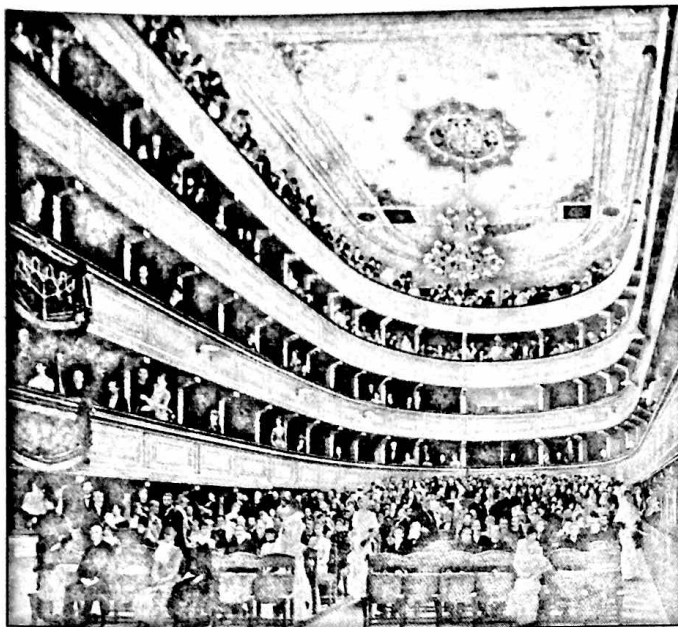


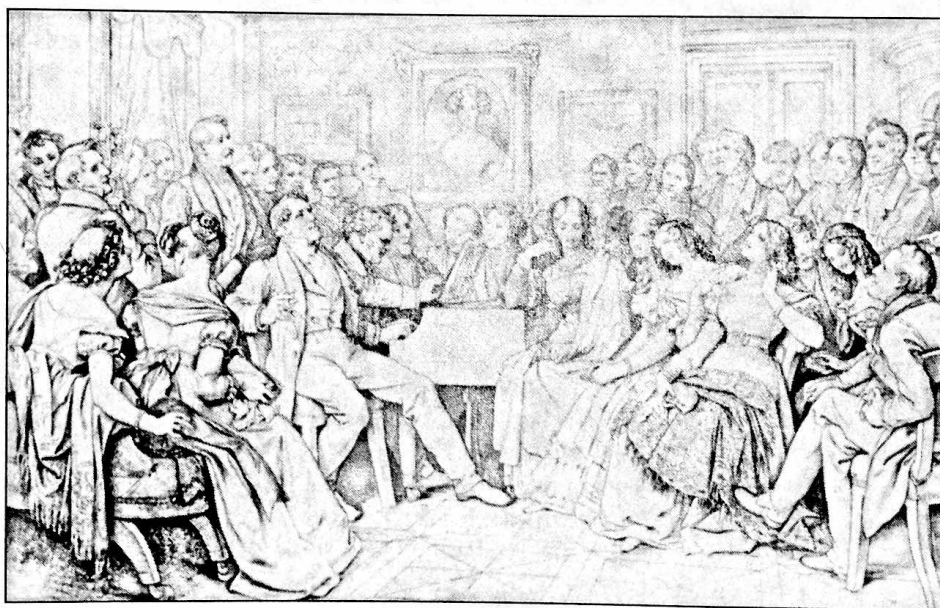
## New music patrons

During the Romantic period, the aristocracy, the upper classes and the church were no longer the only patrons of music. For the first time, the general public became the major consumers of music. Artists supported themselves by performances and sales of their work. This meant that they no longer had to write works according to the needs and wants of their noble or religious patrons, and could follow their own interests and desire for personal expression. However, it also meant that they were dependant on the public's approval for their survival. Composers could write anything they wanted to, but if the public did not like it, they would not pay for it, and the composer had no long-term patron to fall back on.



The public concert hall became the major venue for musical performances. No longer did the churches and the aristocratic salons dominate.

In some respects, the old patronage system had given many composers more freedom, because as long as they produced the music their patron needed, they were left to do it in any way they chose and innovation was at least tolerated. But society in general, the new patron, was more conservative in its musical taste. People tended to like what they already knew and understood. Composers who wanted to try new things could face an antagonistic audience. For the first time, a composer's work might not be publicly performed during his or her lifetime. This divergence between conservative audiences and innovative composers developed in the Romantic period, but has become much greater today. Many more people are willing to go to concerts and hear Bach's, Mozart's or Beethoven's music than are likely to buy tickets for works by contemporary composers.



