

SIGNIFICANCE OF PROCESS EDITIONS:
FELIX MENDELSSOHN'S PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, OP. 49

by

EMILY JANE ALLEY

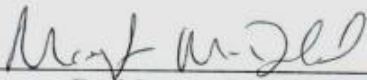
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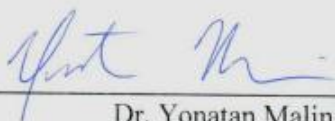
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Dr. Margaret McDonald



Dr. Yonatan Malin



Prof. Harumi Rhodes

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Alley, Emily Jane (DMA, Collaborative Piano)

Significance of Process Editions: Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor,
Op. 49

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Margaret McDonald

Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 49 holds an important place in music history. The final edition of the Piano Trio was published in January of 1840, however the original score, which was completed in July of the previous year, has rarely been studied. An important part of the preparation process for any performer is to discern the composer's intentions to the extent that it is possible—whether or not the performer elects to maintain all original, “authentic” conditions—which includes the close examination of what Christopher Hogwood calls “process” editions. Using an annotated draft edition from 1839 and other primary and secondary sources, I offer insight into the significance of process editions, specifically Mendelssohn's Piano Trio, the concept of authenticity as it was thoroughly discussed by Taruskin, Sherman, Kerman, and others, and ultimately shed light on how Mendelssohn's revisions fundamentally shaped the Piano Trio and what performers should understand about the revision process, leading to a more informed performance practice.

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I. Introduction

Felix Mendelssohn is well known for his chamber works, particularly his Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 49 (referred to as “Piano Trio” from this point forward). This work’s importance in music history is undisputed; it has been called the summit of his chamber music efforts.¹ The final version of the Piano Trio was published in January of 1840. Lesser known is the original score which was completed in July of 1839, but is rarely performed.² The revisions of the score offer a fundamental alteration in both musical syntax and style and some of the changes represent an intentional and systematic approach to find balance between the new and old. The Piano Trio’s process edition of 1839 was described by Larry Todd as “steeped in the classical tradition.”³ On the other hand Robert Schumann described the final edition from 1840 as “the master trio of the present era...that years from now will delight our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.”⁴ Some argue the importance or value of understanding a composer’s writing process, while others—both performers and scholars—say that a piece of music is just as much the performer’s as it is the composer’s. Even so, it can be valuable to view the writing process as an avenue to the thought process and, ultimately, a glimpse of the composer’s intentions. Knowing those intentions and understanding the reasoning behind a compositional decision can lead to a more informed performance. Admittedly, we can never truly know what a composer’s

¹ Stephen Hefling, *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 192.

² Similar to other composers, Mendelssohn’s tendency was to be displeased with the first draft, or several drafts, of his works, sometimes refusing to have them published or claiming the scores should be burned. His *Italian Symphony* and *Reformation Symphony* are among those pieces with which he was unhappy. At least four versions exist of Mendelssohn’s *Hebrides Overture* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Hogwood claimed Mendelssohn suffered from *Revisionskrankheit*, yet, uncharacteristically, Mendelssohn readily accepted his first draft of the D Minor Piano Trio.

³ Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2003), 378.

⁴ Basil Smallman, *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 105.

intentions were when writing a piece; even with letters, diaries, scores, and other material aids one can only construct an incomplete projection. Still, performers should aim to honor what they do know of the composer's intentions and seek out what is not always readily available, which includes the close examination of what Christopher Hogwood calls "process" editions.⁵ This encompasses the study and consideration of all drafts of a score in preparation for performance, for the original passages contribute to the overall understanding of the work.

Before the eighteenth century most performances were centered around music of contemporary composers. For a variety of reasons, including an expansion of repertoire, the nineteenth century brought with it an increased interest in the performance of previous composers' works. This continued to the mid- to late-twentieth century, when the study and informed performance of early works gathered momentum.⁶ Scholars and performers wanted to learn more about the expectations and intentions of composers and convey these desires to the audiences that listened to the music. This led to the "authenticity" debate between Richard Taruskin, Joseph Kerman, Bernard Sherman, and others.⁷ The arguments of the authenticity movement were between those who held the viewpoint that early music should be performed in a way that is true to its original form—this includes instrumentation, the use of exclusively period instruments, style, conventions, original scores, etc.—and on the other hand, those who believed it is impossible to accurately recreate performances exactly how they would have been presented during their time. Not only is it difficult to duplicate every aspect of early performances, it is

⁵ Christopher Hogwood, "Urtext, que me veux-tu?" *Early Music* 41, no. 1 (2013): 123.

⁶ Here, rather than meaning music of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque, "early music" refers to "any music for which a historically appropriate style of performance must be reconstructed on the basis of surviving scores, treatises, instruments and other contemporary evidence." Harry Haskell, "Early Music" Grove Music Online.

⁷ Bernard Sherman, "Authenticity in Musical Performance" *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

unrealistic to think that today's audiences perceive art identically to those of previous generations. It is simply too much to ask that modern audiences become "historical listeners."⁸

From the performer's perspective, however, attempting to learn more deeply about composers' intentions is not a futile effort. While there is, admittedly, speculation involved, much can be deduced from thorough research of biography, primary sources (e.g. journals, letters, critical reviews, etc.), the always-changing perspective recorded by historians, and process editions. In his 2005 dissertation, Ron Regev provides an extensive history of the 1839 and 1840 editions and seeks to find the reasons for Mendelssohn's revisions, while also providing performers with practical ideas for interpretation.⁹ This paper further compares the two editions and examines the academic responsibilities of the performer, implications of studying process editions, and the impact of historically and biographically informed performance practice through a study of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor.

