Fanny Hensel's Piano Works: OPP.2, 4,5 and 6

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FANNY HENSEL’S PIANO WORKS:
Opp. 2, 4, 5 and 6

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ABSTRACT

This treatise examines Fanny Hensel’s published piano works, Opp. 2, 4, 5 and 6 and her early publications prior to Op. 1, which grew out of an established song tradition and exhibit the influence of the north German Lied. Fanny’s published piano works were also products of her participation in her family’s musical tradition of Sonntagsmusiken. She preferred relatively small forms and focused on melodic lines that were closely integrated with their accompaniments. The texture and figuration of Fanny’s accompaniments vary, but her creative treatment of harmony remains throughout her pieces. This bold harmonic treatment includes frequent use of distant key relations and unexpected modulations; these features sometimes result in tonal ambiguity. This treatise reassesses Fanny Hensel’s contribution to the Romantic piano literature with the goal of stimulating more performances of high quality and more frequent study of her music.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose of the Project

To celebrate Fanny Hensel’s 200th birth year in 2005 conferences and concerts were held throughout the world to acknowledge her music. In these events Fanny Hensel’s music was re-evaluated and she was recognized as a serious musician. These occasions marked a new high point in her reception history, because until the past few decades she had been valued mostly as a musical companion to her younger brother Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, based on their correspondence and her diaries. However, Fanny Hensel was also an excellent musician in her own right, and her piano technique and musicianship were recognized by prominent musicians and scholars of her time. She was the musical director of one of the most noted musical salons in Berlin at the time, where she participated actively as a major performer and conductor. In addition, she was a prolific composer, who had the same musical education as her child-prodigy brother Felix, producing close to five hundred works during her short life of forty-one years. She composed in a wide variety of genres—from Lieder, piano pieces, and chamber music to larger-scale choral music and dramatic scenes. The quality and the quantity of her music show Fanny Hensel as one of the most talented female musicians of the nineteenth century. However, for two primary reasons Fanny Hensel’s piano music did not circulate as widely as her reputation.

First, Fanny was restricted in pursuing her musical career due to her gender and class. Her family belonged to the elite ranks of the nineteenth-century German bourgeoisie and did not need to struggle financially to maintain their lifestyle. Her parents, Lea and Abraham Mendelssohn, provided excellent home schooling for their children, but they did not envision a career as a professional musician for their daughter. In the Mendelssohn household, as in any other home in that part of contemporary society,
being a professional musician was not deemed to be a womanly activity. For a woman performer a professional career called into question at least a person’s social class, if not also her morals and character, and this danger to one’s reputation prevented Fanny from public performance. As Marian Wilson Kimber wrote:

For an upper-class nineteenth-century woman, receiving money for musical activities meant compromising her social position, and both siblings’ positions were made more precarious by their status as converted Jews. So instead, Fanny continued the Sunday concerts at the family home, making significant contributions to the musical life of Berlin.¹

Second, Fanny’s delayed publication career and her premature death obstructed the spread of her music. As a pianist and composer she was highly acclaimed by those who attended her private concerts; but her performances were held mainly in her house, and her popularity was limited to small numbers of musicians and musical dilettantes of the upper class. English critic Henry Chorley said, “If she had been a poor man’s daughter, she must have become known to the world by the side of Madame Schumann and Pleyel.”² Because of her status Fanny Hensel’s musical activity was confined to her home and the publication of her music was discouraged. When she finally decided to publish, it was near the end of her life. From 1846 to 1847 she published three sets of vocal music and three sets of piano pieces, and approving reviews of her publications appeared in Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. It was a promising start, but less than a year after her first independent publication she died suddenly of a stroke. After her death more women became prominent in music as virtuoso performers, teachers and composers, but Hensel did not live to experience these changes. Her music was almost forgotten until recent years.

The purpose of this study is to examine Fanny Hensel’s Opp. 2, 4, 5, and 6. These pieces are important in understanding her music, since she herself prepared them for publication with thorough revisions.


Method and Approach

The second chapter presents a short biography of Fanny Hensel focusing on her family history, musical education, and relationship with her brother Felix; it also discusses her musical life, especially as it relates to her published piano works. The third chapter assesses the historical background of the salon tradition in the Mendelssohn household and Fanny Hensel’s general musical activity. Fanny’s great aunts Fanny Arnstein and Sarah Levy had established one of the most noted musical salons in Berlin, and they both influenced Fanny’s musical education and the format of her Sonntagsmusiken. The fourth chapter discusses the process of Fanny Hensel’s publication. Before her independent publishing, six of her songs had been published under Felix’s name, and other songs were included in an anthology published in 1825 and 1837; also, her Manuscript 44 shows her early intention of publishing. This chapter includes a thorough investigation of these early publishing efforts. The fifth chapter will offer analyses of selected works of Fanny Hensel’s published piano music. The formal analysis will focus on tonal orientation, the use of progressive harmonic language, and her brilliant accompaniment figurations.
Due to the careful preservation of her letters and diaries, Fanny Hensel left a large number of primary sources, which have served as important reference material for the study of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and of Fanny Hensel herself. Her letters and diaries provide valuable information about the society of her time, the intimate relationships among her family members, and her musical world. These letters and diaries were collected by Fanny’s only son, Sebastian Hensel, and selections were published in 1879 in two volumes under the title *Die Familie Mendelssohn 1729-1847: Nach Briefen und Tagebüchern (The Mendelssohn Family 1729-1847: From Letters and Journals)*. The work includes portraits of family members drawn by Wilhelm Hensel, Fanny’s artist husband, and it became the main source of information for Mendelssohn studies. However, the book has been criticized for misrepresentations that resulted from the deletion and editing of letters and from idealization of the family history. Sebastian Hensel presented this book as a biographical sketch of the Mendelssohn family, and he chose the materials that he deemed acceptable for publication. In the book Felix is the central figure of the family, but other family members, including Fanny, are also well described. In 1987 Fanny’s correspondence with Felix Mendelssohn was collected and translated into English by Marcia Citron. In this book, *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn*, Citron presented one hundred and fifty letters, covering a span of twenty seven years, from the so-called Green Books at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Citron stated that the selection of letters was based on the information relevant to any aspect of music and aesthetic issues. It therefore gives insight into the musical life of the early nineteenth century and the special connection between these two great musicians.

The most important secondary source for Fanny Hensel’s life is her biography, Françoise Tillard’s 1992 *Fanny Mendelssohn*, which sought to illuminate Fanny Hensel’s life and her struggle as a female musician. The book portrayed her life from her own perspective, and important events in her life are chronologically displayed. For example,

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her encounter with and the marriage to Wilhelm Hensel, the family trip to Italy, and Fanny’s participation at the *Sonntagsmusiken* are well narrated. Her long-awaited dream of visiting Italy gave her the chance to meet artists and musicians who applauded and appreciated her music. The result was a boost in her confidence as a musician, and the experience and encouragement that she obtained from the trip deeply affected her attitude and her music. Other important resources are the biographical studies on her brother Felix Mendelssohn such as Larry Todd’s *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music*. This, the most recent such study, contains extensive resources about Fanny Hensel since it inevitably includes her life and music alongside Felix’s. Todd describes Fanny Hensel’s life and musical background in depth, and he briefly mentions her piano pieces. Todd also has a forthcoming biography on Fanny Hensel.

One of the earliest serious studies on Fanny Hensel’s life and music was Victoria Sirota’s 1981 dissertation, “The Life and Works of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel.” Sirota noted that the composers Fanny most admired are demonstrated in her son’s name: “Sebastian Ludwig Felix Hensel.” The influence of these composers (Bach, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn) is evident in Fanny’s keyboard music. Sirota divided Fanny’s keyboard music into four categories: studies, contrapuntal works, sonatas, and character pieces, noticing that Hensel’s most significant contribution to piano literature is her corpus of character pieces.\(^4\) Two years after Sirota's research, in 1983, Marcia Citron’s paper on Fanny Hensel’s *Lieder* appeared in *The Musical Quarterly*.\(^5\) Here she discusses some early publications of Fanny’s songs that were attributed to Felix. The paper also contains information about the settings of poems and an investigation of the relationship between the texts and music. Citron concluded that Fanny’s *Lieder* basically show conservative characteristics following the tradition of the North German *Lieder*, but with some imaginative and fresh ideas.


Since Fanny and her brother were educated together, some researchers have performed comparative studies of the two siblings’ lives and music. In a 1994 article Camilla Cai pointed out that Fanny’s “Songs for Pianoforte” of 1836-37 and Felix’s “Songs without Words,” Opp. 30 and 38, were written contemporaneously and show certain similarities as well as differences. Fanny’s piano works written in this period of 1836-37 survived as Manuscript 44 (MAMs 44) of the Mendelssohn Archive in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. Cai states that Fanny’s early intention to publish the collection is evident from the engraver’s numbers and markings.\(^6\) When Fanny finally published her first set of piano works ten years later, \textit{Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte}, Op. 2, one of these works appeared as the opening piece; this \textit{Andante} was taken from the early MAMs 44 manuscript No. 2. In Cai’s second paper, “Texture and Gender: New Prisms for Understanding Hensel’s and Mendelssohn’s Piano Pieces,”\(^7\) she points out that three-part texture is prominent in Fanny’s and Felix’s character pieces for piano, as shown in Fanny’s Op. 6, No. 1, and Felix’s Op. 53, No. 1. Even though Fanny’s and Felix’s textures have similar characteristics, Fanny’s show more flexible and irregular configurations along with virtuoso pianistic effects. Judit Bach selected Fanny’s Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 11, for her 2005 comparative study, “A Tale of Two Piano Trios: Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn’s Piano Trios in D Minor (Op. 11, Op. 49); and How a Woman Composer’s Work Should Relate to the Canon.”\(^8\) Bach compared two trios in the same key and stated that Fanny’s works had been unjustly neglected, and the quality of compositional skill and individual character of the work are evident in her piano trio. The paper includes formal and harmonic analysis along with performance suggestions.

Fanny has been compared also with contemporary female pianist Clara Schumann. They both had prodigious musical talent and received exceptional musical education, but


because of their difference in social status they took different paths. Clara’s professional musical career took her all over Europe, while Fanny’s musical activity was limited almost entirely to her home. In her 1988 treatise Nancy Walker compared both female composers’ lives and selected songs, and Iolanda Maria Lucciolla published a comparative study of their respective piano works in 2001. However, the main focus was on the issue of gender, specifically Robert Schumann’s influence on Clara’s music and Felix Mendelssohn’s influence on Fanny’s. Lucciolla selected piano character pieces for the study, since at the time female composers were well acquainted with the genre, and selected No. 7 from MAMs 44 for thorough analysis.

One of the most important piano cycles of Fanny Hensel, *Das Jahr*, was researched by John Toews in his 1993 article in *The Musical Quarterly*. *Das Jahr*, subtitled “Twelve Character Pieces,” comprises thirteen individual pieces representing each month of the year, followed by a postlude. Toews said that the collection can be “interpreted at one level as a retrospective musical diary of her Italian tour of 1839-40.” However, Marian Wilson Kimber established a contrasting opinion in her unpublished paper, stating that Fanny’s choice of epigrams suggests “genuinely Romantic musical cycles,” not a reminiscence of her Italian trip. Wilson Kimber stated:

Furthermore, the additional discovery in 1999 of a volume containing eighteen compositions by Fanny decorated with obviously Italian scenes by Wilhelm, allowed Hans-Günter Klein to lay to rest the notion that *Das Jahr* was somehow an Italian travel diary, as the collection of pieces specifically inspired by Hensel’s Italian travels, labeled *Reise-album 1839-40*, had surfaced.

