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Clara Schumann: Piano Virtuoso



Synopsis

A piano prodigy, Clara Schumann made her professional debut at the age of nine and had embarked on her first European concert tour by the time she was twelve. Clara charmed audiences with her soulful playing throughout her life. Music was a constant source of inspiration and support for this strong and resilient woman. After the death of her husband, Robert Schumann, Clara continued her brilliant career and supported their eight children. Clara Schumann's extraordinary story is supplemented with her letters and diary entries, some of which have never before been published in English. Gorgeous portraits and photographs show the members of Clara's famous musical community and Clara herself from age eight to seventy-six. Index, chronology.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Clara Schumann (nee Wieck) lived a heroic life that would inspire anyone in any age. She lived a life of amazing contrasts: unable to speak with other people when she was young; a piano virtuoso at age 6; the student of a domineering father; the oldest child in a broken home at a young age; the major source of income for her family all her life; a young woman who had to defy her father to marry the man of her dreams; mother of 8 children; young widow; wife of one of the world's most famous composers; constantly on tour while raising her children; friend of the most prodigious

musical talents of her day; and the dominant piano performer of her time. This book is written at a level that will appeal to all but the most serious musical fans and students. The book is full of interesting illustrations and exhibits. I enjoyed the discussion of the sources in the back of the book. The author's mother has also written about Clara Schumann, so they were able to share data. Ms. Schumann's diary was started by her father, so it contains information from both of them. She also loved to write to her friends, and spent several hours a day doing that. As a result, there are a lot of quotes in her own words. Amazingly modern, yet little known to many modern people, Clara Schumann faced many of the conflicts and contradictions that today's young women and mothers face. Her brave and extraordinary life can provide inspiration and guidance for today . . . and tomorrow. I especially encourage you to share this book with young people who have extraordinary talent or a calling at a young age, to help them understand what some of the issues are that they will face over the rest of their lives. Overcome your misconceptions about what it means to be a career woman in the 21st century by examining one from the 19th century!

(...) That reason is because this book provides all the necessary information needed to fill your brain with a river of knowledge about this musical genius. A few templates of information I had read from the book were: * At age 5, Clara Schumann (her name was Clara Wieck, up until she married) had amazing talent for the average child in the world at the time. As it says, as soon as she layed her fingers on the keys of the piano for the first time, she already yielded her amazing skill at music.* Amazing for a child in her pre-teens, her first concert was conducted at age 12, at the Gewandhaus Theatre in her birthplace and what was one of her many hometowns of Leipzig, Saxony, in Germany. One of the many guests she played for were the King and Queen of Prussia.* Not suprising for a 16-year-old, she fell deeply in love with Robert Schumann, which, like all superstars, affected her music by how emotional her music sounded to her audience, although this aspect did not affect the quality of her music, as her emotions leaked into her music and it either told her audience whether she felt gloomy or joyful. A way it affected her personal life was by angering her father, Frederick Wieck, because he did not want anything to do with Robert Schumann. He threatened Clara that if she didn't break up with Robert, he would launch her career into mass jeopardy. So that didn't stop her from communicating with Robert. She wrote letters secretly to Robert, and all the letters she wrote to Robert up unto his death in the 1850s would fill several bookshelves.* She had seven children total, of which a few suffered terrible fates. Her son Ferdinand served in the military and he died of morphine addiction.* Some of her friends were Felix Mendelsohnn and Johannes Brahms. In my opinion, I feel the author of this book, Sussana Reich,

should be renowned the world over because of all the thought, effort, and precision she put into this biographical journey. She gives you every little detail you need to know about this genius. While some biographies just have the basic texts of a book, she included a timeline which I found especially helpful when I was writing a biographical report about her. This author is truly an individual who stands out from the rest of the crowd. In fact she has "convinced" me so much about her that I feel she will convince you the same way!

This book is obviously aimed at children, which I wasn't aware of when I ordered it. Nevertheless I found it a wonderfully inspiring account of Clara's life and her great love for Robert Schumann. Very touching. She was a very modern (for her times) working mother with a large family and had to keep playing to support her family when Robert became ill. She must have been a wonderful pianist - it was her life and she loved playing. How amazing that she was able to keep going during the years from 1841 to 1854, during which she had eight pregnancies! Thank you for including the events in her life section at the end of the book. How sad that five of her eight children as well as her husband, Robert Schumann, predeceased her.

Fascinating story of an incredible musical talent. This book is perfectly aimed at middle school readers, or anyone wanting an overview of a fascinating life. The language and detail are specific enough, without going into unnecessary depth for the audience. Not that the author sugar-coats Clara Schumann's life: her personal difficulties and family tragedies share time with her concert triumphs, her love for her husband, and her personal work ethic. I would recommend this book to any young reader, particularly a person with a single notable talent, or to any girl.

This book is very enjoyable and easy to read. It is well researched and based on her (the author's) mother's extensive study on Clara Schumann's life. The pictures and illustrations really bring this biography to life. I couldn't put the book down. Read it all in an afternoon. It is wonderful to have this history on women's music. I remember years ago during the eighties all this wasn't available. But now thanks to authors and writers like this one, we can recognize the accomplishments of women. This is a must have especially for music majors.

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