

Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group  
September 2010

Forthcoming concert at Wycombe Swan



This file contains Mendelssohn Violin Concerto  
and Sibelius *Finlandia*.  
See separate file for Elgar's *Enigma Variations*

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in  
E Minor Op. 64

This Concerto was inspired  
by Mendelssohn's friendship  
with the Concertmaster of  
his orchestra, the famous  
violinist Ferdinand David  
(right).

"I should like to make a  
violin concerto for you next  
winter", he wrote "one in E  
Minor runs through my head  
and is beginning to give me  
no rest"



## Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor Op. 64

With David as soloist, his Violin Concerto met great success at its premier in 1845. Ever since the work's unique fusion of lyricism and virtuosity has made it one of the best loved concertos



## Mendelssohn's violin concerto

The Concerto's three movements are played without pause, a characteristic linking technique of Romantic composers. Mendelssohn's love of balance is reflected in the cooperation and interplay between soloist and orchestra.

Themes pass from one to another, producing a beautiful contrast of tone colour and expression. At one moment, the violinist plays the melody while the orchestra discreetly accompanies, at another the woodwinds present thematic fragments while the soloist has dazzling running passages

## **First Movement: Allegro Molto Appassionato (very Impassioned allegro)**

**Although Mendelssohn was considered a “Classical Romantic” His opening movement departs from the classical form by beginning with the soloist who presents the main theme.**

**The orchestra then expands the theme and introduces a new flowing melody.**

**Towards the end of the bridge the excitement is gradually relaxed to prepare for the second theme a tranquil woodwind melody which the soloist accompanies**

## **The Cadenza**

**The cadenza has a new function in this movement. In Classical concertos it was improvised by the soloist and played near the end of the movement. Here the composer has written it out and placed it at the end of the development section as a transition to the recapitulation. He wanted the cadenza to be an integral part of the movement, not merely tacked on to display the soloists virtuosity**

## **Second Movement: Andante**

**A single bassoon tone links the brilliant opening movement with the hushed introduction to the slow second movement. The C-major Andante is a songlike, intimate piece in ABA form. Its opening section (A) features a warm expansive melody in the solo violin's high register. The middle section (B) becomes more agitated and the accompaniment is rhythmically more active.**

## **Second Movement: Andante (continued)**

**The transition to the concluding 'A' section is very smooth because the trembling accompaniment figure is maintained. The Andante ends quietly with a tender epilogue for solo violin and woodwind**

**Third Movement: Allegretto non troppo  
(transitional section)**

**Allegro Molto vivace (very lively allegro)**

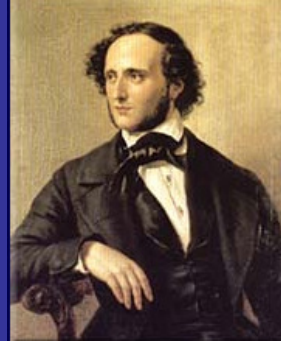
A pensive transitional section for solo violin and strings connects the Andante with the concluding movement of the concerto. This very rapid movement in sonata form, creates the lightness, joy, and brilliance so typical of Mendelssohn's art form. Playful and mostly staccato, it is presented by the solo violin and high woodwinds. (see handout for further information on the Third Movement)

**Felix Mendelssohn**

Beside his musical achievements, he was a talented painter, a fine writer and a brilliant conversationalist in four languages. In England, he often visited the young Queen Victoria, who sang his songs while he accompanied her on the piano. He was happily married and a father of four

## Felix Mendelssohn

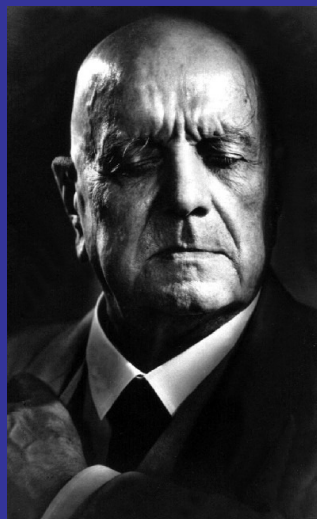
The high point of his career was the triumphant premier of his oratorio ELIJAH. “Never was there a more complete triumph – never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great work” (London Times 1846)



But constant travel and exhausting work had sapped his strength, and the death of his beloved sister in 1847 was a violent shock. He died five months later at the age of 38.

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## Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)



## *Finlandia, Op.26*

- ♪ Sibelius conducted the premiere of Finlandia at a fund-raising concert for the press Pension fund in December 1899
- ♪ It was a direct challenge to tsarist Russia's occupation of Finland
- ♪ The Russians banned this music, yet the Finns defiantly continued to play it. As sympathy for the Finnish cause swept Europe, Finlandia was heard in concert halls across the continent.