Chapter 7
Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann: Parallel Lives, Liberal Delusions

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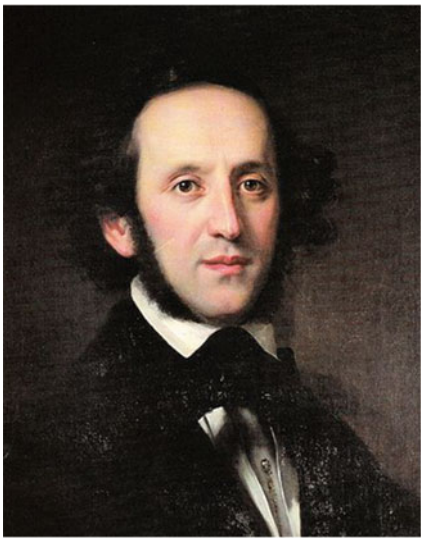

Felix Mendelssohn

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Robert Schumann

How striking it is when an artist says. “I play here one day and there the next, and this I do until I drop dead, since I am a poor man and must earn money”.

Clara Schuman in her *Diary* after a visit in Leipzig by the aging Norwegian violinist Ole Bull.

Introduction: Two Men and One Destiny

The overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begins with the imitation of the scampering of the fairies, one of the most evocative chords in the history of music. Felix Mendelssohn, says his biographer, scribbled these chords after hearing the rustling of leaves in the evening breeze in the garden of the family home (Jacob et al. 1963). He had barely turned 18. Sixteen years later, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia commissioned him to write the incidental music to accompany the overture. At that time, Mendelssohn was already music director of the Royal Academy of Arts and the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. The intermezzo between Acts IV and V is the famous Wedding March, the composer's most popular piece, which accompanies wedding ceremonies.

Mendelssohn's precocity may be surprising. It would seem to be a result of his privileged economic origins, a further investment by his father, a successful German banker. However, it turns out that his father did not force him into music. Moreover, at that time there was an abundance of exquisite children's composers and instrumentalists. This was also the case with Robert Schumann, who, however, did not find so many privileges along the way. What Felix and Robert did agree on was the effort their family made to provide them with a demanding education guided by a love of music.

The lives of Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) and Robert Schumann (1810–1856) reflect the spirit of Romanticism. In both biographies, dawn and dusk merge, for they were both child prodigies and both suffered premature deaths. Both Felix and Robert were born in Germany, Mendelssohn in Hamburg and a year later Schumann in Saxony. Felix lived barely 38 years; Robert 46. Both suffered from mental illness, and in their lyrically intense works, musical complexity is interwoven with the intimate union of music and text. Mendelssohn often suffered mood swings that from time to time caused him to collapse emotionally. An account is given of an attack in the 1830s for which "he was taken to bed and a sound sleep of twelve hours restored him to his normal state" (Devrient 1869, p. 91). According to Bennett (1955, p. 376), such an attack may be related to his early death. In Schumann's case, the mental disorders first manifested themselves in 1833 as a severe melancholic depressive episode, alternating with phases of exaltation. On several occasions, these symptoms were repeated with delusions of being poisoned or threatened with metal objects, symptoms that were diagnosed as psychotic melancholia. It is now believed to be a combination of bipolar disorder and perhaps mercury poisoning. Some claim that Schumann's alleged insanity may have been due to insomnia (Jensen 2012, p. xv; Worthen 2007). Perhaps the death of his sister, who had committed suicide in 1825 in a feverish state from typhus, also played a role (Reich 1985, p. 58). Schumann himself seems to have attempted suicide in 1854; he was fascinated in his youth by madness and suicidal acts connected with art. In nineteenth-century Germanic regions, madness was imbued with a certain romanticism, and, in some cases, some degree of delirium was believed to be a necessary ingredient of creativity (Jensen 2012, p. 12). Idealist philosophy undoubtedly had much to do with this praise of madness (Trincado 2015); precisely the opposite of what happened in Victorian culture, which perceived madness with terror and abhorrence (Jensen 2012, p. vii).

In this chapter, we will focus on Mendelssohn's and Schumann's relationship to economics, although their financial situation was undoubtedly very different. However, we will not be able to avoid the story of how their paths intertwined until they almost blurred, which led both of them to earn a place in the musical Olympus of Romanticism.

Child Prodigies

First, let us look at the playground of these two composers. Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg into a prominent Jewish family (Hensel, 1884). His grandfather was the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), a German Jew and advocate of Jewish civil rights, Jewish integration into society and Jewish enlightenment. Moses emphasised tolerance, the value of earthly knowledge and happiness in this world (Mendelssohn et al. 2011). The family later converted to Lutheranism to avoid the anti-Semitism that began to creep into Europe, adopting the surname Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

His father, Abraham, was a successful banker. In 1811, when Felix Mendelssohn was two years old, his family moved to Berlin, where the banking business was flourishing and where young Felix grew up (Rockstro 1884). He was brought up in a cultivated environment and under a very rigid upbringing. Leah, his mother, devoted herself to the education of her children. She spoke several languages, played the piano, and drew prodigiously, a skill that her son inherited. In addition, many intellectuals from Germany were frequent visitors to the family home, including the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt. His sister Rebecca married the Belgian mathematician Peter Gustav Lejeune Dirichlet, and his other sister Fanny was a pianist and composer, although in this she was only an amateur, since in those days women were often banned from classical music (a counterexample being Clara Schumann, who made a career as a soloist, as explained below). In fact, six of Fanny's early songs were later published under the name of her brother Felix (Hensel 1994).

From an early age, Mendelssohn played the piano masterfully and composed musical pieces. At the age of six, he received piano lessons from his mother, and at the age of seven, he had an outside teacher, Marie Bigot. In 1817 he began composition lessons with Carl Friedrich Zelter in Berlin. Zelter had conservative musical tastes and was an admirer of Johann Sebastian Bach. According to Werner (1963, p. 18), this fact greatly influenced the formation of Felix Mendelssohn's conservative musical tastes, reminiscent of Bach's style. Mendelssohn performed his first works in front of his family and probably his first public appearance was when he was nine years old during a chamber music concert (Todd 2003, p. 36). As a teenager, he often performed his own works at home accompanied by a private orchestra for his parents' associates among Berlin's intellectual elite.

In 1821, his teacher Zelter took Mendelssohn to visit the 72-year-old Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in Weimar. Both were mutually impressed. Goethe said that Mendelssohn was more prodigious than Mozart at his age: "Musical prodigies […] are probably very rare but what this little man can do in improvising and playing at first sight is close to a miracle and I could not believe that this was possible at such a young age" (Todd 2003, p. 89). Mendelssohn was later invited to meet Goethe on several occasions and set some of his poems to music.

Although Felix was considered gifted as a child, his family did not try to take advantage of his abilities. In fact, his father did not want him to pursue a musical career until it was clear that he intended to pursue it seriously. Thus, he made sure that his son could earn a living by composing by taking him to Paris in 1825 to meet the famous Italian composer Luigi Cherubini, director of the city's Conservatoire (Brown 2003, p. 115). The Italian received Mendelssohn's Piano Quartet No. 3 in B minor op. 3 with enthusiastic praise (Mercer-Taylor 2000, pp. 45–46).

