



NORTHSTAR  
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# FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto, Op. 64

String Octet, Op. 20

**Liza Ferschtman** violin

**Het Gelders Orkest**

**Kees Bakels** conductor



SUPER AUDIO CD

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**Itamar Zorman** violin

**Elina Vähälä** violin

**Corina Belcea** violin

**Krzysztof Chorzelski** viola

**Marc Desmons** viola

**Sebastian Klinger** cello

**Antoine Lederlin** cello

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (1809–1847)

**Violin Concerto, Op. 64**

[1] Allegro molto appassionato

**12:40**

[2] Andante

**7:33**

[3] Allegretto non troppo - Allegro molto vivace

**6:42**

**String Octet, Op. 20\***

[4] Allegro moderato con fuoco

**13:51**

[5] Andante

**6:57**

[6] Scherzo. Allegro leggierissimo

**4:18**

[7] Presto

**6:13**

\* Live recording

total time: 58:19

The Mendelssohn violin concerto. Is there a more widely loved piece for violin? Or a more recorded one for that matter? No would be most likely the answer to both those questions, and just several months ago my answer would also have been a quite firm NO to the question of whether I thought my version needed to be added to that very long list of recorded interpretations. But obviously something changed or else you would not be holding this booklet in your hands!

My relationship with this concerto started when I was 14 years old, at first with only the last movement until when I was 15 I finally got to play it fully. It was such a thrill, the first “adult” concerto I played; I still remember that excitement vividly. Over the course of the years I got to perform it many times and it always was a pleasure. At the same time, though, some things always loomed those many lessons I had, all the interpretations that came before me, and most especially the fact that for all its simplicity it is a very difficult concerto!

Slowly though, as my musical path kept unfolding, I got to the point where more and more I was able to let go of my preconceived notions about the piece and more clearly start to see and hear my own voice in it. Over the years I got to know so much more music by Mendelssohn, from the inside out, and I felt the language become more fully my own. When working with Kees Bakels on it a couple of years ago things started to really fall into place, and last May when performing it with Het Gelders Orkest I really was all of a sudden struck by a distinct feeling that I can only describe as falling in love all over again with this magical piece. Certain details in the score seemed to appear completely

new to me and the idea of approaching the work with the same collaborative energy as in chamber music made me experience it completely afresh. The combination of passion, grand emotions and at the same time lightness and elegance, such characteristic traits for Mendelssohn, fell completely into place. To feel this way about such a familiar piece was revelatory and I knew I wanted to share these discoveries, if you like, with many more people.

And so here we are... It is on record, with Kees Bakels and Het Gelders Orkest!

Completing this disc is another ultimate Mendelssohn piece, his String Octet, written when he was just 16 years old. A star-studded cast of wonderful colleagues and friends joins me in a performance that was recorded live during the opening night of my Delft Chamber Music Festival in the summer of 2016!

I hope you fall in love all over again with Mendelssohn, just like I did!

Liza Ferschtman

It is impossible to listen to the String Octet in E-Flat Major, Op. 20 and not to be overwhelmed by the amazing quality of this music, written by a boy of sixteen. Felix Mendelssohn was obviously a child prodigy.

Born into a prominent Jewish family of bankers, with the famous philosopher Moses Mendelssohn as his grandfather, the young Felix soon proved to excel at absolutely everything: from sports to drawing and from languages to mathematics. Talent is not something money can buy. But the family's financial situation was such that Mendelssohn could study with the best teachers so that he could make the most of his talents. And when it turned out that music was his greatest gift, he was even given a private orchestra to work with. Together with the orchestra, he gave concerts in the Mendelssohn family home for the cultural elite of Berlin. Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, he wrote a number of string symphonies for these occasions. In all their Haydnesque grace, they are stylistically quite far removed from those he wrote as an adult. This is only logical: they were written by a child.

And then, suddenly, there was the Octet. Although Mendelssohn had written quite a number of chamber music pieces, there is nothing that can explain this enormous leap forward. The first few measures alone are truly a treat. The strong melody, pulsating and compelling, the resplendent octaves and sostenuto of the violins, everything sparkles and is bursting with energy. What immediately distinguishes the work is that Mendelssohn did not write it in four parts, as was usual, but gave each of the eight instruments its own voice. This gives his Octet enormous depth and richness of sound. His string

symphonies formed a source of inspiration for it. "All instruments must play this octet as if it were a symphony," were his instructions.

