

## Clara Wieck-Schumann's Op. 7, Beethoven's Op. 73 and John Field's 7<sup>th</sup> Piano Concerto: An Analytical Comparison

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This research aims to examine Clara Schumann's Op. 7 Piano Concerto in terms of its counterparts in the canon to establish whether it is a typical concerto of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Current Research

Clara Schumann should be studied because she is a rare example of a woman in nineteenth-century Germany who is an example of the complete nineteenth-century musician: improviser, performer and composer. The general prejudice against women in music has led to a lack of understanding and recognition for the significant contribution to music Clara Schumann has made.

There are several historical studies and biographies on Clara Wieck-Schumann, with that of Nancy B. Reich being the most accurate. This is cited as a source in vast numbers of works on Clara Wieck-Schumann, with Anna Burton using it as a resource to contextualise the Schumanns' relationship. Although work like this exists, there is a lack of focus on Clara Wieck-Schumann as composer without being overshadowed by her husband. There are few essays discussing the analytical content of Clara's compositions, with the most significant works being 'Bass-Line Melodies and Form in Four Piano and Chamber Works by Clara Wieck-Schumann' by Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers and the upcoming publication of a book on Clara Schumann as composer edited by Joe Davies.

My proposal responds to this lacuna by addressing the question 'Is Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto a truly Romantic piano concerto?' and considering the concerto in terms of Beethoven's Op. 73 and John Field's Seventh Piano Concerto. There has been much work on how Beethoven's piano concerti can be understood in terms of its context within the late classical era, particularly in terms of Mozart and how Beethoven deviates from this. The Fifth Piano Concerto is no exception, with much analytical discourse studying the deviations and similarities to the classical concerto. This concerto is considered as an 'Emperor among concertos'<sup>[1]</sup> and as such serves as a good standard in the repertoire for comparison. This approach can be applied to Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto, by way of examining its construction in comparison to Beethoven's Op. 37 as the starting point for the romantic concerto. I will also compare Clara Schumann's Concerto to a contemporaneous work – John Field's Seventh Concerto of 1832 – a work which Robert Schumann reviewed for his *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Alongside this, there will be a brief discussion of what Clara played and how that affected her compositional process as she performed Beethoven's works regularly in concerts. This intimate knowledge of Beethoven's piano concerti is likely to have had an effect on Clara's compositional process, particularly with regards to orchestral/piano interdependence

## Proposal

There are two areas I would like to explore:

1. Beethoven's piano concerto and the establishment of a nineteenth-century model of concerto form
  2. The effect of Clara's performing career on the composition of her concerto
1. Beethoven's piano concerto and the establishment of a nineteenth century model
    - a. What are the similarities and difference between the Op 73 concerto and the Classical concerto?
    - b. How does this set precedence for the nineteenth-century concerto?
    - c. How does Clara Wieck-Schumann's piano concerto compare to Beethoven's Op 73?
      - i. Does Clara's concerto reflect Field's model more closely than Beethoven's?
  2. The effect of Clara's performing career on the composition of her concerto
    - a. To what extent did Clara's performance repertoire influence her compositions?
      - i. How familiar was Clara with the works of Beethoven and Field?
      - ii. How does the reception of Clara's Concerto compare with that of Field?