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In any case, *Das Jahr* is regarded as one of her mature works, and Fanny's use of certain compositional techniques is notable. Toews points out that Fanny used Lutheran chorale tunes in this collection: “Christ ist erstanden” in “March,” “Vom Himmel hoch” in “December,” and “Das alte Jahr vergangen ist” in the postlude. In 1998 Katharine Boyes took this research further and analyzed the complex interwoven texture. In her dissertation, “The Months of the Year Portrayed in Piano Works by Fanny Hensel, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Judith Lang Zaimont,” Boyes notes that all three chorale tunes that Toews mentioned were actually used throughout the work. Fanny slightly modified the chorale tunes or selected certain features of the melody and modified them as recurring motives. Although each movement has its own character and individuality, these elements unify the cyclic work showing Fanny’s sophisticated compositional skill and level of musicianship.

Many believe that despite her extraordinary talent, discipline, and intelligence, Fanny was discouraged unjustly by her father and Felix from becoming a professional musician. Most of the early studies of Fanny usually highlighted her unfair circumstances and the struggles she had to endure. However, Marian Wilson Kimber, in her 2002 article “The ‘Suppression’ of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography,” suggested that this is a biased concept. Wilson Kimber proposed that Fanny’s “suppression” is an exaggeration. When Sebastian Hensel published the family letters, it was necessary to portray “socially acceptable images of the lives of their famous relatives for public consumption.” Wilson Kimber also pointed out that Felix’s reluctant attitude toward Fanny’s publication was based on her circumstances; in a way, Felix’s concern was justifiable, since Fanny passed away shortly after the publication of her works.

Following publication of these books and papers about Fanny Hensel, scholarly attention to her music increased. Recently a greater variety of her music has become

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available to the public, especially through the German music publisher Furore. This growing interest and increased publication are encouraging, since Fanny Hensel’s life and music are inspiring to those musicians who struggle to realize their aspirations in music.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY OF FANNY HENSEL

Fanny Cäcilie Mendelssohn, the eldest child of Abraham Mendelssohn and Lea née Salomon, was born on November 14, 1805, in Hamburg, Germany, her younger brother Felix was born in 1809, and sister Rebecka in 1811. Shortly after Rebecka’s birth the family moved to Berlin where Fanny’s youngest brother Paul was born in 1814. Abraham Mendelssohn, a successful banker, was the son of Moses Mendelssohn, and Abraham’s wife, Lea Salomon, was from the very wealthy Itzig family. The merger of these two families provided an ideal environment that afforded Fanny many privileges.\footnote{The biographical information in this section is compiled from Tillard’s Fanny Mendelssohn except where specifically noted.}

Fanny’s grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), had come from a poor family in Dessau and moved to the Berlin ghetto with a great ambition for learning, later becoming a central figure in the German Enlightenment. Despite a physical defect (a hunchback-like curved spine) and financial difficulties, he managed to acquire stable economic status and a scholarly reputation. His aesthetic theory of “mixed sensations (gemischte Empfindungen)” was based on the belief that music can engage body, mind, and soul. According to Kai Hammermeister’s book German Aesthetic Tradition, Moses Mendelssohn believed that only music contains all three aesthetic pleasures – beauty, perfection, and sensual pleasure – and could be used as an educational tool that could move humankind toward perfection.\footnote{Kai Hammermeister, German Aesthetic Tradition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16-21.} Due to his philosophical outlook, Moses Mendelssohn emphasized education in his household, and musical training was especially encouraged.

Fanny’s maternal great-grandfather, Daniel Itzig, was the extraordinarily wealthy financier of King Frederick II (Frederick the Great), and he taught his thirteen children to be philanthropic. His first son, Isaac Itzig, founded the Berlin Free School (Haskalah...
School) along with Moses Mendelssohn and Moses’s intellectual successor David Friedländer, brother-in-law of Isaac Itzig. Daniel’s first daughter, Bella, Fanny’s maternal grandmother, studied the piano with Johann Philipp Kirnberger, who also taught Moses. Another daughter, Fanny (namesake of Fanny Mendelssohn), was a patron of Mozart, and her sister Cäcile was a patron of Ignaz Moscheles. The youngest daughter, Sarah Levy, was a talented keyboard player who studied harpsichord with Wilhelm Friedemann Bach; she greatly admired the Bach family’s music, and when Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach passed away, she financially supported his widow. Sarah also hosted one of the most important musical salons in Berlin; and she had unusual collections of Johann Sebastian Bach’s and his sons’ music, which she donated to the Berlin Singakademie.

The Mendelssohn family’s tradition of a highly cultured but modest lifestyle was ideal for producing fine musicians such as Fanny and Felix. An intelligent woman who spoke French, English, and Italian, and who could read Greek, Lea also had high standards for her children’s home education. She hired the best available tutors to teach arithmetic, French, German, literature, and fine arts, and required her children to rise at five each morning and study throughout the day.

Music was an important part of the Mendelssohn children’s lives, and their highly intellectual musical taste was suited to enjoying and preserving music of the German masters such as J. S. Bach and his sons, Mozart, and Beethoven. When Fanny was born, Lea remarked that her first daughter had “Bach-fugue fingers.” Following her family’s tradition, Lea was also a keyboard player; she had studied with Kirnberger and became her children’s first piano teacher. As she predicted, Fanny became a child prodigy in keyboard playing and at thirteen performed from memory all of the preludes from Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*, although not the fugues. Fanny and Felix received the same musical education when they were young. They studied piano with Marie Bigot, who was praised by Haydn and Beethoven, and with Ludwig Berger, a student of Clementi and John Field; and they studied composition with Carl Friedrich Zelter, who used Bach’s counterpoint technique as the foundation of his teaching.

Fanny’s father Abraham recognized his eldest two children’s extraordinary musical talent, and despite the opposition of his brother-in-law, Jacob Bartholdy,
Abraham encouraged Felix to be a professional musician. Bartholdy discussed the issue in a letter to Abraham:

I cannot quite agree with you in your not pointing out a positive vocation to Felix. It could and would be no hindrance to his talent for music which is so universally acknowledged. The idea of a professional musician will not go down with me. It is no career, no life, no aim; in the beginning you are just as far as at the end, and with full consciousness of its being so; as a rule you are even better off at first than at last. Let the boy go through a regular course of schooling, and then prepare for a state-career by studying law at the university. His art will remain his friend and companion. So far as I can judge of the present state of things, there is more need than ever of people that have pursued a university study. Should you design him for a merchant, let him enter a counting-house early.  

Abraham’s decision was unusual for a young man of the Mendelssohn family’s social class at the time, since “by many clever and distinguished men the profession of music was not looked upon as a proper career.” However, Abraham was not disposed to allow his talented daughter to pursue a musical profession. As the nineteenth century progressed, more women did have access to a wider variety of education, but in early nineteenth-century society, a professional career for a woman was acceptable only for financial reasons. For upper-class ladies such as Fanny Mendelssohn, musical education was generally regarded as a private, personal accomplishment. Despite Abraham’s progressive ideas about his son’s vocation, with his daughter he followed the commonly held belief that the proper vocation for a respectable woman was that of wife and mother. Although Fanny’s musical education was grounded in societal expectations, Abraham always encouraged his children to attain a higher level of education. “It was the chief principle of Abraham’s method of education that every progress made is nothing but a progress, that what is good may be still better—in a word, that education is never finished,

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18 Ibid., 85.
and that fathers and mothers, as long as they live, must never cease to be the guides and counselors of their children.”

Lea directed most of her children’s education, and Abraham was satisfied with the result and praised her effort. The couple admired each other, and family documents reveal that relationships in the Mendelssohn family were unusually close. Fanny and Felix had an especially close bond because of their common interest in music. Fanny wrote to Felix in a letter of June 2, 1837: “... think back to the time when we were constantly together, when I immediately discovered every thought that went through your mind and knew your new things by heart even before they were notated, ... our relationship was a particularly rare one among siblings, in part because of our common musical pursuits ...” Since their extraordinary musical talent was developed under similar musical training, their musical tastes were also similar. Sometimes exchanging rather harsh comments for each other’s works without reservation, Fanny and Felix were both fastidious in their artistic taste. They deeply respected each other’s music, however, and their musical companionship continued throughout their lives. Even after Felix’s departure from the family home in Berlin, their musical interaction was maintained by exchanging compositions and lengthy letters. When Felix was young, he nicknamed Fanny “the cantor,” and he always took Fanny’s advice seriously. In an 1822 letter Fanny wrote: “He has no musical adviser other than me, also he never puts a thought on paper without first having submitted it to me for examination.” Felix also encouraged Fanny to continue composing when she was otherwise occupied by her marriage and childbirth. Because of his opposition to Fanny’s publication, there has been speculation that Felix and Fanny engaged in sibling rivalry, but in reality their relationship was based on true familial affection and positive interaction.

Fanny’s and Felix’s musical talents drew several family members’ attention. When Fanny performed the Well-Tempered Clavier preludes from memory at age thirteen,

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19 Ibid., 84.
20 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 234.
21 Wilson Kimber, “Felix and Fanny,” 44.
her father Abraham was very proud of her, but her aunt Henriette Arnstein warned that Fanny’s uncommon talent should be guided well:

I was amazed and dumbfounded at Fanny’s heroic achievement in learning 24 preludes by heart—and only recovered use of my tongue to inform everybody of this huge success. Having extended to you both my undivided admiration, I must, however, admit that I find the undertaking worthy of blame; the effort required is too great, and could have become dangerous; the extraordinary talent of your children must be guided and not forced.\textsuperscript{22}

Fanny’s first composition, “Ihr Töne, schwingt euch fröhlich!” (“Notes, fly away joyfully!”), was written in 1819 for her father’s birthday. She had studied composition only about one year by that time, but she showed unusual talent in this early work. According to Françoise Tillard, “it is a pleasant song by an extremely gifted girl of fourteen who has thoroughly absorbed her teachers’ lessons. The melody and its accompaniment (a light Alberti bass) emphasize the text while staying close to it, with just enough chromaticism and modulations to related keys to sustain the musical interest. Yet it already evinces the spontaneity and melodic inspiration that would always be characteristic of Fanny’s style.”\textsuperscript{23}

Because of Zelter’s rigorous instruction, Fanny did not suffer from a lack of early theoretical training, as did other female musicians of her time. Zelter was a respected composer, but he was also a renowned music educator. His method of teaching composition was based on the tradition of Bach and Kirnberger with multiple exercises in counterpoint and figured bass.\textsuperscript{24} Fanny absorbed these lessons and developed a firm compositional foundation. Zelter suggested that Fanny keep her composition exercises in albums and notebooks, and she followed his instruction. These bound manuscripts are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 52.
\end{itemize}
now stored in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage). According to Sean Michael Hamilton Wallace, the earliest surviving manuscript was written between March 1820 and June 1821 and shows the level and seriousness of Fanny’s studies. The first notebook contains about thirty Lieder, sixteen piano pieces, and several piano arrangements of other composers’ works.25

Fanny composed about 500 works, among which are some 150 extant piano pieces. Most of her piano works were composed for self-enjoyment or for performance in her home concerts. Her parents initiated these concerts, called Sonntagsmusiken, around 1821, and their main purpose was to give their children opportunities to perform. Musicians and singers were hired from the Royal Chapel and Royal Opera, and these events became important not just for the Mendelssohn family but also for Berlin musical society. In one of the earliest known Sonntagsmusiken on March 24, 1822, Fanny appeared as a pianist.26 When the Sonntagsmusiken became a regular occurrence, many prominent musicians visiting Berlin appeared in the Mendelssohn home, for example Ignaz Moscheles, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Frederic Chopin, Clara and Robert Schumann, Nicolo Paganini, and Wilhelm Taubert. At the beginning Lea hosted the concerts and Felix was the focus of the program; but after Felix left home to establish his career Fanny took charge. This was the primary musical sphere in which she could perform and receive feedback about her music and performance. In these concerts, Fanny invested her creative energy to satisfy her musical aspirations.

