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# MENDELSSOHN- NEWSLETTER

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OF THE FOUNDATION AND ASSOCIATION



FELIX-MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY-STIFTUNG  
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## Behind the Scenes of the Museum



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Dear Members and Friends,

During the last years I've written a lot about the musical city of Leipzig and I've told you my thoughts about its past and future.

Today I am happy to present to you Prof. Sebastian Klotz, musicologist at the University of Leipzig, and his opinion about the same themes.

Have a pleasant and happy summer!

Yours, Jürgen Ernst

In recent months, Leipzig's Deputy Mayor for Cultural Affairs, Michael Faber, invited interested parties to take part in discussions on the city's bid for a cultural distinction of European standing, but also on the city's cultural development plan. Stakeholders from its leading cultural institutions came together with others from the independent scene for a debate on the potential of this city of music. The Institute of Musicology at Leipzig University acquired some relevant experience in this field when it hosted the International Congress of the Society for Music Research in 2008 on the theme of *Music and the City. Traditions and Perspectives of Urban Music Cultures*.

As far as the fundamental question is concerned of why it was in Leipzig rather than anywhere else that the model of bourgeois music culture was developed, a systematic perspective might provide clarity by considering the interaction of the various institutions and examining how urban, artistic and business interests found their equilibrium in Leipzig. If one takes into account the fact that generic formats were developed in Leipzig, then this perspective can be seen to extend beyond the individual biographical strands into which much research has already been conducted (J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn, and more recently also Richard Wagner). These generic formats include special forms of funding such as the alumnus system of St. Thomas' Choir, but also institutional models like the professionally structured educational plan of the modern conservatory founded by Mendelssohn, as well as performance formats such as the Gewandhaus concerts, not forgetting the emergence of complete editions of the works of living composers. One should also mention the new type of music journal established by Schumann, and the musical societies that were intricately associated with the other institutions.

But one must also look elsewhere for the reasons behind the success of the model of the integrated music city and its creative music industry sector, as one would call it today. We tend to identify classical music with the great works of high culture performed by specialised ensembles. But for the citizens of Leipzig and their many visitors, music in its 19th century heyday must above all else have been a medium and catalyst for self-organisation, representing as it did a compromise between attitudes to morality, aesthetic convictions and social conventions. Music brought acclaim and visibility. In a way, it could be said that its activities in the sphere of music allowed the city to be experienced

by its citizens as an aesthetic entity in a way that was not possible in other areas of public life, which were becoming increasingly differentiated. Thus, events with which they could identify closely proved popular, as did the opportunity to transcend from the prosaic conditions of everyday life to an Arcadia in which one could listen and experience as a community; in this way, the music city was able to achieve systemic stability and portray itself as an extremely attractive model. Its many foreign students made the conservatory a familiar concept around the world, and its graduates assumed the role of ambassadors for the city of music, at the same time consolidating their own national musical traditions, especially in eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy bear eloquent witness to the vibrancy of this cultural state of affairs, to the circumspect and self-aware manner in which the composer planned and controlled his performances and musical editions, and to the breadth of the domain in which his theory and practice played out. A now-forgotten topography of European musical networks emerges once again from his correspondence; this shared many features with the Via Regia and ensured that musicians, scores, instruments, and the latest news from the world of music could circulate quickly and effortlessly between Bordeaux and Lemberg, Verona and Stettin. Leipzig lay at the very hub of this network. Here, music clearly assumed an important role in the city's economy – an association that is generally stifled under the weight of the emotional, rigidly autonomous concept of music.

If we turn our gaze to the present and the future, we can ponder on how we will appropriate these important traditions for ourselves, how we will continue to write the narrative of the city of music, and which new models of musical conviviality it will be possible to develop. Mendelssohn's cosmopolitan outlook and commitment to education and training are very clearly-defined milestones that we can now shape so that they conform to our own cultural expectations. This raises the central question of the relevance of traditions in a global, high-tech world, where highly individualised media offerings are available and everyone is able to piece together his own musical lifestyle. Yet the existence of so-called social networks signals a profound need to exchange information and seek guidance – not so much with reference to what is genuinely surprising, but rather with reference to what is familiar. If music is presenting itself as a medium that allows us to work our way through various life-enhancing gradations of the familiar, then this would undoubtedly be the sort of concept to which Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy could ascribe. But as for being ambitious in our endeavours to make this a reality against the background of a media and event society: well, that's our responsibility.

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Klotz

Chair in Systematic Musicology, Managing Director of the Institute of Musicology at the University of Leipzig

## *Japanese Visitors in the Mendelssohn Museum*

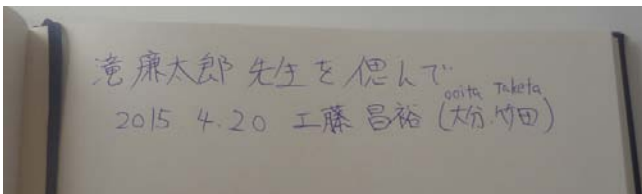
Not only lovers of music in Japan but athletes from that country as well know the Mendelssohn House:

In April Masahiro Kudo from Taketa came to Leipzig to take part in the city marathon on April 19. The long journey was obviously more than worth it, because he finished with a personal record.

