbri, “A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications,” in *Popular Music Perspectives*, eds. David Horn and Philip Tagg (Sweden, Exeter: Göteborg & Exeter, 1982), 58.

¹⁰ Moore, “Categorical Conventions,” 432.

even though these were terms employed in music discussion well before the advent of scholarly music research.¹¹ Yet, the struggle to understand these concepts and their application has not been under closer investigations until recently.

Moore concludes by suggesting four regulative points that differentiate these terms. I particularly agree that genre is “what an art work is set out to do” while style is “how it is actualized.”¹² However, it is obvious that much more research into these terms is required. Perhaps it is best for each scholar to use the terms in the context of his/her own understanding and research. As it is with many newer and evolving fields, authors must begin their writing by describing the context of their research, a context that situates them both within a discipline, and within a chosen vocabulary.

Jim Samson:

Genre investigations by Jim Samson and Jeffery Kallberg are particularly relevant to this study because they both concentrate their research on the nineteenth century and on the music of Friedrich Chopin, who was temporally close to Clara and Schumann, and also composed primarily for the piano. Samson discusses genre at length in his article entitled “Chopin and Genre.” Interestingly, much of his discussion on the topic of genre development and establishment focuses on the concepts of form and style. It is difficult to address one without the other I realize, but much of Samson’s genre identity was based on the “stylistic change in Chopin’s music” or on the “formal type, texture and phraseology”¹³ that links the compositions in question. This may reinforce the general

¹¹ Moore discusses the etymological origins and early usage of these terms on p. 434 of his “Categorical Conventions.”

¹² *Ibid.*, 441.

¹³ Jim Samson, “Chopin and Genre,” *Music Analysis* 8:3 (1989), 218.

concurrence in music that genre cannot be clearly defined without calling to reference some elements of style and form – whether it be historically or semiotically based.

Interesting though, is that Samson believes genre identity does not necessarily rely on having *identical* style and form. According to this scholar, genres may be grouped under a common titular identity, but maintain many differences. Samson states,

The repetition units that define a genre, as opposed to a stylistic norm or a formal schema, extend beyond musical materials into the social domain so that a genre is dependent for its definition on context, function and community validation and not simply on formal and technical regulations.¹⁴

This definition speaks volumes. Samson implies that social elements are part of how genre is defined. Although form and style are elements of the “repetition units,” they are not the sole identifiers, nor the most important. If this definition holds true, then it is reasonable to assume that genre has meaning. If it were solely a conglomeration of its stylistic, formal, and analytical units, genre would be too mathematical to communicate sentiment, function, or external referencing.

Jeffery Kallberg:

Kallberg’s writings are also very gender sensitive, which increases the relevance of his influence to this study. He believes that a focus on genre “directs our critical attention away from a composer-centered notion, form, and onto a societal concept, genre, that displays more than just an etymological affinity with the idea of gender.”¹⁵ Kallberg believes that genre can convey both meaning and gender implications. However, other factors must also be examined when discussing the portrayal of gender in

¹⁴ Ibid., 213.

¹⁵ Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Teatable,” 103.

music. These factors include an examination of women's social expectations, critical responses, historical function, and audience. Kallberg's gendered genre analysis is particularly effective in his studies of the nineteenth-century piano nocturne. Details of this research will come into focus in a later part of this chapter.

Kallberg also frequently discusses the idea of generic contracts, whereby "the composer agrees to use some of the conventions, patterns, and gestures of a genre, and the listener consents to interpret some aspects of the piece in a way conditioned by this genre."¹⁶ This idea is especially relevant when a musical work breaks with some of the expected generic codes – these breaks necessarily signify meaning. Kallberg also examines "hybrid" genres, where the very act of combining two generic references must, by extension, instruct the listener to a more complete understanding of the generic meaning. Kallberg's writing aligns itself very nicely with my thoughts on the subject. I do believe that genres, especially small parlor works, have meaning, and that this meaning was understood by the intended audience.

In fact, similar to my own goals, Kallberg aims to discover the communicative meaning behind genre usage. He states in reference to Chopin, "our challenge is to recover this meaning, to discover what Chopin hoped to communicate through genre..."¹⁷ However, to do so, Kallberg stresses that genre studies must situate the context of the works in question. Meaning cannot be established without research into the communities who would interpret that meaning.

¹⁶ Jeffery Kallberg, "The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor," *19th Century Music* XI/3 (Spring 1988), 243.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

My Understanding of Genre

The purpose of this chapter is not to argue the usage of either genre or, for that matter, style or form. Rather this chapter aims to describe clearly what genre means to me and, accordingly, apply that theory of definition to the musical works in question. From the aforementioned scholars, I have come to understand genre as a representation of social functioning and conduct: “important social variables such as power, class, and gender can be inscribed in a work.”¹⁸ Across musical history, the prevalent genres of each historical period can help scholars reconstruct the social practices of specific communities.

I also feel that genre cannot be defined without reference to form and style. Although I have spent the last several pages citing authors who strive to illustrate the difference, I believe the concepts are inevitably intertwined. As a subject, genre is very functional and expressive, but it still relies on some form of categorization. We may establish genres solely by their social importance or places of reception (for example, piano music), but designation based on these criteria alone can become extremely vague and inconsequential. However, pairing these two analytical approaches (both the functional and the categorical) will have successful ramifications in contemporary music study.

I also align my views with Jeffery Kallberg’s appreciation of genre as a gendered concept.¹⁹ The very fact that women participated in smaller parlor music underlines their femininity. These smaller genres were considered “low art” when compared to the skill

¹⁸ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 121.

¹⁹ Marcia Citron also writes from this standpoint, though I did not reference her in my literature review, as her writing on genre is spread over several publications, rather than being concentrated into one specific study that I could review.

and mastery of larger, more complex compositions like the Symphony, String Quartet, and operatic genres such as Opera Seria or Music Drama. The association of women with the intimate genres assumes their position in the private realm, their association with craft and simplicity, and their delicate and weak sensibilities. Additionally, “women’s attraction to more “natural” genres – those stressing melody, for example – could be used to justify their exclusion from the higher realms of “culture”.”²⁰

Finally, my research has led me to accept the notion that musical authorship is just as important as audience. Although reception audience can lead scholars to identify social meaning and function, it is not the sole factor to consider in this equation. We can understand that the “repetition units” of a particular genre are reflective of the desired aesthetics of the listening audience. This audience receives the communicative intent of the genre. However, the author alone made the choice to convey that message. By the simple act of composing within a system of generic codes, or referring to a genre by title, the author creates intent. Even in instrumental music that has no text, genres can communicate meaning.

More importantly, it is imperative to understand the nature of the meaning implied by a genre. I propose that communicative implications can be suggested by a genre in several ways: 1) through gendered stereotypes, such as the feminized nocturne; 2) through allusions to a sentiment or mood, such as the genre of the romance; or 3) through reference to a specific social function, such as a dance like the mazurka. The final sections of this chapter will assess the value of each of these genres in turn, using works by Clara as subjects of analysis.

²⁰ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 132.

Analysis of Genre as it Figures into Clara Wieck's Compositions

It is worth noting that the examples I discuss here are only representative of Clara's compositions. In my examination, I found that the genres employed by Clara were often far more suggestive than those used by Schumann. At first, I found this puzzling. If this were an accepted mode of alluding communication, why did not both composers use the technique?

Based on my readings of women in music in the nineteenth-century, I believe the answer here can be accounted to gender. The reader may recall the discussion on "appropriate" female compositions in Chapter 2. Clara's genre options were somewhat limited because she was operating from within the realm of women. Smaller forms and character pieces were appropriate for the piano and the parlor – both feminine venues. Because Clara had access to these more intimate genres, she used them to the best of her skills. Marcia Citron underlined the reality of this situation when she wrote, "the criteria [of traditional genre categories] establish hierarchies that are linked with gender: maleness with the large, the non-functional, and the intellectual, which are valued; femaleness with the small and the functional (and the private), which are devalued."²¹

Conversely, Schumann was able to operate with the advantage of complex male writing. We will see in the next chapter on quotation, that Schumann made many of his suggestive references through compositional manipulation of the music itself. Here I contest that, while Clara alluded frequently with choice of genre, Schumann alluded overtly with quotation. I found few examples of Clara quoting a theme of Schumann's,

²¹ Ibid., 122-23.

but her use of suggestive genres is clearly apparent.²² By this, I refer to the fact that her genres are often indicated in the title of her works. Additionally, their significance can be further assumed when looking at the dedication, date, or place of composition.

Nocturne

The first method of generic allusion I consider here is gender implication in the nocturne. The origins of the word *nocturne* can be traced to the daily Matins services of the Catholic Church. This part of the service was originally spoken at dawn, which explains why the name implies a nocturnal context. Again, displaying etymological affinity to a word of Latin based languages, nocturne means “relating to or occurring in the night...dealing with evening or night.”²³ In music, the name is traced back to some examples of eighteenth-century Italian vocal music. However, these pieces do not betray peculiarities in form, only display the significant title. Also, the “term *nocturnes* (or *notturmo*) had been used in the eighteenth-century for a group of pieces for a small ensemble (often winds), to be played out-of-doors.”²⁴

As a celebrated musical genre, the nocturne found its origins in the first few decades of the nineteenth-century. The first appearance of this genre has been credited to the English composer, John Field. Writing in the early part of the century, Field “was influential in establishing a new aesthetic in piano playing, one that eschewed bombast and display in favor of tenderness and intimacy.”²⁵ He created this new type of character

²² Although Clara did quote Schumann on occasion, and I am sure more frequently than I am aware of at this point. Examples include her Op. 20 *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, and her Op. 3 *Romance variée*.

²³ *The New Penguin English Dictionary*, 2001 ed., s.v. “Nocturne.”

²⁴ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 296.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

piece that highlighted lyrical melodies and substantial accompaniment patterns. Field applied the name Nocturne to his new genre of character piece after rejecting several other possibilities.

Field's nocturnes demonstrate the common elements shared by most composers of this genre:

Typically an elaborate but intimate right-hand melody is spun over a subservient left-hand accompaniment pattern. Delicacy and soulful expression attend the melodic unfolding. The structure of the piece, although often recognizable as ABA or another block arrangement, is subservient to the mood and is kept from rigidity through the use of passage work, transitions, or cadenzas.²⁶

After Field, Chopin took up the nocturne, and through his vast exploration of the genre, made its name well known. Field may be credited with developing the nocturne, but Chopin is certainly championed for making it popular and uniquely beautiful.

Jeffery Kallberg has devoted several articles to the subject of the piano nocturne. From his research, I have come to understand the reception audience of the nocturne was primarily female. It was an intimate genre, and was most appropriately performed in the parlor setting, where women were the primary consumers of small piano genres. "The piano, seen and heard in concert hall, palace, and parlor, was considered a particularly appropriate instrument for women to play because of its association with domestic music making."²⁷ Additionally, Kallberg states, "keyboard instruments were conceived as both signifiers and insurers of the domestic role of women."²⁸

Kallberg also explores the nineteenth-century association of detail with women. Here he considers supportive critical literature from visual art, cultural history, and

²⁶ Ibid., 208.

²⁷ Reich, "European Composers," 109.

²⁸ Kallberg, "Harmony of the Teatable," 107.

writings from the nineteenth-century itself. The nocturne, with its ornamentation, melodic turns and contours, and delicate supporting accompaniment, brings attention to the smaller details of the piece. Furthermore, the brevity and simplicity of the genre contributed to its feminine spirit. Kallberg suggests that nineteenth-century audiences believed that no level of education, skill, or music appreciation was needed to listen to these smaller, feminine genres. Therefore, the genre was “appropriate” for the female intellect and pastime. Indeed, these observations about the feminized aspects of small piano works, namely detail, simplicity, and size, hold true for all three genres studied in this chapter.

Kallberg also researches the critical reception of the nocturne in the nineteenth-century. Even those compositions written by men were described as feminine or portraying feminine ideals and sentiments. He quotes an anonymous author who wrote in 1836 that “these new Nocturnes...will again always be most attractive to all hearts inclined toward the feminine.”²⁹ Kallberg also quotes Ferdinand Hand, who expressed in 1841, “In the nocturno, grace balances everything that is characteristically brought into prominence and surrounds it with tender mildness...the representation of sentiment in the nocturno runs the danger of falling into the effeminate and languishing, which displeases stronger souls and altogether tires the listener.”³⁰ Furthermore, the “ancient association of women with darkness and night”³¹ played into the feminization of the genre – this correlation is apparent by the implications of the title. The nocturne also “represented to

²⁹ Ibid., 104.

³⁰ Ibid., 104-105.

³¹ Ibid., 107.

nineteenth-century minds a kind of love poem sung by a man to woman [and therefore] it expressed the soul of a woman.”³²

In his article, Kallberg continues with a synopsis of views expressed several other nineteenth-century critics, and concludes that this genre was indeed considered feminine by nineteenth-century audiences. This type of criticism resulted in the “devaluation” of the genre. Indeed, the most championed works by many composers are their larger, more technically difficult examples. Although men did compose in smaller genres, they are not often remembered for these works, though Chopin and Schumann are obvious exceptions to this observation. However, Kallberg does report that these two men suffered criticisms resulting from their “effeminate” composing style.³³

The nocturne I examine here is from Clara’s Op. 6 *Soirées musicales*. This was her sole attempt at the genre, and given this fact, one might question the relevance of my examination. However, my choice of this piece is still significant, as the biographical placement of this opus is suggestive, and Schumann would later acknowledge the importance of this piece by quoting it in his *Novellettes* (further discussed in chapter 5).

Surely, Clara was aware of the criticisms surrounding the nocturne. It was clearly a feminized genre, as exemplified both by the views of her contemporary music critics, and by the very nature of the performance venue. As a small parlor piece, the nineteenth-century nocturne was largely intended for performance by women, and for the pleasure of women (and the men they were entertaining with their “charming” abilities). In fact, the genre of the nocturne can be viewed as a representation of the finer and more intimate qualities of women: gentility, delicacy, beauty, charm, and a generalized nature of

³² Ibid., 114.