During that summer, the Mendelssohn family moved to a mansion on the outskirts of Berlin. This place was the source of inspiration for many of the young Felix's works. It also became the social and musical centre of Berlin. At the rear of the building was a garden that had been part of the hunting grounds of Frederick II the Great. In the centre of the garden, a pergola seating several hundred people was used as a concert hall. These musical evenings at the Mendelssohns' home were attended by some very notable personalities of the time, such as the aforementioned

Alexander von Humboldt or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, among others (Mercer-Taylor 2004, p. 13). Abraham and Leah lived there until the end of their days, and also Fanny after her marriage. The latter retained ownership of a portion until her death.

Like Felix, Robert Schumann was a child prodigy. He was born in the German town of Zwickau, in the Kingdom of Saxony (in Central Germany). He was the fifth and last child of Johanna Christiane (née Schnabel) and August Schumann (Ostwald 1985, p. 11.) As a child, Schumann already showed musical gifts. His interest in music was stimulated by listening to Ignaz Moscheles play in Carlsbad, and he later developed an interest in the works of Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn.

Zwickau was "one of the most beautiful and romantic regions of Saxony", according to Schumann's father (Jensen 2012, p. 3). The region had large natural parks through which the boy liked to walk. Schumann's mother was a pianist, and his father was a merchant. Although he was unable to attend university because his family could not afford it, he always liked literature and philosophy. It was while working in a bookshop that he met the woman who was to become his wife. From there, he moved on to the world of publishing. Schumann's father was self-taught in bookkeeping and in his knowledge of English and French. He died in 1826, leaving his family enough money to subsist on for years, in particular 60,000 thalers, the silver coin that circulated in the area of Germany and Austria (the Prussian thaler was roughly equivalent to 3.80 francs at the time, or about 19 euros today).[1] This enabled Schumann to study at the Lyceum.

For two and a half years (until he was 6), Schumann had to live in his godparents' house because of the war waged in his hometown by Napoleon, who wanted to invade Russia and was an ally of Saxony. From the age of seven, Robert began to study music and piano with Johann Gottfried Kuntsch. He composed his first musical pieces and his great qualities as a soprano singer became evident. He also wrote essays and poems. In fact, the young Schumann identified himself as much with literature as with music and said that there was an intimate relationship between music and poetry. At the age of 14, he wrote an essay on the aesthetics of music and contributed to a volume, edited by his father, entitled *Portraits of Famous Men.* While still at school in Zwickau, he read the works of German poets and philosophers such as Friedrich Schiller or Goethe, English poets such as Lord Byron, as well as the Classical Greek playwrights or Hans Christian Andersen, with whom he was close friends (Jensen 2012, p. 43). However, his most powerful and abiding literary influence was that of Johann Paul Friedrich Richter—better known by his *nom-de-plume* Jean Paul—, for whom he had very powerful and exalted feelings. Such influence can be seen in his youthful novels.

[1] For details on the currencies, see the endnote in the Introduction to this book.

The First Public Steps of the Two Composers

Mendelssohn married Cécile Jeanrenaud, daughter of a French Protestant clergyman, when she was 17 and he was 27 (Todd 1991). Cécile died just under six years after her husband, on 25 September 1853. The couple had five children: Carl, Marie, Paul, Lili and Felix August. The youngest son, Felix August, contracted measles and died young in 1851. The eldest, Carl, became a distinguished historian, Paul was a prominent chemist, and Marie married the Manchester and London businessman Victor Benecke (Lehmann et al. 1993, p. 119). Lili married Adolphe Wach, later Professor of Law at the University of Leipzig.

Apart from music, Mendelssohn's education included watercolour and oil painting, languages and philosophy, and he was interested in classical literature. His abundant correspondence shows that he could also be a good writer in German and English, sometimes accompanying his text with humorous drawings and vignettes. As a young man, he translated the comedy Andria by Publius Terentius Africanus (Todd 2003, p. 154). This enabled him to study at the University of Berlin, where from 1826 to 1829 he attended lectures on aesthetics with Hegel, history with Eduard Gans and geography with Carl Ritter.

In 1827 Mendelssohn's opera *The Wedding of Camacho*, based on an episode from *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, was premiered and performed for the first time in his lifetime. The failure of this production caused him to discard venturing into this genre again. However, he proposed to his teacher, Zelter, to conduct Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, which was performed in 1829 in Berlin. It was the first time it had been performed since Bach's death in 1750, and the success of this performance was a trigger for the rediscovery of Bach for the general public in Germany. This success brought Mendelssohn great public acclaim when he was only 20 years old.

Then, following his father's advice, Felix Mendelssohn undertook several trips to make his talent known abroad. In April 1829, he visited England for the first time, and in the summer, Edinburgh (Rockstro 1884, p. 38). There, he made his debut at a Philanthropic Society concert and was very successful. He made ten visits to Britain during his lifetime, where he stayed for a total of approximately 20 months. In England, he found a complex musical world, a union of novelty and tradition, cosmopolitanism and provincialism. It was customary to seek fame there as it was the most advanced country at the time, but Mendelssohn's gratitude for the political, religious and social liberality with which he had been received led him to want to do a service to English musical culture, where he performed many non-profit concerts (Eatock 2016). He also made numerous trips around Europe: for example, to Italy where he met Hector Berlioz and to Paris where he met Franz Liszt (Mercer-Taylor 2000, pp. 112–4).

In the case of Robert Schumann, in 1825, at the age of 15, the love of literature led him to create a Literary Society with some schoolmates who for two years would meet frequently and form an orchestra. They wanted to promote German literature, which was very common in the nascent German nationalism. The group of teenagers was particularly interested in authors of the Enlightenment and the early nineteenth

century who were forerunners of German Romanticism. However, Schumann's first depressive crisis dates from this age, preceded by a romantic break-up with a married woman, Agnes Carus, and aggravated by the death of his father and the suicide of his sister.

His father died in 1826, when Robert was 16. Neither his mother nor his tutor approved of his dedication to a musical career, and at the time studying law was an opportunity for the family to move up the social ladder. In 1828, Schumann left secondary school and after a trip during which he met the poet Heinrich Heine in Munich, he went to study law at the University of Leipzig under family pressure. In 1829, Schumann continued his law studies in Heidelberg. There he met Thibaut, a law professor who also liked to play music and who had a great influence on him. He made him realise that love of music and law could coexist, but also that one could not be a great musician only part-time.

Schumann considered taking out a 10% loan to travel around Europe and learn languages. And indeed, he did travel to Switzerland and Italy during 1830. There, he had to borrow from the Kurrers in Augsburg. In Frankfurt, he met Niccoló Paganini, who had a decisive influence on his career as a pianist, and in Leipzig, Carus introduced him to the piano teacher Friedrich Wieck, who, convinced of his musical talent, diverted Schumann from the law studies his mother had set for him. In 1830, he wrote to his mother: "my whole life has been a struggle between poetry and prose, or shall we say music and law" (Perrey 2007, p. 11). But his destiny was that of music. It was something his brothers reproached him for, given that only Robert had been given the privilege of studying at university, and he seemed to want to waste it. However, perhaps because it seemed to make him happy, his mother finally supported him in his musical career.

