

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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