

*Simply Charlotte Mason presents*

# Music Study With the Masters

*by Sonya Shafer*



# mendelssohn

*“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible,  
... let them study occasionally the works of a single great master  
until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.”*

—Charlotte Mason

With **Music Study with the Masters** you have everything you need to teach music appreciation successfully. Just a few minutes once a week and the simple guidance in this book will influence and enrich your children more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- Step-by-step instructions for doing music study with the included audio recordings.
- Listen and Learn ideas that will add to your understanding of the music.
- A Day in the Life biography of the composer that the whole family will enjoy.
- An additional longer biography for older students to read on their own.
- Extra recommended books, DVDs, and CDs that you can use to learn more about the composer and his works.

*Simply  
Charlotte Mason*

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy  
*(1809–1847)*

*by Sonya Shafer*

Excerpts from Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series are surrounded by quotation marks and accompanied by a reference to which book in the series they came from.

Vol. 1: Home Education

Vol. 2: Parents and Children

Vol. 3: School Education

Vol. 4: Ourselves

Vol. 5: Formation of Character

Vol. 6: A Philosophy of Education

Music Study with the Masters: Mendelssohn

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## *Charlotte Mason on Music Study*

“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible, and that *under instruction*. It is a pity we like our music, as our pictures and our poetry, mixed, so that there are few opportunities of going through, as a listener, a course of the works of a single composer. But this is to be aimed at for the young people; let them study occasionally the works of a single great master until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.” (*Formation of Character*, p. 235)





# How to Use Music Study with the Masters

1. Play the music recordings often and mention the composer's name when you do. You can play them as background music during a meal, while running errands in the car, at nap time or bedtime, or while the students work on some handwork. (Try not to keep them playing all day or during noisy times when other sounds or conversation would distract.) Encourage students to describe what the various pieces make them think of, to “draw the music” with art, or to move to the music. Allow them to form their own relations with it.
2. Read the A Day in the Life biography to the students and ask them to narrate. Enter this composer in your Book of Centuries. You can assign the The Story of Mendelssohn expanded biography to older students for independent reading during the weeks you linger with this composer. Other For Further Study resources are listed if you would like to learn more.
3. Once every week or so, give focused listening to a particular piece. Use the Listen and Learn ideas in the back of this book to guide your listening and discussion.

As opportunity presents itself, go to a concert that features the music of this composer so students can listen to a live performance.



# A Day in the Life of Mendelssohn

(From *The Private Life of the Great Composers* [1893]  
by John Frederick Rowbotham, edited)

Mendelssohn's house in Leipsic is pleasantly situated, with a nice open look-out from the front upon the boulevard and the St. Thomas's Church and schools. The hall leads to a dining room facing the street door, a sitting room lies on the right of the hall, and the composer's study on the left. In the study, Mendelssohn is accustomed to work during the early part of the day, though by no means a regular and indefatigable worker like Bach or Haydn. He rose usually between seven and eight. The eight o'clock hour is the time for breakfast, and his wife being a thoroughly good housekeeper, the meal was generally as punctual as the clock.

For breakfast Mendelssohn would take a cup or two of coffee, into which he broke slices of bread, eating the combination with a spoon and with apparent relish. This, he used to confess, was a practice he learned at school, where appetizing morsels for breakfast were rarely put on the table, and the scholars varied their regular menu of bread and coffee with sopped bread and coffee, coffee and sopped toast, sopped crust and coffee, and other unspeakable variations of the eternal ingredients.

Breakfast over, his first care is to devour the pile of correspondence which by nine o'clock was brought by the post. He skimmed through his letters very rapidly, and, making them into a bundle under his arm, would head to the study without delay. Strange as it may appear, he seemed to esteem his correspondence more important than his compositions—at least, by the attention he bestowed upon it. Some of his friends would have us believe that far more of his time was lavished on writing letters than on penning music. But this was not the

# The Story of Mendelssohn

(From *The Great Composers, or Stories of the Lives of Eminent Musicians* [1883]  
by C. E. Bourne, edited)

## *Part 1—“It cannot be told, only played.”*

Mendelssohn's lot in life was strikingly different from that of many other musicians; he never knew, like Robert Schubert, what grinding poverty was, or suffered the long worries that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had to endure for lack of money. His father was a Jewish banker in Berlin, and his grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, was a philosopher whose writings had already made the name celebrated throughout Europe. The composer's father used to say with a very natural pride, after his own son had grown up, 'Formerly I was the son of my father, and now I am the father of my son!'

