

Clara Schumann's collection of playbills: A historiometric analysis of life-span development, mobility, and repertoire canonization

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Abstract

Clara Schumann's (1819–1896) important influence on concert life and piano performance throughout the 19th century can still be felt in our times. Virtually all concerts Clara gave between 1828 (at age 9) and 1891 (at age 71) are documented in a historically unique collection of over 1300 printed concert program leaflets (playbills). Combining an historiometric approach with musicological methods, we analyzed those data descriptively and theoretically from the perspective of repertoire canonization. The aim of this study was to document details of Clara's life-time career as a concert pianist, to study her repertoire development in the context of critical life events and personal aesthetic beliefs, and to establish some first comparisons with data from other performers of the time. This study complements existing research on programming and canonization by explaining the cumulative effects of an individual performer's programming decisions. First, the playbills were entered into a database and prepared for computer-assisted analysis. From the 20,000 program entries we extracted those 536 solo piano and chamber music pieces which Clara had performed. Analyses showed that the yearly frequency of concerts reflected her personal circumstances and critical life events. Although Clara performed works by almost 40 composers, the most frequently performed four composers (R. Schumann, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Chopin) comprised 70% of all performances. Furthermore, although she performed in 160 cities, 50% of her concerts took place in only seven major cities which represented international (London, Leipzig, Vienna) and national (Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Frankfurt) music centers. Finally, her influential role in the canonization of classical piano music can be explained by biographical circumstances which resulted in particular choices of traditionalist repertoire after Robert Schumann's death (1856). This included decreasing program diversity after 1870 and the avoidance of contemporary composers, such as Liszt, Brahms, Grieg, Tchaikovsky or Saint-Saens.

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1. Introduction

The life of Clara (Wieck) Schumann [henceforth Clara] has been of great interest to musicologists and gender studies researchers alike. She is a fortuitous case for us, because she stepped onto the stage at a time that marks the beginnings of a classical canon. Her stage career spanned over 60 years, during which the idea of a “museum of musical masterworks” (Goehr, 1992) emerged. Her life paralleled certain aesthetic and political tendencies of the 19th century. Her performance tempi, for example, were often judged to be at the upper limit of what was deemed proper for interpretations of Beethoven (see de Vries, 1996, p. 216f.). Already in the 1830s she sensed a change in performance practice and taste and consequently incorporated autonomous art into her repertoire. This was risky, as the audience at large still wanted to be touched and entertained rather than culturally educated (de Vries, 1996, p. 196). In the 1840s when the culture of the urban burgher became established, she settled down with her husband Robert Schumann and brought up her family. Toward the middle of the century she distanced herself from the aesthetic developments of the “Neudeutsche” Schule with its innovators such as Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. In the 1870s and 1880s she taught increasingly and became a pioneer of the classical–romantic heritage. How did the performing career of this remarkable woman evolve? Where did she travel, what did she play, and why? We will try to add a new dimension to the scholarly discussion by offering a more panoramic view of her lifetime.

The collection of Clara’s printed program leaflets (playbills) is, to our knowledge, the only instance of an exhaustive documentation of a 19th-century artist’s activities that spans an entire career from age 9 to 71. Her father Friedrich Wieck began the collection of playbills which was later continued by Clara Schumann, presumably with the help of her daughter Marie. It begins with the first playbill from October 20, 1828, in Leipzig and ends with the program from her farewell concert of March 12, 1891, in Frankfurt/Main. The Robert–Schumann–Haus in Zwickau, Germany, houses this collection consisting of 1312 printed programs. In the past this unique collection could only be used efficiently for research on individual recital programs since it was not accessible in electronic form. In our study, Clara’s concert activities are investigated with the help of a searchable database containing all 1312 playbills.

Using this unified corpus of information we hope to shed new light on this remarkable woman’s musical biography and, by the same token, discuss her lasting influence on the cultural institution of the piano recitals—an influence that is still tangible today.

1.1. *Research on repertoire, programming, and public tastes*

Although repertoire formation in music is a complex historical process, it is amenable to musicological study, in particular, quantitative historical analyses; quantitative methods are a widely accepted approach in historical scholarship (Haskins and Jeffrey, 1990). Since the inception of empirical aesthetics, researchers have continuously developed theoretical and methodological approaches to deal with questions of personal and public tastes and their formation. Surprisingly, this has not transpired into the musicological research on performers.

Mueller (1951) and Hevner Mueller (1973) undertook a statistical analysis of the repertoires performed between 1842 and 1970 by 27 American symphony orchestras, illustrating the process of repertory canonization. In their description of the formation of musical taste, Mueller (1951) introduced two terms of which the first, “popularity pyramid”, is used to describe the dominance of a few composers over the entire repertoire. Farnsworth (1969) investigated the social psychology of musical taste by comparing the frequencies of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s

performances of 92 famous composers with radio broadcast performances of those same composers. He also found a tremendous restriction to a small number of composers, mainly Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, and Wagner. Mueller's second term is "life cycle" and it explains changes in a composer's popularity over decades (as measured by the performance frequency of his works). We will look for similar tendencies of concentration and change over time in our body of data for Clara Schumann. Also, we will try to go beyond the descriptive levels and provide a rich biographical and historical contextualization.

The evidently biased distribution of performance frequencies in favour of certain composers can be explained by a "proportional effect," which means that the more often a piece is performed, the higher the probability is that the piece will be performed again (Gilmore, 1993, p. 231). In the study of science and creativity, researchers have tried to develop models that explain this concentration independently of the actual work by focussing on extrinsic factors such as the "performers" (this includes authors and composers) or social influence (Salganik et al., 2006). Some models apply to science as well as to culture. According to one study, out of roughly 250 composers "a mere 36 [...] account for three-quarters of all works performed, and just 16 provide half of all music listening" (Moles, 1958, cit. in Simonton, 1984, p. 79). These highly skewed distributions can be found in various areas including research on wealth and economic power. Price (1963, cited in Price, 1976) developed a simpler model for scientific publications, stating that half of the scientific contributions come from the square root of the total number of contributors. Such models provide us with a rough estimate of the magnitude of concentration we might expect in our data. We will come back to this model in our final discussion.

Another issue in repertoire selection concerns the balance or imbalance between novelty and tradition. Weber (1984) demonstrated with regard to the performance of contemporary music and tastes for contemporary music that the historical decline of such contemporaneity was a process that had started around 1700 and was largely completed by 1870. For centuries, audiences' musical tastes favoured works from contemporary composers, but by the late 1800s, a pantheon of classical composers (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven) had emerged. This change can be explained by three tendencies: first, the decline of royal patronage for artists; second, the increasing access to and awareness of ancient music and ensuing study of it; and third, the educated public's refutation of entertainment as the sole function of music. As Weber (2001) points out, the historical decline of contemporaneity was accompanied by a change from program miscellany to homogeneity around 1850 (see Section 4). How such historical trends can be described from the individual performer's perspective will become clear from our discussion.

A longitudinal analysis of a large corpus of repertoire pieces was conducted by Dowd et al. (2002). The authors investigated the repertoires of major U.S. symphony orchestras between 1842 and 1969 carrying out a re-analysis of data collected by Hevner Mueller (1973). The authors looked at two aspects: "change" in repertoire, which is the annual number of composers debuting in the repertoires and "conformity", which is the extent to which a few composers dominate the repertoires. They found that change had no bearing on conformity, with the debut of composers occurring only at the margins of the repertoire canon. Dowd et al. (2002) argued that the three factors which increased over time and which favoured significantly lower conformity after the 1920s were (a) the performance capabilities of the orchestras; (b) the expanding resources for contemporary music; and (c) the surge of new composers emerging from the proliferation of music programs among U.S. colleges.

Without dismissing Weber's (1984) and Dowd et al.'s (2002) point that certain historical changes are important on a macro-level, we suggest that it is the artist's decision of what music to perform in front of a given audience that transports those developments at the micro-level. For

example, Gilmore (1993) concluded from interviews with music performers describe, that “most of the programming in any concert schedule starts with the performer” (p. 232). Personal preferences of conductors or instrumentalists for musical works, but also economic reasons (e.g., rehearsal time needed) have a strong influence on programming decisions. Adopting the performer’s perspective is a valid way to approach the analysis of repertoire canonization, because he or she plays the central role in “negotiating among different musical needs, tastes and publics, (. . .) reshaping musical life in fundamental ways” (Weber, 2001, p. 128). Finally, we have to consider the artist’s strategy to compensate for imponderabilities such as critical life events or the general age-related decline of level of achievement. As explained in their theory of cognitive aging, Baltes and Baltes (1990) describe such strategies with their Selective Optimization with Compensation (SOC) model (see Section 4). We will show how this applies to Clara.

So far, most studies we mentioned have not dealt with individual performers. Granted, Farnsworth (1969, chapter 6) investigated a single orchestra and its repertoire, but individual programming decisions cannot be traced back to individuals. Yet, the study of creative individuals with a life-span perspective is well-established. Simonton, a leading protagonist in the use of historical data in psychology, provides an overview of his historiometric approach which he defined as a “scientific discipline in which nomothetic hypotheses about human behavior are tested by applying quantitative analyses to data concerning historical individuals” (1990, p. 3). His method lists the following criteria: (a) test of nomothetic hypotheses concerning historical individuals; (b) application of quantitative analyses; (c) focus on individuals who have made history and entail multiple cases (Simonton, 1999). It is of little importance whether the method is applied to a large number of cases or a single one—as in the present study.

