

Reinhard Kopiez*, Andreas Lehmann** & Angelika Heinlein**

*Hanover University of Music and Drama, Germany

**School of Music, Würzburg, Germany

Clara Schumann's collection of concert programs: A first quantitative analysis of her repertoire, her artistic mobility, and the development of a European concert landscape

Paper given at the Annual Meeting of the German Society for Music Psychology,
Würzburg, Germany, School of Music, 10 September 2005

Author address:

Prof. Dr. Reinhard Kopiez

Hochschule für Musik und Theater

Emmichplatz 1, 30175 Hannover, Germany

E-mail: kopiez@hmt-hannover.de

T.: +49-511-3100-608

Fax: +49-511-3100-600

Prof. Dr. Andreas Lehmann

Hochschule für Musik

Hofstallstr. 6-8

97070 Würzburg, Germany

E-mail: ac.lehmann@hfm-wuerzburg.de

T.: 0931-32187-3555

F.: 0931-32187-3802

Background

The Zwickau collection of 1312 concert program leaflets includes all concerts that Clara Schumann (1819-1896) gave between 1828 and 1891. This historically unique collection presents an exhaustive documentation of a performer's career from age 9 to age 71. Unfortunately, up until now archival data from performing musicians has been rarely employed as a source of insights for empirical musicologists. Employing an interdisciplinary, quantitative historiometric approach, we can analyze this data set descriptively and theoretically against the backdrop of her family situation. The most pertinent areas of interest are

- descriptive; Clara's concert activities against the background of her family situation; possibilities of travel and performance; relation between concert location and chosen repertoire;
- theoretical: development of a canon and repertoire with possible influence into our times; development of a "German musical landscape"; German music in European foreign countries.

Method

The program leaflets were entered into a database and prepared for a computer-assisted analysis. From among the 18,000 resulting repertoire entries we selected those solo piano pieces and chamber music in which Clara Schumann's participation was considered more than likely.

Results

A descriptive analysis of concert performances reveals two large phases: The first ranges from 1828 to 1856, i.e., from her childhood to Robert Schumann's death. The second phase covers the years 1856 to 1891, i.e., the time just prior to Robert's death until her last public concert (s. Fig. 1). Personal circumstances and experiences seem to have definitely influenced her concertizing activities.

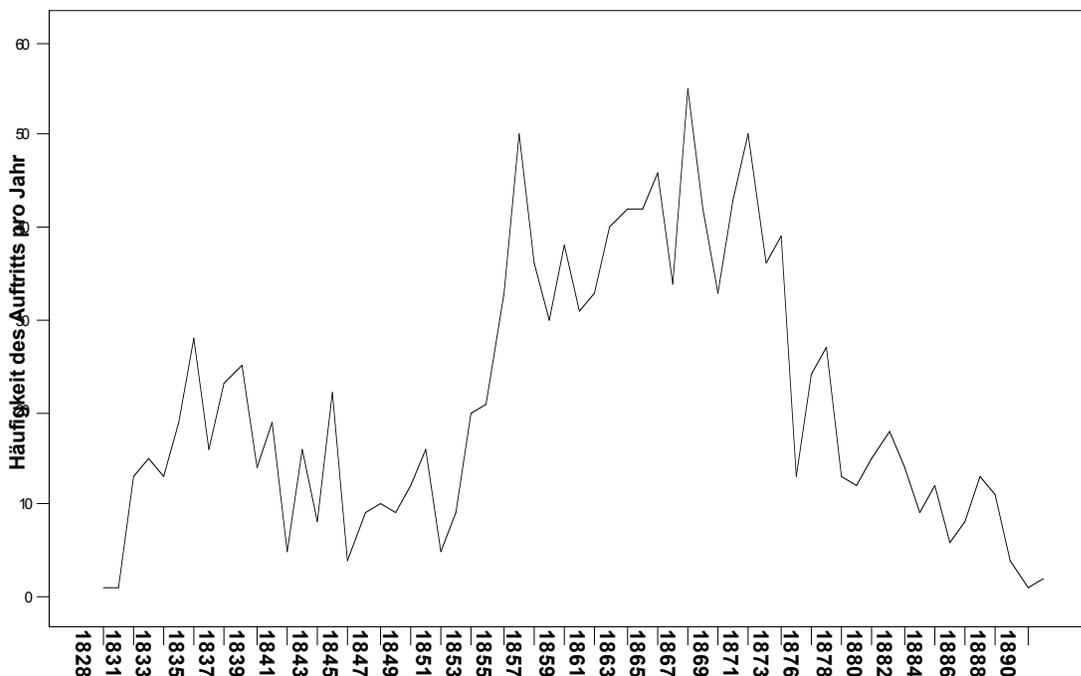


Fig. 1: The trajectory of Clara Schumann's public performances throughout her entire career as a pianist.

The analysis of the most frequently performed composers shows clear patterns: Five composers (Schumann, Chopin, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Bach) make up 72 % of all performances, though Clara Schumann performed works of a total of 77 composers. These proportions confirm current bibliometric models and can also be found in other creative domains. Analyses regarding the geographic distribution of the performances and relation between repertoire and location are underway. Clara performed 50 % of her concerts in merely seven of the occurring 160 cities, namely in London, Leipzig, Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, and Frankfurt. There are typical patterns of performance for individual pieces with virtuoso pieces marking the beginning of her career.

Discussion

So far our analyses have revealed that Clara's artistic career was sensitive to biographical events and hence the frequency of performance varied considerably throughout. Furthermore we can empirically demonstrate how Clara Schumann, through her enlightened program conception (s. Klassen, 1990), increasingly dispersed the works she deemed worthy. However, she could not free herself from the demands of the

audience. Her almost exclusively German repertoire may have played an important role in the development of a corresponding canon. And her choice of works and composers in the 19th century still governs concert life today.

References

Farnsworth, P. R. (1976). *Sozialpsychologie der Musik*. Stuttgart: Enke.

Klassen, J. (1990). *Clara Wieck-Schumann. Die Virtuosin als Komponistin*. Kassel: Bärenreiter.

Mueller, J. H. (1951). *The American symphony orchestra. A social history of musical taste*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.