

# PICTURE COVERS – REAL CAVES

## UNITED KINGDOM – FINGAL'S CAVE

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### Fingal's Cave

Staffa, Inner Hebrides Islands, Scotland

Located at the southeast end of the isolated isle of Staffa within sight of the Isles of Mull and Iona, this world-class basaltic sea cave stands majestically and demands respect. Since 1772 when Sir Joseph Banks “discovered” Staffa, numerous illustrious visitors have testified to the cave’s majesty through their written tributes, poems, paintings, engravings, and musical compositions. To read what has been written, to see the paintings, and to hear Mendelssohn and other composers is to understand the powerful influence this cave can have on the visitor.

Depending on who you read the cave measures anywhere from 227 to 266 feet (69 to 81m) long, 42 to 54 feet (12 to 16m) wide at the entrance, and the entrance arch 117 to 124 feet (36 to 38m) above sea level. (MacCulloch 1957 & MacLean 1890) Once and for all it would be nice if some cavers did an accurate survey of Fingal’s Cave, but then some GB cavers toss it off as little more than “a dirty old sea cave.”

**Ref:** Anon. 1832a, Fingal’s Cave, *The Penny Magazine*, Sept. 15, 1832, p. 236-238

Anon. 1832b, Fingal’s Cave, *The Monthly Repository*, v. III, n. 6, Nov. 1832, Francis Wiggins, New York, p. 206-209

Anon. 2015, Fingal’s Cave, Description, [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fingal%27s_Cave)

Lindenmayr, Franz n.d., Die Fingalshöhle auf Staffa, [lochstein.de](http://lochstein.de)

MacCulloch, Donald B. 1957, *The Wondrous Isle of Staffa*, Oliver & Boyd, London, p.92-113

MacLean, J. P. 1890, *Examination of Fingal’s Cave in the Island of Staffa*, Robert Clarke & Co.; Cincinnati, Ohio, 43p

Mills, Kirsty 2010, Fingals Cave, Staffa, *Proceedings 14<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology*, p. 163-178, (Best treatise), [vulcanospeleology](http://vulcanospeleology.org)

Oldham, Tony 1975, *The Caves of Scotland*, Tony Oldham, Bristol, p. 53-58

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**PC-RE84** United Kingdom 1955

**LP:** MENDELSSOHN – FINGAL'S CAVE OVERTURE &  
RUY BLAS OVERTURE

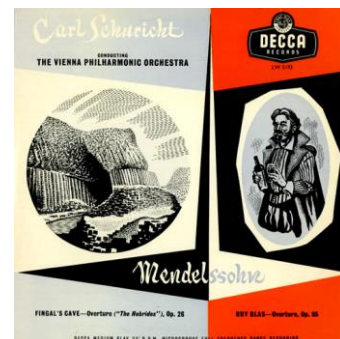
**Cond:** Carl Schuricht (Classical – [CL-FG-P2](#))

**Label:** Decca LW 5193

**Artist:** (Woodcut) (?)

**Notes:** A nice little woodcut showing the view looking towards the entrance. The different bands of basalt, columnar and massive, are well indicated. But the whole promontory on the right is tilted strangely to the left.

**Ref:** Carl Schuricht, Mendelssohn – Fingal’s Cave Overture, Decca LP, [Discogs](https://www.discogs.com)



**PC-RE84** United Kingdom ca.1955  
**LP: MENDELSSOHN OVERTURES**  
**Cond:** Carl Schuricht (Classical – [CL-FG-P2](#))  
**Label:** Ace of Clubs ACL-33  
**Photo:** (B&W Photo) (?)

**Notes:** A magnificent cover of this budget reissue LP with a classic black & white photo of the entrance of Fingal's Cave occupying fully four-fifths of the cover space and a red band at the top where the titles are printed in black.

The Decca Ace of Clubs budget label logo in the upper right hand corner of the cover varies slightly from one presage to another.