1.2. Previous analyses of Clara Schumann’s playbills

First analyses of Clara Schumann’s recital programs were carried out by Clara’s first biographer Litzmann (1902ff.) who probably relied on the same source as the present study. Süsskind-Pettler (1980) undertook analyses of Clara’s favourite composers using performance frequencies; however, recitals after 1850 were not considered. Analyses by Reich (1985) focused on concert tours, and individual recital programs played only a minor role. De Vries (1996) added a frequency analysis of performed compositions to her biography of Clara, compiling previous statistics and combining solo repertoire, chamber music, and accompanied songs (see below for a comparison with our data). Bär (1999) concentrated on the duo recitals of Clara with Joseph Joachim. The most recent biography by Steegmann (2001) gives an uncommented list of concert tours, but not details on cities or performed repertoire. Furthermore, due to the political situation in the divided Germany, all studies prior to 1990 had only limited access to the archival sources of Zwickau in the former German Democratic Republic. In summary, due to lack of a reliable data base, all previous analyses of Clara’s – or anybody else’s – repertoire could provide interesting, but only selective, glimpses into the artist’s life.

1.3. Aims and rationale of the study

This study explores the following aspects of Clara Schumann’s career development: (a) the influence of critical life events and ageing on her life-span development regarding frequency of stage performances; (b) her associated geographical mobility and exportation of German music; (c) her canonization of the repertoire and the role of personal constraints and certain aesthetic values (traditionalist vs. modernist); (d) an exploratory comparison with data for other

performers. We complement existing scholarly research on programming and canonization by employing a primarily quantitative approach and by focusing on the cumulative effects of an individual performer's programming choices. In our opinion, this is the first time ever that such an extensive body of data on a performing career has been analyzed.

2. Methods

2.1. Preparing the data

Initially, the 1312 available leaflets from the Zwickau collection were transcribed by hand to a full text data base (Software askSam, Version 5) by a trained musicologist with expertise in the study of musical sources. The resulting total set contained some 20,000 entries of which many could not possibly have been performed by Clara (e.g., orchestral pieces), while many identifiable piano pieces were performed by her many times. To separate out the large amount of information not related to Clara's performance (i.e., other artists' performances on the same occasion) from the pertinent information, several measures were taken. Fig. 1 offers a flowchart of the decisions we made to eliminate potentially misleading information.

In the first step of our selection process, all songs with piano accompaniment and pieces which were not likely performed by Clara were excluded. This resulted in a preliminary corpus of 1,975 works most probably performed by her. In a second step, we selected from those only pieces for piano solo, piano and orchestra, and chamber music with piano accompaniment in which her participation was beyond reasonable doubt, leaving us with a total of 536 pieces. In a meticulous final step, the spelling of the works' titles and opus numbers were reconciled and oversights corrected. For this, we used standard catalogues of works (e.g., *Grove Music [online]*; *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart [MGG I, MGG II]*) and printed *catalogues raisonnés*.

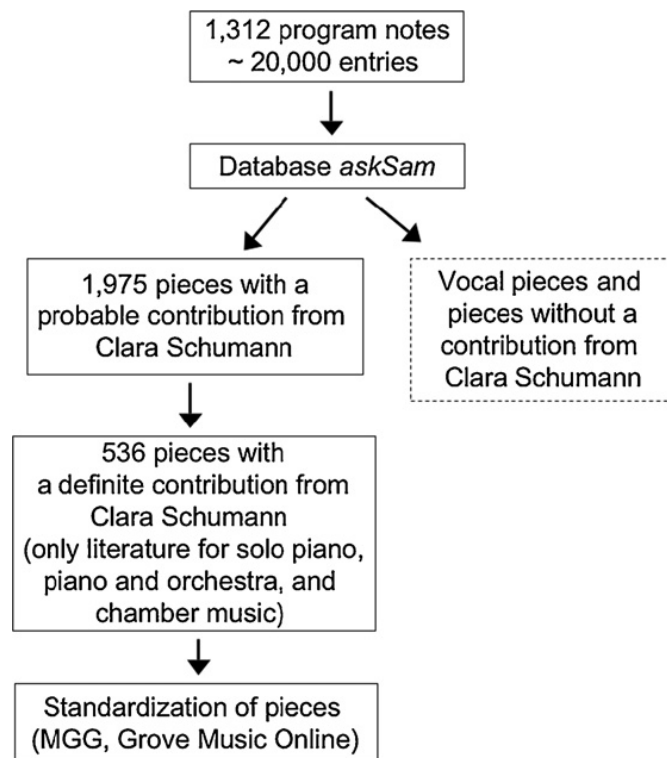


Fig. 1. Flowchart of the process of data collection from Clara Schumann's playbills.

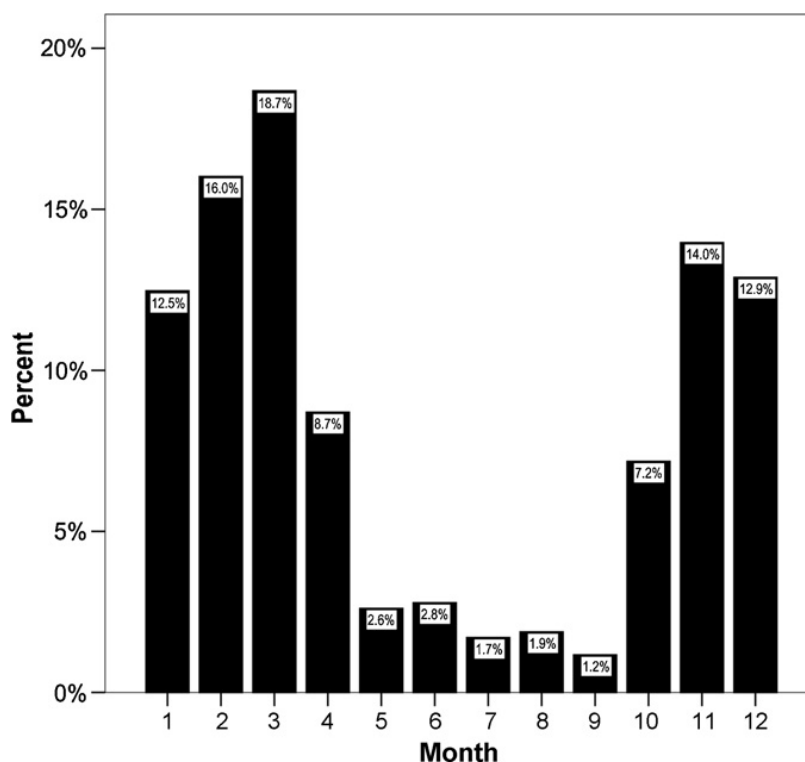


Fig. 2. Distribution of Clara Schumann's concert activities across months of the year (1 = January). The distribution clearly shows the beginning of the concert season in October (10).

We are well aware that some critical aspects of piece selection remain, because information of Clara's participation was sometimes ambiguous and had to be inferred on the basis of information available on the previous or next playbill. Also, we had to make decisions about what to count as individual works. For example, in the case of Robert Schumann's *Piano Concerto* op. 54, we counted this as a single work despite its three movements; similarly, Beethoven's *Piano Sonata* op. 57 is counted as one work, even if only one movement might have been performed at a certain concert. Although Clara pioneered the performance of an entire Beethoven sonata (op. 57, "Appassionata", March 1, 1837), the playing of entire sonatas soon became the rule (around 1845). Thus, when we state how many times a work was performed, we cannot rule out partial performances (at least up to the 1850s, cf. Weber, 2001). In addition, we considered only public recitals with official playbills and not informal performances Clara might have given in front of friends. This ensures that our results err on the conservative side by underestimating, rather than overestimating, Clara's "true" repertoire size and concertizing activities.

The analyses of concert activities were performed for concert seasons rather than calendar years. This means that concerts taking place between October and December were counted for the following year, with September 30th being the cut-off date for the season. This decision was based on the observed distribution of concert activities across the months of the year which showed a seasonal pattern with a slump during the summer months (see Fig. 2). Therefore, all references to years in the graphs should be read as seasons. Our procedure is in line with Clara's own perception of the concert season as stated in a letter to Brahms dated August 17, 1868, in which she writes about the usual impending travels in October.²

² "(...) denn wie bald ist es Oktober, und da rüstet man dann schon wieder zur Reise." (Litzmann, 1927a, p. 591).

3. Results

3.1. Reliability of extant biographical information about Clara

Unfortunately, many biographical studies are compiled by recycling facts from previous studies without questioning their sources and reliability. As a case in point we have tried to rectify two mistakes using our repertoire database. First, Weissweiler (1990, p. 342) claimed that Clara Schumann had a romantic liaison with Brahms and “therefore played his works wherever she performed” and preferred them over Robert’s,³ in particular after 1857. Contrary to this assessment, the proportion of Brahms’ works in her entire solo repertoire amounts to 1.6% or 2.1% if we include chamber music, and the proportion of solo and chamber music compositions (seasons 1855–1891) varied around a low 4–5 pieces or 2.8%.