Having access to process editions is crucial in understanding the writing and thought process of the composer. To the performer, it is especially important because of the influence this type of study could have on the interpretation of the music. It is the work that performers do behind the scenes that creates a more accurate and effective performance. This is part of the due diligence required by those who wish to have a comprehensive knowledge of the piece, its composer, and the society which produced them both.

⁸ John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 76.

⁹ Regev, Ron. "Mendelssohn's Trio opus 49: A Study of the Composer's Change of Mind." PhD diss., The Juilliard School, 2005.

Compositional style leading up to Mendelssohn

In order to understand the implications of the Piano Trio's process edition it is important to identify Mendelssohn's place in the Western classical music canon; this includes an examination of the practice and style of chamber music leading up to Mendelssohn. One notable shift that took place in chamber ensembles that included piano was the increased interest in making the piano part more virtuosic.¹⁰ Beginning in the later eighteenth century, piano chamber works were written primarily for amateur pianists. The piano had become increasingly popular and more widely available to the middle class, thus the increase in more accessible repertoire for chamber groups with piano.

Haydn's instrumental music could be described as having lean orchestration with nothing superfluous added to the texture, driving rhythms, a sense of humor and wit, and, in many cases, a tendency to write in a cyclic manner. His creative rhythms and use of form was not like other composers of the Classical tradition, and these features, as well as his conversational writing style, would soon be adopted by others.¹¹

Haydn's piano trios were similar to accompanied sonatas, where the keyboard functions as the primary instrument, with the cello doubling the bassline and the violin serving more as accompaniment than soloist. Both string instruments, however, are essential because of the variety of color, texture, and rhythmic vitality they provide.

Similarly to Haydn, Mozart's earliest keyboard trios are close in relation to the accompanied sonatas, while in his later trios the strings become more independent. In essence, Mozart's style can be characterized by several elements: beautiful melodic lines, rich textures

¹⁰ Michael Tilmouth and Basil Smallman, "Piano Trio," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, (2018), www.oxfordmusiconline.

¹¹ Georg Feder and James Webster, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, (2018), www.oxfordmusiconline.

and harmonies, elegant formal structures, and deep operatic roots. The piano trios of both Mozart and Haydn were in two or three movements, with one exception: Haydn's Piano Trio in G minor, Hob. XV:19.

The process of gradually giving each voice more independence continued with Beethoven and Schubert, both of whom composed piano trios in four movements, giving those works a significance more equal to the quartet and symphony genres. Beethoven's early chamber music stylistically, tonally, and formally--while beginning to break the mold--resembles the classical style especially when compared to his later chamber works, where he more liberally pushed the boundaries of chamber music genres established by the Classical composers before him. Later piano trios not only elevated the role of the strings, particularly the cello, but also made considerable changes in tempo within movements, expanded the use of tonality, and exaggerated contrasting styles.

During Mendelssohn's time, composers like Chopin and Liszt were piano virtuosi. They saturated their music in brilliance and much of their output was for solo piano. Mendelssohn appreciated their skill at the piano, but was not a proponent of filling music with superfluous notes for the purpose of showing off. He kept his compositions more modest and purposeful, but was not untouched by the virtuoso composers, as can be observed in the Piano Trio.

Steeped in the Classical tradition

Mendelssohn was known for having been "steeped in the music of the past,"¹² particularly that of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; and this description was not meant as a compliment, but rather as a comment on his lack of innovation. Mendelssohn's friend,

¹² Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*, 378.

Ferdinand Hiller, described the 1839 version of the piano trio as having an “old-fashioned” style.¹³ The struggle to find the balance between tradition and innovation is apparent in the two drafts of the Piano Trio. In his early years he was encouraged by his teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, to practice composing in the style of the eighteenth-century masters.¹⁴ His middle and later chamber works continued to be influenced by their writing and carry many characteristics that can be traced to his predecessors. From Bach and Beethoven, he adopted “motivic combination, derivation, juxtaposition, and interplay.”¹⁵ There are many instances of contrapuntal writing in his chamber music output. From the Viennese-Classical style came his ability to form clear, balanced melodies and symmetrical phrase structures. He was compared to Mozart because of his capacity to write with an elegance that was lost on other composers. Much of his music was refined and relatively conservative.

Larry Todd described Mendelssohn as follows:

...the staunch upholder of conservative aesthetic values; no radical reformer or innovator, he is the composer of finely polished chamber works that fall easily and unobtrusively into the Classical paradigms established by Mozart and Haydn in the eighteenth century and redefined by Beethoven in the early decades of the nineteenth.¹⁶

It cannot be overlooked, however, that Mendelssohn displayed his own musical language and was an innovator in some ways. He took what he learned from Bach and Beethoven in the way of contrapuntal writing and expanded on it, possibly starting the beginning of “developing variation,”¹⁷ a technique that Brahms is widely recognized for implementing, in which existing motivic material is continuously transformed. Additionally, Mendelssohn was affected by the

¹³ Hefling, *19th Century Chamber Music*, 179.

