

*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.

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Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy  
*(1809–1847)*

*by Sonya Shafer*

Music Study with the Masters: Mendelssohn

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*See complete track listing on the back page of this book.*



## *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” (*Vol. 5, 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* . . . 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*  
by John Frederick Rowbotham, edited by Sonya Shafer

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

case. He certainly wrote an abundance of letters; but, getting over them very quickly, he reserved the great part of his time for the more important business of his life.

This morning we may see him wading through the heap in his study—answering them one after the other; for, like all voluminous letter writers, he never left over till the next day a single letter unanswered, being well aware—we suppose by the same experience which teaches other men—that this is the infallible road to a speedy congestion of correspondence. At length his task is over. Some of the letters are tossed into the wastepaper basket; others are placed with careful solicitude in the pigeon-holes of a writing desk; and a goodly pile lies on his writing table awaiting the entry of the servant to take them off to the post.

That duty despatched, he applies himself to composition. And now, in place of that matter-of-fact business-like demeanor with which he has traveled through his letter-writing, an entirely different mood seems to come over him. He brings out from a private drawer a huge score and spreads it, with many smiles, on the table. He looks at it lovingly but does not attempt to pen a note for some time to come. Instead of that, he walks up and down the room, snapping his fingers and giving vent to inarticulate expressions of delight. This pantomime continues for awhile. At last a fascinating idea strikes him. He sits down and commits it to paper. A few more turns round the room, and he repeats the process of writing; this time for a considerable period. From this protracted fit of inspiration he rises at length with much abruptness, and walking about the room, keeps muttering to himself, “Good! good! excellent!” while he snaps his fingers in time to his steps.

He is a fast worker despite the constant interruptions in his inspiration, and by the time that one o’clock arrives has covered a good quantity of score paper. He might have done even half as much again had it not been for that intolerable amount of correspondence [Continued in the full version of the book.]

# The Story of Mendelssohn

from *The Great Composers, or Stories of the Lives of Eminent Musicians*  
by C. E. Bourne, edited by Sonya Shafer

## *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 Schubert, what grinding poverty was, or suffered the long worries that 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 [Continued in the full version of the book.]

**Violin Concerto in E Minor,  
Op. 64, MWV O14**

*(Disc 1, Tracks 6–8; approx. 30 minutes)*

Though the entire orchestra is playing in a concerto, all of those many musicians are careful to stay in the background and support the solo instrument for whom the concerto was written. This concerto was written to direct the audience's attention to a solo violin. What do you notice about the violin's part?

Felix Mendelssohn was an accomplished painter, as well as a composer. You might like to paint a picture as you listen to his violin concerto. What scene does the music bring to your mind? You could even paint three different pictures: one for each of the three movements of this concerto.

[The sample file includes the first 30 seconds of this piece.]

Music Study with the Masters: Mendelssohn

# Track Listing

## Disc 1

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, MWV N16, "Italian" (27:05)

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)

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

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

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

## Disc 2

1. A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture, Op. 21, MWV P3 (12:17)
2. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 61, MWV M13: Act V: Entr'acte: Wedding March (5:16)
3. The Hebrides, Op. 26, "Fingal's Cave" (11:03)
4. Songs Without Words, Book 3, Op. 38: No. 18 in A-Flat Major, No. 6, Duette (3:20)
5. Songs Without Words, Book 5, Op. 62: No. 30 in A Major, No. 6, Spring (2:21)
6. Elijah, Op. 70, MWV A25: Wohl Dem, Der Den Herrn Furchtet (2:43)
7. Elijah, Op. 70, MWV A25: Wirf Dein Anliegen Auf Den Herrn (1:40)

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

8. I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco (14:09)

9. II. Andante (6:59)
10. III. Scherzo, Allegro leggerissimo (4:30)
11. IV. Presto (6:00)