**Ref:** Carl Schuricht, Mendelssohn Overtures, Ace of Clubs LP, [Discogs](#)



**PC-RE83** United Kingdom 1956  
**EP: MENDELSSOHN: THE HEBRIDES & RUY BLAS**  
**Cond:** Dimitri Mitropoulos (Classical – [CL-FG-P2](#))  
**Label:** Philips ABE 10006  
**Photo:** (B&W) Alasdair Alpin **MacGregor**

**Notes:** This may be the first time that a picture of Fingal's Cave figured on the jacket cover of a recording of the overture. A classic black & white photo of the entrance viewed at low tide from the rocks in front on a sunny day with a very calm sea. A crowd of tourists can be seen clambering around the buttress and into the cave. Three people are standing on the columnar basalt shingle in the middle ground.

**Ref:** Alasdair Alpin MacGregor, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)

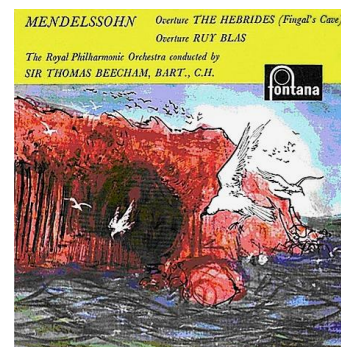
Dimitri Mitropoulos, Mendelssohn – The Hebrides LP, [Discogs](#)



**PC-RE84** United Kingdom 1958  
**EP: MENDELSSOHN – OVERTURE THE HEBRIDES**  
**Cond:** Sir Thomas Beecham (Classical – [CL-FG-P2](#))  
**Label:** Fontana CFE 15004  
**Artist:** (Color) (?)

**Notes:** A pen and ink and watercolor painting showing the entrance with the basalt colored rusty red. A surging blue sea and white seagulls flying around in the foreground and distance. One of the gulls is diving.

**Ref:** Sir Thomas Beecham, Overture: The Hebrides, [Discogs](#)



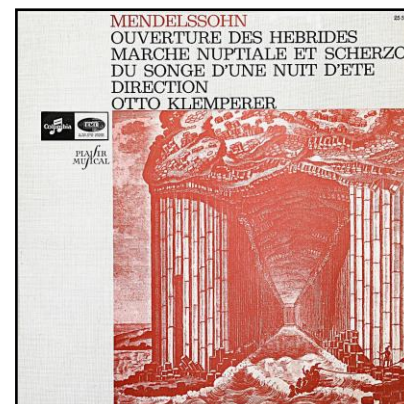
**PC-RE85** United Kingdom 1962  
**LP: MENDELSSOHN – OUVERTURE DES HÉBRIDES, MARCHE NUPTIALE, etc.**

**Cond:** Otto Klemperer (Classical – [CL-FG-P3](#))

**Label:** Columbia FC 25508 (10" mono)  
Columbia SBOF 125508 (10" stereo)

**Artist:** Durand & (Engraving) **Boutrois**, 1797

**Notes:** A famous old engraving, which was originally printed backwards, showing an extremely regular grouping of basaltic columns and looking directly into the cave, which takes the form of a long, deep rectangular corridor. A rowboat, tossed by the waves in the entrance area, is being towed in by a rope held by a man



standing on the columnar pavement (on right). The open sea is seen on the left.

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**PC-RE86** West Germany 1971

**LP:** MENDELSSOHN – FINGAL'S CAVE OVERTURE &  
SYMPHONY No. 3

**Cond:** Herbert Von Karajan (Classical – CL-FG-P4)

**Label:** Deutsche Grammophon 2530-126

**Artist:** Gérard Aublé

**Notes:** A very impressive color painting looking out of the entrance at a stormy green sea at low tide. Several basaltic posts protruding out of the water in the entrance area resemble floating oil drums. These are pure figments of the artist's imagination for no such isolated basaltic posts exist here.

This too is a magnificent cave picture cover, but I certainly wouldn't want to frame it and hang it on my wall what with Von Karajan's name, a former member of the Nazi party, plastered on it.