¹⁴ Stephen Hefling, *19th Century Chamber Music* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 170.

¹⁵ Peter Mercer-Taylor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 130.

¹⁶ Hefling, *19th Century Chamber Music*, 170.

¹⁷ Mercer-Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn*, 130.

aesthetics of the Romantic era, regardless of his Classical roots. Although he was not one to be impressed by virtuosic writing, he did begin to incorporate certain Romantic characteristics into his compositions, including his Piano Trio.

The detailed theoretical analysis below will explore to what extent Mendelssohn favored the old and new styles, and how his handling of those influences shifted between 1839 and 1840. Furthermore, the analysis will provide implications for the historically informed performer.

History of the 1839 process edition

Mendelssohn's first draft of the Piano Trio in D minor was composed in 1839. Upon completion, he gave the Piano Trio to his friend, Ferdinand Hiller, who often spent time with Mendelssohn in Frankfurt. Hiller was the driving force that led to the 1840 revisions. Although Mendelssohn was ultimately pleased with the final edition of his Piano Trio in D minor, particularly that of the piano, he struggled with the idea of making changes to his 1839 draft. After reviewing the trio's piano part, Hiller concluded that, while "impressed by the fire and spirit, the flow, and, in short, the masterly character of the whole thing,"¹⁸ he had an issue with it. The arpeggiated chords were "old-fashioned" and lacked the richness that he had grown accustomed to hearing, given the time he spent in Paris with Liszt and Chopin. The following is an account of Hiller's experience with Mendelssohn:

I made some observations to Mendelssohn on this point, suggesting certain alterations, but at first he would not listen to me. "Do you think that that would make the thing any better?" he said. "The piece would be the same, and so it may remain as it is." "But," I answered, "you have often told me...that the smallest touch of the brush, which might conduce to the perfection of the whole, must not be despised. An unusual form of arpeggio may not improve the harmony, but neither does it spoil it—and it becomes more interesting to the player." We discussed it and tried it on the piano over and over again, and I enjoyed the small

¹⁸ Hefling, *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, 192.

triumph of at last getting Mendelssohn over to my view. With his usual conscientious earnestness when once he had made up his mind about a thing, he now undertook the lengthy, not to say wearisome, task of rewriting the whole pianoforte part.¹⁹

While Hiller was the primary critic, Mendelssohn also took into consideration the comments and criticisms expressed during gatherings at his home and the homes of his friends. He often met with friends and colleagues to perform the trio, as well as other works. This private, intimate setting provided an excellent opportunity to test his works and receive feedback. These gatherings were not uncommon for composers and proved influential in the writing process.

Typical Mendelssohnian phrasing was refined and balanced. He has been compared to Mozart in this regard, and the majority of melodies in the Piano Trio are no exception: refined and elegant at times, and almost always symmetrical. There are several instances where Mendelssohn breaks this mold and strays from tradition, however, and these will be addressed in the analysis of the two editions.

As mentioned above, the piano trio genre was changing in regard to the role of each instrument in the ensemble. The piano was becoming more virtuosic and the strings were gradually being freed and given more responsibilities. From Haydn to Beethoven, textures started out as thin and became thicker with time as each instrumental part became more independent and challenging. We will see in the Piano Trio that Mendelssohn's use of counterpoint and conversational writing will affect the texture as well.

Because certain rhythmic elements often dictate the texture of music, rhythm and texture will often be addressed at the same time when comparing the two editions. A rhythmic change

¹⁹ Hefling, *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, 192.

will frequently be accompanied by a change in texture, and vice versa. One of Mendelssohn's misgivings about his writing was his "poverty of new figures for the piano."²⁰

Regarding tempi, Mendelssohn preferred for the musician to make an educated and intuitive decision rather than having to dictate it for him. He is even quoted as saying that if a person did not know the tempo by looking at the score, he was a "duffer."²¹ Still, Mendelssohn occasionally added metronome markings to his scores along with his tempo markings, or at least gave approval of the tempi added by editors. Several of the tempo markings vary from edition to edition, and should influence the performer to know what these changes were.

| 1839 Tempo Markings | 1840 Tempo Marking Changes |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Allegro molto agitato</i> | <i>Molto Allegro agitato</i> (♩ =80) |
| <i>Andante</i> | <i>Andante con moto tranquillo</i> (♩ =72) |
| <i>Scherzo</i> | <i>Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace</i> (♩ =120) |
| <i>Allegro vivace</i> | <i>Finale: Allegro assai appassionato</i> (♩ =100) |

II. Analysis

There are many possible avenues one could take when comparing the 1839 and 1840 editions. For the purpose of this study, commentary is largely based on material that exists in both editions. One of the goals of this project is to provide performers with valuable, applicable information they can use in performance. Focusing on already existing material that Mendelssohn edited provides a way to present performers with suggestions on how to interpret

²⁰ Mercer-Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn*, 145.

²¹ Siegwart Reichwald, ed., *Mendelssohn in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 195.

his changes. Additionally, between the process edition and final version there are many harmonic changes. At times the changes are necessary because of his alterations in melody; in other instances Mendelssohn made changes in harmony without reworking much of the melody. These cases will not be addressed in this paper, however they are important to note and would likely prove to be influential in the interpretation process when studied closely.