Second, de Vries (1996, p. 187) reported that Clara’s career commenced on November 8, 1830, in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. This statement is based on data available in Litzmann (1902ff., Vol. 1, p. 25), in which he wrote that Clara Schumann performed Kalkbrenner’s *Rondo Brillant* op. 101, the *Variations Brillantes* op. 23 by Herz, the *Quatuor Concertant* op. 230 by Czerny, and her own *Variations About an Original Theme*. According to our data, she also performed her own *Romance for Physharmonica* and an accompanied song. More critical than this incomplete listing of works performed is that her first public concert actually took place two years prior to this performance, namely a few weeks after she turned nine on October 20, 1828. There, she was a guest performer in a recital by pianist Caroline Perthaler in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. On this occasion, Clara Schumann performed, together with Emilie Reichold, only Kalkbrenner’s *Moses Variations* op. 94 for four hands. Clara herself considered 1828 to be the start of her solo career and hence celebrated her 50-year stage anniversary publicly in 1878 and her 60-year anniversary in 1888. Those brief but telling examples demonstrate that biographical accounts are not always as reliable as one would hope. In the case of a child prodigy, a 2-year discrepancy between the reported and documented first public performance is an inexcusable “margin of error.”

3.2. Descriptive analysis of life-span performance activities⁴

Our initial analysis tracked changes in performance frequency over Clara’s life-span (see Fig. 3). Reich (1985) proposed a threefold segmentation for Clara’s career: the prodigy phase from 1828 to 1840, her married years from 1840 to 1856, and a long final phase after Robert’s death from 1856 to 1891. Based on our data, there are convincing reasons for segmenting into four phases with a subdivision of Reich’s third phase into two (October 1856–March 17, 1875; March 18, 1875–March 12, 1891). The main reason for this subdivision is the complete cessation of concert activities between December 1873 and March 1875 due to arm problems and the subsequent tapering of her stage career; this break is cloaked when using calendar years as a basis of analysis. The end of phase 2 has been adjusted accordingly: As can be seen in Fig. 3, Clara’s concert activities took off prior to Robert’s death, soon after his commitment to psychiatric care on March 4, 1854. We, therefore, decided to use this date as the logical starting point of the third phase. The resulting four phases are

³ “(...) weshalb sie überall, wo sie auftrat, seine Werke spielte, was ihn allerdings mehr zu verstimmen als zu erfreuen schien. (...) daß sie seine Musik gegenüber der ihres Mannes bevorzugte, war ein Skandal.”

⁴ Supplementary online materials with detailed statistical analyses of Clara’s repertoire can be obtained from the web server <http://musicweb.hmt-hannover.de/csprograms>.

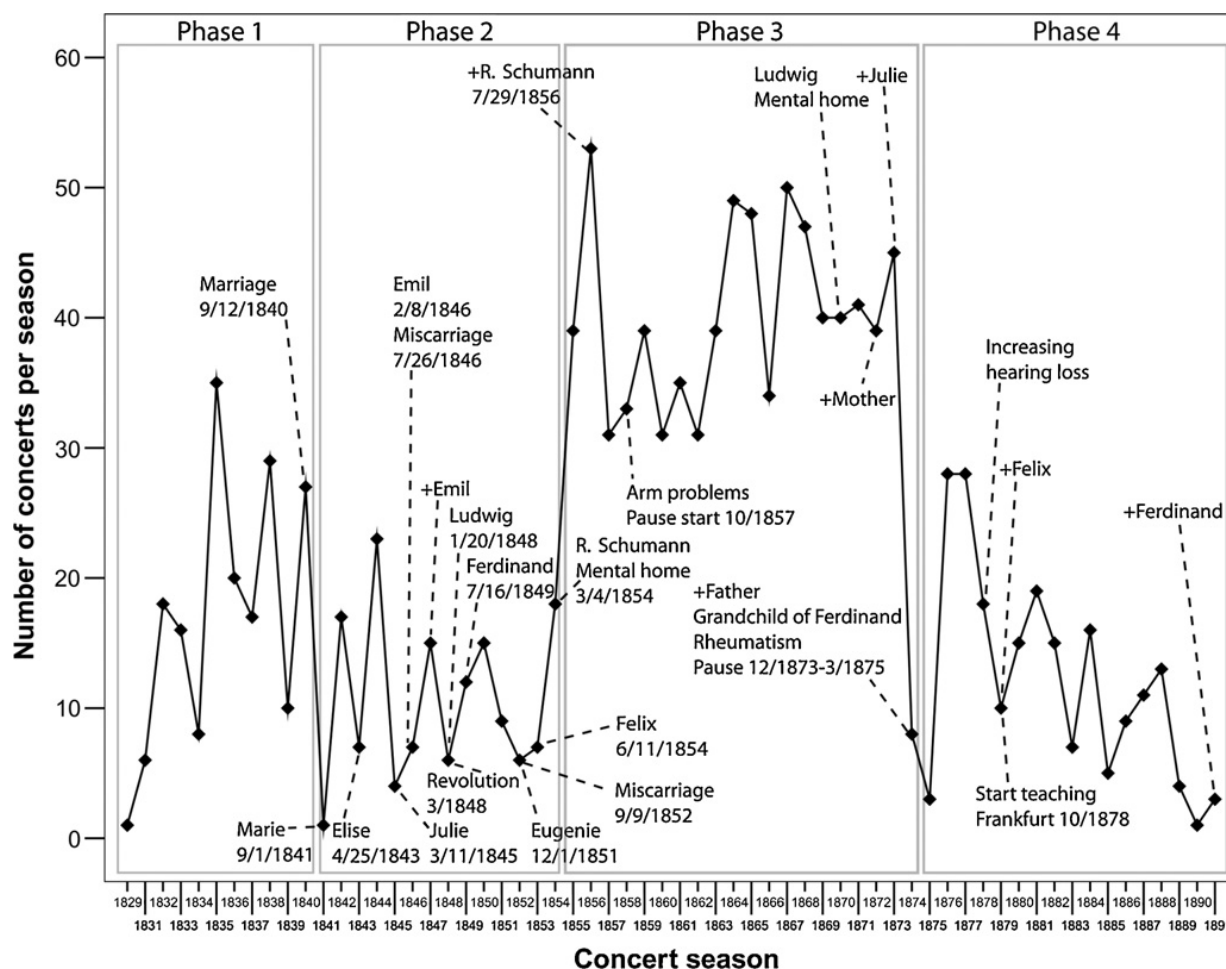


Fig. 3. Life-span development of Clara Schumann's performance activities during four career phases (Phase 1: October 1828–September 1840; Phase 2: October 1840–September 1856; Phase 3: October 1856–March 17, 1875; Phase 4: March 18, 1875–March 12, 1891). Critical life events have a significant impact on performance frequency. Performance minima occur more frequently after a critical event than do performance maxima. Numbers of concerts are indicated for concert seasons, starting in October of the preceding year (cutoff date September 30 of any year).

delimited as follows: Phase 1: October 1828–September 1840; Phase 2: October 1840–March 3, 1854; Phase 3: March 4, 1854–March 17, 1875; Phase 4: March 18, 1875–March 12, 1891. In the following section we will describe her career by making references to critical life-events (see Fig. 3). Those events were abstracted from the current biographical standard literature (de Vries, 1996; Köckritz, 2007; Meier, 1995; Reich, 1985; Schumann, 1995; Stegmann, 2001; Weissweiler, 1990).

In Phase 1, a first peak of concert frequency per season was reached in 1835. This was mainly caused by concerts in cities in northern Germany (Hamburg, Hanover, etc.). The average performance frequency in this first career phase was 17.0 recitals per concert season (S.D. = 10.4). After her marriage in 1840 and the birth of her first child, Marie, in 1841, Clara experienced her first career slump. In Phase 2 of her career we also note considerable fluctuations in performance frequency, certainly caused by the continuous sequence of pregnancies, resulting in eight full-term births and two miscarriages. In this second career phase Clara only performed 10.4 recitals per concert season on average (S.D. = 6.1). If we were to look for a point of comparison for the maximum number of yearly performances, a perfect example would be Clara's famous male colleague Franz Liszt. During the years 1841–1844 he performed in Germany with an average of 66.2 (S.D. = 11.9) concerts per year (calculated on data in Saffle, 1994, pp. 93f.). Clara began Phase 3 of her career 2 years prior to Robert's death on July 29, 1856,

by increasing performance frequency to 36.7 recitals per season (S.D. = 12.5). The midpoint of her life-time concert career was reached in this third phase, when she had played about 50% of all public concerts ($n = 771$) she would ever play. This third phase of her career was similarly characterized by perturbations in performance activity which we can clearly associate with a series of critical life-events between 1872 and 1875, when in short succession her mother (Marianne Bargiel), father (Friedrich Wieck), and daughter Julie died. At this time she started to suffer from rheumatism in her arms and hands (letter from November 24, 1873, see [Litzmann, 1927b, p. 29](#)) and took over custody of a grandchild (her son Ferdinand's offspring). With this accrual of events, her performance activities took a lasting blow. The transition from Phases 3 to 4 is marked by a complete performance pause between December 1873 and March 1875. Due to serious hand and arm problems (mainly in the right arm), she was unable to continue performing and tried hard to recover, reducing the average number of concerts per season in Phase 4 – 12.0 (S.D. = 8.1). This last phase of her career was also accompanied by increasing hearing impairments. These were cogent reasons to search for an alternative source of income which would not be affected by the instability of her health. Hence, after protracted negotiations she took over a permanent teaching position as professor of piano at the Frankfurt Conservatory of Music in October, 1878. The variability of frequency of performance across the four phases is statistically reliable ($\chi^2[3] = 500, p < .01$). Also, performance minima occur significantly more often than performance maxima after critical life events ($\chi^2[1] = 5.44, p < .025$).

