

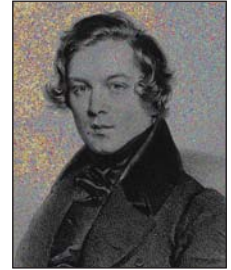
# MMTA Student Evaluations

March & April, 2010

## Composer-of-the-Year for 2010: Schumann

### Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Robert Schumann was born in Zwickau, Germany on June 8, 1810 to August Schumann, an author, publisher, and bookseller, and Johanna Schumann. The youngest of five children, Robert was a quiet boy who was fond of reading, especially poetry. At age 6, Schumann was sent to Archdeacon Döhner's school and the next year began receiving general musical and piano instruction from Baccalaureus Kuntzsch, a teacher at the Zwickau high school. Robert immediately developed a love of music and tried his hand at creating musical compositions himself.



Lithograph by  
Josef Kriehuber, 1839

When not playing music, Schumann enjoyed poring through the books in his father's bookstore. As he grew older, he began to favor romantic literature and enjoyed expressing his creativity through writing.

When Schumann was 16 yrs old, his father, who had encouraged him to follow his musical interests, died. After he graduated high school, Schumann followed his mother's wishes and reluctantly attended Leipzig University to study law. Within weeks of arriving at Leipzig, Robert sought out the University's best piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, and began devoting his time to constant practice. By 1830, Schumann decided to drop the study of law and devote his time exclusively to music.

Now at the age of 20, Schumann spent all of time practicing the piano, making up for time lost studying law. Unfortunately, he permanently injured a finger with a mechanism he invented to strengthen his fingers in 1832 and was forced to abandon his career as a pianist. After his injury, Schumann turned to composing.

In 1833, Schumann founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a music journal, in which he was editor and leading writer. For the next 10 years, Schumann composed a number of different works and wrote articles for the journal that displayed his talent as a musical critic. During this time, Schumann fell in love with Friedrich Wieck's daughter Clara, though Wieck was against their courtship. Within a few years, they wanted to marry, but with Wieck objecting, Schumann went through both periods of deep depression and joyfulness connected with the tribulations of their relationship. More often than not, his music was inspired by poetic descriptive ideas. His music was also very autobiographical, reflecting and his love for Clara. Finally, after a drawn out court battle with Clara's father, they were granted the right to marry in 1840. Schumann and Clara would go on to have eight children.

In 1850, Schumann assumed the post of town musical director in Düsseldorf, but was forced to resign in 1854 because of mental illness. Shortly after, Schumann unsuccessfully attempted suicide. Later that year, he entered an asylum, where he died on July 29, 1856.

Throughout Robert Schumann's accomplished career, he composed over 250 songs, an opera, 4 symphonies, choral, and chamber music.

*Prepared for MMTA by Lindsay Remington.*

➤ **For reference: Composer-of-the-Year for 2011: Please write or bring suggestions to the next meeting. As of 2010, MMTA has completed its current cycle of classical composers. Please write suggestions for the next 'round' to: [bpachecomusic@me.com](mailto:bpachecomusic@me.com)**