



bournemouth
symphony orchestra

Composer Portfolios

Fanny MENDELSSOHN



Name	Fanny Mendelssohn
Nationality	German
Born-Died	1805-1847
Quote	<i>'It must be a sign of talent that I do not give up, though I can get nobody to take interest in my efforts'</i>
	

Interesting Stories

Fanny's Links to Bach

Fanny was taught to play the piano by her mother, who had been taught by a student of J.S.Bach. Fanny could play all 24 Preludes from Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* by the time she was 13.

Something Special

In 1820 she and her brother Felix Mendelssohn joined the Sing-Akademie in Berlin (a music society), directed by the composer Carl Friedrich Zelter. Zelter was so impressed with the young Fanny that he wrote a letter to the author Goethe in which he said: "This child really is something special."

The Invisible Composer

Some of Fanny's works were published under her brother Felix's name, including a song called 'Italien'. This caused some embarrassment when, at a reception in Buckingham Palace, Queen Victoria told Felix Mendelssohn that she would sing her favourite song by the composer... and began to sing 'Italien'. Felix confessed that it was actually the work of his sister.

Facts:

- Fanny was born in Hamburg on 14 November 1805.
- Fanny composed over 460 pieces of music.
- She was one of the 19th-century's most brilliant composers.
- A number of her songs were originally published under her brother's name, Felix Mendelssohn, who was also a composer.
- Fanny's father believed that composition wasn't a career for a woman, he would tell her: 'Music will perhaps become [Felix's] profession, while for you it can and must be only an ornament.'
- Despite her father's protests, Fanny was strong willed and brimming with musical ideas so she continued composing.
- Even today works that were credited to her brother Felix are now being reattributed to their real composer: Fanny Mendelssohn.
- Fanny died in Berlin in 1847.

Fanny's Music

Now we know more about the woman, why not listen to some of her music!

- String Quartet in E flat major
- Hiob Cantata
- Overture in C
- Notturmo in G minor
- Das Jahr
- Bergeslust
- Italien
- Piano Trio in D minor
- Harfners Lied
- Prelude for Organ in F major
- Pastorella, for piano in A major
- Nach Suden