

# barbican



## Classical Music Concert programme

### Felix and Fanny Carducci Quartet

Thu 24 Nov 7.30pm  
Milton Court Concert Hall



# Important information



## When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.20pm, with a 20-minute interval.



## I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



## Please...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



## Please don't...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



## Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



## Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance, or during the interval.



## Looking for refreshment?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1. Pre-order interval drinks to beat the queues. Drinks are not allowed in the hall.



## Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels -1 and 1. There is a further accessible toilet on Level G.



## Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

# Felix and Fanny

A concert version of the play created for the Carducci Quartet  
by Myla Lichtman-Fields

Thu 24 Nov 7.30pm, Milton Court Concert Hall

## Carducci Quartet

**Luke Thallon** Felix Mendelssohn

**Lucy Phelps** Fanny Mendelssohn

### **Fanny Mendelssohn** String Quartet

1 Adagio ma non troppo

**Fanny Mendelssohn** 'June' from *Das Jahr*

(arr Emma Denton)

**Felix Mendelssohn** String Quartet No 1

2 Canzonetta

**Fanny Mendelssohn** String Quartet

2 Allegretto

**Fanny Mendelssohn** 'October' from *Das Jahr*

(arr Denton)

**Fanny Mendelssohn** String Quartet

3 Romanze

*Interval 20 minutes*

### **Felix Mendelssohn** String Quartet No 2

3 Intermezzo

4 Presto

**Fanny Mendelssohn** 'Postlude' from *Das Jahr*

(arr Denton)

**Fanny Mendelssohn** String Quartet

4 Allegro molto vivace

**Felix Mendelssohn** String Quartet No 6

3 Adagio

A concert version of the play *Felix and Fanny*  
produced by special arrangement with Myla  
Productions

*All information correct at time of printing*

Produced by the Barbican

Casting by Martin Poile for RSC

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Programme produced by Harriet Smith

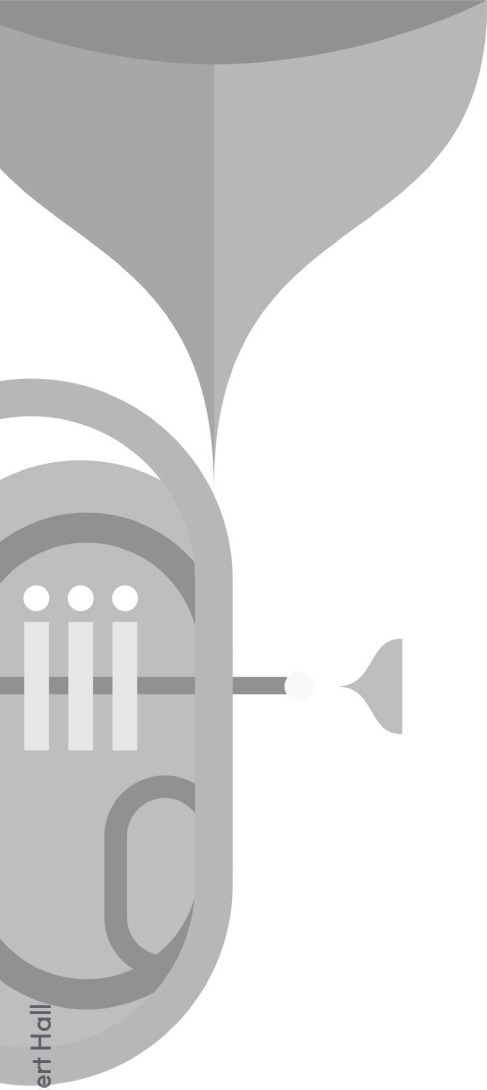
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## A tale of two siblings, equally gifted, one allowed to flourish, the other restricted by the expectations of her time and class ...

*'I am convinced that most human beings realise only a small portion of their real potential. Even though a woman is still not permitted to enter into the male-dominated world, there is no reason why she cannot develop her faculties so that when she is given equal chance, she will be ready! Signed, your engaged, hopeful, future-gazing, Fanny.'*

If we come across a piece in a performance or broadcast by 'Mendelssohn', it's all too easy to assume that the author must be a brilliant young man named Felix: a child prodigy, introduced to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe aged 12, responsible for a seminal performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1829, and composer of numerous symphonies, string quartets, songs, piano pieces and choral works. And yet Felix was most decidedly not the only musically capable Mendelssohn – nor was he the first. That honour goes to his elder sister, a virtuoso pianist and prolific composer (with 450 works to her name): Fanny Mendelssohn.

The Mendelssohn family were extremely wealthy and, once settled in Berlin in 1811, they rapidly became leading cultural figures in the city. Fanny and Felix's parents established fortnightly 'Sunday musicales' at their home, in which famous visiting professionals would take part – as well as their children. The siblings received an unusually thorough education, including multiple languages, art, and musical tuition from the best teachers in the city. At 13, Fanny performed the first 24 Preludes from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* from memory on her father's birthday. The following year, she began her first original compositions.

And yet the siblings were to follow very different paths, despite their shared musical

brilliance. Felix would go on to conduct at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, found a conservatoire and travel Europe as a distinguished performer and composer. By contrast, their father wrote a letter to Fanny in 1820 stressing that, while her brother would probably become a professional musician, 'for you it can and must only be an ornament, never the root of your being and doing.' The scope of the music that Fanny might write, the fate of those scores (which could never be published under her own name), and even the piano repertoire that she might reasonably play in the family salon, were all to be limited by her gender.

