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Hey There! Welcome to episode 15 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm thrilled to have you here with me today.

In today's episode, we're going to learn a little bit about a female composer during the Romantic period of music -- Fanny Mendelssohn.

Fanny was born in Germany in 1805. She is the oldest sister of another composer you may have heard of -- Felix Mendelssohn. Felix and Fanny had the same music teachers growing up, though Felix admitted that Fanny played piano better than him. At the age of 12, she performed all 24 of J.S. Bach's preludes from *Well-Tempered Clavier* from memory.

Fanny was close to her brother Felix, and though he supported her creativity, he discouraged her from publishing her works. He even printed some of them under his own name saying, "She regulates her house, and neither thinks of the public nor of the musical world. Publishing would only disturb her in these." Fanny's father wrote a letter to her in 1820 acknowledging her gifts but also saying that while her brother Felix might become a professional musician, "for you it can and must only be an ornament, never the basis of your being and doing."

One piece that was published under her brother Felix's name was called *Italien*. At a reception in Buckingham Palace, Queen Victoria told Felix Mendelssohn that she would sing her favorite song by him -- and proceeded to sing "Italien". Felix confessed to her that this piece was actually written by his sister. Awkward!

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Fanny married a painter named Wilhelm Hensel in 1829. They traveled in Italy, returning to Berlin after her mother's death in 1842. In Berlin, she organized private concerts at the Mendelssohn home, where she occasionally performed herself.

While her brother Felix overshadowed her as a composer during her lifetime and for many years after, Fanny Mendelssohn has been increasingly more recognized for her own accomplished works. She wrote about 500 musical compositions in all.

Recently in 2017, a major work called Easter Sonata -- which had been lost for 140 years and then mistakenly attributed to Felix Mendelssohn when it was discovered in 1970, was performed at the Royal Academy of Music in London on International Women's Day.

Fanny's compositions contain showy parts balanced with delicate, peaceful and restrained passages. Her works were smaller in scale than male composers of her time not because she didn't want to write anything grander and certainly not because she lacked the ability to, but because of her position in society. Many experts and musicians today wonder as they listen to her work -- how would an opera by Fanny have sounded? Or a full scale oratorio?

Towards the end of her short life, there were changing attitudes about women in the world of music, which resulted in the printing of a few of her works in her own name. She died at the young age of forty-one after a stroke.

Head over to my site at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/15 to listen to more works by the brilliant Fanny Mendelssohn and dig deeper into what we've learned in this episode. I've set up a listening calendar of 10 pieces for you to listen to until our next episode airs in two weeks. Thanks for joining me today to learn more about music together. I'll see you soon for more musical discoveries!