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born on the 3rd of February 1809. His parents were neither of them trained musicians, though both appreciated and loved music, and it was from his mother that young Felix received his first music-lessons. At the age of nine years Felix had attained such proficiency that we find him taking the pianoforte part in a trio at a public concert, and when twelve years old he began to compose, and actually wrote a trio, some sonatas, a cantata, and several organ pieces.

His home life was in the highest degree favourable to his musical development. On alternate Sundays musical performances were regularly given with a small orchestra in the large dining room, Felix, or his sister Fanny, who also possessed remarkable musical gifts, taking the pianoforte part, and new compositions by Felix were always included in the programme. Many friends, musicians and others, used to be present, and the pieces were always freely commented on, Felix receiving then, as indeed he did all his life, the criticisms expressed with the

# Listen and Learn

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## *Songs Without Words*, Book 3, Op. 38: No. 18 in A-flat Major, No. 6, “Duetto”

*(Disc 2, Track 4; approx. 3 minutes)*

Shortly after Mendelssohn married his sweetheart, he wrote one of his *Songs Without Words*. These short piano pieces, that he published throughout his life, have quite singable melodies; they sound like songs someone would sing. But Felix chose not to put words to them. Why do you think he made that decision?

He often did not even give titles to his *Songs Without Words*. But the piece that he composed with his bride, Cecile, in mind, he did give a name: “Duetto”—a song for two voices. Listen for the two voices in the song and make up your own words to it if you would like.

Music Study with the Masters: Mendelssohn

# Complete Track Listing

*All music courtesy of Naxos of America, Inc.*

## Disc 1

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, MWV N16 “Italienische”  
(27:05)

Performed by Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Anthony Bramall

1. I. Allegro vivace (8:04)
2. II. Andante con moto (6:28)
3. III. Con moto moderato (6:27)
4. IV. Salterello: Presto (6:06)

*Rondo Capriccioso* in E Major, Op. 14 (6:32)

Performed by Elena Ivanina

5. *Rondo Capriccioso* in E Major, Op. 14 (6:32)

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, MWV O14 (29:47)

Performed by Takako Nishizaki, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra,  
Kenneth Jean

6. I. Allegro molto appassionato (13:42)
7. II. Andante - Allegro non troppo (9:26)
8. III. Allegro molto vivace (6:39)

## Disc 2

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Performed by Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Anthony Bramall

1. Overture, Op. 21, MWV P3 (12:17)
2. Act V: Entr'acte, Op. 61, MWV M13, “Wedding March” (5:16)

*The Hebrides*, Op. 26, “Fingal’s Cave” (11:03)

Performed by Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Oliver Dohnanyi

3. *The Hebrides*, Op. 26, “Fingal’s Cave” (11:03)

*Songs Without Words*

Performed by Peter Nagy

4. Book 3, Op. 38: No. 18 in A-flat Major, No. 6, “Duetto” (3:20)
5. Book 5, Op. 62: No. 30 in A Major, No. 6, “Spring” (2:21)

*Elijah*, Op. 70, BWV A25

Performed by Christine Schafer, Cornelia Kallisch, Michael Schade,  
Wolfgang Schone, Stuttgart Gachinger Kantorei, Stuttgart Bach  
Collegium, Helmuth Rilling

6. “Wohl Dem, Der Den Herrn Furchtet” (Chorus) (2:43)  
Performed by Stuttgart Bach Collegium, Helmuth Rilling
7. “Wirf Dein Anliegen Auf Den Herrn” (1:40)

String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20, BWV R20 (31:38)

Performed by Afiara Quartet, Alexander String Quartet

8. I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco (14:09)
9. II. Andante (6:59)
10. III. Scherzo, Allegro leggierissimo (4:30)
11. IV. Presto (6:00)