3.3. Artistic mobility

The next analyses focused on Clara Schumann's geographical mobility, looking at the countries and cities she visited during her career (see [Fig. 4](#) and [Table 1](#)). The assigning of cities to countries was done using an historically accurate atlas for central Europe; from 1815 to 1914 ([Bruckmüller and Hartmann, 2001, pp. 131–135](#)). Here, we are interested in relating country and choice of repertoire, because this choice would be indicative of the audiences' preferences and Clara's aesthetic choices.

The panels of [Fig. 4](#) show a clear sequence from nearby countries to more distant ones. In Phase 1 of her career, Clara's father arranged her activities around German speaking countries (Germany, Austria), which probably helped increase popularity in her native country. In Phase 2 she extended her activities along an East-West axis (Netherlands, Russia; see [Table 1](#)). Already in 1840 Clara entertained plans for concert tours in Great Britain and Russia. Most scholars are aware of her first concert tour to Russia in 1844, because it is well-documented through letters and diaries. In Robert's opinion it was a disaster, and they decided on shorter further tours. Sometimes Clara even traveled alone, because Robert hated travelling. At that time, journeys to Great Britain appeared too long and dangerous. Moreover, Clara's complicated logistic arrangements had to be handled by personal acquaintances: concerts in St. Petersburg (Russia) were organized by Adolph Henselt, in the Netherlands by Johann Verhulst, and in London by William Sterndale Bennett. The organization of a concert entailed finding and engaging an orchestra or string quintet as well as additional artists for assistance and local VIPs for endorsement. It is plausible that at this stage of her career, Clara decided to concentrate on Germany and Russia with exploratory concert activities in the Netherlands at the end of Phase 2.

In Phase 3 her activities broadened along the North-South axis; the predominance of Germany as the main country was complemented by a significant increase of activity in Great Britain. Beginning with the 1867 concert season, the number of concerts in Great Britain surpassed her activities in all other countries. In Phase 4 she performed exclusively in Germany and Great

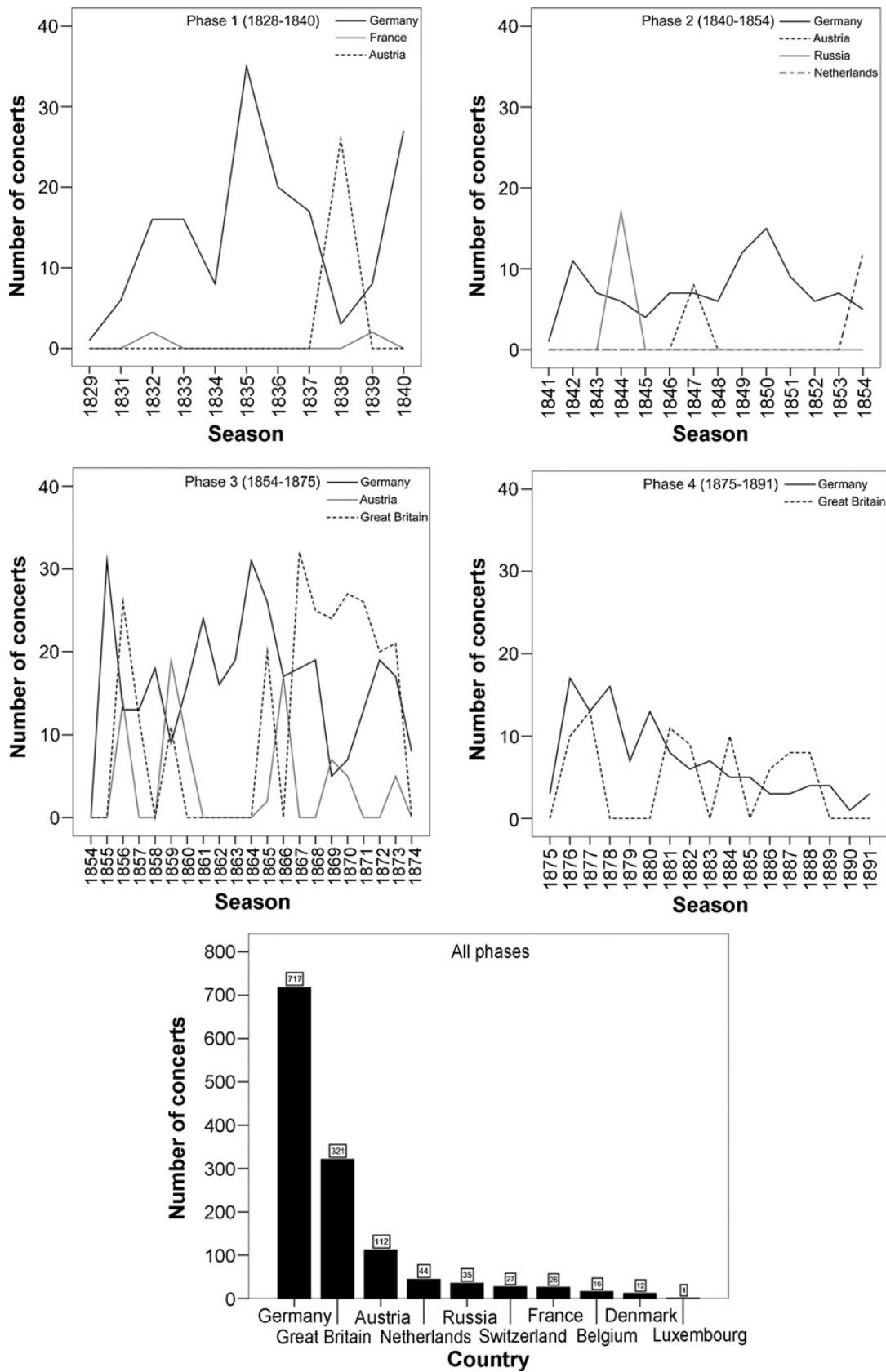


Fig. 4. Top panels: Distribution of Clara Schumann’s concerts across countries during four phases of her career. Countries with less than 5% of performances have been omitted from the line graphs. Bottom panel: Distribution of all concerts according to country.

Table 1
Proportion of performances in different countries for Clara Schumann's four career phases.

Country	First phase (1828–1840)	Second phase (1840–1854)	Third phase (1856–1874)	Fourth phase (1875–1891)
Germany	84.0%	70.5%	44.0%	57.1%
Austria	13.9%	5.5%	10.1%	–
France	2.1%	–	2.9%	–
Netherlands	–	8.2%	3.6%	2.0%
Russia	–	11.6%	2.3%	–
Denmark	–	4.1%	0.8%	–
Great Britain	–	–	31.6%	36.9%
Switzerland	–	–	2.5%	3.9
Belgium	–	–	2.1%	–
Luxembourg	–	–	0.1%	–
<i>N</i> ^a	187	146	771	205

^a *Note.* Three of the 1312 playbills lacked information on city and country.

Britain. Across her entire career, 87.7% of all concerts took place in only three countries—Germany, Great Britain, and Austria.

A similar strategy of concentrating activities in a few selected areas can be observed when studying the cities she visited (see Fig. 5). In Phase 1 of her career, Clara Schumann performed roughly half (42.2%) of her recitals in only four German cities. At the end of Phase 2, Düsseldorf became her new hub, and 39.1% of all recitals were presented in only four German cities. Due to the extension of her concert activities to Great Britain in Phase 3 of her career, concert activities in London increased to 23.7% of all recitals given. Vienna remained the location for 6.0% of all concert activities during this third phase. During Phase 4 London became her most frequented city outside Germany. In sum, along with Vienna, the three German cities Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin were the sites of 24.2% of her life-time concerts (see lower panel). Although Clara performed in some 160 different cities, 50% of all concerts occurred in only seven major ones: London, Leipzig, Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt/Main, and Hamburg.

3.4. Repertoire formation across place and time

We found the names of 76 composers of piano music in our database, 39 when excluding chamber music. One of Clara's explicit aims was to increase the popularity of works by composers whom she valued—in particular those of her husband Robert (see Section 4). Despite her efforts to familiarize every country's audience with his works, Clara was apparently not always successful: in France and Austria, for example, the conservative audience was reluctant to accept his works despite her performing a high proportion of them (see Table 2; also Fig. 6; de Vries, 1996, pp. 189ff.). At times it was therefore necessary to adapt the program by scheduling more virtuosic pieces or simply a more varied repertoire (see category "Others" in Table 2). In Russia, only 17.8% of all solo works were composed by Robert. However, not all programs in the more conservative countries showed a decrease in the proportion of Robert's compositions, as the cases of Austria and France illustrate (23.1% and 30.0%, respectively). Also, these differences were statistically inconspicuous. In sum, the distribution of composers in Clara's recitals offers a distinct conclusion: (a) in all countries, the composers occupying the first four ranks were identical, namely R. Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven, and together they accounted for 69.5% of her performed solo repertoire; (b) the proportion of works by Robert remained rather constant across all