The next day Kudo followed in the footsteps of the Japanese composer Rentaro Taki, who is highly estimated in his native country. A monument was erected for Rentaro Taki in Leipzig, initiated by Dr. Kazoi Watanabe from Yokohama and the Mendelssohn Foundation. Masahiro Kudo's tour also included the Mendelssohn House, where he was welcomed and given a tour by the museum director Jürgen Ernst. Awestruck and deeply moved by the historical ambience Kudo also enjoyed the practical approach of Mendelssohn's music in the so-called Effectorium, where he conducted the *Midsummer Night's Dream* by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy with great enthusiasm, as well as browsing the media centre with the digital library and various recordings of Mendelssohn's works.

Being an admirer of the Mendelssohn Rose, a present to the Rentaro Taki House in Taketa by Dr. Kazoi Watanabe, that he already knew from a visit to the Rentaro Taki House Garden, he certainly paid a visit to its "sister" in the Garden at the Mendelssohn House.

Masahiro Kudo also conveyed regards from the Mayor of Rentaro Taki's hometown Taketa. Leipzig and Taketa have established a lively friendship and exchange throughout the years.



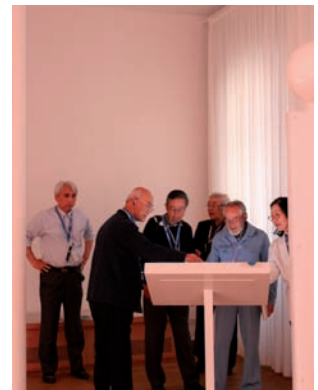
18 May, 2015 brought further visitors from Japan: The German-Japanese Society Tokio visited Leipzig and the Mendelssohn House. Director Jürgen Ernst gave the excited guests a warm welcome and a guided tour of the museum.

The visitors were thirsty for knowledge and asked many questions about the composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and his family, about Leipzig and its cultural and musical development in the 19th century as well as today's music scene of the city.

In the new modern part of the museum the group spent a great amount of their time informing themselves about the history of the Leipzig Gewandhaus and about Mendelssohn's music in the media centre as well as in the Effectorium.

The group was likewise interested in the history of the Mendelssohn House, its rescue from the wrecking ball, its renovation and becoming a museum with the support of many Japanese lovers of music.

Finally the sweet sorrow of parting was unavoidable once more. But unfortunately the schedule of the guests was tight and – promising to visit again – our new friends left.





*Leipziger Romantik* is the title of a new music festival, held in May for the first time in this musical city. To assure the enormous success of only the first round, the *Leipziger Romantik* ought to be held annually in the future. This is, in accordance with many, the wish of Leipzig's Mayor Burkhard Jung. In his greeting he mentioned "Leipzig as a vivid centre of major publishing houses, music journalism and modern instrument making ..." He furthermore spoke of a committed middle class; its foundations, initiative and decisiveness were and are the driving force without which our city, the product of creativity, pride and an open mind, would never have acquired

its glory. Leipzig's 1000th birthday in 2015 is the most welcome reason to remember this.

Yet why should Leipzig provide still more concerts than it already does? To make it short: The 19th century has brought forth - based on the work of many important composers and musicians and on a long musical tradition - a music culture at a very high level. The festival's aim is to illustrate this cultural progress more vividly with different kinds of events like concerts, lectures, exhibitions, as well as city tours and many other exciting events.

This year Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's two well-known oratorios "St. Paul", and "Elijah" were performed in St. Thomas' Church and in the Reformed Church in Leipzig. Other events were, for instance, a musical salon on the theme *Sound of the times*, a concert with music by Edvard Grieg and other Norwegian composers who had studied in Leipzig, a lecture on Leipzig Citizens and their influence on the musical life in Leipzig, and a field trip concerned with the interesting connection between patronage and industrial architecture.

The Mendelssohn House was certainly involved in the new festival hosting the press conference and the concert *Leipzig and the Romantic period* with works for chamber music by the composers Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Ferdinand David, Robert Schumann and Niels W. Gade on 17 May 2015.

In the sold-out music salon Editha Konwitschny (violin) and Michael Seewann (piano) elated the audience with their sensitive and fascinating interpretations. The duo harmonised perfectly and so the audience clapped enthusiastically.

We are already looking forward to the sequel of the multi-

farious festival in 2016 to show more facets of Leipzig as a musical city in the Romantic period.

Besides the Mendelssohn House, further important Leipzig institutions are involved: City of Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsmusik, Leipziger Geschichtsverein, Grieg Association, Schumann Association and Richard-Wagner-Society Leipzig.

We would also like to thank all supporters and sponsors.



Illustrations  
Top: Listening to the rehearsal one could hear the clear and intensive interaction of the two outstanding musicians

Bottom: Editha Konwitschny (violin) and Michael Seewann (piano) after the concert in the Mendelssohn House; it was not possible for them to leave the music salon without several encores.



## *Leipzig Piano Summer*

Summer is here, and it won't be long before music lovers from around the world go on holiday. Leipzig is right at the top of many tourists' list of destinations thanks to its musical heritage, but in summer there is a relative dearth of music in the city compared with what we are accustomed to between October and June. That is why the piano recitals at the Mendelssohn House every Sunday in August, which offer an excellent overview of piano literature from the Baroque to the Romantic, are always so very entertaining. Word has got around about these superb and impressive opportunities to encounter excellent musicians in informal surroundings, with the result that increasing numbers of visitors are attending the Sunday concerts during the Leipzig Piano Summer.