This picture shows Franz Schubert playing his music for a group of friends. Many of Schubert's wonderful songs and instrumental works had their only performance at these evening parties and were not discovered until a generation after his death.

## The new image and social status of the artist



Franz Schubert was the embodiment of the Romantic idea of the starving artist. He was very poor, sometimes selling a song for a loaf of bread, and lived a bohemian lifestyle, often ill and writing his music alone and in misery.

The Romantic emphasis on personal expression made for a new idea of what it meant to be an artist. The Romantics saw themselves as outsiders, isolated from mainstream society, struggling to express their creative ideas. The image of the artist starving in an attic, totally devoted to his art, became accepted as reality. Confronted by a public that could be indifferent to their vision, artists frequently adopted a bohemian lifestyle that was designed to shock the middle-class attitudes and values of the rest of society.

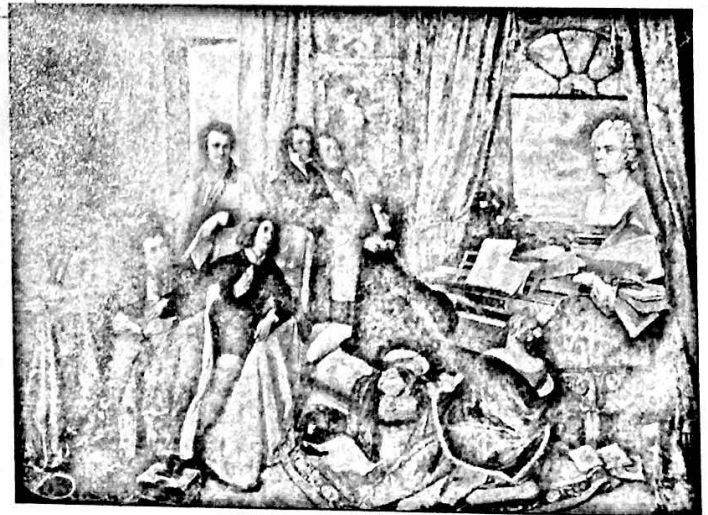
In contrast to the composers and musicians of the Classical period, who were still considered servants, supplying the needs of patrons far above them in social rank, in the Romantic period the creative abilities of these artists raised them above considerations of social rank. They were honoured and respected by their audiences. Artistic and monetary success came to them as long as their work pleased the public. Composers in the Classical period were seen as providers of a

commodity. Haydn would not have expected his works to be valued after he died. He wrote hundreds of them, each for a specific event, and would not have thought they should have a life beyond that event. But the Romantics thought they were creators whose works would have lasting value, not simply craftsmen plying their trade.



This postcard illustrated characters from Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, a group of Romantic artists living in poverty.

Composers now had a much higher social status. Where Beethoven was not considered good enough to marry any of the wellborn ladies he fell in love with, Franz Liszt, shown here at the piano, lived with the Countess Marie d'Agoult, pictured sitting at his feet.



## Music for everyone

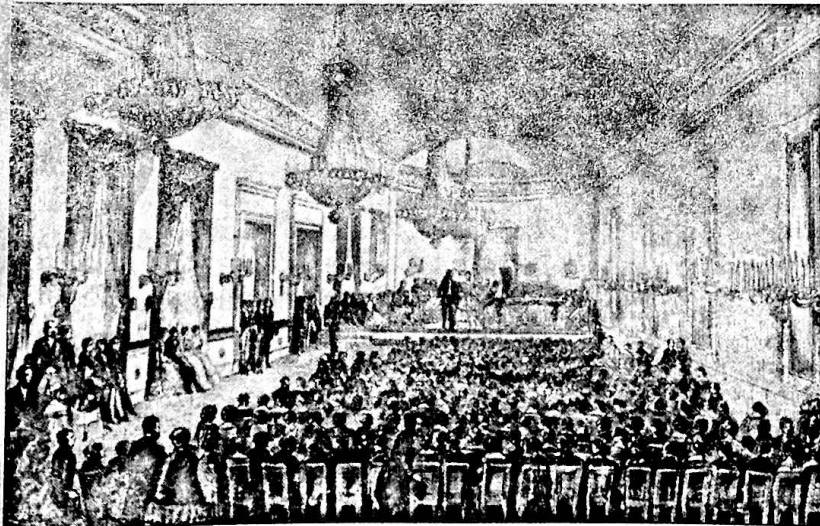
The concert hall became the main venue where professional musicians could perform for the public, and many more concert halls came to be built. Towns and cities across Europe and America boasted their own concert halls, and bandstands sprang up in the parks in smaller communities. Merchants, bankers, lawyers and other members of the urban middle class supported the birth of symphony associations in their cities, and with the improvement in transportation facilities, musicians went on tour to more remote areas. Journals devoted to music began to be published, so music lovers could be informed about musical activities and new works.

