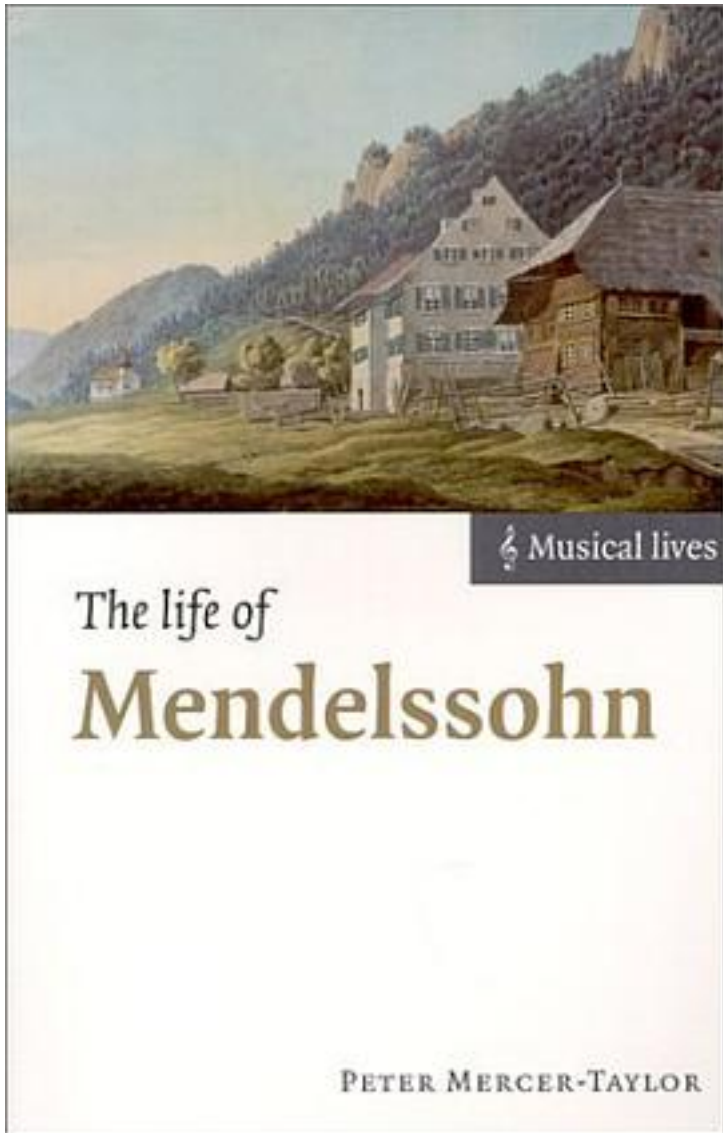


The Life of Mendelssohn



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Famous for a handful of compositions that continue to sparkle with originality, Mendelssohn, as conductor and scholar, was also one of the principal architects of the musical canon that has underpinned concert life to this day. Mendelssohn was one of music's greatest child prodigies. This book roots his early years firmly in the cultural and familial histories that shaped his childhood: the rise of his grandfather, Moses, from obscure poverty to international renown as a philosopher; his aunts' leading role in turn-of-the-century salon culture; his father's career as one of Berlin's most successful bankers. At the same time, this book confronts head-on the myth that Mendelssohn's was a happy, untroubled existence. The composer's last decade was marked by ceaseless psychological turmoil, torn between a staggering performance schedule and a yearning to dedicate his life exclusively to the wife and children he adored, and to the compositional drive that was too often neglected.

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