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**Mendelssohn's Trio opus 49:  
A Study of the Composer's Change of Mind**

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**Essay**

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## **Abstract**

Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, opus 49, is one of the most prominent works of the mainstream chamber music repertoire. Completed in the spring of 1840, it became almost immediately a work celebrated by professional musicians and amateurs alike.

In the summer of 1839 Mendelssohn completed a score of the entire piece, which was never published. This draft version is extant and housed in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin as part of the volume known as Mus.Ms.Autogr. Mendelssohn 31.

The main purpose of this document is to gain insight into Mendelssohn's compositional thought through a comparative analysis of the two complete versions of the D minor Trio: the draft of July 1839 and the final published version of April 1840. The first part of the document reviews the history of the Trio's composition; the second part attempts to trace some of the reasons that prompted Mendelssohn to revise the piece; and the third part derives practical interpretative conclusions from the previous discussion. To facilitate the study of the draft version, the document includes a facsimile of the draft's manuscript, a critical performance edition complete with parts, and a CD recording of both versions of the Trio.

**Ron Regev** has won numerous awards and prizes in competitions such as the Tenth Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition, the American Scholarship Association Piano Competition in Cincinnati, the Bruce Hungerford Award in New York, the First Tbilisi Piano Competition in Georgia, the Israeli Broadcast Association Young Artist Competition, and the Arianne Katz Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. He is also a recipient of prizes and scholarships for performing chamber music in Israel and abroad. Mr. Regev was awarded America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarships from 1987 until the end of his formal studies. In the summer of 1998 he received a Fulbright grant to continue his studies in the United States.

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Born in Israel in 1976, Mr. Regev was graduated from the Tel Aviv School of the Arts and, with distinction, from the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts. He was a member of the Young Musicians Unit at the Jerusalem Music Center. Mr. Regev spent his military service as the commander of the Israeli Defense Forces' chamber ensembles. A student of Professor Emanuel Krasovsky, he was registered in the Special Program for Outstanding Students of the Tel Aviv University, and completed his Bachelor of Music degree at the Samuel Rubin Israeli Academy of Music (Tel Aviv University) *summa cum laude*. Mr. Regev received his Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School, New York, where he studied piano with Mr. Jerome Lowenthal and chamber music with Mr. Joseph Kalichstein. He is currently a doctoral candidate at Juilliard, as well as an adjunct faculty member.

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## **Preface**

Throughout my life as a musician I have been trying to find ways to improve my understanding of the composers whose works I love so much. I have found that one of the most direct routes to this end is the study of their manuscripts and drafts. The comparison between what a piece may have been and what it ended up being provides a fascinating opportunity to get to know a composer's musical thoughts and priorities, as well as his demons.

When Dr. J. Michael Cooper gave a lecture on Mendelssohn at Juilliard, I hesitantly approached him afterwards, and asked whether he could point out possible topics for my doctoral research. Dr. Cooper, whose work on Mendelssohn has been crucial to bringing the composer out of a state of "under-research," was kind enough to provide me with a list of possible topics. Among them was a study of a draft of Mendelssohn's celebrated D minor Piano Trio, opus 49. This was the perfect topic for me, since it combined two of my greatest passions: the study of manuscripts, to which I was introduced by Prof. Claudio Spies, and Mendelssohn's Trio, to which my parents led me. Dr. Cooper provided me with the necessary information and contacts for beginning my research, and I went to work.

Inasmuch as I was able to study the primary sources of the Trio on my own, and to perform my own analysis of the two versions of the piece, I could not have established the background to its composition without the work of scholars such as Dr. Cooper, R. Larry Todd, and Douglass Seaton. I benefited especially from the insights and

information in Friedhelm Krummacher's book. On the more practical side of things, this document would not exist without the help and devotion of Jane Gottlieb and Pia Gilbert from the Juilliard School, Dr. Helmut Hell from the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Dr. Andreas Sopart from the Breitkopf & Härtel archives in Wiesbaden, my wonderful chamber music partners Alisa Weilerstein and Frank Huang, our coach, Joseph Kalichstein, and above all Claudio Spies, whose friendship and knowledge have been nothing short of inspiring, and who helped me with many of the translations from German in this document. In my quest for the primary sources of the Trio, I was also aided by some wonderful librarians, who went to great lengths to assist me: Alan Klein at Juilliard; David Peter Coppen and Alice Carli of the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N.Y.; and Carolyn Shankle of the Jackson Library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My research in Germany, as well as the production of the facsimile and CD, would not have been possible without a grant I received from the Presser Foundation.

My enthusiasm for and dedication to this project were reinforced by my advisor, Dr. L. Michael Griffel. Dr. Griffel's own enthusiasm and dedication, as well as his profound scholarship and keen editorial eye, greet the reader of this document at every sentence. He spent countless hours checking and rechecking my every word, and I feel honored to have worked with a musician and scholar of such caliber.

This document is not the first one to explore the draft version of the Trio. The initial plunge into this fascinating topic was taken in 1960 by Donald Mintz. Mintz's



dissertation was groundbreaking in Mendelssohn scholarship, but as he was working in the East Germany of the 1960s, he could not enjoy the benefits of travel and technology that have been at my disposal. Consequently, his discussion of the two versions of the Trio had to devote most of its focus to local musical details; he literally had to describe the differences between the two versions, since he could not present his readers with any musical means of getting to know the work's draft. Additionally, Mintz picked a rather dangerous and subjective premise for his analysis of the Trio's revision: he set out to prove that Mendelssohn intended his changes to transform a "Classical" work into a more "Romantic" one. At times, Mintz's adherence to this premise seems to have distorted his analytical insights.

In this document I aim to pick up where Mintz left off. The readers of this document have the benefit of a facsimile, a score, and a recording at their disposal; my analysis is limited, therefore, to general and structural observations. The manuscript itself of the draft version of the Trio provides a fascinating study. I am currently working on an exact annotated transcription of it, and consequently my discussion of the manuscript's crossings-out and corrections is limited to observations pertinent to the comparison of the two complete versions of the Trio. I have tried to avoid any premises in my discussion of Mendelssohn's reasons for revising the Trio; I believe it is safe to assume that he thought the piece could stand improvement. Ultimately, I hope that this research will be able to improve, if only by little, our understanding and appreciation of Mendelssohn's genius.

Ron Regev  
*New York, December 2004*

### **Abbreviations**

This document employs only two abbreviations: since both Mus.Ms.Autogr. Mendelssohn 19 and Mus.Ms.Autogr. Mendelssohn 31 are housed in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, they will be referred to as DSB 19 and DSB 31, abbreviations that both Mintz's and Seaton's dissertations have already employed.

## Part I

### The Composition and Reception of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, opus 49

#### 1. 1820-1839

Piano pieces are not the most enjoyable form of composition to me right now; I cannot even write them with real success; but I sometimes need a new piece to play, and if now and then something really suitable for the piano comes into my head, why should I be afraid of writing it down? Moreover, a very important branch of piano music, and one of which I am particularly fond – trios, quartets and other pieces with accompaniment, genuine chamber music – is quite forgotten now and I feel a great urge to do something new of this kind.<sup>1</sup>

These words, taken from a letter Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847) wrote in August 1838 to his good friend at the time, pianist and composer Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885), are indicative of Mendelssohn's life-long affinity to chamber music with piano. Among his earliest known compositions is a trio for violin, viola, and piano in C minor.<sup>2</sup> Albeit never published, this trio, parts of which are included in the first volume of the Mendelssohn *Nachlaß* and date to early 1820,<sup>3</sup> was probably the one considered for performance in London in 1827 (and rejected by Mendelssohn, who claimed he would not be in London at the time of the proposed performance).<sup>4</sup> Mendelssohn chose as his first published works three piano quartets written shortly after the trio, a fact which

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters: Edited by G. Selden-Goth: With 33 Illustrations* (New York, N.Y.: Pantheon, 1945; reprint, New York, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1969), 279; quoted in Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, compiled by David Whitwell (Northridge, Calif.: Winds, 1986), 17.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 60.

<sup>3</sup> R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn's Musical Education: A Study and Edition of His Exercises in Composition: Oxford Bodleian Ms. Margaret Deneke Mendelssohn C. 43.*, ed. John Stevens and Peter Le Huray, Cambridge Studies in Music (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 44.

<sup>4</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to "Preciosissimo" [sic], Hobart Place, Eaton Square, April 16, 1827, in Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, "Letters. Catalogue, with Extracts and Annotations, of 37 Holograph Letters, Dated 1827 to 1846, Four Being in English and One in French" (Music Division, New York Public Library, New York), text-fiche.

should not be underestimated: it was traditional for young composers to choose as their first official *opera* works that they considered representative of the best they could offer – it is enough for us to consider Beethoven’s piano trios opus 1, Schubert’s *Erlkönig*, and Brahms’ first piano sonata as good examples of this practice.

Except for the works mentioned above, Mendelssohn’s early output for piano and strings included some shorter works, mostly for violin and piano. He composed a few sonatas for this combination, the most substantial of which was published as opus 4.<sup>5</sup> Yet, after this initial flourish of works in this genre, Mendelssohn appears to have neglected it for a considerable period: between the early 1820s and the composition of the incomplete violin sonata and the first cello sonata in 1838, the only piece written for a stringed instrument with piano was a short “show piece” for cello and piano – the *Variations concertantes* opus 17 of 1829.<sup>6</sup> An examination of Mendelssohn’s correspondence shows that he may have avoided writing chamber music with piano not for lack of interest, but because he considered this particular medium of chamber music so challenging that he wanted to dedicate his very best to it.

Mendelssohn’s correspondence of the 1830s reveals that he seriously considered the composition of piano trios several times. On August 28, 1831, he wrote a letter to publisher Pietro Mechetti in which he embraced Mechetti’s suggestion that he would write a piano trio. In this letter Mendelssohn went as far as claiming that the piece would

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<sup>5</sup> For the most current list of these works, refer to John Michael Cooper, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: A Guide to Research: With an Introduction to Research Concerning Fanny Hensel*, Composer Resource Manuals, vol. 54 (New York: Routledge, 2001), 248-254.

<sup>6</sup> Cooper mentions a piano trio in A major of ca. 1834 (see *ibid.*, 253). This may be one of the trios that Mendelssohn referred to in his letters (see below), but is not known to exist in any complete form.

soon be ready.<sup>7</sup> On January 21, 1832, he wrote from Paris to dramatist and novelist Karl Immermann (1796-1840):

The publishers [of Paris] are standing on each side of me like veritable Satans, demanding music for the piano, and offering to pay for it. By Heavens! I don't know whether I shall be able to withstand this, or write some kind of trio; for I hope you believe me to be superior to the temptation of a pot-pourri.<sup>8</sup>

On the same day Mendelssohn wrote to his sister Fanny that he “should like to compose a couple of good trios.”<sup>9</sup>

During that sojourn in Paris and London Mendelssohn was having his first dealings with two major publishing houses: Breitkopf & Härtel, and Simrock. In one of his earliest letters to Breitkopf, dated January 23, Mendelssohn offered several works for publication, including his octet. Among his suggestions were “one or two trios for piano with accompanying violin and cello.”<sup>10</sup> Interestingly enough, Mendelssohn's sole request of Breitkopf was that the works be published simultaneously in Leipzig, Paris, and London – a request that was to be repeated and honored seven years later, upon the publication of the D minor Trio. Such a request was rather common at the time, because of the lack of international copyright laws: a piece published in one country would become part of the public domain in another, unless published simultaneously in the other

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<sup>7</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, ed. Rudolf Elvers (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), 291.

<sup>8</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland by Mendelssohn*, trans. Lady Wallace (New York: Books for Libraries Press; reprint, 1970), 333; quoted in Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, compiled by David Whitwell (Northridge, Calif.: Winds, 1986), 38.

<sup>9</sup> John Horton, *Mendelssohn Chamber Music*, BBC Music Guides, vol. 24 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 12.

country.<sup>11</sup> In any case, less than two months later Mendelssohn wrote Breitkopf again and confessed that, although he did have a trio in the works when the previous letter had been written, its composition had been delayed because he had been occupied by “concerts, parties and the run of Parisian life.”<sup>12</sup> He offered instead a *concertante* piece for piano and orchestra or a big *Rondo Brilliant* for piano with orchestral accompaniment. He promised to notify Breitkopf as soon as a trio was ready, provided the publisher was particularly interested in a trio, and was willing to give him the time needed for its composition.

This is the last we hear of Mendelssohn’s intentions to write a trio during 1831-1832. No manuscript of any significance is extant that would suggest that the composition of any trios in this period went beyond initial planning.

Late in 1834 Mendelssohn’s plans to write a trio resurface. His sister Fanny writes on November 24:

...Among the sketches that you list and have in mind the Trio doesn’t appear. Have you given up on it? Please finish it for me because I eagerly look forward to it.<sup>13</sup>

Mendelssohn replies on December 11:

Unfortunately the Trio hasn’t progressed much because I have too much to do on the oratorio, the second part of which I’m working on

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<sup>11</sup> See Joel Sachs, “Hummel and the Pirates: The Struggle for Musical Copyright,” *The Musical Quarterly* 59, no. 1. (Jan. 1973): 31-32; available at <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-4631%28197301%2959%3A1%3C31%3AHATPTS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>.

<sup>12</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn: Collected, Edited, and Translated with Introductory Essays and Notes by Marcia J. Citron* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1987), 156.

now. Please forgive me; it should, however, be finished sometime soon.<sup>14</sup>

We see that on both occasions in which Mendelssohn was thinking of writing piano trios he eventually decided to postpone the project because he could not dedicate sufficient time and energy to it. The opportune moment finally came in 1839, during which he was able to work on the D minor Trio intermittently throughout the year. Although it is not likely that the D minor Trio was based on the pieces planned in the early 1830s, this notion cannot be ruled out completely, if we take into account the length of time which passed between initial planning and final realization of other works.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. The Composition of the D minor Trio: The Summer of 1839

On August 17, 1838, Mendelssohn announced to Ferdinand Hiller his intention “shortly to write a couple of trios.”<sup>16</sup> Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) received notice on February 27, 1839, that “a new pianoforte Trio” has been begun,<sup>17</sup> and on April 4 Mendelssohn wrote to him:

...I have written a new dramatic overture that has been quite a pleasure to me; also a psalm, some songs without words and some with words, and now a trio in D, and a symphony in B, of which I will tell you more when they are finished.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>15</sup> See Friedhelm Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist: Studien zur Kammermusik für Streicher* (Munich: W. Fink, 1978), 95.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles: Translated from the Originals in His Possession, and Edited by Felix Moscheles* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1888), 187. Quoted in F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 95.

<sup>18</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters: Edited by G. Selden-Goth*, 281. Both this source and the previous one mention a symphony in B (see F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles*, 191), but Cooper lists it as a symphony in B-flat (see J. M. Cooper, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: A Guide to Research*, 230).

On April 13 Ferdinand David wrote to Mendelssohn:

...How is the Trio coming? Making progress? Your friends from here are looking forward to it. Don't make us wait too long for it.<sup>19</sup>

R. Larry Todd attributes the initial plunge into the composition of the D minor Trio to Mendelssohn's vacation in Frankfurt from late May to mid-July of 1839.<sup>20</sup> However, there are several factors indicating that Mendelssohn started working on the Trio earlier than that. In addition to the letters quoted above, written well before Mendelssohn's trip to Frankfurt, one must pay close attention to the Trio's extant manuscripts dating to this period. They are as follows: one leaf of sketches (pp. 49-50) from Mus.ms.autogr. F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy 19 (referred to here as DSB 19); the complete score of the first version of the Trio, dated July 18, 1839, which is contained in Mus.ms.autogr. F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy 31 (referred to here as DSB 31); and the piano part used by Breitkopf & Härtel for engraving the first edition of the Trio. The Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin houses the first two sources;<sup>21</sup> the Breitkopf & Härtel Archives in Wiesbaden house the third.

#### DSB 19: Pages 49-50

The earliest extant manuscript pertaining to the Trio appears on the leaf that is now pages 49 and 50 of DSB 19 (for a facsimile of the pertinent passages on that leaf, see

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<sup>19</sup> Julius Wilhelm Albert von Eckardt, *Ferdinand David und die Familie Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Aus hinterlassenen Briefschaften zusammengestellt* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888), text-fiche, 104.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Larry Todd, "The Chamber Music of Mendelssohn," in *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 192; R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 374, 376; R. Larry Todd, ed., *Mendelssohn and His World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 160.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed explanation of Mendelssohn's *Nachlaß* see Douglass Seaton, "A Study of a Collection of Mendelssohn's Sketches and Other Autograph Material, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Berlin Mus. Ms. Autogr. Mendelssohn 19" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1977), 1-2.



Volume II of this document). DSB 19 is the topic of Douglass Seaton's 1977 dissertation.<sup>22</sup> Seaton introduces the volume in his abstract:<sup>23</sup>

This study is based on a collection of miscellaneous scraps from the composer's desk, Mus.ms.autogr. Mendelssohn 19 in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Berlin (DSB 19). The collection contains material for works of the years 1835-1845. . . . About half of the 250 entries remain unidentified.

DSB 19, unlike the familiar Beethoven sketchbooks, was not used as a book, but by individual leaves and folios. The appearance of the book shows that, also in contrast to Beethoven, Mendelssohn was neat, meticulous, and frugal.

Seaton writes about the nature of the sketches that comprise the volume:

Basically it includes short sketches, longer drafts, and a few pages which were apparently discarded from fair copies of completed works, some of the latter having also been used as scratch paper.

And more specifically:

Thematic sketches, whose primary purpose is to show the principal material of a thematically controlled passage, are the most numerous type in DSB 19.

Other sketches in DSB 19 were made by Mendelssohn to solve specific technical problems that confronted him in the working out of the music. These sketches reflect a wide range of problems, including those of counterpoint, recitative writing, development, figuration, cadences, chorale harmonizations, and notation.

Finally, Seaton mentions continuity drafts and score drafts. Of all these different types, the rarest are the passages that appear to be so complete in their detail, including instrumentation, expression marks, articulation, and dynamics, that Seaton speculates they were discarded from scores that were designated as very late stages of a work's

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<sup>22</sup> D. Seaton, "A Study of a Collection."

<sup>23</sup> The citations that follow regarding DSB 19 are taken from D. Seaton, "A Study of a Collection," Abstract, 3.

compositional process, or even as fair copies.<sup>24</sup> As mentioned earlier, Mendelssohn usually worked on separate leaves and then collated them, rather than writing in notebooks or books. Seaton makes a comment that is very pertinent to the leaf containing pages 49 and 50 of the volume:

The value of this system must have been that the separate sketches for a passage could be spread out and seen simultaneously. Examination of the autograph scores of works from this period shows that Mendelssohn's habit when writing out a score was to write on separate folios, filling one before going on to the next, rather than using paper in a book format. This meant that if a piece was later revised, as was often the case, the obsolete sections could be replaced without damaging the preceding and following folios.<sup>25</sup>

Most of page 49 of DSB 19 is taken by a passage of the last type described – a passage so complete in its working out that it is likely to be a discarded part of a score.<sup>26</sup> The page starts with the second theme of the D minor Trio's last movement (which correlates with mm. 52-74 of the last movement's first complete version and with mm. 52-78 of the Finale's final version). The passage is similar to its counterparts in most of its continuity, thematic substance, and harmonic underpinning. However, it is also different, both in small nuances and in major details: for instance, the two appearances of the theme in the violin part and then in the piano part are reversed in relation to their order in the other versions; the texture of the accompaniment is different; and the metric displacement of the beginning of the theme to the middle of the measure occurs in the piano part, but not in the initial appearance of the theme in the violin part – a fact that makes the phrase structure of this first appearance uneven.

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<sup>24</sup> For a somewhat personalized classification of the different types of materials found in DSB 19, as well as an attempt at clarifying the difference between terms such as “draft,” “sketch,” “manuscript,” and “autograph,” see *ibid.*, 39, 41, 47.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>26</sup> For a reproduction of pp. 49 and 50 of DSB 19, see Volume II of this document.