Schumann moved in with Friedrich Wieck, whose daughter, Clara Wieck, then just eleven years old, was to become his wife, a well-known pianist and composer. Schumann received intense and rigorous musical instruction from Wieck, cut short, however, by an irreversible injury to the middle finger of his right hand at the age of twenty-two, caused, some say, by a system he used to try to perfect his piano technique: tying off his right ring finger to increase his skill with the other fingers. However, recent research points to the possible cause of this injury being the medication he was taking for the syphilis from which he suffered. In any case, this injury prevented him from performing, a disability that did not deter him from pursuing music but did direct his efforts towards composition and music criticism (Jensen 2012, p. vii).

Schumann loved solitude, in which he found inspiration. Nevertheless, taking refuge in music, his paranoid depression culminated in a first suicide attempt in 1833. He emerged from his depression through an engagement in the summer of 1834 to Ernestine von Fricken, a pupil of Wieck's and the 16-year-old adopted daughter of a wealthy Bohemian-born nobleman. However, in August 1835, Schumann learned that Ernestine was an illegitimate child (actually, the daughter of his maternal aunt), formally adopted after the engagement, which meant that she would have no dowry. Schumann reproached her for lying to him and feared that his limited means would force him to earn a living outside of music, so he broke off the relationship with her

towards the end of the year. At the time, he had no great expectations of becoming rich from music himself, but his financial needs, or his desire to make a living from music, led him to put aside his personal ties. In any case, it appears to be his realisation of his love for Clara that led him to end the engagement. Ernestine seems to have realised it (Jensen 2012, p. 117).

In 1834, Schumann regained the reins of his life by founding, together with Clara Wieck, the journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Music Review), which was to become a national benchmark in both musical criticism and dissemination. The magazine was a bestseller, and in fact, Schumann earned more as an art critic than as a musician. Schumann bought the rights to the magazine for 350 thalers (approximately 6,650 euros today) and appointed J. A. Barth as the new editor. As a critic and musicologist, he railed against academicism and baseless virtuosity. The editors of the journal called themselves the "*Brotherhood of David*" (Davidsbündler), named after the biblical King David who loved music and fought against the Philistines. In the journal, he criticised both enlightened Romanticism and the popular taste of composers who acted as a pressure group, the "philistines of art", narrow-minded arbiters of taste headed by Meyerbeer, whom he dismissed as conservative and pedantic, and the "futurists", especially Listz, Wagner and Rossini. Schumann wanted to find the sources of a naturalistic, liberating art born of feeling. He signed his articles as "Eusebius", when the tone of his writings was melancholic and introspective, and as "Florestan", when his opinions demanded impetus and passion. These names came from the imaginary characters created by Schumann in Fredéric Chopin's variations on a theme from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in 1831.

As for Clara Wieck, she was only fifteen years old at the time of the magazine's foundation, but already then, she was considered an excellent pianist. In the magazine, under the nickname "Chiarina", she criticised the musical trends of the society of her time. Clara, despite her musical ability, denied her composing ability for many years: "I once thought I was gifted with creative talent, but I have abandoned the idea. A woman should not wish to compose. No woman has ever been able to do it: why should I? It would be arrogant, although, in fact, my father drove me to it very early on" (Litzmann 2013, p. 182), she wrote in her diary in 1839 (Nauhaus 1994). Clara relegated herself as a composer. However, she did not do so as a performer and enjoyed greater social prestige during her lifetime than Schumann. So much so that, as her contemporaries recall, when they attended an event, *she* was the "star" and Schumann was referred to only as "Wieck's husband" (Weingartner 1928; Geck 2010). Moreover, at that time, performers—especially if they were virtuosos, as she was—were valued more highly than composers were; and her income was much higher. Years later, she also managed to break through the "glass ceiling" of composition by publishing her Opus 17.

Clara was innovative in many ways, for example, she began to perform the programmes from memory, without a score in front of her. For many, it was a sign of haughtiness; but with it, she wanted to show the naturalness with a symbiosis of the interpreter with the composer that places the music on the same level between the one who creates it and the one who transmits it. An art proposal that appeals to the communication and empathy that many had advocated at the time, including Adam

Smith himself in his Lessons in Rhetoric (see Trincado 2019). In addition, Clare was keen to emphasise sensitivity and musicality over virtuosity—why speed up at the expense of beauty, why not stop and enjoy it? The key to her credo was depth versus artifice. Over time, Clara was very popular and in fact, her image appeared on the 100 Deutsche Mark banknote from 2 January 1989 until the adoption of the euro on 1 January 2002. The back of the banknote shows a grand piano she played and the exterior of the Hoch Conservatory, where she taught.

Schumann met Mendelssohn personally through Carl and Henriette Voigt, music lovers, in August 1835 at Friedrich Wieck's house in Leipzig. Schumann then acted as an art critic, of whom Mendelssohn was wary, and showed great admiration for Mendelssohn without ever expressing envy for his greater success during his lifetime. "Mendelssohn is the one I look up to like a high mountain. He is a true god" (1st of April 1836, in Jensen 2012, p. 112). He acted with the same generosity with which he interacted with other musicians of the time, and with which he acknowledged the genius of Brahms, who was his close friend, when the composer was not yet known. Felix Mendelssohn also wrote in Schumann's journal and used the rubric "Felix Meritis". Very influential from his position as a conductor, he founded the Leipzig Conservatory and promoted the *Davidsbündler*, including Schumann himself, to various positions. However, Mendelssohn found fault with Schumann's works and did not hesitate to point them out (Niecks 1925, p. 150). The two composers were always friends, they played billiards and Mendelssohn was godfather to Schumann's first child. In 1840, Mendelssohn gave a private concert in Leipzig, which Clara Schumann attended (Rockstro 1884, p. 75).

Economics and Composition

Nineteenth-century British society was not, as Thomas Piketty posits, an environment in which wealth was only inherited and contested: as Jane Austen showed, it was quite dynamic between 1790 and 1830 (Rodriguez Braun 2017). Similarly, the lives of Schumann and Mendelssohn are indicative of such dynamism in the case of nineteenth-century Germanic society. In Austen, there are echoes of a wariness borrowed from Adam Smith of the arrogance of those who want to change society from the top down. As we shall see, this also happened in the case of Schumann and Mendelssohn (see Méndez and Trincado 2022).

