

The hebrides – mendelssohn essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1829- Mendelssohn and his friend Carl Klingemann caught a paddle steamer in Scotland to the town of Oban. They then went to the town of Tobermory and while staying in accommodation, Mendelssohn wrote home heading this letter, ' On one of the Hebrides. ' This contained this famous sentence and 20 bars of music, ' In order to make you understand how extraordinary the Hebrides have affected me, I have written down the following which came into my mind. ' These bars were inspired by islands and sea between Fort William and Oban (or Tobermory). He called the first draft of his overture *Die einsame Insel* (' The Lonely Island') and on publication the full score it was headed *Fingals Hoble*, and therefore it is assumed that the island of Staffa (uninhabited, tiny and very rocky) was the lonely island and the main inspiration for his music. But in Mendelssohn's published letter's there is no mention of Staffa and the title foisted by the publishers meant that it wasn't the Fingel caves which inspired him and Staffa wasn't the lonely island.

Mendelssohn composed the Hebrides over just under a 3- year period but there were 2 different versions written. The first version was finished in Rome in December 1830 and he headed it *Die Hebriden* but someone took a copy of it before Mendelssohn had made most of his alterations called *Die einsame Insel*. In January 1832 he wrote to his sister Fanny and said that he still considered the overture unfinished, ' The loud *DMaj* section in the middle is very stupid, and the so-called development smacks more of counterpoint than of oil and seagulls and dead fish; and it should be just the opposite. He then completed the second version of the overture in London on 20th June 1832. In the first edition of his dictionary, Sir George Grove mentioned that the published score and parts did not always agree, e.

g. bars 7 and 87. This was probably because the published parts had been taken from those used at the first performance and took no account of the later adjustments.