This last observation is crucial to dating this fragment to a time earlier than the first extant complete manuscript of the trio, the one contained in DSB 31. In both complete versions of the Trio, the shift of the Finale's themes to the middle of the measure, in something of a Gavotte style, is consistent. It is very unlikely that an inconsistent version such as the one in DSB 19 would postdate these versions.

Further indications that this leaf is earlier than the manuscript in DSB 31 are detected through analysis of the sketches that follow the aforementioned scoring of the second theme of the fourth movement. In the second measure of lines 13 and 14 of page 49, Mendelssohn starts a far less complete sketch than the one above. This rough sketch appears to contain the violin part and the piano's right-hand part (followed by the left-hand part in the last three measures) of a passage that is harmonically parallel to the one found in mm. 28-34 of both later versions. This passage, however, has little to do with the motivic units that are the building blocks of most of the thematic material of the movement – as if the melodic substance of the movement crystallized after the harmonic structure was already in place (see more on this topic below, in the chapter dealing with the revision of the fourth movement, pp. 94-100).

The beginning of page 50 contains the next evolutionary stage of the same passage: based on the same harmonic structure, Mendelssohn now incorporates canonic entrances of the violin and the cello parts, using the movement's first theme. On the staff below there are unclear figurations, which Seaton terms "Figuration Sketches":

...they are short repetitive patterns which look like ideas for accompaniment, but do not appear in conjunction with any other material.<sup>27</sup>

It is impossible to establish with any degree of certainty whether these figurations were intended for the Trio or not. In any case, it is clear that the sketches at the end of page 49 and the beginning of page 50 represent earlier stages in the evolution of the fourth movement than the ones found in DSB 31.

In an attempt to date this leaf, it is helpful to consider the gestation history of other works that are sketched here. Whereas most of page 50 contains unidentified entries, staves 15 and 16 of page 49 contain sketches for a piece that can be identified: the second movement of the Psalm opus 46. Could it be, then, that the dates of the Psalm's composition would help us ascertain the period in which this leaf was written?

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is both yes and no. The first version of the Psalm opus 46 was completed in early April 1838. On February 21, 1839, all six movements of the work were performed in a charity concert to rave reviews,<sup>28</sup> only to be withheld by Mendelssohn for extensive revisions. In April he drafted the revised fifth verse (that draft is included in pages 51-66 of DSB 31 and is dated April 11), and then started revising the whole piece. This is mentioned in a letter to the publisher Kistner, dated July 14.<sup>29</sup> We can deduce from this information that the last two staves on page 49 were probably written after April 11, 1839. Although this does not clearly answer the question of when the rest of the page was written, it does give rise to the possibility that it

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<sup>27</sup> D. Seaton, "A Study of a Collection," 89.

<sup>28</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 375.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 610.

was written around the same time that Mendelssohn sent Moscheles the above letter, i.e., the beginning of April 1839 or earlier.

An examination of the leaf's paper is equally inconclusive as to the assumption that Mendelssohn was already at work on the Trio in early 1839. Seaton writes about Mendelssohn's paper in DSB 19:

The paper in DSB 19 is mostly all of one general description. The leaves are in vertical format, measure on the average about 29x22 cm, and are pre-ruled with sixteen staves per page. Mendelssohn apparently favored this format and was able to buy this type of paper in quantity, as it is by far the most frequently used in the scores of his works of this period.<sup>30</sup>

A non-scientific comparison of the paper used in this leaf and the paper employed for most of the Trio's manuscript in DSB 31 suggests that although they share the same layout and size, they are of different stock. The confirmation of this assumption is pending proper scientific analysis.<sup>31</sup>

Let us now try to use all of the above information to reach a conclusion about the dating of this leaf. As mentioned before, the beginning of page 49 of DSB 19 is no mere sketch or fragment. This passage is not there for the purpose of working out any compositional difficulty, and it includes such details as the initial transitory passage in the piano part, complete instrumentation, articulations, and dynamics. It is very likely to have been taken from a longer score, a probable initial complete draft of the last

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<sup>30</sup> D. Seaton, "A Study of a Collection," 21.

<sup>31</sup> The staff of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, headed by Dr. Helmut Hell, have been extremely accommodating in allowing me in-depth study of Mendelssohn's autographs. I did not want to burden them with this question, but it is definitely one that future scholarship on this topic should raise.

movement of the Trio. Krummacher asserts that this leaf is taken from the complete manuscript included in DSB 31, presumably replaced by page 159 of that volume.<sup>32</sup> As insightful as Krummacher's observations are, I have to disagree with this assertion, since the pagination of this theme in DSB 31 does not correspond to the pagination here. The most logical conclusion is that the leaf in DSB 19 was taken from a version of the last movement, whether complete or not, that predates the one in DSB 31. The metric idiosyncrasies of the second theme as it appears here suggest that this version predates the versions in DSB 31 and the first edition; this is further supported by the fact that the other sketches on this leaf, which are written after the second theme, depict the compositional evolution of a passage that appears earlier in the continuity of the piece, with the sketch on page 50 closely resembling the passage as it would be used in DSB 31.

We are indeed lucky to have this leaf available at all: pages 49 and 50 of DSB 19 are not typical of the type of material that forms the bulk of the volume. Their leaf is the only one in the volume to contain material from the D minor Trio, whereas most of the volume is dedicated to materials taken from a small number of major works.<sup>33</sup>

To summarize: although there is no conclusive evidence, various factors suggest that pages 49 and 50 of DSB 19 were composed in the beginning of April 1839 or earlier. This assumption receives additional support from an observation that Donald Mintz makes in his study of the version of the Trio contained in DSB 31.

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<sup>32</sup> F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 113.

<sup>33</sup> According to Seaton, the volume includes sketches for nine major works: Opp. 36, 40, 42, 52, 56, 60, 61, 64, and 74. Most of the volume's leaves containing material from other works are included because they feature material related to these pieces. The leaf for the D minor Trio is one of the volume's few exceptions to this rule. See D. Seaton, "A Study of a Collection," 20.

### DSB 31 as an Intended Fair Copy

In his study of the D minor Trio, Donald Mintz observed an interesting phenomenon in the transition between the first and the second pages of the first movement.<sup>34</sup> The last nine measures of page 129 are crossed out – but unlike most of the other instances of crossings-out in this manuscript, the bars following them in page 130 do not continue where the crossed-out measures left off, but rather continue the last retained measure on page 129. At the same time the first thirteen measures of page 130 appear to be much more heavily revised than any of the material preceding them on page 129 or following them on page 130. When one considers the fact that these pages are recto and verso, and therefore page 130 must have been written as a direct continuation of page 129, this can mean only one thing – Mendelssohn must have been copying the music from another source, and as he was copying, he decided to discard and recompose the ending of page 129 directly onto the fair copy. Mintz makes a remarkably sharp observation here, which leads us to the same conclusion as our study of the leaf in DSB 19: the Trio's manuscript in DSB 31 started out as a fair copy of an earlier manuscript, which was probably begun in early 1839, judging from the aforementioned evidence as well as from Mendelssohn's tight schedule and the number of works he was composing simultaneously.

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<sup>34</sup> Donald Monturean Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts of Three of Felix Mendelssohn's Major Works" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1960), 155-156.

Mintz appears not to have been aware of the existence of the leaf in DSB 19, and it was not until the dissertation of Mathias Thomas, “Das Instrumentalwerk Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdys” (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972), that the existence of this leaf was recognized, if not analyzed.<sup>35</sup> The analysis of the evidence presented establishes, then, that Mendelssohn most likely started working on the Trio in early 1839, when he was still in Leipzig.

Mendelssohn spent a few days in May 1839 in Düsseldorf, where he directed the twenty-first Lower Rhine Music Festival.<sup>36</sup> From the festival he and his family traveled to Frankfurt, where they arrived in late May and remained until mid-July. Mendelssohn’s stay in Frankfurt is described in his correspondence as an extremely happy time, as a selection of letters to his mother reveals.

On June 2 he wrote his mother that his wife Cécile and he were expecting their second child.<sup>37</sup> On June 4 he performed organ music at the wedding of Cécile’s sister, Julie, to Julius Schunck. As part of the summer’s musical diversion, Felix composed three-part canons that were sung *ad infinitum* by him, Cécile, and their son Carl.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the most telling account of Mendelssohn’s state of mind during these months is given by Wilhelm Adolf Lampadius, who is described by the editor of his book as “...a

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<sup>35</sup> See D. Seaton, “A Study of a Collection,” 29.

<sup>36</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 374, 376; Karl-Heinz Köhler, “Mendelssohn,” in *The New Grove Early Romantic Masters 2: Weber, Berlioz, Mendelssohn*, The Composer Biography Series (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 220.

<sup>37</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy, June 2, 1839; in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, “Letters, 1821-1847” (Music Division, New York Public Library, New York), text-fiche.

<sup>38</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy, June 4, 1839; *ibid.*



friend of his [Mendelssohn's], a musical amateur, and evidently a man of nice tastes and of high-toned character".<sup>39</sup>

From the strain of this festival, Mendelssohn went for some weeks to Frankfurt. In his honor they made a feast for him there, a kind of a musical picnic in the wood, which he describes in a letter to his mother in the happiest vein: "The most beautiful thing which I ever saw in my whole life, so far as a social gathering of people is concerned, was a festival in the forest here, which I must describe, since it was unique of its kind. The place was a retired spot some quarter of an hour's walk from the road, and so shaded by trees as to have only glimpses through them of the rest of the wood: a very slight footpath led to it, and as soon as one came within a short distance, the white figures of the people were to be seen beneath a little group of trees hung with flower wreaths. This represented the concert hall; how delightfully the voices sounded as the soprano trilled and the sweet bird-like notes rose on the air! What a hush, a charm and delight there was in it all I cannot express. I had by no means anticipated the possibility of it, and upon their singing my song 'Ihr Vöglein in den Zweigen,' the tears really stood in my eyes. It was more than magic, it was pure poetry, and when they had sung the whole group through, and three new songs (the last my 'Lark Song'), it had to be repeated twice amidst a perfect hurrah of fun and enjoyment."<sup>40</sup>

Mendelssohn's compositional output of this period included part songs for mixed voices (some of which ended up in his Op. 48) – the composition of which was inspired by the events described above. Other works composed during this time were three organ fugues. R. Larry Todd speculates that their composition was prompted by Mendelssohn's studies of Bach manuscripts presented to him by the Frankfurt Kapellmeister K.W.F.

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<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Adolf Lampadius, *Memoirs of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy : From the German of W. A. Lampadius; with Supplementary Sketches by Julius Benedict, Henry F. Chorley, Ludwig Rellstab, Bayard Taylor, R. S. Willis, and J. S. Dwight*, trans. W. L. Gage (Boston: Ditson & Co., 1865), iii.

<sup>40</sup> Wilhelm Adolf Lampadius, *The Life of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy*, new and enlarged ed., trans. W. L. Gage (Boston: O. Ditson, 1887), 248-249.

Guhr. The composition of these pieces may have been aided by Mendelssohn's use of a pedal piano provided to him by Fritz Schlemmer.<sup>41</sup>

However, the most substantial piece completed in Frankfurt was undoubtedly the first version of the D minor Trio. The stages of its composition can be traced through Mendelssohn's correspondence:

From Mendelssohn to Kistner, one of his publishers, on June 17:

Dear Herr Kistner,

...I am working on a new violin sonata for F. Kistner, and on a Trio, and on a Symphony, and on Songs – but Walpurgisnacht – but the Opera – Oh, Lord – but the new Oratorio – where is all that!<sup>42</sup>

From Mendelssohn to Fanny, on June 18:

...I am working on a trio (the first movement is ready), on a violin sonata (ditto), on a symphony (not ditto) and on a letter to you (which is finished now); and you, what are YOU working on? –  
Regards to all.  
Your Felix.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, the date of June 6, '39, is inscribed on the final page of the first movement in DSB 31.

On July 3 Mendelssohn wrote to his mother that he had finished the Trio.<sup>44</sup> This may have been a premature declaration, since the Trio's manuscript records July 18 as the date of completion on its last page. On July 19 the Mendelssohns left Frankfurt for

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<sup>41</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 376-377.

<sup>42</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 306, 308; quoted in F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 94ff.

<sup>43</sup> Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, "Die Musik will gar nicht rutschen ohne Dich": *Briefwechsel 1821 bis 1846: Fanny und Felix Mendelssohn*, ed. Eva Weissweiler (Berlin: Propyläen, 1997), 310.

<sup>44</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1833 bis 1847: Von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, ed. Paul Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Dr. Carl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 2 (Leipzig: H. Mendelssohn, 1875), 198.

Hochheim, where they spent the following three weeks. It was there that Mendelssohn received news of the death of his favorite aunt, Dorothea Schlegel.<sup>45</sup> On August 20 the family was back in Leipzig; a few days later Mendelssohn left again to direct the Brunswick Music Festival. Upon the conclusion of the festival on September 8, Mendelssohn returned to Leipzig and was extremely busy with preparations for the opening of the new Gewandhaus season on October 6.<sup>46</sup>

A few letters mention the completion of the Trio, as well as the first time it was played through. On July 24 Mendelssohn wrote to Ferdinand David from Hochheim bei Koblenz:

...I have also been pretty busy (not with watercolors, fear not), but with a trio, a book of four songs in four parts to be sung out of doors, three organ pieces that I finished, and also I started up on a symphony and a few other things.<sup>47</sup>

And on July 28 he wrote to his mother:

...Among finished works I have a Piano Trio, five songs for four voices to be sung out of doors, and have started three Fugues for the organ, besides a number of other organ pieces.<sup>48</sup>

Fanny Mendelssohn recounts in her diary an occasion on August 29 when the trio was played through:

...Early played through F<elix>'s three quartets. At noon at the Schuncks. In the afternoon wrote. Then went for a walk. Evening the Davids and the Schuncks. David played very beautifully. F<elix>'s new Trio <op. 49>, his Psalm <op. 51>, which I find very magnificent. Very animated evening.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 378ff.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 384; K-H Köhler, "Mendelssohn," 220.

<sup>47</sup> J.W.A. von Eckardt, *Ferdinand David*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Hochheim bei Koblenz, to Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy, July 28, 1839, in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, "Letters, 1821-1847."

<sup>49</sup> Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, *Fanny Hensel: Tagebücher*, ed. Hans-Günter Klein and Rudolf Elvers (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2002), 94.

### 3. The Composition of the D minor Trio: The Fall of 1839 and Winter of 1839-1840

We have no documented evidence to suggest that Mendelssohn was either thinking of revising the Trio in the summer of 1839, or actively doing so. However, Sir George Grove indicates September 23, 1839, as the date of the second version of the Trio.<sup>50</sup> There is no extant manuscript that bears this date, and this fact may imply that Grove was referring to a specific manuscript that is lost.

At the top of page 129 of DSB 31, there is a paragraph written in an unknown hand. The text is almost illegible. Krummacher deciphers it as follows:

Das 2te Manuscript nach welchem es gedruckt ist, hat David von  
Mad. Mendelssohn geschenkt erhalten... (?) im Mai 48....<sup>51</sup>

Which translates as:

The second manuscript, from which it was printed, was given to  
David by Mme. Mendelssohn... (?) in May '48....

Claudio Spies and Pia Gilbert of the Juilliard School, in a combined effort, suggest the following reading:

Das 2te Manuskript nach welchem es gedruckt ist, hat David von  
Mad. Mendelssohn geschenkt erhalten. Empfang [or Leipzig; the  
word is very unclear] im Mai 48, mit dem Titel....<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Sir George Grove, "Mendelssohn," in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Sir George Grove, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 308. On page 298 Grove mentions "the D minor Trio, of which there are two editions in actual circulation, containing several important and extensive differences." An examination of all three first editions of the work reveals no differences warranting such a statement; it is possible that Grove inspected both manuscript versions of the Trio and assumed that they were both published. See discussion below on pp. 28-33.

<sup>51</sup> F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 95.

<sup>52</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, "Mus. Ms. Autogr. F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy 31," Score (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Leipzig), text-fiche, 129.

This translates as:

The second manuscript, from which it was printed, was given to David by Mme. Mendelssohn. Received [or Leipzig] in May 1848, with the heading....

Indeed, the contents note that is pasted on the cover of the volume includes the following entries:

...Trio für Pianoforte, Violin und Violoncell (I) (Frankfurt July)  
Ouvertüre zu Ruy Blas  
Trio für Pianoforte, Violin und Violoncell (II) (Leipzig Sept.)<sup>53</sup>

The second manuscript, however, is not part of DSB 31 at present. Krummacher speculates that Grove may have had access to the second manuscript while it was still in David's possession, a speculation that is supported by the date on DSB 31's contents note.<sup>54</sup> This may have been the reason why R. Larry Todd dated the Trio's final revision to September 1839.<sup>55</sup> As will be discussed below, this assertion is not accurate, despite the support it receives from the inscription at the top of page 129 of DSB 31.

The question of why Mendelssohn chose to revise the Trio is one of the pillars of this document, and most of Part II of this volume is dedicated to the possible musical reasons for the revision; there is, however, an oft-quoted document that refers to the revision, and it may be as misleading as it is informative. It is an account by Ferdinand Hiller of a meeting at which time Mendelssohn played the Trio for him:

We had had a tolerable quantity of music, however, during this time. Mendelssohn had just finished his great D minor trio, and played it to me. I was tremendously impressed by the fire and spirit, the flow, and, in short, the masterly character of the whole thing. But I had

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., cover.

<sup>54</sup> F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 94ff.

<sup>55</sup> See footnote no. 20.

one small misgiving. Certain pianoforte passages in it, constructed on broken chords, seemed to me – to speak candidly – somewhat old-fashioned. I had lived many years in Paris, seeing Liszt frequently, and Chopin every day, so that I was thoroughly accustomed to the richness of passages which marked the new pianoforte school. I made some observations to Mendelssohn on this point, suggesting certain alterations, but at first he would not listen to me. “Do you think that that would make the thing any better?” he said. “The piece would be the same, and so it may remain as it is.” “But,” I answered, “you have often told me, and proved to me by your actions, that the smallest touch of the brush, which might conduce to the perfection of the whole, must not be despised. An unusual form of arpeggio may not improve the harmony, but neither does it spoil it – and it becomes more interesting to the player.” We discussed it and tried it on the piano over and over again, and I enjoyed the small triumph of at last getting Mendelssohn over to my view. With his unusual conscientious earnestness when once he had made up his mind about a thing, he now undertook the lengthy, not to say wearisome, task of rewriting the whole pianoforte part. One day, when I found him working at it, he played me a bit which he had worked out *exactly* as I had suggested to him on the piano, and called out to me, “That is to remain as a remembrance of you.” Afterwards, when he had been playing it at a chamber concert with all his wonderful fire, and had carried away the whole audience, he said, “I really enjoy that piece; it is honest music after all, and the players will like it, because they can show off with it.” And so it proved.<sup>56</sup>

Todd asserts that Hiller “saw Mendelssohn frequently during his Frankfurt sojourn.”<sup>57</sup> This may be, but the occasion described above took place during December 1839, almost three months after the completion of the September manuscript. Hiller himself did not date his account, but the header of the page reads “Leipsic, 1840”;<sup>58</sup> Krummacker establishes that Mendelssohn invited Hiller to stay with him on December

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<sup>56</sup> Ferdinand Hiller, *Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections: Translated with the Consent and Revision of the Author, by M. E. von Glehn*, with an introduction by Joel Sachs (New York: Vienna House, 1972), 154-155.

<sup>57</sup> R. L. Todd, “The Chamber Music of Mendelssohn,” 192.

<sup>58</sup> F. Hiller, *Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections*, 154-155.