Before targeting specific musical examples movement by movement, a look at the difference in length of each movement should be noted. See Example 1 for a comparison of the 1839 draft (from now on referred to as "the 1839") and the 1840 edition (from now on referred to as "the 1840").

Example 1: Movement lengths of 1839 and 1840 editions

| Movement | Length of 1839 edition (in measures) | Length of 1840 edition (in measures) |
|-----------------|---|---|
| First | 705 | 616 |
| Second | 94 | 93 |
| Third | 190 | 188 |
| Fourth | 312 | 321 |

The second and third movements are similar in length in each edition; it is the larger outer movements that differ the most. While the fourth movement is longer in the 1840 by 9 measures, it is the first movement that has the greatest difference. Longer in length by 89 measures, the first movement of the 1839 is the one in which Mendelssohn made the most changes. A significant example of Mendelssohn's change of mind in the first movement, which is in sonata form, is found before the coda. This will be discussed further in the paper, after looking at earlier passages of movement one.

Movement One

In the 1839 there were sections of writing that lacked clarity. Moments of drama and excitement in the movement were accompanied by moments of dullness and “old-fashioned” writing. The textures and conversation between instruments were at times too polite and predictable. In the 1840 he achieved clarity, captivating conversation, cohesion of form, and virtuosity, particularly in the piano part. That is not to say the 1839 score was easy; however, in the 1840 score Mendelssohn enhanced the difficulty and allowed the players to “show off,”²² which he claimed they would enjoy.

The changes made in the opening section of the first movement equip the performers with the ability to maintain the melody more clearly at the forefront. For instance, the piano part in mm. 29-32 of the 1839 continues the constant eighth-note pattern between the left and right hands, even while the strings play their low, *staccato, piano* melody (see Example 2). Mendelssohn also placed the piano in a higher register than the violin during those bars and made the texture thicker than that of the strings. The texture, register, and unceasing rhythm of the piano, as well as the dynamic, register, and articulation of the strings cause the violin melody to be overshadowed. It is not until measure 33 that the piano ceases its relentless pattern and joins the strings in their melody and rhythm. This highlights the climax at measure 33, but the melody in bars 25-32 is not as clear.

²² Ferdinand Hiller, *Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874), 154.

Example 2: 1839, Mvt. 1, mm. 15-39²³

Musical score for Example 2, 1839 edition, Mvt. 1, mm. 15-39. The score is in D minor and 3/4 time. It features a first violin part, a second violin part, and a piano accompaniment. The first system (mm. 15-25) shows a crescendo from piano (p) to fortissimo (sf). The second system (mm. 29-33) shows a dynamic shift from piano (p) to fortissimo (sf) with a crescendo, followed by a diminuendo (dimin.).

Example 3: 1840, Mvt. 1, mm. 15-40²⁴

Musical score for Example 3, 1840 edition, Mvt. 1, mm. 15-40. The score is in D minor and 3/4 time. It features a first violin part, a second violin part, and a piano accompaniment. The first system (mm. 15-25) shows a crescendo from piano (p) to fortissimo (f). The second system (mm. 29-33) shows a dynamic shift from piano (p) to fortissimo (f) with a crescendo, followed by a diminuendo (dim.).

²³ All 1839 edition examples are taken from Ron Regev, "Mendelssohn's Trio opus 49: A Study of the Composer's Change of Mind," PhD diss., The Juilliard School, 2005.

²⁴ All 1840 edition examples are taken from Felix Mendelssohn, *Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 49*. Edited by Friedrich Hermann, (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1887).

By contrast, the register, texture, and dynamics of this section in the 1840 allow the melody to be heard more clearly (see Example 3). Beginning in measure 25 the piano switches from playing constant eighth notes to joining the strings in homophony, playing the melody and providing the bass and harmony underneath. This is the first time Mendelssohn has changed the piano's rhythm in this edition. In mm. 27-32 the piano continues the melody, bassline, and harmony and is in the same register as the strings. This is in contrast to the 1839, where the piano is almost an octave higher than the strings and is rhythmically busier.

The cello part is also different between editions in mm. 27-32. Rather than playing in harmony below the violin melody, the cello's responsibility in the 1840 is to play the supporting bassline. The cello goes back to harmonizing under the melody in measures 33 and 34 and is in unison with the violin and right hand of the piano in bars 35 and 36.

All of the changes Mendelssohn made in this section allow the melody from measures 25-39 to be at the forefront. In this case he simplified the rhythm, texture, and register in order to create a more effective and dramatic passage. To highlight the drama, performers should give themselves enough room at measure 17 to grow into the melody at measure 25, aware that Mendelssohn went to specific lengths to emphasize it. The pianist may consider voicing the second and third beats of measure 24 in a way that allows the strings' pickup to measure 25 to be clearly heard. Following this, the string players should emphasize the *crescendo* in measures 31-32 because of the change in the piano's rhythm and texture. Now that it has sustained notes, it can only contribute to the *crescendo* on the downbeat of measure 32. Finally, all parts should highlight the *piano*, *staccato* notes when present to emphasize the contrast in volume and articulation.