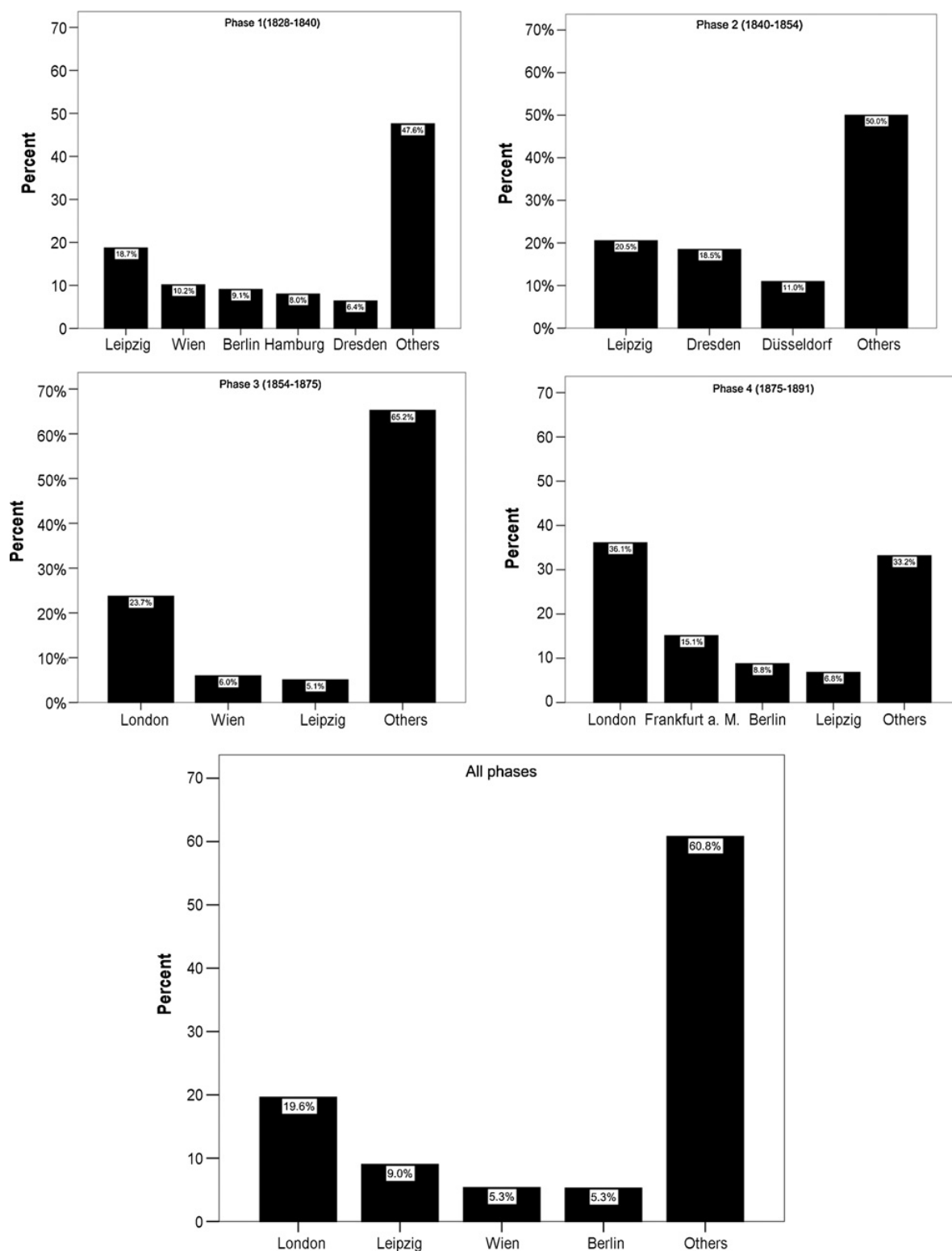


Fig. 5. Top panels: Distribution of Clara Schumann’s performances across European cities during four phases of her career. Cities with less than 5% of performances have been collapsed into the “Others” category. Bottom panel: Distribution of all concerts according to city.

countries visited (between 21% and 32%); (c) works by Bach, Brahms, Liszt, and Mozart played a unexpected negligible role in her repertoire (see Fig. 6). Especially the last finding regarding Brahms will come as great surprise to most musicologists, since previous authors have implied contrasting findings (see Section 4 for details).

Table 2

Most often mentioned composers on Clara Schumann's playbills for six selected European countries. The percentage for each composer includes solo pieces, pieces for piano and orchestra, and chamber music (including multiple performances). Composers with less than 2% contribution have been collapsed into the "Others" category.

Rank	France (n = 142)	Netherlands (n = 180)	Russia (n = 202)	Austria (n = 595)	Great Britain (n = 1103)	Germany (n = 2895)	All countries (n = 7405)
1	Schumann 31.7%	Schumann 29.4%	Schumann 20.8%	Schumann 25.7%	Schumann 28.5%	Schumann 24.0%	Schumann 28.4%
2	Mendelssohn 16.9%	Chopin 17.2%	Chopin 14.9%	Chopin 15.5%	Beethoven 18.9%	Chopin 16.2%	Mendelssohn 12.0%
3	Chopin 12.7%	Mendelssohn 16.7%	Mendelssohn 14.9%	Beethoven 10.8%	Mendelssohn 15.7%	Beethoven 13.8%	Beethoven 11.5%
4	Beethoven 12.0%	Beethoven 15.6%	Beethoven 10.9%	Mendelssohn 10.6%	Chopin 9.2%	Mendelssohn 12.7%	Chopin 10.8%
5	Bach 5.6%	Weber 4.4%	Thalberg 7.9%	Henselt 7.9%	Schubert 5.5%	Bach 3.8%	Schubert 6.9%
6	Liszt 3.5%	Bach 3.3%	Liszt 6.9%	Bach 5.5%	Bach 3.9%	Herz 3.4%	Bach 3.1%
7	Wieck, C. 2.8%	Scarlatti 2.8%	Scarlatti 5.9%	Schubert 4.0%	Brahms 2.4%	Brahms 2.5%	Brahms 2.3%
8	Weber 2.8%	Henselt 2.8%	Bach 5.4%	Wieck, C. 3.2%		Schubert 2.4%	Mozart 2.1%
9	Händel 2.1%	Heller 2.8%	Henselt 3.3%	Scarlatti 2.9%		Wieck, C. 2.3%	
10	Henselt 2.1		Schubert 3.0%	Brahms 2.5%		Henselt 2.1%	
11			Wieck, C. 2.0%			Mozart 2.0%	
	Others 7.7%	Others 5.0%	Others 4.0%	Others 11.4%	Others 15.9%	Others 12.9%	Others 22.9%

In order to add a temporal dimension to the analysis of repertoire selection, we plotted performances of the top four composers throughout Clara's career. A visual inspection of the graph (Fig. 7) revealed surprisingly that prior to Robert's death (1856) his music did not possess the importance for her repertoire that it would assume later. Beethoven also gained importance only in the second half of her career, and Chopin was the foremost composer in the first half. In Phase 1, Clara's repertoire was essentially centred on two composers: Robert Schumann and Frédéric Chopin, who were only gaining in reputation and still primarily known to insiders. Chopin became recognized as a promising young composer as early as 1831 through R. Schumann's visionary review "Ein Werk II" of Chopin's *Variations* op. 2 (Schumann, no year).

3.5. From contemporaneity of musical taste to a traditionalist canon of compositions

Against the background of studies on changes in contemporaneity (Weber, 1984) and conformity (Dowd et al., 2002; Weber, 2001), the last part of our data analysis investigated

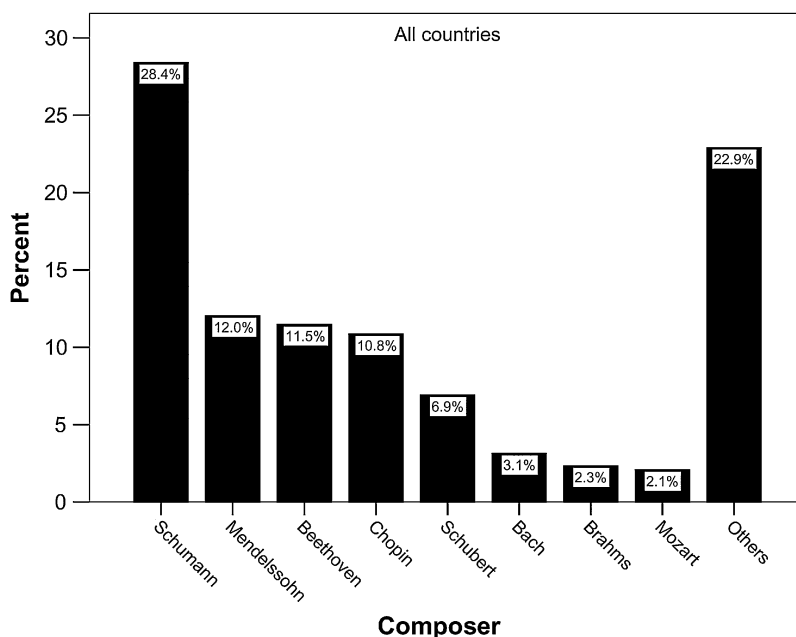


Fig. 6. Clara Schumann's repertoire specialization (canonization). Percentage for most performed composers including their solo pieces, compositions for piano and orchestra, and chamber music (including multiple performances). Composers who contributed less than 2% have been collapsed into the "Others" category.

repertoire age and *program diversity* over time. For this, Clara's stage career was divided into sections of 5-year intervals (starting in 1828). Next, we established the composing dates for the 10 most frequently performed works within each 5-year interval and computed the relation to all other works of this same interval. The top 10 works covered between 22% and 66.5% of total pieces performed within the respective 5-year period. Next, the average repertoire age for each interval was calculated by subtracting the composition dates of each of the 10 works from the first year (season) of the respective career interval and taking the median of those differences. We can hypothesize different scenarios: If Clara had continuously added works by contemporary composers, the repertoire age would remain constant over time; conversely, if she maintained the same repertoire, adding only very few older or even contemporary pieces, the repertoire age would increase progressively over the course of her career. The results are obvious (see Fig. 8). For the first 20 years of her career (up to the 1850s) the mean repertoire age goes up only slightly. After 25 years into her career, namely in 1854 (shortly before Robert's death in 1856) and until 1858, her strategy of repertoire selection changed: She emerged as the prime performer of works by Schumann, Beethoven and Mendelssohn! Before 1854 her most performed composers had been Herz, Henselt, Pixis, Thalberg, Mendelssohn, and Chopin. Starting with her London debut in April 1856, works by Beethoven (*Piano Concerto No. 5*) and Mendelssohn (*Variations Sérieuses op. 54*) became a staple of her repertoire. She maintained this profile for the next 30 years. As a result (see Fig. 8), from this point on forward (about 25 years after career onset), the relationship between her biological age and the mean repertoire age is nearly linear, and her repertoire comprised exclusively works from the "classical" canon, updated only by a few selected works from more recent composers (mainly chamber music by Brahms).

