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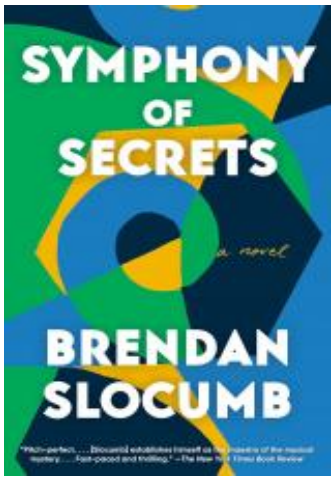
Symphony of Secrets

by Brendan Slocumb



About the Book

A gripping page-turner from the celebrated author of book club favorite THE VIOLIN CONSPIRACY: Music professor Bern Hendricks discovers a shocking secret about the most famous American composer of all time --- his music may have been stolen from a Black Jazz Age prodigy named Josephine Reed. Determined to uncover the truth that a powerful organization wants to keep hidden, Bern will stop at nothing to right history's wrongs and give Josephine the recognition she deserves.

Bern Hendricks has just received the call of a lifetime. As one of the world?s preeminent experts on the famed 20th-century composer Frederick Delaney, Bern knows everything there is to know about the man behind the music. When Mallory Roberts, a board member of the distinguished Delaney Foundation and direct descendant of the man himself, asks for Bern?s help authenticating a newly discovered piece, which may be his famous lost opera, RED, he jumps at the chance. With the help of his tech-savvy acquaintance Eboni, Bern soon discovers that the truth is far more complicated than history would have them believe.

In 1920s Manhattan, Josephine Reed is living on the streets and frequenting jazz clubs when she meets the struggling musician Fred Delaney. But where young Delaney struggles, Josephine soars. She?s a natural prodigy who hears beautiful music in the sounds of the world around her. With Josephine as his silent partner, Delaney?s career takes off --- but who is the real genius here?

In the present day, Bern and Eboni begin to uncover more clues that indicate Delaney may have had help in composing his most successful work. Armed with more questions than answers and caught in the crosshairs of a powerful organization that will stop at nothing to keep their secret hidden, Bern and Eboni will move heaven and earth in their dogged quest to right history?s wrongs.

Discussion Guide

1. Was Freddy wrong, given who he was and when he lived, to ?help? Josephine the way he did?

2. Is Freddy a hero or a villain, and why?

3. If Josephine hadn?t been Black, do you think that Freddy could have gotten away with what he did?

4. If Josephine hadn?t been neurodivergent, do you think that Freddy could have gotten away with what he did?

5.
In the author?s note, Brendan Slocumb says that he wrote this book to be a ?voice for the voiceless.? What do you think he meant, a

6. Was the Delaney Foundation inherently greedy or evil, or were they just trying to preserve their legacy?

7.
How important, or unimportant, was it that most of the Board members were white, and that Bern and Eboni were Black?

8.
In the 1920s, many composers would go to jazz clubs and appropriate melodies and themes from other musicians. Is this appropriat

9.
Bern struggled when he discovered that his idol, Freddy Delaney, had done some really rotten things. Have you ever had your ideali

10. Do you think it?s important that the present-day storyline never discovered what happened to Josephine?

11.
The author has said that the book is about the limits of human knowledge. How do you think the storylines and themes play into tha

12. Who?s your favorite character and why?

Author Bio

Brendan Nicholaus Slocumb was raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and holds a degree in music education (with concentrations in violin and viola) from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For more than 20 years, he has been a public and private school music educator and has performed with orchestras throughout Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. He is the author of THE VIOLIN CONSPIRACY, SYMPHONY OF SECRETS and THE DARK MAESTRO.

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