In other instances Mendelssohn enhanced the drama with intricate rhythmic relationships between instruments, varied textures, and new or adjusted melodic material. One such passage begins on the upbeat to measure 52 of both editions (Examples 4 and 5). The imitative melodies of the two editions differ, however the more significant change is the interaction of the three parts and how they add character to the melody—for this reason it is less important what the melody is and more important how it is treated. The character of the 1839 melody is beautiful and conservative, with a complacent and traditional triplet accompaniment (see Example 4). The strings have separate, imitative, accented entrances. The cello outlines the piano's left hand triplet figures while the violin quarter notes outline the first of each triplet grouping in the piano's right hand; this continues until m. 57 when the right hand piano triplets shift to a third above the violin. The piano part's repeated and predictable pattern that accompanies the strings adds only homorhythmic support in comparison to the character and style added to this section by the right hand of the 1840.

Example 4: 1839, Mvt. 1, mm. 51-61

The image displays a musical score for Example 4, Mendelssohn's 1839 version, measures 51-61. The score is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 51-56) shows the piano accompaniment with triplet figures in both hands. The right hand features a melodic line with quarter notes, while the left hand has a triplet accompaniment. Red arrows point to specific melodic and rhythmic features in the first system. The second system (measures 57-61) shows the string entries, with the violin and cello parts. The piano part continues with its triplet accompaniment, marked with a piano (*p*) and crescendo (*cresc.*) dynamic. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with triplet figures and string entries.

Mendelssohn made several important changes in the 1840 (see Example 5). First, the piano's triplets are reshaped to emphasize the middle note in each grouping, which aligns in pitch but not rhythm with the melody introduced by the violin. This rhythmic misalignment creates a more agitated character which better reflects the *Molto Allegro agitato* assigned to both editions. The piano's left hand serves as a third voice with the strings rather than a simple chordal accompaniment. Additionally, the texture is thicker because of the strings' continuous movement, compared to the 1839 when each has nearly two measures of rest, as if politely waiting for the other to finish their statement. By studying the rhythmic and textural changes between editions, a performer will become acutely aware of Mendelssohn's specific intention to add agitation and heightened excitement, which informs the interpretation.

Example 5: 1840, Mvt. 1, mm. 51-63

The image displays a musical score for Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4, Movement 1, measures 51-63. The score is in 3/4 time and features a violin, piano, and vocal line. Red arrows point to specific changes in the piano's triplets and the violin's melody. The piano part includes dynamic markings like *sf*, *p*, and *sf*. The vocal line includes the lyrics "cre - scen - do" and "piu forte".

Measures 51-57: The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, with a red arrow pointing to the middle note. The violin part has a melody with a red arrow pointing to a specific note. The piano part has dynamic markings *sf*, *p*, *sf*, and *p*. The vocal line has lyrics "cre - scen - do".

Measures 58-63: The piano part has dynamic markings *sf cresc.*, *f*, and *piu forte*. The vocal line has lyrics "cre - scen - do" and "piu forte".

A similar change was made in the following measures to the piano and violin (see Examples 6 and 7). In mm. 69-84 of the 1839, the violin has nondescript and repetitive eighth-note double-stops; in the 1840, this passage is an exciting and virtuosic counter melody that boldly highlights the character of the cello and left-hand piano melody, which was left largely unedited. The right hand of the piano in the 1840, however, is significantly different than the 1839. The 1839, once again, includes predictable triplet patterns, this time as descending arpeggios. The texture is consistently thin, whereas in the 1840 the piano's texture thickens with the addition of dyads that are mixed in sporadically with an unpredictable contour of ascending and descending triplets. The piano triplets were added to enhance the dramatic element of this section; the cello's change in register (now one octave lower than the 1839) and the increased sense of independence in the violin's countermelody with ascending and descending arpeggios, spanning close to three octaves (versus less than a one-octave range in the 1839), further supports this interpretation.

Example 6: 1839, Mvt. 1, mm. 69-80

The image displays a musical score for measures 69-80 of the first movement of a 1839 version. The score is arranged in three systems. The top system contains the violin part, the middle system contains the piano right hand, and the bottom system contains the piano left hand. The violin part (top staff) shows a sequence of eighth-note double-stops from measure 69 to 80, highlighted with a red box. The piano part (middle and bottom staves) features descending arpeggios in the right hand and dyads in the left hand. Red arrows point to specific features: one points to the violin's double-stops, and another points to the piano's descending arpeggios. Measure numbers 69, 75, and 80 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Example 7: 1840, Mvt. 1, mm. 67-80

The image shows a musical score for Example 7, Mendelssohn's 1840 version of the first movement, measures 67-80. The score is in G major and 2/2 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings for 'marcato' and dynamic levels 'f' and 'ff'. A red box highlights the vocal line from measure 67 to 80. A red arrow points to the piano part at measure 67. A second system of music starts at measure 75.

As mentioned previously, the coda of the first movement was significantly altered in length and character. In the 1839 Mendelssohn spends 71 measures (mm. 576-647) repeating themes and transitioning from the recapitulation to the final flourishes of the coda. There are many passages of only piano or only strings and parts of this section are stagnant due to the occasional thin texture and sparse notation. There is a sense of redundancy because of the frequency with which he repeats themes and motives, and there are modulations in the 1839 that are not present in the final edition. In the 1840 Mendelssohn did away with those parts that did not enhance the dramatic element of the piece, whittling this section down from 71 measures to 28 measures (mm. 530-558). The harmonic scheme is similar to that of the 1839, but Mendelssohn manages to cut out any superfluous material that does not contribute to the forward motion of the

movement. The final product is shorter than originally desired, yet maintains the excitement and brilliance of the movement.