3, 1839;<sup>59</sup> and Roger Nichols supports Krummacher by asserting that “Hiller visited Mendelssohn in Leipzig in 1839.”<sup>60</sup>

There are several references to performances of the Trio in the correspondence of the fall and winter of 1839-1840. For instance, Mendelssohn writes to his mother on November 28 (or 23 – his handwriting is not very clear):

...Tomorrow my Cello Sonata and my Trio will be done at Schleinitz', in honor of Prince [“Fuerst”] Schönburg from Vienna; Sunday is the last rehearsal for the Monday concert and a necessary choral rehearsal for Tuesday's soirée at Dorrien's. My new Psalm will be sung by 16 good voices, and my new four-part songs to be sung outdoors will be performed.<sup>61</sup>

And on February 4 he writes to his brother Paul:

Sunday, a week ago, was a quartet soirée . . . . and on the following Saturday I played again at a quartet soirée with David a new rondo of Spohr and at the end my Trio.<sup>62</sup>

We can see that even though the Trio was not yet complete, and would not be finalized until its publication in April 1840 (see below), Mendelssohn was already “testing” it in performances.

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<sup>59</sup> F. Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist*, 94-96.

<sup>60</sup> Roger Nichols, *Mendelssohn Remembered* (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1997), 207ff.

<sup>61</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Leipzig, to Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy, November 28 [23?], 1839, in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, “Letters, 1821-1847.”

<sup>62</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Leipzig, to Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy, February 4, 1840, *ibid.*

#### 4. The Publication of the D minor Trio: The Spring of 1840

The correspondence of this period in regard to the publication of the Trio is abundant. On November 30, 1839, Mendelssohn writes to Moscheles:

...My Trio I should so like to show you; it has grown quite dear to me, and I am confident there are things in it you would be satisfied with. Could I but bring you over here for a day or two, and play it to you, and have your criticisms and your advice as to what I should alter and what I might do better another time, then there would be a chance of my learning something; but at a distance, and by letter, it isn't half the same thing. The publishers are pressing me to let them have it, and I want to do so; I only wish I could just once play it to you before.<sup>63</sup>

On December 27 he writes to Breitkopf & Härtel:

...You also expressed a wish to publish my Trio, which is now ready for publication. I would naturally not want it to be published by anyone else. However, I have received various suggestions that I should ask for a higher honorarium than the usual one. I therefore wish to receive 60 Louisd'or with retention of ownership for England, and the time of publication to be postponed until spring so that I may play it publicly during the winter from manuscript. I request that you give me your answer as soon as possible.

I remain with best regards,

F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy<sup>64</sup>

On January 4 Mendelssohn writes to Fanny:

...Then came Breitkopf & Härtel, and asked for the manuscript of my second book of my songs for four voices, which they now have, and of the Trio, which they don't yet have; then came the copyist, who asked for the score of the new Psalm, which we performed gloriously the day before yesterday, at the beginning of the New Year's concert.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles*, 195.

<sup>64</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 99-100.

<sup>65</sup> F. Mendelssohn Hensel, "Die Musik," 325.



The time finally comes for Mendelssohn to send the manuscript to Breitkopf & Härtel on January 21, 1840. He shows extreme involvement in the technicalities of engraving and publication, to the extent of giving specific (and, at times, contradictory) instructions in two separate letters of the same day. The first one reads:

Enclosed herewith I am sending you the manuscript of my Trio in D minor, and canceling the previously stated condition that it remain in manuscript over the winter. Therefore, if convenient, consider starting to engrave it immediately; please indicate, moreover, the approximate time of publication, so that I can write to England about this. You will receive shortly a more precise heading. I must also remark that I would very much like that the two string instruments be engraved throughout, perhaps in smaller notes, over the piano part. It is probably still the custom. The engraver must be made aware that he should select good page turns for the accompanying parts, so that three measures of rest in the first movement would be *too little* in order to turn pages comfortably, in effect that he may have nothing less than four measures; in the Andante nothing under a measure and a half; in the Scherzo under three; and in the last, similarly, under three measures of rest. The written parts are very good in this respect except for the first page of the cello part, where the three measures give too little time. In the piano part this consideration is naturally not to be observed.<sup>66</sup>

And the second:

To my great regret, I see from your most recent letter that the Trio is going to be very voluminous, and since I assume that this would not be to your liking, and that it is caused by my request that the accompanying parts be engraved over the piano part, I now think it would probably be better if this did not happen; the more so since in most places the piano is independent. In the places where this is not the case one might be able to help with smaller notes. In any case, I would like to ask you if you would prefer to have the piano part engraved alone or along with the other two parts, and I ask you expressly to do it as is most convenient for you. I am equally happy with either alternative. If you decide on the publication of the separate part, I would ask you to send it to me for half a day so I may put in the small notes.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 102-103.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

Mendelssohn sent Breitkopf and Härtel three separate parts, rather than one score. The piano part is extant, and is housed in the Breitkopf and Härtel archives in Wiesbaden. The part corroborates Hiller's story in its extensive revisions of the texture and passage work. It is also interesting to note that although the part is extremely close to the Trio as it appears in the first edition, there are still numerous differences. These revisions must have taken place, to the great discomfort of the publisher, on the engraver's proofs, as mentioned by Hiller:

In the course of that winter Mendelssohn published a number of works, and amongst others his D minor trio. He went on correcting and altering it up to the last minute, and many of the plates had to be engraved over again.<sup>68</sup>

On February 26 Felix writes to Paul:

...My Trio is appearing in 6 to 8 weeks. As soon as I can have a copy I will send it to you.<sup>69</sup>

It is in this period that Mendelssohn starts making considerable efforts to have the Trio published simultaneously in Leipzig, London, and Paris. It is very interesting, not to say amusing, to follow the correspondence of Heinrich Probst, Breitkopf & Härtel's agent in Paris:

February 8, 1840

Nobody is willing to pay for the Mendelssohn trio. M. is decidedly not in demand here. He had already offered it to Schlesinger who was willing to pay him 200 f[ranc]s if he included a collection of *Songs without Words* (a new one). How am I going to get 500 fs in view of that? Richault will pay 100 fs at the most and Schlesinger

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<sup>68</sup> F. Hiller, *Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections*, 167-168. Quoted in Arnd Richter, *Mendelssohn: Leben, Werke, Dokumente* (Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch, 2000), 356.

<sup>69</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Leipzig, to Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy, February 26, 1840, in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, "Letters, 1821-1847."

has meanwhile offered 150 fs. I await your decision. Besides Richault and Schlesinger, no one will publish Mendelssohn here.

February 22, 1840

I managed through great effort to place the Mendelssohn trio with Richault for 200 fs. Mendelssohn is not yet moving here. Perhaps he will do better in the future. He is too learned to be popular.<sup>70</sup>

And thus the French publication of the Trio was negotiated. It is extremely interesting, however, to examine the actual edition:<sup>71</sup> it is based on the manuscripts of the parts used by Breitkopf & Härtel, **without** Mendelssohn's final corrections of the German proofs. Moreover, there are numerous small mistakes in the French edition, suggesting that it was not meticulously proofread prior to publication. The overall impression is that in his haste to publish the work in all three locations, Mendelssohn had the German publishing house send the manuscripts, or the yet-to-be-revised proofs, to Richault, resigning himself to the fact that the French edition would not be so accurate as the German one. Meanwhile, he continued working on the German engraver's proofs.

The circumstances of the Trio's publication in London were even more complex than those in Paris. In late 1839 Mendelssohn offered the Trio to Novello, his usual English publisher; on January 21, the same day on which Mendelssohn sent the three parts of the Trio to Breitkopf & Härtel, he also sent Novello a reminder of his offer. Novello's reply finally came on February 18; it was dismissive:

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<sup>70</sup> Heinrich Probst, *Breitkopf und Härtel in Paris: The Letters of Their Agent Heinrich Probst between 1833 and 1840*, *Vie musicale en France au dix-neuvième siècle*, vol. 5, translation and commentary by Hans Lenneberg (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1990), 73.

<sup>71</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Grand Trio pour Piano, Violon et Violoncelle*, op. 49, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Paris: Richault & C<sup>ie</sup>, 1840).

I am sorry to decline the purchase of your trio which I suppose is for stringed instruments, but I fear such a work would command a very small sale amongst our ignorant public.<sup>72</sup>

Peter Ward Jones suggests that Novello may have been mistaken in his understanding of the instrumentation of the trio; his assessment of a work's commercial value as a string trio may have been correct.

In any case, Mendelssohn was left with very little time to find an alternative to Novello, if he was to maintain a spring date for the publication of the Trio. Fortunately, while he was waiting for Novello's reply he heard from Raymund Härtel<sup>73</sup> that Edward Buxton, the proprietor of the English publishing house of J. J. Ewer & Co., had just visited Härtel in Leipzig and had expressed the wish to publish Mendelssohn. On February 25 Mendelssohn wrote to Buxton:

Sir, – Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel told me that you expressed the wish, during your stay here, of publishing some of my works in your country. I felt very much honoured by this communication and obliged for your kind intentions, and as I think of publishing towards the end of next month a new grand Trio for the Pianoforte with accomp[animent] of Violin and Violoncello, which I should like to lay before the English public, I beg to ask whether you would have the copyright of it? I would be very much obliged if you would give me a speedy answer and tell me if the price of 10 guineas would be convenient to you, and if you like to hear from time to time from me when I have new compositions for the Piano.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obed[ient] Servant,

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Peter Ward Jones, "Mendelssohn and His English Publishers," in R. Larry Todd, ed., *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 248-249.

<sup>73</sup> 1810-1888. Brother of Hermann Härtel.

<sup>74</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Leipzig, to Edward Buxton, February 25, 1840, in "Mendelssohn and His English Publisher: Some Unpublished Letters," *The Musical Times* 46, no. 743 (1905), 20; available at <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-4666%2819050101%2946%3A743%3C20%3A%3AHEPS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0>.

Buxton replied on March 6, stating that he was “much flattered” and accepting the Trio eagerly.<sup>75</sup>

When Mendelssohn received Buxton’s reply, he knew that he would indeed be able to publish the Trio in Leipzig, Paris, and London on the same date. He pressed ahead immediately, and on March 12 he wrote Breitkopf & Härtel:

Herewith the corrected proof of my Trio. However, I must ask you to send me a further copy to go over before you print it, so that it will be entirely accurate in its published form.

Since I did not hear from my usual English publisher at the expected time, I followed Mr. R. Härtel’s statement and wrote to J. J. Ewer & Co., who will now publish the Trio. These gentlemen wish to have a copy in England before the official publication date; consequently I request that you send as soon as possible a copy for me to correct and forward to them. Do you think it would be agreeable to them if they received the three written parts? In that case I could send these over today, but would have to ask you to return them to me immediately; they may be found in the enclosed package. Be sure not to forget to put the name of the English firm on the title page.

If you send me a copy for Ewer & Co. I would ask you to send me a *duplicate* copy of the *violin* part.<sup>76</sup>

This letter reveals that by this date Mendelssohn had already corrected Breitkopf & Härtel’s engraver’s proofs, and that he intended to have the corrections implemented in the plates and then have a new print sent back to him for further revisions. Inasmuch as possible, Breitkopf & Härtel’s first edition of the Trio was going to be his final and most accurate idea of the piece.

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<sup>75</sup> P. W. Jones, “Mendelssohn and His English Publishers,” 248-249.

<sup>76</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe an Deutsche Verleger*, 105.

Mendelssohn was working against a very close deadline. On March 17 he wrote to Breitkopf & Härtel:

I am expediting the package to Ewer & Co. tomorrow via Hamburg by steamboat, and I am also writing these gentlemen that you have determined the publication date to be April 9<sup>th</sup>. If they do not object, I would be very pleased if the publication could take place as soon as you assured me it would....<sup>77</sup>

Mendelssohn entrusted the shipment of the music to his brother Paul in a letter of March 20:

...I ask you, therefore, to take it with you and to forward it as quickly as possible to London to Mr. Edward Buxton, care of Messers. J.J. Ewer & Co., 1 Bow Church Yard. It contains the manuscript of my Trio, which will appear there, in fact, already on April 9<sup>th</sup>, so there is no time to lose. I ask you to confirm its mailing from Hamburg with a few words....<sup>78</sup>

This letter is of extreme importance, since it cites a manuscript that is not mentioned anywhere else and is now lost. From the previous letters we learn that Mendelssohn was hoping to send Ewer either corrected prints or his own handwritten proofed parts; assuming that he was not inaccurate in his use of the word “manuscript” in his letter to Paul, a possible conclusion would be that he was still dissatisfied with Breitkopf & Härtel’s prints, and therefore copied the Trio again for Ewer. Ewer’s actual edition<sup>79</sup> does not shed any further light on this question: it is virtually identical to the German first edition, and could therefore have been produced from either the German engraver’s proofs or from a meticulously copied manuscript. Curiously enough, the layout of the first two movements is similar to that of the French edition; both the English and the

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>78</sup> Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Leipzig, to Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy, March 20, 1840, in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, “Letters, 1821-1847.”

<sup>79</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Trio [pour] Pianoforte, Violino [et] Violoncelle*, op. 49, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (London: J. J. Ewer & Co., 1840; reprint, London: Novello, 18--?).

French editions are very different from the German one in their layout – and, in the last two movements, from each other as well.

According to D. W. Krummel and Stanley Sadie's *Music Printing and Publishing* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1990), J. J. Ewer & Co. merged with Novello in 1867 to become Novello, Ewer & Co.; Ewer's copyrights of Mendelssohn's works passed on to the new firm. Novello's archives are now in the British Library. It is beyond the scope of the present document to trace the lost manuscript; it would be, however, a worthwhile future endeavor, given that this manuscript appears to be the last manuscript of the Trio Mendelssohn produced.

Mendelssohn had one problem left: under the time constraints of the April 9 deadline, he could not possibly oversee the proofreading of the English publication. For this end he enlisted the help of Moscheles, in a letter written on March 21:

A thousand thanks for your kind offer about my Trio. I need not trouble you again about its publication, as it is to appear at Ewer & Co.'s; but your offer to look through the proof-sheets is too tempting to refuse, however indiscreet my acceptance may be. So I have told Ewer to send you the proofs, and am sincerely obliged to you. They asked me for an arrangement for the flute instead of the violin, and I suggested that they should publish only the Andante and Scherzo in this form, under the title "Andante et Rondo (tiré de l'œuvre 49," etc.); because the first and last movements appear too heavy and substantial for such an arrangement. However, I have left the decision in their hands. What do you advise? I have told them to consult you on any question which might arise. That, too, you must excuse; but above all, let me soon know what you think of the work itself.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles*, 204-205.

From this letter we learn that, like the Richault edition, the Ewer edition of the Trio should not be regarded as a primary source, since its proofreading was not overseen by Mendelssohn himself; we also learn that Mendelssohn regarded the Scherzo as a rondo, a fact that should be considered in any formal analysis of this movement.

This letter implies that Mendelssohn did not himself transcribe the two inner movements for flute, but rather gave permission to Ewer to do so. However, the article in the *The Musical Times* that quotes Mendelssohn's letter of February 25, 1840, to Edward Buxton suggests that Mendelssohn did include an arrangement of the two inner movements for flute in the package he sent to Ewer.<sup>81</sup> The name of the article's author is not given, and so the only way to ascertain whether an autograph of a flute part exists is, again, to attempt to trace such an autograph in England.

#### 5. Conclusion: Primary Sources of the Piano Trio in D minor, op. 49

We can extract a dated list of the Trio's primary sources from the information presented above:

1. April 11, 1839, or earlier – sketches, including the ones on pp. 49-50 of DSB 19.  
DSB 19 is presently located in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.
2. June 6, 1839 (first movement) and July 18, 1839 (fourth movement, and likely the rest of the Trio) – complete autograph score of the first version of the Trio, composed mainly in Frankfurt. Included in DSB 31, presently located in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

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<sup>81</sup> "Mendelssohn and His English Publisher," 20.



3. September 23, 1839 (dating according to Sir George Grove, as well as the contents note of DSB 31) – complete autograph score of the second version of the Trio. Originally part of DSB 31; given to Ferdinand David in 1848; now lost.
4. January 21, 1840 – three separate autograph parts that were used by Breitkopf & Härtel for engraving the first edition of the Trio. This version is very close to the final one, yet many additional revisions took place on the ensuing engraver's proofs. The string parts are lost; the piano part is presently located in the archives of Breitkopf & Härtel in Wiesbaden. The first French edition of the Trio, published by Richault, is based on this version of the Trio, prior to the additional revisions.
5. March 20, 1840 – possibly an additional manuscript of the Trio, which Mendelssohn sent to J. J. Ewer through his brother Paul. It is now lost.
6. March 20, 1840 – the same package may have included an arrangement of the violin part of the two inner movements for flute.
7. April 9, 1840 – the first edition of the Trio. As seen above, Mendelssohn supervised the Leipzig publication by Breitkopf & Härtel closely and meticulously, yet could not provide the same level of detailed attention to the publications in Paris and London.

We can clearly ascertain that the first edition of the Trio, published by Breitkopf & Härtel on April 9, 1840, plate no. 6320, is the only source of the D minor Trio that Mendelssohn supervised throughout the process of publication. The only version of the Trio that may postdate this source, the Ewer edition, is virtually identical to it. Therefore,

an informed performer or scholar should treat with caution any edition that is not clearly and explicitly based one of these two sources.

## 6. Reception History

Upon publication the D minor Trio became an immediate attraction for performers, audiences, and critics alike. In the appendix to his dissertation, “The Chamber Music of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy,” John McDonald gives an extensive account of performances and reviews of Mendelssohn’s chamber works during the composer’s lifetime, as they were documented in Germany’s leading music journals. According to this list, the D minor Trio was given very frequent performances and was the object of very high praise, from before its official publication date until the publication of the C minor Trio in 1846 – when the popularity of the newcomer temporarily overshadowed that of its older sibling.<sup>82</sup>

The first review of the Trio was written in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from February 1840, vol. 42, cols. 138-139. It appeared after the performance of the Trio on February 1, 1840, before the Trio was completely revised or published. The name of the author is not given.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February the second musical evening-amusements for chamber music took place. Quartet of Mozart (C major) and Haydn (F major), a new “Rondo alla Spagnuola” for piano and violin by Spohr and also a new Piano Trio (D minor) by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Of extraordinary effect was the new Trio (D minor) of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, which was performed by the composer and

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<sup>82</sup> See John Allen McDonald, “The Chamber Music of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1970), text-fiche, 223, 242-251.

Concertmaster David and Wittmann. We hold it absolutely to be one of the most excellent pieces of the famous composer, for a product of his most beautiful and best hours; it is rich in beautiful new motives and masterly in work and form, a deep poetic feeling penetrates the whole, that works so impressively and directly, as we have seldom found in a musical art work. Moreover, it is for the concerned instruments[,] especially for the piano[,] very advantageously written and in this regard a truly difficult, but above all a brilliant[,] concertpiece. . . . The public was truly enthusiastic and after every one of the four movements which comprise the Trio, appeared within a short time in the publication of Breitkopf and Härtel, and thus soon all friends of art can and will obtain the pleasure of learning to know the same more closely.<sup>83</sup>

Lampadius gives another account of the same performance:

In an entirely different domain of his art was the third great work which the unwearied genius of Mendelssohn gave us that winter. It was the charming trio in D minor for Piano-forte, violin, and violoncello (Op. 49), first played in public by himself, David, and Wittmann, the 1<sup>st</sup> of February of that year. . . . The whole work is a true mirror of Mendelssohn in his most spiritual-minded and deepest mood, a product of one of the happiest hours of his genius, uttering itself in perfect frankness and the most artistic form. It was received, of course, with the greatest applause.<sup>84</sup>

Wilhelm Gottfried Fink (1783-1846), the editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, wrote his own review of the Trio in the journal's June volume (vol. 42, cols. 497-499). Here I preferred Clive Brown's translation to John McDonald's.

