

Fanny Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1805 and died in Berlin in 1847. She was four years older and very close to her brother, the composer Felix Mendelssohn. As children, they studied music together, performed together, and were considered by most to be equally gifted. As creative artists and composers, however, they received vastly different levels of professional encouragement. Their father recognized and celebrated Fanny's talent, but early on made it quite clear that professional pursuit of a career and public creativity (published works) were not acceptable for a woman. While her brother Felix pursued a public career, Fanny pursued one in private, arranging fabulous concerts in her salon, for which she was able to share her gifts as pianist and conductor. Though her brother later echoed her father's discouraging attitude towards publishing, Fanny continued to compose and in the last two years of her life published a number of works on her own initiative.

Her talent for melodic writing is most evident in the outer movements of these *Three Pieces*, originally written for piano, four-hands. In the first, lovely lyrical lines soar over flowing arpeggiated figures. The harmonies are fresh, often taking unexpected turns. This vocal orientation gives way to a dramatic and more instrumental concept in the second piece in C minor. Here, the presentation and development of strong, short motives is reminiscent of Beethoven, as is the sense of driving rhythm created by repeated, pulsating chords. The last and shortest of the three movements again showcases Fanny's talent as a melodist. The *Three Pieces* as individual movements are representative of her fine craftsmanship, with a satisfying balance between slight variations of the familiar and completely contrasting music. The music speaks to us with directness, lyricism, and passion.

Armand Russell (born 1932, Seattle, Washington) completed the Bachelor of Arts and the Master of Arts degrees in music composition at the University of Washington where he studied with John Verrall and George McKay. He earned the doctorate in composition at the Eastman School of Music, studying with Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. As a virtuoso bass player, he played double bass in the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic and Civic Orchestras, the Boston Pops Tour Orchestra, and the Honolulu Symphony. During the summers, he was a Visiting Professor at the Eastman School of Music.

Russell joined the University of Hawaii music faculty in 1961 as Professor of Music Theory and Composition, and he later served as Chairman of the Music Department for seven years. Under his leadership, the department earned national accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music and the graduate program was expanded. He retired in 1994 as Professor Emeritus. He now lives in Santa Rosa, California.

Russell was a prolific composer whose output included many works for double bass and percussion in solo, chamber, and concerto formats. Some of his frequently performed published works include the *Pas de deux* for clarinet and percussion, *Sonata for Percussion and Piano*, *Suite Concertante* for tuba and woodwind quintet, *Theme and Fantasia* for band, *Chaconne* for double bass and piano, *Buffo Set* for double bass and piano, *Harlequin Concerto* for double bass and orchestra (or piano), and several works for chorus. Russell also co-authored with Allen Trubitt, a series of theory textbooks, *The Shaping of Musical Elements*, published by Macmillan.