The first movement, in sonata form, is almost the same length as the other three movements together, but it retains its tension and energy until the final note.

The dream-like Andante brings some welcome quiet introspection. Its calm, its extraordinary beauty are in stark contrast to the Scherzo that follows: it exhibits the playful levity and whimsical teasing that Mendelssohn became known for. It could easily be taken for a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here too, Mendelssohn took his inspiration from literature: it is based on *Walpurgisnacht* from Goethe's *Faust*. Just before the end, Mendelssohn brilliantly intertwines bits and pieces from other movements amongst the notes, after which the entire movement disappears into nothingness as if by magic.

From the depths of the earth, almost growling, the Presto works its way up through the instruments, and then evolves into an enormous fugue. The fugue, technically complex, 'scholarly' music, here sounds completely natural, fresh and full of life. A rare combination of compositional expertise and youthful enthusiasm, by a genius whose voice had only just started to change.

Most child prodigies later become mediocre artists. They succumb to the pressure, or their development is unbalanced. What can you expect if everyone keeps telling you how exceptional you are? It is also said of Mendelssohn that, after he turned twenty, he produced little of any great value. His good

background is often blamed for what is regarded as salon music. After all, an artist needs to have suffered some hardships if he is to rise to great heights. And precisely this aspect was lacking in the life of the banker's son. A good deal of his later work indeed does not have the full freshness of youthful works such as the Octet, the captivating overture for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the pulsating tension of *The Hebrides*.

But everyone is in agreement on his Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64: it is a masterpiece. In 1838 Mendelssohn announced that he would write a violin concerto for his friend Ferdinand David. He did not keep his promise until six years later: the shadow of Beethoven's immensely popular violin concerto made it difficult for him to compose. Would Mendelssohn, the most classical of the romantic composers, suddenly decide for this very reason to show his more progressive side? Or was it his way of competing with the great Beethoven? Or at the very least, distinguishing himself? Perhaps. His violin concerto does sound classically romantic, and the three-movement structure (quick-slow-quick) in a classic form (sonata, Lied, sonata rondo), is entirely according to the rules. But it is full of interesting innovations, and they have often been imitated.

For example, the soloist gets straight to the point without the usual orchestral introduction. And the cadenza, coming remarkably early in the first movement, is written out in full. It was common practice for the soloist to improvise the cadenza, and violinists gladly seized this opportunity to show their virtuosity. But it sometimes got out of hand, which is why Mendelssohn decided to take control. Here, not the soloist, but the composer, determines - for the first

time - the relationship between the cadenza and the rest of the composition. Mendelssohn thus removed improvisation from the concert hall, because from then on the usual practice would be to write out the cadenza in full. It must be remarked that Ferdinand David made some adaptations to Mendelssohn's cadenza. It was first published in that adapted version, and is usually played that way in concert halls and recordings, [as it is on this CD].

Another innovation is the way he transitions between the movements: the concerto is one continuous whole. After the first movement, a lone bassoon links the final chord to the Andante that follows. The second movement is not followed by a brief silence, but a linking piece, after which a trumpet fanfare announces the actual finale.

But more than all these interesting innovations, it is the tender warmth and inner depth that make this violin concerto so well-loved. Because, as the great violinist Joseph Joachim famously said: "The Germans have four great violin concertos. The greatest and most uncompromising is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in its seriousness. The richest, most seductive was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the jewel of the heart, is Mendelssohn's."

*Translation: Carol Stennes/Muse Translations*

## **Liza Ferschtman**

Dutch violinist Liza Ferschtman is known for her passionate performances, interesting programs and communicative qualities on stage. The daughter of Russian musicians, Liza Ferschtman grew up constantly surrounded by music. One of her earliest major influences was the violinist Philipp Hirschhorn, a close family friend. She received her formal training from Herman Krebbers at the Amsterdam Conservatory, Ida Kavafian at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and David Takeno in London. In 2006 she received the highest accolade awarded to a musician in the Netherlands, the Dutch Music Award.

