

ABOUT THE SCHERZO IN E MINOR

On holiday in Wales in 1819, at the country estate of John Taylor, a wealthy patron of the arts, the young Felix Mendelssohn was captivated by the charm and beauty of Taylor's three daughters, Anne, Honoria and Susan. For each of them he composed one of the piano compositions that make up his *Trois Fantasiae ou Caprices*, Op. 16.

The second of these works, written for Honoria, the youngest of the three, has proved the most popular and enduring. This piece, entitled *Scherzo*, was inspired, according to one of the sister's letters, by a trumpet vine that grew in Honoria's garden. "Could you not compose music for such lovely trumpets?" The question was put to Mendelssohn by Honoria, who had listened to Mendelssohn's playing in wide-eyed wonder. "Certainly," the 20-year-old Felix answered, "the fairies might have played on such instruments." The light and airy music that resulted is not unlike the music he contrived for "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*," for which the Overture had been composed when he was only 18.

Felix, an accomplished artist with the brush, decorated the margin of the page of the autograph manuscript with a watercolored sketch of a branch of the vine. Later, in February of 1835, Mendelssohn wrote out another copy, in preparation for the publication by Marchetti in Vienna. A facsimile of this final version is shown below.



Facsimile of an autograph copy of the *Scherzo*, Op. 16, No. 2
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As valuable as this manuscript is as a source material, it is also important to examine the first printed edition (Marchetti, Vienna, 1835) in which several small improvements by the composer are noted, along with a few additional dynamic signs. The present edition uses both of these valuable sources, along with the suggestions made by the editors of several later editions. All fingering has been added by the present editor, and modern pedal indications substituted for the old-fashioned *ped* *.

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102

103

pp

p

f

pp

dim.

8va

sempre pedale

pp

e

(e) Pedal ad lib from here to the end. Some clearing or half pedal seems advisable on the modern piano.