Schumann had to fight for his social position, and his compositions were often created in response to critical reactions and financial needs (Jensen 2012, p. xi). In 1828 Schumann enrolled at the University of Leipzig—which had a population ten times that of Zwickau—to study law at his mother's request and supported by his brothers, in order to have a stable income. Leipzig was known as a centre of commerce and publishing (its book fairs attracted buyers from all over Europe). Music publishing was also important: two of the most prestigious publishing houses in Europe, Breitkopf & Härtel and Hofmeister, were located there. Musical life was very rich. However, Schumann disliked life in Leipzig, neither had he liked

the students, whom he saw as unidealistic and somewhat petty, nor the law school, which he saw as cold and full of definitions. His family sent him to law classes, but he skipped them, and it was a time of constant drunkenness, flirtations and debts to family and friends. Between 1834 and 1836, Robert had to borrow money from his brothers Carl and Eduard. In 1834, he wrote pitifully to his mother, claiming that his income was only 400–500 thalers, when he needed at least 600 thalers to live on (about 11,400 euros). He then suggested that his brothers finance him. However, on 19 March 1838, he wrote to his brothers about a debt they had incurred with him, perhaps for a loan or a family sale, for which they would have to pay him 600 thalers every month so that in six or seven years he would have been fully repaid. That means that his brothers owed him at that time 7,200 thalers (more than 136,000 euros, if they were German thalers!).

While in Leipzig, Schumann wrote to his mother "Nature—where is it here? Man has disfigured everything. There are no valleys, mountains or forests where I can remain immersed in my thoughts". This is one of the moments when one senses in Schumann a desire to expand into the infinite nature to which the Romantics clung. In this sense, and in several of his allusions, Schumann approaches the utopias of aesthetic mediation that would begin with Schiller, and which in the twentieth century would be consolidated in the Frankfurt School.

When Schumann broke off his engagement to Ernestina von Fricken, he declared a relationship with Clara. Robert and Clara were married in September 1836 in Leipzig. However, Clara's father did not consent to the marriage. He was concerned about Schumann's financial situation, as well as the fact that his daughter, once married, would not enjoy an artistic career. His daughter, he stated in a letter, needed to spend at least 2,000 thalers a year (approximately 38,000 euros), although according to Clara it was 2,000 guilders, which was equivalent to 1,600–1,800 thalers (Jensen 2012, pp. 124–125). At that time, Schumann's professional situation did not seem to improve because his compositions were neither quoted nor heard anywhere. When Liszt played Schumann's works in public in 1840, people did not understand them: the public preferred more conventional pieces. This incomprehension, together with Clara's father's refusal to marry, dissension within the editorial staff of his journal, and the death of Schumann's mother, dragged Robert into an episode of alcoholism.

Clara's father was harsh in his refusal to allow his daughter to marry Schumann. He forbade them to meet and ordered all their correspondence to be burned. Wieck even asked Clara for 1,000 thalers (19,000 euros) for her belongings and piano, giving her brothers Clara's previous earnings from concerts and demanding that, in case of separation, Schumann give him 8,000 thalers (152,000 euros). He also tried to ask Clara to pay him for the lessons she had received and to sign that she would not receive an inheritance. When they went to trial, Wieck brought charges against Schumann that he wanted to take advantage of Clara's money and that Schumann was not a good composer or critic, that he could not speak or write clearly, that he lied about his income and that he was a drunkard (Jensen 2012, p. 134). In 1840, the court dismissed all accusations except that of drunkenness, a very strong accusation that Schumann wanted to deny and clarify. His taste for beer and wine was no secret, but he asked some witnesses to testify in favour of his sobriety, including Felix

Mendelssohn. On 1 June, Schumann accused Wieck of defamation of character. The case was decided in 1841, and Wieck was sentenced to 18 days in jail. On 6 July, Wieck withdrew the complaint, but not before withholding the money Clara had earned for her concerts. After four years of legal proceedings on the grounds that she was a minor, Schumann and Clara confirmed their marriage in 1840, and from then on they remained united: she performed her husband's compositions with great success; he, guided by his wife, brought his compositions to perfection, directing them towards intimate music. Over the next thirteen years, they would have eight children (Reichç 2001, pp. 162–167).[2]

In 1840, Schumann writes "we spend more than we earn" (Jensen 2012, p. 172). This frustrated Clara, because she wanted to, and could, earn an income outside the home by performing music. From 1840 to 1854, Clara gave almost 150 concerts, but they were fewer than she would have liked. In any case, also Schumann from 1840 began to have more success with his songs: in October 1840 he received from Breitkopf & Härtel 23 talers (437 euros) for *Drei Romanzen* op 28 and 50 talers in December 1840 for a vocal work, the Four Duets op 34. In April 1841 he received 54 talers for *Lieder op 35*. In 1849, to earn more income, Schumann produced 40 works for domestic consumption for young people. The *Album für die Jugend*, op. 61, which appeared in 1849, made him very popular, and he was paid 226 talers for it, the same as he was paid for Peri. He composed 29 songs for children, *Lieder-Album* for Youth, op 79, and received 220 thalers from Breitkopf & Härtel for them. That year, he was given up to 1,275 thalers (about 24,000 euros) for his compositions, the highest amount he had ever received, and four times more than he had earned in 1848. For more substantial works, which could bring him more fame, such as symphonies and chamber music, the income was as following: he was paid 120 thalers for the publication of each symphony, *First Symphony op. 38* and *String Quartet op. 41*. In 1850 he received 1,584 talers, in 1851 he received 1,439 talers, in 1852 his income was 1,717 talers and in 1853 he received 1,925 talers (about 36,500 euros). In 1851 he was paid 200 talers for *Symphony No. 3, op. 97* alone. These works were well received and he had more and more admirers (Jensen 2012, pp. 223–224). He had already achieved what Wieck had expressed that Clara needed to support herself annually, which we recall was 1,600 to 1,800 talers.

In 1840, the University of Jena in Saxony awarded Schumann an honorary doctorate, and in 1843, he became professor at the Leipzig Conservatory. According to Reinhard Kapp, Schumann in the late 1840s and early 1850s became a music teacher for the German people, a *Praeceptor Germaniae*, collecting maxims and collective editions of his writings on music and offering advice to young composers, promoting the German musical canon, etc.[3] He planned to write about the life of Martin Luther and adored Goethe's Faust, with its incitement to suicide (Daverio 2002, p. 60). From 1850, he was music director of Düsseldorf. The following period

[2] Marie (1841–1929), Elise (1843–1928), Julie (1845–1872), Emil (1846–1847), Ludwig (1848–1899), Ferdinand (1849–1891), Eugenie (1851–1938) and Felix (1854–1879).

[3] Annex 1 gives an overview of the Schumann's family expenditures in 1841.

of his life was the most prolific, in which he created most of his great works. He would then receive an annual salary of 700 thalers.

Mendelssohn's finances were more balanced, but not without obstacles. After Zelter's death in 1832, Mendelssohn had some hope of taking over his position as director of the Berlin Singakademie. However, Karl Rungenhagen defeated him after a vote in January 1833 (60 votes out of 236). This may have been due to Mendelssohn's youth and fear of possible innovations; but some suspected it was due to his Jewish lineage (Mercer-Taylor 2000, pp. 112–114). Mendelssohn was greatly affected by this defeat and made his situation in Berlin uncomfortable, which was compounded by his failure in *The Marriage of Camacho*. In the 1930s, Mendelssohn divided most of his professional time between England and Düsseldorf, where he was appointed music director in 1833 at a good salary. He was hired for three years at a salary of 600 thalers (corresponding to 800 or 900 thalers in Berlin, which represented approximately 121 English pounds if the pound was equivalent to 25 francs and the Prussian thaler to 3.8 francs; i.e. about 16,000 euros today). According to Rockstro (1884, p. 50) these figures appear in a letter written by Abraham Mendelssohn, who seems to have been present at the time of the offer.

