

**Ron Regev**

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

Volume III:

**Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**

**Piano Trio in D Minor**  
**Draft Version – Completed in July 1839**

Critical Performance Edition

Edited by Ron Regev

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## Preface

As documented in his letters, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847) expressed his wish to write piano trios several times to different people during the 1830s. In 1839 he finally got to writing one, mostly during a vacation he took in Frankfurt in the summer. At the end of July he sent letters to family members and friends, announcing the completion of the Trio. The manuscript of the piece is currently held in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. It is not, however, the manuscript of the work we now know as Mendelssohn's first piano trio in D minor, op. 49. During the fall and winter of 1839-1840 Mendelssohn performed the Trio several times on private occasions, and subsequently he kept revising it. Sir George Grove (1820-1900) dated the second version of the Trio to September 23, 1839; presumably he was referring to a manuscript that is now missing, and that was originally bound in the same volume as the first version, and then given by Mendelssohn's widow to violinist Ferdinand David (1810-1873), the concertmaster of Mendelssohn's orchestra in Leipzig. This too, however, was not the manuscript of the final version of the Trio.

Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885), the 19<sup>th</sup>-century composer and pianist and one of Mendelssohn's closest friends at the time, gives a detailed account of a meeting he had with Mendelssohn, at which time Mendelssohn played the Trio for him. Hiller criticized his friend's style of piano writing as outdated. He recounts his success in persuading Mendelssohn to revise the piano part in order to conform to the more brilliant writing style of the new school of piano playing, as embodied by Chopin and Liszt. Although the scholarly community has tended to attribute the rejection of the first manuscript to Hiller's influence, the German scholar Friedhelm Krummacher established that the meeting between Hiller and Mendelssohn did not take place until the winter of 1839-1840. This suggests that two revisions of the piece took place: one of the continuity of the piece, and then one of the texture and style of the piano part. The other extant manuscript of the Trio supports this assumption: it is a piano part in Mendelssohn's hand, which was used by Breitkopf & Härtel for engraving the first edition, and which is essentially identical to the final version as far as the continuity is concerned, but shows extensive revisions of the piano texture. The date of submission of this manuscript is January 21, 1840; Mendelssohn's correspondence with the publishing house suggests that it was accompanied by the violin and cello parts, which are now missing. In the current edition this manuscript of the piano part is referred to as **A2**.

As close as this manuscript is to the first edition of the piece, it is not identical. This fact, along with another comment made by Hiller, supports the contention that the final version was created on the engraver's proofs, and that therefore the first edition, as published by Breitkopf & Härtel in April 1840 (plate no. 6320), should be regarded as the conclusive source for the final version of the Trio. Here the first edition will be referred to as **FE**.

A further study of the work's publication history, however, reveals that it was issued simultaneously by Breitkopf & Härtel in Germany, Richault in Paris, and Ewer in England – contracted independently by Mendelssohn himself. Whereas the Richault edition was based on the manuscripts Mendelssohn had sent to Breitkopf & Härtel on January 21, and did not incorporate his later revisions on the engraver's proofs, there is documented evidence to suggest that the Ewer edition was based on a more advanced manuscript, which is lost. The proximity of the date on which Mendelssohn sent that manuscript to the date of publication makes it likely that what he sent Ewer was a copy made of Breitkopf & Härtel's engraver's proofs. Mendelssohn entrusted pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) with the task of proofreading the English publication; the resulting edition was virtually identical to the version produced by Breitkopf & Härtel. Should the manuscript Mendelssohn sent Ewer be recovered, it

would need to be regarded as a source of equal importance and authority to the German first edition. Ewer also contracted Mendelssohn to transcribe the violin part for flute; it is difficult to determine from the correspondence alone whether Mendelssohn made the transcription himself or, rather, gave Ewer permission to do so. There is no extant manuscript of this version. If one ever surfaces, it would need to be consulted in any attempt to create a critical edition of the final version of the Trio.

Despite the elaborate process of composition and revision, the piece exists essentially in only two versions: the one brought here, which was completed during the summer of 1839, and the one that was heavily reworked during the ensuing winter, and was published as Mendelssohn's op. 49 by Breitkopf & Härtel and Ewer in April 1840.

