

# She Composed, Herself

The Life and Music of Mel Bonis



*“The piano in her mother’s salon was never meant to be a musical instrument. Remember this. It is meant to be dusted, and polished, and admired. Like the girl herself, it is meant to be seen, not heard...”*

**She Composed, Herself** celebrates the life and music of the late 19th/early 20th century female French composer, Mel (Mélanie) Bonis. The spoken word and music performance traces Bonis’ life from a bourgeois childhood in Paris, where a musical education was actively discouraged, to a career as an award-winning composer of more than 300 pieces under her male pseudonym.

Selections from Bonis’ “Cello Sonata in F Major” and other compositions are woven through the script to bring her dramatic story to life — a story that includes an arranged marriage to a widower twice her age, a mid-life affair that resulted in the birth of a secret daughter, and more.

Pianist Nico Rhodes describes it as *“that rare intersection between beautiful art that is both moving and gripping, impactful and purposeful.”*



*She Composed, Herself* is a project of the **Quill & Scroll Ensemble**. Quill & Scroll consists of cellist **Alexandra Lee**, Assistant Principal Cellist of the Vancouver Island Symphony and graduate of the U of T’s Music Performance program; pianist **Frances Armstrong**, past apprentice coach with l’Opéra de Montréal and the Canadian Opera Company with a Masters in Collaborative Piano from the U of T; and storyteller **Rachel Dunstan Muller**, a frequent festival performer and the author-producer of “Once Upon a Fiddle” and other works.

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