After her marriage in 1829 Fanny’s continued musical activity was possible because of support from her husband, Wilhelm Hensel, court painter to the King of Prussia. Although Fanny’s father discouraged her career as a professional musician and insisted that her true vocation was in womanhood, Wilhelm honored his wife’s musical gift and encouraged Fanny to pursue her musical career seriously. In 1839 Wilhelm also


fulfilled Fanny’s lifelong dream of visiting Italy, as they and their nine-year-old son Sebastian spent a year there. This trip became the most memorable event in Fanny’s life, and the experience had great impact on both her life and her music. While the Hensels were residing in Rome, they became acquainted with artists and musicians of the Académie de France at the Villa Medici. This association, filled with music, drawing, and pleasant conversation, included Georges Bousquet, Charles Gounod, Charles Dugasseau, and amateur pianist Charlotte Thygeson.27 Here Fanny introduced her own compositions as well as performing the music of German masters such as Bach and Beethoven. The group was amused by her intelligence and musicianship. Especially the young composer Gounod was deeply impressed by her incredible memory and elegant compositions. According to Martin Cooper, Gounod’s encounter with Fanny Hensel was one of the most important musical influences in the Académie de France.

Musically the most important of his Roman experiences were his friendships with two women, Pauline Viardot and Fanny Hensel, the one a great singer and the other a fine pianist . . . She (Fanny) was a cultured German woman who introduced Gounod to the works of Bach, Beethoven and her own brother, to the classics of German literature and especially to Goethe, laying the foundation for that fine workmanship, that thoroughness and competence which were to distinguish all Gounod’s compositions, even the most trivial.28

Her experience at the Villa Medici expanded Fanny’s mental boundaries, and her confidence as a musician became stronger. After the Hensels returned from Italy, Fanny diligently composed new works that reflected her musical growth. She produced larger-scale compositions with experimental approaches in structure and style. Following the trip in 1841, she created the volume of character pieces for piano called Das Jahr that has been recognized as one of her best and most innovative works, and it shows her as an original and creative composer. The format of Das Jahr is distinctive and differs from

27Tillard, 279.

her other compositions; in a special calligraphic manuscript each movement is preceded by a short epigram by various poets and an original illustration by Wilhelm.

Early in Fanny’s career she had written several pieces bearing the word sonata in the title, but none was a full-scale sonata. These include the “Sonata Movement” in E major, written in 1822 and a “Sonata o Capriccio” in 1824. Also in 1824, Fanny’s first complete three-movement sonata, in C minor, was composed for Felix while he was away from home. In the letters and diaries two more sonatas are mentioned, an F-major sonata and an Easter sonata, but the manuscripts have not survived. In the surviving pieces, Fanny showed her ability to handle this strict form with skillful technique, but her more adventurous experiments with the sonata form are demonstrated in her last sonata in G minor, written during the autumn of 1843. This work has four movements, fast-fast-slow-fast, all connected tightly together without pause. Her creative genius and skillful technique in the sonata genre is perfected in her Piano Trio in D minor, written in 1846.

This was the decade in which Fanny’s life had changed through the Italian trip and her mother’s unexpected death in 1842. As sudden death ran in her family, she had already experienced the death of her father in 1835 with shock, but Lea’s death was accepted rather calmly. Fanny took her mother’s position as the matriarch of the Mendelssohn family. Her responsibility as hostess of this prominent family’s gatherings increased, and a year and a half after Lea’s death Fanny was able to revive the *Sonntagsmusiken*, which had been temporarily interrupted by the changes. Her vigorous compositional efforts for these gatherings pleased her audience. Her Piano Trio, composed to celebrate Rebecka’s birthday, was a big success and still retains its popularity. In the previous year, 1845, Rebecka and her mathematician husband Peter Dirichlet had traveled to Italy, and both had been struck by serious illnesses. As a sister and the head of the family, Fanny traveled to Italy with her husband to rescue the Dirichlets. For that reason Rebecka’s birthday in 1846 had special meaning to Fanny and her family. However, no one realized that Fanny’s own death was near.

The last two years of Fanny’s life were filled with happy memories, and her musical activity continued. Her *Sonntagsmusiken* flourished more than ever, and brilliantly programmed concerts attracted the elites and connoisseurs of Berlin. The young councilor Robert von Keudell, an excellent amateur pianist, became a regular
attendee. Keudell respected Fanny’s musical talent and he urged her to publish. At this time she also received special offers from two very prestigious publishers, Bote und Bock and Schlesinger. In 1846, despite her age and family tradition, Fanny finally published her music under her own name. As she stated in her letter to Felix, publication became “a great stimulus to me, something I’ve always needed in order to create.”29 Within two years Fanny published two sets of Lieder, three sets of piano works in four volumes, and a choral part song. She also excelled in organizing more impressive Sonntagsmusiken. In April 1847 she performed her Piano Trio with great success, and immediately thereafter planned another large-scale concert. On May 14, 1847, while she was rehearsing the chorus part of Felix’s Die erste Walpurgisnacht, Fanny suddenly collapsed and died. Her family members were devastated by her tragic death. Wilhelm sketched his wife’s deathbed portrait, but he never gained his full creativity and left his last commissioned work unfinished. Felix was stricken with grief, and within six months he also died from a series of strokes.

29 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 351.
CHAPTER 3
MUSICAL SALON

Fanny Hensel performed in public only on a few occasions, such as a charity concert on February 19, 1838, when she played Felix’s Piano Concerto in G minor.³⁰ Fanny maintained her musical activity all her life through the Sonntagsmusiken. At the beginning, Lea was the hostess and Felix was the center of the event. Later Felix left home to follow his career, and Fanny took charge as a composer, performer, and even conductor. As the main musical sphere in which she performed her own compositions, the Sonntagsmusiken played an important role in Fanny’s musical life. This chapter presents the historical background of the musical salon as a Mendelssohn family tradition.

The salon was introduced to Berlin Society during the second half of the eighteenth century. Modeled after the French literary salon of the Enlightenment, its basic format was a gathering of society in private homes. Usually the members of the salon were upper- and middle-class intellectuals who esteemed the cultivation of knowledge and art. They came to exchange conversation, to listen to literary readings, and/or to listen to musical performances. These meetings were open to both male and female connoisseurs, who had equal opportunity to express their opinions. Because the salons took place in the domestic sphere, females usually organized them; and these educated women took important positions in the development of the salon.

In her book on the salons in Berlin, Roswitha Burwick names a few renowned women who strongly influenced the development of the Berlin salon: Henriette Herz, Rahel Levin, Elisabeth Graun Stagemann, and Bettina von Arnim.³¹ These women were

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³⁰ Todd, 363.
highly intelligent, interested in their society’s important political issues, and knowledgeable about art and music.

Sarah Levy

Another leading salonnière was Sarah Levy (1761-1854), a great aunt of Fanny Hensel, who married the banker Samuel Levy. Since she and her husband had no children, she was able to devote her time to weekly salon gatherings. Her salon lasted for more than a half century, and her contribution was significant not just to Berlin’s musical society of the time but also to the history of music in general. As a serious amateur keyboard player who studied with Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, her acquaintance with the Bach family led her to a deeper understanding of their music. At that time J. S. Bach’s music was considered old-fashioned and outdated, but Levy highly valued J. S. Bach’s and his sons’ compositions. Her voluminous collections of Bach family manuscripts and copies are the result of her special devotion and commitment to their music. However, Bach’s collection is only a part of her extensive music library. Christoph Wolff states:

Madame Levy’s music collection was quite comprehensive, consisting almost exclusively of instrumental music by all major composers active in the second half of the eighteenth century. The repertoire extended from solo keyboard works and chamber music to different kinds of concertos and symphonies—the music room in her house could easily accommodate an orchestra of eighteenth-century proportions. She owned many keyboard instruments of various kinds and was particularly fond of the fortepianos by Friedrich Silbermann of Strasbourg. Within Levy’s music library, the works of J. S. Bach and his four sons—Wilhelm Friedemann, Carl Philipp Emanuel, Johann Christoph Friedrich, and Johann Christian—represent a significant section of a scope and character without parallel elsewhere. Moreover, her collection formed a library for practical use, that is, the collection contained not only scores but also performing parts.32

Sarah Levy’s collection suggests that her musical salon included not only small-scale music such as Lieder and keyboard music, but also works for larger ensembles.

Levy often hosted elaborate concerts and had no difficulty hiring fine musicians for these events. In those days Berlin was experiencing an abundance of musical activity. In the middle of the eighteenth century King Frederick II had established a Hofkapelle for which he hired renowned musicians. He hired the best musicians available for his court, and as a result a formidable group of musicians resided in Berlin and made an indelible impression on Berlin’s musical society. However, after the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War, the King’s support and interest in music lessened. Therefore, those court musicians had to search for other engagements outside the court, and musical salons provided the extra performance opportunities. This was beneficial to both musicians and musical connoisseurs in Berlin.

This social background was advantageous to Sarah Levy’s musical salon. According to Peter Wollny, Sarah Levy’s musical documents can be divided into three categories: 1) subscription lists, 2) manuscripts bearing Levy’s owner’s signature, and 3) the Singakademie Library’s catalogue. The lists suggest that Sarah Levy not only preserved masters’ music of the past but also encouraged contemporary composers by subscribing, commissioning, and supporting them financially. Sarah Levy was an early member of the Singakademie and also participated as a keyboard player, even performing the keyboard part of J. S. Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 with Zelter in 1808.

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33 The list includes Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Joachim Quantz, Franz Benda, and Johann Friedrich Agricola. As a music lover, Frederick II took flute lessons with Quantz and studied composition with Agricola, who had been a pupil of J. S. Bach. The king was also interested in Italian opera and built a new opera house.

34 Her subscription lists reveal that keyboard music dominated. The lists include C. P. E. Bach, J. C. F. Bach, Johann Withauer, and Johann Forkel, and she purchased vocal music also such as C. P. E. Bach, J. A. P. Schulz, F. G. Naumann.


36 The Singakademie was founded by Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch in 1791, and his successor was Carl Friedrich Zelter who became Fanny’s theory and composition teacher. Under the direction of Zelter the institution cultivated choral music, and Bach’s choral works were regularly performed.

37 Todd, 46.
After Sarah Levy’s death, most of her costly musical collection was donated to the Singakademie.

**Fanny von Arnstein**

Sarah Levy’s sister Fanny von Arnstein (1758-1818), who moved from Berlin to Vienna, was also vigorously involved with musical activity through her own salon. Her husband was a renowned banker, and with her wealth she was able to organize fine concerts. She introduced the Berlin style of music salon in Vienna, and her house was busy with celebrity intellectuals, including Goethe, Humboldt, and Schlegel. At that time in Vienna, small-scale music was performed regularly at private musical salons; but large-scale public performances were rare. She was also associated with the founding of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society for the Friends of Music) in Vienna. The first concert was held in 1812, and even though the performers and the conductor were amateurs, the event was very successful. The aim of this organization was “to perform concerts of artistic value, to found a conservatory for the musical instruction of the young, a library, musical archives, and a museum for musical research work.” Fanny von Arnstein’s musical activity also extended to supporting musicians. She was an important patron of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and she introduced foreign virtuosos such as young Giacomo Meyerbeer through her splendid concerts. According to Waltraud Heindl, her support of Mozart included allowing him to stay for eight months in her residence. Fanny von Arnstein’s daughter Henriette von Pereira Arnstein (1780-1859) was also an excellent pianist, and she continued to host musical salons following her mother’s footsteps, even after her death.