The current volume was created in 2004 by the editor as part of his doctoral work at the Juilliard School. This work also included the preparation of a facsimile of the Trio's earlier manuscript from a microfilm provided by the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, a comparative study of the Trio's two versions, and a recording of both versions. The current edition is presented here for the benefit of performers and music scholars who may wish to study this early version on their own. This version, however, should in no way be regarded as a finalized conception of this piece; if Mendelssohn ever thought of it as such, he did so for a period of time not longer than a few days in late July of 1839.

## Editorial Comments

This edition is based on one source only: the composer's autograph of the Trio, which is dated July 18, 1839, and which is housed in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, as part of the volume referred to as Mus.Ms.Autogr. Mendelssohn 31. Consequently, it strives to represent this manuscript in printed form in the most accurate way possible. The following guidelines were observed:

- Any editorial decisions and alterations of the original autograph are detailed in elaborate footnotes.
- The locations of dynamic markings are preserved, as much as possible, to reflect their locations in the autograph.
- Mendelssohn frequently beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes with some of the members of the group above the beam and some below it. His beamings have been preserved whenever possible.
- Mendelssohn was very economical in his use of accidentals, and sometimes of clefs. He did not indicate things he considered obvious. Any additions of accidentals or clefs, inferred by harmonic and textural contexts, are parenthesized.
- Other parenthesized additions occur only in two cases: when one part includes material that is closely related to that of another part, but missing dynamic indications or articulation marks; and when such indications and marks appear later in the same part, and should therefore be reflected in earlier appearances of similar materials. In all other instances the performers should use their judgment to complete missing indications.

Ron Regev  
*New York City, October 2004*

# Trio

1839

**Allegro molto agitato**  $\text{♩} = 80$  <sup>1)</sup>

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

Violoncello

10

21

31

40

50

59

68

78

87

96

104

*p*

*cresc.* <sup>3)</sup>

*cresc.* ---

*en* (---) *f* (*dim.*) <sup>4)</sup> (*p*)

*cresc.* *f* *dimin.*

Pno.

*sf* *sf*

*f* *sf* (*sf*) *cresc.*

*ff* *sf* <sup>5)</sup>

*ff*

<sup>6)</sup> > > > > >

1) M. M. according to A2 and FE. **Molto Allegro agitato** in A2 and FE.

2) The slur is written over a system break: it appears in the new system, but not in the previous one.

3) A *cresc.* in the violin part of this measure is erased. In consideration of the following dynamics, this *cresc.* may have been left here as an oversight.

4) The dynamics below the violin part are located low enough to seem to apply to the cello part as well.

5) This slur is over a page break; it exists in the new page, but not in the previous one.

6) Parallel passages (see m. 101) suggest that this must be an oversight, and the slur should begin on the second eighth note.

112 *p* 1)

120 Pno.

127 *dolce*

135 *p* *sf*

144 *p* *cresc.*

154 2) *p* *pp* 3)

164 4) *sf* *dim. espress.*

174 Vn. *p* *crescendo*

183 *f*

191 *p* *cresc.* *f*

198 *p* *sf* *crescendo*

207 5) *ff*

1) The slurs in both the violin and the cello parts leave room for the possibility that they are supposed to extend to the *b*<sup>1</sup>.

2) The extensive revision in this place makes it difficult to ascertain whether a slur is intended.

3) The *pp* in the manuscript starts in the next measure, probably a relic of a heavily revised line.

4) This barline separates two systems. The tie appears in the beginning of the new system but not at the end of the previous one.

5) Mendelssohn's notation here follows the older tradition of writing the cello part an octave higher when in the treble clef. It has been transposed here to actual pitch, following the modern standard.

## 3

- 1) The articulation of the second and third quarter notes looks more like dots than wedges; since the wedges in the violin part of the next two measures are clear, these were kept as wedges as well.
- 2) The slur appears here as it does in the manuscript. Parallel passages suggest it may have been intended to start on the first beat; however, see mm. 694 and 698.
- 3) The changes of registers and dynamics, as well as the tie, would make a repeat here sound extremely forced. Mendelssohn may have been paying tribute to tradition by including it; the fact that he chose to remove it in the revision further suggests it should not be executed.
- 4) The manuscript has a system break here. Whereas the piano part has clear indications of the continuation of the slur in both systems, the violin and the cello parts have such indications only in the new system.
- 5) The *p* appears slightly later in the manuscript; the *d* was not a dotted half note when it was originally written.
- 6) The *ff* has a portion of it written well into the previous measure.