The following pianists have finalised programmes to delight their audiences; some have already made a name for themselves and won multiple awards, while other talented performers are just starting out:

2 August, 11 am

Inaugural concert

Yoonji Kim, Hanover, performs works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Robert Schumann

This concert will be held in association with the Euro Music Festival. And music lovers with young children don't have to miss out: we will be providing a fun crèche for the kids from 10 am to 12.30 pm while their parents attend a concert or visit the museum

9 August, 11 am

Pervez Mody, Stuttgart, offers us his personal selection of works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Frédéric Chopin and Alexander Scriabin

16 August, 11 am

Piano duo Liene & Andreas Henkel, Dresden, make their first guest appearance at the Mendelssohn House, where they will perform works for four hands by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Bedřich Smetana and others

23 August, 11 am

Michael Hein, Dresden, returns to the Mendelssohn House and plays works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy and others

30 August, 11 am

The closing concert sees Roman Salyutov, Cologne, perform for the first time at the Mendelssohn House with his interpretation of works by Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann and Carl Maria von Weber

Booking has now opened. Contact: [ims@mendelssohnstiftung.de](mailto:ims@mendelssohnstiftung.de).

## *Mendelssohn Festival*

The selection of *Mendelssohn and Mozart* as the theme for the Mendelssohn Festival has thrilled music lovers, promising as it does beguiling diversity and a varied programme, not only of concerts, but also of guided tours and lectures.

The Mendelssohn Festival has been attracting audiences to Leipzig since 1997, making it the city's oldest music festival. Large and small institutions alike participate in organising the festival, although the Mendelssohn House and the Leipzig Gewandhaus with its celebrated Gewandhaus Orchestra are hardy perennials.

This year, three chamber concerts are to be held at the Mendelssohn House; there will also be a concert talk in the summerhouse and guided city walks following in the footsteps of Mendelssohn.

The prize-winners' concert at 3 pm on 19 September, at which the winners of the Jugend musiziert competition for young musicians and of the Mendelssohn competition of the Main-Taunus District, which is held slightly later in the music calendar, are able to introduce themselves, is now a regular fixture on the festival programme; the audience never fails to be delighted by the astonishing talent of the young musicians, none of whom is older than 17.

This is followed at 11 am on 20 September by a concert featuring the prodigious members of the Mendelssohn Quartet (Gunnar Harms and Anna Schuberth-Richwien - violin, Larissa Petersen - viola, Susanne Rassbach - cello) and their guest, Immo Schaar on viola. They will be performing quintets and a quartet by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

At 4 pm on 26 September, there will be another special event which no aficionado of Mendelssohn will want to miss: Oedipus at Colonus – Sophocles and Mendelssohn.

This is to be a concert talk by Prof Hellmut Flashar, an outstanding authority on both Greek drama and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's treatment of its themes. The talk will feature musical interludes with extracts from Mendelssohn's theatrical music in an arrangement for male choir and piano.

At 11 am on 27 September, visitors are cordially invited to our matinée of Lieder featuring Verena Küllmer, soprano, and Stephan Gogolka, piano. The two virtuoso musicians will perform a programme of Lieder and piano works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

The events at the Mendelssohn House are almost sold out, but anyone keen to experience the Mendelssohn Festival in Leipzig at some time over their summer holidays can easily find out more about the complete programme of events, ticket prices, and the waiting list for remaining tickets at our website:

[www.mendelssohn-haus.de](http://www.mendelssohn-haus.de)

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*Recitals and reflections*

The annual concert of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation was scheduled to take place on 24 March 2015 at the Hôtel de Beauharnais in Paris, the official residence of the German ambassador. The final touches had been put in place for the festive occasion. Sadly, it was to prove a horrific day, although it began harmlessly enough: on its flight from Barcelona to Düsseldorf, an Airbus A320 operated by Germanwings crashed in the department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence in southern France. All 150 people on board lost their lives. Naturally, it was out of the question to stage the concert, because the embassy staff had to rush to the crash site to offer their assistance to the French authorities.

It was only thanks to the extraordinary thoughtfulness and consideration of the ambassador, Dr Susanne Wasum-Rainer, that it was possible to reschedule the concert in Paris; soon, the revised date of 4 May 2015 was earmarked for the occasion.

Burkhard Jung, who is Leipzig's Mayor as well as the Chairman of the Board of the Foundation, set off for a second time with executive board member Jürgen Ernst to attend the concert in Paris.

In her insightful welcoming address at the imposing Hôtel de Beauharnais, the ambassador spoke movingly about the events that had caused the concert to be postponed: she thanked the many volunteers and the courageous members of the emergency services, and her words resonated with every single member of the audience. But Dr Wasum-Rainer also referred to the healing and comforting power of music. The Foundation's longstanding representative in Paris, Mrs Ulrike Krill de Capello, had – as ever – done an excellent job in organising the event, and was once again able to engage some outstanding artistes. Lise Berthaud (viola) and Adam Laloum (piano) performed works featuring different aspects of romance: Robert Schumann's *Fairy Tales*, op. 113, was followed by Johannes Brahms' *Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2 in E-flat major*, op. 120, before the concert culminated in a selection of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's *Songs Without Words* in an arrangement for viola and piano. The young musicians took the audience with them on a journey of exploration to the magical soundscapes they had created with their accomplished interpretations.