**Ref:** Herbert Von Karajan, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)

Herbert Von Karajan, Discussion of his membership in Nazi party, (in French), [Wikipedia](#)

Herbert Von Karajan, Mendelssohn – Fingal's Cave Overture LP, Deutsche Grammophon, [Discogs](#)



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**PC-RE87** France 1975

A. French **LP:** MENDELSSOHN – OUVERTURES  
EMI 2C 069-02638

B. West German **LP:** MENDELSSOHN – OUVERTÜREN  
EMI 1C 063-02 638 Q

C. British **LP:** MENDELSSOHN – OUVERTURES (1976)  
EMI-HMV ESD 7003 (Greensleeve Series)

D. Spanish **LP:** MENDELSSOHN – OUVERTURES (1982)  
Edigsa 23L0484-5

**Perf:** New Philharmonia Orchestra London

**Cond:** Moshe Atzmon (Classical – CL-FG-P4)

**Artist:** Herbert P. Kupferberg

**Notes:** Another magnificent cave picture cover that you would might want to frame and hang on your wall.

An exterior view showing heavy waves dashing into the entrance



and flocks of sea birds flying around it. There is a steamer in the far distance on the right. A group of basaltic columns rise out of the sea in the foreground and one isolated basaltic post nearby looks like a mooring pylon. In reality there are no posts or columns like this sticking up in the water out in front of the cave except perhaps at very low Equinox tides. The upper zone of irregular amorphous basalt, which caps the cave has been colored green to suggest vegetation, which is fact does not grow here.

This LP cover is a detail of a hand-colored steel engraving, which when it was published by Meyer in New York in 1852 was mislabeled "Fingal's Cave in Ireland."

The three releases all show the same framing of the colored engraving, but the French LP has a red border running around it with "La Voix de son Maitre" printed repeatedly within this border and the British LP has an top bar with "HMV Greensleeve" printed there and green scrolls at either end. The Spanish LP had a black border running around the engraving.

**Ref:** Moshe Atzmon, Mendelssohn – Overtures LP, [Amazon.fr](#)

Moshe Atzmon, Mendelssohn – Overtures LP, [eil.com](#)



**PC-RE88** United Kingdom 1976

**LP:** FAVORITE COMPOSERS – MENDELSSOHN

**Cond:** Peter Maag (Classical – [CL-FG-P3](#))

**Label:** Decca DPA 557/ 8 (2 LP Set)

**Photo:** (Color) James Weir

**Notes:** The back cover has a color photo of the exterior of the cave. It was not possible to show this photo here.

**Ref:** Favorite Composers – Mendelssohn LP, [Discogs](#)

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**PC-RE89** Italy 1981

**LP:** MENDELSSOHN – LA GROTTA DI FINGAL &  
SINFONIA NO. 3

**Cond:** Sergiu Comissiona (Classical – [CL-FG-P4](#))

**Label:** RCA GL 32625

**Photo:** **Scottish Tourist Board**; Edinburgh

**Notes:** An underexposed color photo (slightly canted) of the sea cliffs at the southeast end of Staffa showing the entrance of Fingal's Cave. The extraordinary aspect of this photo is that it shows the coast of Staffa at equinox low tide where the cave is almost high and dry. The largest annual tidal range can be expected around the time of the equinox, if coincidental with a spring tide.

**Ref:** Tidal Variations, British Marine Life Study Society, [glaucus.org.uk](#)

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**PC-RE90** Denmark 1992

1. **CD:** NEILS W. GADE – PIANO MUSIC – VOL. I

**Label:** Dacapo DCCD 9115

2. **CD:** NEILS W. GADE – PIANO MUSIC – VOL. II

**Label:** Dacapo DCCD 9116

3. **CD:** NEILS W. GADE – PIANO MUSIC – VOL. III

**Label:** Dacapo DCCD 9117

**Perf:** Anker Blyme (Classical)

**Artist:** Vilhelm Melbye (Helsingør, 1624-Roskilde, 1882)

**Title:** *Fingals Hule med et Parti af den sydlige Deel af Øen Staffa*  
(Fingal's Cave with a Lot of the Southern Portion of the  
Isle of Staffa) – 1851

(Oil on canvas, 70x110 cm)

Charlottenborg

**Notes:** A stunning painting of the cave viewed from the sea on a stormy day, which takes a few liberties by adding an extensive shore apron of basaltic columns in the foreground. Some of the rocks on the left in the original painting have been cropped out.

This cover design and painting was used for three CD releases of Neils Gade's complete piano music on the Danish Dacapo label. None of these CD albums include Mendelssohn's Fingal's Cave Overture.