Liza Ferschtman's worldwide appearances include: BBC National Orchestra of Wales and London Philharmonic, Dallas and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, Essen Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Weimar and Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra, Orchestre National de Belgique and Flanders Symphony Orchestra, Radio Symphony Orchestra of Prague, Malmö Symphony and Bergen Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic as well as virtually every Dutch orchestra, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. Amongst the conductors with whom she has worked are: Stefan Blunier, Frans Brüggen, Christoph von Dohnányi, Claus Peter Flor, Neeme Järvi, Yakov Kreizberg, Zdeněk Macál, Jun Märkl, Gianandrea Noseda, Marc Soustrot, Leonard Slatkin, Thomas Søndergård, Karl-Heinz Steffens, Mario Venzago, Jan Willem de Vriend and Jaap van Zweden.

An avid chamber musician, Liza Ferschtman has collaborated regularly with artists such as Jonathan Biss, Nobuko Imai, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Christian Poltera, Lars Anders Tomter and Alisa Weilerstein, counting as her duo partners Enrico Pace and Inon Barnatan. Appearing at venues such as Alice Tully Hall (New York), Wigmore Hall (London), Musikverein (Vienna), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Liederhalle (Stuttgart) and Beethoven Haus (Bonn), she is also present at major international Chamber Music festivals. Moreover, Ms. Ferschtman has been the artistic director of the Delft Chamber Music Festival since 2007, one of the most admired festivals in the Netherlands.

Recent highlights have been the performance of Bach's complete solo works in Amsterdam and a concert tour with the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer of which The New York Times wrote: "...with Dutch violinist Liza Ferschtman bringing refined beauty and character to the solo part of the Bernstein [*Serenade*] ...the concert was nothing short of revelatory". In 2015/16 she performed concerts with the Residentie Orkest The Hague, the Nuremberg Symphony, Staatskapelle Weimar and Bremen Philharmonic.

Chamber music projects brought her to the Schumannfest Düsseldorf, to Utrecht, Amsterdam and the Norwegian Risør Festival. In December 2017 she will play her debut concert at Wigmore Hall, London. Next season she is going to play Violin Concertos with orchestras in Germany, France, Scotland, Finland, Mexico and the United States. She will play her debuts with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Beethoven Concerto) and Amsterdam Baroque

Orchestra with Ton Koopman (Bach Concertos). In 2018 she will play 'Serenade' of Leonard Bernstein in several cities to celebrate the composers 100th birthday.

Liza Ferschtman's recording of the Beethoven Concerto and Romances (Challenge Classics - CC 72384) was received with great critical acclaim, as were other recordings with concertos by Dvořák and Röntgen, solo works by Bach and Ysaÿe (Challenge Classics - CC 72351 - STRAD CD choice of the month), and duo works by Beethoven and Schubert. Her latest CD features solo works by Bach, Biber, Bartók and Berio (Challenge Classics - CC 72635).

**Kees Bakels** (1945) Conductor began his musical career as a violinist and studied conducting at the Amsterdam Conservatory and the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. He then became assistant conductor of the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and also conducted the Dutch Chamber Orchestra. Bakels was chief conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra (1991-1996), principal guest director of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (1990-2000) and founder and chief conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, which appointed him in 2005 as honorary conductor.

Additionally Bakels conducted major Dutch and international orchestras including the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Orchestre National de Lille, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Lausanne Chamber and Orquesta Ciudad de Granada.

Bakels also led new opera productions of *Aida* and *Fidelio* at the English National Opera and *La Bohème* and *Carmen* at the Welsh opera. And over the course of 25 years Bakels conducted lots of concerts during the KRO 'Bijzondere Concerten' series in Vredenburg Utrecht and the ZaterdagMatinee in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, where he introduced the audience with little-known operas such as Mascagni's *Zanetto*, *Iris*, *Amica*, *Isabeau*, *Il Piccolo Marat* and *Nerone*, and Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* and *Zazà*. His performances of Mascagni's operas are published on the Bongiovanni label.

Recent and future engagements include, among others, projects with Philharmonie zuidnederland and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

### **Het Gelders Orkest**

Driven by musical ambition, inspired by our public and attached to our environment. That is Het Gelders Orkest! We share our passion for classical music with people of all ages in Gelderland and beyond. We perform famous and lesser-known works, and appear with world-renowned soloists, young stars and great guest conductors. Our musicians grow and shine under the direction of chief conductor Antonello Manacorda. As a youthful 'old soul', his ability to fuse the emotions of the audience and the orchestra is second to none. Het Gelders Orkest strives to touch as many people as possible. That is why we organise not only symphonic concerts but also a surprising array of alternative musical encounters and adventurous crossovers, in the form of children's concerts, educational and amateur projects, films and workshops.

