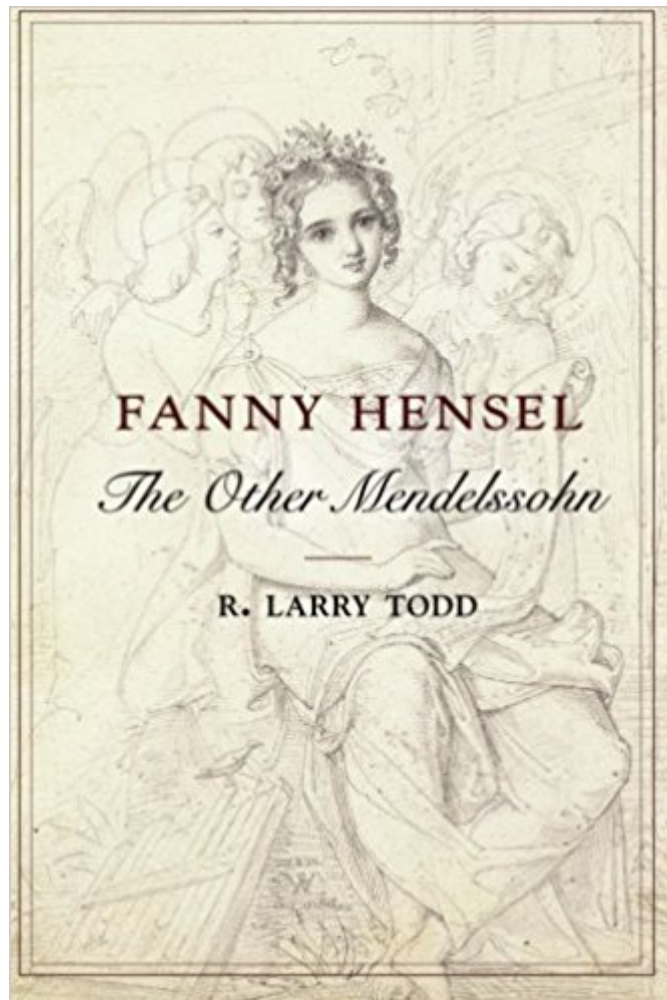




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Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn



Synopsis

Granddaughter of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn and sister of the composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Fanny Hensel (1805-1847) was an extraordinary musician who left well over four hundred compositions, most of which fell into oblivion until their rediscovery late in the twentieth century. In *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn*, R. Larry Todd offers a compelling, authoritative account of Hensel's life and music, and her struggle to emerge as a publicly recognized composer.

Book Information

Paperback: 456 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reprint edition (March 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 019936639X

ISBN-13: 978-0199366392

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 1.2 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #135,986 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Classical](#) #300 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Classical](#) #1747 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Women](#)

Customer Reviews

"An authoritative new biography." --Forward.com "Todd's exhaustively researched and engaging biography will probably remain the authoritative source into the foreseeable future. It has helped to lift the 'curtain of silence' that kept Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's works in the dark for well over a century." --Chamber Music "At last--an authoritative account of Hensel's life and music. Todd accords Hensel the creative recognition that is long overdue, and builds on his Mendelssohnian expertise to trace the mutually influential relationship between Fanny and Felix. A scholarly tour de force!" --Marcia J. Citron, Author of *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993) and Editor of *Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn* (1987) "The author of an acclaimed biography of Felix Mendelssohn, R. Larry Todd has now written what will surely be the authoritative life-and-works study of Fanny Hensel for a long time to come. With his superb insights into the workings of her music, he brings her out of her brother's shadow and enables her to take her rightful place in the

sun. This book is an event, one that enlarges our picture of a woman, a family, a place, an era, and an important body of music."-Susan Youens, author of *Heinrich Heine and the Lied* (2008) and *Hugo Wolf and his Märchenlike Songs* (2006) "It is hard to believe that once again Larry Todd has made history with scholarship. Close on the heels of his authoritative biography of Felix Mendelssohn, for the first time we have a comprehensive biography of Fanny Mendelssohn. The biography is magisterial and pathbreaking, replete with a useful thematic catalog of Fanny's compositions. This book represents an indispensable piece of social and cultural history concerning German-speaking Europe before 1848."-Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra "This book of many threads is a long awaited, pivotal source for the study of Fanny Hensel and her music...Todd has opened the field wide for advanced study of the musical relationships between the siblings as well as between Fanny and the Schumanns, of the same texts used by Fanny and Franz Schubert or Robert Schumann, and reflections of Fanny's style in Brahms's works (an idea Todd suggests on several occasions). Most important is the opportunity for new studies of Fanny Hensel's genres and stylistic periods. Todd's descriptions and analyses of the music will serve to widen access to this pivotal nineteenth-century composer. What fine and thorough groundwork!" --Notes "[Todd's] contribution to scholarship on Hensel is immeasurable. Todd combines an in-depth discussion of the music with rich biographical information, and through his book we gain a firmer understanding of Hensel as an independent and creative artist." --Journal of the International Alliance of Women in Music "A work of such erudition and fascinating detail, which vividly evokes the Mendelssohns' interactions with one another and with most of the artistic figures of their milieu. Most valuable are the provocative and accessible analyses Todd provides of Fanny's music." --Opera News "Todd shares his view of his biography as a starting point that he hopes will stimulate more performances of and the publication of a complete edition of Hensel's music. Todd's excellent scholarship, engaging writing style, and enthusiasm for his subject should ensure the fulfillment of his hopes." --Fontes Artis Musicae

Recognized in the *New Yorker* as "Mendelssohn's most authoritative biographer," R. Larry Todd is Arts and Sciences Professor at Duke University. A Guggenheim Fellow and Fellow of the National Humanities Center, he is the author of *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, named Best Biography in 2003 by the Association of American Publishers. He has recently returned to his pianist roots and released his first CD, of Mendelssohn's complete cello works, with internationally acclaimed cellist Nancy Green for JRI Recordings.

Great book. Very well done.

I've been a fan of R. Larry Todd's biographic work on the Mendelssohns for quite a while, and this new bio of Felix Mendelssohn's unjustly overlooked sister was marvelous. She was easily as talented as her famous younger brother, and was only less known because she was an upper-class woman, for whom a career as a composer/ conductor/performer wouldn't do. This bio would be excellent for anyone interested in women's studies or music history. Highly recommended.

You will not find here a book truly about Fanny Mendelssohn the person, but about technical musical analysis of her pieces, many of them compared, unfavourably, to other musicians who set music to the same lyrics or otherwise made similar pieces. Her music trajectory is also compared, also unfavourably, to the more talented, "genius", of her brother Felix, thus the title of the book. No gender analysis, no deeper historical research on documents beside music scores that would have further our knowledge of the character. She deserved better.

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