If any of this celebrated composer's instrumental works, especially of those written chiefly for piano, has roused enthusiasm, it is this trio above all. There are not a few who immediately declare it to be the best work for piano and strings that the composer has ever produced. Although such a comment may tread on the toes of several other works by the same composer and detract from their appreciation more than is right and proper, it nevertheless makes clear the extraordinary impression that this new trio has made at its public performance as well as in private circles. Such an impression must certainly be significant and must make everyone hungry to get

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 242. The excerpt is quoted accurately; the source appears to have omitted some words.

<sup>84</sup> W. A. Lampadius, *Memoirs of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, 75-77.

to know the work itself. We felt like this when we were at the public performance of this favourite composition. We now know it not merely from repeated scrutiny [of the score], which is insufficient, but also from hearing it, and know from experience that it must make a powerful impact and what causes it to do so. The work is not only a rounded whole, with sustained interweaving of themes and the sure mastery of form, which one already knows from the best of the composer's earlier works, but also has as much as anyone could desire of lively excitement, fresh drive, joyful brilliance.<sup>85</sup>

McDonald's next listing is of one of the most often quoted reviews of Robert Schumann. The review appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 13/50 (December 19, 1840), p. 198, and the translation presented here is that of Douglass Seaton:

It only remains to say something about *Mendelssohn's* Trio, – but only a little, since it is surely already in everyone's hands. It is the trio masterpiece of our time, as in their day were those of Beethoven in B-flat and D and that of Franz Schubert in E-flat, a thoroughly beautiful composition, which in years to come will bring joy to grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The storm of recent years is gradually coming to an end and, we admit, has already cast up many pearls on the beach. Mendelssohn, although less tossed about by it than others, nevertheless also remains a child of his time, has also had to struggle, has often also had to hear some narrow-minded writers' idle chatter that "the true flowering of music is behind us," and has raised himself so high that we may well say that he is the Mozart of the nineteenth century, the most brilliant of musicians, who saw most clearly through the contradictions of the time and was first to resolve them. He will also not be the last artist. After Mozart came one Beethoven; the new Mozart will also be followed by a new Beethoven; indeed, he may already have been born. What more shall I say about this Trio that everyone who has heard it has not already said? Most fortunate, certainly, are those who have heard it played by its creator in person, for even if there are more dashing virtuosos, hardly any other knows how to perform Mendelssohn's works with such magical freshness as he himself. This should not make anyone afraid to play the Trio; in comparison to others, such as, for example, those of Schubert, it has fewer difficulties, but in first-rank works of art these always stand in proportion to its [*sic*] effect, for as the former increase, the latter increases correspondingly. Moreover, it need hardly be said that the Trio is not a piece just for the pianist; the other players also have to play

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<sup>85</sup> Clive Brown, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 409-410.

their roles in lively fashion and can count on gaining satisfaction and appreciation. So may the new work be effective from all perspectives, as it should, and may it serve us as evidence of its creator's artistic power, which now appears to be near its full bloom.<sup>86</sup>

This is the most enthusiastic review Schumann ever wrote of Mendelssohn in general or of any of his works in particular. It demonstrates Schumann's desire to place the music of his day in the context of music history, a history which he viewed as a journey between musical giants. Schumann's review came ten years before he met Brahms, and we can already see how Brahms would fit into Schumann's mold, and what would prompt Schumann to burden the young Brahms with Beethoven's weight in his last article for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, "Neue Bahnen."

The rest of the reviews on McDonald's extensive list all take the Trio's merit for granted.<sup>87</sup> We can safely conclude that the piece was recognized as an unquestionable masterpiece as soon as it was presented to the public.

#### Additional Performances and Testimonies

This section aims to supplement McDonald's list with accounts of performances and reactions to the D Minor Trio found in additional sources, in chronological order.

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<sup>86</sup> Douglass Seaton, ed., *The Mendelssohn Companion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 574.

<sup>87</sup> These reviews, from the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (vol. 43, col. 362, May 1841; col. 427, May 1841; col. 597, July 1841; vol. 44, col. 436, May 1842; col. 801, Oct. 1842; vol. 47, col. 11, Jan. 1845; col. 162, Mar. 1845), and from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (vol. 20, p. 104, Mar. 1844) are presented on pp. 245-248 and 251 of McDonald's list.

## 1840

**September:** Fanny Mendelssohn decided to learn the Trio. In a letter dated September

28 she writes to her brother:

I've taken up your Trio now and am practicing it, but it's very difficult. If I resume the musicales, it's to be the first piece performed. But thus far I haven't felt like doing it.<sup>88</sup>

**October:** Robert Schumann included the following entry in his marriage diary for the fortnight of October 4 to 18:

Last Sunday Morning Clara played the C major Sonata of Beethoven as I have never heard it played before; so also, when Moscheles was present, she played some of the Kreisler pieces, and on Thursday evening, at a party we gave, the Trios of Moscheles and Mendelssohn.<sup>89</sup>

## 1841

**General:** After Clara Schumann heard Mendelssohn perform the Trio and a few Songs without Words, she commented:

I know no player whose playing might make me feel so good, and one really does not know in what *genre* one most likes to hear him, he plays everything in an equally masterly manner.<sup>90</sup>

**January:** Robert Schumann wrote the following entry for his wife Clara in their marriage diary (the week of January 10 to 16):

...I was unwell most of the time and only managed to pluck up my spirits one evening, which we spent very pleasantly at A. Harkort's. There were a lot of artists there, among others Mendelssohn, David, and Ole Bull. I had not intended to play, least of all the Mendelssohn Trio, with which I was quite out of practice. However,

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<sup>88</sup> F. Mendelssohn Hensel, *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn*, 296.

<sup>89</sup> Eugenie Schumann and G.D.H. Pidcock, "The Diary of Robert and Clara Schumann," *Music & Letters* 15, no. 4 (1934), 289; available at [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-4224\(193410\)15:4%3C287:TDORAC%3E2.0.CO;2-7](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-4224(193410)15:4%3C287:TDORAC%3E2.0.CO;2-7).

<sup>90</sup> C. Brown, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn*, 217.

it went better than I dared hope, and Mendelssohn, who had pressed me to play in it, seemed satisfied.<sup>91</sup>

**March:** Fanny Mendelssohn wrote to Felix on March 2:

...The day after tomorrow there will be a so-called "Concert for Dilettantes," pretty much like mustard after dinner, because one could hope that the greatest anguish will be over by then. I am going to play your Trio; actually, I should have chosen the Serenade for the concert hall, but that one is not in my fingers. I have not been able to learn it, while the trio, which is perhaps not less difficult, lies very comfortably for me, and since I am not really used to playing in public, I have to choose something which does not make me anxious.<sup>92</sup>

The performance of the Trio is confirmed in an entry she made in her diary on March 4.<sup>93</sup>

On March 25, 1841, the Trio was performed for the first time in England. The event took place in the Hanover Square Rooms, and the pianist was Madame Dulcken, Ferdinand David's sister. The other performers were Henry Blagrove and Charles Lucas, and the *Musical World* hailed the Trio as "the star of the evening."<sup>94</sup>

**August:** On August 23 Mendelssohn wrote from Berlin to Erich Heinrich Verkenius, a royal appellant judge in Cologne:

I have played my Trio 10-12 times here; each time there were such mishaps, such negligent errors in the accompaniment, even though they were the foremost local artists who played with me. Consequently the whole orchestra is truly demoralized from top to bottom. The person who is to blame for this is Spontini, who has been directing the orchestra for too long, oppressing – rather than inspiring – the diligent musicians.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> E. Schumann and G.D.H. Pidcock, "The Diary of Robert and Clara Schumann," 291.

<sup>92</sup> F. Mendelssohn Hensel, "*Die Musik*," 356.

<sup>93</sup> F. Mendelssohn Hensel, *Fanny Hensel: Tagebücher*, 201.

<sup>94</sup> "Mendelssohn and His English Publisher," 20.

<sup>95</sup> Ernst Wolff, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, Meister-Briefe Series II: Music, ed. Max Friedländer (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1907), 187.

**October:** R. Larry Todd mentions a performance of the Trio which took place in October 1841.<sup>96</sup>

**November:** According to the *Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte zu Leipzig*, the first performance of the *Variations sérieuses* took place on November 27, 1841. Mendelssohn played the piece from manuscript after performing the D minor Trio with his almost regular partners, Ferdinand David and Franz Carl Wittmann.<sup>97</sup>

## 1842

**April:** Another review in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, this time by Gebhard von Alvensleben:

This is a delayed report, which should include two of the most significant musical events of April and May. An extensive discussion is appropriate here. In order to be true to the sequence of events, I must start out by recalling the flourishing of Ernst, who after having given a long series of concerts to ever-increasing applause in the Königsstädter Theater, concluded his local career as a virtuoso with two quartet evenings in the hall of the Singakademie. Both Ernst as a quartet player and Mendelssohn, who on this occasion resumed his public appearances as a pianist, lent to these concerts a particular interest. Ernst demonstrated in several quartets of Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn the range of his virtuosity. However, certain aspects of the performance might have been more complete and rounded, had more frequent and more precise rehearsals of the four players taken place. (Apart from Ernst the players were concertmaster Ries, Leopold and Moritz Ganz.) One of the highlights of these evenings was the Trio in D minor by Mendelssohn. The particular light elegance and grace, which distinguish this most attractive composition, are also characteristics of Mendelssohn's playing. In all the pieces in which these traits

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<sup>96</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 425. The venue is not specified.

<sup>97</sup> Christa Jost, "In Mutual Reflection: Historical, Biographical, and Structural Aspects of Mendelssohn's *Variations Sérieuses*," trans. J. Bradford Robinson, in *Mendelssohn Studies*, ed. R. L. Todd, 40.



dominate rather than fire and passion, his playing was irresistible.<sup>98</sup>

## 1843

**March:** R. Larry Todd gives an account of Charles Edward Horsley (1822-1876), a composition student of Mendelssohn, of an evening, probably around February or March of 1843, when Clara Schumann performed the trio at a private event. Both Mendelssohn and Fanny were present.<sup>99</sup>

## 1844

**May:** During May and June 1844 Mendelssohn was touring in England, where he gave several performances of the D Minor Trio. On May 21 the Trio was played for the first time in this tour, with Ernst playing the violin. Todd mentions an anecdote: apparently Ernst missed a page turn, and Mendelssohn immediately improvised in order to catch him without the audience noticing.<sup>100</sup>

**June:** In an interview given to *The Musical Times* in 1898, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) relayed an anecdote from one of the performances in England:

At a concert given by a Mr. Purdy, at Radley's Hotel, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, on June 5, 1844, Mendelssohn was announced to play his D minor Trio with Master Joachim and Mr. Hancock. "It so happened," relates Dr. Joachim, "that only the violin and violoncello parts had been brought to the concert-room, and Mendelssohn was rather displeased at this; but he said, "Never mind, put any book on the piano, and someone can turn from time to time, so that I need not

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<sup>98</sup> Gebhard von Alvensleben, "Aus Berlin (April --- Juni): Konzerte: Quartettsoireen von Ernst im Saal der Singakademie: Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Trio d-Moll (unter Mitwirkung des Komponisten)," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, no. 1 (1842), 2.

<sup>99</sup> R. L. Todd, ed., *Mendelssohn and His World*, 242, 250-251.

<sup>100</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 473.

look as though I played by heart.” Now-a-days, when people put such importance on playing or conducting without a book, I think this might be considered a good moral lesson of a great musician’s modesty. He evidently did not like to be in too great a prominence before his partners in the Trio. He was always truly generous!”<sup>101</sup>

On June 6 Mendelssohn wrote a letter to G. A. Macfarren, Esq., specifying his requests for the upcoming performance of the Trio:

Mr. Davison told me the Concert was now to begin with my Trio: I shall therefore be punctually with you to-morrow evening at ½ past 8. I beg you will arrange about having a *good* Piano of Erard’s at the room; they know there already which I like best.<sup>102</sup>

**July:** On July 19 Mendelssohn wrote from Soden to his brother about his English sojourn:

My stay in England was wonderful. I have never been treated with such general friendliness anywhere before, and I have made more music in these two months than anywhere else in two years: my A minor symphony twice, the Midsummer Night’s Dream three times, St. Paul twice, the Trio twice.<sup>103</sup>

## 1845

**August:** On August 10 Fanny Mendelssohn wrote in her diary:

I spent the most agreeable hours at Charlotte <Thygeson>’s, who lived in the very beautiful Villa Paulsen, quite near us, and who had two splendid grand pianos, where I frequently had coffee in the garden, also a couple of times played Felix’s Trio <op. 49>.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> R. Nichols, *Mendelssohn Remembered*, 89.

<sup>102</sup> Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Goethe and Mendelssohn, 1821-1831: Translated, with Additions, from the German of Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy by M. E. Von Glehn; with Portraits and Facsimile, and Letters by Mendelssohn of Later Date*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970), 163.

<sup>103</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1833 bis 1847*, 422.

<sup>104</sup> F. Mendelssohn Hensel, *Fanny Hensel: Tagebücher*, 249.

**October:** Todd mentions a performance of the Trio in Leipzig in late 1845, presumably in October.<sup>105</sup>

In conclusion, the D minor Trio became an immensely celebrated work as soon as it was introduced. Perhaps as a reaction to the work's popularity and numerous performances, the publication of the C minor Trio in 1846 marked the beginning of a period in which the second Trio was the more popular one. It did not take long, however, for the D minor Trio to reclaim its position as the more beloved Mendelssohn trio. It has reigned since then as one of Mendelssohn's most celebrated works, and as one of the most acclaimed piano trios in the repertoire.

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<sup>105</sup> R. L. Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 509.

## Part II

### First Attempt and Final Triumph

#### 1. Concerning Mendelssohn, Musical Ethics, and Revisions

The enthusiasm which his *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture called out from the public does not intoxicate him. The piece must all be improved, he thinks.

(Ignaz Moscheles, London, 1829)<sup>1</sup>

Throughout Mendelssohn's compositional career, he was motivated by what Schumann characterized as "ambition in the noblest sense,"<sup>2</sup> and he was always determined to achieve the finest of which he was capable. He would not release for publication anything that did not meet his standards. Clive Brown mentions Mendelssohn's father as a possible inspiration for such perfectionism, recanting the father's comments on the incomplete *St. Paul* in 1835: warm praise, and a remark that it should still be made better. Douglass Seaton concludes that as much as a "natural" sounding style was Mendelssohn's ideal, its attainment required the meticulous work witnessed when studying his drafts.<sup>3</sup>

Mendelssohn was concerned with finding the perfect technical and formal expression of his ideas, a fact that often made him reluctant to send his works to publishers. On June 12, 1843, he wrote to Karl Klingemann about this reluctance:

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Adolf Lampadius, *Memoirs of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: From the German of W. A. Lampadius; with Supplementary Sketches by Julius Benedict, Henry F. Chorley, Ludwig Rellstab, Bayard Taylor, R. S. Willis, and J. S. Dwight*, trans. W. L. Gage (Boston: Ditson & Co., 1865), 274.

<sup>2</sup> Clive Brown, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 311.

<sup>3</sup> Douglass Seaton, "A Study of a Collection of Mendelssohn's Sketches and Other Autograph Material, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Berlin Mus. Ms. Autogr. Mendelssohn 19" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1977), 249.

As long as the compositions remain here with me they never cease to torment me, because I so much dislike to see such nice, clean manuscript pass into the dirty hands of engravers, customers and the public, and I bolster up a little here, smooth out a little there and go on improving them just in order to keep them here. But when the proofs are once here, they are as foreign and indifferent to me as if they had been written by a stranger.<sup>4</sup>

Mendelssohn considered the principles of art to be “universal and immutable”:<sup>5</sup> he did not feel that it was up to him to set the standards for himself, but rather that he had to meet preset ones.

Ferdinand Hiller’s account of his discussion with Mendelssohn about the D minor Trio<sup>6</sup> provides a good example of Mendelssohn’s high standards and conflicting interests. Hiller claims to be taking a stand here that Mendelssohn himself usually took in regard to Hiller’s compositions. Seaton mentions a letter Mendelssohn sent to Hiller after conducting one of Hiller’s overtures:

Mendelssohn was taking up an old point of contention about which the two of them had had “endless discussions,” the place of inspiration and of craftsmanship and revision in the course of producing a finished masterpiece. . . . Mendelssohn saw composition as a process of the development of the initial inspiration or invention, while Hiller stood for the perhaps more “romantic” view that one’s first inspiration was always best (“it is so, and therefore it must be so”), that revision was not only useless, but would positively inhibit the free spirit of the initial inspiration.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters: Edited by G. Selden-Goth: With 33 Illustrations* (New York, N.Y.: Pantheon, 1945; reprint, New York, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1969), 325; quoted in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, compiled by David Whitwell (Northridge, Calif.: Winds, 1986), 19.

<sup>5</sup> C. Brown, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn*, 313. See also pp. 311-315.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> See D. Seaton, “A Study of a Collection,” 247-249.

When the two discussed the Trio, Mendelssohn's first reaction was to oppose Hiller's suggested revision of the piano texture. The reason for that reaction may be that what Hiller suggested was a revision for the sake of external brilliance, and not for the sake of compositional merit. In June 1843 Mendelssohn would write to Eduard Devrient about his sentiments on the matter:

Ever since I began to compose, I have remained true to my starting principle: not to write a page because no matter what public, or what pretty girl wanted it to be thus or thus; but to write solely as I myself thought best, and as it gave me pleasure.<sup>8</sup>

Hiller may have also struck a nerve with Mendelssohn when he mentioned the "New Pianoforte School," about which Mendelssohn wrote to his mother in July 1837:

[The new pianoforte school] can execute a few variations and *tours de force* cleverly enough, but all this facility, and coquetting with facility, no longer succeeds in dazzling even the public. There must be soul, in order to carry others along with you.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to this, and in spite of his view in favor of arduous revision, Mendelssohn himself harbored romantic notions about the merit of initial inspiration. These are reflected, for instance, in a recollection of Devrient:

He spoke disparagingly of ideas that had been waited for and contrived, and said that when one had at heart to compose music, the first involuntary thought would be the right one, even though it might not be so new or so striking, or though it might recall Sebastian Bach; if it did, it was a sign that so it was to have been.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Eduard Devrient, *My Recollections of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and His Letters to Me*, trans. Natalia Macfarren (London: Bentley, 1869; reprint, New York: Vienna House, 1972), 241; quoted in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, from 1833 to 1847*, trans. Lady Wallace (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 114; quoted in Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Eduard Devrient, *My Recollections*, 275; quoted in F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, 19.

Finally, Mendelssohn may have reacted negatively to Hiller's comments simply out of a defensive response to criticism. Samuel Stratton mentions this quality of Mendelssohn's:

He was morbidly sensitive to criticism, and whether he liked praise or not, he looked upon any one as an enemy who received his music coldly.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, what Hiller was suggesting was not all that foreign to Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn acknowledged his own tendency to succumb to the temptation of the audience's admiration in a letter he wrote to G. Otten in July 1843:

You must not compare my playing with my music; I feel quite embarrassed by such an idea, and I am certainly not the man to prevent people worshipping the golden calf, as it is called in the fashion of the day. Moreover, I believe that this mode will soon pass away, even without opposition. True, a new one will certainly start up; on this account therefore it seems to me best to pursue one's own path steadily, and especially to guard against an evil custom of the day, which is not included in those you name, but which, however, does infinite harm, – squandering and frittering away talents for the sake of outward show. This is a reproach which I might make to most of our present artists, and to myself also more than I could wish.<sup>12</sup>

The overall picture of Mendelssohn's musical ethics is therefore complex. On the one hand, he is a purist, almost a crusader, who firmly believes that music should answer only to the highest artistic standards. This is the composer whose masterpieces often underwent years of revision before he reluctantly submitted them for publication. This is the Mendelssohn of the summer of 1839, who did not need anyone's urging to undertake

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Samuel Stratton, *Mendelssohn*, rev. ed., Master Musicians Series, New Series (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1934), 146.