The Danish Wikipedia biography for Vilhelm Melbye states – "*Derpå var han atter et års tid i Danmark, hvor hans Fingals Hule, oprækkende Uvej, der købtes af Frederik 7, vakte megen opsigt (udstillet 1856)...*" (Anon. 2015) [Then he was again a year in Denmark, where his *Fingal's Cave, Winding Storm*, which was bought by Frederik 7, caused great excitement (exhibited in 1856),] Presumably this was the same painting used for this CD cover.

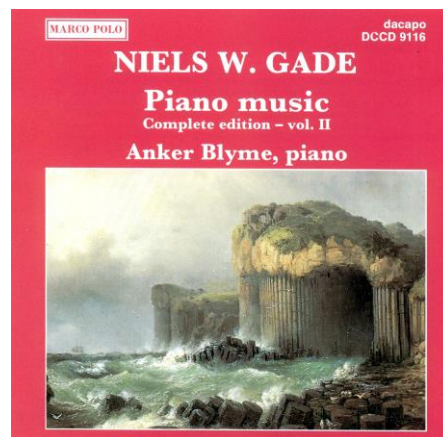
This Danish painter did another oil painting, dated 1857, looking out Fingal's Cave on a calm day to a sailing ship on the horizon. (Anon. n.d.)

**Ref:** Anon. 2015, Vilhelm Melbye, Bio, (in Danish), [Wikipedia](#) & (in English), [Wikipedia](#)

Anon. n.d., Vilhelm Melbye, *Fingals Hule*, 1857, [artnet](#)

Neils W. Gade, Bio & Dacapo Discography, [dacapo-records.dk](#)

Neils W. Gade – Piano Music – Vol. 1, [dacapo-records.dk](#)



Neils W. Gade – Piano Music – Vol. 2, [dacapo-records.dk](http://dacapo-records.dk)  
Neils W. Gade – Piano Music – Vol. 3, [dacapo-records.dk](http://dacapo-records.dk)  
Vilhelm Melbye, *Fingals Hule*, Ældre Dansk Kunst, [johnhunov.dk](http://johnhunov.dk)

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**PC-RE91** United Kingdom 1992

**CD:** MENDELSSOHN [with Symphonies n.1, 5, & Hebrides Overture]

**Cond:** Walter Weller (Classical – CL-FG-P5)

**Label:** Chandos CHAN 9099

**Artist:** William Turner (1775-1851)

**Title:** *Staffa – Fingal's Cave* – 1832  
(Oil on canvas, 91.5x122 cm)

New Haven, CT, USA; Yale Center for British Art,

Mellon Collection

**Notes:** The celebrated painting by Turner of the island of Staffa in luminous mist. The headland of the southeast coast is portrayed with a steamboat in rough sea to the left of center and the sun rising (in the northeast) just at the horizon on the right. Many reproductions of this painting do not allow you to see Fingal's Cave in the haze. But in this reproduction if you follow the smoke from the paddle steamer it will lead you to a faintly shadowy area at the base of the cliff, which is the cave. Further to the left at the water's edge can be seen another slightly dark area which is Boat Cave.



It is especially interesting to glance at Turner's pencil sketches that he made *sur le motif* when he sailed by the coast of Staffa and visited the cave in 1831. His rough sketch, labeled *Staffa with Fingal's Cave from the South and South-West* in the Tate collections, is probably the basis for this oil. From several pencil sketches that Turner did in the cave Edward Goodall made an engraving that was used for the title page to volume 10 of the *Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*. (Anon. 2004; Anon. n.d.; Ardill 2010b; & Irwin et al. 1982)

Later he did this large oil of Staffa, which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1832 and purchased for James Lenox of New York. Upon reception of the painting, Lenox commented that it appeared very "indistinct throughout." (another story has Lenox "greatly disappointed" and "baffled by the painting's indistinctness.") On hearing this, Turner is reported to have

said, "Tell him that indistinctness is my forte." (MacCulloch 1975)

**Ref:** Anon. 2004, *Fingal's Cave, Staffa*, Engraved by Edward Goodall, 1834, [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)  
Anon. 2015, *Strom Clouds and Watercolours*, *Scots Heritage Magazine*, April 20, 2015, [pressreader](http://pressreader)  
Anon. n.d., *Engraving of a cave at Staffa by E; Goodall after J.M.W. Turner*, [europeana.eu](http://europeana.eu)  
Ardill, Thomas 2010a, *Staffa with Fingal's Cave from the South and South-West* 1831, Pencil sketch by Turner, [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)