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38 Karl Geiringer, “‘The Friends of Music’ in Vienna (1812-1937),” *The Musical Quarterly* 14/3 (1938), 244.

Cäcilie von Eskeles

Fanny von Arnstein’s younger sister Cäcilie von Eskeles (also known as Zippora Wulff née Itzig, 1760-1836) also followed her family’s tradition. Cäcilie married twice, and her second husband Bernhard Eskeles became the banking partner of his brother-in-law Nathan Arnstein. The sisters’ husbands established the most notable banking firm in Vienna and became the first Jews who were granted patents of nobility. With their wealth and prominent status, they had close relationships with renowned intellectuals.

According to A. W. Thayer, Bernhard Eskeles was a financial advisor of Beethoven and maintained a close friendship with him until the composer’s death. When Beethoven became ill and bed-ridden, Eskeles even held a benefit concert under the sponsorship of the Arnstein and Eskeles Bank Firm to help alleviate Beethoven’s financial needs. Their close friendship is revealed in Eskeles’s personal album, which includes a hand-written composition by Beethoven, a Lied set to Goethe’s “Das Göttliche (The Divine).” This friendship was based on the family’s admiration for Beethoven’s music, and it is likely that Fanny Hensel was exposed to his most recent compositions. Because of Cäcilie von Eskeles, Fanny admired and was inspired by Beethoven’s piano works, and she often performed his piano sonatas at her Sonntagsmusiken. In a letter to Felix, Fanny acknowledged the following: “I think it comes from the fact that we were young during Beethoven’s last period and, of course, we had assimilated his art and style. But that style is very emotional and wrenching. You have gone through and beyond that, while I’ve remained stuck in it, but without the strength through which that sensitivity can and must endure.”

Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) was also close to the Eskeles family and appeared at their salon frequently. His acquaintance with them led to a meeting with the talented Mendelssohn prodigies Fanny and Felix, and Moscheles became an important adviser for

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41 Ibid., 833.

42 Tillard, 225.
them. Moscheles often visited the Mendelssohn residence and participated in the Sonntagsmusik there as a performer and/or an audience member.

Cäcilie’s music library shows that a vast amount of her collection was devoted to Bach’s family; but Peter Wollny suggests that the “two Viennese sisters’ active interest in the music of Beethoven distinguishes them clearly from the Berlin members of the Itzig family and suggests that after they had left the closer family circle, their musical tastes somewhat accommodated to their new environment.”

Eskeles’ daughter also was a fine keyboard player who favored Beethoven’s music the most.

Lea and Fanny Mendelssohn’s Sonntagsmusiken

The Mendelssohns’ fine taste and understanding of music were reflected in the quality of their Sonntagsmusiken. The main difference between Lea’s musical salon and those of other family members was the involvement of the young Mendelssohns. Lea and Abraham were willing to share their children’s unusual talent with Berlin music lovers, and this participation attracted many people to their house concerts. Abraham often supported big productions that required large numbers of musicians to perform Felix’s large-scale compositions.

According to Larry Todd, one of the earliest documentations of a Sunday musicale hosted by Fanny’s parents appears in a letter of Lea Mendelssohn that was written to Henriette Arnstein and is dated March 29, 1822. The letter indicates that on March 24, Fanny played Hummel’s piano concerto before Prince Antoni Henryk Radziwill, a brother-in-law of the king. Prince Radziwill was a music dilettante who played cello and may have participated in readings of Beethoven’s string quartet; and later Beethoven dedicated his Namensfeier Overture, Op. 115, to this prince. Many of Lea’s Sonntagsmusiken were formal, well-attended affairs, such as the performance of renowned Frankfurt pianist Aloys Schmitt, or the occasion at which Felix spontaneously improvised on the subject of Mozart’s Fugue in C minor for two pianos K. 426 at the request of the prince. Another memorable Sunday musicale was one in which Abraham

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43 Wollny, 683.

44 Todd., 93-94.
Mendelssohn hosted a major production in his residence on February 7 and 9, 1824: two performances of Mendelssohn’s fourth opera, *Die beiden Neffen*, (or *Der Onkel aus Boston*), which were held to celebrate Felix’s fifteenth birthday and for which court musicians were hired to perform before 150 guests.\(^{45}\)

Another *Sonntagsmusik* was held on November 14, 1824, to celebrate Fanny’s birthday. The program included a symphony by Felix, as well as Mozart’s Piano Concerto in C minor and Felix’s Double Concerto in E major probably accompanied by Fanny or Felix. Moscheles was in the audience and later wrote his impression in his diary.

> This is a family the like of which I have never known. Felix, a boy of fifteen, is a phenomenon. What are all prodigies as compared with him? Gifted children, but nothing else. This Felix Mendelssohn is already a mature artist, and yet but fifteen years old! . . . His elder sister Fanny, also extraordinarily gifted, played by heart, and with admirable precision, Fugues and Passacailles by Bach. I think one may well call her a thorough “Mus. Doc.”\(^{46}\)

Moscheles attended other *Sonntagsmusiken* and performed one of his own duets, *Hommage à Handel*, with Felix.\(^{47}\) He was deeply impressed by Fanny’s and Felix’s musicianship.

As stated above, Mendelssohn’s *Sonntagsmusik* ranged from piano solo and chamber music to choir music and dramatic works; and as Moscheles remarked, the quality of the musicianship was very high. On one occasion the four Mendelssohn children produced a special and unforgettable musical event prepared by Fanny and Felix to celebrate their parents’ silver wedding anniversary on December 26, 1829. The performance was limited to relatives and friends, and the participants included family members. Felix even composed a part with only one note for tone-deaf Wilhelm Hensel. With Lea’s description one can imagine the performance.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 124.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 135.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
Felix had a real theater built with an elevated platform for spectators; there were more than 120 of us, most of whom were seated. His orchestra was very select: first violins, Rits and Ganz; cellos, the other Ganz and Paul, to whom Felix had given a solo. Fanny’s Festspiel was sung by Busolt, Landsberg, and Paul! and by my daughters and Therese Devrient. Paul sang in the trio, played well and cut a very good figure. The three heralds had magnificent costumes which came from the Royal Tournament of Potsdam. Therese, crowned with roses, symbolized the first wedding; Rebecka—whose dress and veil were richly embroidered with diamonds and who wore myrtle in her hair—the silver wedding; and Fanny, who was adorned in the same manner, but entirely in gold, represented the golden wedding; all three were pleasing to look at and made a truly touching impression.48

The performance was held at the Mendelssohn residence situated at 3 Leipziger Strasse. The mansion had once served as a palace and contained several large rooms. Because of the cold weather, the Silver Wedding Concert was held in Lea’s bedroom. However, usually Sonntagsmusiken were held in the large room in the Gartenhaus that could accommodate a few hundred people, and was always beautifully decorated and provided an intimate, noble environment in which to appreciate music.

At the beginning Lea Mendelssohn’s Sonntagsmusiken were held occasionally to celebrate special days such as anniversaries and birthdays, or to host renowned musicians who were visiting the town. When Fanny reinstated them after Lea’s death, she scheduled the concerts as regular events, carefully planning the programs to give more variety by alternating vocal music, piano music, and other instrumental music. The effort can be seen in her diary of October 28, 1833, where Fanny jotted down her plan for the programs. The following excerpt is from Tillard’s book.

**First concert:**
- Quartet by Mozart
- Beethoven’s G major concerto
- Second duet from Fidelio, Devrient and Decker
- Concerto in D minor by Bach

**Second concert:**
- Triple concerto by Beethoven, with Kins and Ganz
- Hero by Decker

48 Tillard, 180.
Felix plays his concerto and Bach’s D minor concerto

**Third concert:**
Variations by Felix, with Ganz
Quartet by Weber
Finale from Oberon, Decker
Quintet by Spohr
Song of the Sea from Oberon

**Fourth concert:**
Beethoven’s trio in E major
String quartet by Felix in A minor
Beethoven’s D major trio

**Fifth concert:**
Mozart trio G major
Scene from Der Freischüdecker
Trio by Moscheles
Aria from Iphigénie

To the right of this list, she indicates how often the various composers were played in her concerts:

Beethoven, six times
Bach, twice
Mozart, twice
Weber, four times
Felix, three times
Gluck, once
Spohr, once
Moscheles, once
Me, once

As described above, Fanny Hensel grew up with her family tradition established by intelligent female relatives. Most of them were serious amateur musicians or music-lovers, but often their musical level was above that of pure amateur. They recognized and appreciated the most prominent musicians, such as J. S. Bach, whose fame was just beginning to recover after a period of neglect, and Beethoven, who was at the time very controversial. These women often actively engaged with social musical activities by opening musical salons and participating in public musical institutions such as the Singakademie or the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. They collected manuscripts and

\[49\] Tillard, 217-8. Efforts to reveal which piece she references here have been unsuccessful.
supported musicians by patronizing or subscribing to their compositions. For example, the subscription lists of J. C. F. Bach included six members of the Itzig family: Sarah Levy, Cäcilie von Eskeles (Zippora Wulff), Bella, Salomon, Rachel, Lea, and Henriette Itzig.\(^{50}\) Fanny Hensel not only carried on the family tradition well but established her *Sonnagsmusiken* as one of the best musical salons in Berlin.

\(^{50}\) Wollny, 682.
CHAPTER 4

EARLY PUBLICATIONS

Fanny Hensel composed about 500 works, but only a fraction of them were published during her lifetime. The first publication of which she was the sole author, a set of six Lieder, was published in 1846 by Bote und Bock; but previously her music had appeared in several collections. This chapter is a detailed investigation of those early publications, and it also discusses the circumstances of the delayed publication of her Opus 1.

Fanny’s first-published song, “Die Schwalbe,” appeared anonymously in 1825 as a supplement to the musical literature almanac Rheinblüthen. This Lied was composed in 1823, when she was only eighteen, and was set to a poem of one of her favorite poets, Friederike Robert. A year after the first Lied was published, more of her Lieder appeared, but her name was still not exposed. In 1826 when Felix published his first set of six Lieder, Op. 8, Nos. 1 - 6, two of Fanny’s Lieder were included: Op. 8, No. 2 “Das Heimweh” (composed July 19, 1824), and Op. 8, No. 3 “Italien” (composed August 24, 1825). In the next year Felix added six more songs, making a complete set of twelve Lieder, Op. 8, Nos. 1-12, including another Lied by Fanny, “Suleika und Hatem” (composed April 28, 1825).

Even though Fanny’s name was suppressed, certain people knew that three of the songs from Op. 8 were composed by her. For example, when Felix visited Queen Victoria of England, she praised Felix’s Lieder, and Felix acknowledged that the Queen’s favorite Lied, “Italien,” which had become the most popular, was actually composed by Fanny. John Thomson also reported in the Harmonicon of 1830 that “three of the best songs are by his sister . . . her songs are distinguished by tenderness, warmth, and

51 Todd, 176.
originality; some of which I heard were exquisite.”

He added that Fanny was different from other female composers: “I cannot refrain from mentioning Miss Mendelssohn’s name in connection with these songs, more particularly, when I see so many ladies without one atom of genius coming forward to the public with their musical crudities, and, because these are printed, holding up their heads as if they were finished musicians.” It is possible that this review induced the publication of Fanny’s “Ave Maria,” composed in 1820, which was included in the 1832 *Harmonicon* as a supplement to a Collection of Vocal and Instrumental Music. A brief piece of just thirty measures with an English text by Walter Scott, the song was composed only two years after her composition lessons with Zelter had started. However, probably this Lied was the first publication in which her authorship was acknowledged. It shows the author’s name as “Mad[52]elle Mendelssohn-Bartholdy” with the additional footnote on the bottom, “Now Madame Hensel.”

According to Larry Todd, the suppression of a female composer’s name was a common practice of the time.