Leipzig's Mayor Burkhard Jung thanked the German ambassador for her renewed offer of hospitality, which she could have been forgiven for withholding in the light of recent events, and expressed his gratitude to everyone who had been keen to support the aims of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation in the interests of the common good, even under difficult circumstances. He also singled out some of the audience members, namely Mrs Ulrike Krill de Capello and Wolfgang Krill de Capello, for the outstanding commitment they had shown in organising the recital.



Illustrations:

Top: Dr Susanne Wasum-Rainer, the German ambassador in Paris, delivers her thoughtful address at the memorable concert in the Hôtel de Beauharnais.

Centre: Leipzig's Mayor Burkhard Jung, Chairman of the Board of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation, thanks the ambassador and the assembled guests for their support, the artistes for being so accommodating about the postponement, and Mrs Ulrike Krill de Capello and Wolfgang Krill de Capello for the incredibly hard work involved when, at very short notice, it was decided to re-stage the concert after all at the embassy's invitation.

Bottom: The young musicians Lise Berthaud (viola) and Adam Laloum (piano), who inspired an atmosphere of reverie in the audience.



## *Mendelssohn Friends UK and new activities*

In 2015 the UK Friends of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation (UKFFMBF) have continued their charitable work to support young musicians, “in the spirit of Mendelssohn”.

In March the internationally acclaimed pianist Leslie Howard gave a fund-raising recital of works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Robert Schumann in the home of trustees Desmond and Ruth Cecil. The enthusiastic audience listened spellbound to brilliant performances of Schumann’s *Faschingswank aus Wien* op. 26 and *Arabeske* op. 18, Mendelssohn’s *Andante con Variazioni* B-major MWV U 159 and a selection of *Songs without Words* by the same composer – followed by supper for all.

This was followed in May 2015 by another fund-raising concert by the distinguished Maggini Quartet giving outstanding performances of Mozart Quartet K. 428 and Brahms Quartet op. 51, no. 2. This took place in the historic Hampton Court House, which was built in 1757 by the Earl of Halifax for his mistress, the well-known singer Anna Maria Donaldson. In the interval the musicians joined the audience for conviviality over wine and cheese, provided by trustees Megan and Tom Tress, Ruth and Desmond Cecil.

For both concerts the star professional musicians very generously reduced or waived their fees, to enable the UK Friends of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation to raise additional charitable funds.

So far in 2015 the UK Friends have made a donation to the Multi-Storey charity, which encourages appreciation of classical music for many children of all backgrounds through open concerts in a multi-storey car-park in South London.



Illustrations

Top: Hampton Court House in a bucolic and peaceful landscape

Centre: Pianist Leslie Howard, working together with the UK Friends for their aims for many years

Bottom: Maggini Quartet and its members – Julian Leaper (violin), David Angel (violin), Martin Outram (viola) and Michal Kaznowski (cello)

In June the trustees were guests at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London for the London Philharmonic Orchestra’s (LPO) “Debut Sounds” Concert. The UKFFMBF was one of the sponsors of world premieres of works by four as yet unpublished young composers, Peter Longworth, Jonathan Brigg, Paulina Zalubka and Sergio Cote. The LPO was conducted by their Composer-in-Residence, Magnus Lindberg, who also “mentored” the young composers. An exciting musical evening was followed by a reception with all the musicians.

We are also working with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama,

once more to send an outstanding young singer and pianist to the Leipzig International Mendelssohn Academy Master-Class with Prof. Peter Schreier in September this year – the third successive year in which we have sponsored this wonderful experience for young musicians to visit the music city of Leipzig.

The UK Friends of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation is planning further events in 2015 to support young musicians “in the spirit of Mendelssohn” – to be reported in the next NEWSLETTER.

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## *The Mendelssohn Academy and its master classes, 2015*

*31 August – 3 September*

It will soon be that time of year again when the International Mendelssohn Academy in Leipzig welcomes its students and scholarship-winners for 2015. Three courses are being offered this year: setting the musical ball rolling will be the master class presented by Kammersänger Prof. Peter Schreier, for which applications are flooding in. Young vocalists from many countries have already registered their interest. The selection procedure is due for completion by the end of July.

Once again, its theme will be the interpretation of Lieder by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Robert Schumann. Since the classes are held in public and visitors are allowed to attend, music lovers are more than welcome to turn up at the summerhouse (the chamber music room) of the Mendelssohn House to study at close quarters this accomplished singer's method of working with his young colleagues, which involves a high level of concentration and extreme attention to detail.

As in previous years, the final concert at 7.30 pm on 3 September in the Mendelssohn Hall at the Gewandhaus can be attended free of charge. This touchstone of the students' hard work is always a very festive occasion, because the vocalists confidently put into practice all that they have learned.



*2 – 4 September*

Every year, the master classes offered by Prof. Kurt Masur attract plenty of interested music-lovers to Leipzig. In 2015, the active participants in the conducting course under the Maestro's rigorous direction are four scholarship-winners from the International Mendelssohn Academy in Leipzig, which is once again working in partnership with the Leipzig Symphony Orchestra, the American Friends, and the Japanese Mendelssohn Friends.

