

*Christina Dahl:*

Good Afternoon, my name is Christina Dahl and I really should be playing live for all of you from the stage at Mills College, but since we are still all, unfortunately, in quarantine protocols I am in the music room of my house in Cleveland Ohio, where I live with my husband who is a member of the Cleveland Orchestra.

I've been here, home, for almost an entire year, teaching, through the wonders of technology and ZOOM, my students in Stonybrook New, York, where I teach at the University there.

It has been really wonderful to prepare this program, with the parameters of not doing any new music, playing music before 1900, and surrounding kind of the coterie of that most fascinating couple in the mid-19th century, the Schumanns, without actually playing music by Robert Schumann, instead seeing Clara Schumann as the center of that coterie.

So, I am at my instrument at home, which you will see as I lean, is really banged-up and you will see that in the, as you cut into video of my hands, but it is a beautiful 1927 Steinway B that I inherited from my first piano teacher, with whom I studied in L.A, where I grew up, and it's traveled all over the country with me, this beautiful piano.

I'm also my own camera person here, so I've taken three angles of myself playing, as well as trying to set up home microphones

and, you have a wonderful person at Mills (Brendan Glasson) whose been able to put these videos together. I have not made any edits in the middle of pieces. So often times when you hear professional recordings you will hear pieces which are, of course, edited in the midst of a movement or a piece, but in my case, I had to do full runs of everything, so, it has the imperfection of a live performance, which hopefully will make you feel as if you are more there.

Just another brief word about this program, when I started to think about what I wanted to play, and thinking about the tremendous influence of Clara Schumann on the 19th century, as really one of the great pianists of the century, I looked into what she typically would play on her programs. To put Mendelssohn there is to play one of the four composers that she programmed most frequently. She didn't play her own works in concert very often, or perhaps even at all, I'm not sure about that. But these Romances, they're taken from an early and a later set, are just fantastic and really deserve to be on every piano concert that features music from the 19th century.

Her husband, Robert, was a great lover of Schubert and is really an important figure in how we are aware of and understand Schubert here in the 21st century. After Schubert's death Schumann went and contacted Schubert's brother and was able to discover some scores which were in danger of being lost forever, including that for the Great Symphony.

I've always wanted to learn this Schubert Sonata and this program gave me an excuse to do it. In the middle of Cleveland winter, as we started heading through those shorter days, I thought I just want to learn one of the happiest, most gentle and wonderful pieces I can imagine, and that's this Schubert Sonata. It's the same opus number as (German) and I think you are going to hear a lot of relationships in a way, but it was also written as he was headed into the very last period of his life, which was kind of incandescently fruitful for composition right before his death. This piece was written out of a period where he spent some time in the Alps, in (German) and you can hear alpenhorn, you can hear yodeling, in my opinion, you definitely hear this very salient horn call writing throughout the movement. And it ends in the most fabulously, gentle, lovely, wonderful way you could possibly imagine. So, it has been such a treat as it's gotten colder and colder and snowier and snowier in Cleveland to be in contact with this incredible sonata.

And then there is Brahms on this program because Brahms was the great other relationship in Clara Schumann's life and this is a set that I have wanted to do for a really long time.

So, I hope that you enjoy this program and I hope someday I can meet all of you who are listening in-person and actually get out to Mills College. I've heard about it my whole life, as a Southern Californian, and I hope you enjoy all of it. It is a great pleasure to play for all of you today. Thank you.