Why did Felix subsume three of Fanny’s songs into his own opus? Postmodern standards might vilify his action as artistic theft. But Fanny’s anonymity reflected her time, when many women writers and artists (e.g., the Brontës, George Sand, and George Eliot) adopted masculine pseudonyms to circumvent societal restrictions; indeed, Felix’s aunt Dorothea had published several articles under Friedrich Schlegel’s name. No less meaningful for Fanny than the gender divide was the class divide, which restricted ladies of leisure from pursuing “public” professions.

Fanny’s father Abraham also agreed with this common societal practice; and when Fanny was young, he assured her that a musical profession was not her destiny. In his letter of 1820 Abraham explained that music “can and must only be an ornament, never the root

52 *Harmonicon* 8 (1830), 99.

53 Ibid., 99.

54 Todd, 175-76.
of your being and doing.”55 On Fanny’s twenty-third birthday in 1828, Abraham admonished Fanny that she “must become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the only calling of a young woman—I mean the state of a housewife.”56 These letters have prompted twentieth-century scholars in gender studies to identify Fanny as a victim of a chauvinistic society. But Abraham’s concern was not to abandon his daughter’s talent and restrict her to the female role; rather, he was trying to protect her and guide her to a more comfortable, happier life. Fanny was also aware of her status as an upper-class young female and accepted her responsibility. For instance, she voluntarily provided her music to be published under her brother’s name, which was an indirect achievement as a composer. When Felix decided to publish a second set of the Lieder, he asked Fanny to select the contents, and she again added three of her own Lieder.57 In a letter to his father, Felix wrote that “. . . Fanny, without further consulting me, should select from her works or mine just as she pleases, the only stipulation being that the accompaniments must be simple and there must be at least one merry, cheerful piece in quick tempo.”58 The collection was printed in two volumes in 1830, and the second volume, like the first, contains three of Fanny’s Lieder: Op. 9, No. 7 “Sehnsucht,” No. 10 “Verlust,” and No. 12 “Die Nonne.” Finally, in 1837, the publisher Schlesinger asked Fanny to include one of her Lieder, “Die Schiffende,” in an album and published it under her name. In 1839 another Lied, “Äolsharfe auf dem Schlosse zu Baden,” was published, again bearing her name; it was included in the collection of Rhein-Sagen und Lieder by J. M. Dunst of Cologne and Bonn.

55 Sebastian Hensel, 82.

56 Ibid., 84.

57 Todd, 216.

58 Rudolf Elvers, Forward from Ausgewählte Klavierwerke by Fanny Hensel, vi.
Table 1: Fanny Hensel’s Works Published before 1846

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work Title</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>“Die Schwalbe”</td>
<td>as a music supplement of the <em>Rheinblüthen</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>“Das Heimweh” (Heimweh)</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 8, No. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Italien” (Zwischen Gaeta und Capua)</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 8, No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>“Suleika und Hatem”</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 8, No. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>“Sehnsucht” (Geräusch)</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 9, No. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Verlust” (Und wüsstens die Blumen)</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 9, No.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Die Nonne”</td>
<td>in FMB’s Op. 9, No. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>“Ave Maria”</td>
<td><em>Harmonicon</em> as a supplement of a <em>Collection of Vocal and Instrumental Music</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>“Die Schiffende”</td>
<td>in Schlesinger’s <em>Album</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>“Die Äolsharfe auf dem Schlosse zu Baden” (Schloss Liebeneck)</td>
<td>in the collection of <em>Rhein- Sagen und Lieder</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 1 indicates, ten known compositions of Fanny had been published prior to her Op. 1 in 1846, just three of these being attributed to her. It also shows that her name appeared only after her father’s death in 1835, the only exception being “Ave Maria,” which was published in England. Although Fanny was able to publish her compositions in these various ways, she began in the mid-1830s to reveal her desire to publish under her own name. In her letter to Karl Klingemann of July 15, 1836, Fanny expressed her struggle.

I must add that it is a pleasure to me to find a public for my little pieces in London, for here I have none at all... Now that Rebecca (her sister) has left off singing, my songs lie unheeded and unknown. If nobody ever offers an opinion, or takes the slightest interest in one’s production, one loses in time not only all pleasure in them, but all power of judging their value. Felix, who is
alone a sufficient public for me, is so seldom here that he cannot help me much, and thus I am thrown back entirely on myself. But my one delight in music and Hensel’s sympathy keep me awake still, and I can’t help considering it a sign of talent that I do not give it up, though I can get nobody to take an interest in my efforts. 59

As this letter indicates, Fanny’s activity in her Sonntagsmusik and Felix’s encouragement to keep her composing were not sufficient to give adequate stimulus for creating fine music, and she easily fell into a slump. In addition, married life distracted her from composing. She also had a miscarriage and a dangerous pregnancy that caused her health to deteriorate. She had active support from her husband, however, who respected his wife’s talent and encouraged her to keep working. Fanny wrote in her letter to Felix: “My husband has given me the duty of going to the piano every morning immediately after breakfast, because interruption upon interruption occurs later on.”60 Wilhelm’s encouragement even extended to urging her to publish. Sebastian mentioned in his book that “Hensel had always wished some of his wife’s compositions to be published, and after the success of the attempt already mentioned to urge her to go on.”61 Accordingly, Fanny tried to pursue publication, and she carefully brought up the subject of publishing in a letter to Felix:

You ask what I’ve composed, and I answer, a half-dozen piano pieces, as per your instructions. I’ll send them to you with Paul. If you have time, play them through sometime or have one of your students play them, and let me know what you think. I bear such a great similarity to your students that I always find it most profitable if you tell me to do this or that. In the recent past, I’ve been frequently asked, once again, about publishing something; should I do it?62

The piano pieces that Fanny mentioned in this letter were written during 1836 and 1837 (MAMs 44). After her marriage in 1829 Fanny produced hardly any notable piano works.

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60 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 96.
After she regained her health and finished nursing her son, however, she took a decisive step forward as a serious composer by creating a large set of piano works.

This ambition to publish a large new collection resulted in MAMs 44, now stored at the Mendelssohn Archive of the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. It shows a clear purpose of targeting a specific audience. Camilla Cai pointed out that “these pieces are an important type of nineteenth-century music written not for the public concert hall, but for private gatherings of connoisseurs. The expectations of this style are as particular and exacting as those of the concert hall. These fairly short pieces with appealing melodies, but also with sections of sharp contrast and technical display, are intended not only to appeal to the emotions, but to dazzle with their brilliance.”

The MAMs 44 manuscript consists of ten numbered works and one unnumbered work, in a variety of styles and lengths. The pieces are not in chronological order, showing that they were selected later from her earlier compositions and bound together as a set. As Table 2 shows, No. 7 and No. 8 are reversed in order, and the single unnumbered piece is placed after No. 1, suggesting that last-minute changes were made. Engraver’s markings in the scores show that the collection was handed to an unknown engraver, presumably the Berlin publisher Adolph Schlesinger.

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Fanny’s mother Lea also remarked about these works: “For about a year she’s been composing many excellent works, especially for the piano”; but Felix was reluctant to agree to the publication.\textsuperscript{64} Sebastian also mentioned the conflict in his book:

Her mother was of the same opinion, and begged Felix in the summer of 1837 to persuade Fanny to publish. The one success had not altered Felix’s views about publishing in general, however, and he declined to persuade his sister; and Fanny, who had herself no desire to appear in print, and

\textsuperscript{64} Todd, 352.
had yielded only to please her husband, readily gave up the idea. It was, however, resumed at a much later date, and carried out to a very small extent.  

Fanny respected and loved her parents and her brother, and as she indicated in her letter to Felix, she was “desirous during her entire life to please Felix and everyone whom I love.” It was difficult to press ahead without consent from Felix. In her letter of November 22, 1836, she discussed the issue with him:

> With regard to my publishing I stand like the donkey between two bales of hay. I have to admit honestly that I’m rather neutral about it, and Hensel, on the one hand, is for it, and you, on the other, are against it. I would of course comply totally with the wishes of my husband in any other matter, yet on this issue alone it’s crucial to have your consent, for without it I might not undertake anything of the kind.

Here, “the kind” means the publication of “Die Schiffende,” which, as already mentioned, was composed in 1827 and published by Schlesinger in 1837; this was the only time that both Felix’s and Fanny’s names appeared together as authors. Fanny’s Lied was praised by both audiences and critics, and Felix mentioned the publication in his letter of January 24, 1837:

> Do you know, Fenchel, that your A major lied in Schlesinger’s Album is creating furor here? That the new Musikalische Zeitung (I mean its editor . . . ) raves about you. That everybody says it’s the best in the Album—a bad compliment, for is there anything else good? That they really like it? Are you now a real author, and does that make you happy?

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65 Sebastian Hensel, II 33.

66 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 349.

67 Ibid, 222.

68 Ibid., 230-1.
The Lied was performed at a concert at which Felix was present, and he experienced the success of her song and wrote: “I, for my part, give thanks in the name of the public in Leipzig and other places that you published against my wishes.”

Felix’s encouragement for Fanny’s piano pieces continued in his letter of November 14, 1838:

To my great joy I see that clearly again in the piano pieces that you sent me through Paul and Albertine. There are indeed some excellent qualities about them and I thank you very much for the great joy I’ve derived from them. It is so rare that new music pleases one so thoroughly, and the impression is so much the greater when one meets up with the Right—as if one were staring it in the face—and is forced to say “There it is.” I experience such feelings with many of your pieces, immediately upon the first playing, but in particular at the close of the first in B-flat major, which is extremely endearing, and then at the slow one in G major, which pleases me exceedingly. However, I’ve only been able to play through them once and want to write you something in detail when I’m better acquainted with them and will have gained more pleasure from them.

These positive comments on Fanny’s works appear to contradict his opposition to her taking up a career in publication. Although Felix continued his support for Fanny’s musical activity, he did not encourage her to publish. He respected her musicianship, often discussed his works with her, and applied her suggestions to his compositions. He trusted Fanny’s decisions and even allowed her to collect his songs for publication without consulting with him. However, Felix still hesitated to push Fanny to be a professional musician.

Both Fanny and Felix were raised with high standards and aimed for perfection in every respect. This attitude applied very seriously to their respective musical responsibilities, his as a professional musician and hers as a skilled amateur. For this reason, both Felix and Fanny were highly critical of mediocre performances. His personality was described by Jack Werner: “... when he liked a thing, he liked it with his whole heart, but if it did not please him, he would sometimes use the most singular

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69 Ibid., 231.

70 Ibid., 219-21.
language.”71 Felix was considered a child prodigy comparable to Mozart, but he worked very hard to meet expectations. “He also had a great deal of the ‘artistic temperament’ generally considered indispensable to genius (though more often than not serving as a substitute), and his normal gaiety was often clouded over by fits of acute depression and irritability, particularly later in life when he wore himself out by sheer over-work.”72 Felix’s expectations of a professional composer may have been excessive, and his patriarchal attitude was possibly to blame for this. However, his advice to Fanny was based on his own experience. Moreover, he was concerned about Fanny’s physical and emotional capacity to accomplish two demanding jobs: mother and musician. Felix’s concern was well described in a letter to Lea: “Please also write me sometime whether Fanny gets exhausted from her large gatherings and the music making. They always made me very tired, and since Fanny suffers from weak nerves, I think she must be very careful.”73 Therefore, when Lea asked his consent on her publication, Felix refused to do so. Felix answered Lea’s letter as follows:

You write to me about Fanny’s new compositions, and say that I ought to persuade her to publish them . . . But to persuade her to publish anything I cannot, because this is contrary to my views and to my convictions. We have often formerly discussed the subject, and I still remain exactly of the same opinion. I consider the publication of a work as a serious matter . . . If she resolved to publish, either from her own impulse or to please Hensel, I am, as I said before, quite ready to assist her as far as I can; but to encourage her in what I do not consider right, is what I cannot do.74

It is not clear how well Fanny received Felix’s advice, but in fact she did not begin to publish at that time.

