

## **THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY OFFERS THREE WORLD PREMIERE LIVESTREAM PERFORMANCES BY HERSHEY FELDER**

*Felder shares stories of “Fiddler” inspiration, Puccini, and Rachmaninoff.*

REDWOOD SHORES, CA (12 January 2021) – **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** launches the New Year with the announcement of three World Premiere livestreamed performances in partnership with **Hershey Felder Presents *Live from Florence***. Audiences will have access to “front row seats” via at-home viewing of three brand new works as the acclaimed playwright/performer presents ***Hershey Felder as Sholem Aleichem in BEFORE FIDDLER***, presented live 5pm PST, Sunday, February 7, 2021 (with streaming on-demand access through February 14), followed by ***Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*** presented live 5pm PST, Sunday, March 14, 2021 (with streaming on-demand access through March 21), and ***Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI*** presented live 5pm PST, Sunday, May 16, 2021 (with streaming on-demand access through May 23). More information and tickets (for each household: \$55 per show or patrons may receive a 10% discount with a World Premiere Pass for all three plays) are available at **TheatreWorks.org**.

First up in this year in the *Hershey Felder Presents – Live from Florence* series is ***BEFORE FIDDLER***, featuring **Klezmerata Fiorentina**.

Decades before the beloved musical *Fiddler on the Roof* first delighted worldwide audiences, there was Sholem Aleichem and his beloved character of ‘Tevye the Milkman.’ When he was only 24 years old, Aleichem published his first story, *Tsvey Shteyner* (“Two Stones”), and by 1890, he had become a central figure in Yiddish literature. Aleichem was known as the “Jewish Mark Twain” for his similar writing style and pen name usage.

Felder will play Sholem Aleichem himself – giving audiences the true story of what happened ‘Before *Fiddler*.’

Long before songs like “Tradition,” “If I Were a Rich Man” and “Sunrise, Sunset” first beguiled audiences, there was Klezmer, the music of the Old World; a music that imitated talking, laughing, weeping, and singing, and where musicians didn’t just make music, they spoke to audiences in song.

In Florence, Italy, one of the oldest artistic centers in the world, a group of musicians have been virtuosos in the world-famous Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino by day whose artistic director and conductor is the famed Zubin Mehta, and then become the Klezmerata Fiorentina by night. The quartet consists of violinist and violist **Igor Polesitsky**; clarinetist **Riccardo Crocilla**; accordionist and bassoonist **Francesco Furlanich**; and double bass player **Riccardo Donati**.

Filmed on location where events actually took place, this streaming production will feature the stories and characters of Sholem Aleichem, along with music that is sure to move the soul.

*BEFORE FIDDLER – Live from Florence* is directed by **Felder & Stefano Decarli**, with associate direction by **Trevor Hay**. Production design is by **Hershey Felder**. Film production and live editing is by the **DeCarli Live** film company. Live broadcast and sound design production are by **Erik Carstensen**. Line producer is **Annette Nixon**. Production and broadcast development are by **Meghan Maiya**. Costumes and Hair are by **Isabelle Gerbe**. Scenic construction is directed by **Pierre Gerbe**.

Next, Felder will explore one of history’s most renowned opera composers in **Hershey Felder, PUCCINI**. Featuring excerpts from *La bohème, Tosca, Turandot, Madama Butterfly*, and more, the chameleon Felder inhabits the Italian composer Giacomo Puccini, offering up sumptuous and saucy tales of the great composer’s deliciously scandalous life. This World Premiere delves into Puccini’s female operatic characters, and how the real women in the composer’s life were reflected in the heroines he created for the stage. Once again, Felder creates this performance live on location in the places where the events, compositions, and premieres that are depicted originally took place.

For the third premiere, **Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI** tells the little known story of a strange meeting between Russian piano virtuoso and composer

Rachmaninoff and Anna Anderson, a woman claiming to be Princess Anastasia, the sole surviving member of the Romanov Dynasty. What comes next is a singular tale, incarnated for audiences by Felder's acclaimed story-telling skills. Featuring Rachmaninoff's most beloved melodies and music, *ANNA & SERGEI* is set in the Beverly Hills house in which Rachmaninoff died in 1943, offering up a mesmerizing memory play.