Program diversity was calculated for each interval in Clara's career by taking the number all works performed (including songs) that constituted 50% of the total repertoire. As the associated line in Fig. 8 illustrates Clara's program diversity reached its maximum at about 40 years into her

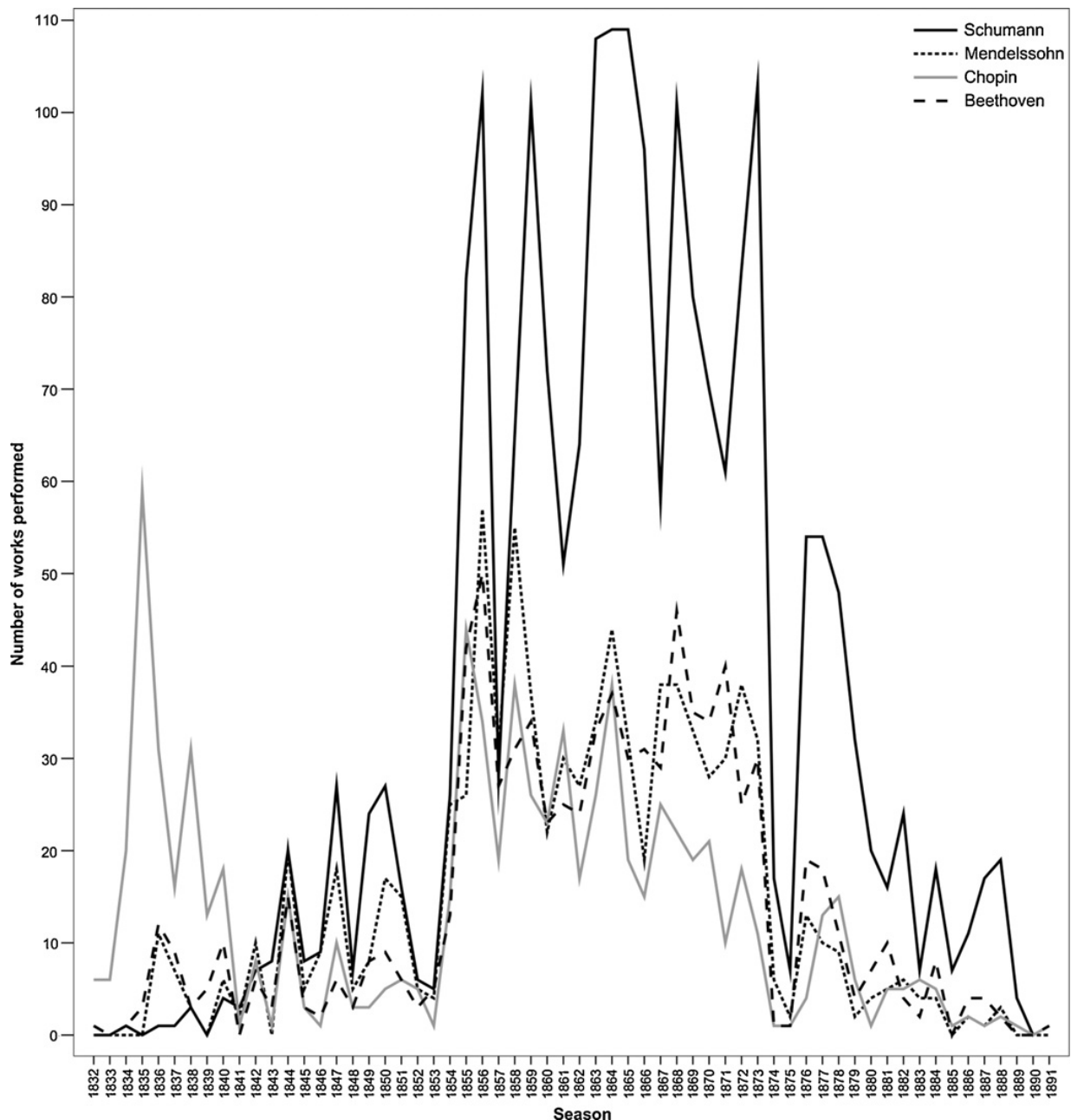


Fig. 7. Distribution of the four most performed composers (Schumann, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Chopin) across Clara Schumann's life span (includes solo pieces, compositions for piano and orchestra, and chamber music).

career (around 1870) and decreased thereafter. Altogether this means that although she played many different pieces, these pieces tended to be part of a traditionalist canon.

Our final data analysis concerns the mix of music genres over time (see Fig. 9). Clara performed piano solo music for the first 15 years of her career. Immediately after her marriage in 1840 she decreased the proportion of piano solo music and increased the proportion of songs in her repertoire, presumably as one strategy to compensate for the time constraints imposed upon her by her familial duties. Then, shortly before Robert's death (around 25 years into her career) she again programmed more solo repertoire, however, providing less variety and more previously performed and older works than before. Her beginning health problems about 40 years after career onset (around 1870) were again characterized by a larger number of accompanied pieces: for example, songs and, later on, chamber music works.

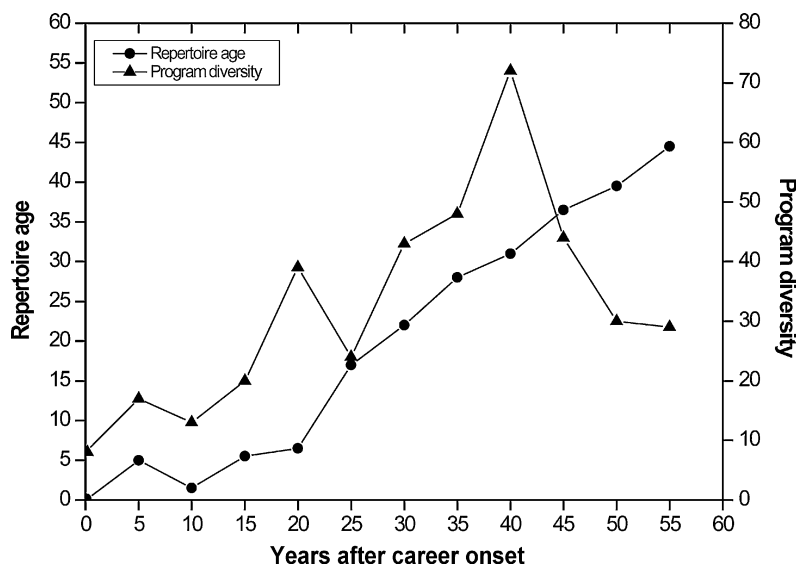


Fig. 8. Average program age and program diversity throughout Clara Schumann’s entire career, starting with her first public appearance in the season of 1829. Data points are calculated for intervals of 5 years after career onset. Program age = average [median] age of 10 most performed compositions; Program diversity = number of compositions which result in 50% of all performed pieces [all works performed, including songs]).

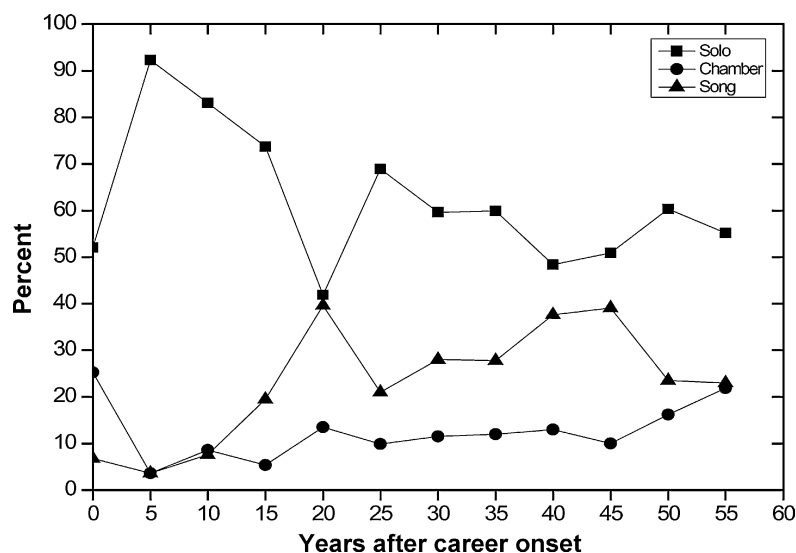


Fig. 9. Development of the proportion of music for piano solo (squares), chamber music (circles) and songs (triangles) in Clara Schumann’s repertoire, starting with her first public appearance in the season of 1829. Data are calculated for intervals of 5 years after career onset.