71 Jack Werner, 314.
72 Ibid., 312.
73 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 239.
74 Camilla Cai, Songs for Pianoforte, viii.
Her publication project postponed, Fanny fulfilled her lifelong dream of visiting Italy, where her musical talent was widely praised. The inspiration of the journey led her to work on bigger projects, and she finally decided to publish her first collection of Lieder under her own name. In her diary of July 1846, Fanny wrote:

I have decided to issue my works in print. Bote & Bock have made offers to me the likes of which have perhaps never before been given a dilettante composer of my sex, whereupon Schlesinger even outdid them. I do not in the least imagine that this will continue, but am pleased at the moment, having decided to embark on this course, to see my best works appear in print.  

Although publication had been a major issue in Fanny’s musical growth, she never initiated it or exerted herself to print her works. However, the encouragement from her husband and friends, as well as appealing offers by publishers, led Fanny to make this decision. In her letter to a friend, Angelica von Woringen, she explains that publication had not been her inclination, but she also admits that continuing publication would give her motivation to compose.

I’m glad that you, dear Angela, are interested in the publication of my lieder. I was always afraid of being disparaged by my dearest friends, since I’ve always expressed myself against it. In addition, I can truthfully say that I let it happen more than made it happen, and it is this in particular that cheers me... If they want more from me, it should act as a stimulus to achieve, if possible, more. If the matter comes to an end then, I also won’t grieve, for I’m not ambitious, and so I haven’t yet had the occasion to regret my decision.

After Fanny made the decision, instead of consulting Felix, she cautiously notified him about her publication and asked his acceptance.

. . . Actually I wouldn’t expect you to read this rubbish now, busy as you are, if I didn’t have to tell you something. But since I know from the start that you won’t like it, it’s a bit awkward to get under way. So laugh at me or not, as you wish: I’m afraid of my brothers at age 40, as I was of Father at age 12—or, more aptly expressed, desirous of pleasing you and everyone I’ve loved.

75 Fanny Hensel, Letters, 349-351.

76 Ibid., 352.
throughout my life. And when I now know in advance that it won’t be the case, I thus feel RATHER uncomfortable. In a word, I’m beginning to publish. I have Herr Bock’s sincere offer for my lieder and have finally turned a receptive ear to his favorable terms. And if I’ve done it of my own free will and cannot blame anyone in my family if aggravation results from it (friends and acquaintances have indeed been urging me for a long time), then I can console myself, on the other hand, with the knowledge that I in no way sought out or induced the type of musical reputation that might have elicited such offers. I hope I won’t disgrace all of you through my publishing, as I’m no femme libre and unfortunately not even an adherent of the Young Germany movement. I trust you will in no way be bothered by it, since, as you can see, I’ve proceeded completely on my own, in order to spare you any possible unpleasant moment, and I hope you won’t think badly of me. If it succeeds—that is, if the pieces are well liked and I receive additional offers—I know it will be a great stimulus to me, something I’ve always needed in order to create. If not, I’ll be as indifferent as I’ve always been and not be upset, and then if I work less or stop completely, nothing will have been lost by that either.77

Felix did not respond immediately, but about a month later he replied to Fanny as follows:

My dearest Fenchel, only today, just before leaving, do I, hard-hearted brother, get round to answering your kind letter and give you my professional blessing upon your decision to enter our guild. I give it to you now, Fenchel, and may you obtain satisfaction and joy from providing delight and joy to others; may you know only the pleasures of being a composer and none of the miseries; may the public only send you roses and never sand; may the printer’s ink never seem black or oppressive to you—in fact, I think there can be no doubt in the matter. Why did I not wish you this before? It’s only because of the guild, so that I too could give you my blessing, as I now have.78

With the blessing of Felix, Fanny finally printed her first publication of Sechs Lieder, Op. 1, published by Bote und Bock in 1846; and Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte, Op. 2, followed soon thereafter. The first review was of Op. 2 and appeared in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik in 1847:

77 Ibid., 349-351.

78 Tillard, 325.
Of the four lieder presented here, whose outward appearance does not at all betray a woman’s hand, but suggests an artistic study of masculine seriousness, it seems to us that the final one is the freest and the most profound, whereas the others lack either a commanding individual idea, or else clear phrasing. We shall reserve a more detailed and general judgment until familiar with other works by the composer.\textsuperscript{79}

Although the \textit{Neue Zeitschrift für Musik} was known for its cutting remarks and acerbic tone, Fanny’s review was positive and promising. This encouraged her to continue publishing, and the next year she produced \textit{Gartenlieder: Sechs Gesänge für Sopran, Alto, Tenor und Bass}, Op. 3, which included six part songs composed in 1846. This collection shows Fanny’s preference for pastoral poetry and her familiarity with the genre. She composed more than sixty part songs but she published this collection only. Another favorable review, this one of her set of songs published as Op. 4, was presented by Dr. Emanuel Klitzsch in the \textit{Neue Zeitschrift für Musik}, where he remarked that

\begin{quote}
The lieder by Fanny Hensel, \textit{née} Mendelssohn Bartholdy, stand out from many others of the same kind through their artistic concept, even if we find less individuality and discern in them the prevalence of gracious, pleasant element rather than a powerful feeling drawn from deep conviction. The harmonic language is highly select and one cannot fail to recognize an artistic hand. All are bathed in a tender and poetic atmosphere, particularly No. 1 \textit{Hörst du nicht die Bäumen rauschen} (Don’t you hear the trees rustling) of Eichendorff and No. 3 \textit{Im Herbst} (To autumn) by Uhland, in which we point to the central phrase \textit{Ahnest du, o Seele, wieder} (Do you recognize, my soul) as being remarkably well-tuned.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Her successful publication led Schlesinger to request the opportunity to print her music, and \textit{Six Melodies for Piano} was published in two volumes, Op. 4, Nos. 1-3, and Op. 5, Nos. 4-6. Then Fanny prepared more compositions for Bote und Bock, \textit{Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte}, Op. 6, and \textit{Sechs Lieder}, Op. 7, but these were published only after her death.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 330.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 331.
Table 3: Publications under Fanny Hensel’s Supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Sechs Lieder</em>, Bote und Bock,</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte</em>, Bote und Bock</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Gartenlieder: Sechs Gesänge für Sopran, Alto, Tenor und Bass</em>, Bote und Bock</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Six Mélodies for Piano</em> No. 1-3, Schlesinger</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Six Mélodies for Piano</em> No. 4-6, Schlesinger</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte</em>, Bote und Bock</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Sechs Lieder</em>, Bote und Bock</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More publications followed after Fanny’s death, but those were prepared by either Felix or the family members; Fanny organized only the seven opera shown in Table 3. The following chapter will focus on the fourteen individual pieces for piano, from Opp. 2, 4, 5 and 6.
CHAPTER 5
ANALYSIS

Background

When Fanny published her first set of piano works, Felix’s collections of *Lieder ohne Worte* had already garnered popularity throughout Europe. As Camilla Cai aptly noted, credit for the development of the “song without words” could be shared by both siblings.\(^1\) Fanny, however, needed to differentiate her works from Felix’s already well-known *Lieder ohne Worte*, so she named her first set of piano works *Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte*, Op. 2. Later Bote und Bock published another set of *Vier Lieder für das Pianoforte*, Op. 6; but between Opp. 2 and 6 Fanny allowed Schlesinger to publish a two-volume collection bearing the title *Six Mélodies pour le Piano*, Opp. 4 and 5. Though the titles of Opp. 2 and 6 are in German and Opp. 4 and 5 are in French, the meanings are essentially the same; they both deal with the piano in a singing manner.

Rey Longyear has written that the Lied was “one of the few genuinely new forms of the Romantic Era,”\(^2\) and from an early age Fanny poured the majority of her creative effort and expression into this genre, extending it to her short piano pieces, as she composed song-like piano works throughout her life. The Lied was a gender-appropriate genre for her, and at the same time it was convenient and effective for her domestic concerts.

According to Marcia Citron, the characteristic elements of Fanny’s *Lieder* follow in the north German Lied tradition, and Zelter’s influence is evident.

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Most of the Lieder of the 1820s show clearly the influence of the *Volkslied*, espoused by Zelter. Strophic form, sparse texture, repetitive rhythms in the voice and accompaniment, clear-cut phrases, syllabic text setting, few expression marks, diatonic harmony, diatonic melody, and a minimal sense of dramatic pacing characterize this style.\(^3\)

Zelter’s impact on Fanny’s composition may have been unavoidable, but an even more direct influence can be found in Ludwig Berger’s music. The current *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* carries very little information about Berger, and in studies about Felix Mendelssohn, Berger is known simply as a pianist and as Fanny’s and Felix’s piano teacher. His influence on Felix’s music has not been widely recognized, but is briefly acknowledged by the following statement: “Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte* stem directly from Berger’s Etudes, Opp.12 and 22, as a comparison between Berger’s Op.12 No.11 in G minor and Mendelssohn’s Op.38, No.2 in C minor confirms.”\(^4\) Since Fanny and Felix shared many common features, Berger’s influence on Fanny was also significant. Example 1 shows similar characteristics that may be found in the piano works of both Fanny and Felix. The song-like melody line with two layers of accompaniment, bass notes and middle section chords, creates three-hand writing, and is a typical feature of Fanny’s piano works.

\(^3\) Marcia Citron, “The Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel,” 581.

Example 1. Ludwig Berger Piano Etude Op. 12, No. 11
As Citron noted (see page 44), Fanny’s earlier *Lieder* show some limitations; however, her natural ability to create beautiful melodic lines and her skillful treatment of piano accompaniments date even to her early years. In one of these early works, *Ave Maria*, composed when Fanny was only fifteen years old, the melody is supported by a simple accompaniment in a straightforward manner (see Example 2 following, and earlier references to songs on pages 31 and 32).
Example 2. “Ave Maria”
General Overview

Victoria Sirota divided Hensel’s compositions into three periods. The early period extends from the beginning of her study with Zelter until her marriage, the middle period until her trip to Italy, and the mature period until her death. Fanny composed a large amount of music overall, about 130 piano compositions including sonatas, etudes, contrapuntal works, and suites; but she selected only short piano pieces for publication. Usually the title of these expressive lyrical character pieces was simply Klavierstück, but the manuscripts show that four of the published works had had subtitles, as Table 4 illustrates. In the publication, however, only one subtitle remained: Jl (sic) saltarello romano, Op. 6, No. 4. Other subtitles, such as “September,” “Villa Mills” and “O Traum der Jugend o goldner Stern,” were suppressed at publication.

These pieces were composed mostly during her mature period; the only exception is the first piece, Op. 2, No. 1, from her MAMs 44 collection, which dates from 1836. Op. 2, No. 2, “September,” was originally composed for the cyclic piano work Das Jahr. September had special meaning for Fanny, since her Italian journey started and ended in this month and she included only this piece from the cycle. Other titles also show direct influence from the trip to Italy: “Villa Mills” and “Il saltarello romano.” Also, according to Cai, even though the autograph of Op. 2, No. 3, was titled “Lied,” it contains Fanny’s handwritten marking “aus meinem Reise Album” (from my travel album). These published pieces were clearly indebted to her experience in Italy.