In addition, up to twenty passive participants from many countries will be permitted to attend; they will undoubtedly pick up lots of tips by watching and listening.

This year, works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart will be on the programme, thereby anticipating the theme of the forthcoming Mendelssohn Festival, which is to be held from 18 to 27 September.

The classes will be held in public at the Mendelssohn Hall of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig; the same venue has been chosen for the closing concert at 7 pm on 4 September, when the scholarship-winners are to conduct the Leipzig Symphony Orchestra.

Tickets are available for Euro 15 (Euro 12 concessions).

Stadt- und Kreissparkasse Leipzig is among the sponsors of the Mendelssohn Academy this year.

For additional information about the classes, visit:

[www.mendelssohn-stiftung.de](http://www.mendelssohn-stiftung.de)

(Master classes of the International Mendelssohn Academy Leipzig) or call us on: +49 341 1270 294.



*9 – 11 October*



Another course for conductors will be taught by Georg-Christoph Sandmann in October, but this time will be aimed squarely at choirmasters and choral directors working primarily in the semi-professional sphere or with amateur choirs.

This year they will be working on Part I of Joseph Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* (Hob. XXI:2). So many applications have been received for this course that we are trying to fit in an additional weekend. This just goes to show the high level of demand among trained choral directors for an opportunity like this to increase their confidence in their practical work, among other things. And it demonstrates how keen choirmasters of amateur ensembles are to acquire the appropriate conducting techniques. That is basically the whole raison d'être of the course – to impart knowledge that builds on practical experience to improve the quality of performances, rehearsal techniques and the preparation of works; understanding the inspiration behind them, controlling and, if necessary, improving one's baton technique, and tackling associated problems such as the upbeat, pauses, the conducting of recitatives, and changes of time and tempo; adapting scores, the importance of understanding the context of the piece, theoretical aspects and practical implementation, as well as having the chance to discuss one's experiences with one's peers: all valid reasons why many of the participants have already applied many times in the past. – Why not come and watch?



## Homepage/Facebook

The profile of the Mendelssohn House has definitely been on the rise since 2012, when it made its first post on Facebook. And it has become apparent that people are using all sorts of sources for their information; traditional newsprint is just as much in demand as Facebook articles or the latest snippets on our website. No form of media should be neglected. That is why we issue press releases to mark important events, but also to cover everything that's going on at the House, and that is why there are regular updates, major and minor modifications, and new ideas to be discovered on our website. But the exchange of information on Facebook is particularly fast-paced – it's a wonderful medium to use if we want to show how beautiful the garden is looking around the Mendelssohn House throughout the changing seasons, for instance, and to discuss details of the work of the museum, as well as concerts, exhibitions, master classes and other events.

Until June, our most popular representative on Facebook was in fact Franz the cat, probably the most frequently photographed museum cat in Germany, and a star of the internet and the newspaper, whose engaging little tales and observations were greatly appreciated by Mendelssohn fans of all ages. Sadly, Franz's voice has now been silenced for ever, and he will be unable to tell us any more stories. But we will still remain loyal to Facebook, and hope to be able to continue bringing information and announcements to people around the world even without the help of our intelligent, dearly loved friend.

So please maintain the level of goodwill and thirst for knowledge with which our regular reports from the Mendelssohn House have been greeted in the past.

And we will welcome any ideas you may have, or improvements you can suggest!

## MDR visits the Mendelssohn House

There is a direct and really quite surprising tie-in between the appearance of, say, a museum in the media – irrespective of whether one is talking about the print media, radio or TV – and the upsurge in the number of visitors it attracts. We see evidence of this again and again in our everyday lives, which just goes to show that advertising does help!

The Mendelssohn House is currently reaping the rewards of an MDR feature which appeared on *Wir um vier*, a programme broadcast from four o'clock in the afternoon: the very popular presenter Anja Koebel came to the museum with her cameraman to find out more about the Effectorium, learned about the purpose of the facility and the details of how it was used, and basically just had fun trying her hand at conducting. The feature was broadcast on Thursday, 30th April, and the museum was so full during its opening hours on the following weekend that three staff members were kept busy non-stop selling entrance tickets, souvenirs and coffee, and the Effectorium was packed. Articles in the local press have had a similar effect.

And because we were so delighted with our collaboration with MDR, we were only too happy to answer the cameraman's technical questions and initiate him into the great and complex secrets of the Effectorium – behind the scenes of the museum. We wouldn't want to deprive you of such a pleasure either! The cover photo and the other illustrations speaking volumes...

Photos: Anja Koebel (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk) in the Effectorium and many details of the Effectorium controls (see also cover photo)



*Special exhibitions*

When the museum at the Mendelssohn House was extended, a room designed for special exhibitions was created in the summerhouse; with its daylight ceiling, it provides excellent conditions for displaying paintings and graphic art in particular.

The highly acclaimed exhibition entitled 'Felix without words: Christl Maria Göthner - lithographs and woodcuts on Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy' opened on 5 March, and will continue until 31 July 2015. You are cordially invited to view these powerful and expressive works, which can be seen every day between 10 am and 6 pm.

