



Robert SCHUMANN

Manfred Overture, Op. 115

Robert Schumann (8 June 1810 – 29 July 1856) was a German composer and influential music critic. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era. Schumann left the study of law, intending to pursue a career as a virtuoso pianist. He had been assured by his teacher Friedrich Wieck that he could become the finest pianist in Europe, but a hand injury ended this dream. Schumann then focused his musical energies on composing. Schumann's published compositions were written exclusively for the piano until 1840; he later composed works for piano and orchestra; many Lieder (songs for voice and piano); four symphonies; an opera; and other orchestral, choral, and chamber works. Works such as *Carnaval*, *Symphonic Studies*, *Kinderszenen*, *Kreisleriana*, and the *Fantasie in C* are among his most famous. His writings about music appeared mostly in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music), a Leipzig-based publication which he jointly founded.

In 1840, Schumann married Friedrich Wieck's daughter Clara, against the wishes of her father, following a long and acrimonious legal battle, which found in favor of Clara and Robert. Clara also composed music and had a considerable concert career as a pianist, the earnings from which, before her marriage, formed a substantial part of her father's fortune. Schumann suffered from a mental disorder, first manifesting itself in 1833 as a severe melancholic depressive episode, which recurred several times alternating with phases of 'exaltation' and increasingly also delusional ideas of being poisoned or threatened with metallic items. After a suicide attempt in 1854, Schumann was admitted to a mental asylum, at his own request, in Endenich near Bonn. Diagnosed with "psychotic melancholia", Schumann died two years later in 1856 without having recovered from his mental illness.

Manfred: Dramatic Poem with Music in Three Parts Op. 115 [German: *Manfred. Dramatisches Gedicht in drei Abtheilungen*], is a work of incidental music by Robert Schumann. The work is based on the poem *Manfred* by Lord Byron and consists of an overture, an entracte, melodramas, and several solos and choruses. Written primarily in 1848, it was first performed at the Gewandhaus concert at Leipzig on March 14, 1852. The most highly regarded piece in the work is the *Manfred Overture*. Composer Hugo Wolf wrote that the work "has brought the essence, the focal point of the drama to plastic expression with the simplest strokes." Music historian Peter Ostwald wrote that the *Overture* was written during a time when Schumann was facing "exquisite suffering" from "inner voices," or auditory hallucinations.