Unlike her earlier autographs, Fanny’s published works include specific notational instructions to the performer, such as tempo indications, pedal markings and phrasing. For example, the autograph of “September” (1842) shows the tempo marking Andante con moto quasi Allegro. In the publication, however, she changed it to Andante con moto. As Examples 3 and 4 from the published score (1846) show, Fanny was specific

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85 Sirota, 139.
86 Camilla Cai, Songs for Pianoforte, xii.
87 Boyes, 89.
with the phrasing of the melody, which gives a better sense of the direction of the line. Especially detailed pedal markings are notable, since her earlier works did not show such indications. With these phrasing lines and pedal markings, Fanny tried to demonstrate the direction and flow of the music.

Example 3. Op. 5, No. 5, mm. 12-15

Example 4. Op. 4, No. 1, mm. 67-72

In her early years, Fanny owned an 1820 English Broadwood piano that had a split damper pedal and two different hammer coverings. These devices gave the pianist the options to produce a more resonant bass sound and a clearer sound in the treble register. In a letter to Klingemann in 1837 Fanny expressed her preference for an English
piano that had more complex mechanisms and more variety of dynamic range. Judging by this preference, one could speculate that Fanny favored a richer tone with a variety of sounds that would enable her to create more sensitive melodic lines. Fanny expressed these ideas by adding markings such as “La melodia ben legata” or “tutto legato e cantata.” In one instance, Op. 5, No. 6, Fanny added una corda, indicating that a sudden shift of sonority is required. According to Sirota, this was modeled after Beethoven’s piano works such as Beethoven’s fourth piano concerto and the last three piano sonatas.

Example 5. Op. 5, No. 6, mm 61-63

These markings give clear instructions to the pianists who used her publications. The majority of these pianists were skilled amateur players who could enjoy the sensitivity and elegance of Fanny’s music along with a challenge of medium technical difficulty.

Fanny was a superb pianist, and her capability and knowledge of virtuoso pianistic effects are evident in her Übungsstücke and in more expansive works such as her earlier MAMs 44 collection and Das Jahr. However, the works Fanny chose for publication were not so demanding and virtuosic. Her inclusion of petite works such as Op. 4, No. 2, and Op. 5, No. 4, can be understood in this regard. To satisfy her audience Fanny also tried to create in each collection a variety of moods and textures, as shown in the tempo markings, time signatures and the lengths of the pieces given in Table 1 show. However, her choice of relatively simple pieces does not diminish the quality of her music, and her elegance and brilliance remained.

88 Sirota, 144-5.
Table 4: General Features of Opp. 2, 4, 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Sig.</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mea.</th>
<th>Tempo marking</th>
<th>Special Indication</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Op.2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>G/g/G</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>1836</td>
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<td>b/b-flat/b</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Andante con moto</td>
<td>September, Am Fluß 1841</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>E/e/E</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Allegretto grazioso</td>
<td>Lied, Villa Mills 1840</td>
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<td>No.4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Allegro molto vivace</td>
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<td>No.4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>12/8</td>
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<td>Lento Appassionato</td>
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<td>O Traum der Jugend, o goldner Stern 1846</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Allegro molto</td>
<td>Il saltarello romano 1841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MELODY**

Fanny’s published works clearly emphasize the expressive element of lyrical melody. The distinctive feature of her melodies is a restrained simple line; stepwise motion with plain rhythms dominate, and usually the melody stays in the pitch range of
the human voice. As Examples 3 and 4 show, stepwise melodic lines have their own stems and phrase marks for clarity. Melodies are placed in the treble and are very songlike, but compared to her vocal songs they cover a wider range of pitches and include more leaps (see Example 6).

Example 6. Op. 2, No. 3, mm. 1-23

Occasionally a melody is displaced in an inner or lower part, sometimes creating a contrapuntal texture (see Examples 7 and 8). Contrapuntal writing was a familiar texture
to Fanny. She had written numerous contrapuntal exercises since childhood and had produced about five piano compositions called *fuge* or *fugata*, but she minimized the complexity of fugal texture in her published works. In Example 8, for instance, a brief melodic theme is immediately introduced and is imitated in other voices creating musical continuity with a developmental context.

![Example 7. Op. 2, No. 1, mm. 12-23](image7.png)

![Example 8. Op. 6, No. 4, mm. 13-15](image8.png)

Another recognizable technique Fanny used was doubling the melody line in octaves. In this way she enhanced the sonority and the volume to increase the intensity of the music. Sometimes she used chords instead of octaves in the same manner (see Examples 9 and 10).
Example 9. Op. 2, No. 2, mm. 36-41

Example 10. Op. 6, No. 2, mm. 49-54
The melody lines are effectively supported by the accompanimental figurations, often with arpeggiated chords or block chords. These figures enhance the expression of her intentionally simplified melody lines, but sometimes they create technical difficulties as Example 11 shows. Inner lines are played by alternating hands, while the melody is in the upper part, a technique that requires well-balanced voicing.

Example 11. Op. 2, No. 4, mm. 1-4

Fanny generally employed four-bar phrases; however, she often modified the lines into irregular phrase groupings. These may constructed from sequential repetitions of a two-bar unit, or the addition of one or two bars that generates unexpected extensions or abrupt changes of phrase lines, such as 2+4+2, 4+4+2, or 4+4+5. In Example 12 from Op. 4, No. 2, the slurs show the irregular grouping of 2+4+2.
Similar irregular phrases appear frequently in her songs, such as in *Nachtwanderer*, Op. 7, No. 1, composed in 1843, which has a two-measure introduction followed by 4+3 phrasing. Here the irregular phrasing is a result of the text and generates an asymmetrical phrase structure.
Although works for solo piano have no text, Fanny chose to use song-derived irregular phrasing in some of her piano pieces, and sometimes also added introductions as shown in Examples 14 and 15. The combination of four-bar introduction and regular 4+4 phrasing serves the same function as irregular divisions and create asymmetrical phrasing structure, which creates a more interesting melodic line.
Andante soave.  
tutto legato  
e cantato.

Example 15. Op. 5, No. 6, mm. 1-14
FORM

Fanny used rather conservative, uncomplicated formal structures in her piano works, in which the ternary A-B-A' form dominates. The three sections are more or less equal in length, and usually the A section serves an expository function. Often the A and B sections are connected by a transition that includes innovative modulation, and the transition leads to a contrasting B section. Fanny typically separates the A and B sections by changes of key signature and/or texture, and the B sections are in closely related or parallel keys. As Table 1 shows, five works explore parallel key relationships, exposing Fanny’s preference for them. Often the tonality of a B section is unclear because of the continual modulation. However, the restatement of A always appears in the home key without changing its melodic shape. Examples 16 through 18 show the parallel key relationship, section A in G major, section B in G minor; and the clear restatement of A.


Example 17. Op. 2, No. 1, mm. 35-38
Fanny’s intention to avoid complex formal structure was due to her desire to focus on restrained and simple melodies. Though this approach could have resulted in a lack of structural variety, her works provide contrasting B sections and brilliant modulations to counteract that potential.

**HARMONY**

The most striking element of Fanny’s piano works is the creative and adventurous use of harmony. Sirota noted that:

Her harmonic language trades heavily in devices which were to become typical of the expansion of the tonal spectrum of the middle romantic period: modal interchange, the augmented sixth chord, diminished seventh chord, and Neapolitan (the latter used as both chord and key area).\(^{89}\)

As Sirota stated, Fanny departed from conventional harmonic patterns, and she juxtaposed unexpected harmonies in such a way as to give drama to the music but still preserve elegance and sensitivity. Her use of chromaticism is the most notable feature of her piano works. Fanny used chromatic harmonic movement to focus on the linear melodic lines and to produce a variety of harmonic colors. Her most distinctive uses of chromaticism can be identified in two different categories: 1) linear chromaticism and 2) modal mixture. As Examples 19 and 20 show, the linear chromaticism can be found in both upper and lower parts. The chromatic ascending bass line is shown in Example 19, and Example 20 displays the soprano melody derived from the arpeggiated harmonies, descending chromatically and prolonging the dominant chord.

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\(^{89}\) Sirota, 251-2.
Example 19. Op. 6, No. 4, mm. 97-100

Example 20. Op. 2, No. 4, mm. 49-50

The extended chromatic chordal passage and the dominant pedal in Example 20 shows that Fanny was trying to avoid a conventional cadence and to lengthen the cadential passage.

Fanny also made liberal use of modal mixture to add expressive character to her music. In Example 21, the major subdominant chord is followed by a minor subdominant, supporting the chromatic movement, F#-F-E, of the melody line. Another example of modal mixture is shown in Example 22 in which A major is gracefully sequenced into a brief stay in A minor through the use of the D minor chord (subdominant) in measure 15. This minor borrowing enhances voice leading through motion by half step, which creates a dramatic effect.
Another interesting harmonic feature of Fanny’s music is the tonally ambiguous beginning. She often started a piece in the dominant key and disguised the real tonality, as Op. 2, No. 1 shows. The piece is in G major, but it begins on the dominant seventh chord and prolongs it until the end of the first period. In measure 7 there is a brief entry of the tonic chord, but it immediately modulates by chromatic movement in the bass (see Example 23).
Fanny used the same technique at the beginning of Op. 5, No. 5. As Example 24 shows, a D major chord in first inversion starts the piece, but the home key of G major is established in measure 3.
In addition to the harmonic features described above, Fanny also made extensive use of diminished seventh chords and altered chords. Also, according to Sirota, Fanny’s harmonic vocabulary was “based on tertial relationships and common tone modulations”\textsuperscript{90}.

\textsuperscript{90} Sirota, 142.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Analysis of Fanny Hensel’s published piano works shows that even though her musical background was conservative, she was following Romantic trends of her time. Her piano works grew out of an established song tradition and exhibit the influence of the north German Lied. She preferred relatively small forms and focused on melodic lines that were closely integrated with their accompaniments. The texture and figuration of Fanny’s accompaniments vary, but her creative treatment of harmony remains throughout her pieces. This bold harmonic treatment includes distant key relations and unexpected modulations that sometimes result in tonal ambiguity.

Her published piano works were products of her family tradition and the prevailing salon movement of the time. Fanny chose effective musical language and simple, often asymmetrical, melodies with captivating accompaniments to express emotion in her works and to appeal to the intimately gathered salon audiences. The potential commercial value of her music can be assessed by the competition for her music between two of the most prestigious publishers, Bote und Bock and Schlesinger, and the evaluation of her published music by one of the most critical journals, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. It is unfortunate that her talent and music did not have time to gain wider recognition and that today her gender is often a central historiographic issue, because her published music shows that Fanny was one of the most significant female musicians of the Romantic period.