<sup>12</sup> F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, from 1833 to 1847*, 302ff.; quoted in Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Mendelssohn: A Self-Portrait in His Own Words*, 39.

the complete continuity revision of the newly completed D minor Trio, resulting in the September score.

On the other hand, the undertone of some of his letters, as well as the final outcome of his debate with Hiller concerning the Trio, suggests that he was not impervious to the lure of public affection. After all, he did produce a considerable number of extremely popular Songs without Words, works for which he often gained more praise and more money than he did for more substantial ones, and which were not all on the same artistic level.

Perhaps this conflict explains why he finally decided to humor Hiller and undertake the revision of the piano part. After all, as Hiller pointed out, the continuity was already meeting Mendelssohn's standards, and a textural revision would not detract from that. In addition, the end result would be a rare breed, a piece that would prompt Mendelssohn to refer to it as "honest music after all, and the players will like it, because they can show off with it," thus combining the best of both worlds.



## 2. From *Allegro molto agitato* to *Molto Allegro agitato*

The first movement of the Trio is the one that underwent the heaviest revision between its original version, dated June 6, 1839, and its final published form, more than ten months later. In fact, very few passages remained unchanged. Donald Mintz provides an almost note-for-note account of the revisions;<sup>13</sup> in addition, the reader of the present document can examine the more local changes by comparing the Trio's published version to the facsimile (Volume II of this document) and to the performance edition (Volume III), which were created from Mendelssohn's autograph of the draft version. The aim of this chapter is to try to examine the more fundamental, conceptual differences between the original and the final versions of this movement. These changes fall into four main categories:

1. Mendelssohn wanted to create a greater overall rhythmic sweep, and to avoid the stagnation caused by a heavy downbeat in every measure. To this end he subtly altered many of the movement's rhythmic patterns and gestures, in a manner that effectively turned the basic pulse of the movement into a **hypermeasure** of two measures, rather than the single measure of most of the draft version.
2. He tried to create greater **motivic and thematic consistency**. Whereas the draft version developed mainly the first theme, and the lower-neighbor motive introduced by the cello in m. 2, the final version also utilized elements from the second theme, and the ascending-fourth upbeat motive of the very opening.
3. Mendelssohn may have realized that the draft version contained many instances in which the pulse was already of two measures, but only the first measure of the

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<sup>13</sup> See Donald Monturean Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts of Three of Felix Mendelssohn's Major Works" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1960), 152-184.

unit contained dense motivic and textural activities. To balance such instances, he introduced in the final version what can be termed **textural counterpoint**, a technique that allowed two different textural patterns to interact in a manner that removed the textural holes weakening the draft.

4. Lastly, in the final version Mendelssohn eliminated all instances of **structural** and **harmonic redundancies**.

The two most noticeable changes between the two versions are the recomposition of the development section and the extreme truncation of the coda. These will be discussed on pp. 64-66 and 81-83 (the development), and on pp. 63-64 and 84-85 (the coda).

Another crucial element of the movement's revision concerns Mendelssohn's attempt to unify the Trio as a cycle through the use of thematic transformation techniques. This will be discussed in a separate section, starting on page 101.

### The Creation of Hypermeasures

Let us examine the parallel passages in Exx. 1a (draft) and 1b (final):



Ex. 1a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 39-47, piano part

39

44

*cresc.* *sf* *sf* *f* *f*

*sf* *p*

Ex. 1b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 39-47, piano part

Mendelssohn revised this passage several times. Its earliest form appears at the end of the first page of the draft's manuscript (see Volume II). Mintz observes that it may have been rejected because of its lack of rhythmic and harmonic intensity.<sup>14</sup> The first revision of the passage, at the top of the second page of the manuscript, included the arpeggiated diminished seventh chords that we now find in the final version. These were abandoned

<sup>14</sup> D. M. Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts," 156.

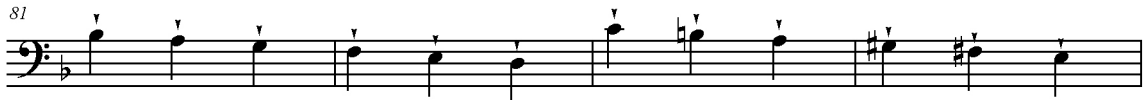
in the draft in favor of chord formations that included a *d* pedal tone. In the final version Mendelssohn found a way to combine the diminished seventh chords with the pedal tone, and also establish hypermeasures: the pedal tone was introduced as bass octaves every second measure. The other deciding factor in establishing the broader pulse was the alteration of the rhythmic pattern in mm. 40 and 42: whereas repeated quarter notes yielded heavy downbeats in the following measures, the dotted rhythm made the gesture more flexible and agitated, enough to provide the drive needed for the downbeats of mm. 41 and 43 to be perceived as lighter than those of mm. 42 and 44. This broader pulse is reaffirmed by an examination of the following entrance of the strings: their syncopations are all the more effective, since they anticipate the heavier downbeat measures. Consequently, the listener perceives both mm. 39 and 40 of the final version as downbeat measures, and this asymmetry is another factor contributing to the overall drive and agitation of the passage.

Another major alteration that Mendelssohn made to the passage concerns the descending pattern in mm. 44-45. Here we can speculate that the chromaticism of the draft version seemed to him out of place against the overall diatonic progressions that preceded and followed the passage; it was therefore rejected in favor of a simpler passage, both harmonically and melodically. There would be enough room for chromaticism at later stages of the movement, when the dramatic intensity is greater.

The last difference between the two versions of Ex. 1 concerns Mendelssohn's choice in the final version to write out the arpeggiations with full noteheads, rather than

resort to small-note notation, as he did in the draft. This change is cosmetic, but is very informative in regard to performance practice. It will be discussed in Part III (p. 114).

Later in the exposition, during the transition to the second theme, the draft version includes the following sequence for the cello:



Ex. 2a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 81-84, cello part

This passage seemingly conforms to a hypermeasure pulse. This, however, is not quite the case: the fact that the harmony changes every measure here makes the listener perceive the passage not as two sequences, but rather as four. To correct this problem, Mendelssohn applied a similar rhythmic manipulation to the one in the previous example:



Ex. 2b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 79-82, cello part

Example 2b demonstrates how important it was for Mendelssohn to avoid having a heavy downbeat every measure: not only did he change the rhythm of mm. 80 and 82, but he also included slurs and *sfs* in mm. 79 and 81 to remove any doubt that there are only two, and not four, downbeats in this passage.

By this point in the final version the dotted rhythm has become motivic. It is not surprising, then, that when Mendelssohn was looking for a way to avoid one-measure

downbeats in the “tail” of the second theme, he reverted to the same method, which had proved effective before. Thus this:



Ex. 3a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 140-143, cello part

turned into this:



Ex. 3b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 130-133, cello part

In Ex. 1b the second beats of mm. 40 and 42 were dotted, and consequently they lent enough drive to the ensuing downbeats to prevent them from being perceived as heavy. In Exx. 2b and 3b it is the downbeat that is dotted, and the effect is different: the eighth notes and the third-beat quarter notes are perceived as upbeats to the following measures, thus making those measures heavier than the ones preceding them. Therefore Mendelssohn no longer needed the accent on the  $e^1$  in m. 143 of the draft (Ex. 3a), and removed it from m. 133 of the final version (Ex. 3b). Another factor contributing to the greater lightness and rhythmic “tilt” of the final version is the absence of a slur in m. 132, which allows the cellist to alter bow strokes and thus produce a lighter sound, as well as create greater affinity between this measure and previous instances of dotted rhythms.

As the exposition of the movement progresses, its dramatic intensity and drive increase. In the transition between the second theme and the concluding section, Mendelssohn uses the dotted rhythm already in the draft:



Ex. 4a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 181-187, violin part

However, in this passage of great build-up of intensity, the dotted rhythms do not suffice. Moreover, their effect is diminished by the bow strokes on each downbeat. Here Mendelssohn was looking for a way to transform the ends of the lighter measures into upbeats to the heavier ones. This he did by going beyond the dotted rhythm:



Ex. 4b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 171-179, violin part

The eighth notes at the ends of mm. 172 and 174 clearly turn mm. 173 and 175 into downbeat measures. In addition, the slurs of the draft are abandoned in favor of *staccati* and wedges. The final three measures of the passage do not mark a transition into a one-measure pulse, but rather accelerate the harmonic rhythm, thus rendering m. 179 a true point of arrival.

The alterations presented in Exx. 1-4 demonstrate an extremely subtle and skillful compositional craftsmanship. The altered passages are not different in essence and in function from their predecessors in the draft; they simply enhance them, and transform their pulse into that of one downbeat per two measures. Consequently, they create a greater flow, and eliminate any possibility of heaviness or stagnation. These alterations affect the exposition and recapitulation of the movement; accordingly, Mendelssohn

recomposed the development and coda with the premise of hypermeasures as basic metric units.

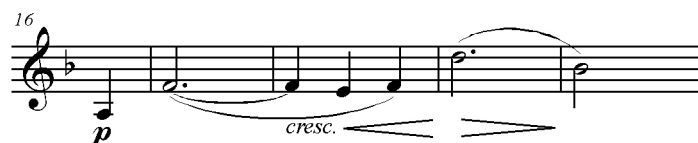
### Greater Motivic and Thematic Consistency

Among all the changes to the very opening of the Trio that Mendelssohn implemented in the final version, one small detail is of paramount significance. In the draft version, this is the violin's first entrance:



Ex. 5a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 16-20, violin part

In the final version Mendelssohn altered only the first note:



Ex. 5b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 16-20, violin part

A study of this change, as well as the following examples, suggests that Mendelssohn may not have realized initially the motivic significance of the ascending fourth that opens the piece. In the draft version he works throughout the movement with the lower-neighbor pattern the cello introduces in the second measure (the same pattern that Brahms used almost forty years later in his second symphony), but pays little attention to the importance of the initial ascent from A to d. Example 5b is the first sign in the final version of the added significance of this ascending fourth: the violin entrance is no longer just a rhythmic counterpart to the cello's opening, but is now also connected to it by



means of intervallic expansion. Furthermore, Mendelssohn realizes the strength of intervallic expansion as a common thread for the entire first theme:



Ex. 5c: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, intervallic expansion in the first theme

As Mintz points out,<sup>15</sup> the final version paradoxically negates this newly established common thread by an alteration of texture. Whereas the syncopated accompaniment of the piano continues to m. 33 of the draft version, thus contributing to the establishment of this measure as the apex of the phrase, in the final version it stops already in m. 25. We can only speculate that Mendelssohn wanted his use of intervallic expansion to be subtle.

We shall see later that the significance of the outlined second-inversion tonic triad, presented in Ex. 5c, goes far beyond the first page of the Trio. For now, let us explore other instances of revision that enhance and emphasize the ascending-fourth motive.

In the draft both the exposition and the recapitulation end with a passage based on the lower-neighbor motive of the second measure. The following measures are taken from the exposition:

<sup>15</sup> D. M. Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts," 153-154.

Ex. 6a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 231-239

The importance of the neighbor-note motive is obvious, since it appears in every measure from m. 231 to m. 235. Another element that shapes this passage is the soprano line's stepwise ascent from  $a^1$  in m. 231 to  $e^2$  in m. 237, with a chromatic inflection of  $d^\sharp$  in m. 235, which expands to hint at an augmented-sixth harmonic flavor in m. 236. Otherwise, the passage moves in octaves and unisons, and is of limited harmonic substance until m. 237.

This passage was suppressed in the final version in favor of the following one:

214

219

*ff*

*f*

*fp*

Ex. 6b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 214-222

This version has two advantages over the one in the draft. First of all, the strings do not play in unison with the piano, but rather they articulate every hypermeasure downbeat with decisive repeated notes. Along with the piano left hand's introduction of full chords on these downbeats, this change marks a clear departure from the orientation of the one-measure pulse that the corresponding passage had in the draft.

The second advantage of the final version of this passage is its more complex treatment of motivic material. It combines the two motives the cello introduces at the beginning of the movement: the piano part consists of a series of chromatic sequences, in

which every cell contains of a drop of a fourth and then a rise of a second, thus combining an inversion of the ascending-fourth motive with the second half of the lower-neighbor motive. The dropping sequences are set as hemiolas, effectively balancing the clearly stated downbeats of the hypermeasures with rhythmic flexibility.

The only section the two versions of this passage have in common is their ending (mm. 237-239 in the draft version and mm. 220-222 in the final version). It is dangerous to assign motivic significance to a gesture as common as an ascending second-inversion triad; however, Mendelssohn's treatment of this cell throughout the movement, and the entire work, is such that it does not seem likely that this gesture, in its critical location within the movement, is accidental. Example 5c demonstrates one aspect of this gesture's importance to the opening of the movement; other aspects will be discussed below.<sup>16</sup> The presence of this gesture at the very end of the exposition, therefore, serves to tie it to its opening.

Another instance of revision that demonstrates the increased motivic significance of the ascending fourth occurs in the recapitulation, during the transition from the second theme to the concluding section. This passage is very similar in both versions, unlike its parallel in the exposition. The string parts in the recapitulation of the draft version are as follows:

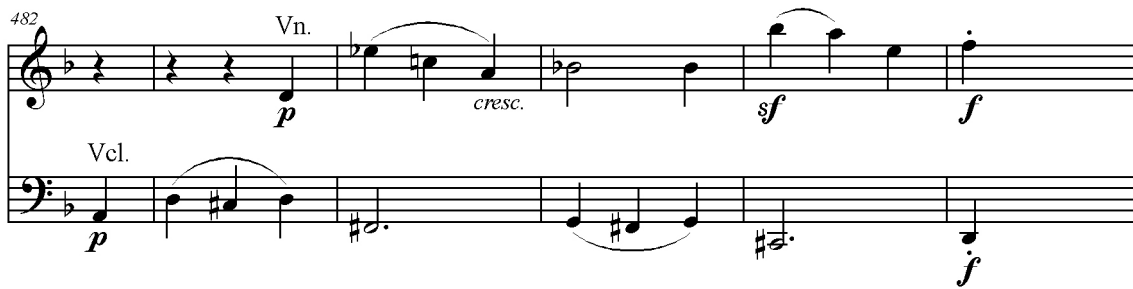
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<sup>16</sup> See p. 101ff.



Ex. 7a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 523-527, string parts

Whereas the lower-neighbor motive is clearly present in the cello line, the ascending-fourth motive is nowhere to be found. There are no upbeats to the entrances of the two instruments, a fact that makes these entrances seem fragmented, and obscures their connection to the first theme. These issues are addressed in the final version:



Ex. 7b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 482-487

The most dramatic and complex appearance of the ascending-fourth motive in conjunction with the lower-neighbor motive happens in the recomposed coda of the final version. Mendelssohn brings the opening of the first theme in quadruple canonic entrances, and proceeds to sustain a Neapolitan harmony from m. 550 through m. 557 in preparation for the final appearance of the second theme in the key of the D major tonic:

Ex. 8: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 539-554

In addition, the passage is revisited by the same intervallic expansion that was presented at the beginning of the movement. It appears in the violin part (mm. 539-540 and 543-544, and then mm. 549-550, 551-552, and 553-554), in the cello part (mm. 540-541 and 544-545), and to a lesser extent also in the piano part (compare the bass line of mm. 545-546 to that of mm. 549-550).

In the draft version, most of the development section (mm. 242-386) is dedicated to the first theme and to the lower-neighbor motive. The second theme appears only twice: at the very beginning of the section and at its end. These two statements are complete,

and what little development of this theme takes place in mm. 364-382 is limited to basic transposition and fragmentation. Perhaps Mendelssohn felt that the development did not balance well the different ideas presented in the exposition; in any case, the recomposed development maintains a careful balance of ideas from all sections of the exposition, and it does so, among other methods, by transforming elements from the original development in an unusual manner.

After the initial statement of the second theme in B-flat major (mm. 254-262), the original development proceeds with a statement of the first theme in the same key, played by the cello, and accompanied with a new counterpoint by the violin. This is followed with the piano's similar statement in G minor, this time with the counterpoint given to the cello part:

The image shows a musical score for measures 270-275. The top staff is for the Violoncello (Vcl.) and the bottom two staves are for the Piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The piano part is marked with a 'p' for piano. The music features intricate contrapuntal textures with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, particularly in the cello and piano parts. The piano part has a more rhythmic, chordal texture compared to the cello's melodic line.

Ex. 9a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 270-275, cello and piano parts

The recomposed development starts in a similar manner. However, instead of reverting to the first theme Mendelssohn chose here to continue to use the second theme with the same contrapuntal idea that he had originally set against the first theme, and in the same tonal regions. The second statement, in G minor, is of special interest:

Ex. 9b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 267-271, cello and piano parts

The roles of the cello and the piano are reversed from what one sees in Ex. 9a, but the counterpoint starts in the same way, note for note, as it did in the draft version, and it does so against a completely different theme. This reveals a hidden similarity between the two themes, a similarity to be explored further in the section dealing with the cyclic nature of the Trio, starting on p. 101.

After this section, the recomposed development departs altogether from the original one. The new development is a masterpiece of ingenuity in its balanced treatment of all of the motives and themes introduced in the exposition. Measures 304-335 are a good example: they alternate rhapsodic, quasi-improvisatory piano solos, loosely based on the motives of the first theme, with restatements of the second theme in the string parts.

### The Introduction of Textural Counterpoint

As mentioned before, Mendelssohn wrote segments of the original first movement adhering to a pulse of one downbeat per two measures, although not systematically. A common problem, however, adversely affected many of these segments: their upbeat



measures did not present enough material to balance the intense activity and sheer weight of the downbeat measures, thus creating virtual holes in the unfolding of the music. A clear example of this problem is present in the first theme's first *ff* appearance:

Ex. 10a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 68-74

In this example, mm. 69 and 71 carry a weight given by their strong placement within the hypermeasure, by accents, and by the flourish of the arpeggiations in the piano part. Measures 70 and 72 do not provide adequate counterparts to any of these elements, and consequently render the music heavy, stagnant, and predictable.

Ex. 10b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 66-72

Mendelssohn's revision of this passage addresses these issues, and also modifies the piano figurations to less conventional and more brilliant patterns, perhaps at the encouragement of Hiller. Here the piano passagework in the downbeat measures is immediately answered by equally brilliant violin passagework in the upbeat measures. The upbeat measures present an adequate response to the intensity of the downbeat measures, and consequently the problem is solved. This solution comes from the realm of counterpoint; however, it is not counterpoint of lines, but rather of textures.

An earlier passage in the movement provides a similar example:

The musical score for Ex. 11a, measures 47-51, is presented in three staves. The top staff is for Violin I, the middle for Violin II, and the bottom for Piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at measure 47. The piano part features a prominent arpeggiated figure in the right hand, while the violin parts provide a counterpoint with melodic lines. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando) and *sfz* (sforzando).

Ex. 11a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 47-51

This is the consequent phrase to the antecedent of Ex. 1a. The strings join the piano, and the problem of having heavy downbeats in every measure, a problem that Mendelssohn may have attempted to avoid by crossing out the original octave basses (see the facsimile in Volume II of this document), is now joined by a new one. The strings double the piano, and consequently the passage becomes heavy and repetitive; it sounds too similar to the antecedent phrase.

A study of the manuscript reveals that Mendelssohn was of two minds in his treatment of this phrase. His original notion in the draft is very similar to what we find in the final version. It has been crossed out in favor of the simpler setting presented in Ex. 11a, and then reinstated with slight modifications in the final version:

Ex. 11b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 47-51

When composing the draft, Mendelssohn may have been thinking of maintaining relative simplicity in this passage. It is also possible that at the time he could not clearly identify the weakness of this section, i.e., the lack of hypermeasures. In any event, the final version has several advantages over the draft. The newly introduced dotted rhythm helps to create the broader pulse of the hypermeasures. It is joined by the suspensions and the appoggiaturas the strings play at the beginnings of mm. 49 and 51, respectively, which help shift the weight away from these measures' downbeats. Similarly the syncopated, tied-over upbeats to mm. 48 and 50 in the string parts emphasize the following downbeats. Finally, the textural counterpoint between the arpeggiations of the piano and

the eighth notes of the strings serves to increase the drive of this passage, as well as to vary it in relation to its antecedent phrase.