Movement Two

Mendelssohn's ternary-form second movement was edited in similar ways to passages discussed in the first movement. Mendelssohn struggled with aspects of clarity and unity and his 1840 changes were focused on enhancing the existing musical ideas initially drafted in 1839. The movement is reminiscent of one of his Songs Without Words:²⁵ it is a beautifully and simply crafted melody that is tranquil, refined, and subtly restrained. If there is romanticized sentimentality in the A-theme, it is done without the use of overtly romantic gestures, at least at the outset. Mendelssohn, who Schumann called "the Mozart of the nineteenth century"²⁶ specifically in regard to this trio, crafted a Mozartian operatic melody to serve as the A-theme of the second movement. One of the major edits can be found at the return of the A-theme in m. 62 of the 1839 and m. 61 of the 1840.

The first four measures of this example could depict a woman who is dreaming of, or calling out to, her beloved but, in the subsequent four measures, is disrupted by thoughts of past unfaithfulness, disappointment, longing for his return, or some other type of concern or hesitancy (see Example 8). In the second half of the theme's return, her beloved enters for a duet, singing a countermelody until the close of the theme, beginning in m. 70 of the 1839. The sixteenth-note *obbligato* played by the piano throughout the A-theme's return in m. 62 creates a backdrop reminiscent of that used by Mozart in "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto," from his opera, *Don Giovanni*, which serves to create a ceaseless churning that musically connects different ideas and

²⁵ Regev, Ron, "Mendelssohn's Trio opus 49," 4.

²⁶ Hefling, *19th Century Chamber Music*, 170.

passages. In *Don Giovanni*, the *obbligato* is not only a tonal and textural foundation, it also drives the musical drama and provides contrast for the rhythmic material in the melody (see Example 9).²⁷ Mendelssohn's usage of this *obbligato* was initially less effective in delivering the musical drama, however, due to the unbalanced instrumentation and physical constraints of assigning both melody and *obbligato* to the piano. The 1839 melody was embedded in accompanimental material that struggled to maintain conformity: the instrumentation challenged the piano to perform two roles in a limited register while leaving the strings with underwhelming *pizzicato* passages that failed to appropriately support the aria-like melody. The effect was also lessened by choices like that seen in m. 66, where Mendelssohn interrupted the *obbligato* pattern on the third beat.

Example 8: 1839, Mvt. 2, mm. 61-75

The image shows a musical score for Example 8, Mendelssohn's 1839 version of Mvt. 2, measures 61-75. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part has a complex texture with a prominent obbligato pattern. Red arrows point to specific moments of interruption in the obbligato pattern. A red circle highlights a measure in the piano part. Dynamics include p, dim., sf, f, and p.

²⁷ Wye J. Allanbrook and Wendy Hilton, "Dance Rhythms in Mozart's Arias," *Early Music* 20, No. 1. Performing Mozart's Music II (Feb, 1992): 142-149.

Example 9: “Batti, batti, o bel Masetto,” from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

The image shows a musical score for two parts: ZERLINA (vocal) and Violoncello obbligato. The vocal line is in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major, and contains the lyrics: "Bat - ti, bat-ti, o bel Ma - set - to, la tua po - ve - ra". The Violoncello obbligato part is in the same time and key, featuring a continuous stream of sixteenth notes.

The return to the A-theme aria in the 1840 incorporates more clever instrumentation and seamless transitions while simultaneously making better usage of the *obbligato* (see Example 10). At the start of the theme's return the piano maintains the oscillating sixteenth notes, this time without the additional responsibility of presenting the melody, which is now in the violin part. One exception is mm. 63-65, when the piano doubles the melody two octaves lower than the violin but continues to play the *obbligato*. On the third beat of m. 65, the melody changes character--we might imagine that the woman is now at the questioning or worrying stage, thinking of her beloved. At this point the melody and bassline are handed over to the piano and the strings take over the *obbligato* in a seamless transition. This transition is clearer than that of the 1839--rather than stopping on beat three and breaking the continuous stream of sixteenths, Mendelssohn allows the *obbligato* to be truly unending, keeping the oscillating effect of ceaseless winding. More importantly, the contour of the piano *obbligato* leads seamlessly into the piano melody as well as the string *obbligato*. Even though the *obbligato* changes instruments, Mendelssohn is more successful in incorporating it in the return of the A-theme in the 1840 because of the less awkward and more intuitive *obbligato* pattern in the piano part, as well as more clearly defined roles for each instrument.

Example 10: 1840, mm. 60-71

The image shows a musical score for Example 10, 1840, mm. 60-71. The score is in G minor and 3/4 time. It features a piano and a violin. The piano part is marked with dynamics such as *f*, *cresc.*, *pp*, and *dim.* The violin part is marked with *p*, *tenuto*, and *cresc.* There are several annotations: a red arrow pointing to a note in the violin part at the beginning of the system, a green oval around a passage in the violin part at measure 63, and a red arrow pointing to a note in the piano part at measure 63. The score is divided into systems of two staves each, with measure numbers 60, 63, 66, and 69 indicated at the start of their respective systems.