³³ Ibid., 111-12, 114.

intimate space, as offered by the private sphere. This depiction of female sensibilities calls to mind Norman Bryson's examination of genre in his book, *Looking at the Overlooked*. Although his series of four essays concentrate on still life painting in visual art, his approach to genre studies are interestingly relevant here.

Bryson explained that still life painting was (and is) a method of viewing the personal, the intimate, and the "interior," but from the perspective of the "outside." This genre of painting offered external insight into the lives and private intimacies of women's day-to-day routines: involving cooking, cleaning, reading, nursing, and caring for children. In contrast, "masculine" paintings portray outdoor scenes, hunting, battles, and civilization. Bryson clearly distinguishes between these genres, and specifies that, historically, painters were judged by their ability to negotiate "grand genres."³⁴

As I discussed in chapter 2 in reference to women's "appropriate" musical participation, I similarly discussed the differences between masculine and feminine musical genres. The larger, more popularized and publicized genres were championed as "grand" and were admired for their complexity and large-scale form. Clara was able to participate in this public realm of music making. Her compositional contributions in the musical realm were strong and prominent and her skill in these more difficult genres was obvious, accepted, and enjoyed (recognized at least in her own century, if not this one). When surveying her piano literature, the more common genres include the Scherzo, Impromptu, Variations, Concertino, Leider, and Prelude and Fugues. Although still small in form, these pieces are not considered overt representations of the feminine aesthetic; rather, they portray the opposite.

³⁴ For more on this subject, consult Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Since Clara was not limited by her gender to compose smaller pieces, her choice to do so here is interesting. If nineteenth-century audiences and music circles judged composers by their capabilities of composing grand genres, why did Clara choose to pursue a genre of much less stature and prowess? Perhaps the answer here is linked to the very feminized spirit conveyed by the nocturne. She composed her *Soirées musicales*, in 1834-36, during the years that her interest in Schumann was growing into something much more mature. As her positioning in the public realm, and in the constant company of men, detracted from her femininity, this attempt at an overt feminized genre may have been with special intent. It is possible that Clara's delicate *Nocturne* was written as a method of reclaiming her space within the private realm – for the purpose of attracting Schumann.

This hypothesis is partially corroborated by Schumann himself. This piece was one of his favourites. Writing on February 11, 1838, he wrote, “do you know what the most precious thing of yours is for me – your Notturmo in F Major in six-eight time. What do you think about that? It is sufficiently melancholy, I think...”³⁵ Evidently, the Op. 6 *Nocturne* sent a message: “For Robert, the Notturmo not only embodied a generalized feminine spirit, it also represented quite literally his beloved Clara.”³⁶

Romance

Although I cannot rely on Kallberg's writing to support my genre analysis of the romance or mazurka (since he has not specifically addressed these genres), I do use his analysis of the nocturne as a model for my own research. Therefore, on his authority I

³⁵ Ibid., 120.

³⁶ Ibid., 122.

assert the validity of my studies into genre implications and social referencing. Following Kallberg's example, I will begin with detail on the etymological origins, social and historical functioning of the genre, and then describe any external or referential meaning in Clara's compositions that can be derived from these genre studies.

The romance is unusual in that the generic label itself is suggestive of a mood or sentiment. The etymological origins of the term date back centuries and initially "referred to a narrative written in the vernacular, as opposed to Latin, many of which were about chivalrous deeds or courtly love."³⁷ Throughout history, the word *romance* has come to signify amorous intentions or acts of romantic love, longing, or lust. Thus, even before considering the formal and stylistic characteristics, this genre can be understood to imply meaning by its very existence.

According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the earliest known examples of the musical genre were recorded in fifteenth-century Spain and Italy. In these countries, the *romanza* was a popular vocal piece, akin to a ballade. The songs were based on secular subject matter, usually in the form of short, versed, narrative texts, or epic poems. "In France and Germany the term came to indicate an extravagant, sentimental or romantic tale in either prose or strophic verse."³⁸ The genre maintained its poetic and sentimental traits, but has since evolved to include both vocal and instrumental compositions.

"The first solo instrumental romance was composed by the violinist Pierre Gaviniès in about 1760, and the term became a common title for the slow movements in

³⁷ *The New Penguin English Dictionary*, 2001 ed., s.v. "Romance."

³⁸ Jack Sage and Susana Friedmann, "Romance," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 21, 571.

his sonatas and concertos.”³⁹ Accordingly, romances were prolifically written for violin and other stringed instruments for centuries to come. The first solo keyboard romances were also written during this time, but the genre did not initially flourish so intensely within keyboard literature.

The romance also frequented larger symphonic and chamber works. It was particularly featured as slow lyric movements to contrast the dramatic power of the first movement. Many operas also utilized the romance as a method of reinforcing narrative plot. It was particularly useful for this function because its simplicity made text enunciation very clear to the listening audience. Within opera itself, this genre has an extensive evolutionary development – but I do not expand on this subject further, as operatic romances are not especially relevant to this chapter.

Thus, the romance has had a long history of diverse uses and instrumentations. The particular lyricism and beauty ascribed to the verses with simple accompaniment are features that have remained constant. The romance can be presented in a variety of structures depending on the context; the most commonly found are rondo, ABA, or variation form. Nevertheless, “the most frequent application of the term in the 19th century was to small character-pieces with no common formal pattern...In such works the Romanze bears connotations of love or antiquity and is predominantly lyrical.”⁴⁰

According to the criteria of gendered aspects of music set out by feminist musicologists, especially Susan McClary, this genre can be easily understood as feminine. The reader will recall the discussion in Chapter 2 of this thesis which detailed some feminine qualities in music. Notions of simplicity, beauty, and lyricism, all

³⁹ Roger Hickman, “Romance: The Instrumental Romance,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 21, 575.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 575.

typically present in the romance genre, are considered signifiers of more feminine traits. Additionally, the romance is small, formally and harmonically straightforward, and requires comparatively little compositional prowess.

It is doubtful that Clara knew of the historical development of this genre, but this does not negate the possibility of her understanding the emotional implications suggested by the generic label. Although it is impossible to determine her true intentions with this genre choice, she did display a definite affinity for the romance. When surveying her compositional output, it appears to be the most prevalent genre used (figure 3.1 lists her compositional output of romances). She wrote over a dozen works with this generic title, and possibly countless others with the romance sentiment, but not referenced in the title. True, this observation may be coincidental and thus does not signify any particular meaning. However, upon closer examination of the composition dates of these pieces, I believe there is a noteworthy connection apparent. There is a definite outpouring of this genre around the time of three important dates: the beginning of her friendship and then romantic relationship with Schumann (1831 and 1833-36 respectively), the years directly before their marriage (1838-39), and the period of his mental illness before death (1853-56).

OPUS	TITLE	DEDICATION	DATE	INSTRUM.
Op. 3	Romance variée	R. Schumann	1831-33	Piano
Op. 4	Valses romantiques	Emma Eggers (née Garlichs)	1835	Piano
Op. 5	Quatre pièces caractéristiques, No. 3, "Romance"	Sophie Kaskel	1833-36	Piano
Op. 7	Premier concert pour piano-forte avec accompagnement d'Orchestre, Mov. II, "Romanze"	Louis [Ludwig] Spohr	1833-36	Piano & orch.
Op. 11	Trois romances	R. Schumann	1838-39	Piano
Op. 21	Drei Romanzen	J. Brahms	1855	Piano

Op. 22	Drei Romanzen für pianoforte und violine	J. Joachim	1953	Piano & violin
Unpub	Romanze (A Minor)	Rosalie Leser	1853	Piano
Unpub	Romanze (B Minor)	Julius and Pauline Hübner	1856	Piano

Fig 3.1 – Clara’s Output of *Romance* Compositions

According to Nancy Reich, the Schumann-Wieck official courtship possibly began somewhere around 1833. It is plausible to assume that Clara harbored romantic feelings for Schumann before they actually became involved, hence the dates 1831-33. What could be more natural than writing romantically sentimental music for the instrument that brought them together? Not coincidentally, her very first romance, the Op. 3 *Romance variée*, is also her first dedication to Schumann.⁴¹ This fact in itself is very suggestive of her feelings for him at the time. As it was her first foray into the romance, it is possible (and here I stress *possible*) to assume that each subsequent composition in this genre was, in some way, reminiscent of her original intentions.

Additionally, in the years before their marriage, she wrote another set of three, her Opus 11. These pieces were the last works to be published before their marriage in 1840. Surely it is significant that Clara was inspired to write romances at a time when her love for Schumann was so intense that she could bolster the courage to leave the shackles of her father’s influence. Writing on July 9, 1838, Clara wrote to Schumann “I began a Romance for you a long time ago and it sings powerfully in my head but I can’t get it down on paper. And the instrument here is completely without tone for that. However, I will do it very soon.”⁴²

⁴¹ This dedication is subject to discussion in chapter 5. I only mention it here in context.

⁴² Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 303.

Finally, the trend is again reflected during the last years of Schumann's life. Between the years 1853-56, she wrote seven more romances. Given the intensely personal and close nature of their relationship, one can only imagine the stress and grief that Clara must have felt with Schumann's illness. It is known that, although Clara was not permitted to visit Schumann in person, she was allowed to send letters and music transcripts.

It is not far off to assume then, that in absence of actual words and personal meetings, she would be inspired to write messages of love and suggest her feelings to her intended through the genre of the romance. Clara did not have the luxury to express her feelings by letters or allusions to specific texts. Rather, she may have been able to imply, or communicate her feelings through the sentiments and mood expressed by the very nature of the romance genre. Her prolific romance output is significant, especially when put into context and combined with the other methods of suggestive referencing detailed in this thesis.

Mazurka

Genres can express intent through means other than gendered or titular implications (as in the nocturne and romance). Certain genres serve a social purpose that involves more than simple aural pleasures, and identifying the function of these genres gives insight into their meaning. Here I group pieces such as processional, dances, lullabies, and traditional folk or working music. This type of music historically originated to serve a definite function. It was not created with the intention of concert-hall performance in the manner made popular by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, over time, these functional genres become appreciated in their own right. Evolutionary history transforms the simple social constructs into a new genre meant solely for audience appreciation, not participation. In this sense, it becomes apparent that genres are defined as much by their communities as by their history and repetition units.

Clara's foray into these types of genres was in the realm of dance, namely the waltz, mazurka, and polonaise. Here I address the mazurka. This traditional piece is actually a family of three different, but closely related, sung dances originating in Poland. The name is derived from the mazur folk dances from the region of Mazovia. The three types of dances were distinguished by their speed: the slowest was the kujawiak, of moderate tempo was the mazur, and the fastest of these dances was the overtas or overek. Originally, the folk dancing was accompanied by a wind instrument, known as a dudy, which was similar to a bagpipe. The melody came from a fujarka, which produced a high-pitched sound akin to a shepherd's pipe. Finally, the rhythmic pulse was provided by a type of stringed bass called a bassetla or basy.

Though it originated in Poland, the mazurka spread through the European continent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It initially appealed to the Europeans as a dance piece, but later, through the compositions of Friedrich Chopin, became well known as a solo character piece for the piano. The drone-like quality of the traditional dudy is often preserved in Chopin's compositions through dominant pedals sustained throughout sections of his writing. The ornamented melodic lines are also representative of the original pipe melodies. However, though some of the distinct traditional characteristics can be distinguished in Chopin's music, the mazurka eventually reached a stage in its development where the particular cultural and generic differences

were melded into one. The genre evolved into a general form of moderate speed that encompassed the characteristics of its three predecessors.

The most characteristic element of this dance is the invariable lilting triple meter. Second and/or third beats are accentuated or highlighted rhythmically through rests or syncopations. This effect is further heightened by the performers use of tempo rubato, which was a traditional feature of this dance.⁴³ Keyboard mazurkas “are usually sectional and the structural concepts almost always rest upon the departure, alternation, or return of these small sections. Codas often figure prominently as eloquent summations.”⁴⁴ The contrast of themes against one another, which creates a call and response effect, is also typical of the genre – especially as seen in the piano mazurkas by Chopin.

In performance, tempo rubato is key with “accents and dynamics emphasizing the gestures of the dancers, especially stamping or heel-clicking leaps on the displaced accents on the second or third beats of the bar.”⁴⁵ The dance was one for couples in which a turning motion was prominent. “The mazur is known for its improvisatory character. It allows for new steps and figures, and is usually danced by a minimum of four, and up to a dozen and more couples. The dancers maintain an erect posture and their movements are reminiscent of those of a horse rider. They stamp their feet in an imitation of the sound of horse hoofs.”⁴⁶

Given the nature of the dance steps which provided for close intimacy and gaiety, the mazurka may very well have been many a girl’s fantasy when dreaming of a beau.

⁴³ The original folk dances typically increased in speed until the dancers were a “whirl.” Jan Gorbaty, “Polish Folk Music and Chopin’s Mazurkas.” Chopin Foundation of the United States. Accessed Oct 26, 2004; <http://andreja.com/chopin/pages/publication/pages/polishFolkMusic.htm>.

⁴⁴ Gordon, *A History of Keyboard*, 297.

⁴⁵ “Mazurka,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians On-line*, www.grovemusic.com, accessed November 15, 2004.

⁴⁶ Gorbaty, “Chopin’s Mazurka’s.”

The historical role of this genre as a dance piece likely figured into social courtship rituals as a characteristic dance-soirée piece. It is not surprising that Clara chose to employ it during a time when thoughts of Schumann were certainly on her mind. Though she did not necessarily mean her piano compositions to be performed for dancing, it is impossible to ignore their reference to the function of the genre.

Although I am sure Clara did not expect to literally dance the mazurka with Schumann, she may have been implying that it was in her thoughts. What could be more passionate than embracing in close contact in a fashionable social setting? Perhaps, in this way, Clara was also lamenting the secrecy of their relationship. Here again I have no written proof to support this suggestion. However, I feel the potential for musical messaging exists and speculation on these topics may convince the reader or provoke future studies.

