

HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY CLARA SCHUMANN

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Clara Wieck Schumann's 200th birthday was September 13, 2019. She was an amazing pianist, teacher and composer during a time when women were expected to stay home and raise the children.

Childhood - Clara Josephine Wieck was born on September 13, 1819 to Friederich and Marianne Wieck in Leipzig, Germany. Her parents constantly fought – Clara was very withdrawn. Parents divorced when she was 5. Playing the piano was a means of escape.

Before her marriage – In 1830, Clara gave her first full recital in Leipzig's Gegendhaus at age 11. Her Piano Concerto was composed at age 14 and premiered at age 16 with Mendelssohn conducting.

Marriage – From the beginning of their marriage, the Schumanns kept a joint diary, which Robert started 9/13/1840.

Robert's illness – Robert's illness reached the point where he heard a constant tone in one ear and was delusional and aggressive. He attempted suicide, and then committed himself to a mental institution.

Widowhood – After Robert's death, her performing career took off to international acclaim, but she stopped composing. Her time was spent touring, teaching, and caring for her children and grandchildren.

BREAKING WITH THE NORM – Clara Schumann had the longest career of any concert pianist in the 19th century, over 60 years.

1. Started to play concerts for memory
2. Played solo concerts alone without other performers on the program
3. Focused on a few serious composers – J. S. Bach, Brahms, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann
4. Performed while obviously pregnant
5. Was permitted to teach both male and female students at both Leipzig and Hoch Universities. Was the only woman permitted to do so.
6. In her playing and teaching, strictly adhered to the wishes of the composer as dictated by the score. Technique was only a means to an end.
7. Was the main bread winner for the household before and after Robert's death.

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