

Mendelssohn +

Michael Stephen Brown, Piano

Mendelssohn + is a multi-part recital series exploring Felix Mendelssohn's inner world. His music speaks to me on the deepest personal level—exploring subtlety, virtuosity, love, and optimism for the human spirit. The programs also feature music by Delphine Von Schauroth, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Leonard Bernstein, transcriptions by Rachmaninoff and Liszt-Horowitz, and a recent composition of mine. -MSB

Program 1, Love

A musical figure of the past whose music has been virtually unheard is Delphine Von Schauroth, a pianist-composer and contemporary of Mendelssohn's who came to his attention as a pianist at the age of eleven. Further encounters led to a mutual affection and she wrote *Songs Without Words* for him and he responded with his famous *Rondo Capriccioso*. My *Breakup Etude for Right Hand Alone* pours out my own aching soul in the form of a masochistically difficult piece written for my right hand alone when my left hand was stuck in a splint. Program One also features two masterpieces by Mendelssohn, the *Fantasy in F-sharp Minor* and *Variations sérieuses*, and two gorgeous *Melodies* by Felix's sister Fanny. The recital concludes with two transcriptions from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Felix Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff's dazzling transcription of the *Scherzo*, and my own spin on Liszt and (Horowitz's) *Wedding March*.

Delphine Von Schauroth: Six Songs Without Words, Op. 18 (14 mins)

Felix Mendelssohn: Andante and Rondo Capriccioso, Op 14 (6)

Michael Stephen Brown: Breakup Etude for the Right Hand (2020) (6)

Felix Mendelssohn: Fantasy in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28 (11)

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn: Variations sérieuses, Op. 54 (11)

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel - Six Melodies, Op. 5 (7)

No. 5 in G Major, Allegro molto Vivace

No.6 in E-flat Major, Andante soave

Two transcriptions from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Felix Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn-Rachmaninoff: Scherzo (4)

Mendelssohn-Liszt-Horowitz-Brown: Wedding March (7)

Program 2, Op. 35

Program 2 features a lot of Op. 35's—Mendelssohn's epic cycle of *Six Preludes and Fugues*, and Beethoven's mighty *Eroica Variations*. Sandwiched in between are *Song Without Words* by Delphine von Schauroth. I am also 35 (for now).

Delphine von Schauroth: Songs Without Words, Op. 18, No. I in E Major

Felix Mendelssohn: Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, Op. 35, No. 1

Prelude and Fugue in D Major, Op. 35, No. 2

Delphine von Schauroth: Songs Without Words, Op. 18, No. IV in E Minor

Mendelssohn: Prelude and Fugue in B Minor Op. 35, No. 3

Prelude and Fugue in A-flat Major, Op. 35, No. 4

Delphine Von Schauroth: Songs Without Words, Op. 18, No. III in A-flat Major

Mendelssohn: Prelude and Fugue in F Minor, Op. 35, No. 5

Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Major, Op. 36, No. 6

Intermission

Ludwig Van Beethoven: Fifteen Variations and Fugue in E-flat Major, Op. 35 "Eroica"

Program 3, Friendship

Program 3 features two great sonatas by intimate friends and musical colleagues, Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann. Mendelssohn's *Sonata in E Major, Op. 6*, written when he was just 16 years old, is a prodigious outpouring of pastoral romance, elfin lightness, and supreme virtuosity. Robert Schumann's stormy *Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22* is a wild emotional journey driven by passionate outbursts combined with moments with intimate nostalgia. The program also includes a set of Mendelssohn's beloved *Songs Without Words*, a small group of Leonard Bernstein's *Anniversaries*—intimate songful miniatures composed for close friends. The series concludes with Felix, a rarely played gem, *Andante cantabile e Presto Agitato*.

Felix Mendelssohn: Songs without Words, Op. 67 (13)

Leonard Bernstein: from *Anniversaries* (7)

for Shirley Gabis Rhoads Perle

for Craig Urquhart

for Jessica Fleischmann

for Aaron Copland

Felix Mendelssohn: Sonata in E Major, Op. 6 (22)

Intermission

Robert Schumann: Sonata no. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22 (19)

Felix Mendelssohn: Andante cantabile e Presto agitato, WoO 6 (8)

All programs are available for the 2023-24, and 2024-25 seasons and MSB works with presenters to make a version of Mendelssohn + that works for them, including a single or double concert option.