Tonight's performance explores that relationship between the two brilliant young Mendelssohn siblings in Myla Lichtman-Fields's play *Felix and Fanny*. Crucially, and despite the different expectations put upon them by their family, these two composers enjoyed a very loving and supportive relationship. Fanny was frequently recruited to read over Felix's new works and made many suggestions that were subsequently incorporated into finished pieces. Felix attempted to help Fanny by publishing some of her music under his name – although this caused tensions between them. Eventually Fanny was encouraged by her husband, the painter Wilhelm Hensel, to publish music herself. The impact this had on the family bond is revealed to us in our protagonists' conversations, complemented by performances from the Carducci Quartet.

So how does one go about bringing such a story to life? 'My first draft was just letters,' Myla Lichtman-Fields explains. From these, she constructed a timeline of which sibling was doing what when, and then filled in the gaps. 'I wasn't in the room when they were talking to each other: that's where

I have to take some dramatic licence.' *Felix and Fanny* began as a play in 1994 and has been performed across the USA. Myla is particularly thrilled that working with the Carduccis has allowed for the incorporation of live music into the show.

The collaboration was born of the Covid lockdowns. Having enjoyed such success with its 'Shostakovich: Life, Letters & Friendship' project, the quartet was keen to put together another evening of words and music. While researching Fanny Mendelssohn's music, the Carducci's cellist Emma Denton came across Myla's play. 'I guess it was pandemic bravado!', Emma laughs. She wrote to Myla to see if she would be willing to collaborate. The play was then adjusted to fit the format of the evening and Emma began selecting repertoire. 'I remember a mad weekend when I just shut myself in a room with the play and listened. I wanted Fanny's Quartet to be heard in its entirety, to put her music centre stage.' Myla also recommended Fanny's piano diary, *Das Jahr*, from which Emma selected and arranged several movements. These are set alongside excerpts from several of Felix's quartets, including his last in F minor, written in the aftermath of his sister's death – and just a few months before his own.

What, then, would Myla and Emma have us take away from this glimpse into the lives of the Mendelssohn siblings? 'Tolerance,' Myla muses, 'this embraces not only the gender politics played out between Felix and Fanny, but also the anti-Semitism directed towards them despite their status as assimilated Protestants. And even though their relationship wasn't perfect,' adds Emma, 'they had an incredible bond ... I think there's such love there.'

Programme note © Katy Hamilton



© Tom Barnes

## Carducci Quartet

**Matthew Denton, Michelle Fleming** violin  
**Eoin Schmidt-Martin** viola  
**Emma Denton** cello

The award-winning Carducci Quartet is internationally acclaimed for its accomplishment and versatility. In addition to core repertoire, it 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.

The quartet performs at prestigious venues across the globe, including the Barbican, Cadogan Hall and Wigmore Hall in 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 Centre for the Arts, Toronto; and Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Festival residencies include Cheltenham, Ryedale, Lichfield, Presteigne, Kilkenny, Canterbury, Snape Proms and West Cork.

In 2016, the Carducci won a Royal Philharmonic Society Award for its *Shostakovich 15* project, with performances of his quartet cycle across the UK (including

a marathon one-day cycle at Shakespeare's Globe) and North and South America. The project was accompanied by a recording of Quartets Nos 4, 8 and 11, to which it added a further volume in 2019 of Nos 1, 2 and 7. Earlier this year the quartet returned to the composer, with performances here at the Barbican and at Wigmore Hall, residencies at Kilkenny and Canterbury festivals, and a third recording featuring Nos 9 and 15.

The Carducci Quartet has devised numerous projects and is regularly invited to perform new works. Its catalogue of programmes presenting music and spoken word includes ones built around Beethoven, Shostakovich and the Mendelssohn siblings.

In 2015 it curated projects around Philip Glass (whose quartets it has also recorded) and Steve Reich as part of the Royal Philharmonic Society Award-winning 'Minimalism Unwrapped' at London's Kings Place.

Education is an important element of its activities, and it set up the Carducci Music Trust to support its work in schools and with young musicians. The quartet also performs a number of school concerts each year, supported by the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust.



### Lucy Phelps

Lucy Phelps trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

Her theatre credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Tempest* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* (RSC); *Witness for the Prosecution* (West End); *King Charles III* (Almeida: UK and Australia tour); *Sex and the Three-Day Week* (Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse theatres); *Viva Forever!* (West End); *Can't Stand Up for Falling Down* and *See How They Run* (York Theatre Royal); *Lay Down Your Cross* (Hampstead Theatre); *Earthquakes in London* (Headlong/The National Theatre); and *Country Music* (Royal Court Gala).

Television credits include *The Chelsea Detective* (Expectation); *DI Ray* and *Grace* (ITV); *The Coroner*, *Siblings*, *Silent Witness*, *Call the Midwife*, *Holby City* and *New Tricks* (BBC); *Midsomer Murders* (Bentley Productions); and *Skins* (Company Pictures/E4). She appeared in the film *Until I Breathe This Life* and has also recorded several plays for BBC Radio 3 and 4, among others.



### Luke Thallon

Luke Thallon's theatre credits include *Camp Siegfried and Present Laughter* (The Old Vic); *After Life* (National Theatre); *Patriots, Albion and Nine Lessons and Carols* (Almeida Theatre); *Cock* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *The Inheritance* (Young Vic); and *Leopoldstadt* and *Jamie Lloyd's Pinter at the Pinter* season (West End).

His concert appearances includes readings of T S Eliot for *Dead Poets Live* at Wilton's Music Hall and the Coronet Theatre.

Luke Thallon's awards include the Clarence Derwent Award for *Leopoldstadt* and an Evening Standard Award nomination for *Albion*. This year he was listed by *The Stage* as one of the top 25 theatre makers of the future. He trained at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.



# Events coming up we think you might like



**Sinfonia of London/  
John Wilson**  
Fri 2 Dec, Hall



**A Winter's Journey**  
Wed 7 Dec, Hall

Book now at [barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk)