Mendelssohn made his first appearance as an opera conductor in Karl Leberecht Immermann's production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in late 1833. He resented the public's protests about the cost of admission and had problems with the city's intendant. Because of this and the provincialism he saw in Düsseldorf, he resigned from his post at the end of 1834 "rather than submit to intrigues and pettiness". The decision was influenced by the fact that he had also received an invitation to take over the direction of the *Gewandhaus* Orchestra in Leipzig in 1835. This appointment was extremely important to him, as it was a moral reparation for his disappointment with the *Singakademie* appointment. Despite the efforts of Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III to lure him to Berlin, Mendelssohn concentrated on developing his musical life in Leipzig. He represented Georg Friedrich Händel and contributed to the revival of interest in Händel in Germany, just as he had reawakened interest in Bach (Mercer-Taylor 2000, pp. 118, 124). Mendelssohn was also able to revive interest in the works of Franz Schubert. Schumann himself discovered the manuscript of Schubert's Ninth Symphony and sent it to Mendelssohn, who promptly premiered it in Leipzig on 21 March 1839, more than a decade after the composer's death. Mendelssohn had a vocation to educate the people in their taste for classical music and would wander in a moral struggle between accepting positions being moved by the interests of the court; and seeking the gratitude of the people for the liberating excitement of the chords of his music. He was also a tireless discoverer of talent in young composers. He asked them, no more and no less, to show the same commitment to music as he did, and not to allow themselves to be slavishly imitated, but to put their own personal stamp on the performance. Sometimes in his classes, he would sit close to the improviser and give him advice on how to follow his performance. Some performances he called "ungentlemanlike" (unbecoming of a gentleman, uncivilised). He wanted to create a love of civilisation and flee from the corrupters of the true principles of art.

Frederick William IV acceded to the Prussian throne in 1840 with the ambition of making Berlin a cultural centre by founding the National Academy of Arts for the cultivation of painting, sculpture, architecture and music. This included the establishment of a music school to reform church music. The obvious choice as the head of these reforms was Mendelssohn. He was offered 3,000 thalers a year, i.e., 57,000 euros. It should be noted that this was double what Schumann earned annually in his prime. Mendelssohn was reluctant to take on such a task, perhaps because of previous disappointments in the city, but he could not refuse for fear that his gesture would be understood as disloyalty to the king. However, the foundation of the school never materialised, and several of the promises (in terms of finance, title and concert programme) that the court made to Mendelssohn were not fulfilled. In 1842, Mendelssohn resigned, but the king made him offers he could not refuse, particularly in material terms a salary of 1,500 thalers (Rockstro 1884, p. 86). His mother died in 1842, and in 1843, Mendelssohn founded an important music school, the Leipzig Conservatory, for which he secured funding from the King of Saxony, and persuaded Ignaz Moscheles and Robert Schumann, among others, to join him. At that conservatory, Mendelssohn and Schumann shared the teaching of composition and pianoforte, but as a teacher, Schumann was disappointing. After Mendelssohn's death in 1847, Moscheles succeeded him as director of the Conservatoire, maintaining its conservative tradition.

Mendelssohn's private life seems conventional compared to Schumann's, except for his ambiguous relationship with the famous Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. He met her in October 1844 and seems to have asked her to elope with him to America in 1847, when she was still unmarried (Duchen 2009). Mendelssohn met and worked with Lind on numerous occasions and wrote the opera Lorelei for her. Throughout his life, Mendelssohn was wary of the more radical musical developments made by his contemporaries. He had a friendly, sometimes frosty, relationship with composers such as Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and Giacomo Meyerbeer, but in his letters, he expressed his disapproval of their works. Mendelssohn thought the Parisian style of opera was vulgar and lacked morals and Meyerbeer's works were insincere (Mercer-Taylor 2004, p. 218; Todd 1991, p. 25). It is significant that the only musician who had a close personal friendship with him, Ignaz Moscheles, was of an earlier generation and conservative in his views. However, for the Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, he followed Ferdinand Hiller's advice and rewrote the piano part in a more romantic style, in the style of Robert Schumann, greatly enhancing its effect.

In 1844, he alternated his time between Leipzig and Berlin. He composed many works and conducted concerts in Germany and England, many of them of a charitable nature. He devoted much of his time since then, at the request of the King of Prussia, to the Berlin Cathedral concerts. All this great work left him exhausted and he suffered from severe headaches and acute fatigue. Mendelssohn therefore suspended his activities for a time, left Berlin and retired to Frankfurt. In 1845 he returned to the post of concertmaster of the *Gewandhaus* in Leipzig but asked the king for

permission to give up all activities that would oblige him to reside in Berlin. The king agreed, but his salary was reduced to 1,000 thalers (Rockstro 1884, p. 98).

All kinds of music were performed at the *Gewandhaus*, and at his last concert in Leipzig in 1845, he saw Clara Schumann in the audience and asked her to come out and perform some works, including a Scherzo of his own devising. Similarly, Clara performed some caprices at a private farewell evening given by Mendelssohn, which was also attended by Schumann. However, Clara would not be mentioned in the performers' sheets (Rockstro 1884, p. 118).

Economic Ideas

Mendelssohn met Ferdinand Hiller, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and Giacomo Meyerbeer. They tried to get Mendelssohn interested in Saint-Simonism, and although at first he did not refuse to approach the movement, over time he radically rejected their ideas (Locke 1986, p. 107). Saint-Simonism gave primacy to the economy over politics and proposed a perfect world where men would stop having power struggles and would use their power to exploit nature. For Saint-Simon, society is divided into classes based on the true nature of each man: first, those who satisfy rational scientific needs, such as scientists and engineers; second, those who have motor capacity, such as businesspersons, bankers, producers, employers and workers; finally, those with sensory or administrative-manual capacity, such as artists, poets and religious leaders. The perfect society would be one that achieved a harmonious cooperation of men of different abilities. Thus, the government should be replaced by an expert administration that would impersonally make decisions based on "positive" scientific reasons, the industrial Parliament, which would try to increase production until there was plenty. Saint-Simon was not an egalitarian and did not attack hierarchy or private property. However, once disorder and conflict have been eradicated and harmony achieved, the current State would lose its raison d'être. Disciples of Saint-Simon are Auguste Comte, Enfantin and Eugène Rodrigues. They attacked the inheritance and ownership of land and factories, proposing that the State direct production according to the interests of the community. They defended planning that mistrusted the "anarchic forces of the market" (Trincado 2014).