Ardill, Thomas 2010b, *The Entrance to Fingal's Cave* 1831, Pencil sketch by Turner, [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)

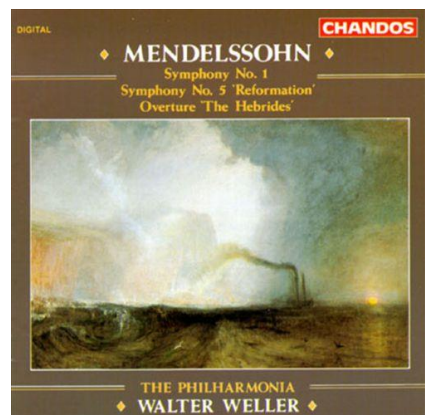
Gatt, Guisepe 1968, Turner, *Thames & Hudson*, p. 32, 42-43 (very poor reproduction)

Irwin, Francina; Wilton, Andrew; Finley, Gerrald et al. 1982, *Turner in Scotland*, Aberdeen Art Gallery, p. 23, 50, 58-59

Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Staffa, Fingal's Cave*, Yale Center for British Art, [centerforbritishart](http://centerforbritishart)

MacCulloch, Donald B. 1975, *Staffa*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, Devon, p. 159-161

Walter Weller, Mendelssohn – Symphony No. 1, etc. CD, [Allmusic](http://Allmusic)



**PC-RE92** Canada 1999

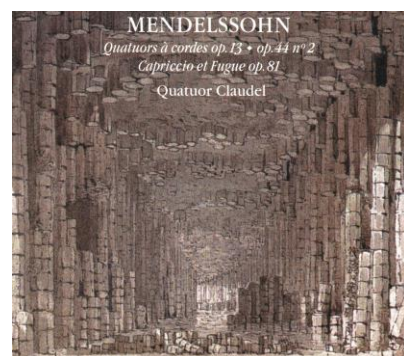
**CD:** MENDELSSOHN – QUATUORS À CORDES

**Cond:** Quatuor Claudel (Classical)

**Label:** Pelléas CD-0105

**Artist:** Carl Gustav Carus – 1834

**Notes:** View looking into the cave showing entirely too symmetrical, almost square space enclosed by perfectly vertical columns of basalt,



which are fractured into equal segments like the blocks of church columns.

This CD album does not include Mendelssohn's Fingal's Cave Overture.

**Ref:** Quatuor Claudel, Mendelssohn – Quatuors à cordes CD, [Amazon.fr](https://www.amazon.fr)

Quatuor Claudel, Mendelssohn – Quatuors à cordes CD, Réseau des Bibliothèques de Cergy-Pontoise,

[cergypontoise.fr](http://cergypontoise.fr)

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**PC-RE92** Germany 2001

Boxed Set **CDs:** MENDELSSOHN – 5 SYMPHONIES & 7 OVERTURES

**Cond:** Claudio Abbado (Classical – [CL-FG-P4](#))

**Perf:** London Symphony Orchestra

**Label:** Deutsche Grammophon 471-467-2 (4 CDs)

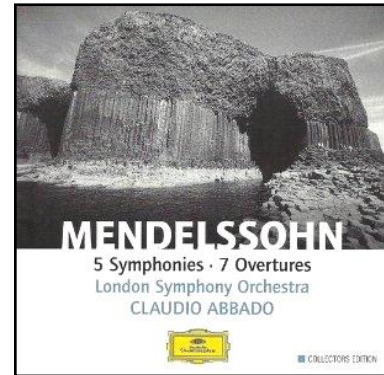
**Photo:** (?)

**Notes:** The classic view of the promontory at the southeastern end of the Isle of Staffa, where the entrance to Fingal's Cave is clearly seen at what appears to be low tide.

**Ref:** Claudio Abbado, Mendelssohn – Overtures CD, [CDUniverse](http://CDUniverse.com)

Claudio Abbado, Mendelssohn – 5 Symphonies & 7 Overtures, Boxed Set CDs, [deutsche Grammophon](http://deutsche Grammophon.com)

London Symphony Orchestra, Mendelssohn – 5 Symphonies & 7 Overtures, Boxed Set CDs, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)



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