### **Itamar Zorman** violin

The recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust award, Itamar Zorman was also joint winner of the 2011 International Tchaikovsky Competition. Other competition successes include first prize at the 2010 International Violin Competition of Freiburg and the Juilliard Berg Concerto Competition in April 2011.

Itamar Zorman's solo encompasses four continents; he has appeared with major orchestras in the USA, Europe, Asia and South America. In the 2016/17 season, Zorman will make his debuts with the Belgrade Philharmonic, the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, and the RTE National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin. Continuing a collaboration that started in January 2016 and at the invitation of Mitsuko Uchida, he will lead the Mahler Chamber Orchestra on a tour of Japan, including orchestral and chamber music.

Zorman is a founding member of the Israeli Chamber Project and a member of the Lysander Piano Trio, winners of the 2012 Concert Artists Guild Competition. In November 2014, he gave his Carnegie Hall recital debut, as part of the 'Distinctive Debuts' series in Weill Recital Hall. His first solo CD recording, entitled 'Portrait' was released in 2014 by Profil - Editions Günther Hänssler.

A graduate of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and The Juilliard School, Zorman is a recipient of scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. He currently plays on a Guarneri Del Gesù from 1734, from the collection of Yehuda Zisapel.

[www.itamarzorman.com](http://www.itamarzorman.com)



### **Elina Vähälä** violin

Born in the US and raised in Finland, Elina Vähälä made her orchestral debut with Sinfonia Lahti at the age of twelve and was later chosen by Osmo Vänskä as the orchestra's 'young master soloist'. Since then, her career continues to expand on the international stage, winning praise from audiences and musicians alike as 'a fluent, stylish and gifted musician whose brilliant technique is matched by an abundant spirit, sensitivity and imagination' (Chicago Tribune). Elina Vähälä has appeared with orchestras including Helsinki Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Lahti, Turku Philharmonic as well as Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra and Nashville Symphony Orchestra. She has worked with conductors Leonard Slatkin, Carlos Kalmar, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Okko Kamu, and toured throughout the UK, Finland, Germany, China, Korea and South America.

Recent highlights include highly successful debuts with Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra and Gävle Symphony Orchestra, performances with Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic and Colorado Symphony Orchestras, as well as a tour of the US with the Festival Pablo Casals Prades Collective.

With a repertoire that ranges from baroque to contemporary, Elina Vähälä has given world premieres of Aulis Sallinen's Chamber Concerto and Curtis-Smith's Double Concerto, both written for her and pianist-conductor Ralf Gothóni. In addition, Vähälä gave the first Nordic performance of John Corigliano's Violin Concerto 'The Red Violin' and commissioned a new violin concerto from

composer Jaakko Kuusisto. Both the Corigliano and Kuusisto concertos were recorded for BIS in 2013.

As a devoted chamber musician Elina Vähälä performs with Andras Adorjan, Yuri Bashmet, Ana Chumachenko, Chee-Yun, Peter Csaba, Adam Neiman, Arto Noras, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Alisa Weilerstein.

[www.elinavahala.com](http://www.elinavahala.com)

### **Corina Belcea** violin

Corina Belcea was born in Romania in 1975 and began playing the violin at the age of six. Her teachers in Romania were Radu Bozgan and Stefan Gheorghiu. In 1991, as a result of her participation in the Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition, she was invited by the late Lord Menuhin to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School where her teacher was Natalia Boyarskaya. After graduating from the Menuhin School, Corina continued her studies at the Royal College with Dr. Felix Andrievsky.

Her competition prizes include the 1st Prize in the Kloster Schöntal International Competition (Germany), second prizes in the Wieniawski International Competition (Lublin) and the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition (Folkestone) and the first prize in the Bromsgrove Festival. In 1998 she was the winner of the Lasmo Staffa award. Corina has performed as a soloist in Europe and The Far East, in venues such as St. John Smith Square, Queen Elisabeth Hall, Barbican Hall, Purcell Room, Théâtre du Châtelet and

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, where she joined members of the Alban Berg Quartet for a performance of Mozart's Symphonie Concertante. She is a frequent soloist with the Timisoara Philharmonic and performs recitals with the pianist Dragos Mihailescu. Future plans include a concert at the Atheneum in Bucharest with the flautist Catalin Opritoiu (Martinu concerto for flute and violin and Bach Brandenburg concerto No. 5) and the Beethoven violin concerto with the Timisoara Philharmonic. Corina is a founding member of the Belcea quartet. She plays a 1666 Stradivarius violin kindly on loan from the Beare Family.