4. General discussion

With this paper we contribute to the scholarly literature on Clara Schumann by tracing her entire performing career using the unique collection of playbills. At the same time, we show how the artist’s lifelong series of discrete decisions, influenced by varying biographical constraints, have contributed to establish the piano recital as we still know it today.

4.1. Methodological remarks

The large number of programs allows us to use quantitative analysis as a method of choice. Printed programs can be an invaluable source of information because they tell us indirectly that

audiences wanted to hear and what performers were willing to play for them. Yet, a few critical points regarding the reliability of our sources may be in order. Obviously, sometimes a program may not have been performed as printed because of unforeseeable circumstances—for example, when the orchestra cancelled at the last minute and Clara had to brush up on an alternative piece (letter to Robert, January 19, 1839, see [Weissweiler and Ludwig, 1987](#)). As this was likely an exception rather than the rule, we can assume that the playbills accurately portray Clara's performing career. There may also have been some events without corresponding printed programs, or ones for which the playbill might have been lost. We could fabricate the unlikely circumstance that Clara played Muzio Clementi extensively, later destroyed all playbills listing this composer—incidentally missing two leaflets! Also, one could complete the collection by painstakingly cross-referencing our database with all available newspaper reports, and so forth. However, whether this additional information would change our conclusions is questionable, because it is unlikely that the undocumented or lost programs would be systematically different from the documented ones.

Difficulties in preparing the data for analysis arose from the fact that the titles mentioned on the leaflets were sometimes ambiguous, and it even remained unclear after identifying the piece which part of it had actually been performed. Thorough cross-checks with other programs often helped to resolve some of those ambiguities. Since our analyses have not thus far addressed questions for which the issue of partial or whole performance would have been critical (for instance, the question about which Chopin *Nocturnes* she may have never played), we believe that our information is reliable enough for the present purpose.

4.2. Clara Schumann's personal situation

An important, though not at all surprising, result of our analysis is that the frequency of Clara's concerts varied predictably across her life-span. For example, during the time of her marriage up until Robert's later stages of illness and commitment to psychiatric care, she performed an average of 10.4 concerts a year, which appears to be a comparably low number for a professional artist. Her tender age during the early years and personal obligations once she got married in 1840 (e.g., her pregnancies and the husband's desire to envisage her as the proverbial "Hausfrau" [household manager]) might account for this fact. While performing 10 and 27 concerts during the 1839 and 1840 season, she only performed once in the first season of her marriage (1841). Given that the concerts occurred mainly during the winter months, the household was consequently overseen by servants much of the time on weekends – most concerts happened on Sunday according to our data – and even during the week. Especially during the cold season, trips must have been physically extremely demanding. It seemed that Clara concertized most often in large cities with good infrastructure (e.g., railroad) and music publishing houses. This would have supported efficient travel as well as help her promote Robert's and other contemporary composers' ambitious music. Clara had such an outstanding reputation as an artist that she could forego giving concerts in small cities where the public only wanted to hear virtuosic pieces for light entertainment and where she could hardly find an adequate concert hall or decent instrument to perform on.

Although she significantly reduced her concert activities after 1876 and shortly before becoming a professor in Frankfurt/Main (1878), this did not erase her from public memory. Virtuoso Ignaz Paderewsky reportedly suffered from the overbearing shadow of the old lady ([de Vries, 1996](#)). Our data suggest that her prime time began just prior to Robert's consignment to psychiatric care (1854) when she became the sole financial provider for the household. But even

despite financial obligations and artistic desires, her personal life took a toll on her performance career. Perturbations of this career were caused by critical life-events associated with subsequent decreases in performance frequency.

4.3. Comparison with other performers

It would be interesting to compare the data analyzed here to that of different performers, a desire that may be fulfilled in years to come as other researchers may join our effort to locate and study collections of playbills. For example, Hans von Bülow's and Joseph Joachim's printed programs are apparently available (Hinrichsen, 1999) and should be analyzed in a similar fashion; statistical analyses of the repertoire of Marie Wieck (stepsister of Clara) are under way (Hodde, 2008). A rough-and-ready inspection of their repertoires reveals that canonization is a multidimensional process: it is influenced by the gender of the performer (DeNora, 2002), respective instrument, genre, available literature, and historical circumstances.

Clara's personal canon of piano solo repertoire is headed by the five most performed composers R. Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Bach. In the first phase of her career Clara followed the prevalent musical taste by performing short virtuosic pieces, but in the second phase (after 1840) she increasingly considered works by Beethoven and composers of the 18th century (e.g., Bach, Scarlatti). In this phase she became the leading performer of entire piano sonatas and works from what is now known as the "classical/romantic" era. It is well established that the next generation of pianists, such as Tausig, Rubinstein, or von Bülow also allowed the audience greater exposure to a reduced selection of repertoire, modelling their repertoire choices after Clara's (Reich, 1985, p. 265).

The violinist Joseph Joachim's (1831–1907) repertoire was of similar taste to that of Clara, and they concertized together frequently: He performed Beethoven's violin concerto more often than any other (e.g., Mendelssohn and Spohr), and his repertoire for solo violin featured J.S. Bach's *Chaconne* in D minor (from BWV 1004) most frequently. Not surprisingly, that his Joachim String Quartet (which performed between 1869 and 1911) mainly played works by Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, and Mendelssohn (see Borchard, 2005, p. 500 and appendix E.I. on CD-ROM). In contrast, the famous pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), about one decade younger than Clara, performed mainly Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, Bach, and Brahms (see Klassen, 2006, p. 63). Thus, while Clara played her husband's works, Bülow performed the musical avant-garde (e.g., Liszt).

4.4. Canonization from the perspective of personal constraints

Although Clara played piano solo works by 39 composers, only a few of these composers were featured in the majority of pieces performed. Researchers in different fields ponder reasons for such tendencies of concentration: Why are few people so disproportionately influential, be it in science, economy, or in cultural areas? The discussion in cultural philosophy (Citron, 1993; Goehr, 1992), which we tie in only marginally, criticizes the authoritative way in which the classical canon is enforced. According to Price (1976; see Section 1), we would expect the square root of 39 composers in her solo repertoire – about six in all – to contribute half of the repertoire. In Clara Schumann's case, the top three (R. Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn) alone account for 57% of all pieces performed, and the fourth composer (Beethoven) increased this value to 69.5%. If we add a fifth (Bach), we have already accounted for nearly three-fourths (73.8%) of the performances. Thus, for reasons to be explained below, Clara "plugged" an extremely restricted

canon of composers. Finally, it should be mentioned that her friend Brahms' works accounted for a disappointing 1.6% and her own works for 2.0% of the solo repertoire. This sobering statistic stands in marked contrast to some scholarly intuitions and the sympathies afforded to Brahms in the Schumann family (see, for example Eugenie Schumann's memoirs in E. Schumann, 1995).

Previous studies in concert programming have argued that the basis of modern classical music taste (characterized by an increased homogeneity in programming) emerged around 1870 (Weber, 1984). In the case of Clara, this change came somewhat earlier, noticeable by an increase in repertoire age around 1855 (25 years after her career onset; see Fig. 8). Weber (2001) also argues that the change from program miscellany to homogeneity, marked for example by the reduced number of compositions performed, took place around 1850. As we can see in Fig. 8, Clara's program diversity declined somewhat later, around 1875. A thorough investigation of miscellany among our programs lies beyond the scope of this paper and would require a secondary analysis of full/partial performances of various works.

So far, we have observed how Clara unknowingly became a trendsetter. In the late 1850s, when she was about 35 years old, she started on the third phase of her career. This phase was preceded by a series of critical life-events between 1841 and 1856 (see Fig. 3) which had certainly resulted in limited time for the study of new repertoire. It is therefore probable that in the late 1850s she had to rely on her previous selection of well rehearsed pieces to compensate for the lack of new repertoire. The maximum program diversity around 1870 (40 years after career onset; see Figs. 8 and 9) can be explained by a similar strategy: the performance of a larger number of pieces in which the pianist acts as an accompanist increases the diversity of concert programs whilst reducing pianistic demands. A case in point: 25 years after career onset (around 1854 until shortly before Robert's death) the proportion of songs in her repertoire was about 20% compared to 69% of solo piano music; 40 years after career onset (around 1870) the proportion of songs increased to 37% compared to 48% of solo repertoire. At the time Clara was suffering serious arm problems causing her to stop for the entire season of 1874. In sum, her two-fold strategy of a reduced program contemporaneity (resulting in an increasing program age), followed by an increased program diversity (caused by a higher proportion of accompanied songs) was a sustainable strategy to maintain her career between 1854 until about 1870/1875. Next, in the late 1870s she switched to teaching as a new and reliable source of income.

Clara's choice of repertoire was also influenced by her health condition. Already in 1869 she mentioned pains in her hand and arm in a letter to Brahms (October 23). In another letter to Brahms (April 8, 1871) she wrote: "I have ruined myself with your Händel Variations [op. 24] (...). I cannot tell you how sorry I am that these variations are beyond my capabilities" [transl. AL]⁵. Although this medical condition marred her pianistic career until the end, she upheld her image of a piano virtuoso, and public discussion of Clara's health problems was off the record (see Alford and Szanto, 1996). Her movement disorder would today be diagnosed as an "overuse injury" (Altenmüller et al., 2006, Chapter 5). These hand problems also explain the surprisingly few solo piano compositions by Brahms in her repertoire.

