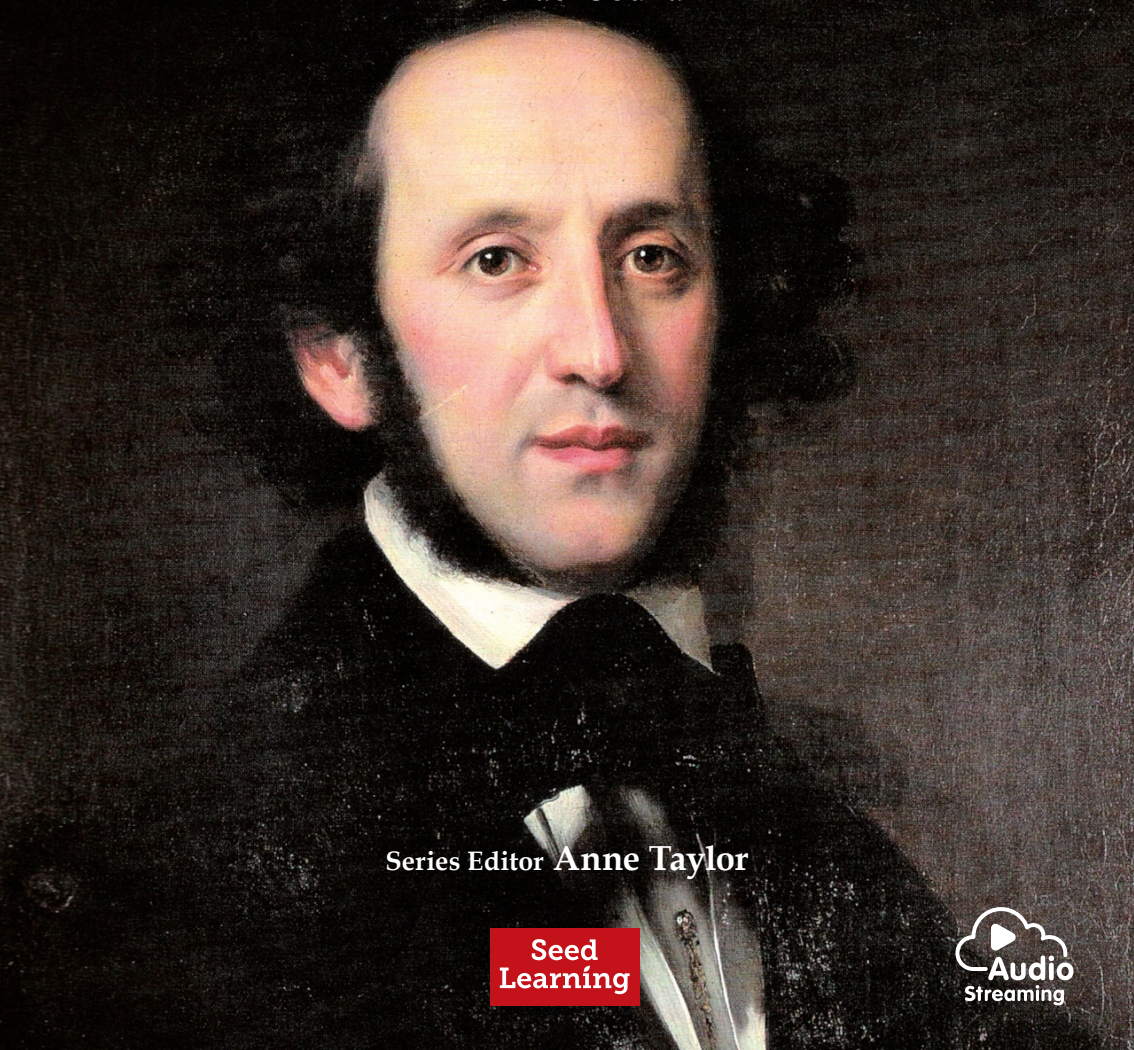


The Works of **Felix Mendelssohn**

Michael Souza



Series Editor **Anne Taylor**

**Seed
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Who was Felix Mendelssohn?

Felix Mendelssohn was a German composer, conductor, and pianist who was born in the city of Hamburg in 1809. He died in 1847. His sister, Fanny, was also a composer.