From 12 September 2015, we are repeating the extremely successful exhibition, 'Blood and spirit – Bach, Mendelssohn and their music in the Third Reich' by popular request. Visitors to our museum in Leipzig will be able to encounter this very affecting subject face-to-face until 28 March 2016. It is not for nothing that the exhibition is being shown for a second time.

After that, the next special exhibition is scheduled to be held from 11 June to 30 September 2016; it will once again feature paintings on the theme of Mendelssohn, but for the first time there will also be sculpture. This means it will be open throughout both the Bach Festival and the Mendelssohn Festival next year.

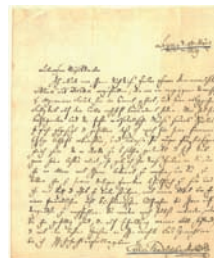
The French artist Michel Rosset from Paris will present us with his very personal thoughts on Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's music, life and travels at this exhibition. If you come to the preview event, there will of course be a concert to accompany it! Please join us at 3 pm on 11 June 2016 in the summerhouse at the Mendelssohn House; the recital will be performed by the well-known pianist Kyle Alexandre Faugerat, also from Paris.

*Promenade concert*

Friends of the Mendelssohn House will already be familiar with the delightful tradition of holding summer gala concerts at St Mary's Church in Rötha near Leipzig, which now dates back several years. Every June, a great deal of thought goes into planning an interesting programme for the day, which never fails to attract music lovers keen to follow in the footsteps of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in this tranquil little town with its two Silbermann organs.

This year, the central theme of idyllic rural life and the veneration of nature was given a musical interpretation on the very two organs played by Mendelssohn during his convivial outing to the country on 20 June 1840; not only have they survived to the present day, but they have also been expertly restored in the meantime. Indeed, this restoration was funded in part from the proceeds of concerts held in previous years.

This country outing ambience informed the idea for a promenade concert, with the first segment being held in St. Mary's Church, followed by a second segment in St. George's Church, Rötha. After a few words of introduction by the Director of the Mendelssohn House, Jürgen Ernst, who spoke about Mendelssohn's love of nature and how it was echoed in his music, the Leipzig organist Christiane Bräutigam performed a repertoire appropriate to the theme of the day on the two Silbermann organs. In a rich variety of timbres, the audience heard a succession of rural themes unfold – morning yielded to a dulcet forenoon, sunlight shimmered and memories from a distant time were evoked; the naves of the churches resonated with shifting sounds, from the peals of midday through the afternoon to dusk. The audience was visibly delighted with the programme, and the concept of creating an idyll with words, music and a short promenade, proved a success. Mendelssohn, too, would undoubtedly have enjoyed this afternoon 'in the country' very much indeed.

*Acquisition of a letter*

The Mendelssohn House is now richer by an original letter from the composer's own hand!

Late last year, the joint heirs of an estate offered the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation a letter written by Mendelssohn to Simon Georg Schmidt, the musical director and leader of the Halle Singakademie. Dated 9 March 1839, it is a letter of recommendation for the cellist Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Schlick, who had performed as a soloist for Mendelssohn two days earlier at a subscription concert in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and who had clearly made a big impression.

Thanks to funding from the International Society for the Promotion of the Mendelssohn House, it has now been possible to purchase this two-page letter, which is in an excellent condition. This means that the constantly growing collection at the Mendelssohn House now contains two letters written on the same day by the former musical director of the Gewandhaus. The first letter bearing this date was donated to the Mendelssohn House in 1999 by a benefactor in Japan, and was written by the composer to his publisher, Friese.

We know nearly 5000 letters penned by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy; these shed light on his rich social life, but also on his dedication to his work.

It would seem that 9 March 1839 was a convenient day for Mendelssohn to catch up on his extensive correspondence.

## *Members' activities*

One issue that has already been addressed at the members' AGM is that the life of the association has been virtually moribund of late. That is why the Board invited members to a number of activities in the spring of 2015, including a talk on the progress made and difficulties encountered in digitising the Mendelssohn House's collection of first and early editions. The talk could have provided an extremely interesting insight into the work of the archive and could also have explained how material is captured in digital form. Juliane Baumgart-Streibert, who is in charge of digitising the collection of first editions of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's works, is adept at giving a wide-ranging and thought-provoking account of what one might have assumed to be rather dry subject matter. The work she is involved in is so stimulating and diverse that one could easily spend two or three evenings listening to her accounts.

One of the other topics raised was the greater use of colour and the development of ornamentation and motifs in the 19th century, which was to be explored in association with an embroidery course led by Mrs Brigitte Richter. This was inspired by a desire not just to pass on knowledge of an old craft and teach members the necessary skills, but also to encourage members of the association and staff at the Mendelssohn House to attract the younger generation to this art-form, for instance within the family or at children's events in the Mendelssohn House. Knitting and embroidery, crocheting, and even complicated lace-making have once again become fashionable leisure pursuits, and not just for housewives; even men are starting to show an interest.

Sadly, the members did not take advantage of these opportunities; no-one turned up at the lecture, and only a few female members of staff from the Mendelssohn House attended the embroidery course.

That is one reason why an appeal was made at the members' AGM to consider another trip, which members are welcome to organise with the assistance of the Mendelssohn House.

Meanwhile, why not try one of our autumn events? Entry is free for members.