Clara only wrote two mazurkas, both found in her Op. 6 *Soirées musicales*. At the risk of being redundant, I chose this genre for many of the same reasons as her above-mentioned nocturne. The prominent left hand figure in Clara's Op. 6 *Mazurka* will later be borrowed by Schumann to figure into one of his own pieces, his Op. 6 *Davidsbündlertänze*.⁴⁷ It is, therefore, through the luxury of retroactive historical examination that I identify the significance (or rather, the significance Schumann perceived) of this mazurka.

Clara's compositions from this time (1834-36) were during the beginning years of her clandestine courtship with Schumann. In these years, Schumann was establishing his society of David, and writing criticisms for the *Neue Zeitschrift*. It is fitting that, given the nature of their musical relationship, Clara would feel the desire to compose pieces

⁴⁷ These pieces will come into further inspection in the following chapter on quotation.

that corresponded with Schumann's Davidsbünd ideals.. I believe Clara left the showy, virtuosic trends of her previous compositions to respond to Schumann's formal and stylistic ideals. The entire opus is comprised of the smaller character pieces that experienced a resurgence of interest by early nineteenth-century piano composers: the toccatina, nocturne, mazurka, ballade, and polonaise. It is with this connection in mind that I find the mazurka genre significant. If we assume that Clara was trying to speak to Schumann through this opus, then her use of smaller genres that conformed to the Davidsbünd ideals shows her approval and alliance with his ideology.

The Rise of the Piano and Piano Genres

To conclude this chapter, it seems relevant to discuss the importance of the piano and piano music as a genre. The compositions I examine in this thesis are all written for solo piano. This instrument became the vehicle for romanticism in the nineteenth-century. It brought Clara and Schumann together under the instruction of Friedrich Wieck, and was the instrument for which they both predominantly wrote. Additionally, most of the suggestive references I am aware of can be found within their keyboard works.⁴⁸ It is, therefore, important to understand what the piano stood for in the early part of the nineteenth-century. The following section traces the development and rise to virtuosity of the modern piano.

Traditionally, keyboard instruments served dual function, both as an independent instrument, and as a tool for composition or orchestration. Many composers, even now,

⁴⁸ Although, Schumann did allude to Clara in several of his large-scale works – for example, his Symphony No. 1 is reputed to contain many references to Clara. For more on this discussion see John Daverio's *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

write at the piano because it can play chords, melody, and contrapuntal lines simultaneously, thus serving as an imaginary orchestra or ensemble. The ideas and sounds assigned to different “instruments” in the “orchestra” could “first be tested, then proved or corrected”⁴⁹ all conveniently on one instrument. In the eighteenth-century, harpsichords and fortepianos grew in popularity, and, by the nineteenth-century, were an affordable method of reproducing orchestral and operatic works in the home. The instrument was truly a “music synthesizer. Every genre of music was reproduced on the piano.”⁵⁰ Unfortunately, this did nothing but assure the piano maintained amateur status.

In the early nineteenth century when the piano, as a new and improved instrument, elicited more solo writing, most of these early compositional experiments still subscribed to a “fundamental concept of the instrument as a kind of surrogate orchestra, designed, in earlier times, as much for the domestic performance of symphonic and operatic reductions as for the interpretation of original keyboard works.”⁵¹ It was not commonly seen as an instrument that had an individual identity, nor was it seen to necessitate mastery, work, and skill. Even the most famous nineteenth-century piano music tended to mimic other instruments. Friedrich Chopin, for example, one of the most well-known and inventive “pianistic” composers, was highly influenced by vocal works, while, Franz Liszt wrote many of his virtuoso works to emulate the performance rigor of violinist Niccolò Paganini.

Despite its tendencies to mimic, the piano transformed into a celebrated solo instrument in the nineteenth century – especially under the hands of such virtuosos as

⁴⁹Harry Parch, *Genesis of a Music* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), 95.

⁵⁰Yuji Takahashi, “The Piano and Its Transformation,” *Perspectives of New Music* 32/2 (Summer 1994), 86.

⁵¹Jeremy Siepmann, *The Piano* (London: Carlton Books Ltd, 1996), 43.

Liszt, Thalburg, and Rubenstein. Solo piano performances became wildly popular, as did the demand for reproductions of printed musical scores. The piano truly became *the* instrument of the nineteenth century. In his book on piano literature, Stewart Gordon aptly described the elements that led to this new piano culture:

The rise of the instrumental virtuoso-idol coincided with the physical refinement of the piano to an instrument of power, beautiful tone, and reliability. Many of the great composers of the nineteenth century were trained as virtuoso pianists and regarded the piano as the instrument for their most personal work, often using it as a vehicle for refining ideas that later appeared in other guises.⁵²

The new Romantic sentiment, coupled with advances in piano construction and technique, resulted in many innovations in piano composition. Composers, such as Chopin, Liszt, and Schubert, began to explore the musical capacity of the instrument itself, including a new range of timbre, dynamics, ornamentation, and technical brilliance.

The increase of keyboard literature continued throughout the century. Genres such as the character piece, nocturne, fantasy, etude, impromptu, and many others became specific to the instrument and its unique musical capabilities. Composers were exploring the diverse tonal and expressive capabilities of the piano, and the result produced a wealth of innovative, complex, and beautiful music. Jim Samson, a prominent scholar of nineteenth-century music and Chopin, expressed the changes in keyboard literature as follows,

The piano piece of the early nineteenth century is a repertory in which new modes of expression struggled to break free of the old, as musical composition responded to rapid changes in the infrastructure of musical life and in the climate of ideas. The impulses which shaped the repertory were of many kinds, some new, some newly significant. They include the demands of specific taste-publics in the benefit concert and the middle-class salon; they include technological change; they include influences from vocal music and from contemporary literature, both signaling an

⁵² Gordon, *A History of Keyboard*, 197.

expressive aesthetic. Not surprisingly, then, the repertory is highly diversified stylistically.⁵³

The piano became an instrument noted for its individuality and poetic variety. Although it is integrated into small ensembles and large orchestras, the piano really shines in solo repertoire. The range of solo literature is so vast that it is not far off to suppose that it has become some sort of genre in itself. So much import was placed on this instrument in the nineteenth century that established generic codes could be applied to the whole of the literature for this instrument.

Here I suggest that Clara and Schumann may have thought of piano music as a significant genre in itself. It is possible that they composed to and for each other through this instrument because of its expressive and generic powers, not solely because it was the instrument they shared in common. As many pianists will confess, music for this instrument makes up a unique and independent generic category: one that is particularly expressive in its beauty, complexity, and power of expression that can be matched by no other instrument.

Despite her compositional prowess and acceptance in the male dominated sphere of music, her resistance to convention could only be pushed so far – Clara undoubtedly composed primarily for this instrument because of her occupation of the feminine realm and her specialization on the instrument. Conversely, Schumann did write for larger ensembles, orchestras, and voice. However, his compositions that contain the most suggestive referencing were written for the piano.⁵⁴ I believe this predominance of expressive piano literature reflects his love of the instrument, his affinity for creating

⁵³ Jim Samson, "Chopin and Genre," 214.

⁵⁴ There are actually examples of suggestive referencing in some of his larger works, for example the appearance of the Clara cipher in his Symphony No. 1. However, I am here contesting that the majority of his allusions can be found within his keyboard compositions.

musical meaning, and his desire to “speak” to Clara. Her profession as a concert pianist allowed her to experience piano music by playing and interpreting it – even Schumann’s music when they were under enforced separation. His decision to embed message into his piano works must have been by intention, so that Clara would have a method by which to understand his secret implications.

~Chapter 4~

Interpreting Quotations

*"I too gaze ever more deeply into a pair of wondrously beautiful eyes, they gaze at me now from out of the Davidsbündlertänze and the Kreisleriana."*¹

The previous chapter dealt with genre, which is a superficial characteristic of music analysis. Though evidently important when searching for possible meaning within a piece, genre does not necessarily consider the intricacies of composition in its analysis. Accordingly, in this chapter I investigate internal evidence of musical meaning by analyzing several of Schumann's compositional quotations of Clara's original themes.² I believe that Robert Schumann frequently quoted Clara Wieck's music, not solely as a means of paying homage, but also to represent his feelings, longing for their union, and to express a private message to the woman he was forbidden to see.

The first section of this chapter provides general definitions of relevant terms pertaining to musical referencing, namely allusion, borrowing, ciphering, and quotation. Although some scholars debate the potential meaning of Schumann's ciphers, I address it in detail here because the topic is relevant to this thesis, and thus necessitates closer investigation. The purported Clara cipher and research conducted by John Daverio, leading Brahms and Schumann scholar, figure heavily into my discussion. However, I do not actually analyze the presence of any ciphers within Schumann's music, as I have decided against letting this heavily debated subject become the center of my study.

¹ Johannes Brahms writing to Clara Schumann on August 27, 1854, after sensing her presence in these works by Schumann. This translated letter is in Styra Avins and Josef Eisinger, trans., *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60.

² As I speculated in chapter 3, Clara may have found it difficult to allude to Schumann through overt quotation, and I therefore reasoned her predominant usage of suggestive genres, while Schumann may have preferred the more public and challenging methods of imbuing reference through compositional manipulation. It is with this in mind that I focus solely on Schumann's compositions in reference to this topic.

Musical quotation is the central issue here, and the subsequent sections of this chapter focus on definition, application, and analysis. I rely on Kenneth Hull's PhD dissertation, *Brahms the Allusive*, for insight into the meanings and use of quotation in nineteenth-century music circles. Hull's approach to the subject is clear, convincing, and relevant to contemporary studies, despite being written in 1989. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of two quotations of Clara's music found in Schumann's compositions.

I realize that approaching the subject of musical referencing is dangerous, considering the subjective nature of the analytic enterprise. My hypothesis relies on the assumption that Schumann used music to express his emotions to and for Clara Wieck (and vice versa). Given these circumstances, it is natural, though unacceptable, to understand information from a certain perspective, or in support of a certain premise, simply because I believe "it *must* have been so." As aptly described by Daverio, "the identification of musical allusions is by and large a subjective endeavor. Unless the composer is obliging enough to supply the source of the allusion...critics are left to exercise their own judgment in deciding whether or not an allusion has actually been made."³ Though I make every effort to keep my own bias out of this study, the nature of this subject invites interpretive speculation and drawing together of conclusions.

General Background on Musical Referencing

I begin with some definitions, in order to establish the terms common to this field of inquiry. It may become obvious to the reader that there are many similarities between the terms allusion, borrowing, and quotation. It is admittedly difficult for every scholar to agree on definitions when research is conducted in so many varying contexts and

³ John Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 7.

fields. The ambiguous nature of these terms is a possible result of the subjective and contextual nature of their applications.⁴ Additionally, it must be noted that these words all apply to the similarity between two or more subjects, but their usage depends on the degree of this similarity. The author's intent concerning the perceived musical reference, whether it was accidental, discovered by chance, or meant to imply overt meaning, can steer contemporary scholars to choose a term that most aptly fits the situation.⁵ As I contest below, quotation is arguably the most overt method of musical referencing, and thus the most relevant when considering authorial intent.

Allusion

In the nineteenth century, *reminiscences* (*Anklänge*) was the word most often used by composers and critics to indicate a passage of another's music in a new composition.⁶ This is now more commonly known as *allusion* within most contemporary music circles. The *Canadian Oxford English Dictionary* defines this word as "a reference, esp. a covert, passing, or indirect one."⁷ In music, it can refer to the use of a direct passage of music, to the adaptation of certain musical techniques or traditions, or combinations of many similar musical functions: melody, rhythm, instrumentation, gesture, form, or genre.⁸ "Generally an allusion is made in order to evoke associations with the work, style or convention alluded to and thus to convey meaning; to invoke a work or style as a model for the new work or in homage to another composer; or in some other way to suggest a

⁴ This situation is similar to the problems I have previously discussed on genre and style.

⁵ I am grateful to Professor Dillon Parmer, University of Ottawa, for pointing this logic out to me.

⁶ Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 7.

⁷ *The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary*, 2000 ed., s.v. "Allusion."

⁸ Peter J. Burkholder, "Allusion," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 1, 408.

link with the music alluded to that calls for interpretation.”⁹ According to the *New Grove*, allusion is a general designation that encompasses any method of musical referencing, including borrowing, ciphering, and quotation.

Borrowing

Borrowing is a very elaborately defined concept in the *New Grove*. Here, a composition calls to reference a source piece of music by “borrowing” a combination of elements from the original. The identification of borrowed material considers similarities of type (genre, medium, style), texture, origin, and function within the piece. Scholars consider the alterations, if any, made to the borrowed passage and speculate on the possible reasons and change of function because of these changes. The borrowed passage only needs to be *similar*, not *identical* (in which case would be a quotation).

Furthermore, the listener response to the borrowed passage is relevant to scholars. The reactions and assumptions of listeners who sense the allusion often figure into studies on reception history and contemplations on the intentions of the author. “Much of the scholarship on borrowing directly engages...issues of recognition and intent, identifying hitherto unsuspected relationships and presenting evidence to support the claim that borrowing has occurred, beyond subjective impressions.”¹⁰ It is important to note that borrowed passages are not exclusively sourced from canonic classical composers. Indeed, the trends of exoticism, nationalism, and historicism were created from borrowing musical elements from cultural and ethnic traditions.¹¹

⁹ Burkholder, “Allusion,” 408.