Singer at a Café Concert,  
Edgar Degas, 1878

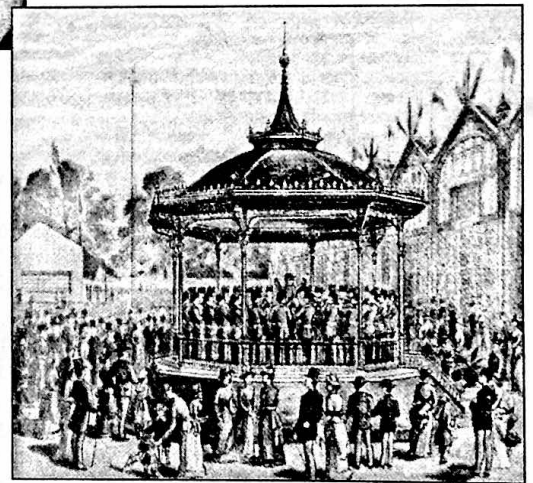
Restaurants with entertainers  
were popular in nineteenth-  
century Paris



The Salle Pleyel in Paris, a famous concert hall where Chopin performed



It was only towards the end of the Romantic era, not much more than 100 years ago, that composers began to be protected by copyright laws. There was nothing composers could do to prevent people from printing copies of their music and selling them without paying the composer anything. Under copyright laws drafted at the first international copyright convention in Switzerland, in 1886, however, any published work is protected while the author or composer lives and 50 years after his or her death. A fee must be paid to publish or perform the work during this time. In modern times, of course, this also includes recorded performances.



A bandstand in an  
Edinburgh park in 1886

## Virtuoso performers

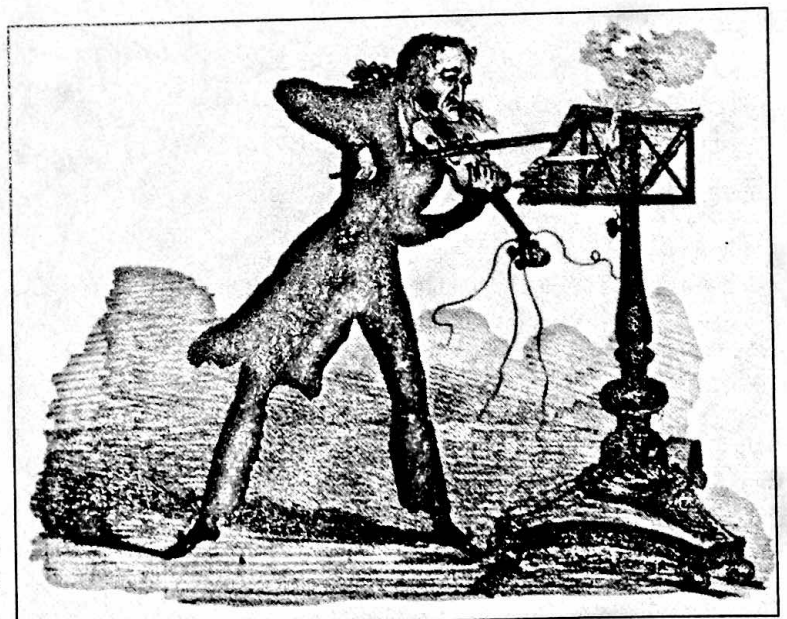


Paganini painted by one of the great painters of his time, Eugène Delacroix, 1831



A drawing of Paganini done in 1819 by Ingres, another famous painter

A caricature of one of Paganini's performances. All his strings are broken, and the music is in flames.