The Saint-Simonians, whose movement flourished in France between 1825 and 1835, viewed music as an ideological tool and as a powerful means of gaining support for their views. Music became an integral part of their writings and ceremonial activities. They used art as a means of social control. When Mendelssohn spent five months in Paris in 1831–1832, some friends tried to interest him in their activities, such as Hiller, whom he had known since he was a child, and d'Eichthal, whom he met between 1824–1825 when he was an apprentice at Abraham Mendelssohn's bank. In Berlin. Mendelssohn, however, had a negative view of the Saint-Simonians and considered them doctrinaire. He quotes Olinde Rodrigues, together with Enfantin,

father of the movement, complaining that he was trying to convince everyone of his creed. They gave him pamphlets to distribute in Germany, and he attended meetings of the Saint-Simonians over which Olinde authoritatively presided. In his letters, Mendelssohn comments to his father that they wanted to convince him of their religion and that they wanted him to make "better music than Rossini and Beethoven, to build temples of peace" (Locke 1986, p. 109).

In another letter to his sister Fanny, he tells her that Hiller, d'Eichthal and Rodrigues had made revelations to him about the Saint-Simonian movement that made them seem repulsive and "shocked me so much that I revolved never again to go to him or to the other accomplices" (Locke 1986, p. 110). Later, he writes to the editor of The Globe asking him not to send him the newspaper propagating the new Saint-Simonian religion as he was horrified by it. Mendelssohn had written in favour of peace and harmony of natural forces, for example, in a "Humboldt" Cantata to build a new world. But the attitude of these doctrinaires took away all enthusiasm because the way in which the Fathers of the movement gave orders, praise or blame went against his liberal Lutheran ideals. Also, the Saint-Simonians' vision of "flesh rehabilitation" and partner-swapping may have made him uncomfortable, since he considered hedonism vaguely immoral.

Nevertheless, what economic school could Mendelssohn, and perhaps Schumann, be closest to? We could think that they were closer to the ideas of the romantics, for example, Thomas Carlyle; however, Carlyle proposed a history of heroes, of exceptional individuals, not the masses (Carlyle 1841, p. 34). He defended the social policies of the government as a benevolent patron of workers.[4] Nevertheless, Mendelssohn's own words bring him closer to Smithian ideas of natural institutions in which the encouragement of individual effort is the goal of improving one's condition. Mendelssohn appealed to the efforts of ordinary people. Thus, Sarah Austin (1848) said that their conversations were about the language, literature and manners of their respective countries, stressing the importance of history and geography in the institutions of each country. She commented that Mendelssohn always asked what music was for if people did not understand what it meant.

Robert Schumann seems to have been an abstracted man, indifferent to the world around him. An anecdote claims that in the fight that took place in Dresden between the republicans and the royalists in May 1849, Schumann, afraid that he would be enlisted in the citizen security brigade, escaped through the back door of his house, just picking up his wife Clara and their eldest daughter Marie. Shortly after, Clara, then seven months pregnant, picked up the other three children to take them to the shelter they had in the countryside. Nevertheless, the truth is that his entire circle of friends did the same, even though they considered themselves free thinkers. Daverio (2002, p. 61) points out that actually the revolutions of 1848 were very important for Schumann as a man and artist. In his diaries, he wrote in 1827 "Political freedom

[4] Carlyle became passionate about the German language and literature, which he came to know perfectly. He spread them among his compatriots by translating Goethe's works, writing a Life of Schiller (1825) and publishing plenty of articles on Germany and its culture. For Carlyle, material riches lead to a personal crisis from which only spiritual idealism can save.

is perhaps the true nursemaid of art; where there is oppression; there can be no true poetry". In 1838, he wrote to Clara "politics, literature, people: I think about it all in my fashion, and my feelings find their expression in music" (Jensen 2012, p. 137). In a letter dated 17 June 1849 to the publisher Friedrich Whistling, he describes his *IV Märsche for piano*, *Op. 76*, as "republican", "I knew of no better way to express my delight [in the upsurge of republicanism]" (Applegate and Potter 2002, p. 61). Reinhard Kapp portrays him as a "political author" whose latest works represent a "continuous commentary" on revolutions (quoted in Daverio 2002, p. 62). He called his *Drei Gesänge* "patriotic songs" which he made in response to the victory in November 1947 of the Swiss federalists who wanted independence from Denmark, and for the spirit of the 1848–1849 revolutions as an emblem of popular sovereignty and national unity. Also, the four republican marches he composed after returning to Dresden in 1849 suggest that the revolutionary spirit survived him despite the victories of the Prussian royalists in Saxony. Their music was a response to the revolutionary dreams of "Unity and freedom of the German Fatherland" (Daverio 2002, p. 66). The *moto* was unity and freedom. These melodies, which were marches, had a military tone.

Schumann in 1839 described himself as "religious but without religion", pointing to a utopia that seeks the infinite in finite forms, that is, in art. He was imbued with the ludic utopias and the aesthetic mediation posed by the romantic poet Schiller (1759–1805). For Schiller, art was a form of liberation from the idealistic stereotypes that social collectivity manipulates to reach individual freedom. According to Schiller, individual love becomes love for humanity; in the loved one all human beings are discovered. In his essay "On the pathetic", he reveals what he expected from music: a rapture of the listener, who must obey certain rules. The music of the innovators seems to rest solely on sensuality and Schiller affirmed that the noble and masculine taste excludes all these sensations from art. In addition, Schiller warned of the duality of the revolutionary phenomenon, which enchanted everyone at first but then produced the fright of terror, in his *Ode to Joy*, so opportunely appropriated by Beethoven when he used it as a climax to his Ninth Symphony No 9. When he proclaims "All Men Shall Be Brothers" he recognises in them a common ancestry and joy is the feeling that comes from recognising that common ancestry.

In the case of Schumann, he sought the unity of nature, giving it shape in the sensible through play and art that, unlike work that imposes purposes alien to the worker, has no other purpose than to play and express himself. Playfulness is the privileged place of freedom, the free exercise of faculties. Thus, according to Schumann, music must seek self-command and must be "noble and virile", qualities that disappear when the artistic emotion—notably, the one provoked by music—leads to the loss of control and, consequently, of freedom (Matamoro 2005). For Schumann, his works herald the arrival of a time when the rulers and the ruled form a fellowship; an ideal community founded on mutual trust and shared beliefs. Schumann projected this utopian vision with choral music. The *Neujahrslied* culminates in a block chord ending to a Lutheran hymn. Over time, Schumann became less optimistic, especially

after the devastation of the Dresden uprising in May 1849. It is not that he resigned himself to the futility of the revolutionary attitude, but that he reflected on it by taking the objective attitude of the historian. Even within the revolutionary movement, there were divisions between moderate liberals and radical democrats, between those who valued more highly liberty or unity. The choral ballads showed this interrelationship between individual and communal modes of expression. The solos allow a free expression of individual feelings, while the choirs are musical emblems of unity. However, the voice of the chorus is not the voice of the masses; it has an aura of epic distance and suggests that the 48–49 Republicans had lost faith in political slogans (Daverio 2002, p. 76).