¹⁰ Peter J. Burkholder, “Borrowing,” *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001) vol. 4, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

Borrowing was fashionable in the nineteenth century. Composers alluded to the greats of the past in to establish stylistic links with historical figures or to pay homage. Some composers exhibited their prowess by technically improving a given passage. Others even re-used their own music as a continuation of experimental ideas and method of unity. However, “too close a similarity to another composer’s work in melody or style could bring criticism for unoriginality or plagiarism; only sly allusion, like a wink to the connoisseur, or addressing the same musical issues in a new and original way could allow the younger composer to reach a level equal with his predecessors.”¹²

Ciphering

Ciphering is arguably the most mathematical and coded method of musical referencing. It differs from the previously described terms in that it does not draw on the influence of another composer. Rather, a cipher is a short figure, usually melodic, that can be decoded to create a word or image. Throughout the course of musical history, certain composers toyed with musical encryption of various kinds, most commonly, writing a name into a composition by aligning musical notes with the letters of the alphabet. For example, the theme in Schumann’s *Theme sur le nom Abegg varié pour le piano*, Op. 1, is based on the musical pitches A-B-E-G-G to reflect the name of his love interest at the time. Example 4.1 illustrates this theme. Importantly, Schumann made the purpose of this encoded theme clear in his title, which absolves the audience of any speculation.¹³

¹² Ibid., 8.

¹³ This piece was composed in 1830 after encountering a woman from Mannheim named Pauline Comtesse d’Abegg. John Daverio, who discusses this cipher on pp. 68, 76, 88, and 100 in



Ex. 4.1 – Schumann’s *Abegg Variations*, Op. 1, mm. 1-2.¹⁴

The Clara Cipher:

Schumann was fascinated by musical mottos and themes based on letters of the written alphabet.¹⁵ Accordingly, he developed the five-note pattern that has forever immortalized Clara’s spirit in his, and later Brahms’s, music. Literally, she appears as the notes C-B-A-G#-A, meant to roughly correspond with the letters and contour of her name (see example 4.2). However, “this theme is music, not a word; so it can begin on any note, in any key, without losing its Clara-evocative significance.”¹⁶



Ex. 4.2 – The putative Clara cipher

Schumann obviously did not keep his compositional methods and meanings to himself. In 1844, Felix Mendelssohn used the Clara cipher in one of his *Songs without*

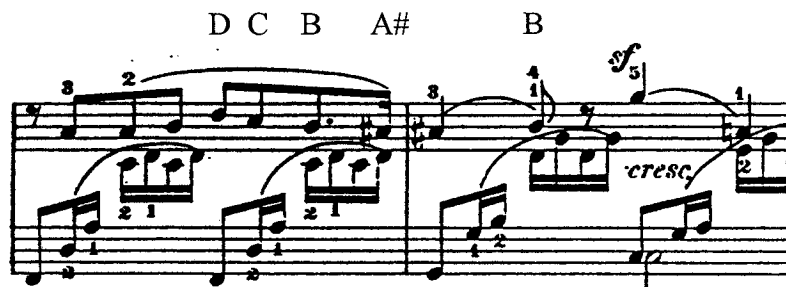
Crossing Paths, drew my attention to the significance of the title for establishing the intentions of the author.

¹⁴ Robert Schumann, “Abegg Variations,” in *Piano Music*, Ed. Clara Schumann (New York: Dover Pub., 1972).

¹⁵ This is argued at length by John Daverio throughout *Crossing Paths*.

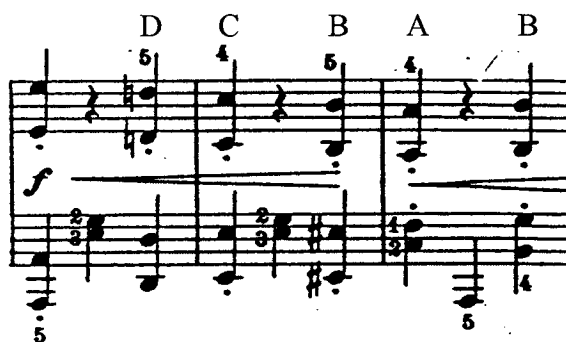
¹⁶ Eric Sams, *The Songs of Johannes Brahms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 15.

Words, Op. 62, No. 1. The cipher, D-C-B-A#-B, is prominently written in the upper voice of the first theme (see example 4.3). As if to confirm that it was consciously meant to represent Clara, Mendelssohn dedicated the whole opus to her.¹⁷



Ex. 4.3 – Mendelssohn’s “May Breezes,” *Songs without Words*, Op. 62, No. 1, mm. 2-3¹⁸

It is not surprising then, that Brahms also became aware of this Clara cipher. As evidence of his understanding, he wrote to Clara “I gaze ever deeper into a pair of wondrously beautiful eyes; now they are looking out at me from the *Davidsbündlertänze*.”¹⁹ This may have been the first time that Brahms recognized her presence, here represented by D-C#-B-A#-B, in mm. 27-29 of Schumann’s Op. 6, No. III (see example 4.4).



Ex. 4.4 – Schumann’s *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, No. 3, mm. 27-28²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ Felix Mendelssohn, “May Breezes,” *Songs without Words*, ed. Constantin von Sternberg (New York: Schirmer, 1915).

¹⁹ Sams, “*The Songs of Johannes Brahms*,” 15.

²⁰ Robert Schumann, *Les danses des compagnons de David*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris, New York: Editions Salabert, 1947).

These examples are just the beginning of innumerable occurrences throughout the compositions of Schumann and Brahms. I have elsewhere attempted to document these references, but the project became much more immense than anticipated. I believe that there are literally dozens of prominent and plausible outcroppings of this particular five-note turn in the musical literature of both Schumann and Brahms.²¹

John Daverio's Arguments Against the Clara Cipher:

Though scholars from the mid-twentieth century, such as Eric Sams, were proponents of this line of inquiry, the cipher has more recently suffered attack. John Daverio's last publication, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, devotes several chapters to the analysis and degradation of the Clara cipher and its advocates. This book is an in-depth analysis of the musical and personal relationships between the three German Romantic composers listed in the title. Daverio examines compositional links between these composers' styles to suggest that they wrote musical tributes as homage to each other's influence. Overall, the book is a fantastic foray into the intricacies of textual and extra-musical implications within absolute and programmatic music. It "is filled with original and suggestive insights that will undoubtedly stimulate continuing inquiry into the questions that they raise. Musicologists will welcome it as an important contribution to nineteenth-century studies."²²

²¹ By plausible, I mean that these uses of the cipher occur in pieces that show further links to Clara – either temporally (such as around the date of her birthday, September 13), by dedication, or by being intertwined into pieces that quote her themes or use other Clara-allusive devices (C pedal, Clara theme, or key of C).

²² Margaret Notley, "Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms [Review]," *Notes* 60 (Sept 2003), 167.

Part II, “Uttering “Clara” in Tones,” turns to the intertwined relationship between Schumann, Clara, and Johannes Brahms. The chapters in this section are structured to refute and discredit any possibility of the existence of a “putative Clara cipher.” Daverio’s main area of attack is on the research put forth by Eric Sams in the 1960s. Sams was the main advocate of the Clara cipher, and much continued speculation and research has been propelled by his publications. The foundation of Sams’s research and testing relies on the use of a manual on cryptology published by Johann Ludwig Klüber in 1809. This manual, *Kryptographik*, was supposedly used by Schumann to create his own ciphers. However, Daverio’s chapter 3 argues Sams, by convincingly proving the weaknesses in almost every bit of evidence employed by the older scholar. The case against Sams is entirely credible and believable, as there seems to be insufficient evidence to support his claims. Daverio summarized his views on the Clara cipher by stating,

To find traces of Schumann’s embodiment of Clara in four – and five note cells that supposedly utter “Clara” is a naïve, musically unconvincing, and ultimately pointless enterprise: naïve because the images of a loved one cannot be translated directly into pitches, unconvincing because as often as not the pitch cells do not coincide with musical significant ideas, and pointless because the argument for Schumann’s invention of a cipher to encipher Clara is absolutely without foundation. Hasn’t the time come, then, to cast this theory aside? And having recognized Schumann’s Clara cipher as a fiction, shouldn’t we do the same with Brahms’s, for how could Brahms have learned something from his mentor that never existed in the first place?²³

By proving the Clara cipher does not exist, Daverio intended to rid musicology of the tabloid pursuit of *creating* history. Daverio discusses the cipher with doubt laced through his dialogue. He mentions Schumann specialists who have “simply ignored” or are skeptical of the possibility of a cipher for Clara. He comments on the uselessness of

²³ Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 86-87.

searching for ciphers and questions the merit of attempting a quest for proof, when the outcome may result in “biography degenera[ting] into myth.”²⁴ Clearly, Daverio’s purpose was to disprove the existence and widespread usage of the Clara cipher. In performing such a task, he would discredit the proponents of the cipher and nullify any previous academic endeavors on the subject, thereby playing down the need for, and importance of, music criticism in the area of cipher analysis and its constructed meaning. Additionally, Daverio states that his purpose for writing these chapters was impelled by the “ultimate aim to offer positive responses to issues that remain unresolved.”²⁵

My Comments on Daverio and Subsequent Defense of the Clara Cipher:

Daverio relayed his premise and made his expectations clear from the beginning. He considered evidence from the music itself, from the work of other reputed musicologists, and from cultural identifiers such as literature, tradition, and craft. His conclusions seem to logically follow the facts supplied. However, I find it problematic that some of his “evidence” is purely speculative, such as his supposition that Schumann conceived ciphering as “innocent” and “game-like.” Other proof is intentionally fabricated to assist his defense; here I am specifically referring to Daverio’s imaginary lists of “cipher rules” supposedly employed by Schumann, Brahms, and Joseph Joachim. Daverio also ignored any common-sense possibilities, such as supposing that Schumann may have altered the “rules” that he himself “created” in order to compose a cipher for his beloved.

²⁴ Ibid., 66.

²⁵ Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 67.

Throughout, Daverio insists on comparing the putative Clara cipher with every other Schumann cipher known to exist. The five-note turn is evaluated in comparison to other musical examples, subjected to rules, torn apart by cultural signifiers, and discredited in every way imaginable. It is obviously the intention of this book to dispel any “myths” on the topic. However, the arguments are one-sided, only focus on the negatives, and are essentially speculative. It is impossible to treat the evidence in this text as sound proof, and it is not important to prove each supposed cipher case by subjecting it to rules and analysis. I find neither Sams’s nor Daverio’s arguments convincing, but at the same time, it is difficult to offer indisputable academic proof to the contrary.

In focusing on what Schumann did not do, Daverio ignored much evidence that should be considered in such a large-scale scholarly debate. The most convincing evidence lies in examining biographical and textual detail. Reading meaning into the dedications, diaries, and correspondences of the people in question can support many examples. Additionally, Daverio did not address the widespread usage of the putative Clara cipher. If this particular five-note turn is “meaningless,” how does he explain the prolific number of occurrences? This is especially obvious with Brahms, whose music is riddled with cipher permutations that appear to have been composed around September 13, Clara’s birthday, or on holidays that the two spent together. Evidently, there is much more to be uncovered about this mystifying topic.

The point here is not to dispute Daverio’s findings further, but to show the relevance of cipher analysis in musicology. Daverio stated that, “even on the almost non-existent chance that [Schumann] thought of the pitch cell C-B-A-G#-A as a Clara cipher,

it has little or nothing of importance to tell us about the music.”²⁶ Though I acknowledge that the cipher may not detail a large amount on the compositions – it speaks so much about the composer! Establishing associated meaning with these ciphers can express emotional, psychological, and autobiographical content about the composers themselves. The possibility of discovering expressive messages through this medium should be of immense importance for music historians. Proving the existence of musical messaging would open a new realm in music – one that cannot be defined within the boundaries of absolute or program.

The problem remains: a definitive answer to the validity and usage of the Clara cipher cannot yet be established. When looked for, there is equal evidence on both sides of the debate: it cannot be firmly disproved, nor can it be convincingly substantiated. Perhaps this will always be the case with a subject as clouded and secretive as ciphers. Here is where I believe research into extra-musical references, allusions, and musical messaging is imperative. Daverio seems to advocate considering music on a purely analytical or theoretical level. He completely ignores the potential of using music as a research tool to discover more about the composers, their situations, their interests, and inspirations. I believe that these implications *can* be found within music, and should have an impact on how historical research is constructed and substantiated.

I have referenced the Clara cipher in this chapter because I support the view that it is present in the music. Though I am forced to agree with some of the arguments made by Daverio, I find it hard to perceive the countless occurrences of the cipher as mere coincidence. If the cipher were accepted, it could strengthen the meaning and appreciation of its host compositions. However, given the obvious debate surrounding

²⁶ Ibid., 111.

this topic, I cannot consider it as a proven fact to aid my conclusions and construction of musical meaning in this thesis. My research would become vulnerable to avid critique if I subscribed to this belief without properly addressing the subject – which I cannot do within the boundaries of this project.

Quotation

Quotations are very similar to borrowing (defined above), but the distinction lies in the degree of exactitude. Quotations should only have minute alterations, if any, to the original passage. They are overt, and virtually exact references. They are generally placed in a prominent position within the musical texture, often appearing in a solo instrument, upper voice, or placed in an area of importance (the first or last measures of a piece, or around central cadences). This placement suggests that the composer or improviser expects those familiar with the quoted work to recognize it from a short excerpt.

From an analytical standpoint, the method of compositional quotation is a sound way of musically alluding to a composer, subject, feeling, or artifact: it is an overt form of homage, show of respect, or act of commemoration in order “to evoke in the reader the pleasure of recognition; to impress a learned audience; to illustrate his own remarks; to buttress an opinion; or to give an air of universality to the literature at hand.”²⁷

When analyzed from a historical and biographical standpoint, one may hypothesize that some quotes carry the additional significance of being expressions of the self, or messages directed to a particular listening audience.

²⁷ Kenneth Hull, *Brahms the Allusive: Quotation in the Music of Brahms* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Princeton, 1989), 41.