Example 10 is not the only part of the transition to the second theme that suffers from the aforementioned problem. Let us consider the following case, which appears shortly after the one presented in Ex. 10:

Ex. 12a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 85-93

The problem here is the imbalance between pairs of measures. The long notes in the strings and the eighth notes in the piano in mm. 87-88 and 91-92 cannot match the strength and intensity of mm. 85-86 and 89-90, respectively. Mendelssohn's solution in the final version comes, once more, from the realm of textural counterpoint:

The image displays a musical score for a piano and strings. It is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 83 to 87, and the second system covers measures 88 to 91. The piano part is written in the upper staves, and the string part is in the lower staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (f, sf, ff). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is indicated as *Molto Allegro agitato*.

Ex. 12b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 83-91

The final version juxtaposes the piano and the strings, and thus creates greater textural variety, while enhancing the drama through the use of contrasting sonorities. Another well-calculated touch is the introduction of accented syncopations in the piano part of mm. 85 and 89: they shift weight away from the downbeats, and by doing so they contribute to the drive and flow of the passage. Mendelssohn uses similar syncopated chords throughout the final version of the first movement, for similar purposes, and with similar success. On some occasions these syncopated chords are used as the sole means

for the creation of textural counterpoint. Compare the piano part of the following passage:

Ex. 13a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 200-205

to that of its later counterpart:

Ex. 13b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 186-191

The change in the figuration of the first beats takes place in the manuscript of the separate piano part, which was sent to Breitkopf & Härtel on January 21, 1839; therefore, this change may be one of the results of Mendelssohn's interaction with Hiller. The more striking difference between the versions, however, is the right-hand chord in m. 190 of

the final version, which recurs later on, in m. 194, an octave higher. These chords charge the passage with great intensity, just as it becomes vulnerable to losing intensity at the ends of the strings' phrases. These syncopated chords become as frequent as one per measure in the ensuing section (mm. 195-199), which marks the dramatic climax of the exposition, and which will be discussed at greater length in Part III of this volume.<sup>17</sup>

On one occasion Mendelssohn solves the problem of a weak and inactive second measure of a hypermeasure by introducing actual linear counterpoint. Once again, this example is taken from the transition to the second theme:



Ex. 14a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 101-109, piano part

The hypermeasures are felt clearly here, to the extent of creating a notion of standstill, which their use is meant to prevent. Mendelssohn's solution for this is as follows:



Ex. 14b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 99-107, piano part

The counterpoint in the left hand of the final version helps to avert any notion of standstill. Its contrapuntal and harmonic complexities are developed further through the

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 118-121.

use of an inversion in the left hand (compare the right hand of mm. 103-104 to the left hand of mm. 104-105), and through the introduction of a German augmented sixth chord in m. 106. In the parallel section of the recapitulation, mm. 419-427, the violin plays a different counterpoint, based on the first theme, to the cello's principal line, with a similar effect.

Mendelssohn's use of textural counterpoint as a means of maintaining the intensity of a musical period permeates the second theme as well. In the draft version the cello's theme is accompanied by the piano alone:

The image shows a musical score for measures 127-133. The top staff is for the cello, marked 'Vcl. dolce', and contains a melodic line with slurs and ties. The bottom staves are for the piano, marked 'pp', and contain a rhythmic accompaniment in the right hand and a harmonic line in the left hand. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex. 15a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 127-133, cello and piano parts

The piano's right hand part of m. 132 introduces a new top voice, which serves to maintain the intensity of the period as the cello part rounds off the first phrase of the theme. Mendelssohn seems to have liked this idea enough to strengthen it in the final version by having the violin anticipate and double the top voice of the piano:



Ex. 15b: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 117-123

In m. 143 of the draft version the theme is restated by the piano. Its first phrase is accompanied by the strings with an unchanging dominant pedal tone. Its second phrase is doubled by the violin, while the cello doubles the bass line. In short, the texture is that of melody and accompaniment, with no contrapuntal procedures involved. Example 15c shows how Mendelssohn reworked this passage in the final version:

Ex. 15c: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 132-137

The change is subtle, but it is nevertheless fundamental: the cello's move to  $f^{\#}$  serves the same balancing purpose that the line of the piano and violin served in Ex. 15b. The texture is now contrapuntal.

Mendelssohn expands his use of counterpoint in the second theme of the final version's recapitulation. The counterpoint no longer consists of one strategically placed note. It now consists of two fully independent and different lines in the string parts:

Ex. 15d: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 448-453

These lines still serve the purpose of balancing the period structure of the theme. They do this by maintaining activity throughout the last measure of the theme's first phrase (here it is m. 452).

In conclusion, Mendelssohn may have realized that one of the faults of this movement in its draft version was the persistent symmetry of its phrases. In its most local form, this symmetry was manifested by heavy downbeats in every measure, downbeats that halted the flow of the musical unfolding and made the phrasing sound too

regular and predictable. He solved this difficulty by incorporating subtle changes that transformed the basic pulse of the movement to that of a hypermeasure consisting of two measures. This solution, however, did not suffice when the hypermeasures created a similar overly-symmetrical phrase structure on a larger scale. In order to solve this problem Mendelssohn employed counterpoint, both of lines and of textures, that guaranteed the continued flow of the phrases and periods through their weak beats and closures.

### The Elimination of Structural and Harmonic Redundancies

If we try to name one common ground for all of the revisions encountered so far, it would probably be this: in the final version of the first movement Mendelssohn aimed to make the work tighter and more intense. To this end he also discarded several large sections of the movement as they appeared in the draft, and recomposed them almost from scratch.

The first of these sections is part of the transition to the second theme, which starts in the draft in m. 51 and ends in m. 68. The manuscript reveals that Mendelssohn already tried to make this section tighter in the draft itself by crossing out the original measure that followed m. 59.<sup>18</sup> This discarded m. 60, along with a crossed-out sharp before the last  $f^2$  of m. 59, would have added a chromatic flavor to an otherwise diatonic passage. Mendelssohn was able to cross them out without compromising the integrity of the whole phrase for a reason that may have contributed to his decision to abandon this passage altogether: its pulse was clearly one downbeat per measure.

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<sup>18</sup> See the second page of the movement in the facsimile.

Mintz mentions another possible reason for the rejection of these eighteen measures:<sup>19</sup> their initial harmonic plane is that of G minor, and it is not just a fleeting touch on the subdominant key, but a harmonic underpinning for a statement that appears in the violin part (mm. 51-53), in the cello part (mm. 53-55), and then in both string parts together (mm. 55-57). In addition to being static harmonically, these seven measures anticipate the structurally significant harmonic shift to G minor that takes place in m. 77. This passage therefore robs the later appearance of the subdominant of some of its effectiveness. It also anticipates the ensuing *ff* appearance of the first theme through its use of motivic fragments taken from that theme: the melodic cell that both string parts play here is loosely based on the first two measures of the theme. In the final version the melodic cell of the recomposed passage, as it appears in mm. 52-66, relates to the bass line of mm. 79-89, thus creating a sense of continuity without anticipating the appearance of the first theme.

Mendelssohn did not have an easy time coming up with alternatives to these measures. The piano score, which he submitted for engraving on January 21, 1840, and which was reproduced almost exactly in the French first edition of the piece, includes a slightly different transition from the one appearing in the final version:

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<sup>19</sup> D. M. Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts," 158-159.



Ex. 16: Separate Piano Score, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*,  
equivalent of mm. 46-69 of the Final Version<sup>20</sup>

The last system includes a chromatic scale that is reminiscent of mm. 547-548 of the draft version. These two measures from the draft are part of the transition to the concluding section in the recapitulation; this transition was suppressed in the final version. Perhaps Mendelssohn was trying to preserve the gesture in a different location, a feat that he attempted twice more, as will be discussed below.<sup>21</sup>

We can learn from the Richault edition that in the second and third measures of the last system in Ex. 16 the strings supported the piano by sustaining long notes ( $d^3$  in the violin part and  $f^1$  in the cello part). As a result, the downbeat of the measure, which correlates with m. 65 of the final version (last system, second measure), was not pronounced enough, since it did not include a strongly articulated bass. It was also harmonically weaker than the final version: the bass supported a secondary diminished

<sup>20</sup> This facsimile is reproduced from a copy of the autograph provided by Dr. Sopart of the Breitkopf & Härtel archives in Wiesbaden, and with his permission.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 83-84.

seventh chord (vii<sup>o</sup>7 of V), rather than a stronger dominant chord. These reasons may have been the ones that led to the revision of the three measures of ascending chromatic scale into the two measures present in the final version (mm. 65-66).

We should also note that the final version of this passage is not its third, but its fourth: the version presented in Ex. 16 is pasted over a yet older version of the same passage.<sup>22</sup>

This revision left its mark in the engraving of the Breitkopf & Härtel edition: the engraver originally spaced this system to include six measures; he then had to change it to include only five. Consequently, the spacing of this system in the German first edition is noticeably wider than that of the rest of the page.

The next passages that Mendelssohn removed on account of their repetitive nature and lack of harmonic interest come in mm. 112-124 of the draft version, which precede the second theme, and in mm. 154-160, which follow it (as well as their parallels in the recapitulation). The latter passage originally included three additional measures after m. 154; these crossed-out measures repeated the material of mm. 140-142.<sup>23</sup> Once again, Mendelssohn chose to reject passages that did not advance the movement harmonically or structurally.

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<sup>22</sup> There were no planned attempts to separate this paste-over when I was studying the original manuscript in Wiesbaden; perhaps such attempts will take place in the future.

<sup>23</sup> In the facsimile this page is marked as page 133 on its top right-hand corner.

The first part of the transition to the concluding section in the draft (mm. 173-186) is replaced in the final version with material based on its parallel passage in the recapitulation (mm. 519-534). Whereas the original passage states and restates a tonic harmony every two measures, the revised one does so every four. Even then the tonic appears as the V of iv, and while the violin part of the original passage repeats the same melodic idea twice, the revised string parts incorporate one continuous line. The reasons for the revision, therefore, are the same ones that we have encountered in our discussions of hypermeasures and textural counterpoint.

The second part of this transition, in both the exposition (mm. 187-200) and the recapitulation (mm. 535-548), modulated in the draft version to the relative major. Mendelssohn rejected both passages in the final version. He may have decided that this tonal shift constituted an unnecessary deviation from the otherwise straightforward move to the minor dominant in the exposition, and to the minor tonic in the recapitulation; additionally, these passages did not include any motivic or thematic substance.

As mentioned before, the beginnings of the developments in both versions draw from the same sources. The draft version begins its development with a sense of quiet stillness. The four entrances of the opening of the first theme (mm. 239-248), which move from the higher register down to the bass, gradually provide enough harmonic information in their falling thirds to establish ii<sup>7</sup> of B-flat major as the underlying chord in m. 248, which then resolves to I at the appearance of the second theme in m. 254.

The development of the final version begins differently: instead of ending on the major dominant, the exposition ends on the minor dominant. The repeat sign is omitted (even in the draft it does not connect well to the beginning of the movement, and we can therefore assume that Mendelssohn has placed it there as a tribute to the conventions of the form more than anything else). The texture returns to that of the very opening of the movement, employing the circle of fifths between subsequent entrances of the first theme in order to arrive finally at a transition into the second theme in B-flat major (m. 246), a transition which is very similar to the one in the draft. Overall, this recomposed section is far more active in its texture, harmony, and drive than its predecessor.

We have discussed previously the following respective sections of the two developments (mm. 262-295 in the draft version; mm. 263-283 in the final one).<sup>24</sup> The subsequent parts of the developments cannot be compared, since they have nothing in common. We can, however, try to speculate as to the reasons that led Mendelssohn to abandon his original development.

We have already mentioned lack of motivic and thematic complexity as one possible reason. Another reason may be the static nature of the harmonic progressions starting in m. 323: mm. 323-333 serve the sole purpose of establishing the key of G major, and the following page does nothing but very gradually, through a combination of diatonic and chromatic modulations, reach the remote key of D-flat major (m. 357). This page is reminiscent of the first movement of Schubert's G major String Quartet, D. 887,

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<sup>24</sup> See pp. 64-66.



in its string writing, melodic gestures, and harmonic progressions. It is far more static, harmonically and motivically, than the rest of the movement.

The last page of the draft's development (mm. 357-385) does not introduce any new harmonic or thematic urgency. The only material used is the second theme; the sole harmonic move is from D-flat major to B-flat minor. If the nature of the development, as recounted so far, did not suffice to fuel Mendelssohn's decision to rewrite it, the retransition into the recapitulation was probably the last straw. The move from the very distant key of B-flat minor to the dominant of D minor uses the ambiguity of a fully-diminished seventh chord (mm. 379-384); and the appearance of the dominant itself, which one would expect to be substantial in a movement of such proportions, lasts but two measures. It makes for a dramatic, yet very local, statement. In contrast, the retransition section of the final version spans mm. 336-367, which aim to establish A major as the dominant of D minor.

The ending of the recomposed development is very different from the dramatic and intense original one, and warrants a recapitulation of a completely different character. This is one reason for the recomposition of the beginning of the recapitulation; the other reason will be discussed in the section dealing with the cyclic nature of the piece.<sup>25</sup> Yet, Mendelssohn appears to have mourned the loss of the texture he was using in mm. 403-410 of the draft version, so he incorporated it, almost exactly, at the beginning of the recomposed development (mm. 238-245 of the final version).

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<sup>25</sup> See pp. 110-111.

Mm. 417-440 of the draft version present the first theme in a hitherto unused texture. This section brings to mind the term “developmental variation,” which is traditionally associated with Brahms; the effect of the piano’s *staccato* eighth notes is charming, almost playful. As creative as this section is, however, it is foreign to the rest of the movement, it is static harmonically and motivically, and it does not advance the tonal scheme of the movement. Measure 441 finds us back in D minor, repeating the end of the first theme as it appeared in m. 25, albeit with the two ensuing phrases reversed in relation to their original appearance on the first page. It is no wonder, then, that Mendelssohn discarded mm. 417-440; in fact, he did not need to compose any transition to compensate for the loss: mm. 396-397 of the final version (without the unnecessary ascending flourish of the piano’s right hand) are essentially m. 416 of the draft going straight to m. 441.

Measures 548-556 of the draft present a unique textural experiment: the cello restates the first theme, as part of the concluding section of the recapitulation, an octave higher than the violin. In the final version Mendelssohn decided to neglect this novelty in favor of a more traditional setting; however, he did not abandon the idea altogether: in the second theme groups of both the exposition and the recapitulation of the final version, the violin accompanies the cello below the cello’s line.

The last major section that Mendelssohn chose to discard in his final version is the bulk of the coda. The possible reasons for his decision are by now all too familiar: once again, the original coda, which starts in a manner reminiscent of the rejected

development, breaks the drive of the movement in favor of a quiet statement of the second theme in the key of the Neapolitan. The buildup to the final statement of the second theme in the major tonic (m. 647), where the discarded coda joins the recomposed one, is extremely gradual, and incorporates but two redundant harmonic moves: from E-flat major to G minor and back. The new coda follows an overall similar tonal scheme, yet it condenses some sixty measures to approximately seventeen, discards the redundant modulations, and does not let go of the drive and excitement of the end of the recapitulation for a moment.

We can see that there is nothing random about Mendelssohn's revision of the first movement. Every change was made for the purpose of intensifying the music. Even if Mendelssohn chose to sacrifice moments of lyricism, more original textures, and broader harmonic gestures, by doing so he gained the great sweep that he lacked in the draft version, and successfully avoided the risk of falling into symmetrical, static phrases.

### 3. From *Andante* to *Andante con moto tranquillo*

The second movement of the Trio is neither so long nor so complex as the first, and therefore its revision does not seem as all-encompassing. In proportion to the movement's length, however, an even larger portion has been revised in comparison to the first movement.

The first thirty-two measures (thirty-one in the final version), and the last thirty-three measures of the two versions are almost identical in their continuity. Both outer

parts are identified as a Song without Words by numerous authors.<sup>26</sup> The opening of the movement is cast in the form of A-A'-B-B', alternating between piano solos and string replies; the movement's ending condenses the same material into A-B and coda.

Mintz discusses the few textural and harmonic differences between these sections of the two versions at length;<sup>27</sup> he makes the interesting observation that the replacement of the first sixteenth note of the accompaniment figure in the opening section by rests effectively changes the phrasing of the accompaniment and also affects the pedaling. He claims, furthermore, that the omission of the initial two beats of the first measure in the final version indicates that the movement is not conceived as a Song without Words, since pieces in that genre traditionally have introductions. A more plausible explanation for this omission is that, as an introduction, these two beats are not substantial enough, and their use as an introduction had been the only possible justification for their existence.

In both versions the return of the opening material in the final section invokes the concept of "developing variation" in relation to the movement's beginning. The two versions differ in their textures, with the final one being more complex and contrapuntal. The accompaniment of both versions, however, is based on the same premise: a *pizzicato*

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<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, Friedhelm Krummacher, *Mendelssohn, der Komponist: Studien zur Kammermusik für Streicher* (Munich: W. Fink, 1978), 228; Philip Radcliffe, *Mendelssohn*, rev. Peter Ward Jones, *The Master Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85-86; Thomas Christian Schmidt, *Die ästhetischen Grundlagen der Instrumentalmusik Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdys* (Stuttgart: M & P, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1996), 327; R. Larry Todd, "Piano Music Reformed: The Case of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy," in Douglass Seaton, ed., *The Mendelssohn Companion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 599.

<sup>27</sup> D. M. Mintz, "The Sketches and Drafts," 212-234, 237-252.

walking bass, which is later imitated by the piano's left hand, against a flowing counterpoint of sixteenth notes.

The major difference between the two versions is, naturally, their different middle sections. The second movement of the draft version is cast in a variant of *sonatina* form. The opening A-A'-B-B' sections function as a first theme group, and they are followed by a transition, which modulates to F major, the key of the dominant (mm. 33-44). The piano introduces a second theme in mm. 45-48, and the strings repeat it in mm. 49-51. An imitative concluding section is presented in mm. 53-56 (this section is later repeated in the key of the tonic as the movement's coda, which has been preserved in the final version). Finally, a transition back to the key of B-flat major, and to the opening material, takes place in mm. 57-62. Incidentally, this transition bears a striking resemblance to passages from the slow movement of Mendelssohn's D minor piano concerto.

In the best traditions of this form, which replaces the sonata's development section with a short modulatory transition to the recapitulation, the extended transition to the second theme here assumes the role of a substitute development. This poses the first problem of this section: the opening material of the movement is that of a song, and it does not lend itself easily to developmental treatment. Consequently, Mendelssohn chooses to use the repeated notes from the movement's very opening as a motivic unit that he can develop here, and he does not employ anything else from the first section of

the movement. This undermines the connection between the opening section and the transition, to the point of making the transition sound foreign to the rest of the movement.

The second problem of the draft's middle section stems from the fact that the second theme never returns later in the key of the tonic. The absence of this theme in the recapitulation leaves the movement with structural loose ends, and damages the integrity of the sonata principle.

The second movement of the Trio, as Mendelssohn originally wrote it, is therefore an imbalanced hybrid of two formal principles: it is a Song without Words infused with elements of a *sonatina*. It seems that Mendelssohn ultimately considered this combination to be unsuccessful; he substituted the whole middle section of the draft version with a new one in the final version. The new middle section is another Song without Words, in the parallel key of B-flat minor, cast in the form of A-A'-B-transition-A-B-conclusion (the conclusion leads to the return of the movement's opening material). The overall form of the revised second movement becomes A-B-A'-coda, and thus the movement becomes a unified Song without Words rather than a hybrid song-sonata.

The material for the new middle section seems to draw on the melodic patterns of the opening section. However, its origins run deeper, as we shall see in the section discussing the cyclic nature of the Trio.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See pp. 109-112.