**Hershey Felder** (*Writer & Performer*). Named to Time Magazine's 2016 Top 10 Plays and Musicals, Hershey Felder has played over 6,000 performances of his self-created solo productions at some of the world's most prestigious theatres, consistently breaking box office records. American Theatre Magazine has said, "Hershey Felder is in a category all his own." His shows include: *George Gershwin Alone* (Broadway's Helen Hayes Theatre, West End's Duchess Theatre); *Monsieur Chopin*; *Beethoven*; *Maestro* (Leonard Bernstein); *Franz Liszt in Musik*; *Lincoln: An American Story*; *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*; *Our Great Tchaikovsky*; and *A Paris Love Story*. His compositions and recordings include *Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Fairytale, a musical*; *Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano*; *Song Settings*; *Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra*; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano*; and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*. Hershey is the adaptor, director and designer for the internationally performed play-with-music *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* with Steinway artist Mona Golabek; producer and designer for the musical *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, directed by Taylor Hackford; and writer and director for *Flying Solo*, featuring opera legend Nathan Gunn. Hershey has operated a full-service production company since 2001, and in 2020 created a new brand, Live From Florence, that operates a "theatre at home broadcast company," based in Florence, Italy. Previous broadcasts have included *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*; *Hershey Felder, Beethoven*; *Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone*; *Hershey Felder, Backstory – The Story Behind the Creation of Berlin, Gershwin & Bernstein*; and *Cooking French in Florence with Jeff Thickman & Hershey Felder*. The Hershey Felder Presents - Live from Florence 2020-21 Season of broadcasts include: *Hershey Felder as Claude Debussy in A PARIS LOVE STORY*; *Hershey Felder, TCHAIKOVSKY*; *Hershey Felder as Sholem Aleichem in BEFORE FIDDLER*; *Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*; and *Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI*. Hershey has been a scholar-in-residence at Harvard University's Department of Music and is married to Kim Campbell, the first female Prime Minister of Canada.

Felder has dazzled audiences at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, where regional premieres of *Our Great Tchaikovsky* and *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, as well as the World Premieres of *Hershey Felder as Claude Debussy in A PARIS LOVE STORY* and *Hershey Felder: Beethoven* have set all-time sales and attendance records. *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, for which Felder served as adaptor, director, and designer, was enjoyed by TheatreWorks audiences in early 2020.

**KLEZMERATA FIORENTINA (Music)** is a quartet comprised of principal players of one of the leading Italian operatic and symphonic orchestras, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. In 2005, the violinist and violist **Igor Polesitsky**, clarinetist **Riccardo Crocilla**, accordionist and bassoonist **Francesco Furlanich**, and double bass player **Riccardo Donati** formed the ensemble to explore new ways of creative, unwritten elaboration of authentic Yiddish folk material, the musical heritage of the group's founder, Igor Polesitsky. Since the group's debut in 2005 at the Progetto Martha Argerich Festival in Lugano, Switzerland, Klezmerata Fiorentina has appeared on some of the world's most prestigious stages. Of special note are their performances at the Quirinale Palace in Rome, the official residence of the President of the Republic of Italy, at the Great Hall of Congresses in the Kremlin, Moscow's Dom Musyki, the Rachmaninov Hall of Tchaikovsky Conservatory, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic society, Società di Quartetto in Milan, Amici della Musica in Florence, the Skirball Center in Los Angeles, the Italian Festival delle Nazioni, the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, Natalia Gutman's Kreuth Festival in Germany, the Ashkenaz Festival in Toronto, the Chutzpah! Festival in Vancouver, the Telavi Festival in the Republic of Georgia, the Summertime Festival in Jurmala (Latvia), etc.

**TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** is the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Led by Artistic Director **Tim Bond** and Executive Director **Phil Santora**, the Palo Alto-based theatre company serves more than 100,000 patrons per year and has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country. The company's 51<sup>st</sup> season has been postponed in accordance with global efforts to

prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). In late January 2021, TheatreWorks will make an announcement regarding its upcoming 51<sup>st</sup> season.

**For Calendar Editors:**

## ***Hershey Felder as Sholem Aleichem in BEFORE FIDDLER***

**WHAT:** Decades before the beloved musical *Fiddler on the Roof* first delighted worldwide audiences, there was Sholem Aleichem and his beloved character of ‘Tevye the Milkman.’ When he was only 24 years old, Aleichem published his first story, *Tsvey Shteyner* (“Two Stones”), and by 1890, he had become a central figure in Yiddish literature. Aleichem was known as the “Jewish Mark Twain” for his similar writing style and pen name usage.

Felder will play Sholem Aleichem himself – giving audiences the true story of what happened ‘Before *Fiddler*.’

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In Florence, Italy, one of the oldest artistic centers in the world, a group of musicians have been virtuosos in the world-famous Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino by day (under the baton of famed conductor Zubin Mehta), and then become the Klezmerata Fiorentina by night. The quartet consists of violinist and violist **Igor Polesitsky**; clarinetist **Riccardo Crocilla**; accordionist and bassoonist **Francesco Furlanich**; and double bass player **Riccardo Donati**.

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**DATES:** Livestreamed at **5pm PST, Sunday, February 7, 2021**  
with streaming on-demand access available through February 14, 2021.

**WHERE:** Patrons who purchase a ticket to the event will be emailed a link to stream the program at home on their computer, SmartTV or other device.

**TICKETS:** \$55 per household  
\$148.50 (10% off) for a World Premiere Pass including access to *Hershey Felder as Sholem Aleichem in BEFORE FIDDLER*; *Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*; and *Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI* for one household.

**INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit [TheatreWorks.org](http://TheatreWorks.org).

## *Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*

**WHAT:** TheatreWorks Silicon Valley in partnership with Hershey Felder Presents *Live From Florence* offers streaming access for *Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*, which delves into the world of one of the most renowned opera composers, Giacomo Puccini. Featuring excerpts from *La bohème, Tosca, Turandot*, and more, *PUCCINI* is the story of the great composer's deliciously scandalous life, and how the real women he knew affected the heroines he created for the stage. Felder creates this performance live on location in the places where the events, compositions, and premieres that are depicted originally took place.

**DATES:** Livestreamed at **5pm PST, Sunday, March 14, 2021**  
with streaming on-demand access available through March 21, 2021.

**WHERE:** Patrons who purchase a ticket to the event will be emailed a link to stream the program at home on their computer, SmartTV or other device.

**TICKETS:** \$55 per household  
\$148.50 (10% off) for a World Premiere Pass including access to *Hershey Felder as Sholem Aleichem in BEFORE FIDDLER*; *Hershey Felder, PUCCINI*; and *Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI* for one household.

**INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit [TheatreWorks.org](http://TheatreWorks.org).

## *Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI*

**WHAT:** TheatreWorks Silicon Valley in partnership with Hershey Felder Presents *Live From Florence* offers streaming access for *Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in ANNA & SERGEI*, exploring the little known story of a strange meeting of Russian piano virtuoso

Rachmaninoff and Anna Anderson, a woman who claimed to be Princess Anastasia, the sole surviving member of the Romanov Dynasty. Featuring Rachmaninoff's most beloved melodies and music, *ANNA & SERGEI* is set in the Beverly Hills house in which Rachmaninoff died in 1943, offering up a mesmerizing memory play.

- DATES:** Livestreamed at **5pm PST, Sunday, May 16, 2021**  
with streaming on-demand access available through May 23, 2021.
- WHERE:** Patrons who purchase a ticket to the event will be emailed a link to stream the program at home on their computer, SmartTV or other device.
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- INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit **TheatreWorks.org**.

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- PRESS:** Contact Carla Befera & Co.  
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- PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/HersheyFelder2021>