Thematic allusion...enlarges our understanding of the work itself, and incidentally, may provide an insight into the composer's intentions and creative process. When it carries an autobiographical significance as well, it may also allow a perspective on the work not just as an aesthetic object, but as a document in the life of the composer.²⁸

In most cases, quoting existing music conveys meaning through the text or associations carried by the original source. The quotation can stand for the entire work from which it is extracted and thus for its composer, genre, historical period, region of origin, or the musical tradition from which it comes.²⁹

Hull's Definitions, "Six Criteria for Establishing Allusion," and "Intentionality"

Hull is an appropriate model for this study, as the historical positioning of his subject, Johannes Brahms, is closely linked with my own. Brahms operated within the same cultural and temporal period, was intimately connected with the Schumann household, and may indeed have adopted many of Schumann's compositional techniques. It is possible to assume that Hull's emphasis on the importance of allusion and quotation in Brahms's music may also extend to the music of Schumann, a man certainly clearly enjoyed encrypting his music with code, cipher, and suggestive references.

Hull's General Definition of Allusion:

In his dissertation, Hull makes particular efforts to define allusion, quotation, and other related terms, and to outline specifically the methods of determining the authenticity and intent of a perceived allusion within a given piece of music. Though influence is an undeniable factor in any form of composition or writing, it is not

²⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁹ Peter J. Burkholder, "Quotation," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 20, 689-90.

necessarily the intention of the author to reference any other specific piece of music or art. Hull clarifies that allusion differs from

borrowing [and influence] in being a stylistic device designed to direct the attention of the reader or listener to the source text to which the allusion refers. It is an intentional extra-compositional reference made by means of a resemblance the recognition and comprehension of which contributes to the reader's or listener's understanding of the work which contains the allusion.³⁰

“The Theory of Allusion” and the “Six Criteria for Establishing Allusion”:

In his section on the “Theory of Allusion,” Hull considers various definitions and methods of determining the validity and intent of allusion. This is where my terminology differs somewhat from Hull: while he termed his understanding of musical referencing allusion, I prefer to maintain the term quotation for the remainder of this chapter. I consider the Clara-cipher, Clara-theme, C-pedal, and other “Clara” compositional devices to be allusions, but I do not see quotation occupying the same space. Though the purpose of a quotation, to a learned or private ear, is to allude, the method is an exact and overt quote, which necessitates a distinct title from those other devices, which reference meaning through more secretive means.

However, Hull's research into allusion is still pertinent here, and his “six criteria for identifying the presence of allusion,” transcribed below, are equally useful for determining the plausibility and intentions of quotation. The first three of Hull's criteria are labeled “intrinsic” because they consider factors that are based on internal elements of music and its similarities to the original source. The remaining criteria deal with the external connections between the allusion and its author and background.

³⁰ Hull, *Brahms the Allusive*, 54.

1. Exactitude: ...states that the case for identifying a quotation will be strengthened the more precisely the passage being referred to and the putative quotation resemble.
2. Singularity: ...states that the case for identifying a quotation will be strengthened the more distinctive or highly characterized the quoted passage is. This principle obviously modifies the importance of exactitude: exactitude is more or less valuable in proportion as the passage being referred to is singular.
3. Multiplicity: ...states that the case for an allusive relationship between two works is strengthened in proportion to the number of points of resemblance between them. The importance of the principles of exactitude and multiplicity varies in an inverse relationship.
4. Historical Plausibility: ...states that the case for a quotation or allusion is strengthened in proportion to the strength of the connection which can be made between its composer and the work which is referred to: how likely is it that this composer should have employed this particular “musical vocabulary” as a quotation?
5. Prominence and Integrity: ...states that the case for a quotation or allusion is strengthened in proportion as the quoted passage occurs prominently and with integrity, not only in the piece which makes the reference, but also in the work from which the quotation is drawn. By prominence is meant that the passage plays an important structural or melodic or rhythmic role. By integrity is meant that the passage occurs as a coherent unit, whether melodically rhythmically, with respect to instrumentation, or any combination of these.
6. Function: ...states that the case for a quotation or allusion is strengthened to the degree that a convincing explanation of its function can be given.³¹

Hull’s thorough research and comprehensive criteria provide the means of analysis for the next section of this chapter, where I will subject Schumann’s quotations to Hull’s determinations of validity and intentionality.

Intentionality:

Hull stresses the importance of understanding the authors’ intentionality with any given allusion or quotation. According to Hull, and most of the scholars he researched, there can be no allusion without intention. I do firmly agree with Hull here: it is simply

³¹ Ibid., 62-85.

unreasonable to assume meaning within any grouping of notes, melodic turn, or harmonic progression, which may coincidentally bear resemblance to another occurrence. As suggested by Peter J. Burkholder, these occurrences should, or could, be labeled *phantom quotations*, which are “similarities that we may hear but that have no significance...”³² The reader may recall that similarities without proof, fact or theory, was also John Daverio’s point of contention with the research presented by Eric Sams.

However, it must be noted that the specific intentions of the composer are difficult to deduce, meaning that solidifying the validity of an allusion is not always straightforward. The chances of finding direct admission from the composers are unlikely, as most did not support their allusions by explicitly referencing the source. Therefore, I must propose that other methods of deducing intent should be considered valid. For example, to return to the debatable Clara cipher, there is no known admission of its creation or existence by Robert Schumann or Johannes Brahms, however, when the five-note turn seems to occur in numbers far more than coincidence, we must interpret some meaning. The very fact that this cipher was used by three composers (Schumann, Brahms, and Mendelssohn) and almost always in pieces that were dedicated to Clara Wieck, given to her as gifts, or supported by plainly suggestive literary texts, seems to accumulate evidence for a stronger argument.

Intentionality is key to this line of research, but scholars must be open to the fact that the intentions of the author may not necessarily be conveniently conveyed on paper, but rather may be understood through a large gathering of supportive evidence. I believe that examining biographical details, personal correspondences, and known historical facts are valid methods for re-constructing a composer’s objective.

³² Ibid., 44.

Determining the intended recipient for the allusion becomes a more complicated issue. Hull suggests that, “allusion is a device used by the author to produce a particular effect; in employing allusion, the author has in mind that the reader should make certain associations as a result of recognizing the phrase or passage concerned as allusive.”³³ If the reader, is to make certain associations upon reception of the allusive phrase, it is plausible to assume Clara, the reader, would have understood the references to her own music as representations of herself. Further, she may have understood that these musical expressions of her “self” were intertwined with expressions of Schumann’s “self.” Perhaps we can assume that Schumann was uniting their spiritual “selves” in music, suggesting that he desired their union in reality. I believe Schumann’s quotations were allusions, not to a musical idea or style, but to an external, non-musical, entity: Clara Wieck.

Hull is preoccupied with the source of a given allusion, the intentionality of the author to make this allusion, and the reception of the audience. The result of exploring these factors is the creation of musical meaning. In accordance with my topic, I suggest that the sources of Schumann’s allusions are Clara’s compositions, his intention was to unite their musical psyches, and the reception of the audience, Clara, was to understand a suggestive message spoken to her through music.

Analysis of Schumann’s Musical Quotations and Application of Hull’s Six Criteria

I must remind the reader here that this chapter examines a compositional method of allusion employed more frequently by Schumann than by Clara. As I explained in the previous chapter on genre, I found few examples of suggestive genre use by Schumann,

³³ Ibid., 40.

and a similar paucity of quote manipulation by Clara – hence the division of the two chapters.

Clara's lack of overt references to Schumann may be due partly to Wieck, who disapproved of their courtship. Though this is speculation, it is possible that Clara resisted imbuing her compositions with overt references for fear that her father, who oversaw her publications and concerts, would become suspicious or angered at the blatant references to the man he had come to despise. However, something as subtle and innocent as genre use may have passed his attention. Clara's use of suggestive genres such as the nocturne, romance, and mazurka would have seemed completely innocent, as they were already socially appropriate for women to employ.

Additionally, Schumann may have had the luxury of more time, which was necessary to compose the compositional intricacies he was so fond of. Clara was under pressure to continually produce new works, not only to satisfy her tyrannical father, but also to present new and inspired pieces to her concert audience. This may have also been a factor in her relatively few attempts at allusion through encoded compositional techniques.

Furthermore, as a woman, Clara would not have carried the socially authoritative presence necessary to recreate a theme composed by a man. Even though her stature elevated her higher than most women, and she was surely compositionally capable of thematic manipulation, I presume she would have met with some conflict if she attempted to assert her skills by transforming or adopting a masculine theme.

Schumann's *Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5*

One of the first examples of quotation between Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck can be traced to the very beginnings of their courtship. Schumann's *Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5* uses a direct quotation of the theme from her *Romance variée, Op. 3*.³⁴ Clara wrote the *Romance* between 1831-33 when she was around thirteen years old. Following the completion of Clara's Op. 3, Schumann composed his *Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck*, also in 1833. Her theme is his main subject, and is varied throughout the course of his *Impromptus*.

Schumann's quotation of Clara's Op. 3 thematic passage meets all of Hull's intrinsic criteria (see ex. 4.5 (a) and (b) for a transcription of these themes). Both pieces begin in C-major, and in 2/4 time and each are prefaced by a short introduction followed by the first presentation of the Romanza theme.

The image shows a musical score for Clara Wieck's *Romance variée, Op. 3*, measures 1-11. The score is divided into two sections: **Introduzione** and **Romanza**. The **Introduzione** section is marked *Moderato a piacere* and *f*. The **Romanza** section is marked *Moderato dolce*. The score includes dynamic markings *p*, *mf*, and *f*, and a *ritard.* marking. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 2/4. An asterisk is placed below the first measure of the Romanza section.

Ex. 4.5 (a) – Clara's *Romance variée, Op. 3*, mm. 1-11³⁵

³⁴ Her *Romance variée* has previously been referenced because of its significant genre, and it will be discussed again in chapter 5 because it is her first dedication to Schumann.

³⁵ Clara Wieck, *Romance variée pour le piano, Op. 3* (Hofheim, Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 1996).

Ex. 4.5 (b) – Schumann’s *Impromptu on a Romance by Clara Wieck*, Op. 5, mm. 1-24³⁶

Melodically, the upper voice of the theme is identical, with the exception of Schumann’s minute shift in the rhythm of the seventh bar, and a slight melodic alteration of the cadence at measure eight. Although it is not identical, the accompaniment is rhythmically similar, and the harmonic progression maintains the same function and direction. Another difference is that, while Clara’s theme is structured in $||: A :||: B A :||$ form, Schumann’s theme does not return to the A section, and instead reads $||: A :||: B :||$.

Despite these small alterations, Schumann’s theme clearly fits Hull’s definition of exactitude, singularity, and multiplicity: the two themes are almost identical in melodic contour, rhythm, length, and harmonic foundation. There are several points of similarity between them, and both are featured prominently as the theme within forms that are similarly constructed.

When considering Hull’s external criteria for this quotation, there is equal supportive evidence. The theme is overtly, and immediately, recognizable from Clara’s Op. 3. It is also immediately evident within Schumann’s Op. 5, and was seamlessly integrated into his own musical expression. It is historically plausible that Schumann had

³⁶ Robert Schumann, *Impromptu on a Romance by Clara Wieck*, ed. Clara Schumann (New York : G. Schirmer, 1916).

heard this piece. Even if he had not heard it in performance, Clara's Op. 3 was written before his own, and at a time when they were maintaining close correspondence and contact. Even more convincing, is that Clara had sent him a copy of the published work accompanied by a letter reading:

Much as I regret having dedicated the enclosed trifle to you, and much as I wished that these variations not be printed, the evil has already come to pass and cannot be altered. Therefore, I ask your forgiveness for the enclosed. Your ingenious setting of this little musical thought will redeem the errors in mine. I would like to request yours: I can hardly wait to make a closer acquaintance with it.³⁷

Evidently, Schumann was aware of her work before composing his own. The function of this quotation is also self-evident. Schumann was responding to Clara's creative output. Nancy Reich writes, "and extraordinary flow of ideas between Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck is recognizable in the works of the years between 1830 to 1836. The two young musicians were working and playing in such close proximity that it is often difficult to determine the origin of main musical ideas they shared."³⁸

These years of "musical sharing" coincided with Schumann's growing obsession with new music, marked by his published criticisms and *Society of David*. He was passionately entangled with championing new ideals and ethics. His higher musical standards encouraged "1) the composer's responsibility to create new forms based on a solid knowledge of older, "classical" models, 2) subordination of technique and virtuosity to the compositional idea, and 3) compositional egocentricity – for music, to communicate at its deepest level, must convey a composer's personal life experience."³⁹

³⁷ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 45.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

³⁹ Andrew Fowler, "Robert Schumann and the "Real" Davisbündler," *College Music Symposium* Vol 30/1 (Spring 1990), 19.

Accordingly, many composers who subscribed to his ideals considered popularized virtuosic forms, such as Theme and Variations, to be empty of meaning. These types of showy pieces only highlighted technique, which was no longer considered worthy of high praise. Schumann reportedly

found most variations of this time irredeemably trite and vapid. Schumann...deplored their lack of meaning. He argued against using popular themes, ...and against the empty virtuosity and mechanical figurations of salon variations; in a scathing review of 1836 he asserted that 'in no other genre of our art is more bungling incompetence displayed ... variations should create a whole, whose centre is the theme. ... The time is past when one can create astonishment with a sugary figure, a yearning suspension, run over the keyboard. Now one strives for thoughts, for inner connections, with the whole bathed in fresh fantasy'⁴⁰

With sentiments such as this being expressed by her idol, Clara may have felt embarrassed about her previous showy compositions such as the *Romance variée*. Perhaps her letter to Schumann (transcribed above) was meant as an embarrassed confession, after she realized that he may not appreciate her composition, or the dedication. True, the letter may have equally been meant as some sort of modest jest, we will never know. Such is the problem with musicology and historical subjects: though scholars may speculate, there is rarely sufficient proof to irredeemably state fact.

In light of Schumann's emphasis on new music, it is interesting to note that Clara's compositions written in the years following the *Romance variée* were small parlor and dance forms: the Op. 4 *Valses romantiques*, 1835; the Op. 5 *Quatre pieces caracteristiques*, 1833-36; and the Op. 6 *Soirées musicales*, 1834-36. This shift in style from large, performance oriented, compositions to small, intimate, character pieces cannot be coincidental. As Clara thought increasingly about her male friend, she may

⁴⁰ Elaine Sisman, "Variations," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Lond: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 26, 310.

hearing her play it, may have forgotten the source and assumed it was her musical idea.”⁴³ Additionally, it is possible that they composed this short theme together, and though Schumann was the one to write it down, they had agreed that Clara would use it first.