#### 4. From *Scherzo* to *Scherzo*: *Leggiero e vivace*

The third movement of the Trio is the one most similar in the two versions; perhaps this was caused by Mendelssohn's affinity for this type of movement. The revisions are aimed at achieving three main goals: a lighter texture, a more complex and pervasive contrapuntal treatment of the main motive, and the elimination of a few redundant passages.

##### The Creation of a Lighter Texture

Example 17a presents the original opening of the *Scherzo*:

Scherzo

The musical score for the original opening of the *Scherzo* (measures 1-8) is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal staves (soprano and bass) and the piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a complex rhythmic pattern. The second system continues the piano accompaniment and introduces the vocal melody in measure 5. The third system shows the piano accompaniment and the vocal melody continuing. The texture is relatively dense due to the piano accompaniment.

Ex. 17a: Draft Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo*, mm. 1-8

Let us compare it with the opening of the final version of the movement:

Scherzo  
 Leggiero e vivace  $\text{♩} = 120$

The musical score is for the third movement of Scherzo, marked 'Leggiero e vivace' with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. It is in 3/8 time and the key of D major. The score is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measures 5 through 8. The piano part is marked 'p' (piano). The melody in the right hand of the piano part is characterized by eighth-note patterns and rests. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth-note figures.

Ex. 17b: Final Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace*, mm. 1-8

There are two fundamental differences between the two versions. The first one is the fact that the passagework of mm. 2-3 ends on an  $a^1$  in m. 4 of the draft version, and on an  $e^2$  in m. 4 of the final one. The manuscript reveals that the draft had an  $e^2$  as well, before it was crossed out in favor of an  $a^1$ ; the corrected pattern would repeat later in m. 52 of the piano part, and in m. 123 of the violin part. The reason for the use of  $a^1$  instead of  $e^2$  is related to structural counterpoint, and will be clarified in the section dealing with the cyclic elements of the piece.<sup>29</sup> In the final version Mendelssohn appears to have preferred local consistencies over broader structural ones in the first themes of both the

<sup>29</sup> See pp. 104-105.



first and the third movements; therefore, he chose in the final version to make m. 4 and its parallels conform to m. 1.

The more obvious and striking difference between Exx. 17a and 17b is the texture of the downbeats. The octave bass line and full chords of the draft version make it much heavier than the final one; in fact, the final version seems so natural that one wonders what prompted Mendelssohn to write such strong downbeats in the first place.

A similar textural revision takes place in the second theme in both the exposition and recapitulation. After the violin introduces the theme in the exposition (m. 28), it repeats it, with the addition of a counterpoint in the cello and a pedal tone in the piano:



Ex. 18a: Draft Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo*, mm. 32-34

The addition of a pedal tone, and the complexity caused by the inclusion of a counterpoint, make this appearance of the theme far heavier than the one just preceding it. Mendelssohn sought to correct this imbalance in the final version, and at the same time to improve the interaction between the instruments by giving the theme to the cello:

Ex. 18b: Final Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace*, mm. 32-34, cello and piano parts

In this version both the bass pedal tone and the counterpoint are eliminated; the same happens in the parallel appearance of this theme in the recapitulation (compare mm. 147-149 in the draft version to mm. 145-147 in the final one).

Similar textural changes occur throughout the movement. As a general rule, in the final version Mendelssohn tries to avoid heavy chords and low bass lines.

### The Incorporation of a More Complex Contrapuntal Treatment of the Main Motive

Mendelssohn takes two motives from the first theme and uses them throughout the movement. The first is the octave leap, which opens the movement; the second is the pattern introduced by the piano's right hand in the first half of the first complete measure. These motives are already amply developed in the draft version; there are two instances, however, in which the final version incorporates them in pre-existing passages as afterthoughts.

The first instance occurs in mm. 44-48 of the draft version. Originally this transitional passage was made entirely of canonic entrances of the first motive; mm. 42-46 of the final version added the second motive to the left-hand part of the piano.

The second instance occurs in mm. 69-70 of the draft, which originally did not include any of the primary motives; their parallel passage in mm. 67-68 of the final version added another entrance of the opening of the first theme in the right-hand part of the piano.

On one occasion Mendelssohn chose to replace a purely motivically-constructed passage with a thematically-oriented one: compare mm. 84-85, 88-89, and 92-93 of the draft version to mm. 82-83, 86-87, and 90-91 of the final version. As unique and exciting as the hemiolas of the draft version are, they lack the stability and textural magnitude necessary in such a climactic section; the more conventional final version is better suited here.

#### The Elimination of Redundant Passages

The discrepancy between the measure numbers of the two versions in the previous examples is constant, and is caused by two measures in the draft that do not appear in the final version. These are mm. 42-43, whose sole function is to restate the first theme with minor subdominant harmonies on their second beats. Mendelssohn may have decided that the playfulness added by these measures was not worth the asymmetry of the phrase structure, and the resulting detraction from the overall flow of the passage.

He made a similar decision in regard to mm. 174-177 of the draft. The thematic nature of mm. 174 and 176 compromised the effect of the motivic imitation in mm. 178-181. In addition, the string parts in mm. 175 and 177 were not based on any prior motives, and their stepwise eighth-note lines seemed awkward and misplaced in a movement that did not include any such patterns prior to these measures. In the final version Mendelssohn substituted for these four measures a playful sixteenth-note imitative play between the piano and the strings (mm. 172-175). The piano's left hand here is reminiscent of the original string patterns.

In conclusion, the relationship between the two versions of the Scherzo may best be described as a move toward refinement, rather than a revision.

#### 5. From *Allegro vivace* to *Finale: Allegro assai appassionato*

The last movement is the largest in scope after the first, but Mendelssohn's revision of its draft is more superficial than that of the earlier movement. The sixteenth-note piano figurations in the final version clearly show Hiller's influence in their added brilliance. Otherwise, the overall guidelines for the revision are threefold: a consolidation of the melodic ideas of the movement, a clearer thematic and motivic definition of the different sections, and the elimination of harmonic redundancies.

## The Consolidation of Melodic Ideas

The draft version of this movement is perhaps the most rough-edged of the four, yet it is also imaginative and exciting. Its most peculiar aspect is the confusion Mendelssohn appears to have had with regard to the melodic makeup of its first theme.



Ex. 19a: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro vivace*, mm. 18-20, violin part

This passage in the violin part is inverted in the final version:



Ex. 19b: Final Version, fourth mvt.: *Finale: Allegro assai appassionato*, mm. 18-20, violin part

This revision is not unique to these measures. One of the most telling examples of Mendelssohn's deliberation with regard to the melodic outline of this fragment is found in mm. 222-223 of the draft's manuscript:



Ex. 19c: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro assai appassionato*, mm. 222-223<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Clefs have been added for ease of reading.

Here we see Mendelssohn experimenting with the melodic outlines of both Exx. 19a and 19b.

The sketches at the bottom of p. 49 and the top of p. 50 of DSB 19 have been discussed above.<sup>31</sup> They too exemplify an extraordinary, almost bizarre difficulty that Mendelssohn seems to have had with the themes and motives of this movement. In this movement, it would appear, Mendelssohn knew the rhythmic and harmonic frameworks of his themes and motives before he knew their exact melodic contours. We see inconsistencies throughout the draft version in the appearances of the first theme and the motives derived from it, whether in the melodic lines themselves or in the textures that accompany them. These inconsistencies are eliminated in the final version.

Mendelssohn did not make any substantial structural modifications between the two versions. He did, however, alter the thematic and motivic building blocks of the concluding sections in both the exposition and the recapitulation. If we compare mm. 81-96 in the exposition of the draft version to mm. 222-258 in its recapitulation, we see that the two sections, which are supposed to be structurally parallel, are not based on similar thematic units. Their counterparts in the final version, in mm. 85-106 and 238-268, respectively, are much closer to each other thematically. On a personal note, I mourn the loss of the original passages, which are truly engaging, and which are smoother than their revised versions in the manner in which they emerge from the passages that precede

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<sup>31</sup> See pp. 10-16.

them. However, Mendelssohn's choice is clear: he wanted to increase the thematic and structural coherence of the movement, even at the expense of very successful sections.

One cannot mention Mendelssohn's manipulation of thematic material in this movement without mentioning one of the most impressive and delightful uses of the "developmental variation" principle prior to the music of Brahms. Measures 107-121 of the draft present the movement's first theme with a textural modification: the top line of the piano's right hand provides a high dominant pedal tone against the violin's theme. Yet, Mendelssohn's revision of this passage in the final version, in mm. 123-140 (with mm. 107-122 functioning as a transition to this section), uses the strings' *pizzicati* in an extraordinarily effective manner against the piano, thus reinventing the theme with a completely fresh texture. This variant of the texture recurs later in the movement (mm. 228-234), where it is once again modified. In fact, the first theme of the movement, in itself consistent throughout the final version, never appears twice in the same textural context.

#### The Elimination of Harmonic Redundancies

Three sections of the last movement's draft suffer from problems similar to those that we have encountered in some sections of the first movement's draft. One section anticipates major tonal shifts before their structural point of arrival, and two linger on the same harmony for an extended enough period to stop the flow of the music.

Once again, I regret Mendelssohn's decision to omit the first of these sections from the final version. This section, which starts in m. 163 of the draft and ends in m. 181, is one of the dramatic highpoints of the movement. Its gradual buildup and subtle use of chromatic sequences are masterly, and when it finally reaches its destination at the climactic *ff* of m. 182, the commencing recapitulation sounds very gratifying to this listener's ears. The section does, however, contain one serious flaw, which is corrected in its revision (mm. 183-192 of the final version). The canonic entrance of the piano's left hand in m. 167 is in the key of D minor, and thus it anticipates the tonality of the recapitulation in m. 182, thereby rendering superfluous the harmonic unfolding that takes place between these two points. The final version corrects this flaw by assigning the key of C minor, rather than D minor, to the entrance of the piano's left hand.

Measures 97-105 and 212-222 of the draft are based on the same melodic and textural gestures. They seem to be parallel sections of the exposition and recapitulation, but they are not. Measures 97-105 follow the concluding section of the movement's exposition, whereas mm. 212-222 precede the concluding section of the recapitulation. The strong affinity of these two passages can therefore obscure the listener's grasp of the movement's formal design. In addition, they are both harmonically static, not serving a role in the advancement of the movement's general harmonic scheme. These may have been the reasons why Mendelssohn chose to suppress these two sections in the final version. Once again, these considerations do not detract in any way from the compositional merit of these sections.



The last revision I wish to discuss is of a single note, which is very poignant. The middle section of the movement is a lyrical intermezzo in B-flat major, which is reminiscent of the second movement in both key and character. In the final version it starts in m. 141 with a soaring cello solo:

This musical score shows the final version of the fourth movement, measures 141-145. The top staff is for the cello (Vcl.) and the bottom staff is for the piano. The cello part begins in measure 141 with a soaring solo, marked 'a tempo' and 'Vcl.'. The piano part is marked 'p' and 'cantabile'. The key signature is B-flat major. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 142 and a triplet of sixteenth notes in measure 143. The cello part has a long, sweeping line with a fermata over the final note in measure 145.

Ex. 20a: Final Version, fourth mvt.: *Finale: Allegro assai appassionato*, mm. 141-145, cello and piano parts

The one note that seems to be the very essence of this whole phrase is its final natural  $e^1$ . This note appears in a place where the listener expects to hear the E-flat of a C minor chord. It is hard to imagine that this theme was conceived for any purpose other than to surprise the listener with that E-natural. Imagine the unimaginable we must, however, since the original version of this theme was as follows:

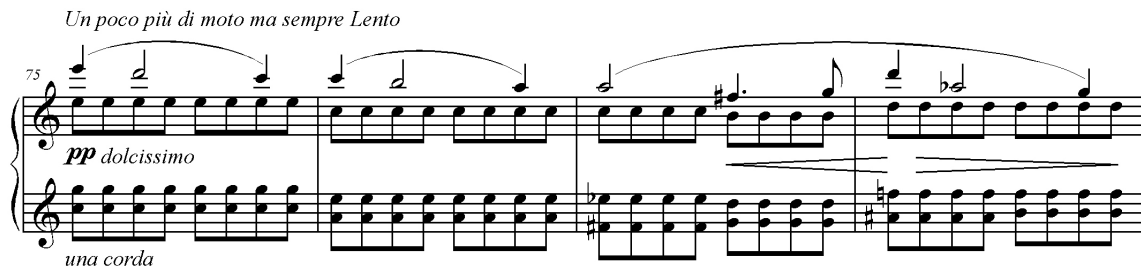
This musical score shows the draft version of the fourth movement, measures 121-125. The top staff is for the cello (Vcl.) and the bottom staff is for the piano. The cello part begins in measure 121 with a soaring solo, marked 'Vcl.'. The piano part is marked 'cantab.'. The key signature is B-flat major. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 122 and a triplet of sixteenth notes in measure 123. The cello part has a long, sweeping line with a fermata over the final note in measure 125.

Ex. 20b: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro vivace*, mm. 121-125, cello and piano parts

The E-natural came to Mendelssohn as an afterthought.<sup>32</sup>

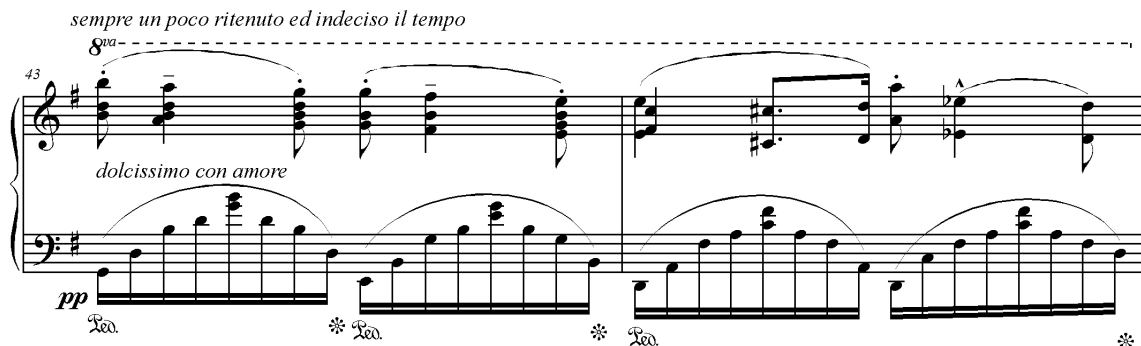
The case of the last movement's revision is special. As raw as the original version of the movement was, it was also imaginative and dramatic. The passages Mendelssohn chose to revise or suppress were mostly successful to begin with. He had to make hard choices and discard some very good ideas in favor of greater structural unity and coherence.

<sup>32</sup> It is very similar to an afterthought that Liszt had when he was revising his "Vallée d'Obermann" from the first book of *Années de Pèlerinage*. The familiar version of Liszt's piece includes the following theme:



Ex. 21a: "Vallée d'Obermann" by Franz Liszt, 1855 Version, mm. 75-78

This theme, like Mendelssohn's theme in Ex. 20a, has one exceptional note: the  $a^{\#1}$  in the bass of m. 78. This note creates a temporary illusion of a surprising B-flat major harmony in a general context of C major; it then reveals its true role as a chromatic passing tone to  $b^1$ . This one note, like Mendelssohn's E-natural, seems to be the *raison d'être* of the entire theme; it is therefore surprising to discover that Liszt did not think of this idea in the original 1842 version of the piece.



Ex. 21b: "Vallée d'Obermann" by Franz Liszt, 1842 Version, mm. 43-44

## 6. The Cyclic Nature of the Trio

The previous discussion mentioned Mendelssohn's use of the concept of "developmental variation." This section ascribes to Mendelssohn other techniques that are not ordinarily associated with him: the use of cyclic elements and of thematic transformation in a multimovement work.

The concept of the cyclic sonata was not invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but its first great proponent was Beethoven, in works such as the Fifth Symphony, the Piano Sonata op. 101, the Cello Sonata op. 102 no.1, and the Ninth Symphony. In all of these works, themes and motives introduced in early movements recur and are developed in later ones, thus lending greater unity to the piece as a whole.

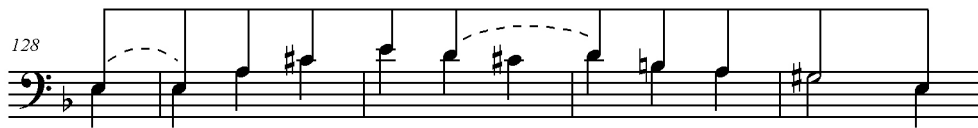
This compositional technique became a central tenet in the output of Romantic composers such as Schumann, Liszt, and Franck. Mendelssohn's use of this technique in the D minor Trio, however, is just as skillful as Schumann's in the Piano Concerto and Fourth Symphony, or Liszt's in his B minor Sonata. If anything, Mendelssohn's technique is subtler.

Mendelssohn's choice of thematic material in the Trio is not accidental. Let us consider a quasi-Schenkerian graph of the first theme of the first movement:



Ex. 22a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 1-15, cello part

Example 22a shows the underlying skeleton of this theme: its opening gesture is an ascending arpeggiation of a second-inversion tonic triad. The same chord is then arpeggiated back down, while also incorporating a stepwise descent. We have seen how the first theme uses intervallic expansion in order to outline the same second-inversion triad. We have also seen the same arpeggiated triad used at the very end of the exposition in both versions of the movement. This gesture is indeed omnipresent here, as an examination of the second theme reveals:



Ex. 22b: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 128-132, cello part

The second theme of the movement is in fact a varied reduction of the first theme.

It should be noted that Mendelssohn planned this underlying connecting thread from the very inception of the piece. He also used it to aid him in his revisions, as the two versions of the first movement's final thirty-seven measures show. The piano part of these measures is almost identical in the two versions; it is the melody in the violin part that has been revised. The draft version gave the violin yet another statement of the first

theme, and Mendelssohn may have felt later that this was one statement too many.

Consequently he revised the violin part to present a melodic line that does not seem to be connected to any of the movement's themes, yet seems extremely fitting.



Ex. 22c: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 587-596, violin part

A close examination of this line reveals that it is based on the same skeleton that Mendelssohn used for both of the movement's themes. In fact, this line constitutes a compromise between the broad structure of the first theme and the brevity of the second. Its conclusive location in the movement is therefore the perfect place for this passage. The very end of the movement restates the beginning of the first theme, and the top line of the last four chords is but another manifestation of the same motivic skeleton.

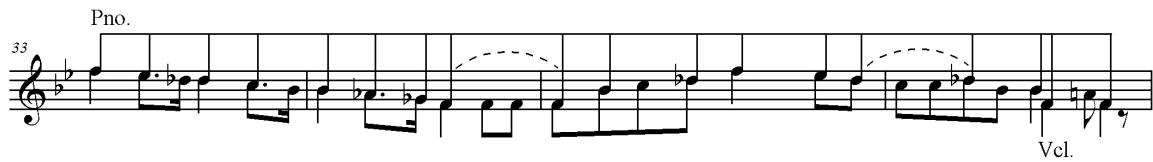
Let us now consider the opening of the second movement:



Ex. 23a: Draft Version, second mvt.: *Andante*, mm. 1-5, piano part

Mendelssohn did not limit his use of the aforementioned motivic skeleton to the first movement. The opening of the second movement is based on the same ascending second-inversion triad; however, the descent back to  $f^1$  occurs after the music modulates to the key of the dominant (therefore it was not included in Ex. 23a). The reason for the

use of only half the skeleton is structural, and it will become clearer as we explore the following examples.



Ex. 23b: Final Version, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, mm. 33-36, piano part

Example 23b shows that Mendelssohn was thinking of his common compositional thread when he was considering the new middle section of the second movement. This section starts where the opening of the first one left off: it descends from the high dominant note to the lower one. This descent is followed by an immediate ascent back to the same peak, which is not given an adequate resolution the second time around. The desire for a resolution back to the tonic, the same desire that we encountered at the beginning of the movement, is recreated and emphasized here.

