

Unraveling the Threads of Madness: Henry Russell's 'The Maniac' as an Advocate for Deinstitutionalization in the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract : Henry Russell was best known as a composer of more than 300 songs. Many of his compositions were popular for both their sentimental texts, as in 'The Old Armchair,' and those of a more political nature, such as 'Woodsman, Spare That Tree!' Indeed, Russell had written such songs of advocacy as those associated with abolitionism ('The Slave Ship') and environmentalism ('Woodsman, Spare that Tree!'). 'The Maniac' is his only composition addressing the issue of institutionalization. The text is borrowed and adapted from the monodrama *The Captive* by M.G. 'Monk' Lewis. Through an analysis of form, harmony, melody, text, and thematic development and interactions between text and music we can approach a clearer understanding of 'The Maniac' and how the text and music interact. Select periodicals, such as *The London Times*, provide contemporary critical review for 'The Maniac.' Additional nineteenth century songs whose texts focus on madness and/or institutionalization will assist in building a stylistic and cultural context for 'The Maniac.' Through comparative analyses of 'The Maniac' with a body of songs that focus on similar topics, we can approach a clear understanding of the song as a vehicle for deinstitutionalization.

Keywords : 19th century song, institutionalization, M. G. Lewis, Henry Russell

Conference Title : ICME 2016 : International Conference on Musicology and Ethnomusicology

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 12-13, 2016