The primary purpose of this treatise has been to evaluate Fanny Hensel’s life and her published piano works. The exploration of her life and music revealed that Fanny produced music of admirable quality and quantity. She received a well structured musical education including composition lessons, which was unusual for women at that time, and her status enabled her to maintain her musical activity throughout her life. She was fortunate enough to have a musical companion in her brother Felix and a dedicated supporter in her husband Wilhelm. Several scholars and Mendelssohn researchers have
represented her situation as being overshadowed by her brother Felix, and the struggles she endured as a female musician have often been overstated. This study, however, has focused on a portion of her music, namely the fourteen published piano works that Fanny prepared carefully for publication. Further research on her piano works, especially her dynamic harmonies, should facilitate her acceptance in more performers’ repertoires. Also, further analysis of the *Etudes* of Hans Ludwig Berger could reveal the foundation of both Felix and Fanny’s *Lieder ohne Worte*. 
APPENDIX

List of Solo Piano Works by Fanny Hensel

1. (*HU 1) 1819 - 12 Gavotten (lost)
2. (HU 4) 1820 - Klavierstück in d
3. (HU 29) 1821 - Klavierstück in e
4. (HU 30) 1821 - Klavierstück in E. Andante
5. (HU 37) 1821 - Klavierstück in g. Allegro
6. (HU 39) 1821 - Klavierstück in Bb
7. (HU 40) 1821 - Klavierstück in g. Allegro agitato
8. (HU 41) 1821 - Klavierstück in Ab
9. (HU 42) 1821 - Klavierstück in a (frag)
10. (HU 43) 1821 - Sonate in F (lost)
11. (HU 44) 1822 - Sonatensatz in E. Allegro assai moderato
12. (HU 53) 1822 - Übungsstück in C. Allegro moderato
13. (HU 67) 1823 - Übungsstück in C. Allegro molto
14. (HU 69) 1823 - Übungsstück in g. Allegro agitato
15. (HU 71) 1823 - Übungsstück in g. Allegro moderato
16. (HU 74) 1823 - Übungsstück in eb. Larghetto
17. (HU 79) 1823 - Übungsstück in G. Allegro assai moderato
18. (HU 81) 1823 - Walzer für den Herzog von Rovigo (four-hands)
19. (HU 84) 1823 - Übungsstück in G. Presto
20. (HU 86) 1823 - Übungsstück in C. Allegro ma non troppo
21. (HU 88) 1823 - Übungsstück in C
22. (HU 92) 1823 - Übungsstück in b. Allegro ma non troppo
23. (HU 96) 1823 - Übungsstück in g
24. (HU 99) 1823 - Klavierstück in C. Lento ma non troppo
25. (HU 102) 1823 - Klavierstück in Bb. Andantino
26. (HU 103) 1823 - Übungsstück in d. Allegro molto agitato
27. (HU 108) 1823 - Übungsstück in C. Allegro di molto
28. (HU 113) 1824 - Sonata o capriccio in f
   1. Adagio
   2. Andante sostenuto e con espressivo
   3. Allegro molto
29. (HU 114) 1824 - Tokkate in c. Allegro moderato
30. (HU 116) 1824 - Klavierstück in c
31. (HU 123) 1824 - Übungsstück in g. Allegretto
32. (HU 127) 1824 - Gigue in e. Allegro
33. (HU 128) 1824 - Sonate in c
   1. Allegro moderato e con espressione
   2. Andante con moto
   3. Finale. presto.
34. (HU 130) 1824 - Klavierstück in g. Allegro di molto
35. (HU 132) 1824 - Klavierstück in f
36. (HU 136) 1824 - Übungsstück in c. Allegro assai
37. (HU 139) 1824 - Klavierstück in c. Allegro
38. (HU 140) 1824 - 32 Fugen (lost)
39. (HU 144) 1825 - Klavierstück in g
40. (HU 145) 1825 - Klavierstück in f
41. (HU 146) 1825 - Klavierstück in c. Andante con moto
42. (HU 165) 1826 - Capriccio in F#. Humoristisch und etwas ironisch
43. (HU 166) 1826 - Etüde in F. Allegro moderatissimo
44. (HU 167) 1826 - Klavierstück in f. Allegro ma non troppo
45. (HU 177) 1826 - Klavierstück in d. Andante
46. (HU 181) 1826 - Klavierstück in c. Andante con espressione
47. (HU 183) 1826 - Klavierstück in c. Allegro di molto (frag)
48. (HU 184) 1826 - Walzer in F#. Westöstlicher redaktionswalzer
49. (HU 187) 1826 - Klavierstück (lost)
50. (HU 193) 1827 - Fugata in Eb. Largo non troppo lento
51. (HU 200) 1827 - Klavierstück in b. Andante
52. (HU 202) 1827 - Klavierstück in f
53. (HU 214) 1827 - Klavierbuch in e
   1. Präludio
   2. Fuga
   3. Allegro di molto
   4. Largo
   5. Präludio
   6. Toccata
   7. Anhang. Fuga (frag)

54. (HU 216) 1828 - Klavierstück in e

55. (HU 223) 1828 - Fuge (lost)

56. (HU 229) 1829 - Klavierstück in E

57. (HU 231) 1829 - Präludium in a (frag)

58. (HU 235) 1829 - Ostersonate (lost)

59. (HU 239) 1829 - Klavierstück in a. Presto

60. (HU 246) 1829 - Sonate in Eb(incomplete)
   1. Adagio
   2. Intermezzo. Allegretto
   3. Largo molto

61. (HU 251) 1830 - Präludium in a

62. (HU 253) 1830 - Fantasie in Ab. Adagio

63. (HU 263) 1832 - Das nordlicht. Allegro di molto (frag)

64. (HU 267) 1832 - Klavierstück in c. Con moto (frag)

65. (HU 269) 1832 - Duett in A. Andante

66. (HU 273) 1834 - Fuge in Eb

67. (HU 294) 1836 - Klavierstück in Bb. Allegretto grazioso

68. (HU 299) 1836 - Klavierstück in C. Prestissimo

69. (HU 300) 1836 - Klavierstück in g. Allegro agitato

70. (HU 301) 1836 - Klavierstück in G. Andante (Op.2, No. 1)

71. (HU 302) 1836 - Klavierstück in f. Allegro agitato

72. (HU 303) 1836 - Klavierstück in F. Allegro con spirit

73. (HU 304) 1836 - Klavierstück in f. Allegro con brio
74.  (HU 308) 1836 - Capriccio in f#.  Allegro ma non troppo
75.  (HU 310) 1837 - Bagatelle in F.  Allegretto
76.  (HU 311) 1837 - Bagatelle in D.  Con moto
77.  (HU 313) 1837 - Klavierstück in B.  Allegro moderato
78.  (HU 314) 1837 - Klavierstück in Bb.  Andante con espressione
79.  (HU 321) 1837 - Klavierstück in c.  Allegro con brio
80.  (HU 322) 1837 - Klavierstück in e.  Largo con espressione
81.  (HU 330) 1838 - Klavierstück in E.  Andante con moto
82.  (HU 332) 1838 - Klavierstück in Eb.  Allegro molto vivace ma con
sentimento
83.  (HU 333) 1838 - Etüde in g.  Allegro con brio
84.  (HU 337) 1838 - Notturno in g.  Andantino
85.  (HU 338) 1838 - Klavierstück in d.  Allegro di molto
86.  (HU 339) 1839 - Klavierstück in Bb.  Allegro grazioso
87.  (HU 342) 1839 - Klavierstück in Ab.  Allegro assai (Op. 4/5, No. 1)
88.  (HU 345) 1839 - Gondelfahrt in g.  Serenata
89.  (HU 346) 1840 - Klavierstück in Ab.  Allegro moderato
90.  (HU 349) 1840 - Klavierstück in b.  Introduktion; allegro
91.  (HU 350) 1840 - Klavierstück in g.  Largo; allegro con fuoco
92.  (HU 352) 1840 - Abschied von Rom (Ponte molle) in a.  Andante con
espressione
93.  (HU 353) 1840 - Villa Medicis in Ab.  Allegro maestoso
94.  (HU 356) 1840 - Klavierstück in B.  Allegro vivace (Op. 6, No. 2)
2, No. 3)
96.  (HU 364) 1840 - Klavierstück in E.  Allegro molto quasi presto (Op. 4/5,
No. 3)
97.  (HU 365) 1840 - Klavierstück in G.  Allegro molto vivace (Op. 4/5, No. 5)
98.  (HU 366) 1840 - Klavierstück in Eb.  Andante soave (Op. 4/5, No. 6)
99.  (HU 368) 1841 - Klavierstück in G.  Allegro molto
100. (HU 369) 1841 - Klavierstück in Ab.  Allegro molto vivace
101. (HU 372) 1841 - Il saltarello romano. Tarantella. Allegro molto (Op. 6, No. 4)

102. (HU 376) 1841 - Klavierstück in a. Allegro molto

103. (HU 385a) 1841- Das jahr. 12 Charakterstücke

   Adagio, quasi una Fantasia; Presto

2. Februar. Scherzo.
   Presto

3. März.
   Agitato; Andante; Allegro moderato ma con fuoco

   Allegretto; Allegro

   Allegro vivace e gioioso

   Largo; Andante
   Juni. Serenade (Reinschrift)
   Allegro

7. Juli.
   Larghetto

8. August.
   Allegro; Tempo di Marcia; Allegro assai

   Andante con moto

10. Oktober.
   Allegro con spirit; Poco più presto

11. November.
   Mesto; Allegro molto

12. Dezember.
   Allegro molto; Andante; Allegro

Choral

104. (HU 391) 1843 - Klavierstück in g. Allegro agitato
105. (HU 393) 1843 - Klavierstück in e. Allegretto ma non troppo
106. (HU 394) 1843 - Klavierstück in A. Allegro molto vivace (Op. 2, No. 4)
107. (HU 395) 1843 - Sonate in g
   1. Allegro molto agitato
   2. Scherzo
   3. Adagio
   4. Finale. presto; Allegro moderato e con espressione
108. (HU 396) 1843 - Klavierstück in Eb. Adagio
109. (HU 403) 1844 - Klavierstück in g
110. (HU 404) 1844 - Klavierstück in Eb (frag)
111. (HU 405) 1844 - Klavierstück in a. Allegro moderato assai
112. (HU 406) 1844 - Klavierstück in Eb. Allegretto
113. (HU 408) 1844 - Klavierstück in c. Allegro molto
114. (HU 409) 1844 - Klavierstück in Ab. Allegretto grazioso
115. (HU 410) 1844 - Klavierstück in e. Allegro molto
116. (HU 413) 1846 - Klavierstück in c. Allegro molto
117. (HU 414) 1846 - Klavierstück in B. Allegro molto vivace e leggiero
118. (HU 417) 1846 - Klavierstück in Db. Andante cantabile
119. (HU 420) 1846 - Klavierstück in c#. Allegretto (Op. 4/5, No. 2)
120. (HU 423) 1846 - Klavierstück in b. Allegro moderato (Op. 8, No. 1)
121. (HU 424) 1846 - Klavierstück in F#. Andante cantabile (Op. 6, No. 3)
122. (HU 425) 1846 - Pastorella in A
123. (HU 426) 1846 - Klavierstück in d. Allegretto
124. (HU 427) 1846 - Klavierstück in f# (frag)
125. (HU 438) 1846 - Klavierstück in B. Lento appassionato (Op. 4/5, No. 4)
126. (HU 442) 1846 - Klavierstück in C. Allegro molto vivace
127. (HU 443) 1846 - Klavierstück in e. Tempo di Scherzo
128.  (HU 452) 1846 - Klavierstück in E. Andante con moto
129.  (HU 454) 1846 - Klavierstück in Ab. Andante espressivo (Op. 6, No. 1)
130.  (HU 456) 1846 - Lied in Eb. Andante espressivo; più allegro
131.  (HU 458) 1846 - Wanderlied in E. Presto (Op. 8, No. 4)
132.  (HU 459) 1846 - Lied in A. Allegro vivace
133.  (HU 461) 1846 - Lied (Lenau) in D♭. Larghetto (Op. 8, No. 3)
134.  (HU 463) 1846 - Klavierstück in a. Andante con espressione (Op. 8, No. 2)

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MUSICAL SCORES


Kyungju Park Lee was born in Seoul, Korea and began playing the piano at the age of three. She graduated from Seoul Music and Art School, and received her undergraduate degree from Yonsei University. After earning a performance diploma from Indiana University, she entered the School of Music at Florida State University and completed a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance.

At Florida State University Kyungju won both the Young Artist Competition, and Doctoral Concerto Competition as well as the following the Chapman Competition sponsored by the Rotary Club. In Korea she was a recipient of many prizes and scholarships including the Dong-A Music Competition prize and a scholarship from Samick Music Corporation.

Mrs. Lee’s extensive study includes fortepiano and harpsichord music, and in 2006 she participated in the First Global Scarlatti Marathon, in which all 556 Scarlatti sonatas are performed in a single day in seven different countries. In 2008 she received the Doctor of Music Degree in Piano Performance from the Florida State University.