Mendelssohn handled these transitions more naturally in the 1840 than he did in the 1839. He defined the instruments' roles more clearly, with each one adding significantly to the character and brilliance of the piece, whereas the 1839 was more of a piano piece with string

accompaniment. It was also more convoluted and did not provide the performer with as many clues to interpretation as did his published version. The piano's melody was more easily hidden among the *obbligato* and the strings' *pizzicatos* were in danger of being covered by the piano. Mendelssohn's changes to instrumentation and notation in the 1840 allow the melody to come through at all times and make it clear for the performers what the focus of each section should be. In the same way Mendelssohn clarifies the return of the A-theme, his treatment of the B-theme in the 1840 more clearly and effectively captures the core of the character (see Example 11). This is due to the changes he makes in rhythm and instrumentation. Throughout the B section in the 1839, the sixteenth-note *obbligato* continues in various forms. It is no longer consistently played by a single instrument; Mendelssohn often passes it back and forth between instruments, even alternating the sixteenth notes between them, such as in m. 43. Passages like this, with the violin playing in between the cello's eighth notes, have the potential to cause rhythmic ambiguity and confusion rather than intensity and a clear vision. Despite having written different melodic material for the B-theme in the 1839 and 1840, his intention in both comes across as having been to create a more passionate, turbulent atmosphere. In the 1840 he more fully achieves this by replacing the sixteenth-note *obbligato* with a triplet pattern (see Example 12). This pattern remains constant throughout the B section and makes it easier for the performers to effectively conjure an atmosphere of passion and angst, particularly when the instruments have two against three.

Example 11: 1839, Mvt. 2, mm. 36-47

36 *cresc.*

39 *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *p* *crescendo* *f*

43 *f* *fp* *cresc.* *f* *cresc.* *f* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* *f*

The image displays a musical score for measures 36 through 47. It is organized into three systems. The first system (measures 36-38) features a treble clef staff with a melodic line marked 'cresc.', a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment also marked 'cresc.', and a grand staff with chords. The second system (measures 39-42) shows the treble and bass clef staves with dynamics 'p' and 'cresc.', and the grand staff with a 'p' dynamic and a 'crescendo' marking in the bass line, which is highlighted by a red box. The third system (measures 43-47) continues with the treble and bass clef staves showing dynamics 'f', 'fp', and 'cresc.', and the grand staff with various dynamics including 'sf', 'p', and 'sf'. A red box highlights the first two measures of this system.

Example 12: 1840, Mvt. 2, mm. 33-41

The image displays a musical score for Example 12, consisting of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 33-35) shows a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (measures 36-38) continues the piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 39-41) shows a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *cresc.*, *sf*, *mf*, and *dim.* A red box highlights measures 33-35, and another red box highlights measures 39-41.

Movement Three

Of all four movements of his Piano Trio, Mendelssohn made the smallest number of alterations to the third. In both editions it is light, lively, and energetic, but the changes he applied to the 1840 further increase the exuberant spirit of the movement. Of particular importance is the way Mendelssohn treated some of the motives of the opening theme during the entirety of the movement.

Until measure 32 of the 1839, the longest note the violin's dotted half, syncopated over the bar line (dotted quarter tied to dotted quarter). While this is happening, the cello plays eighth notes and the piano has continuous sixteenths (see Example 13).

Example 13: 1839, Mvt. 3, mm. 21-27

The image displays a musical score for measures 21-27 of a piece. The score is written for violin, cello, and piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 21 features a long tied note in the violin (highlighted in red) and a dotted half note in the piano (highlighted in red). Measure 25 features a dotted half note in the violin (highlighted in red) and a dotted half note in the piano (highlighted in green).

Additionally, the long note is in the middle of the cello and piano registers, and there is a harmony change underneath the violin's tied dotted quarter note. Because of these factors, the listener's ears are drawn away from the long violin note. Prior to measure 32, the bassline is thin and sporadic and only occurs in the piano (the cello has four measures of rest). The eighth-note bassline allows this section to keep its light and lifted feeling. When Mendelssohn places a dotted half note (A) tied to a dotted quarter note in the left hand of the piano in measure 32, it stands out (see Example 14). This bass note acts as a pedal tone for one and a half measures and it is the longest note of the movement to this point. Although the cello has *staccato* notes above it and the piano plays sixteenth notes in the right hand, the length of the piano's bass note, the low register, and lack of harmony change all contribute to a temporary stop in the propulsion of the phrase.

Example 14: 1839, Mvt. 3, mm. 31-37

The image shows a musical score for Mendelssohn's 1839, Mvt. 3, mm. 31-37. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a violin part, a viola part, and a piano accompaniment. Measures 31-34 are highlighted with a green box, and measures 35-37 are highlighted with a red box. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, and *dim.*

By contrast, Mendelssohn continues the forward motion in m. 32 of the 1840 by taking away the long note in the bassline and replacing it with playful eighth notes, written identically in rhythm and articulation to the two eighth notes in the very opening of the movement (see Example 15). These eighth notes serve the same harmonic function of the longer bass note in the 1839, but with the additional purpose of propelling the phrase forward. Additionally, Mendelssohn added sixteenth notes to the string parts in measures 35-36, helping to continue the forward motion, which all the performers should strive to do.