The historical development of this theme becomes even more complex in the 1850s. Johannes Brahms also decided to twine Clara’s Op. 3 theme into his newly composed *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, Op. 9. Significantly, this opus is one of the first pieces he composed after meeting the Schumann’s, and it obviously shows his admiration for the older couple by utilizing a theme from each musician in his own composition (or so he thought): Schumann’s *Bunte Blätter* Op. 99, No. 1, and Clara’s Op. 3.



C# (L) A (R) A

Ex. 4.7 – Schumann’s “Albumblätter,” *Bunte Blätter* Op. 99, No. 4, mm. 1-4⁴⁴

Brahms’s inspiration for his *Variations* came from Clara’s previously written *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, which was based on the same Op. 99, No. 4 theme from Schumann. She began writing her *Variations* in the fall of 1853 (the fall Brahms met them) as a birthday present for her husband. Her May 24, 1854 diary entry

⁴³ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁴ Robert Schumann, “Bunte Blätter,” in *Robert Schumann: Piano Music*, ed. Clara Schumann (New York: Dover Pub., 1972)..

states that she played her Op. 20 for Brahms that day. It is thus certain that Brahms heard her composition before beginning his own later that year, which means this quotation meets Hull's criteria for historical plausibility.

Brahms composed his fourteen Variations in June 1854 and presented Clara with his *Variations on a Theme by Him Dedicated to Her* on June 11. However, on September 12 (the day before her birthday), he added two more Variations, Nos. X and XI.⁴⁵ The revised version, with the new variations included were presented to her on her birthday, September 13. Variation X, one of the later additions to the composition, also quotes the Op. 3 melody attributed to Clara. In a letter to Joachim about his Variations, Brahms confessed, "I've added another set of two to my Variations - through one of them, *Clara speaks*."⁴⁶

Inexplicably, Clara responded by revising the coda of her *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, to also include a reference to her Op. 3 *Romance*. According to Nancy Reich, the theme Clara quotation in the coda is present in the first publication of November 1854, but does not exist in either of the two surviving autograph copies.⁴⁷ It is uncertain why Clara chose to make this change, and for what reason, though it was surely a response to Brahms's composition.

Schumann usually secured Clara's publications, but as he was ill, she had requested the publication for her composition herself in July 1854. However, she had no response from the firm by September when Brahms was ready to submit his own version.

⁴⁵ In a letter to Joachim, Brahms dates these two Variations on September 13, 1854. However, according to the McCorkle thematic catalogue, Variation XI is signed *Düsseldorf am 12. August 54. J.B.* I am inclined to believe Brahms's letter, as I imagine he would have been inspired to write the Variations for her birthday – as he does with many birthday compositions for Clara throughout the rest of his life.

⁴⁶ Avins and Eisinger, *Johannes Brahms*, 62.

⁴⁷ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 313.

His letter to Brietkopf & Hartel, dating September 25, 1854, requested to have his published simultaneously with hers. Brahms changed his title to *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, and Brietkopf & Hartel published the works simultaneously in November 1854. Figure 4.1 illustrates the historical devolvment of the Romance theme.

DATE	PUB	PIECE	AUTHOR	THEME SOURCE
Sept. 28, 1830		Theme	R. Schumann	R.S.'s personal diary entry
1831-33	1833	Romance variée, Op. 3 "Romanza"	C. Wieck	R.S.'s sketches
1833	1833	Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5	R. Schumann	C.W.'s Op. 3, and from his sketches
Changes in 1850	1850	Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op. 5 (Revised version)	R. Schumann	Slightly different version of original theme
1838	1852	Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, No. 4 <i>Albumblatt</i>	R. Schumann	
May/June 1853		Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann	C. Schumann	R.S.'s Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, No. 4 <i>Albumblatt</i>
June/Sep 1854	Nov. 1854	Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann	J. Brahms	R.S.'s Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, No. 4 <i>Albumblatt</i> and C.S.'s Op.3
Changes in Fall 1854	Nov. 1854	Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann (Revised version)	C. Schumann	R.S.'s Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, No. 4 <i>Albumblatt</i> and C.S.'s Op. 3

Fig. 4.1 –Historical Development of Clara's Op. 3 Romance Theme

The development of this theme is highly fascinating and presumably representative. Though originally composed by Schumann, three different composers alluded to each other through manipulation of this theme: Clara to Schumann in her Op. 3, Schumann to Clara in his Op. 5, and Brahms to Clara – though inadvertently to

Schumann in his Op. 9. One must wonder if there is more internal meaning to this theme, for it was used by three different composers to create message or allusion in music.

I must point out here in passing, that Schumann's theme begins with a striking rendition of the putative Clara cipher (the opening measures are found in example 4.7). The very fact that Clara chose this piece to use in her Variations speaks volumes to me, as it may imply that Clara understood the meaning of the cipher, but alas, as the cipher is not *proven*, I must disregard this tantalizing evidence.

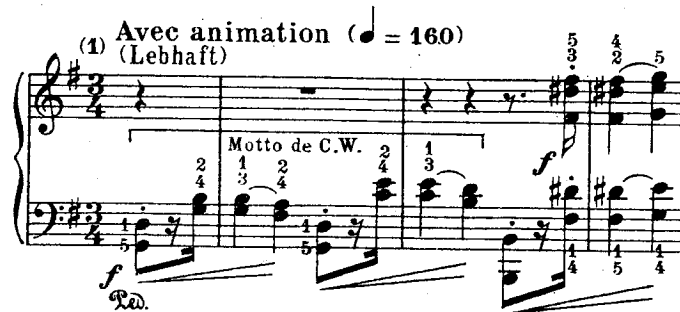
Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, No. 1

One obvious clue that Clara had written something acceptable to the aforementioned ideals of the Davidsbünd is the fact that Schumann quoted one of her mazurkas in the first of his *Davidsbündlertänze* pieces, Op.6. The diverse pieces from her Op. 6 *Soirées musicales* were written through the years 1834-36 and were published as a set by Hofmeister in 1836. Accordingly, Schumann's responsive set of eighteen character pieces were written and published in 1837, shortly after their secret engagement. The fact that his pieces carry the title of his society for new music suggests that these works would be exemplars of the type of compositional techniques he deemed current and acceptable. The very presence of Clara's theme, unaltered and prominent in the opening bars of his first piece, shows her success in complying with his rules.

His short character piece begins with a direct quotation of the opening left hand motto of Clara's "Mazurka," from her *Soirées musicales*, Op. 6, No. 5. This is one of Schumann's most overt quotations of Clara Wieck's music, as he even labeled the theme "motto de C.W." (musical examples 4.7 (a) and (b) illustrate this below).



Ex. 4.8 (a) – Clara’s “Mazurka,” *Soirées musicales*, Op. 6, No. 5, mm. 1-3⁴⁸



Ex. 4.8 (b) – Schumann’s *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, No. 1, mm. 1-3⁴⁹

This *Mazurka* is simple and neither technically nor compositionally complex. Though some of the rhythms and ornamental patterns may pose trouble to the amateur pianist, the piece does not immediately suggest a high level of performance difficulty. The simple character of this composition (and the others of Op. 6) is unlike many of Clara’s previous compositions.

Her *Mazurka* opens with a strong and driving motif in the left hand (see ex 4.8 (a)). This motif, originally stated in the tonic, is then immediately transposed to the subdominant and restated. This doubled passage will continue to be a major developing feature of the piece. The motif is characterized by its forceful nature, as established by the strong ascending motion, the accented repeated notes, the doubling at the third, and the *forte* dynamic marking.

⁴⁸ Clara Schumann, *Soirées musicales*, Op. 6, ed. Sylvia Glickman (Bryn Mawr, PA.: Hildegard Pub. Co., 1996).

⁴⁹ Robert Schumann, *Les dances*.

Schumann's quotation of the left hand passage in his own work is remarkably similar. The only visible difference between the two presentations is a minute change in rhythm. The mazurka begins with a dotted eighth and sixteenth followed over the bar by a quarter and an eighth. The *Davidsbündlertänze* is written with an eighth, a sixteenth rest and a sixteenth note, followed by two quarters. The result is almost undetected, unless following the music with the score.

Both compositions are in the key of G-major, set to 3/4 time, and begin with a *forte* dynamic marking. For tempo, Clara marked hers *con moto*, while Schumann indicated *avec animation (Lebhaft)*. Not coincidentally, both compositions are also numbered Op. 6 (which is a very significant point I will consider in the next chapter on titling and dedication). Returning to Hull's six criteria, this quotation also conforms to the intrinsic elements of exactitude, singularity, and multiplicity. It is historically plausible that Schumann had access to her Op. 6 because it was published a year before he wrote his own Op. 6. The prominence and the function of this driving opening motif as a returning and dominant motif is unquestionable.

Additionally, as if to dispel any question of its origin, Schumann highlighted the passage and labeled it with "motto de C.W." Mysteriously, this is one of the few times in his compositional career that Schumann made an effort to acknowledge the origin of a quotation. I cannot speculate on the reason for the public recognition of Clara's theme with any pretense of proof. There are few similar occurrences throughout the course of Schumann's compositional career. I believe that he wished his allusions to become more public, so that knowledge of their intimacy, and his intentions, would be widely recognized. Perhaps he felt this would be a method of easing Friedrich Wieck into the

notion of their love. Or, maybe this was a childish way to “get back” at Wieck for denying their courtship – by publicizing their union on published editions. The possibilities here are endless, but the true reason lies with Schumann.

To further the meaning of the opus, Schumann apparently confessed many of his desires for Clara within. This set of eighteen pieces was replete with significant musical motifs, quotations, and allusions:

in a letter of January 1838, [Schumann] confided to her [Clara] that the work was “teeming with wedding thoughts.” Even more tantalizing is a comment from the letter that accompanied the deluxe edition of the published score he sent to Clara about a month later: “My Clara will find out what’s in the *Tänze*, which are dedicated to her more than anything else of mine.”⁵⁰

On comprend alors [un] passage d’une lettre de Robert à sa bien-aimée : « Dans les Danses des Compagnons de David, il y a beaucoup de motifs qui sont des pensées de mariage et qui sont nés dans les plus beaux moments d’exaltation dont j’aie [sic] souvenir. Si jamais j’ai été heureux au piano, c’est bien en composant ces pièces ». ⁵¹

According to Daverio, Schumann imagined the story of the *Davidsbündlertänze* as following the course of “a “Polterabend” (the traditional bachelor’s party before a wedding) and leaving it to Clara to “imagine the beginning and the end.”⁵² I must refer the reader here to *Crossing Paths*, where Daverio offers a detailed analysis of the eighteen pieces of Op. 6 in an attempt to reconstruct the story that Clara may have understood.⁵³ Fittingly, Schumann’s Op. 6 is also host to several instances of the putative Clara cipher.

⁵⁰ Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 78.

⁵¹ Alfred Cortot, “Avant-propos,” *Les danses des compagnons de David*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris, New York: Editions Salabert, 1947). i.

⁵² Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 135.

⁵³ This analysis can be found on pages 135-137 of Daverio’s *Crossing Paths*.

Chapter Conclusions

Clearly, Clara and Schumann placed emphasis upon musical referencing through quotation. Their written correspondence betrays their comprehension of the allusive messages imbued within the works mentioned above. If it were not for corroborating written adjuncts, the practice of quotation may be perceived as innocent and playful. However, upon examination of the interplay between their compositions and the letters that suggest deeper meaning, it is obvious that Clara and Schumann understood suggestive messages through musical composition. These two quotation examples, from Clara's *Romance variée* and *Mazurka*, are just some of the more interesting of many. Indeed, the practice of alluding to one another spans through the majority of both compositional careers.

Daverio notes that, though Schumann alluded to Clara primarily through quotation before their marriage, they both participated in the practice in the years after their marriage.⁵⁴ This reinforces some of the possibilities I suggested earlier: Clara may not have fully participated while under the guard of her father for fear of his reaction upon discovery of their courtship. However, once she was free of his control, she was not so restrained in her suggestive referencing. Reich aptly concludes,

Robert Schumann used musical quotations, motifs, and words that symbolized Clara for him, incorporating her into his work, as it were. In 1839, he wrote...that Clara had been the inspiration for all of his greatest piano works. He often declared that he could feel her very presence as he composed. And Clara, even as a young girl, used motifs and phrases of his, sometimes deliberately – paying homage to the man she loved and admired – and sometimes unconsciously taking in the musical ideas flowing from his fingertips.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁵⁵ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 220.

~Chapter 5~

Titles and Dedications: “Surface Relevance’s” of Musical Scores

“I’d perhaps express the hope that the union of our names on the title page might in the future be a union of our views and ideas.”¹

According to the research conducted by Jeffery Kallberg, each element of a musical composition contributes to its overall suggestive potential. While it may seem that musicology should concentrate on the importance of musical details alone, Kallberg asserts that extraneous elements are indeed important identifiers to consider. Accordingly, this chapter explores suggestive examples of the two most overt surface relevance’s that betray compositional meaning: titles and dedications.

I urge the reader to recall previous analysis from chapters 3 and 4 when considering the examples I present here, since most of the music I examine has been the subject of previous analysis on genre and quotations. The presence of suggestive titles and dedications provide the authorial intent needed to solidify the references of many of the previously considered compositions. However, because descriptive titling is so intimately linked to the concepts of program and absolute music, I must address these concepts first, before turning to the examination of titles and dedications in Clara and Schumann’s compositions.