A portrait of Mendelssohn

A conductor tells an orchestra how and when to play.



Hamburg is the second largest city in Germany today.



Just like these two children, Felix and Fanny were young pianists.

Mendelssohn was introduced to music at a young age. His mother taught him to play the piano when he was six. The talented young Mendelssohn gave his first public concert at the age of nine. In around 1819, Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny began learning how to write music from Carl Friedrich Zelter, a respected composer, conductor, and music teacher.



↑ Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1832) said that Mendelssohn was his best student.



Mozart at age 11

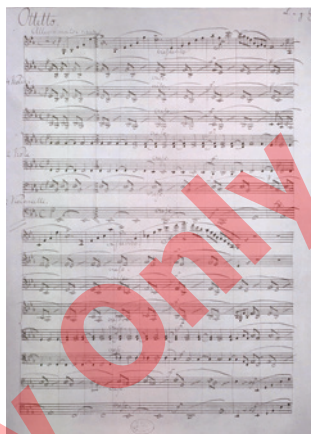
Mendelssohn quickly took to writing music. Like Mozart, he was considered a musical prodigy. As a child, he wrote several symphonies and concertos. These early works were greatly influenced by the music of other composers such as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Mendelssohn
at age 12



The first page of the *String Octet in E-flat Major*

In 1824, Mendelssohn wrote his first symphony for a full orchestra, and in 1825, he wrote the *String Octet in E-flat Major*. The *String Octet* was special because it was a new kind of music. It is one of the most important of Mendelssohn's early works.



Not all of his music was a success. In 1827, the first performance of his opera *Die Hochzeit des Camacho* (Camacho's Wedding) did not go well. This experience put Mendelssohn off writing opera for a while.



Mendelssohn had a love-hate relationship with opera.

Mendelssohn wasn't just a composer. He studied art and history at the Humboldt University of Berlin from 1826 to 1829. In 1829, he started to make a name for himself as a conductor after a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1727) is an important work of Baroque music.



The entrance to the Humboldt University of Berlin





Although he lived in Germany, Mendelssohn took his music to many other parts of Europe.

Over the next few years, Mendelssohn traveled around Europe, starting with a trip to England in 1829. He also visited Scotland, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland. During these trips, he shared his music with the rest of Europe.

A statue of Mendelssohn in Düsseldorf, Germany





Queen Victoria
(1819-1901) was
queen of England
for 63 years.



Mendelssohn's music was
very popular in England
during his lifetime.

Mendelssohn fell in love with England, which he visited ten times. His music was well-liked in England. On one of his visits to England, Mendelssohn met Queen Victoria. She described him as the “greatest musical genius since Mozart.”

In 1835, Mendelssohn was made head of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Germany. He was an excellent conductor who transformed the orchestra. In doing so, he made Leipzig the musical capital of Germany.

While in Leipzig, Mendelssohn became friends with the composers Frédéric Chopin and Robert Schumann. That same year, Mendelssohn met Cecile Jeanrenaud, who he married two years later. They had five children together.



↑ Mendelssohn's wife, Cecile



Inside the Mendelssohn Museum in Leipzig



A map of Germany, showing the location of Leipzig

In 1843, Mendelssohn set up the Conservatory of Music (a music school) in Leipzig. He and Schumann both taught there. Mendelssohn always enjoyed having lots of work to do. This was not always good for him. He suffered from poor health for most of his life.

In May 1847, his dear sister Fanny died. Mendelssohn was so sad that he could no longer work. Just six months after the death of his sister, Mendelssohn also died. He was buried in Leipzig.

Mendelssohn was good friends with composer Robert Schumann, who he first met in 1835.



Today, the Conservatory of Music set up by Mendelssohn is a public university.



Fanny Hensel, Mendelssohn's sister, wrote hundreds of pieces of music.