

Mendelssohn Perspectives. Edited by Nicole Grimes and Angela R. Mace. Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 2012. Pp. xxii + 368. Cloth \$134.95. ISBN 978-1409428251.

2005 and 2009 were important Mendelssohn years, as they marked the 200th birthdays of the siblings Fanny Hensel and Felix Mendelssohn. Many events took place in those years, creating a flurry of new scholarship. This collection of essays falls into the category of conference proceedings, as it is the end result of the international conference “Mendelssohn in the Long Nineteenth Century” at Trinity College, Dublin, in July 2005. In the introduction, editors Nicole Grimes and Angela R. Mace list the impressive achievements of Mendelssohn scholarship over the last half century that have rehabilitated the composer’s distorted image caused by rising antisemitism soon after Mendelssohn’s death. This volume, therefore, is free “to celebrate multifaceted and engaging perspectives on Mendelssohn studies” (1). The wide range of topics “is informed by critical engagement with a wide range of source materials,” including “not only traditional musical analysis-based studies, but also . . . lines of inquiry that are crucial to other areas of the humanities, bringing these approaches to bear on historical and interpretative studies of the Mendelssohns” (3).

The resulting sixteen essays by scholars from North America, Germany, the UK, Italy, and France cover a wide range of topics organized in five parts: Mendelssohn’s Jewishness, Between Tradition and Innovation, Mendelssohn and the Stage, Style and Compositional Process, and Contemporary Views and Posthumous Perspectives. This sensible categorization works well to give the reader a sense of continuity and homogeneity despite the diverse contributions. The level of scholarship of this volume is high, as the majority of contributors are seasoned Mendelssohn scholars. The non-Mendelssohnians, nevertheless, offer fresh insights by exploring new contexts. The extensive use of a variety of source materials is impressive, and they underline the originality of most contributions. Editors Grimes and Mace were able to strike the right balance of creating a uniform style without squelching the scholar’s individual voice.

The first part on Mendelssohn’s Jewishness might seem at odds with the editors’ claim that Mendelssohn scholarship has gotten past image repair, as the four chapters trace elements of public perception of the composer’s Jewish identity. A closer reading, however, reveals new and different perspectives that are unconcerned about rehabilitation. Sinéad Dempsey-Garrat’s reevaluation of Wagner’s smear campaign against Mendelssohn, for example, argues surprisingly against its success, offering more potent reasons for the composer’s quickly faltering image around 1850. And just as Nicole Grimes seems to wade dangerously into recent controversies of Jewish perspectives in the interpretation of Mendelssohn’s works, she effectively broadens the discussion through her careful reading of Eduard Hanslick’s review of Mendelssohn’s *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*. Marian Wilson Kimber’s “Never Perfectly Beautiful:

Physiognomy, Jewishness, and Mendelssohn Portraiture” is the most esoteric of the group. Yet Kimber is able to not only ask broader cultural questions, but her fascinating research takes the reader beneath the surface of public perception through her exploration of portrayal of Jewishness in drawings, paintings, and caricatures throughout the nineteenth century. In doing so, Kimber strips away at our still simplistic image of the composer. While Colin Eatock’s “Mendelssohn’s Conversion to Judaism: An English Perspective” would seem to offer the least novel ideas, his contribution to Mendelssohn’s reception history is outstanding. Eatock shows convincingly how Mendelssohn’s Jewishness hinges on the question of race or religion—a question whose answers shift dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The pairing of the second part of the book, *Between Tradition and Innovation*, seems at bit forced, as its three essays are quite different in scope and approach. That does not lessen the excellent content of these chapters, however. “Norm and Deformation in Mendelssohn’s Sonata Forms” by Paul Wingfeld and Julian Horton might be the most groundbreaking chapter of the book. Their excellent survey and discussion of Mendelssohn’s approach to sonata form offers not only fascinating insights into his compositional strategies, but they provide a new framework for analysis and interpretation of the composer’s instrumental music. John Michael Cooper’s article on Mendelssohn and Berlioz is a fine exposé on their personal and professional relationship throughout their careers, rectifying misconceptions and generalization that have skewed our perspective for many years. Cooper is also able to demonstrate convincingly some of the musical affinities between these very different composers. Anselm Hartinger’s essay “Between Tradition and Innovation: Mendelssohn as Music Director and His Performances of Bach in Leipzig” does an excellent job of exploring broader historical and cultural contexts around Mendelssohn’s approach to the programming of his historic concerts and his performances of Bach’s music in Leipzig. By looking beyond the typical source materials, Hartinger helps us understand Mendelssohn’s rationale for his programming and performance choices.

