

FELIX AND FANNY

SIR JACK LYONS CONCERT HALL
WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2023, 7.30PM

Carducci Quartet

Matthew Denton *violin*

Michelle Fleming *violin*

Eoin Schmidt-Martin *viola*

Emma Denton *cello*

Luke Thallon, Abigail Weinstock *actors*

Felix and Fanny

Adagio ma non troppo *from* **String Quartet in E-flat**

Fanny Mendelssohn
(1805-47)

June *from* **Das Jahr**

Fanny Mendelssohn, arr. Emma Denton

Canzonetta *from* **String Quartet no. 1 in E flat, op. 12**

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-47)

Allegretto *from* **String Quartet in E-flat**

Fanny Mendelssohn

October *from* **Das Jahr**

Fanny Mendelssohn, arr. Emma Denton

Romanze *from* **String Quartet in E-flat**

Fanny Mendelssohn

Interval – 20 minutes

Refreshments are available from the foyer bar

Intermezzo and Presto

Felix Mendelssohn

from **String Quartet no. 2 in A minor, op. 13**

Postlude *from* **Das Jahr**

Fanny Mendelssohn, arr. Emma Denton

Allegro molto vivace *from* **String Quartet in E-flat**

Fanny Mendelssohn

Adagio *from* **String Quartet no. 6 in F minor, op. 80**

Felix Mendelssohn

Felix and Fanny

Felix and Fanny is an exciting new programme of music and spoken word showcasing Fanny Hensel's String Quartet in E-flat alongside material adapted from a two-person play by Myla Lichtman-Fields. Exploring the intense connection between the musician-siblings, Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, it also shines a light on the social constructions in the nineteenth century that prevented Fanny from developing concert skills like her illustrious brother Felix, who published many of Fanny's compositions under his own name. As Fanny, regarding her brother Felix, said aged 17:

I have watched his progress step by step, and may say I have contributed to his development. I have always been his only musical advisor, and he never writes down a thought before submitting it to my judgement. For instance, I have known his operas by heart before a note was written.

The spoken words in *Felix and Fanny* focus on the intense relationship between the siblings and the complex and emotional journey they went on. The musical excerpts firmly place Fanny centre stage, with her extraordinary String Quartet forming the heart of the programme. There are also excerpts from her incredible *Das Jahr* before the programme ends with the Adagio from Felix's op. 80 String Quartet – his heartfelt requiem for Fanny.

Fanny Hensel was one of the most prolific female composers of the nineteenth century, among the first women to write a string quartet. Hensel was a pianist of rare talent and prodigious memory who dazzled private audiences at her concert series in her Berlin home. She struggled her entire life with the conflicting impulses of authorship versus the social expectations for her high-class status, finally deciding to publish her music only one year before her early death at the age of 41. During her lifetime, Hensel's career, conducted mostly in the private sphere, was overshadowed by the more public exploits of her brother. The true extent of her compositions (over 450 completed compositions and drafts) and her contributions to the Mendelssohnian style have been rediscovered in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Described by *The Strad* as presenting ‘a masterclass in unanimity of musical purpose, in which severity could melt seamlessly into charm, and drama into geniality’, the award-winning **Carducci Quartet** is internationally acclaimed as one of the most accomplished and versatile ensembles of today. Not only mastering the core repertoire, the Quartet also presents a selection of new works each season and diversifies further with programmes of film music, pop and rock. Founded in 1997, the ensemble has won numerous international competitions, including the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and First Prize at Finland’s Kuhmo International Chamber Music Competition.

The Carducci Quartet performs at prestigious venues across the globe including the Barbican, Cadogan Hall and Wigmore Hall, London; National Concert Hall, Dublin; Tivoli Concert Hall, Copenhagen; The Frick Collection and Carnegie Hall, New York; Library of Congress and John F Kennedy Center, Washington DC; St Lawrence Center for the Arts, Toronto; and Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Festival residencies include Cheltenham, Ryedale, Lichfield, Presteigne, Kilkenny, Canterbury, Snape Proms and West Cork.

In 2016, they took home a Royal Philharmonic Society Award for their project, *Shostakovich15*, an immense cycle of Shostakovich’s Quartets performed across the UK, North and South America with a marathon one-day cycle hosted by Shakespeare’s Globe, London. The project was accompanied by a recording of the Fourth, Eighth and Eleventh Quartets to which they added a further volume in Spring 2019 of the First, Second and Seventh Quartets, acclaimed by *Gramophone Magazine* for its ‘athletic, upfront performances, clear in texture, forthright in tone and bold in articulation’. The Carduccis returned to the composer in 2022, with performances at the Barbican and Wigmore Hall in London, residencies at Kilkenny and Canterbury Festival and a third recording presenting the Ninth and Fifteenth Quartets.

Highly celebrated for their diverse approach to programming, the Carducci Quartet has devised numerous projects and is regularly invited to perform new works. Their catalogue of programmes presenting music and spoken word includes focuses on Beethoven, Shostakovich and the relationship between Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn.

In 2015 they curated projects around Philip Glass and Steve Reich as part of the Royal Philharmonic Society award-winning *Minimalism Unwrapped* at Kings Place in London. Their recording of the Philip Glass Quartets, for Naxos, has reached over six million plays on Spotify.

Education work is an important element of the Carducci Quartet's work, earning them a place on the Royal Philharmonic Society Award shortlist for their family concert *Getting the Quartet Bug!* The Carducci Music Trust was set up to support their work in schools and with young musicians. They also perform a number of school concerts each year supported by the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust.

Luke Thallon won the Clarence Derwent Award for his performance in Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt* on the West End and was nominated for the *Evening Standard* Emerging Talent Award for *Albion* at the Almeida Theatre. Whilst training, he won the Michael Bryant Award 2017, National Theatre and the Laurence Olivier Bursary Prize 2016, Society of London Theatre.

Abigail Weinstock is a graduate of the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. Her stage credits include *Love and Other Acts of Violence* at the Donmar Warehouse, *A Night of Small Things* at the Pleasance Theatre and *Vaudeville* at Underbelly Edinburgh and Soho Theatre. Her screen credits include Ridley Scott's upcoming feature film *Marengo* and *Posh Witch* for the BBC.

Felix and Fanny made its UK concert debut at The Barbican in November 2022, featuring The Carducci String Quartet with Luke Thallon as Felix and Lucy Phelps as Fanny. The play is the first in **Myla Lichtman-Fields'** 4 *MUSICMAKERS* play series. *Felix and Fanny* was produced before a live audience by California Artists Radio Theatre, featuring Michael York and Samantha Eggar, and aired in the US on NPR and Sirius XM radio. The courtroom drama *VS. Robert Schumann* is the second play in the *MUSICMAKERS* series. The third play, *Serenade*, is about the Schumanns and Brahms. *CLARA & JOHANNES*, the final play in the series, is based on the correspondence between Clara Wieck Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

Other works by the playwright include *Brigid of Kildare* (the first play in Myla's Irish play trilogy) recorded for radio by CART with a star-studded cast. Myla's award-winning play *Learning to Dance in the Rain* featured Olympia Dukakis in its NYC reading. Myla's plays have received recognition in national playwriting contests and have been produced throughout the USA.

As a staff writer at Universal Studios, Myla penned NBC episodics, MOWs and an NBC special. Her background includes training at the Juilliard School of Drama and a PhD in Communications/ Drama with a minor in Film from USC. She is a member of the Writers Guild of America, West, The Dramatists Guild and PEN. 16 of Myla's plays, including *Felix and Fanny*, are available through www.lulu.com.

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