

December 14, 2017
For Immediate Release



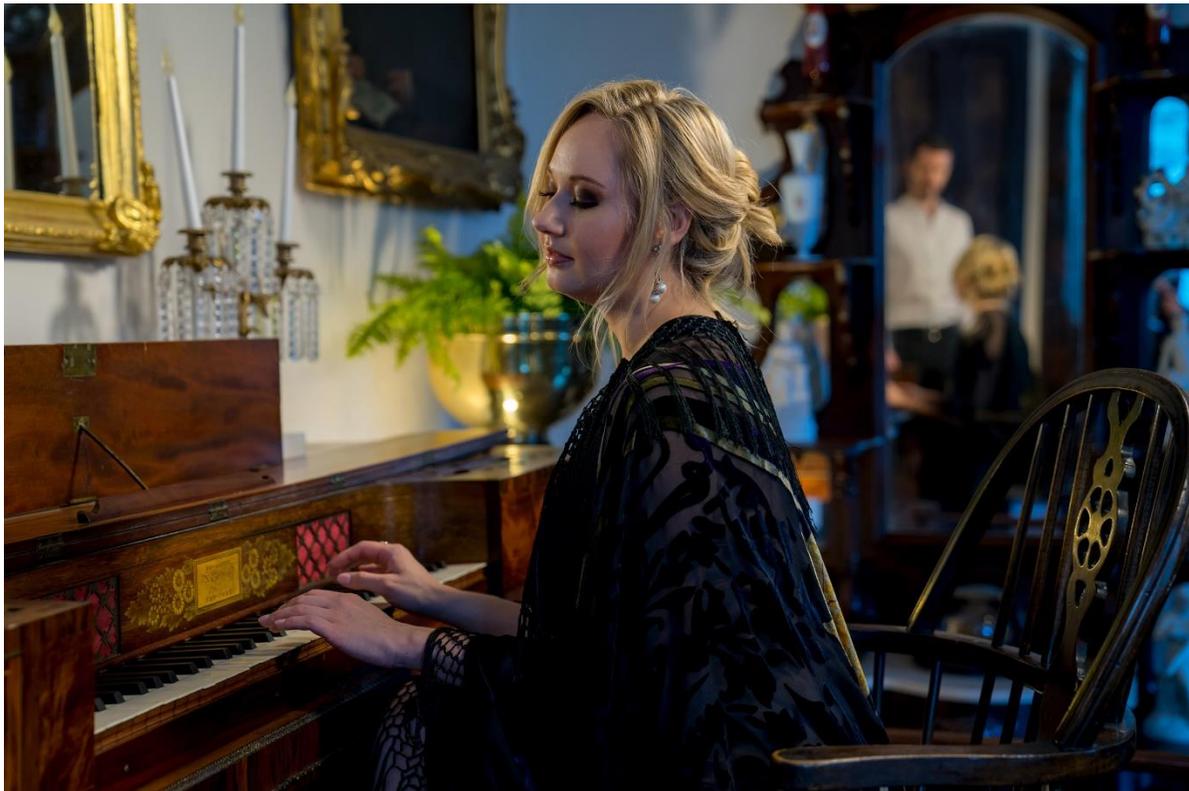
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One Woman. Two Men.

Mercury proudly presents the world premiere of

"*Loving Clara Schumann*"

an historical story of passion, heartbreak, loss, and hope



Houston, TX - The enduring strength and persistence of artistry, love, and loyalty are at the center of Mercury's newest multi-theatrical production. In a dramatic combination of music, dance, voice and imagery, "*Loving Clara Schumann*," by co-creators **Tara Faircloth** and **Antoine Plante**, travels through the remarkable life of pianist and composer Clara Wieck Schumann, a pioneer in the male-dominated field of mid-nineteenth century music, and her relationships with two of the Romantic era's distinguished composers, Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

"This is an incredible story of love both realized and unrequited, of passion, despair and compassion - where life is presaged by art," states Ms. Faircloth. "Following a tumultuous, hostile road to marriage resolved in the courtroom (Clara Schumann defied her father's refusal to allow her to marry his student), many of the songs that Clara and Robert Schumann wrote early on foreshadowed the trials they would face as their lives progressed together. Her long relationship with Brahms did not proceed as she might have envisioned, but her determination in the face of tragedy and the beautiful music that grew out of it is truly inspirational."

