

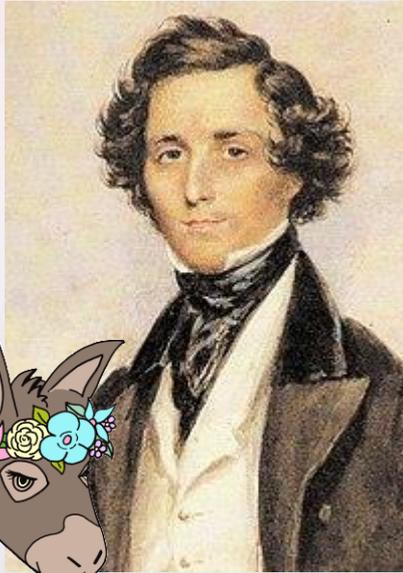
Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 35

Each week ALL our children will be listening to a piece of classical music as part of our music lessons. We'll be talking about it in class and discussing what we like, what we don't like and what it makes us think or feel.

Parents/carers/family - why not join in and listen for yourself at home! All music is available **free** on YouTube as well as paid services such as iTunes and Spotify.

This week's music...



'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by Felix Mendelssohn (1826 and 1843)

'Overture' – [HERE](#)

'Wedding March' - [HERE](#)

Animated section from the 'Scherzo' - [HERE](#)

You might have heard of '**A Midsummer Night's Dream**'. It's one of William Shakespeare's most famous plays. It's a comedy story about fairies, magic and people falling in love – but falling in love with the wrong person!

Why is there a picture of a donkey's head next to the picture of Felix Mendelssohn? Because, in the play, the fairies play a magic trick on one of the characters and turn his head into a donkey's. But then one of the girls in the story falls in love

with him because she's been given a magic love potion! It's quite a confusing story – but it's great fun.

The strange thing about Mendelssohn's music for this story is that he wrote some of it when he was only 17 – and the rest of it another 17 years later – when he was 34!

Why such a big gap? Well, he wrote the '**Overture**' for fun when he was young. (An 'Overture' is usually the music you hear at the beginning of a theatre performance before the curtain goes up and the action starts). His older sister Fanny Mendelssohn was a particularly good piano player and they used to perform concerts together at their house for friends. (Many people think Fanny also helped him write the music – but no-one's really sure).

Then, many years later, when he was a well-known composer, the King of Prussia asked him to write some music to accompany a new performance of the play at the Palace Theatre. This was going to be '**incidental music**', which means it would be played in-between different scenes in the play. So, Felix added some more music to his original Overture.



One of the new pieces he added is now one of his most famous tunes – '**The Wedding March**'. If you've ever been to a wedding yourself there's a good chance you might have heard this played on a church organ as the bride walks down the aisle. It was even played at the wedding of Queen Victoria's daughter when she married the Crown Prince of Prussia in 1858 (Mendelssohn often played piano for Queen Victoria when he used to visit England).



The 'Overture' starts with a very quiet **dynamic** (volume) with simple notes on the flutes (the beginning of the play is set in a forest at night). Then the violins start playing gently but with a very quick **tempo** (speed) – this is supposed to make you think of the fairies and magical creatures flying around the forest.



Suddenly, after about one minute, the orchestra starts to play loudly and this is supposed to make us think of the entrance of the King and Queen of the fairies (Oberon and Titania) who meet in the forest at the beginning of the story.



'The Wedding March' comes near the end of the story when the main characters finally fall in love with the right person and there is a triple wedding!

Listening to the music, you can imagine the actors entering the stage, arm in arm, for their wedding ceremony which ends the play.

Fantastic Felix Facts!

Felix Mendelssohn lived a short life - he died when he was only 38 years old. His sister Fanny had died only 6 months earlier and this had a bad effect on his health. But in those short years he led a very interesting life. Here's six Fun Facts about Felix!



1. When he was young, as well as being a great musician, he was also a fine swimmer, horse rider and billiards (like snooker) player! He could also dance really well, was talented at painting and learned several different languages. However, he was also a little naughty as a boy. He used to climb on roofs at night and miaow like a cat. He also once threw a banana through his neighbour's bedroom window!

2. Felix showed his musical genius at an early age. He performed his first public concert when he was 9, wrote twelve pieces for strings between the ages of 12 and 14, published and sold his first music at 13 and wrote his first symphony at 15!



3. Mendelssohn was famous for always falling asleep whenever he could. Sometimes he would fall asleep so deeply that it took him a few minutes to realise where he was when he woke up! Someone once said about him 'Whenever he saw a couch, he lay down and off he went!'

4. He visited Buckingham Palace and played music for Queen Victoria for her to sing along to. However, she had a parrot which would squawk so loudly when she sang that she couldn't hear herself! She asked Mendelssohn to carry it out of the room so she could carry on in peace and quiet.





5. Mendelssohn's favourite dessert was rice pudding – which he ate for the first time when visiting England!

6. He visited England ten different times and was very popular with English audiences. He once played an organ concert in St. Paul's Cathedral and it was such a success that the audience wouldn't leave the church! The vicar finally had to disconnect the organ in the middle of one of his tunes to make them go away.



Listen & enjoy...

Mr. Mole

Music Teacher