In their theory of cognitive aging, Baltes and Baltes (1990) explain those strategies that we just described as the Selective Optimization with Compensation (SOC) model. Like any other aging (or ailing) human, artists can react to the general age-related decline of level of achievement by using two strategies, namely selection and compensation. Our data analysis confirms that Clara

⁵ "Ich hatte mich an Deinen Händel-Variationen [op. 24] verdorben (...). Ich kann nicht sagen, wie leid es mir ist, daß diese Variationen (...) über meine Kräfte gehen." (Litzmann, 1927a, p. 639).

used exactly these strategies between 1854 and 1874 when she reduced the number of newly studied works and instead relied on existing ones (selection) and performed a larger number of pieces with reduced demands on the piano part (compensation).

Although aesthetic decisions will be discussed in the next section, one personal issue regarding her programming is obvious: Would she have promoted Robert Schumann's work if she had not been married to him? She played his music extensively in public only late in their marriage and after his death. His highly poetic style with descriptive titles of his works may have been problematic in her opinion. In fact, she wrote to Robert in an apologetic tone explaining why she did not perform his works in Paris 1839, arguing that one had to win the public's mind first: "Once you have offered the audiences something they understand, then you can also put forward something more difficult" [transl. AL].⁶ A related aspect concerning her choices in programming Robert's music might have been her knowledge of his manic depression that prompted her to perform certain works more or less frequently. Future analyses will have to clarify this question. From a modern perspective, using the number of currently available sound recordings as an indicator of quality, Weisberg (1994) did not find evidence supporting the idea that manic-depression *per se* altered the quality of Robert's compositions. We cannot overlook her competitive advantage as the Schumann widow. Here she held a unique selling proposition (to use an expression from the marketing world), because she could claim to be the leading authority on his music and enhanced this position by editing his works and transmitting them through teaching. This allowed her to be sought after even in later stages of her career, much to the chagrin of her rivals. A final reason, namely her longevity, completes the list of assets which served her lasting impact as an artist who promoted a specific type of well-established repertoire.

4.5. Canonization from an artistic perspective

We can only hint at a few of the complex reasons that Clara progressively concentrated on the small number of composers or works. Since the "objective quality" of a work of art is difficult to judge for a performer in a given historical situation and may be in fact an historical outcome, we want to steer clear of this question and hone in on Clara's personal aesthetic dogmas.

The first explanation for her promoting a small number of composers is related to immediate biographical and historical aspects. Her first (pianistic) love, still under her father's tutelage, was Chopin's music (see Fig. 7), probably due to its appropriateness for the salons and commensurate with maiden virtuosity. Also, she held a life-long enthusiasm for Mendelssohn's work as she admits in a conversation with her grandchild Julie Schumann in 1894: "Mendelssohn is the greatest master, Schumann the greatest poet" [transl. AL].⁷ On the other hand, she was opposed to the music of Wagner and Liszt and she described Liszt's music as utterly dreadful in a diary entry of 1841 (cf. Weissweiler, 1990, p. 221) and was unwilling to recognize the modernity of his later compositions. She also never performed one of his piano concertos, études, or other major works. Even in her teaching she propagated this agenda, and one student from her Frankfurt class reported in 1894 that Liszt was Clara's only disliked composer.⁸ In summary, her initial aesthetic

⁶ "Hat man dem Publikum Etwas geliefert, das sie verstehen, kann man ihm auch dann Etwas Schwereres vorführen." (Weissweiler and Ludwig, 1987, p. 469)."

⁷ "Mendelssohn ist der größte Meister, Schumann der größte Poetiker." (Moser, 1990, p. 262).

⁸ "Der einzige, ihr unsympathische Komponist war Liszt, da sie, wie sie sich ausdrückte, das 'salto mortale' auf dem Klavier nicht liebte." (Hofmann, no year, p. 98).

thinking, be it her own or inspired through her domineering father and literate husband, can be characterized as “traditionalistic” with complete ignorance for later contemporary masterpieces. Consequently, the list of unperformed works is impressive: piano concertos by Saint-Saens (from 1858), Grieg (1868), Dvorák (1876), and Tchaikovsky (1875/1880), compositions for piano solo by Fauré (e.g., *Nocturnes*, from 1883), and Smetana (e.g., *Polkas*, 1855). A look at notes from her classes in Frankfurt, taught between 1893 and 1896, confirmed her conservative attitude: none of her 29 students from this period studied either any of the above mentioned works or piano concertos by Brahms, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, or any important works by Liszt (Hofmann, no year, pp. 135–141). The teaching repertoire reported from Liszt’s masterclasses between 1884 and 1886 paints a completely different picture (see Göllicher, 1975). His students studied (of course) numerous works by Liszt (with the *Années de pèlerinage* [1848–1853] and the *Études d’exécution transcendante* [1851] as the most performed works) as well as works by other contemporary composers, such as Grieg (e.g., Piano Concerto op. 16, 1868), Tchaikovsky (e.g., op. 23, 1874/75), Dvorák (e.g., op. 33, 1876), and Sgambati (e.g., op. 15, 1878/80), and other contemporary piano solo works (e.g., Balakirev’s *Islamey*, 1869). Liszt was aware of his role as a promoter of works by contemporary composers, and he characterized the works performed in those masterclass as “Zukunftsmusik” (music of the future, see Lachmund, 1970, p. 135). In sum, Clara’s teaching and performance repertoire tell a similar story of traditionalism.

We do not want to imply that the performer is some kind of clairvoyant. Instead, like all artists, Clara experienced a particular historical time and its *Zeitgeist* and acted upon it, even anticipating developments. For example, she became known as the Beethoven player especially after her 1854 debut in England. Clara’s aesthetic mission speaks through a letter to Brahms: “You regard it [music] only as a way to earn money. I do not. I feel a calling to reproduce great works, above all, those of Robert, as long as I have the strength to do so. [. . .] The practice of art is, after all, a great part of my inner self. To me, it is the very air I breathe” (Reich, 1985, p. 267). She wanted to promote those pieces that she deemed worthy of transmission—or had learned to appreciate through her two male advisors (her father and Robert). In sum, it is virtually impossible to disentangle the interplay of personal life circumstances, aesthetic decisions, and even economic considerations, especially when it comes to the choice of programming her husband Robert’s works (see previous section).

4.6. Future perspectives

Our final discussion concerns how our findings connect with Clara Schumann’s subjective valuations and thoughts expressed in her diaries and other scholars’ opinions, both of which tend to focus on singular events. Her many small decisions, made one at a time in the context of a specific biographical and historical situation, all add up to a larger picture that tells a different story from that of the individual moments. For example, Clara might have been fond of a work at first, written fervently about it, but later grown tired of it. Or she might have noticed that the audiences did not share her preferences. It is impossible for a performer to oversee his or her lifetime repertoire at any point. Therefore, our cumulative view of all her performances can be used to substantiate claims made at specific points in time.

Our present approach may also be used to complement the existing musicological understanding of Clara Schumann’s career and the lasting tribute she paid to Robert’s music. Undoubtedly our findings also contribute to the current discussion of repertoire formation as discussed for classical music (e.g., Goehr, 1992; Klassen, 2006) or for popular music (e.g., Appen

and Doehring, 2006; Kärja, 2006; Watson and Anand, 2006). A question worthy of discussion would be how and if Clara's choice of works by Beethoven was influenced by the discussion of "masculinity" in music and music performance. For example, as DeNora (2002) points out, already at the beginning of the 18th century there was a lively discussion on "masculine" and "feminine" composers and their performers. This discussion is also relevant to the issue of whether Clara or Hans von Bülow, her strongest rival at the piano, was the leading Beethoven performer (see Hinrichsen, 1999, pp. 327ff.; Klassen, 2008). This discussion reached its climax in the 1880s and centered on the question of analytical versus holistic interpretation. Our database affords the possibility to track country specific tastes regarding individual works and composers in order to show how modern perceptions and preferences have been shaped (e.g., Hennion and Fauquet, 2001).

The next step in our research will be to investigate the programming of individual pieces at different points in Clara Schumann's life. Related to this, we will develop notions that describe the "life cycles" of a repertoire (see Mueller, 1951). Furthermore, we have only analyzed piano solo pieces (including piano concerts) and chamber music from our data base, leaving aside for the moment much vocal music that still awaits investigation. And here also we will be able to look at Robert's works in particular.

5. Conclusions

Our data reveals that Clara Schumann's career was strongly influenced by her personal situation and constraints, and she wisely adapted her repertoire accordingly. Her impact on modern programming and the subsequent canonization of her repertoire structure has to be understood in light of the many repeated minor decisions she took. Through her later extensive teaching activities she was able to project into the next generation of pianists.

Could this phenomenon have occurred at any other time in history—for instance, during Mozart's time? Presumably not, since only the societal climate of the 19th-century provided an audience ready for her conservative choices. Up until Clara's time, great pianists had always been composer-pianists like Chopin and Liszt, but with the help of Robert's music she was able to compensate for her minor compositional stature. More so, because she was woman, nobody expected her to be a composer. Whether she could have also been a great composer in her own right is a question beyond this paper. As a woman of her time Clara was not granted the opportunities that her husband was, but she took utmost advantage of his resultant work.

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