There have always been stars, of course, and great performers have always been celebrated. The Baroque period had the castrati of the Italian opera, and in the Classical period, Mozart toured Europe as a child prodigy. But this tendency escalated in the Romantic period, as the Romantics' need for heroes and dramatic effect coincided with a rise of a much broader public. A new kind of virtuoso performer developed, playing for audiences all over Europe and even venturing into the New World. The public adored them for their brilliance and technical ability, and the virtuosos often relied on tricks and showy effects to impress them.

The Italian violinist Niccolò Paganini was one of the first musicians to establish himself as a virtuoso. His technical ability was so far in advance of the other violinists of his time that some people suspected he had made a pact with the devil. Many wanted to be reassured that his instrument was in fact a standard violin. He was not above using tricks to heighten the drama of his performances—he used to partially cut through one of the strings on his violin so that it would break while he was playing, and then he would amaze everyone by finishing the piece anyway.

## Virtuoso performers

The composer and pianist Franz Liszt was another virtuoso. When he played, women fainted and people crowded to the stage to get a closer view. His way of placing the piano sideways to the audience, while not entirely a new concept, certainly became standard after Liszt employed it. It gave audiences a better appreciation of his technical ability, and a better view of his handsome profile as well. He was greatly influenced by Paganini and wrote music for the piano that tried to capture the flavour of the violinist's music.

One consequence of the rise of virtuoso performers was the need for technically difficult pieces to display their skill. Sometimes this meant that the musical value was of lesser importance than the technical wizardry required.

LISZT és a NŐK



A drawing of Liszt caricaturing his flamboyant style at the piano

This cartoon shows the women adoring Liszt after one of his concerts

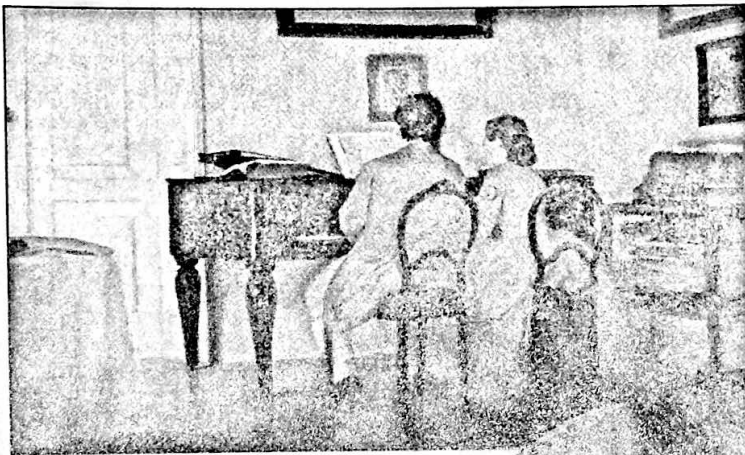
## Music at home



A typical nineteenth-century evening at home

The increased number of middle class music consumers also meant an increase in music-making at home. Piano factories prospered in Europe and the United States, and new technology made the instrument cheaper and more available. By the end of the nineteenth century, pianos were a standard feature in most middle-class homes. Printed sheet music became readily available, and an evening of amateur music-making in the home was a common occurrence. In fact, the evening

was not complete in many middle-class homes unless family or guests performed a song, gave a piano recital, or played some chamber music together.



A couple playing piano in a typical middle-class home. Note the piles of sheet music on the stand beside the piano.



A young girl playing for her own enjoyment



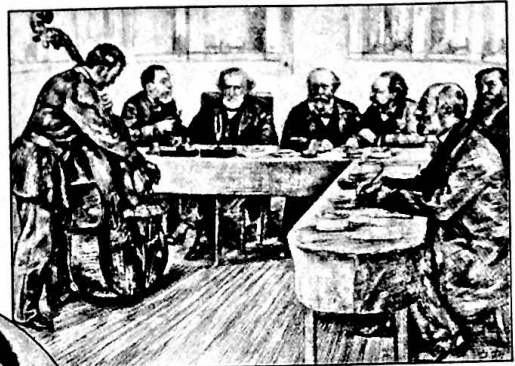
*Marguerite Gachet at the Piano*, Vincent van Gogh, 1890