330 *fp*

335 *ff* *(f dim.)* *p*

340

347 *pp*

354 *cresc.* *sf* 6 Pno.

371 9 Pno. *ff*

388 *sf* *sf* 1)

400 *sf*

410 3 *p* *sf* *sf*

422 *sf* *p*

432 *p* *(sf)* *f*

443 *p* *(f)*

454

1) There is a system break here, and the tie in the cello part appears only at the beginning of the new system.



464 3 2 Pno. *p*

476

484 1) *cresc.*

493 10 Vn. Pno. 2) (*pp*)

514 *dim.* 3 *p*

526 *f*

535 6 Pno. *p cresc.*

553 5 Pno. 4) 5)

569 *f* 3 3

577

583

591

596 *dim.* *p* 3 3

1) Compare slur to m. 139.

2) Mendelssohn does not write a separate change of clef. It is implied by his use of the bass clef at the beginning of the current staff in the manuscript (m. 499).

3) In the manuscript the slur does not start until m. 516; however, its angle and position suggest it is intended to include the previous measure as well. This would result in a considerably long bow stroke for the cellist; perhaps here would be the right place to discreetly change bows without interrupting the overall phrasing intended by Mendelssohn.

4) Mendelssohn does not write a separate change of clef. It is implied by his use of the bass clef at the beginning of the current staff in the manuscript (m. 559).

5) See articulation in mm. 222 and 224.

## Violoncello

6

601 *dimin.* 10 Pno. *p*

618 3 *cresc.*

628 *sempre crescendo* 1) 2)

637 *sf*

647 *ff* 3)

655 4)

664 7 *mf*

679 *cresc.*

688 *ff* 5)

697 *sf*

**Andante** Pno.  $\text{♩} = 72$  6) 4 *p*

11 *cresc.*

1) Starting in m. 627, the slurring pattern in the strings changes consistently to preclude the half note. In m. 631 the violin changes back to the previous pattern, in which the slur ends on the downbeat half note, and the cello follows suit in m. 634. The slur here does not reach the downbeat in the manuscript, and was changed in order to maintain consistency with the violin part, as well as with m. 634 in the cello part.

2) Here the inclusion of the upbeat under the slur is implied in the new system, but does not appear in the previous one. Compare to the following measures.

3) Slurs follow the manuscript and are consistent between the violin and the cello parts.

4) In both the violin and the cello parts, the slurs do not extend all the way to the downbeat, but do extend beyond the last note of the previous measure, and suggest the connection.

5) There is a dot above the cello's *a*, which is most likely the abbreviation dot of the *ff*.

6) M.M. according to A2 and FE. *Andante tranquillo* in A2; *Andante con moto tranquillo* in FE.

## Violoncello

18 *Pno.* **6** *p* *cresc.* *f*

29 *sf* *dim.* *p* *cresc.* <sup>1)</sup>

35 *p* *cresc.* <sup>2)</sup>

38 *p* *cresc.* *f* <sup>3)</sup>

44 *fp* *cresc.* *f* *p*

49 *p* *sf* *sf* *f* *(dim.)* *p*

55 *cresc.* *f*

61 *pizz.*

66 *c.a.b.*

71 *cresc.* *f* *(dim.)* *p*

77 *cresc.* *(f)* *sf* *dim.*

83 *dim.* *pp* <sup>4)</sup>

86

1) The manuscript is not completely conclusive with regard to the beginning of this slur. It may have been intended to start on the *f*, in which case the whole phrase would be executed using one bow.

2) Slurs according to the manuscript; however, see the violin part of m. 33.

3) In the manuscript the middle of this measure is a system break. Whereas the slur at the end of the previous system appears to be continuing into the next one, the slur in the next one appears to be starting with the first eighth note.

4) Mendelssohn neglected to include many needed slurs in this section. It seems likely that from the second half of m. 85 to the end of m. 90 every two beats are meant to be slurred.