Programmatic and Absolute Music

The nineteenth century saw the development of the Romantic fascination with expression. Among other factors, the changes in industrialization, social structure, and

¹ Schumann writing to Clara after receiving a manuscript of her first dedication to him. Transcribed in Eva Weissweiler, *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann, Vol 1*, trans. Hildgard Fritsch and Ronald Crawford (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1994), 8.

class systems concentrated the new cultural appeal on Romanticism, Nationalism, Naturalism, and Historicism. By extension, the ways in which music was composed and received also transformed. Composers sought to mimic art, literature, or nature as a means of making their music more accessible to the new middle-class, musically uneducated, audience. Accordingly, music became more descriptive and made more user-friendly by suggesting images, stories, or events in the titles or programs that accompanied the piece.

In purely aesthetic terms, the new found artistic freedom was a corollary of the Romantic discovery of music as the 'language of feeling.' It was this, its much heralded affective appeal, which turned music into 'the favourite art of the middle class, the form in which it can express its emotional life more directly and with less hindrances than any other'.²

Composers took liberty with form and style in order to mould the contours of the musical texture to represent something more than just notes. A fascination with exotic places resulted in music reminiscent of the Orient, India, and Spain (to name a few). Increased sentimentality and pride of heritage found an outlet in Nationalism, which fathered many compositions descriptive of culture, patriotism, and landscape. The move towards Naturalism resulted in a more realistic subject matter. This is especially evident in opera, where the characters become more common-place, of the working class, or of lesser reputed professions (*Carmen* by Bizet, and *La Traviata* by Verdi are good examples here).

The reverse side of this particular Romantic coin, however, was the drastically reduced productivity of individuals struggling for 'inspiration' from quarters that most of their predecessors would have considered of little aesthetic import. The more the 'language of feeling' sought to fathom the human psyche, especially the composer's own, the more tortured and extended, it seems, was the creative process. Whatever results it yielded, moreover, frequently underwent periodic revisions, as if,

² Ringer, "The Rise of Urban Musical Life," 6-7.

at a time when performers began to insist on highly idiosyncratic ‘interpretations,’ at least some composers felt they ought to contribute their share.³

It is clear that the societal role of music, as well as the compositional process, changed through the course of this century. The resulting emphasis on expression, meaning, and the descriptive qualities of music led Franz Liszt to coin the term *program music*.

He defined a programme as a ‘preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it.’ He did not regard music as a direct means of describing objects, rather he thought that music could put the listener in the same frame of mind as could the objects themselves. In this way, by suggesting the emotional reality of things, music could indirectly represent them.⁴

However, Liszt created an academic dilemma with his new term. The category of *program music* remains difficult to define, and similarly difficult to trace in historical origin. Some definitions regulate that the term only refers to instrumental music that conveys “narrative or descriptive ‘meaning’ (for example, music that purports to depict a scene or a story). Others have so broadened its application as to use the term for all music that contains an extra-musical reference, whether to objective events or to subjective feelings.”⁵ Some traditional definitions of program music may specify the need for a written adjunct or suggestive title before a work to be classified as such. Debate surrounds the concept, as many scholars believe the distinction between programmatic and absolute music is too rigid and exclusive.

³ Ibid., 28.

⁴ Roger Scruton, “Programme,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 20, 396.

⁵ Ibid., 396.

The additional argumentative difficulty here, is that any music, whether programmatic or absolute, conveys something. It is certainly viable for music to contain meaning, even when it does not overtly ascribe to doing so. All art is known to express – such is the nature of the creative process. It is impossible to assume that some music may be *absolutely* devoid of meaning, inspiration, or intention. Therefore, though the classifications still exist in traditional musicology, many scholars, and the music itself, resists these categorizations. Additionally, while some music unquestionably expresses external programmatic connotations, other music is more vaguely suggestive and does not immediately lend itself to the classification. Therefore, the definition of program music must have space to accept and include musical examples that may not contain the author's admittance of programmatic content.

There is evidently much questioning about the definition and usage of this term. However, the need for the categorical distinctions of programmatic or absolute within musicology is debatable. If all music expresses something, is it necessary to categorize it further? If so, what selections of evidence do we examine for the categorization of this music. Consider the example of Johannes Brahms. By many standards, most of his music is absolute. It does not prescribe to the traditions of indicative titles, written adjuncts, or public confessions that we would normally associate with programmatic meaning. However, after investigating his surviving personal correspondences, and uses of private ciphers and allusive thematic borrowing, we may arrive at the conclusion that Brahms's music is indeed expressive.⁶

⁶ Indeed, many scholars prescribe to this idea, among them John Daverio, Dillon Parmer, and Kenneth Hull have been referenced in this study, but there are many others.

This presents two problems: how deeply must we dig in order to categorize? And, secondly, is it morally appropriate to scrape together meanings for compositions that were meant to seem absolute in the eyes of the public? These hypothetical and contentious questions deserve attention, and are worth pointing out here. However, to address them adequately would necessitate another paper with a different focus from my own. Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter returns to my topic, and examines the relevance of titles and dedications in specific compositions by Clara and Schumann.

Title Analysis

I prefaced the analysis of titles with an examination of program music because nineteenth-century titles were invariably understood to “mean” something within nineteenth-century trends and music spheres. It is reasonable to assume that the titles assigned by a composer may suggest insight into the composition. However, this was not always the case. Most composers predating the nineteenth century were accustomed to identifying their works by categorical names and numerals. For example, J.S. Bach labeled most of his works by category. Bach’s music is almost entirely titled by numerological sequences of genre or form: Preludes and Fugues, Partitas, Canons, Chorales, Masses, Suites, Sonatas, etc. This type of compositional titling betrays little authorial intent, or “intentionality” according to Kenneth Hull. Although categorical titling was most common, some pre-nineteenth-century composers did label their works with suggestive titles. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K 525, is an example of such a composition.

The compositional intent to express extra-musical content within music really took hold in the nineteenth century – a century that was already preoccupied with Romanticism, the psyche, and the senses. With the increased audience of middle-class, and arguably uneducated, listeners, it was important for nineteenth-century composers to title their music carefully in order to suggest the nature of its meaning. In this way, audiences were more likely to understand and correctly interpret the author’s intent, inspiration, or subject. Many composers took the liberty of titling their pieces in a way that would suggest more than its compositional form, in order to reflect the inspiration, genre, or sentiment that is particular to that work.⁷

I do not presume that all nineteenth-century composers took great pains to programmatically title their music. Indeed, the traditional practice of labeling according to form, number, and series continued. As mentioned, Johannes Brahms is one prime example of a nineteenth-century composer who clung to past traditions. Contrary to many of his contemporaries, he made little effort to explain his music and inspiration to the public by means of written adjuncts. Thus, his music may seem absolute in nature, as it outwardly contains no personal or programmatic content. “Here was someone who habitually kept his feelings to himself, and he deliberately destroyed many manuscripts and other personal documents that might have revealed how his mind functioned.”⁸ However, through analysis of Brahms’s personal correspondences, it becomes clear that much of his music is programmatic, or at least full of musical messages, but only in a

⁷ We will see evidence of the care authors took to choose a title further on in this chapter.

⁸ Peter F. Ostwald, “Johannes Brahms, Solitary Altruist,” in *Brahms and His World*, ed. Walter Frisch (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 24.

private context.⁹ Only those individuals privy to Brahms's personal life and writings were able to recognize the deeper meanings in many of his compositions.

Evidently, the nineteenth-century trend of programmatically labeling music did not abolish the traditional categorical methods. Even our composers in question, Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann, titled many of their works according to traditions of category and number. For example, recall that Clara's compositional output is riddled with the romance genre, distinguished only by opus number and date. The remainder of this chapter focuses on specific compositions for analysis, as outlined in figure 5.1.

DATE	TITLE	SIGNIFICANCE	AUTHOR
1838-39	Trois romances pour le piano, Op. 11	Evidence of the care and thought composers put into titling.	C. Wieck
1833	Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5	Clara's name is overtly referred to in the title.	R. Schumann
1837	Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6	Opus was changed to match his inspiration pieces: Clara's Op. 6.	R. Schumann
1838-39	Novelletten, Op. 21	Title was chosen to secretly allude to Clara.	R. Schumann
	Generic titles, such as nocturne, romance, and mazurka	Imply socially constructed allusions by the very nature of their genres.	C. Wieck

Figure 5.1 – Proposed Pieces for Examination of Titular Significance

Clara's Op. 11 Trois romances pour le Piano:

Clara's Op. 11 is an example of the care composers put into choosing a title.

These three short pieces were written in 1838 and the spring of 1839. Clara wrote to

⁹ I am grateful to Dillon Parmer for introducing me to this concept. For more information, see chapter 5 of his *Brahms the Programmatic? : A Critical Assessment* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Rochester (Eastman), 1995).

Schumann frequently about these pieces, as they were written for him specifically. Their correspondence is as follows:

CW to RS, July 9, 1838: I began a Romance for you a long time ago and it sings powerfully in my head but I can't get it down on paper. And the instrument here is completely without tone for that. However, I will do it very soon.

CW to RS, April 18, 1839: Yesterday evening I was very happy – I had a nice idea for a little Romance, but I am dissatisfied with it today.

CW/Diary, April 18, 1839: I played a (unfinished) Romance for him [Georges Onslow] and he made a few comments about it.

CW/Diary, April 20, 1839: I composed a small, dramatic Andante.

CW to RS, April 23, 1839: I wrote a little piece but don't know what to call it. I had so many feelings as I wrote it – so intimate and heartfelt – won't you find a name for it for me? One that the French will understand – also, I will wait for your opinion; I am sending it to you and you write and tell me what I should change.

CW to RS, June 6, 1838: I have received the Idylle and thank you for it, my dearest, but you will surely forgive me if I tell you that there are some things in it I do not like. You have completely altered the ending, which was always my favorite part and precisely the one that made the biggest impression on everyone to whom I played it...You are not angry with me, are you?

CW to RS, July 2, 1839: The Romance is coming. You must play it very freely, at times passionately, then melancholy again – I like it very much. Please, send it right back to me, and don't be embarrassed to criticize it – that can only be helpful to me.

RS to CW, July 10, 1839: In your Romance I heard anew that we are destined to be man and wife. You complete me as a composer just as I do you. Each of your thoughts comes from my very soul; indeed it is you I have to thank for all my music. There is nothing to change in the Romance; it must remain exactly as it is.¹⁰

Throughout the course of its composition, this piece was alternatively labeled Romance, Andante, and Idylle before she returned to her original title. Clearly, she desired the title of the work to reflect both the intimate feelings she had expressed to Schumann in their letters, and his heartfelt romantic response.

Schumann's comments in these letters are quite revealing. By stating that he "heard anew," he is outwardly validating my belief that they understood messages

¹⁰ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 303-04.

imbued in musical composition. It must be noted, however, that these were not messages in the literal sense of the word. Schumann and Clara understood meaning from these pieces by their treatment of themes, melody, and harmony. Schumann confessed that her “thoughts come from his very soul.” This implies that her compositions followed similar thematic treatments to those he would have done himself. In seeing his own ideas and practices reflected by Clara, Schumann must have felt a connection, spiritually, artistically, and, therefore, sentimentally.

Returning to the letter Schumann wrote to Clara on July 10, 1839, “it is you I have to thank for all my music.” Here again we gain a sense of their intimacy and strength of musical union. As discussed above in reference to program music, nineteenth-century composers often wrote as a response to feelings or occurrences. Schumann confessed to Clara in 1838, “I am affected by everything that goes on in the world and think it all over in my own way, politics, literature, and people, and then I long to express my feelings and find an outlet for them in music.”¹¹ It is significant that he admits his strongest influence and creative muse to be Clara. Here again we learn that much of Schumann’s music is linked to thoughts of his beloved. Though not necessarily outwardly admitted, his works contain meaning, as they express his inspiration: love.

Schumann’s Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck:

In some cases, Robert Schumann openly acknowledged Clara’s name within the title of his piece. Here I turn again to his *Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck*, which was the subject of a study on quotation in chapter 4. The title of this Op. 5 piano piece is public admittance of Clara as his source of inspiration. This is especially

¹¹ Ringer, “The Rise of Urban Musical Life,” 8.

significant in the nineteenth century, when women were not often accepted as peers within music and other learned fields. Despite the obvious sociological effect of acknowledging a women's influence on a man, Schumann chose to make his source public knowledge. In this manner, Schumann may have been directly intending to show Clara his love, appreciation of their friendship, admiration for her skills, and approval for her own successful compositions.

Schumann's Op. 6 Davidsbündlertänze:

In fact, Schumann placed so much importance on the meaning of titles, that he rearranged the order of his opus numbers in order to align one of his compositions with her own. As discussed in chapter 4, his Op. 6 *Davidsbündlertänze* opens with a direct quotation of her *Soirées musicales*, Op. 6, No. 5. According to Alfred Cortot's editorial notes to his critical edition of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, "Cette composition de Clara figurait dans un recueil de «Soirées musicales» portant le numéro d'œuvre 6, ce qui amènera Schumann, à antidater la sienne pour lui pouvoir également attribuer ce chiffre dans la liste de ses œuvres."¹²

Apparently, Schumann wanted this set of short character pieces to carry the same numerical identity as Clara's. The reason behind this can only be speculated upon, though it does seem obvious that he desired these musical works to be united. To reinforce this assumption, Schumann's Op. 6 is riddled with quotations of Clara's own Op. 6 compositions (more than what I discussed in the previous chapter). It is clear that Schumann intended to convey message or implication by his choice of labels.

¹² Cortot, "Avant-propos," i.

Schumann's Op. 21, 8 Novelletten:

Perhaps one of Schumann's most intricate methods of alluding to Clara through a title is his Op. 21, *8 Novelletten*, written in 1838 and published in 1839. This title does not appear to have any connection with Clara whatsoever. However, upon examining his personal correspondences, the intimate meaning of this title is very telling. According to his letters, the title *Novelletten* was a derived and encoded method of allusion. These pieces were written during a period in their courtship when they did not meet or correspond often because of her father's restrictions. However, this was a time of immense creativity on Schumann's part, as it was following their secret engagement, August 14, 1837. On February 6, 1838, Schumann wrote to Clara,

And then I have also been composing an awful lot for you in the last three weeks – jocular things, Egmont stories, family scenes with fathers, a wedding, in short extremely charming things – and called the whole Novelettes [sic], because you are named Clara and Wieckettes does not sound good enough.¹³

Though this reference to his choice of title may not seem revealing to contemporary readers, it was most certainly obvious to Clara. “Imagining Clara, but unwilling to name her publicly, Schumann drew his title from the name of another well-known musical Clara, the singer Clara Novello.”¹⁴ Clearly, Schumann's fascination with riddles and code found expression in this clever word association.