## Training musicians

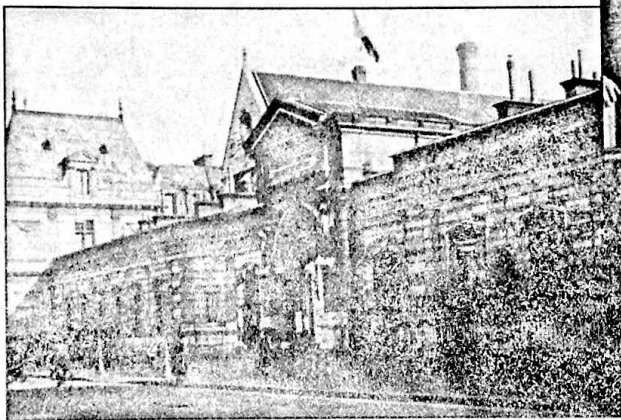
Composers and musicians in the Romantic period became interested in broader opportunities for music education. Conservatories based on the model of the Paris Conservatory, founded in 1795, were established in other countries as well to train musicians. Felix Mendelssohn, who was a pianist and conductor as well as a composer, helped to found the Leipzig Conservatory in 1842. In 1862, the Russian composer and pianist Anton Rubinstein established the Imperial Conservatory in St. Petersburg. These music schools meant that composers and conductors could count on having more and better-trained musicians in their orchestras.



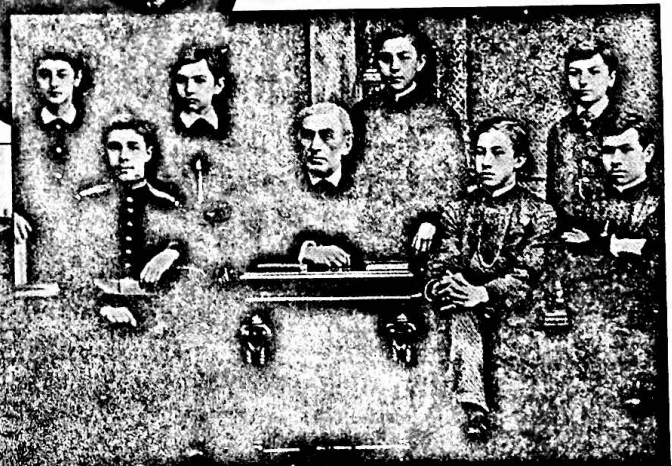
Anton Rubinstein, who founded the St. Petersburg Conservatory



An audition at the Paris Conservatory. Shown as jury members are Thomas, Gounod, Massenet and Delibes, all composers of the period.



The Paris Conservatory. In 1803, the Conservatory began awarding the Prix de Rome which enables the winner to study in Rome.



The Moscow Conservatory was established in 1866 by Nicholas Rubinstein, Anton's brother. This picture shows one of the professors with his young pupils. On his left sits Scriabin, and on his right, Rachmaninoff, two important composers of the twentieth century.

## Music criticism

Another aspect of this interest in music education was the rise of criticism and writing on the arts. Musicians talked and wrote a great deal about what constituted good music. The German composer Robert Schumann published a music journal and became a well-known critic. Richard Wagner, another German composer, wrote articles disagreeing with Schumann. Hector Berlioz was a major contributor to French journals. All this talk and writing spread the Romantics' ideas about music to a broader public.

## Women as performers



The famous soprano Jenny Lind, known as "the Swedish nightingale" giving a concert in London in 1855.

With the new conservatories admitting women, there were opportunities for women to get professional training as singers, instrumentalists and composers. There was considerable prejudice against women becoming professional musicians, however. Finding a place in a professional orchestra or as a teacher in one of the conservatories was next to impossible. The one place where women really took a leading role was in the opera, where they had traditionally been stars.

Women's place was in the home, and although a woman needed to be able to play an instrument or sing as a social accomplishment for family and friends to enjoy, performing in public, outside one's own home, was not encouraged. Clara Schumann was one of the few women who managed to have a career as a professional pianist and manage a household and a large number of children at the same time.



*The Piano or Music*, Edouard Vuillard, 1896

Women were encouraged to perform on social occasions.



*Girl at the Piano*, Paul Cézanne, 1869

Playing an instrument for the family's enjoyment was considered part of a woman's role.

