

# Montgomery Philharmonic

Intersecting with the Community

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## 2015-2016 – A Celebration of the Montgomery Philharmonic’s 10th Anniversary Season Concert 5– May 15 2016

### A Second Concert with the Central Maryland Chorale

Veni Sancte Spiritu | Luebst du um Schönheit | The Lake Isle of Innisfree | Three Madrigals |  
To Sit and Dream | I Believe This is Jesus | The Dreamers of Dreams | Mass in A-flat

#### *Luebst du um Schönheit* – Clara Weik Schumann (1819–1896)

##### About – Clara Schumann

Clara Schumann was a child prodigy who grew up with her young life planned to the second by her father. She received daily lessons in piano, violin, singing, music theory, harmony, composition, and counterpoint. Additionally, she practiced for two hours to make sure that she was prepared for her lessons the next day. When she was 8 years old, Clara performed in the Leipzig home of Dr. Ernst Carus, a director of a mental hospital at the Colditz Castle. It was at this concert that she met the 17-year-old pianist Robert Schumann. Schumann had been invited to hear Clara play the concert. He admired her playing so much that he decided he wanted to dedicate his life to playing the piano and composing, so he asked his mother for permission to discontinue his law studies and study piano and composition with Clara’s father instead.

At age of 11, Clara gave a concert tour of Europe, with concerts in Paris, Leipzig, and Weimar. Niccolò Paganini was in Paris at the same time and offered to play with Clara. When she was 18, she gave recitals for a week in Vienna. She performed to sell-out crowds and received many highly complimentary reviews, which were published in Paris and Leipzig. This led to even more concert tours.

During this time, Robert Schumann fell in love with Clara and proposed to her. She accepted his proposal, but her father refused to allow it. A judge allowed the marriage to take place, however, and at age 21, she and Robert were married. They received many famous visitors in their home, including Joachim and Brahms. It was at this time that Clara was asked to give concerts accompanying Joachim. She did, and they gave 238 concerts together. When Brahms visited Robert and Clara, he was a 20-year-old, unknown composer. They were both so impressed by Brahms’ work that they gave him a letter of introduction. Additionally, Robert Schumann published a letter praising Brahms’ work.

When Clara married Robert, she essentially gave up her public playing and composing career in favor of his career. In February 1854, Robert attempted suicide and was committed to an asylum. Brahms, Joachim, Albert Dietrich, and Julius Otto Grim spent a lot of time with Clara to keep her mind off his illness. He died two years later, on July 9, 1856, so at the age of 37, Clara was a widow. Friends helped her restart her career and she soon found herself performing with Joachim, Alfredo Piatti (violinist), Joseph Reis (violinist), J. B. Zerboni (violinist), and several singers, as well as giving solo recitals and playing concerti with orchestras. Clara also tried to resume her composing career, but found that she had lost interest in composing, so she completed only one work—*Verspiele*, a set of improvisations.

Clara had two daughters—Marie and Eugenie, who helped their mother in her old age.