Deaths

After a trip to Russia, Mendelssohn went in 1844 through a depressive period and left Leipzig to settle in Dresden. During the following years, his physical and mental health declined, aggravated by nervous problems and overwork. In 1846, an event that might not have been important caused him considerable discomfort: at the Herbesthal station on the Prussian border, a police officer mistook him for a fugitive from justice who was trying to escape. This event, which might seem irrelevant, caused him great irritability. On medical recommendation, he accepted help from others to carry out his tasks; but in 1847, his sister Fanny died suddenly, a victim of a cerebral embolism, and the setback caused Mendelssohn a stroke. He temporarily recovered and returned to work. He wrote a few compositions, gave a few concerts, but there was something about his art that made it different from his earlier days. His friend Henry Chorley (1854, p. 387) would remark that when he heard him play, he felt as if he had said goodbye to the musician forever. Violent headaches caused him to faint. In 1847, he died at the age of 38 surrounded by his family and friends and with a crowd that thronged at the door of his residence. His grandfather Moses, his sister Fanny and some of their other relatives had died of similar strokes. Schumann was one of those who carried the coffin. His wife survived him for almost six years, and she died of tuberculosis.

Harriet Grote names the friends whose deaths had caused her the greatest sadness, including Felix Mendelssohn, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill (Grove 2013; Willis 2018). His friend since 1829, Sarah Austin (Eatock 2016), said when he passed away that

> Much as I admired him as an artist, I was no less struck by his childlike simplicity and sportiveness, his deference to age, his readiness to bend his genius to give pleasure to the humble and ignorant; the vivacity and fervour of his admiration for everything good and great, his cultivated intellect, refined tastes and noble sentiments. (Austin, Fraser's Mag. April 1848)

Of Mendelssohn's death, Jenny Lind wrote, "He was the only person who brought fulfilment to my spirit, and almost as soon as I found him I lost him again". In 1849,

he established the Mendelssohn Scholarship Foundation, which awards a two-year prize to a young British composer in Mendelssohn's memory. The first recipient of this scholarship, in 1856, was Arthur Sullivan, who was 14 years old. In 1869, Lind erected a plaque in memory of Mendelssohn at his birthplace in Hamburg.

In Schumann's case, the deaths in 1832 of his teacher Zelter and in 1833 of his brother Julius, and his sister-in-law Rosalie in the cholera pandemic led him to a severe depressive episode. He had frequent depressions and periods of complete seclusion, which worsened from 1834 until his death, even hearing voices and experiencing hallucinations, probably due to a manic-depressive illness. But Schumann's great creative intensity was concentrated in his periods of lucidity. As soon as he recovered from a period of illness, he devoted himself to composition and worked tirelessly.

Until 1840 Schumann composed works for piano and later for piano and orchestra and many lieder. He was known for filling his music with characters through motifs, as well as his references to literary works. After a successful tour of Russia in the 1850s, the Schumanns returned to Germany and a period of decline began: Robert could not find a foothold in the new pre-revolutionary musical scene (led by Wagner, Rossini and Listz). He fell into a new depressive cycle, added to auditory hallucinations, insomnia, paralysis and fevers. He suffered visions of angels and demons, which he feared would hurt him; he was suspicious of high places and of contact with metal objects. Schumann's diary mentions that he suffered from a hallucination of imagining that the note "A 5" was constantly ringing in his ears. Sometime later, he tells his brother about his desire to commit suicide, since he was distraught by the cholera epidemic that was ravaging Europe. In 1852, he resigned from the position of musical director of the Dusseldorf Conservatory due to the criticism received for his absences and constant delays. However, in these years, he also composed to exhaustion in all musical genres.

On 27 February 1854 ,Schumann attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine. Five days after the incident, the composer himself asked to be admitted to Endenich, a psychiatric institution on the outskirts of Bonn. It was an expensive asylum, which involved 600 thalers each year (Schumann's salary was then 700 thalers), but Clara tried to pay for it without asking third parties for money and refused to have benefit concerts to raise income. She preferred to give concerts herself (Jensen 2012, p. 299). There, Schumann lived through two years of great suffering, during which he only allowed himself to be visited by his friend and composer Johannes Brahms. Brahms took care of business affairs on Clara's behalf. Just two days before his death, Clara was able to see him, and for a brief moment, Robert was lucid and managed to recognise her. There he died on the 29th of July 1856, at the age of 46, some say from a neuro-circulatory collapse, others from syphilis, a disease he had suffered from since his youth (Hernández 2020). Others say it could be herpes (Jensen 2012, p. xiv). Subsequently, a strong sentimental bond, perhaps a platonic one, linked Brahms and Clara.

Falsified Wake of Two Geniuses

The romanticism of their life faded with their death, when egos, interests and power hijacked the image of Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann. The lives of Mendelssohn and Schumann are a singular demonstration that the dynamic forces of the economy, with an intrinsic action, as Veblen (1971) would put it, are passion, curiosity and the instinct of workmanship; however, the static and immobilising institutions that obstruct creativity are image, self-preservation, emulation, and the desire for power and excelling.

Friedrich Nietzsche cites our composers in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), identifying them with the German music of Romanticism, "that is to say, to a movement which, historically considered, was still shorter, more fleeting, and more superficial than that great interlude, the transition of Europe from Rousseau to Napoleon, and to the rise of democracy" (Nietzsche 1966, p. 180). According to Nietzsche, music of romanticism was not aristocratic enough, it was not music enough to be able to prevail in other different places, besides in the theatre and before the crowd; it was second-rate music…

Felix Mendelssohn had some influence on other composers, notably Johannes Brahms and Max Reger. His music was very popular in his time, but Mendelssohn's excess of conservatism led to a condescension on the part of some of his contemporaries towards his music. His success and his Jewish origins upset Richard Wagner who scorned Mendelssohn three years after his death, perhaps out of resentment that he sent him his first symphony as a young man, and, to Wagner's chagrin, Mendelssohn misplaced it (Mercer-Taylor 2000, p. 143). Wagner believed in his ability to nurture and promote his belief in pan-Germanic nationalism with his opera. Mendelssohn, a loyal but non-nationalist German, envisioned a musical world led by chamber music, choral music, and the symphony orchestra. However, shortly after the death of Felix Mendelssohn, nationalism and racism came to the fore in Germany. In the pamphlet entitled *Das Judentum in der Musik*, Wagner explains why the Jews were a detriment to the arts and why they should not be accepted by Germany. He used Mendelssohn as an example in his argument against the Jewish people. Wagner did not care that Mendelssohn, of Jewish origin, had converted to Lutheranism as a child. In detail, he explained why "they" were incapable of writing good music: Their blood prevented them. Wagner's book became a national bestseller, and in a few years, Felix Mendelssohn went from being the most performed composer in Central Europe to being almost not performed at all. As documented in his letters and other writings throughout the rest of his long life, Wagner remained obsessed with denigrating the legacy of Felix Mendelssohn, right up until his own death in 1883. The Nazis added Mendelssohn's name to lists of artists banned in Germany in 1936.

This move to denigrate Mendelssohn's achievements by the Nazis lasted for nearly a century, and its aftermath can still be seen today. Charles Rosen, in his book *The Romantic Generation,* dismisses Mendelssohn's style as "religious kitsch" (Rosen 1995, p. 10). In England, many critics, including Fabians such as Bernard Shaw, began

to condemn Mendelssohn's music for its association with Victorian cultural closeness; Shaw complained in *The Star* in 1888 of the composer's "kid glove gentility, his conventional sentimentality, and his despicable oratorio mongering" (Todd 1991, p. 6).