The Mendelssohn House will be contributing two events to the 19th Leipzig Literary Autumn from 20 to 27 October 2015, one of whose themes will be French music and literature.

At 6 pm on 23 October, Irina Kruppke (mezzosoprano) and Paul Wenger (piano) will be performing an entertainingly hosted programme of Edith Piaf's music.

At 5 pm on 24 October 2015, you are invited to join us in the music salon as Christiane Schmidt and Hagen Kunze discuss Mendelssohn's connection with Leipzig. Both authors have spoken before about the composer's life and work in this musical city; the conversation will be compered by Jürgen Ernst.

## *Mendelssohn's organ music*

The Mendelssohn House is constantly receiving all sorts of correspondence – in letter form, as a Facebook post, or by email – containing all sorts of different information about musical experiences, reports of trips to sites associated with Mendelssohn, concert announcements and so on. Sometimes we come across very moving stories that the sender felt an urgent need to communicate.

Shortly before this newsletter was published, the editors were sent the following message by Mr Gerd Prengel.

“While I was cycling past a church on a tour of Darmstadt last weekend, I heard someone playing organ music inside. Curious, I entered the church and heard a performance of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's sixth organ sonata [Sonata No. 6 in D minor, op. 65, BWV W 61, Ed.], which was completely unfamiliar to me, despite my being an ardent exponent of Mendelssohn's work. I was so profoundly moved by the final Andante that I was immediately seized with the desire to hear it in an orchestral arrangement! What a gem, and yet so little known! That is why this afternoon I wrote an adaptation for orchestra; I send it to you with my best regards, and hope it will bring you some pleasure.

It is a hobby of mine to convert some of the piano sonatas of Mozart (KV 457), Beethoven (opp. 109 to 111) and Schubert (D 784) into 'symphonies' in this way, making these magnificent works accessible to me as if for the first time, in a new guise and with fresh colours – an experience that brings me genuine delight ...”

What an astonishing outcome to arise from a chance encounter with Mendelssohn's organ music! If you would like to listen to the results for yourself, follow the links below to the music and score:

[www.gerdprengel.de/Mendelssohn\\_OrganSon6\\_Finale\\_orch.mp3](http://www.gerdprengel.de/Mendelssohn_OrganSon6_Finale_orch.mp3) (audio)

[www.gerdprengel.de/Mendelssohn\\_OrganSon6\\_Finale\\_orch.pdf](http://www.gerdprengel.de/Mendelssohn_OrganSon6_Finale_orch.pdf) (score)



### *7th Museum Night 2015 in Halle & Leipzig – Mind movies*

Dusk was slowly falling, and darkness was creeping gradually over the city: indication enough that no ordinary night lay ahead.

For that Saturday evening – 25 April, to be exact – not only did one light after another come on in the city: a little cinema house was also created in the minds of the expectant visitors. This year's Museum Night had the theme of 'mind movies', and a total of 86 museums, galleries, collections and historic monuments in Leipzig and Halle invited the public to embark on a journey of discovery of a very special kind.

The Mendelssohn House in Leipzig was fantastically well equipped for this, with its famous and universally popular Effectorium. Because where else could you conjure up such a true-to-life imagining of an orchestra and its conductor, through a combination of sound and space, technology and interactivity? And with Mendelssohn's music playing in one's ears, one could find oneself transported through the rugged Hebrides or to the fantasy world of a Midsummer Night's Dream.

Thus the first event on the evening's programme gave visitors a brief introduction to this room with all its effects and possibilities, and it wasn't just children or lovers of Mendelssohn who got a buzz from wielding the baton and finding that the orchestra actually picked up the pace, or that the choir sang its closing bars in a pensive mood. The second part of the programme was this year entrusted to the capable hands of Annemarie Reichenbach and Nico Ahnert, volunteers from the Federal Volunteer Service, and consisted of half-hourly sessions in the music salon, which had been laid out especially with this evening in mind. The staff at the Mendelssohn House felt it was particularly important to ensure that this trip to the museum was not

only entertaining, but that the mine of information awaiting visitors that night included something about the life and work of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

Many of the guests were brave enough to answer five questions in the form of a short quiz in the music salon. This fun, interactive quiz was not only set against the background of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words on the piano, but also among pictures on easels depicting either the composer, a contemporary instrument, or drawings by Mendelssohn himself. In each case, these were accompanied by a light-hearted teaser, which the visitors ventured to answer, often correctly. They had particular fun solving a rebus by the great man himself, which astonished them with its creativity but also its logic, and caused more than a few to exclaim, "What else was Felix good at?!" Afterwards, the winners were rewarded with a token prize, but everyone came away with a few new nuggets of information.

This year's Museum Night proved once again that even late at night, when everyone else is asleep, the only original rooms to be inhabited by the composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy that still exist today continue to create an atmosphere that encourages young and old alike to find inspiration and pleasure in music and life.



## *Children's festival at the Mendelssohn House*

The children's music festival at 'Mendelssohn's house' on 27 June created joyful memories of a delightful day. Tasti and Clavi, who are familiar characters at 'Mendel's son's house', welcomed the impatient children and their parents to the opening concert, which got everything off to a fun start! About 400 visitors were welcomed to the children's festival at the Mendelssohn House over the course of the day, and everyone enjoyed the many different activities on offer, such as the Musical Miniatures and the Sound Terrace; the children built instruments in the carriage house, had a go on the Walking Piano, and

visited the listening area/Effectorium in the museum.