Five days later, Schumann wrote “Do you know what the most precious thing [das Liebste] of yours is for me – Your Notturmo in F Major in six-eight time. What do you think about that? It is sufficiently melancholy [*Schwermuthig*], I think. Then the Trio

¹³ Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Teatable,” 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

from the Toccatina.”¹⁵ These two pieces from Clara’s Op. 6 were quoted in his Op. 21 *Novelletten*. Here we find an example of a composition that expresses many emotions and intentions. The title was clearly named to imply Clara, her pieces were quoted within, and he wrote her an accompanying letter to ensure that she would understand the references. With the assistance of the February letter, Clara surely would have understood that these pieces were meant for her and were expressive of Schumann’s thoughts – particularly those about “weddings” and “family with fathers.” Schumann could not have better articulated his intentions, even if it were in person.

General Comments on Clara’s Titling Practice and Genres:

Clara more frequently titled her works with generic labels, as was the tradition before the nineteenth century. As a result, her works may seem to carry little titular importance. However, this is not necessarily so. Even titles based on the form or genre of the composition can betray meaning when coupled with other signifiers. Recall, for example, Clara’s Op. 11 *Trois romances*, referred to earlier in this chapter. True, this title is representative of the genre and casual form of the pieces. However, as I have mentioned, the word *romance* can be interpreted literally to suggest a feeling or mood. It is entirely possible that Clara preferred this title over her other choices because of its extra-musical implications. Furthermore, Clara’s genre choices are important in her musical output and possible referencing to Schumann, because, as I discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, genre has the capability to imply meaning to external and social references.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

Dedication Analysis

The dedication of a piece of music to another betrays much purpose on the part of the composer. Though the practice of dedicating music is not particular to the nineteenth century, (indeed music has been bestowed on others for centuries), the function of these personal acknowledgements continue to enlighten scholars and listeners alike. Dedications can express a wide variety of intentions: paying homage to a patron or benefactor, expressing gratitude or love, acknowledging influence or inspiration, and for the purposes of bequeathing a gift. Figure 5.2 lists some of the pieces I examine in this section.

DATE	TITLE	DED	SIGNIFICANCE	AUTHOR
1831-33	Romance variée, Op. 3	R. Schumann	Her first dedication to him.	C. Wieck
1838-39	Trois romances pour le piano, Op. 11	R. Schumann	Significant genre, subject of much correspondence, and composed while they were engaged.	C. Wieck
1833	Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 20	R. Schumann	Final dedication to him.	C. Schumann

Figure 5.2 – Clara’s Significant Dedications to Schumann

Clara’s Dedication Practice:

Clara seems to have addressed many of the above-mentioned intentions of dedication throughout her career. She made several dedications meant to thank her supporters. Her Op. 5 *Valses romantiques pour le pianoforte* is dedicated to Emma Eggers née Garlichs, who was “the wife of a Bremen schoolteacher and music lover,

[and] was particularly helpful to the Wiecks on their 1835 trip to Bremen.”¹⁶ Her Op. 6 *Soirées musicales* were dedicated to Henriette Voigt, who was a friend and supporter of the Wieck family and music circles, and also an accomplished pianist married to an upper-class Leipzig merchant. Clara’s diary entry from September 30, 1836 (here written by Friedrich Wieck) read, “Madame Voigt bought the Tomaschek-Wieck piano and Clara dedicated Op. 6 to her to thank her.”¹⁷

In other cases, Clara seems to have dedicated pieces to friends, perhaps simply in appreciation of their time together. Her Op. 2 *Caprices en forme de valse pour le piano* is dedicated to Madame Henriette Foerster née Weicke [sic], who had been a fellow piano student and girlhood friend to Clara. This dedication was brought to Henriette on the eve of her marriage. Other similar dedications to friends can be found through the course of her composing career. It would seem that the dedicatee is not necessarily the inspiration for Clara’s music. Her dedication may have come as an afterthought, either to serve some purpose or to pay respects. With this in mind, her dedications to Schumann could have been similar afterthoughts. However, this can hardly be so. Her dedications to him were infrequent (considering the nature of their relationship), and all three instances were coupled with suggestive titles, genres, and were often subjects in their correspondence.

Clara’s Romance variée:

Significantly, Clara’s very first dedication to Schumann was written in the genre of the romance: her Op. 3 *Romance variée*. This piece, written in 1831-33 was her first

¹⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 293.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 293.

public admittance of her affection for Schumann. Upon learning of her Op. 3 dedication he responded, “I’d perhaps express the hope that the union of our names on the title page might in the future be a union of our views and ideas.”¹⁸ Clearly, Schumann read meaning into such common nineteenth-century musical practices as dedication. There must have been some sort of sentimental attraction to having one’s name permanently imprinted in association with a loved one.

Clara’s Trois romances:

Clara’s Op. 11 *Trois romances* are also dedicated to Schumann. The mere act of this dedication heightens the possibility that the *Romance* title is intended to be meaningful. I believe that Clara deliberately gave a suggestive title to these three piano pieces, and, with the dedication, indicated for whom she felt the romantic feeling. The reader may recall the extensive correspondence Clara and Schumann had on topic of these three pieces. Surely, her dedication to him after requesting his suggestions and sentiments is significant. Additionally, these pieces were written during the years of their engagement, making her reference to him and “romance” even more significant. In the published version, both her name and his would be united by this term.

Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann:

Clara’s Op. 20 *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann* was her final dedication to Schumann, made in the few years before his death. The reader may recall the historical transformation of the themes in this composition, as detailed in the previous chapter. The dedications associated with these pieces are almost as complicated as the

¹⁸ Weissweiler, *The Complete Correspondence*, 8.

manipulation of the quotation. Figure 5.3 lists the dedications that accompany these pieces.

DATE	PUB.	PIECE	AUTHOR	DEDICATION
Sept. 28/29, 1830		Theme	R. Schumann	
1831-33	1833	Romance variée, Op. 3 “Romanza”	C. Wieck	R. Schumann
1833	1833	Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck, Op. 5	R. Schumann	F. Wieck
Changes in 1850	1850	Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op. 5 (Revised version)	R. Schumann	Dedication to F. Wieck dropped
1838	1852	Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, No. 4 <i>Albumblatt</i>	R. Schumann	
May/ June 1853		Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann	C. Schumann	R. Schumann
June/Sep 1854	Nov. 1854	Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann	J. Brahms	C. Schumann
Changes in Fall 1854	Nov. 1854	Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann (Revised version)	C. Schumann	R. Schumann

Fig. 5.3 – Associated Dedications with Clara’s Op. 3 Theme

Clara’s Op. 3 *Romance* and her later Op. 20 *Variations* were both dedicated to Schumann. However, Schumann originally dedicated his 1833 *Impromptus on a Romance by Clara Wieck* to Friedrich Wieck, presumably to pay homage to his teacher. However, in 1850, while still angry with his father-in-law for their personality complications, he revised and republished the work. Only minute differences are apparent between the two copies, but, most significantly, Schumann dropped his earlier respectful dedication and left the 1850 version simply without. Clearly, Schumann placed much importance on this practice of overtly alluding to another.

Furthermore, in 1854, Brahms’s Op. 9 composition on the same two themes was dedicated to Clara. These pieces were a true collaboration of ideas, and the dedications

figured as heavily as the quotations into the homage and respect of authorship and inspiration.

Chapter Conclusions

When considering factors that betray meaning in music, two superficial characteristics of the musical score become immediately apparent: title and dedication. These elements are undeniably significant: they are typically the first details to be presented on a manuscript, and are usually also featured prominently on a separate title page. The author indubitably derives the title and dedication in order to express details particular to the music, compositional process, or personal influences. Given the nature of above examples, it is clear that both Clara and Schumann placed value on these methods of showing affection through music. As these elements would be forever inscribed in published ink, it is unreasonable to assume that composers would have titled or dedicated their music arbitrarily.

~Epilogue~

Exploring the Potential of Musical Messaging

This thesis has explored the potential of musical messaging in piano repertoire by Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann. Given their segregation, fleeting encounters, and particular courtship circumstances, Clara and Schumann were forced to find alternative methods of communicating. Music was an obvious solution: it was their common bond, interest, and passion, but more importantly, it expressed what words could not. The dual purpose of this project was to examine Clara's participation in dichotomous social realms, and to speculate on how the result of her unusual positioning led her to communicate her courtship through music.

Accordingly, chapter 2 focused on Clara's social and cultural surroundings in order to exemplify nineteenth-century gendered roles and expectations of white, middle-class women. By prefacing Clara's biographical detail with this historical survey, I illustrated her deviance to socially constructed norms for women. I showed that Clara's heavily male-influenced upbringing, and enforced participation in the public realm of music making, were unusual and had ramifications on her status as a woman. Her occupation of the public sphere made traditional courtship difficult, resulted in her continual lack of self-worth and need for encouragement, and, ultimately, led her to feel insecure with women's traditional roles.

The three analytical chapters in this thesis examined different compositional methods whereby Clara and Schumann imbued meaning into their scores. Chapter 3 explored the extra-musical and societal implications of genre, and by extension, examined what genre usage divulged about a composer's social positioning and

referential intent. I contested that Clara expressed messages to Schumann through her references to feminized, sentimental, and social discourses, as conveyed by her genre usage of the nocturne, romance, and mazurka. Additionally, her compositional style changed during her adolescence to mirror Schumann's Davidsbünd ideals more accurately. Not coincidentally, her shift from larger, performance-oriented, virtuosic works, to smaller and expressive character pieces, coincided with Schumann's principles, at a time when their relationship was becoming more intimate.

In Chapter 4, a more analytical analysis of allusion was conducted to identify particular quotations in Schumann's compositions. Here I also offered a critique of Schumann's ciphering practice as further evidence to support his love of musical encryption, and to suggest the possibility that more illusive compositional devices may be extant. More specifically, this chapter examined musical details and context that proved Schumann used quotation to externally allude to Clara. His quotation is a more overt method of messaging than genre use, for example, but still necessitates a learned listener to make the referential connections – or at least one privy to his extra-musical intentions.

I speculated upon the relevance of titles and dedications in chapter 5. These two obvious methods of suggesting musical meaning are the most overt and intentionally accurate examples I considered. Though titling and dedicating compositions may be perceived as an arbitrary practice, I argued in this chapter that Clara and Schumann purposely labeled their works to express meaning. Schumann's titles betray intent by the inclusion of Clara's name (or, as in the *Novelletten*, a more secret code for it), or by aligning his titles closely with her own, such as his re-numbering of Op. 6. Meanwhile,

Clara's dedications to Schumann are also significantly linked to compositions with suggestive genres or thematic quotations.

Through the examples explored in these chapters, I accumulated a number of plausible instances whereby Clara and Schumann may have communicated. Although there are no actual confessions from the composers that admit to corresponding in this manner, the numerous examples I have discussed in this study, coupled with suggestive and revealing letters (and combined with the many more pieces that host these same referential devices outside of this examination) must alert the reader to the significance of these allusions. I have no doubt that these composers embedded their repertoire with suggestive content as means of alternative correspondence.

Conclusions on the Relevance of Studying Musical Allusion:

I believe that music can be expressive of extra-musical meaning, even though this content may not be immediately recognizable to the audience. Texted music conveys message by the very nature of the accompanying words, but this luxury is not available to scholars studying imbued meaning within instrumental works. Unless music is overtly programmatic (implied by specific written adjuncts, editorial comments, or indicative titles), the communicative message embedded in the composition may be more difficult to identify. As I have shown in this study, private musical meaning may only be decipherable through the examination of many disparate elements of the music, ranging from identifiers within the musical texture, to the surface details on the printed score.

The topics of musical messaging and allusion are current, but vague and elusive, and therefore are in need of further scholarly investigation. Understanding music as

expressing more than the sum of its technical parts can reveal the personal intent of the composer. However, though this type of musicological questioning seems necessary, research into allusion is still cautious and exploratory, as there is a certain reticence to assume too much. Kenneth Hull perfectly sums up academic reluctance when he states, there is a “hesitancy on the part of scholars to spend time on an area which often seems to rely heavily on subjective impression: how do we establish whether a resemblance is to be understood allusively?”¹ Since musicology is more traditionally likened to a scientific field, where scholars utilize quantitative research methods and hard evidence to prove an outcome, it is natural that the type of subjective inquiry associated with allusion has not found wholehearted acceptance within the discipline. Clearly, the antiquated analytical methods we are accustomed to using in musicology are insufficient for speculation on some of the more personal and secretive details of our musical history and its participants.

Here is where new musicology, feminist musicology, and feminism are important influences; both on my work and on musical research in general. These contemporary fields teach the importance of the question “why?” and highlight the value of answers that cannot be understood fully or categorically classified. It is imperative for research to address the gray areas in every subject, because neglecting the illusive does nothing but further the mysterious. I believe musicology should embrace new methods of research and interpretation – as long as the authors of such research acknowledge any scepticism, and do not attempt to publicize their findings as absolute and irrefutable fact.

I remind the reader of John Daverio’s assertion that the purported Clara cipher is of no relevance to the music. It is my hope that such an argument is untenable if one

¹ Hull, *Brahms the Allusive*, 10.

takes musical criticism and biography into consideration. The very nature of musicology is to uncover meaning from the past. As historians, we are indebted to consider factors of influence upon the music itself, which necessitates an examination of the lives and practices of the composers in question. Even if this does not assist specific musical research, it pays necessary and due respect to the men and women who created our past.

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