Three famous opera singers in the Romantic period, Pauline Viardot, Maria Malibran, and Guilia Grisi, and a playbill for Mme Malibran's performance in *Norma*, one of her favourite roles.





## Women as composers

Composition was not seen as an activity suitable for women. If they did compose, it should only be light, unsubstantial music that was not very difficult. Men did not believe that women had the kind of brains necessary to compose music. And some women believed what they were told. Clara Schumann said, "I once thought I possessed creative talent, but now I have given up this idea. A woman must not desire to compose. Not one has been able to do it, so why should I?"

Fanny Mendelssohn was a talented composer but her family would not let her publish her work because it was not seemly for young ladies to do so. Her many compositions remained unknown until quite recently. Alma Schindler was writing music when she met the composer Gustav Mahler. When they married, she gave up her career as a composer entirely and spent their married life supporting her husband in his work.

In spite of the obstacles they had to contend with, nineteenth-century women made progress towards equality in the field of music, whether as performers, teachers or composers, laying the groundwork for the full participation of women in the twentieth century.

## Women as patrons

Women played an important supportive role as patrons of music in general. Hostesses presided over musical salons where they gathered together important people in the musical world to perform and talk about music. Fanny Mendelssohn, the sister of Felix Mendelssohn, for instance, organized concerts of her brother's work in her home. Some women played roles in the lives of particular composers. The French writer, George Sand, who took a man's name in order to be able to publish her work, was an important factor in the career of Chopin, and the support of Nadezhda von Meck enabled Tchaikovsky to compose when he would otherwise have been too poor to do so.



George Sand,  
Chopin's long-time mistress



Clara Schumann

"It does not seem that woman will ever originate music in its fullest and grandest harmonic forms. She will always be the recipient and interpreter, but there is little hope that she will be the creator."

American music critic  
George Upton in 1880



Nadezhda von Meck,  
Tchaikovsky's patroness.

## Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847)



Fanny Mendelssohn

Fanny Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg, Germany, four years before her famous brother Felix. She too was a talented pianist and composer, but her well-to-do father disapproved of her taking up a career in music. Well-brought-up, upper-class young ladies in the nineteenth century were expected to be good amateur musicians, but a career as a performer or composer was out of the question. Even Felix, who was close to his sister, did not support the idea of Fanny becoming a professional musician. So instead Fanny married painter William Hensel, had a son and contented herself with amateur musical activities. She continued to compose though, a total of 400 works—songs, cantatas, oratorios and works for the piano. She died of a stroke very suddenly at the age of 41 in the midst of rehearsing a choir for their performance of one

of Felix's cantatas. Most of her work was never published, although a few of her songs were included in a collection put out under her brother's name. Her compositions are available in various music libraries and with recent interest in women's music, her work is being rediscovered.



Felix Mendelssohn is playing here for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Once when the Queen asked him to play a particular song, he had to admit that Fanny had actually written it, even though it had been published under his name.

## Clara Wieck Schumann (1819-1896)

Clara Weick (pronounced veek) was the daughter of a well-known music teacher in Leipzig, Germany. Her father began teaching her to play the piano when she was five; at nine she gave her first recital. By the time she was 20, she was an internationally recognized pianist. She had also studied voice, violin and composition and published some piano pieces.

She married the composer Robert Schumann in 1837 over her father's strong opposition. In fact the couple had to go to court to get permission to marry. Throughout her married life Clara had to juggle the demands of a large family—she and Robert had eight children—and those of her career as a performer and composer. She continued to perform, but she considered that her life's work was to increase Robert's reputation as a composer. The nineteenth century world was not ready to believe that a woman could be a great composer, and Clara could not believe it either.

Clara and Robert Schumann were very much in love, but their life together was not easy. He suffered from manic depression and eventually had a complete breakdown. After Robert's death at the age of 46, she supported her children by performing and teaching. Clara never remarried but she had a lifelong friendship with Johannes Brahms, who had been her husband's protege. Before she died at the age of 77, she had composed one piano concerto and a piano trio, and a great number of smaller works, solo piano pieces and songs. As a gifted pianist, teacher and composer, herself the daughter of a well-known teacher, the wife of one famous composer and good friend to another, she was central to music in the Romantic period.



The young Clara Wieck before her marriage



Clara accompanying the violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim.



Clara Schumann in later years



Robert Schumann with his wife Clara at the piano.