Mendelssohn’s failed attempts at composing an opera during his career as a musician have caused much consternation and speculation. Part III: *Mendelssohn and the Stage* explores two very different aspects of the composer’s complex relationship to staged works. Jason Geary’s essay “Converting the Pagans: Mendelssohn, Greek Tragedy, and the Christina Ethos” traces the cultural and aesthetic relevance of the composer’s incidental music for *Antigone* and *Oedipus in Kolonos* within the political, religious, and cultural contexts of the time. Geary gives reasons for the music’s success at the time of composition as well as its seeming irrelevance in today’s culture. Monika Hennemann comes at the topic from a completely different angle, as she explores how the nineteenth-century public coped with Mendelssohn’s delay and eventual failure to produce an opera. Her discussion of rumors of imminent opera performances and of fictionalized biographies gives fascinating insights into Mendelssohn’s image during his lifetime and after his death.

Two of the three articles on Style and Compositional Process deal with the Mendelssohn siblings' piano playing and how it relates to their compositional styles. R. Larry Todd's essay on the origins and meaning of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* presents fascinating details that offer insights into their improvisational skills, compositional process, and aesthetic framework. Angela Mace's archival research is equally remarkable, as she uncovers performance details about improvisational strategies of Felix and Fanny. Benedict Taylor presents new interpretative clues in his analysis of Mendelssohn's sonata form strategies of his String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 12. His article is thought provoking, as it opens up new hermeneutic windows for finding meaning in Mendelssohn's music.

The last part of the book, *Contemporary Views and Posthumous Perspectives*, looks at less developed topics about Mendelssohn's image and personality. Regina Back's "A Friendship in Letters: The Correspondence of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Carl Klingemann" and Lorraine Byrne Bodley's "Mendelssohn as Portrayed in the Goethe-Zelter Correspondence" highlight the high regard for his extraordinary talents. Pieter Zappalà and Cécile Reynaud deal with perceptions and successes of Mendelssohn's music in Italy and France. All four articles fill in gaps in our understanding of the composer's talents, perception, and personality.

This book continues the trend of exceptional Mendelssohn scholarship in form of collections of essays. While many chapters deal with biographical and cultural topics that are easily accessible to the general public (parts I, III, and V), the target audience is nevertheless primarily music historians; part II, *Between Tradition and Innovation*, and part IV, *Style and Compositional Process*, are rather technical in their discussions of specific musical procedures. This book will be on the bookshelf of most nineteenth-century scholars, but its partially interdisciplinary content also offers important ideas for scholars outside the discipline.

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Rethinking Hanslick: Music, Formalism, and Expression. Edited by Nicole Grimes, Siobhán Donovan, and Wolfgang Marx. Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2013. Pp. 360. Cloth \$90.00. ISBN 978-1580464321.

As the title *Rethinking Hanslick* promises, this volume offers fourteen studies that mark what Nicole Grimes terms "a paradigm shift" in the reception of the work of Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904) by seeking to "redress the manifold misreadings" that have grown up around it (5). A number of the contributors do focus attention on musical formalism and expression, as the subtitle would suggest; yet surprisingly, much of the most interesting material explores topics not hinted at on the book's cover, notably cultural politics, gender, ethnicity, and social identity. Taken as a whole, this