89

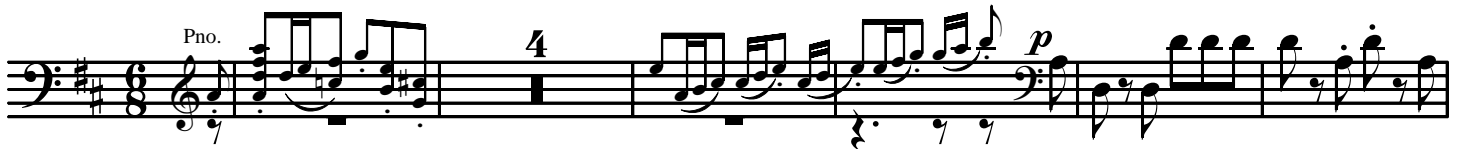


91

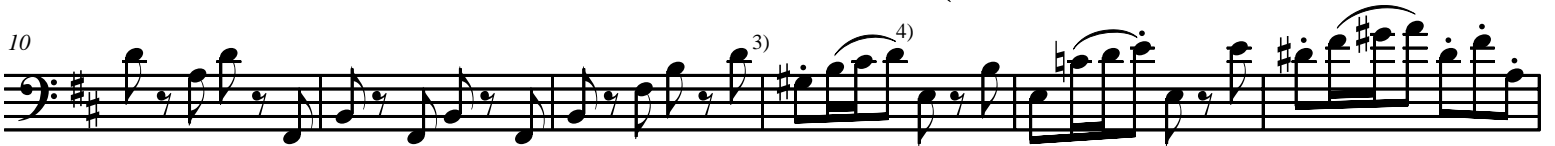


### Scherzo $\text{♩} = 120$ <sup>2)</sup>

Pno.



10



16



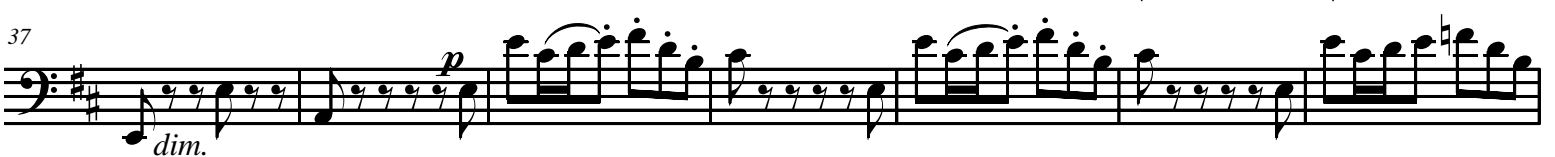
22



28



37



44



49



58



62



1) There is a dot above the *d* in the cello part, and a hint of one above the *f*<sup>1</sup> in the violin part. These may indicate *staccati*; however, Mendelssohn's tendency to write dots after abbreviated dynamics provides a more likely explanation.

2) M.M. according to A2 and FE. *Scherzo / Leggiero e vivace* in A2 and FE.

3) This part of the manuscript page is not clean, and consequently it is difficult to ascertain whether the *staccato* dots on the upbeat and the following downbeat are intended. What seems to be an additional dot appears above the first of the sixteenth notes of the next measure of the violin part. It might also be inferred here that the cello part upbeat should have a dot; the one on the downbeat is conclusive.

4) The articulation and slurring of this motive are not consistent in the manuscript. This edition follows Mendelssohn's original indications; however, it is likely that he intended the more frequent articulation of this motive (a *staccato* mark above the slur on the last eighth note) to prevail throughout the movement.

5) Mendelssohn does not write slurs for the cello here; it is safe to assume that the same slurs are intended as in mm. 59-60.

66

66

73

80

87

96

104

112

119

128

137

144

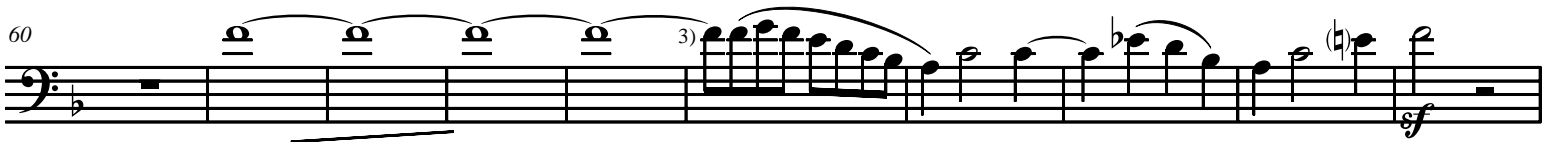
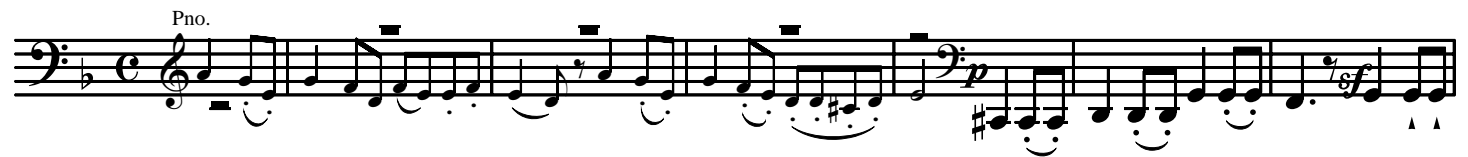
152