"Clara Schumann was a prodigy pianist, a respected composer, passionate lover, compassionate friend, loyal wife and loving mother," offered Mr. Plante. "She was all these things, and a pioneer in the world of music, influencing and shaping the format of the piano recital in her 61-year career. *'Loving Clara Schumann'* is based on historical events in her life. We wanted to portray the incredible dignity, grace, and determination of this remarkable artist and her life-long interactions with the two men who profoundly affected and influenced not only her personal life but her professional life as well."

The multi-dimensional performance weaves together a portrait of the captivating artist and woman via important times in her life. Carefully selected music, both instrumental and vocal works, by all three composers -Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms - forms the backdrop of this vivid, two-performance only event.

Joining Mercury and Artistic Director and Conductor Antoine Plante in this production are a group of talented artists: the piano soloist is **Rachel Chao**, who has collaborated with Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet, and has been heard in recital at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall; soprano **Megan Samarin**, "an artist with vocal intrigue and acting skill to back it up" - *Houstonia* sings the role of Clara Schumann, who is also portrayed by dancer **Genene McGrath** of Houston METdance; the roles of Schumann and Brahms are both sung by **Lee Gregory**, "the excellent baritone"- *Huffington Post*, and are also portrayed by METdance ensemble member **Dwain Travis**. Choreography is by **Marlana Walsh Doyle**, Artistic Director of METdance, with lighting by **Christina Giannelli** and costume design by **Macy Lyne**.



Chao; Samarin; McGrath; Gregory; Travis



Faircloth; Plante

MERCURY

"Loving Clara Schumann"

[Saturday, January 13, 2018 Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center; 2:30 PM & 8:00 PM](#)

Antoine Plante, conductor
Tara Faircloth, director
Rachel Chao, piano
Megan Samarin, soprano
Lee Gregory, baritone
Geneve McGrath, dancer
Dwain Travis, dancer

Choreography - Marlana Walsh Doyle, METdance

Lighting Design - Christina Giannelli

Costume Design - Macy Lyne

This concert is made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Houston Endowment and the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

To view the "Loving Clara Schumann" trailer, please click [here](#).

ABOUT MERCURY

Innovation, accessibility and dynamism are just three of the distinguishing characteristics of Mercury, the critically acclaimed Houston-based period instrument ensemble that continues to redefine the orchestra experience. Now in its 17th season, Mercury celebrates the power of music - from the Baroque period and more - serving the Houston community and beyond through teaching, sharing and performing with passion, intimacy and excellence.

In addition to performances in multiple venues throughout the Houston area, Mercury continues to invest in the community. It offers free community performances annually, including the community concert at The Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, and the public concerts in the Crain Garden at Houston Methodist Hospital. Recognized for its award-winning education outreach programs comprising classroom music education and performances in Houston area schools, Mercury also presents master classes for school orchestras. Active in the recording scene, to date, Mercury has released eight albums on its own label, featuring works by Corelli, Mozart, Schubert, Rameau, Vivaldi, Piazzolla, and Handel.

Following Hurricane Harvey, Mercury's 2017-18 Flagship Downtown Series takes place at Stude Concert Hall at Rice University and Zilkha Hall at The Hobby Center while the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater is being renovated. Mercury's Neighborhood Series continues in the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH) Beck Building, MATCH, Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, and Dosey Doe in The Woodlands.

Mercury gratefully acknowledges the following organizations and corporations for their ongoing support: the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment Inc., Texas Commission on the ARTS (TCA), the Wyatt Foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fung Chao Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Of recent import is a Hurricane Harvey Relief Grant from the TCA, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Mellon Foundation and State of Texas, awarded to the ensemble to assist in the recovery of the business interruptions due the Hurricane Harvey this fall.

Click [here](#) for Artist bios, photos and pdf of press release.