

Biography of composer felix mendelssohn

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The Prodigy The German composer Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, mostly famously known as Felix Mendelssohn was born on February 3rd 1809 in Hamburg Germany. Mendelssohn was one of four children growing up, the second oldest of the children right behind his sister Fanny. Mendelssohn was the son of a successful banker and the grandson of a well-known German Jewish Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. Even though his grandfather was Jewish, his father grew up his family to be Lutherans.

Mendelssohn and his family moved to Berlin in July of 1812, due to the fact his father Abraham was afraid that the French military would seek revenge on their bank, because the Mendelssohn bank played a role in stopping Napoleons Continental System. Mendelssohn was very blessed in growing up with the best education and began his musical education at the age of 6. Mendelssohn and his brother and sisters were given piano lessons by their mother. A year later he was then under the teachings of Carl Friedrich Zelter another German composer.

In 1818 at around the age of 9 Mendelssohn began to perform in public playing pieces of music from composers Joseph Wolf, Jan Ladislav Dussek, and Johann Bach. Mendelssohn's biggest inspiration was from George Handel, Joseph Hayden, Wolfgang Mozart, but his biggest and probably his favorite composer was Johann composer. Even though they all came before Mendelssohn's time listened and would examine works from all composers and find a way to use a certain technique from each one of these composer and make it his own.

Being the unique child prodigy that many had referred to him as, Mendelssohn had composed 13 pieces of material by his early teens. One of Mendelssohn's greatest performances had to have been in 1829 and in 1839 when he made a trip to England and played Johann Bach's St. Matthew Passion and Franz Schubert's (Unfinished) Symphony No. 9 in public. He was given credit for reviving these pieces of music and playing them with great skill. Mendelssohn's most recognizable and probably most famous piece was the Wedding March that is primarily played at most weddings.

Felix was married to Cecile Charlotte Sophie Jeanrenaude. The two had 5 children 3 boys and 2 girls. Mendelssohn lived a very short life after having many strokes he finally passed away at the age of 38 on November 4th 1847. Even though his life was short he was known as a pianist, organist, conductor and a Romantic era composer. Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture piece was a great piece of music. I really didn't know what to expect when I started to listen to Hebrides Overture. After reading about Mendelssohn I tried to listen to this piece and see if I can pick out the styles he used from Mozart or Beethoven.

The way Mendelssohn uses the piano can be heard almost in a similar way that Beethoven used it in his pieces, in that the movements can be changed in the moods of the music. Mendelssohn mood in Hebrides starts off in a very peaceful manner and by halfway through the piece it changes. It becomes very aggressive, it harsh and heavy sounds from the piano as well as the strings. I like how the mood swings from soft to hard and heavy it gives you an idea of what Felix was trying to paint for the audience. I read in the New

Grove that his piece was inspired from a boat trip to a small island that Mendelssohn had wanted to see.

This piece paints the picture of the boat ride and the scenery to the cave. When hearing this piece I can imagine the boat ride being smooth sailing at first on a gloomy day. As the music continues you can envision the boat ride getting rougher and more severe. I can picture rain coming down kicking up the waves all within a matter of moments. And in the third and final movement it settles down for just a moment just like the calm before the storm, just when you think its smooth sailing it picks back up and ends with a bang.

Loud and in your face ending that gives the piece a bit of excitement. This was a very well composed piece and it will probably be one of the favorites for many years. Mendelssohn wrote music for William Shakespeare's plays to include A Midsummer Night's Dream. This piece was very up tempo for the most part and light hearted. The play itself was a comedy; I believe that Mendelssohn captured the elements of a light and not very moody piece of music. This incidental piece of work also contained Wedding March, which probably one of the most recognizable pieces of work worldwide.

The piece that stood out to me besides the Wedding March was Nocturne. This part of the piece was not like much of the other parts. It was very slow and almost had a sad type of feel to it. Having many scenes and acts in the play Mendelssohn was given the opportunity to play around with his various types of composers that he had much inspiration from. At the very beginning of the piece it seemed that the music was going to start very slow, but then

quite dramatically it picks up the tempo and becomes quite the opposite. The strings seem to be playing at 100 miles per hour.

This tempo bounces back and forth with a lot of room left for imagination on what can be going on in the play. The flutes in the music play around throughout the piece that seems to be what is keeping the music light. Singing in the music surprise me a bit, it was much unexpected. I just thought it was going to be just music in this piece. The end of A Midsummer Night's Dream summed up the whole piece, it had a little bit of everything in it. At one point it's slow and others it's very and sort of dramatic, and it even included singing.

Over this entire piece was good in that it was light and upbeat expect for the Nocturne parts. Symphony No. 3 in A minor " Scottish" Op. 56 is a piece not much like the others. It almost has a little of bit of Hebrides and A Midsummer Night's Dream. It starts over slow, not a sad slow but more of a mellow slow. But as the piece continues it becomes forceful and very strong. Listening you can tell Mendelssohn was on a war path at some point. This piece is very serious in the first movement. You can almost feel of a bit of excitement and anger in it.

The second and third movements calm down and lighten up. They are make you feel at ease and not feel the anger that was present in the first. It brings you to a calm and relaxing moment. The third movement also has a bit of a grand extravaganza feel to it. I can see elegant type of venue with this movement playing in the background. Another thing I noticed is that these movements don't really seem to have a break in between then them. They

jump one right into the next. The final movement brings back that excitement and serious business feel.

The very dramatic and dark powerful feeling is the image you get when it is being heard. The strings in the fourth movement have brought the excitement to the piece, there very fast and played hard. It ends in a grand manner; it takes it back to the third movement. This piece was kind of everywhere. Powerful, light, and also elegant this piece can in a category with any of the other pieces. I liked the beginning of how commanding the piece started; it was very intense and made me want to listen to more.

All three pieces had their own sound, but the Scottish had a little bit of both in it. I found that Felix Mendelssohn was a great composer and I had known more about his music then I thought I had. I just didn't know that some of the music I knew was from him. Mendelssohn will now be one of my favorite composers of the Romantic era, and I found that his music can really bring out a mood in you that may not be present at the moment but listening to a few of his dramatic powerful pieces will get you there.

Being the young composer that he was, he developed his sound at a very early age in that he followed great composers that were way before his time. He played their music but with his twist to it, and that is how he has become one of the best Romantic composers of the 19th century. After feeling the power that he delivered I feel that I will want to see what other pieces are out there and if they have the same if not more of effect on dramatic moods. I believe that his work can influence a lot of people and that he did influence a lot of people.

Felix Mendelssohn will go down in my books as the composer who can paint your scenery. Work Cited Clive Brown. " Mendelssohn, Felix. " The New Grove Dictionary of Opera. Ed. Stanley Sadie. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 4 Dec. 2012. . R. Larry Todd. " Mendelssohn, Felix. " Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 1 Dec. 2012. .