[www.belceaquartet.com](http://www.belceaquartet.com)

#### **Krzysztof Chorzelski** viola

Krzysztof Chorzelski enjoys a diverse career as a performing musician that has taken him all over the world.

In 1992 he won the Wronski Solo Violin Competition in Warsaw and has performed as a recitalist and concerto soloist in Europe as well as made several radio recordings for the Polish Radio and the BBC. In 1996 he became the violist in the Belcea Quartet. He performs as guest with many other ensembles, such as the Alban Berg, Ysaye and Pavel Haas Quartets and his other chamber music partners include Stephen Kovacevich, Piotr Anderszewski and Natalie Clein. He is a viola professor at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama and regularly gives masterclasses in the UK, US, his native Poland and Israel. His viola and piano recital disc with Katya Apekisheva is due to be released on

the Champs Hill Records Label. Krzysztof is also pursuing a conducting career. His recording of Ittai Shapira's Violin Concerto "Concierto Latino" with the London Serenata Orchestra and the composer as soloist has been released in May 2011 on the Champs Hill Records label.

[www.belceaquartet.com](http://www.belceaquartet.com)

#### **Marc Desmons** viola

After he successfully graduated as a viola and writing major at the National Superior Music Conservatory of Paris, Marc Desmons is offered the second viola soloist post at the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Paris. He won the First Prize at the International «Lionel Tertis» Competition and the Third one at the International Yuri Bashmet Competition in Moscow. He developed an intense activity as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe and in the U.S.A. (Marlboro Festival) and often gave master classes in Japan (MMCK Festival). Particularly fond of string quartets, he became successively a member of the Galitzine Quartet, Altaïr, Salomé, of the Métamorphosis and ZIK ensembles, then of the Gabriel Quartet with piano. Passionate about today's music, Marc Desmons collaborates with the Intercontemporain and TM+ ensembles. As a soloist, he recently recorded «Lachrymae» by B. Britten with Auvergne Chamber Orchestra under Armin Jordan's direction and released by the label SAPHIR. He also took part in a recording of string quartets by Chausson and Guettier. Together with his performing career, Marc Desmons is also a conductor and composer (Furibonderies for viola and five cellos).

**Sebastian Klinger** cello

The cellist Sebastian Klinger is one of the most outstanding soloists and chamber musicians of his generation. He is praised by the international press for his warm quality of sound and the intensity of his expression, as well as his flawless technique and superb musicality.

He plays internationally as a soloist with orchestras such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin, the orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Deutsche Radiophilharmonie Saarbrücken, the Staatskapelle Weimar, where he has worked with conductors such as Mariss Jansons, Christoph Poppen, Michael Sanderling, Heinrich Schiff and Antoni Wit.

With his solo programmes and in top-class chamber music line-ups together with, among others, Lisa Batiashvili, Yuri Bashmet, Christian Gerhaher, Gidon Kremer, Lang Lang, François Leleux, Emmanuel Pahud and Yo-Yo Ma he plays in the major music centres in Europe and the US. His CD recordings have been highly acclaimed, e.g. he received a “Diapason d’Or” for his Bach cello suites. Since 2015 he is teaching as a professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg.

[www.sebastian-klinger.com](http://www.sebastian-klinger.com)

**Antoine Lederlin** cello

Born in 1975, the French cellist Antoine Lederlin studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, where he completed the “cycle de perfectionnement” in 1995 as a pupil of Roland Pidoux. He has also received lessons from Janos Starker, Isaac Stern and Henri Dutilleux.

At the age of 20 he became the solo cellist in the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and principal cellist in Orchestre de Monaco. He is currently the principal cellist with the Sinfonieorchester Basel. Antoine has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician, performing at major European festivals and American venues. He recently performed in the Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall with Midori, Jonathan Biss and Nobuko Imai. His other chamber music partners include Joseph Silverstein, Pamela Franck, Leon Fleisher. Since 2006 Antoine is the cellist in the Belcea quartet.

[www.belceaquartet.com](http://www.belceaquartet.com)

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



[www.northstarconsult.nl](http://www.northstarconsult.nl)

**This production is also available as High Resolution digital download  
at [www.spiritofturtle.com](http://www.spiritofturtle.com)**

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