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Hey Busy Kids! Welcome to episode 90 of the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. My name is Carly Seifert, and I'm so happy you're joining me today as we make musical discoveries. This episode is brought to you by my free parent-child piano workshop called "Everything You Need to Know to Play Your First Song at the Piano". In this parent-child workshop I'll teach you and your student rhythm, keyboard geography and piano technique and by the end of our time together, your student will be able to play his first song at the piano. You'll find the link to sign up for this free workshop at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/90 if it's something you'd like to register for.

This episode is scheduled to air on Valentine's Day here in the United States. While there is a lot of history around the original Feast of Saint Valentine, the holiday has mostly become a celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world. So I thought it would be a fun time to learn about some of the love stories of a few famous music composers from history! We'll start with the love story of a composer we've discussed in quite a few episodes here on the podcast – Johann Sebastian Bach – and his second wife, Anna Magdalena Bach.

Bach's first wife, Maria Barbara, passed away after 13 years of marriage. Bach returned from a trip and found that Maria Barbara had suddenly died and been buried during his two month journey with Prince Leopold. They had two children together. It's unclear when Bach met his second wife, Anna Magdalena, but it is believed that he was charmed by her singing when they were both employed at the court of Köthen, Bach as the Kapellmeister and Anna Magdalena as a vocalist. They married about 18 months after the death of Bach's first wife.

This couple would go on to have 13 children together, but only six of their children survived into adulthood. Anna Magdalena was an

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important help to her husband and would copy and transcribe the reams of music he wrote for the major churches of Leipzig. Bach showed his thanks by dedicating several of his piano and chamber collections to her, including the famous one you're listening to now, called "The Notebook for Anna Magdalena". Some believe that Anna Magdalena may have even written some of Bach's compositions under his name – but there isn't any real evidence to support this. Anna Magdalena continued to sing professionally after her marriage to Bach, and performed at Prince Leopold's funeral in 1729. The Bachs' shared interest in music appears to have contributed to their happy union.

Our next love story is actually more of a love triangle – perhaps the most famous one in western Classical music – involving 3 great Romantic era composers – Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

Clara Wieck, one of the most talented pianists of her day, was just 11 years old when she met 20 year old composer and pianist Robert Schumann, who was a guest at her home at the invitation of her father, who was a celebrated piano teacher. When Clara turned 18, Robert proposed to her, and she accepted. This was not welcome news to Clara's father, who tried to get a local judge to ban the marriage. After 3 years of fighting with her father, the couple was finally able to wed in 1840.

Clara was always Robert's muse – and this is well documented. He wrote many adoring love letters to her and dedicated much of his music to her, even expressing love to her in a musical code known as the "Clara motif". Sadly, Robert suffered from crippling depression. He would eventually be confined to an asylum.

So how does Johannes Brahms fit into their love story?

Brahms was a guest of the musical couple when he was a young, unknown, aspiring composer. Robert declared Brahms the heir of

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Beethoven after hearing him play some of his music, and basically made Brahms famous overnight. The Schumanns became Brahms's mentors and friends.

When Robert Schumann suffered his first complete mental breakdown, Clara was pregnant with her seventh child, and Brahms came to help them in their time of need. He looked after their other children so that Clara could earn income to support their family while Robert was unable to. It was during this time that their feelings developed into something more than friendship. Brahms wrote in a letter to a friend about his falling in love with Clara, and Clara wrote in her diary that she loved his noble heart. It was a messy situation, of course.

While no one knows what passed between them after Robert's death, it is known that they took a trip to Switzerland together, accompanied by family, and then parted ways. They remained steadfast friends the rest of their lives, Brahms never marrying and Clara never remarrying after Robert's death.

Let's close this special Valentine's Day episode by learning about a final tempestuous love affair in classical music – that of French composer Hector Berlioz and Irish Shakespearean actress Harriett Smithson.

Hector Berlioz attended a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Paris in 1827, and fell madly in love with Harriet Smithson, who was playing the role of Ophelia. His obsession turned into an actual stalking situation...he wrote her letter after letter confessing to his infatuation, sent flowers and even rented an apartment near hers, but she refused to acknowledge him. Berlioz, unrequited in love, began writing her into his music. His first resulting collection was *9 Melodies*. Later, his first masterwork, called *Symphony Fantastique*, which you're listening to now, would be created. It's a very personal autobiographical symphony about an artist who falls madly in love with a woman who doesn't know he exists. It was arranged to be performed on a day that would celebrate

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her return to Paris, but alas, Harriet did not show. Berlioz eventually wrote a sequel to the symphony, called Lelio, in 1832. A mutual friend invited Harriet Smithson to attend a performance of Lelio, which is where Smithson finally realized both works were about her. Smithson arranged for a visit from Berlioz and the pair eventually together in 1833...though both families vehemently objected. After several years of unhappiness, Harriet finally left Berlioz in 1848. Quite the love affair, wasn't it?

If you head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/90, you'll find a link to a playlist I've created for you with songs that were inspired by the 3 real-life romance stories we learned about today – Bach and Anna Magdalena's happy marriage, the love triangle of Robert and Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, and the tumultuous love/obsession of Hector Berlioz and Harriet Smithson. Again you'll find that playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/90 along with a transcript for today's episode and a link to register for the parent-child piano workshop if that was something that you're interested in.

Thanks so much for joining me today, and I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks for our next episode of the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. Bye for now!