The opening of the third movement proves that this pattern of an unresolved ascent is not accidental:



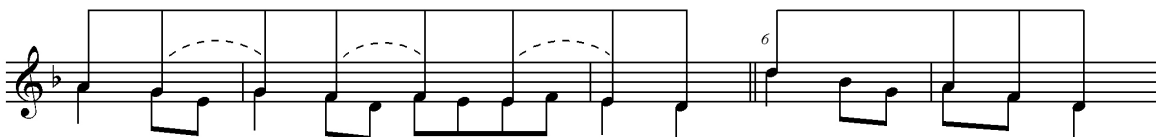
Ex. 24: Draft Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo*, mm. 1-4, piano part

The initial ascent of the skeleton is reduced here to its core: an octave leap from dominant to dominant. Example 24 may be misleading, because it appears to descend back to the lower dominant; however, we should note that, as in the opening of the second

movement, the tonal center shifts away from the tonic by the time the line reaches the final note. It does not, therefore, resolve the tension created by the initial ascent.

The thematic material of the second and the third movements establishes a pattern: the initial ascent of their underlying motivic skeleton is not given an adequate resolution, like the one at the opening of the first movement. This raises the question of why the first movement is different. The answer to this question is that originally it was not. An examination of the cross-outs at the beginning of the cello's first theme in the draft version, as well as of its existing recapitulation, shows that the theme ended originally with yet another arpeggiated ascent to the high dominant. This preliminary version of the first theme adhered to the same scheme we later find in the second and third movements. The additional high dominant caused much damage locally, however. It sounded repetitive, coming so soon after the initial ascent to the same note, and it undermined the intervallic expansion culminating in the  $a^2$  of the violin near the end of the section. In this case, local considerations took precedence over inter-movement ones.

We have seen that Mendelssohn intended to use the themes of the first three movements to create and reinforce an underlying tension. This tension finally finds its resolution in the last movement:



Ex. 25: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro vivace*, mm. 1-3 (piano part) and 6-7 (violin part)

All of the themes of the last movement descend from the dominant without an initial ascent. The opening utilizes two forms of descent to the tonic: stepwise motion and arpeggiation.

In conclusion, a reduction of the Trio's themes reveals that they all share the same underlying design, and that the purpose of this design is to create motivic and tonal tensions in the first three movements. These tensions then resolve in the fourth movement, thus unifying the Trio.

The unification of the Trio's themes is not the only cyclic device Mendelssohn uses in the piece.

Ex. 26a: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 65-69

The importance of Ex. 26a lies in three elements: a pedal tone (bass line), a repetition of a note within the measure (the violin and the cello parts in each of the measures), and a chromatic ascent (the downbeats of the piano's right-hand part). The same three elements appear a few measures later even more clearly:





Ex. 26b: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 93-97

This time the pedal tone is in the cello part and in the last eighth note of the piano's left-hand part in every measure. The repeated notes in the violin part are now consecutive, and the chromatic ascent is once again presented by the top notes of the piano's right-hand figurations. The inclusion of these three elements in one passage is not limited to the first movement:

Ex. 26c: Draft Version, second mvt.: *Andante*, mm. 40-43

The same three elements essentially make up the passage in Ex. 26c. This passage is part of the transition that Mendelssohn discarded in the final version of the second movement.

It is also strikingly similar to the one in Ex. 26d, taken from near the end of the fourth movement:

The image displays a musical score for a draft version of a fourth movement, marked 'Allegro vivace' and measures 242-249. The score is written for voice and piano. The first system (measures 242-245) shows a vocal line with a melodic phrase and a piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords. The second system (measures 246-249) shows a vocal line with a long note and a piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords.

Ex. 26d: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro vivace*, mm. 242-249

The passages presented in Ex. 26 manifest another means by which Mendelssohn tied the first, second, and last movements together. These passages, however, posed Mendelssohn with three major difficulties. They were not of major structural importance in their respective movements, and therefore their contribution to the overall unity of the piece could easily be overlooked. The third movement did not include any similar passages that may have tied it to this common thread. Most importantly, Exx. 26a and

26c are both parts of sections that were suppressed in the final version, and the passage presented in Ex. 26d was heavily revised.

Mendelssohn tried to find another, more significant, unifying element for the four movements of the final version. He found that element in a unity that already existed between the third and the fourth movements of the draft. R. Larry Todd makes the observation that these movements share the exact same rondo-sonata form,<sup>33</sup> with a refrain that serves as the first theme, a two-themed exposition, a short development, a foreign-key episode (that returns in the coda), and a recapitulation. In fact, the similarity between the formal designs of the two movements is such that the equivalences of different sections can be identified one by one, with the last movement naturally being of larger proportions.

These two movements share more than their form. They also share their second themes:

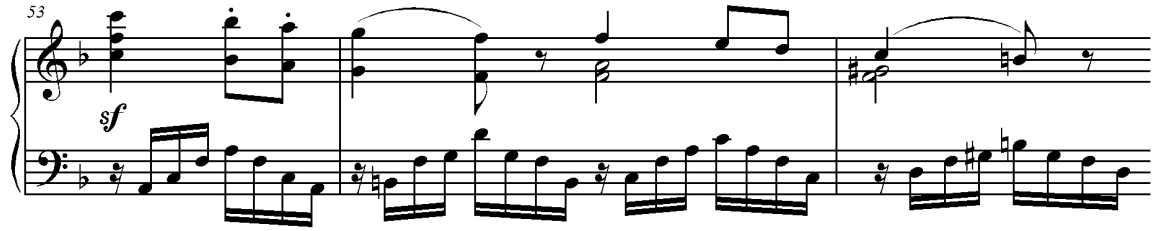


Ex. 27a: Draft Version, third mvt.: *Scherzo*, mm. 28-32, violin part

The gesture of the beginning of this theme is simple and straightforward: a descending scale with an unequal rhythmic pattern.

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<sup>33</sup> R. Larry Todd, "The Chamber Music of Mendelssohn," in *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 194.



Ex. 27b: Draft Version, fourth mvt.: *Allegro vivace*, mm. 53-55, piano part

The very same description applies also to the second theme of the fourth movement, presented in Ex. 27b.

Examples 27a and 27b have two significant advantages over the passages in Ex. 26. They both occupy structurally significant locations within their respective movements, and they both were retained in the final version. All Mendelssohn needed to do in order to extend the unifying potential of these passages to the first and second movements was to include variants of them at key points in newly composed passages.

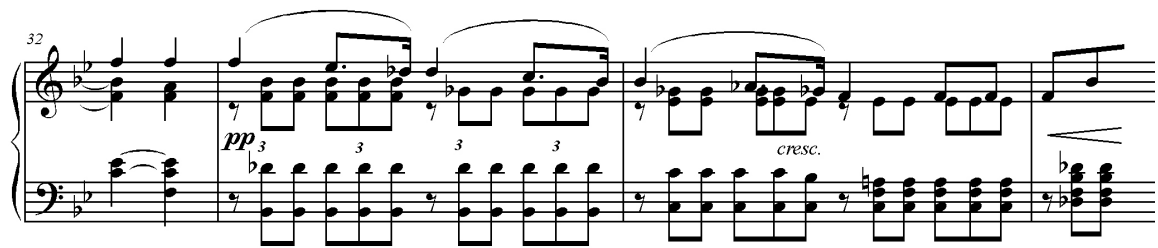
His choice for the first movement was indeed strategic: the isolated and highly memorable counterpoint the violin plays against the cello's first theme in the recapitulation.



Ex. 27c: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 366-375, violin and cello parts

This is the first time the listener hears this descending scale. Its location, its setup, and the fact that it is not similar to any other melodic idea in the movement – all these features make it highly memorable.

The incorporation of this idea into the revised second movement is probably the most striking instance of thematic transformation in the piece. Here this unifying melodic gesture is not hidden; on the contrary, it provides the main thematic substance for the new middle section. Furthermore, it utilizes the melody, rhythm, and underlying harmony of Ex. 27c almost exactly.



Ex. 27d: Final Version, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, mm. 32-35, piano part

The reason why I personally find this passage so striking is simple: I have been playing the Trio ever since I was a child, and I realized the connection between Exx. 27c and 27d only while working on the current analysis. The reactions of my peers, some of whom have known the piece longer than I have, were similar to my own. Mendelssohn's compositional skill is such that even when he makes explicit use of thematic transformation, the concerned passages are integrated so seamlessly into their surroundings that the unifying effect remains largely concealed. The listener feels that a certain passage sounds familiar and befitting, yet does not realize that the reason is that

the very same idea was heard just a few minutes earlier – in a different movement, and within a different context.

In conclusion, a comparison between the two versions of Mendelssohn's D minor Trio demonstrates the greatness of this composer. The draft version of the Trio is already a masterpiece, and even if Mendelssohn had published it immediately after its completion in July 1839, it would be known today as the celebrated Mendelssohn opus 49.

Mendelssohn's genius is underscored by the fact that he was not content with the fruits of his initial inspiration, as successful as they were. He would not release the Trio to the public until he was completely satisfied with it.

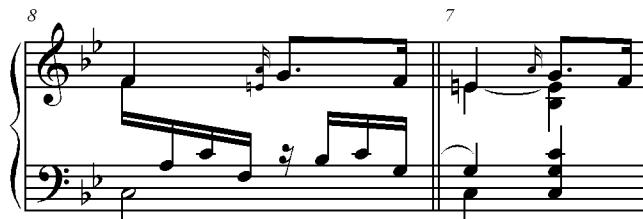
### Part III

#### From Comparative Analysis to Practical Interpretation

A comparison of the two versions of Mendelssohn's D minor Trio can be extremely informative to the performers of the piece, of Mendelssohn's music in general, and of music composed around the time when the Trio was written. This section will examine a few of the most striking interpretative insights obtained through the comparative analysis of the two versions.

#### The Placement of Grace Notes

Example 28 presents the ending of the first piano solo in both versions of the second movement.



Ex. 28: Draft Version, second mvt.: *Andante*, m. 8, piano part;  
Final Version, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, m. 7, piano part

The performer of the final version may be at a loss to determine whether the  $a^l$  should be played on the beat as an appoggiatura, or before the beat as a grace note. Both options seem viable, especially since the top line is written as a separate voice; this allows the performer to execute the  $a^l$  simultaneously with the two notes of the lower voice. An examination of the same passage in the draft version answers the question: here the grace note includes the  $e^l$ , and therefore it should not be executed before the beat. Since the

bass is not repeated on the last beat of the measure, an execution of the  $e^I$ - $a^I$  fourth as grace notes before the beat would distort both the sense of rhythm and the harmony.

This lesson can be applied not just to this particular passage, but it can also serve to make a useful generalization about the performance practice of grace notes in Mendelssohn's time. In order to do this, let us revisit Exx. 1a and 1b. In the draft version Mendelssohn notates the broken chords of the right hand with grace notes, but in the final version he chooses to use normal-sized notes. The logical explanation for this change is his fear that the original notation might prompt the performer to play the right-hand grace notes on the beat. From this we can surmise that the execution of grace notes on the beat was conventional in Mendelssohn's time.

A final conclusion from comparing Ex. 28 with Exx. 1a and 1b works in conjunction with Mendelssohn's use of grace notes in the third movement. In the Scherzo the grace notes are obviously meant to be executed before the beat, and therefore they are **slashed**. This should in no way be underestimated, since Mendelssohn is completely consistent in this matter. Slashed grace notes are to be executed before the beat; small notes with accurate rhythmic values, and without slashes, are to be executed on the beat, in a manner that corresponds to their indicated value.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> I was disappointed to discover that a renowned publisher such as Henle did not pay attention to Mendelssohn's original intentions. Henle's edition of the Trio slashes the appoggiatura ornaments throughout the second movement, whereas the original Breitkopf & Härtel systematically avoids slashes in this movement.

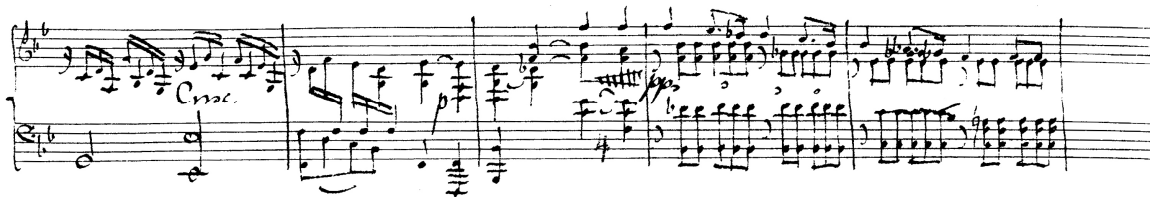


These conclusions are of particular importance, since even a treatise as standard as Edward Dannreuther's *Musical Ornamentation* assumes the performer's acquaintance with the niceties of Mendelssohn's style. Dannreuther does not provide specific guidance on the problems of ornamentation, such as those in the final version of the Trio.<sup>35</sup>

### The Execution of Dotted Eighth Notes and Sixteenth Notes against Triplets

One of the much debated questions of early 19<sup>th</sup>-century performance practice is that of whether a sixteenth note that follows a dotted eighth, and that appears against a triplet of eighths, should be played together with the last member of the triplet or after it. Publishers tend to adhere to exact mathematical divisions of the beat. It is therefore useful to consult the manuscript when such questions arise.

In the case of the Trio, the separate manuscript of the piano part, which was used for engraving the first edition, provides valuable insights in regard to this question. Example 29a is a facsimile of the beginning of the middle section of the slow movement. It is reproduced and edited from a copy of the manuscript provided by the Breitkopf & Härtel archives in Wiesbaden.



Ex. 29a: Separate Piano Score, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, equivalent to mm. 30-34 of the Final Version

<sup>35</sup> See Edward Dannreuther, *Musical Ornamentation*, part II (London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1895), 155. Dannreuther mentions a similarity between Mendelssohn's and Scarlatti's treatments of ornamentation. The entry concerning Scarlatti, however, does not shed any further light on the matter. See Edward Dannreuther, *Musical Ornamentation*, part I (London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1893), 119.

Here we see that in Mendelssohn's hand the sixteenth notes appear aligned with the third members of the triplets; in the first instance, however, the sixteenth-note D-flat seems to precede the third member of the triplet.

Let us explore what happens later in the same section:



Ex. 29b: Separate Piano Score, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, equivalent to mm. 40-44 of the Final Version

In m. 43 the sixteenth note clearly appears **after** the third member of the triplet.

Mendelssohn is not being consistent. One possible explanation might be that when the piano plays the dotted rhythmic pattern together with the strings, it has to adjust itself to move along with them. After all, the string players are not supposed to play two different rhythmic patterns at once. Indeed, m. 43 marks the beginning of an imitative dialogue between the piano and the violin.

As plausible as this theory may seem, it is disproved by Ex. 29c:



Ex. 29c: Separate Piano Score, second mvt.: *Andante con moto tranquillo*, equivalent to mm. 50-54 of the Final Version

In mm. 52-54 the piano doubles the violin, and here we see once more that the sixteenth notes are aligned with the third members of the triplets.

These contradictions give rise to several possibilities:

1. Mendelssohn's view of this performance-practice issue is flexible, and is affected by the character of the passage. Less dramatic passages adhere to the convention of simultaneous execution; more dramatic passages take advantage of the rhythmic clash.
2. Mendelssohn did not mean for his alignment to be indicative of the performance; if this option is the case, his manuscripts cannot shed any light on the question at hand.
3. Mendelssohn may not have worried about this particular aspect of performance practice. After all, what we now term "performance practice" was for him a way of life.

Any one of these possibilities is viable, and therefore the performers of the Trio would be well advised to go beyond the indications in any given edition, and decide for themselves which interpretation of each passage would sound best.

#### The Relevance of Mendelssohn's Metronome Markings

Mendelssohn's metronome markings tend to be on the fast side, and the Trio is no exception. However, our comparative analysis has established the great length to which he went in order to ensure the flow and drive of the first movement and, to a lesser extent, the flow and drive of the third. If a composer pays this much attention to enabling a rapid

and continuous unfolding of the music, he would want the music to be performed fast. Given the fact that Mendelssohn's metronome markings are not impossible to execute, one may safely assume that they are indeed indicative of his intentions.

#### The Lightness of Touch in the Scherzo

The comparative analysis of the third movement revealed that many of the revisions of the draft were made in order to eliminate heavier textures. This compositional effort is geared toward the spirit of the execution of the movement, and should therefore guide the performer to seek the lightest touch possible.

#### The Performance of the Trio as a Cycle

The discussion of the cyclic nature of the Trio at the end of Part II revealed that Mendelssohn used several different methods to unify the piece as a whole. If his intentions are to be followed during a performance of the work, breaks between the movements should be minimized. Since the first three movements create great motivic tension, which builds toward the final movement, the performers may even go as far as to start the Finale with an *attacca* from the ending of the Scherzo.

#### Bar Phrasing

To conclude, I would like to discuss the execution of a passage that can be understood only through comparing its two versions. The passage in question is the climax of the concluding section of the first movement's exposition and recapitulation.

The final version of the passage is given in Ex. 30a.

Ex. 30a: Final Version, first mvt.: *Molto Allegro agitato*, mm. 186-196

The phrase that starts in m. 195 consists of nineteen measures. The twentieth measure serves as the first downbeat of the next phrase. Even if we take into account that mm. 210-213 constitute an extension of the previous phrase, we are still faced with asymmetry, which is not typical of this movement. Where should the downbeat of the hypermeasure shift?

The answer to this question is found in the draft version of this passage.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves (treble, bass, and grand staff). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 200 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first system (measures 200-205) features a crescendo leading to a forte (*sf*) dynamic. The second system (measures 206-210) includes a first ending bracket over measures 209 and 210, which are marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The score concludes with a final measure (211) marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic.

Ex. 30b: Draft Version, first mvt.: *Allegro molto agitato*, mm. 200-210

Measures 209-211, which were probably discarded in the final version because of their harmonic redundancy, clearly show that m. 212 is conceived as an upbeat measure. This

not only sorts out the asymmetry of the ensuing phrase but also explains why in the final version the piano's right hand has a single note in m. 203 and a full chord in m. 204. The *sfs* in the string parts can be understood as providing textural counterpoint rather than giving unnecessary extra emphasis to the downbeats. Most importantly, the two descending fifths of the violin in mm. 193-196 are now perceived not as heavy-light-heavy-light, but rather as heavy-light-light-heavy. These fifths, with one conceptual shift, turn from an ordinary sequence to a carefully calculated and extremely effective prolongation of tension. The ensuing climax, in its turn, is rendered almost cathartic. Thus research and analysis can inform the interpretation; and thought and emotion can become one in music.

## **Appendix**

### **The Interactive CD**

The two versions of the Trio were recorded on November 11, 2004. The recording, engineered by Michael Piasio, took place in Studio B, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, New York.

This CD adheres to the **CD Extra** format: it can be played on conventional CD players, but it also contains a data track. The data track includes MP3 versions of the audio tracks, as well as a digitized facsimile of the autograph of the draft version. It is compatible with Windows and Macintosh PCs.

#### Windows

On most computers, an interactive menu will appear on the screen about 30 seconds after the CD is inserted. In case this menu does not appear automatically, it can be accessed by opening the file DoubleClickMe.exe in the CD's root directory. Please note that any setting of the font size other than "Normal" may cause distortions in the text of the interactive menus. The font size can be modified in the "Appearance" tab of the display settings.

#### Macintosh

The interactive menu of the CD is an HTML file named ClickMe.htm, located at the root directory of the CD. On OS IX or lower, this file is accessed automatically when the CD is inserted. Users of OS X will need to open this file manually. Please note that, depending on the configuration of individual machines, clicking on the links in the menu sometimes opens *finder* windows with the selected files highlighted, and other times opens the actual applications that play the MP3 files or show the facsimile.



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