With games, quizzes and puzzles, refreshments, introductions to various instruments and plenty of opportunities to get hands-on, join in and make discoveries, this entertaining and inspiring day was over far too quickly! The family concert that closed the festival saw happy children with shining eyes and red cheeks clapping along and singing enthusiastically.

The event was made possible thanks in large part to the generous support of the Leipzig hilft Kindern foundation, to which we extend our sincere gratitude!



## *Summer gala concert by Live Music Now Leipzig*



Illustrations

Top: Gisela von Keyserlingk, Deputy Chair of LMN Leipzig, welcomes guests in the summerhouse

Bottom: Jürgen Ernst, Director of the Mendelssohn House, delivers the welcome address at LMN's anniversary concert



On 21 June, Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Leipzig (LMN) hosted a jubilee concert in the summerhouse at the Mendelssohn House to celebrate the association's fifth anniversary. 'Enjoy music while doing good!' was the unofficial motto of the afternoon, which featured scholarship-holders from LMN Leipzig performing works by Franz Schubert, Niccolò Paganini/Pavel Netcheporenko, César Franck and Johannes Brahms. The young musicians (Kwang-Yun Chi, baritone, Hannah Burchardt, violin, Madin Ogunlade, balalaika, Madoka Ito, piano, Eun-Jung Son, piano, and their guests: Friederike von Oppeln-Bronikowski, clarinet, and Vita Kan, piano) once again demonstrated their incredible talent, which is usually exhibited at the small-scale hosted concerts that they perform for LMN at hospitals, homes for the disabled, nursing homes and even prisons: in short, places where people who are no

longer mobile are able to obtain great pleasure from and be re-energised by their exposure to music. The proceeds from the concert will benefit the organisation's social projects.

The close links between LMN and the Mendelssohn House were established on 20 November 2010: the day on which LMN was launched in Leipzig. Since then, four other benefit concerts and five concerts by scholarship holders have been held at the Mendelssohn House to support the work of LMN.



### *Educational activities inside and outside the museum walls*

The museum organises a large number of educational activities for visitors to the Mendelssohn House, including an exhibition catering for modern tastes, the Sunday recitals, the monthly Treffpunkt Salon, the Mendelssohn tour of Leipzig, that takes place every Saturday, 'Mendelssohn mornings' that complement the school curriculum, and project days and activities during the holidays for children and young people, as well as trying many other interesting approaches that feature regularly in our newsletters: evening events for music scholars in Leipzig and elsewhere in Germany, guided walks for the pupils of elite music schools in Russia, China and Britain, support for choirs and orchestras – not to mention themed tours for music societies and branches of the *Goethe-Institut* from around the world.

Of course, this list is by no means exhaustive, but it will certainly give you an impression of the many, varied and interesting ways in which we engage with our guests.

There are also exhibitions, concerts and lectures, and not just at the Mendelssohn House itself: the staff have been deployed as musical ambassadors from Asia to America and in many parts of Europe. New concepts, some specifically designed for children, are now to complement the considerable range of educational activities organised outside the walls of the museum.

#### *Parisian hospitality*

On 11 February 2015, the pupils in classes 1 to 5 of the Ecole Croix-Bosset in Sèvres near Paris welcomed a visitor from the Mendelssohn House in Leipzig. In the German section of the school, the newly-opened (2014) and ultra-modern museum displayed exhibits illustrating the rich musical history of the city of Leipzig.

An entire morning was devoted to the celebrated Leipzig composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. In three different sessions led by Anna-Barbara Schmidt, the children explored the sketches and watercolours that Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy prepared on his travels, but also – naturally enough – the music and work of the composer, whose ideas and reforms proved highly influential in the city of Leipzig. The boys and girls were able to learn a little more about the world in which Mendelssohn lived as they enjoyed taking part in 19th century singing and action games.

To learn more about Mendelssohn and his work as a conductor, the children were able to try out conducting for themselves under expert guidance; they were also able to rehearse the choreography of the rustic dance from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [op. 61, MWV M 13], naturally to the accompaniment of the composer's own music.

Some of the teachers, including headmistress Sabine Ide-Mallon and German teacher Christine Scholtz, were interested spectators at the sessions. Both pupils and staff alike regarded this unusual and highly informative morning as a full-on experience. And some of them have promised to visit the musical city of Leipzig during their upcoming holidays. If they do, they will undoubtedly visit the museum at the Mendelssohn House to see the composer's Leipzig home for themselves.



## Some information about the International Mendelssohn House Association



### *New members of the Mendelssohn House Association until July 2015*

- » Frau Doris Benner, Deutschland
- » Frau Barbara und Herr Jörg Zumbaum, Deutschland

A very warm welcome to you! We are looking forward to work together with you.

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### *Many thanks to all our members of the association,*

who have provided their support for the objectives of the Mendelssohn House:

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- » Jürgen Ernst (Schatzmeister), Leipzig.



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The cover shows the complicated insides of the electronic control unit of our virtual orchestra; the computer-operated system processes data and transfers it into the Effectorium in the Mendelssohn House via metres of cable.

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