161

- 1) The swell is positioned according to its relative location within the measure in the manuscript and in relation to the violin's swell. In relation to the cello's notes, however, the swell goes to its peak and back before the G.
- 2) It is unclear in the manuscript whether this dot is a *staccato* dot or an abbreviation period after the *a* of *c.a.* If one judges from the articulation marks of the violin in previous measures, it may well be either.
- 3) There is a hint of a dot above the *a* in the manuscript, which may just be dirt; however, it has been interpreted here as a *staccato* dot, which is consistent with the preceding measures.
- 4) Mendelssohn's use of the treble clef here is according to the older tradition, in which treble clef material in the cello part is notated an octave above its actual pitch. Here it has been converted to the modern standard.



**Allegro vivace**  $\text{♩} = 100^{1)}$

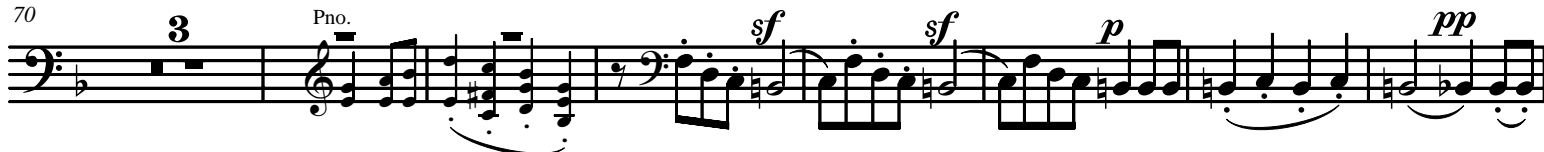


1) M.M. according to A2 and FE. *Allegro assai appassionato* in A2 and FE.

2) The manuscript has a system break at the end of the previous bar. This is probably why the wedges do not continue here.

3) In the manuscript this slur is carried over a system break: it does not appear at the end of the previous system, but does at the beginning of the new one.