Example 15: 1840, Mvt. 3, mm. 31-37

31

34

Mendelssohn makes a similar change slightly further along in the movement. In m. 44 of the 1839, there is a constant iteration of overlapping eighth notes among the instruments (see Example 16). In this version the piano plays the first two eighth notes of each beat. All parts are at a *piano* dynamic and then *crescendo* into m. 48 before the piano takes over the return of the opening theme, once again *piano*.

Example 16: 1839, Mvt. 3, mm. 44-50

44

49

In the 1840 Mendelssohn no longer has the left and right hands of the piano play rhythmically in unison (see Example 17). In m. 42 the pianist's right hand is the same, but to the left hand Mendelssohn adds the brief sixteenth-note motive from the opening theme. He also removed the *crescendo* that was in the 1839 and maintains a *piano* dynamic until the return of the opening theme. Observing this change would suggest to the performers to give this section buoyancy and lightness while maintaining the forward motion, similar to the edits mentioned above.

Example 17: 1840, Mvt. 3, mm. 42-48

The image displays a musical score for measures 42-48 of the third movement of Mendelssohn's 1840 version. The score is written for piano and cello. Measures 42-44 show the piano accompaniment with a cello melody in the bass line. The piano part features arpeggiated triplets in the right hand. A green oval highlights the word "sempre p" in the piano part of measure 43. Measures 45-48 show the continuation of the piano accompaniment, with a "p" dynamic marking in measure 46.

Movement Four

Mendelssohn made several changes to the final movement, one of which will be highlighted here. During the cello's theme beginning in m. 259 of the 1839, the piano fills in the harmony with arpeggiated triplets in the right hand (see Example 18). Within those triplets is the cello's melody, sometimes lining up directly on the beat with the cello and other times landing on the second triplet-eighth of the beat. Instead of providing more support for the theme, the lack of uniformity in the piano's right hand causes a sense of instability. Five measures into this passage (m. 263) the piano continues the triplet rhythm but switches its arpeggiated pattern to one that is more regular. From here the piano's bass line, which played an F octave for the first four measures of the phrase, moves up chromatically every four beats, while the cello remains on a D until m. 268. Here the roles reverse and the piano remains on a G-sharp and the cello

ascends chromatically until the key change in m. 269. Although Mendelssohn does not write in a *ritardando*, this is a climactic moment and performers might have a tendency to slow down into the key change, given the heightened drama of the chromatic motion and repeated notes, as well as the continuous triplets in the piano.

Example 18: 1839, Mvt. 4, mm. 258-270

258

262

267

The corresponding section in the 1840 (m. 269) begins in the same manner as the 1839 (See Example 19). Accompanying the cello melody is the piano's F pedal tone and triplets in the

right hand. This time the triplets are in a more sensible pattern. Not only do they make more sense from a technical approach, but they provide a stable countermelody to the cello that is written as quarter notes among the triplets. Rather than including the theme in different parts of each triplet in the 1839, Mendelssohn changes the piano's right hand to play the cello's melody on the third triplet of each beat. These two changes--the quarter-note countermelody on each beat and the melody on the last triplet of each beat--provide more stability than the 1839. In m. 273, where the piano continued to play triplets in the 1839, Mendelssohn changed the rhythm to straight eighth notes. Because he made the rhythm naturally slower, it negates the need for the performer to do the work, especially close to the key change.

Example 19: 1840, Mvt. 4, mm. 267-280

The image displays a musical score for Example 19, covering measures 267 to 280. The score is arranged in three systems, each with a vocal line (top) and piano accompaniment (bottom). The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand and a left hand. The key signature changes from one key to another between measures 272 and 273, indicated by a green box in the piano left hand. The piano right hand features triplets, with a green box highlighting a specific triplet in measure 272. The vocal line includes lyrics: "cre - - - - - seen - - - - -" in measure 272 and "do sino - - - - - al - - - - -" in measure 276. A red arrow points to a measure in the vocal line in the first system. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *fff*, and *f*.

III. Conclusion

By comparing the 1839 and 1840 editions of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, inferences can be drawn with regard to the meaning of the changes and the intentions of the composer. Although Mendelssohn was reluctant to change it, the 1840 edition features dozens of stylistic shifts: in many instances Mendelssohn attempted to modernize the Piano Trio and move forward stylistically, in response to Hiller's criticism that it was too old-fashioned; other edits, like that made to the return of the A-theme in the second movement, preserve influences of the past. Studying the process edition offers insight into Mendelssohn's creative process and can influence the interpretation of the Piano Trio. It is the performer's duty to study and more fully understand composers and their works—doing so will not only lead to a performance that is informed down to the details of each individual phrase, but also empower the performer by connecting more deeply to the composer. Ultimately the way this analysis is used will depend on the performer, but it would be encouraged to incorporate the details, large and small, from the above analysis when performing this piano trio and to take it a step further, doing an even deeper analysis if possible. Regardless of how the process edition impacts the performance it is the responsibility of the performer to take all reasonable steps in a comprehensive search toward an informed performance.

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