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# Fanny Mendelssohn




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## Synopsis

(Amadeus). This is the first English-language biography of Fanny Mendelssohn, the older sister of Felix Mendelssohn and a gifted composer and pianist in her own right. Under pressure to neglect her talents in favor of her brother, Fanny stifled her career, and most of her 400 compositions have only recently become known. HARDCOVER

## Book Information

Hardcover: 402 pages

Publisher: Amadeus Press; First English Language Edition edition (March 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0931340969

ISBN-13: 978-0931340963

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.3 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,139,040 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 inÃ Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Composers > Mendelssohn #556 inÃ Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Historical Period > Early Romantic #789 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Reference & Collections

## Customer Reviews

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805^-47), like her brother Felix (1809^-47), was a precocious musician who trained with the best teachers. Her parents believed, however, that a woman must devote body and soul to home, family, and motherhood. Her hopes for a musical career thus dashed, Fanny became Felix’s confidante. Enter painter and poet Wilhelm Hensel (1794^-1861), who met Fanny in 1821 and, eight years later, married her. Fanny continued composing pieces, including settings of Hensel’s poems, that she performed at Sunday afternoon musicales in the couple’s apartment in the Mendelssohn home. An 1839 trip to Rome revived her spirit for music. She surrounded herself with French composers: Gounod, Berlioz, and Massenet, from whom she learned the meaning of liberty. In 1845, she began publishing her music. She issued 12 collections by the end of her life, by which time she saw herself as a woman dilettante, "the most alarming creature that can be imagined." Telling her story, Tillard tells that of the Mendelssohns, too, because much of Fanny’s life is revealed in their correspondence. Alan Hirsch

Text: English (translation) Original Language: French

It is not easy to find a comprehensive account of Fanny Mendelssohn where she is dealt with as a person of some musical importance on her own account. This book delivers in this respect but sadly reaffirms the difficulty women artists and composers have in being taken seriously whatever their endeavours and the artistic merit associated with them. Well worth a read.

Important contribution to the revelation of Fanny Mendelssohn’s place in the lieder tradition. Having lived in the shadow of her more famous brother, she is gradually becoming known; her lieder are beautiful and her life most interesting.

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