70



80



86



92



98



104



111



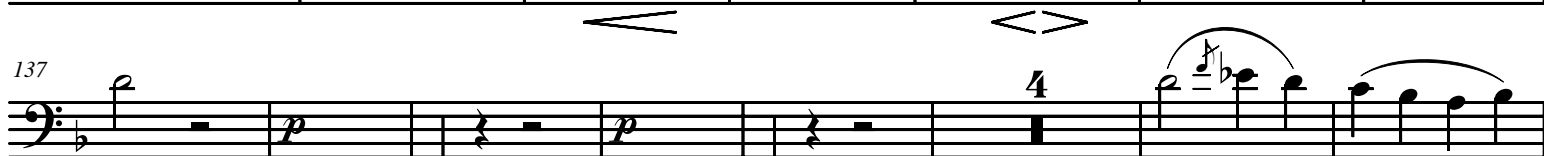
120



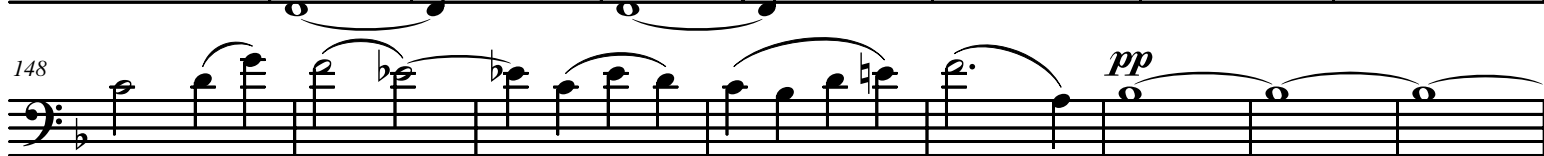
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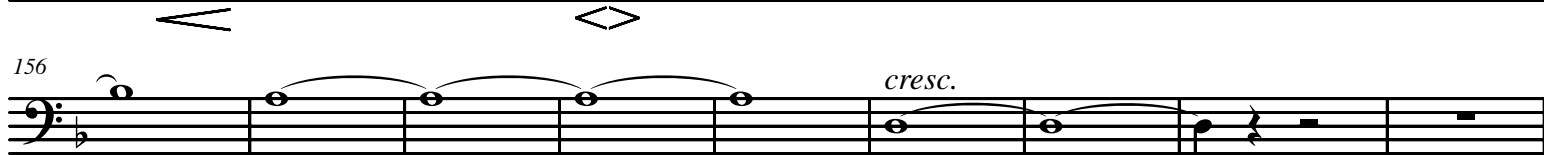
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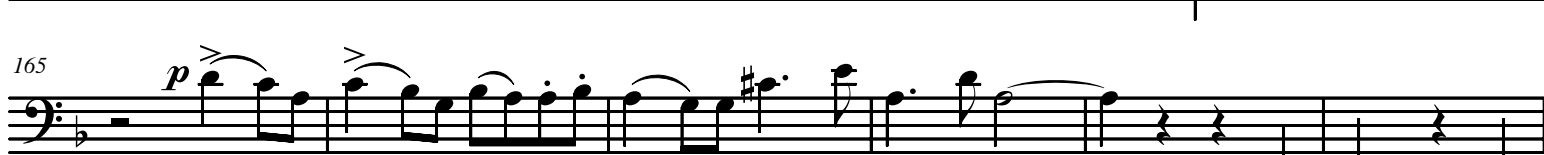
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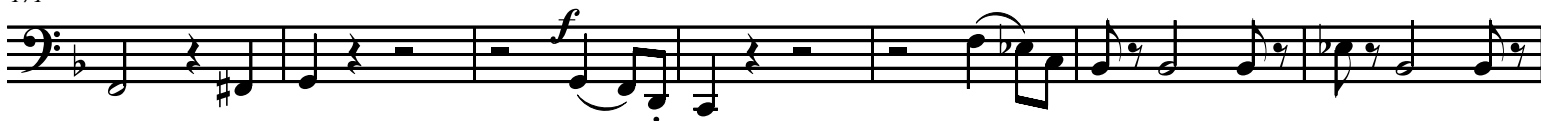
156



165



171



178



184



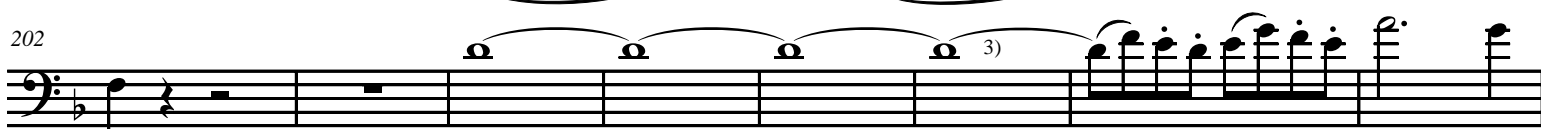
189



195



202



210



220



226



234



240



246



253

*cantab.*

1) The alignment of the cello's *ff* in the manuscript is different than that of the violin and the piano.

2) This tie is over a page break in the manuscript. As in many other instances, the tie appears only at the beginning of the new page, and not at the end of the previous one.

3) Once again the tie appears only at the beginning of a new system, and not at the end of a previous one.

4) Since Mendelssohn does not repeat the slur that appears in the violin part of m. 250, it is up to the performers to decide whether they want to play these two notes with the same bow or not.



259 *cresc. en do*

267 *f* *p*

274 *sf* *p* *sf* *p*<sub>1</sub>

282 *cresc.*

290 *pizz.* *c.a.*

296 *(f)*<sup>2</sup> *(cresc.)*<sup>2</sup> *ff*

302 *ff*

308

1) The *p* appears between the first and the second beats; it is likely that it is meant to follow the violin part, and start on the second beat.

2) The *f* and the *cresc.* appear between the violin and the cello parts.