Clara Schumann at 200 - Study Days -

4-5 Oct. 2019
School of Music, University of Ottawa
Perez Hall, CreatorSpace

Friday, Oct. 4

9:30–10:45. Workshop 1: Clara Schumann's Textural Tapestries
Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers (University of Ottawa)

Coffee break (10:45–11:00)

11:00–12:15. Workshop 2: Clara (and Robert) in London: Views from Within and Without
Julie Hedges Brown (Northern Arizona University)

Lunch (12h15–13h30)

13:30–14:45. Workshop 3: Expressive Declamation in Clara Schumann's Lieder
Harald Krebs (University of Victoria)

Coffee break (14:45 – 15:00)

15:00–16:15. Workshop 4: Clara Schumann's 1840s Compositions and her Midcentury Persona
Alexander Stefaniak (Washington University in St. Louis)

Coffee break (16:15 – 16:30)

16:30–17:45. Workshop 5: Clara Schumann and the Poetry of Emanuel Geibel
Susan Youens (University of Notre-Dame)

Saturday, Oct. 5

9:30–10:45. Workshop 6: Schumann's "Ihr Bild" in David Lewin's Musical Imagination
Nathan Martin (University of Michigan)

Coffee break (10:45–11:00)

11:00–12:15. Workshop 7: Managing the Art of Listening: Clara Wieck Schumann's Designing of Concert Programs
Janina Klassen (Hochschule für Musik Freiburg)

Lunch (12:15–13:30)

13:30–14:45. Workshop 8: Clara Schumann's Nightingales
Sharon Krebs, soprano

Coffee break (14:45 – 15:00)

15:00–16:15. Workshop 9: Musical and Poetic Closure in Clara Schumann's Lieder
Stephen Rodgers (University of Oregon)

16:15 – 16:30: Closing remarks

Info: jpedneau@uottawa.ca
Clara Schumann’s Textural Tapestries
Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers (University of Ottawa)
Building on my past scholarship on Clara Schumann’s use of descending basslines as a means of formal organization, I turn in my workshop to her ascending basslines as a lens into some of her recurrent harmonic techniques and their kaleidoscopic textural arrangements. We will discuss the interactions of (mostly) ascending bassline contours with sequential harmonies, wedges and linear intervallic patterns, and pedal points, and we will look at musical excerpts that exemplify the multifaceted ways in which she layers and recombines voice-leading patterns to create distinctive kinetic and textural makeups.

Clara (and Robert) in London: Views from Within and Without
Julie Hedges Brown (Northern Arizona University)
As a widow, Clara Schumann spent more time concertizing in London than in any other European capital. Not surprisingly, advocacy of Robert’s music formed a significant focus of her efforts. This workshop will explore 1) the challenging context into which Clara entered on her first tours, and 2) strategies she adopted to make his music more palatable and well-known to English audiences. Collaborating with August Manns at the Crystal Palace Concerts, and especially with Arthur Chappell at the Popular Concerts, Clara became a significant factor in the growing popularity of Robert’s music. This popularity in turn exposed a deepening divide between conservative critics and audiences, and reviews by the former illustrate various defensive explanations about why Robert’s music was supposedly capturing the public imagination. Time permitting, the workshop may explore the critical reception of Clara—the-performer when playing her husband’s music versus that of other composers; gendered descriptions of her playing; and reasons that explain why Clara cultivated such a long relationship with the English.

Expressive Declamation in Clara Schumann’s Lieder
Harald Krebs (University of Victoria)
Beginning in her earliest songs, Clara Schumann recognized that declamation was a significant vehicle of text expression, and declaimed her song texts in creative and imaginative ways. I shall begin with a presentation explaining my methodology for the analysis of declamation in song, and shall apply it to one of Clara Schumann’s Lieder (“Der Mond kommt still gegangen”, op. 13 no. 4). We shall then work together on analyses of declamation in a number of additional songs.

Clara Schumann’s 1840s Compositions and her Midcentury Persona
Alexander Stefaniak (Washington University in St. Louis)
This workshop will discuss a book chapter-in-progress titled “Clara Schumann's 1840s Compositions and her Midcentury Persona.” During the 1840s, Schumann renovated her compositional portfolio, publishing her first essays in several important musical genres. My chapter considers why these works were important for Schumann’s broader profile as a performer. I argue that Schumann published—and, in some cases, performed—these works as part of her broader effort to transform her public persona (including her gendered persona) as a pianist and thereby enhance her legitimacy and authority as a performer of the canonic tradition. Our discussion will center on two of Schumann’s 1840s projects: her Preludes and Fugues, Op. 16—in which she asserted her mastery of a learned, venerable tradition—and Piano Trio, Op. 17—in which she put her own, distinct stamp on a genre cultivated extensively by virtuoso pianists.