However, after a long period of neglect, Mendelssohn has been reassessed and has become one of the most popular composers of the Romantic period (Todd 2003, p. 463). In England, it always had a very good reputation (Eatock 2016); Sarah Sheppard's novel Charles Auchester, published in 1851, singles out Mendelssohn as the "Chevalier Seraphael". Queen Victoria required that a statue of the composer be included in The Crystal Palace when it was rebuilt in 1854 (Musgrave 1995, p. 58). The Wedding March from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been performed at royal weddings since 1858 (Emmett 1996, p. 755), curiously often accompanied by the "March of the Bride" (wrongly called the "Wedding March") of his "antithesis" Wagner. Mendelssohn's choral sacred music, particularly the minor works, continues to be used in the popular choral tradition of the Church of England. Elsewhere, he also won admirers: according to Andrew Porter, Ferruccio Busoni considered Mendelssohn a master of undisputed greatness and "an heir of Mozart". This contrasts with his vision of composers such as Franz Schubert, whom he considered a gifted amateur, or Ludwig van Beethoven, who he claimed lacked the technique to express his emotions (Andrew Porter, Sleeve Notes of Walter Gieseking's recording of *Songs Without Words*, Angel 35,428). However, the real Mendelssohn renaissance did not begin until the 1990s.

The Nazis, who presented him as the Aryan model of anti-Semite, also distorted the image of Schumann. Perhaps to complete this distortion, many of his personal documents were lost in World War II. Marxists, who considered him defender of common people, also used his image. It was not until 1971 that his image began to clear up, when his diaries were published; other diaries came out in 1982. There you can see that Schumann was a tireless worker driven by ambition. Since childhood, he fantasised about being rich and famous, but he always had financial concerns. He was interested in the musical enterprise and in literature, but he did his musical criticism because he earned more with it than as a composer (Jensen 2012, p. ix). He had a great devotion to beauty, both in nature and in art, and was a great idealist who felt guilty and ashamed in his diaries for passions he considered demeaning and inconsistent—especially sensual outbursts of his youth. In his diaries, he often refers to his children, not as a doting father but as a lover of childhood and an admirer of idealised innocence (Jensen 2012, p. 14).

Conclusion

The privileged upbringing of Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann undoubtedly gave them a head start over their compatriots. The effort Mendelssohn's parents had to make was not as great as Schumann's, whose travels in Europe had to be financed on credit. On the other hand, Mendelssohn's parents' gamble was not an investment for

the greatest profit; the family sought their son's happiness and to satisfy his passion for music. Of course, his later fame was influenced by the fit of his compositions into subsequent cultural movements and the interests of the propagators or the envy, imitation or corruption of the society to come.

Not surprisingly, both composers suffered from mental disorders. Perhaps poisoning from mercury, typical of the time, aggravated those disorders (it was sometimes due to eating fish, or using felt hats or dental amalgam produced with mercury). In this case, the symptoms coincide with some accounts of the composers' lives: tremors, shyness and paranoia; however, it is true that we have no evidence and, for instance, we have seen no pictures or daguerreotypes of the composers wearing such hats.

Both composers had to struggle with incomprehension. Mendelssohn was shunned because of his Jewish origin, even though his grandfather advocated their integration into society and the family converted to Lutheranism. His conservative musical tastes also did not help him in a cultural environment that called for change. Schumann was also a victim of misunderstanding, first from his family, who wanted him to study law to move up the social ladder, and later from his father-in-law, who refused to marry his daughter because of her humble origins. Schumann survived for much of his life on the credit of his family, but eventually through constant work, he found a place in the musical culture of the time. From an early age, he had been ambitious and longed for recognition, yet he eventually devoted his life to spreading the love of music and searching for the sources of a naturalistic, liberating art born of feeling. His love for Clara Wieck, who made up for his physical inability to perform by playing the piano, was a great support for him. Clara's courage to perform the music naturally seems to be a proposal agreed upon by the couple, who wanted the spectator to put himself in the performer's place.

The lives of Schumann and Mendelssohn show the dynamism of nineteenth-century German society, but also how common sense has always fought against the arrogance of those who want to change society from above (through politics or, in this case, through art). As our composers show, the enjoyment of nature, aesthetic play, is the free exercise of the faculties that are governed by the simple joy of creating and by self-control aimed at creation. Mendelssohn rejected Saint-Simonism precisely because he chafed at the use of music as a tool of social control. Above all, he was repelled by the authoritarian and paternalistic way in which the Saint-Simonians led their followers. It consisted of a sect that extracted individuals from their origins, depersonalising them and making them mouldable. Mendelssohn had written for the peace and harmony of natural forces, but the attitude of the Saint-Simonians was steeped in a moral superiority that Mendelssohn despised. Both Mendelssohn and Schumann were living evidence of a liberal morality where the natural emergence of institutions arises from individual effort to improve one's own condition. Schumann championed political freedom and described himself as a "republican", an advocate of popular sovereignty and national unity, "religious, but without religion" who sought a utopia of the infinite in finite forms. His works proclaim the arrival of a utopia in which the community would be founded on mutual trust and shared beliefs. However, in the course of time reality made him realise that utopia is an ever-moving

image that is not, cannot be, permanent: it must be fought for at every moment. Mendelssohn, a man of the elite, sang of individual independence, free from external impositions and stereotypes; Schumann, a man of the people, extended responsibility to a choral symphony, a passing territory, a passionate action that accepted freedom in its suffering.

As for his finances, Schumann began to receive a steady income from 1840 onwards, but the leap came in 1849, when he received 1,275 thalers for his compositions, four times more than he had earned in 1848. From then on, his income grew to an amount optimal to support, if necessary, Clara Schumann (something she never needed). Mendelssohn's finances were more balanced, but not without obstacles. He was offered 3,000 thalers a year to head the National Academy of Arts and did not care to resign in 1842. Although the king offered him a salary of 1,500 thalers, he agreed to reduce it to 1,000 thalers when he left Berlin. Money was certainly not that important to him: his goals were different.

Annex 1: Schumann Family Expenditure in 1841

Category	Thaler	Percent of total
Clara's weekly allowance	634	33.02
Outside meals	208	10–83
Furniture	286	9.69
Rent	230	6.77
Travel	208	5.63
Bulk wine and spirits	83	4.32
Coal and wood	81	4.22
Household help	77	4.01
Gifts	75	3.91
Clothing	75	3.91
Cigars	51	2.66
Supplies, including note paper	39	2.03
Medial	24	1.25
Music copying	21	1.09
Public bath	16	0.83
Legal services	11	0.57
Entertainment	8	0.42
Insurance	7	0.36
Books and newspapers	6	0.31
Taxes	5	0.26

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Category	Thaler	Percent of total
Other	30	1.56
Unknown	45	2.34
Total	1,920	100

Sources Scherer (2004, p. 211)

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