



Fenella Humphreys

VIOLIN

Fenella Humphreys, winner of the 2023 BBC Music Magazine Premiere Recording Award, has attracted critical admiration and audience acclaim with the grace and intensity of her remarkable performances.

With her playing described in the press as “*alluring*”, “*unforgettable*” and “*a wonder*”, Fenella is one of the UK’s most established and versatile violinists, having also won the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Instrumental Award. She enjoys a busy career combining chamber music with solo work, performing in the most prestigious venues around the world and is frequently broadcast on the BBC, Classic FM, Scala Radio and international radio stations.


Fenella performs widely as a soloist. Her recent album of Sibelius’ solo works with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and George Vass has been featured in BBC Radio 3’s Building a Library, Gramophone Magazine’s Guide to the Concerto, and was Album of the Week on Scala Radio. BBC Music Magazine has written of the recording: “*it takes an unusually fine artist to be able to bridge the two extremes. Fenella Humphreys’s playing is a genuine revelation in the way it brings out the music’s dark and introspective qualities, with no shortage of technical panache meanwhile.*”

Over the past decade, Fenella has captured international attention by applying spellbinding virtuosity to a strikingly broad range of compositions. Her *Bach 2 the Future* albums - the second of which won the coveted BBC Music Magazine Instrumental Award - combined newly commissioned works with two of Bach’s solo sonatas and partitas and other repertoire landmarks. In 2022, Fenella returned to unaccompanied music with ‘*Caprices*’- the 2023 BBC Music Magazine Award winner - released on Rubicon Classics. The album explores Études and Caprices from Paganini to the present day, including new works by Freya Waley-Cohen, Laurence Osborn and Oliver Leith, and a new set of variations on Paganini’s 24th Caprice with composers including Héloïse Werner, Emily Howard and Robin Haigh. “*Really, very impressive*” (Gramophone Magazine), “*technically and musically superb*” (The Strad).

Fenella’s forthcoming recording on Rubicon, *Prism*, will again focus on unaccompanied violin works - from new works written by young British composers to iconic recent works by Caroline Shaw, Jessie Montgomery and George Walker, with Fenella’s new arrangement of Bach’s *Tocatta and Fugue BWV565* at its heart.

Fenella has given the first performances of scores by a vast range of composers, most notably Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sally Beamish, Gordon Crosse, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Freya Waley-Cohen and Adrian Sutton. In June 2023, Fenella premiered a new violin concerto, dedicated to her by Adrian Sutton, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Her first concerto recording - Christopher Wright’s Violin Concerto with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Martin Yates (Dutton Epoch) - was released in 2012 to great critical acclaim (“*Fenella Humphreys’ performance is a wonder*” – International Record Review) and was selected as Orchestral CD of the Month in a 5 star review in BBC Music Magazine.



Four Seasons Recomposed with Covent Garden Sinfonia and Ben Palmer (Rubicon), was released in June 2019. The album unites Max Richter's iconic *Recomposed: The Four Seasons* with Pēteris Vasks' *Lonely Angel* and Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* to produce a compelling meditation on the profound power of melody. The disc was launched with a performance of *Recomposed* at the Proms at St Jude's, and was placed at No. 6 in the Classical Charts. It was chosen as one of BBC Radio 3's pick of new releases on Essential Classics; chosen for Apple Music's Classical A-List; was Scala Radio's Album of the Week, and was been described by Radio 3's Record Review as "...a delight. The whole thing is gently expressive, meditative, touching and very effective." In 2023 the Vasks performance was included in The Times' list of "The 100 Best Pieces of Classical Music - as chosen by the critics".

Fenella's previous disc, *So Many Stars* with acclaimed pianist Nicola Eimer, was released on Stone Records in February 2019. It was described as "hugely rewarding" by The Observer; "an absolutely exquisite album" by BBC Radio 3's Record Review, and was The Strad's Recommended Recording that month. Her 2022 album of Sibelius' duo works with Joseph Tong was chosen as BBC Music Magazine's Chamber Music Choice recording - "From start to finish Humphreys's playing is a feast of flawless tuning, beautifully focused and coloured tone and rich characterisation."

Concertmaster of the Deutsche Kammerakademie, Fenella also enjoys guest leading and directing various ensembles in Europe.

As an avid and passionate chamber musician, Fenella enjoys performances with the Roscoe Piano Trio, Perpetuo and Counterpoise, as well as collaborations with artists including Nicholas Daniel, Martin Roscoe and Peter Donohoe, and is regularly invited by Steven Isserlis to take part in the International Musicians' Seminar, Prussia Cove. A new collaboration with the writer and broadcaster Leah Broad, and pianist Nicola Eimer, has seen the creation of a new project 'Lost Voices' which explores one of Fenella's greatest passions: unknown and under-performed repertoire by female composers, something which Fenella seeks to champion in all areas of her programming.

For the launch of Apple Music Classical in April 2023, Fenella was one of a handful of artists invited to record a 'Classical Session' at home, alongside Daniel Barenboim, Beatrice Rana and Gautier Capuçon.

Fenella is grateful for the support of the Royal Philharmonic Society, Harriet's Trust and Arts Council England for their support to keep making music during the Covid Pandemic.

Fenella's teachers have included Sidney Griller CBE, Itzhak Rashkovsky, Ida Bieler and David Takeno at the Purcell School, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule in Düsseldorf where she was awarded the highest attainable marks both for the 'Diplom' exam and the 'Konzertexamen' soloists' diploma.

Fenella plays on a G.B. Guadagnini violin kindly on loan from Jonathan Sparey.

www.fenellahumphreys.com

This biography is valid for use until September 2024. We update our biographies regularly and ask that they are not altered without permission.
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