Clara Schumann and the Poetry of Emanuel Geibel
Susan Youens (University of Notre-Dame)
Three of Clara Schumann’s most beautiful songs—“Liebeszauber,” Op. 13, no. 3; “Der Mond kommt still gegangen,” Op. 13, no 4; and “Die stille Lotosblume,” Op.13, no. 6—are settings of poetry by a singular character in German letters: Emanuel Geibel (1815-1884), whose first volume of poetry in 1843 netted him a pension from the Prussian king. Clara Schumann was not the only composer drawn to this poet; in this symposium, we will discuss the sources of Geibel’s popularity with musicians, the nature of these three poems, and Robert’s approach to them.
Schumann’s “Ihr Bild” in David Lewin’s Musical Imagination  
Nathan Martin (University of Michigan)

David Lewin’s posthumously published Studies in Music with Text (2006) includes as its seventh chapter a short, previously unpublished analysis of Clara Schumann’s setting of Heine’s “Ihr Bild.” In this workshop, we will consider Lewin’s analysis of Schumann’s setting against the backdrop of his earlier interpretation of Schubert’s handling of the same text. Possible questions for discussion include: how Lewin’s later Schumann analysis qualifies or contests aspects of his earlier discussion; the position of Clara Schumann in Lewin’s work on texted music more generally; connections between the Schumann analysis and Lewin’s involvement with the Gender Studies Group at Harvard; as well as the details of Lewin’s analysis, considered on their own terms.

Managing the Art of Listening: Clara Wieck Schumann’s Designing of Concert Programs  
Janina Klassen (Hochschule für Musik Freiburg)

“Managing the art of listening” is the working hypothesis of a currently planned research project by the German pianist Ragna Schirmer and myself about Schumann’s influence on the audience’s perception of music. Clara Schumann already pursued in 1837/8 a strategy of replacing bravura pieces by those of a “higher” taste, once she had won an audience’s sympathy. Later on Clara Schumann tried out the effects of programming in private performances. The aim of the workshop is to discuss Schumann’s strategies of programming, using a performance she gave together with the tenorist Julius Stockhausen in Hamburg in 1862 with parts of Schubert’s Winterreise. As a preparation for the workshop one can listen to the program in a historical mode, i.e. without further instructions, gathering one’s own impressions, but reading the texts of the Schubert Lieder*, which were given to the audience. Based on the leaflet of the chosen concert, the evaluation of its content, and everyone’s own listening experience, we shall then discuss questions about the repertoire, the audience, and about the working hypothesis.

*Wilhelm Müller (Schubert D. 911):

Clara Schumann’s Nightingales  
Sharon Krebs, soprano

Clara Schumann’s singers – that is, those with whom she performed collaboratively – are a fascinating group of people, including some of the best-known artists of the 19th century. Foremost among the more than 55 singers is Jenny Lind, the “Swedish nightingale.” The workshop will begin with a summary of what it meant to be called a nightingale in the 19th century, and how these characteristics map onto Jenny Lind. Participants will then be provided with “singer packages” of reviews, letters, poems, etc. relating to some of Clara Schumann’s other singers, and will be given the opportunity to investigate how they measure up as nightingales.

Musical and Poetic Closure in Clara Schumann’s Lieder  
Stephen Rodgers (University of Oregon)

One of the main differences between Classical and Romantic music is the way Romantic composers end things, modifying the cadential norms of their eighteenth-century predecessors. Recently there has been an outpouring of scholarship on these characteristically Romantic approaches to musical closure, but most of it has focused on instrumental music, not song. My workshop explores the interaction of musical and poetic closure, using Clara Schumann’s songs as a case study. A hallmark of Schumann’s Lied aesthetic is her tendency to undermine closure at the ends of phrases—not, however, by avoiding or deferring closure but instead by skewing it in some way. I explore several examples of this kind of skewed closure in Schumann’s Lied output. In so doing, I offer evidence that in spite of her self-deprecating comments about her grasp of poetry, Schumann was a gifted reader of verse who showed astonishing sensitivity to the shape and flow of language.