

Mendelssohniana (1988)

Viktor Fortin

“In 1985, I wrote *Mendelssohniana* for the American Verdehr Trio. I had become acquainted with the three musicians, and in our conversations, they had lamented the fact that there weren't works from the Classic or Romantic period for their combination. Thus I wrote this work.

While composing the work, I had concerns: copying styles from the past was similar to homework assignments I had while studying composition with Waldemar Bloch, and it seemed too 'studentish' to write a stylistic copy. So I added 'aleatoric fields' typical of modern writing of the 1980s into the variations which are written in the spirit of Mendelssohn. However, I was somewhat dissatisfied with the whole thing.

As I started to write a work for the *Kegelstatt Trio* combination of viola, clarinet, and piano for a Czech group, I remembered and returned to my work and changed everything around. No stone was left unturned. I changed tonalities, the tasks for each instrument, and completely eliminated the aleatoric sequences. Instead, I wrote three interludes in a present-day style, but with easily recognizable elements from the theme so that the connection between today's musical approach and the romantic theme becomes clear. I inserted these interludes into the weave of the four variations which, however, also leave Mendelssohn's style in the course of events (Variations 3 and 4). The conclusion is—as in *Mendelssohniana*—a fugue which approaches the style of the master I admire so much. I hope (and am confident) that I have finally managed to accomplish what I wanted from the outset: a lively, comprehensible symbiosis between the music of Mendelssohn—which I approach humbly—and my own!”

—Viktor Fortin

The world premiere of *Mendelssohniana* was on April 17, 1989 in the Neue Gallery in Graz, Austria.

Viktor Fortin (born 1936, Fohnsdorf, Styria, Austria) studied from 1956 at the Styrian State Conservatory (Conservatory of Graz, Austria) with Rudolf Schwenzer (piano), Rudolf Frodl (bassoon), Ilse Strzelba (recorder), and Waldemar Bloch (composition). He studied German and musicology at the Universities of Graz and Vienna as well as school music at the Art University in Graz, receiving the doctoral degree in musicology and Germanic studies in 1985. During these years of study, he was a teacher at Styrian music schools and later at various high schools, all the while working actively as a composer, recorder player, piano accompanist, and conductor of his own compositions.

In the 1990s, Fortin received the State of Styria's Golden Medal and was elected president of the Styrian Association of Tonic Artists (succeeding Karl Haidmayer). Increasingly, he celebrated national and international success as a composer of chamber music, choral, orchestral, and stage works. About fifty of his works are published by Austrian and German publishers. Among his most important artistic activities are numerous concerts of his own chansons with vocalists Monique Johannsen and Wolfgang Müller-Lorenz, and performances of his church opera *Franz Jägerstätter*.

From 1968, Fortin was a member of the faculty of the Department of Music Education of the University of Graz, and in 1979, was appointed Professor of Recorder. He retired in 2004.

Additional information is available at www.fortin.at/.