

Benedetti – baby already listening to classical music

Violinist Nicola Benedetti says that two months before her due date her baby is already listening to her music.

The classical musician, 36, is due to give birth to her first child in May, but insisted she has never enjoyed playing violin more than at present.

The expectant mum said she plays to her baby “all the time”, although she insisted she does not have a favoured tune.

She said: “Do I play the violin to my baby? Well yeah, I’m practising all the time so yes. And it’s a living being so of course you communicate.

“There’s nothing specific, just my regular practice. I don’t know if my baby will be musical. You never know who you get, but from the very earliest stages they will be exposed to music, that is true.”

Benedetti, who last year became the first woman and the first Scot appointed director of the Edinburgh International Festival, is scheduled to perform in the Scottish capital this August.

She said touring plans in the coming weeks have been altered but she intends to perform during the Festival, where her various commitments include “a relaxed, family-friendly performance” of Vaughan Williams’ masterpiece The Lark Ascending.

And she said her baby could be introduced to the world-famous Festival at only around three months old.

She said: “Yes, quite an induction to the world. Of course, that is a lovely thought. But we’ll just take one step at a time, I think it will just be working with flexibility, in terms of the environment and decisions made in advance.

“Obviously there will be a time when I won’t be touring and there are changes to my touring schedule. I’ll be keeping a bit more local for a period.

“People do it (have babies) all the time. I’ll just have to see how it goes and work with the new definition of work life and home life but we’ll make it work.”

Benedetti was brought up in West Kilbride, North Ayrshire, but left her family home aged just nine to attend the famous Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey.

She won the title of BBC Young Musician when she was 16 and became the youngest ever recipient of the Queen’s Medal for Music in 2017.

A Grammy and Brit Award winner, she has spent much of her adult life touring the world, but she is also renowned for her work with and for children, sharing her love for music and campaigning for better music education.

Among her numerous roles, The Benedetti Foundation she set up in 2019 has worked with tens of thousands of children as young as two, with a belief that “music is integral to life’s education”.

She insisted having a child of her own was not a missing piece in a jigsaw.

She said: “There wasn’t a missing part. It’s not filling a void or a need. It’s a wonderful addition.

“I didn’t really think about it from that point of view but I’ve had a lot of messages from people saying things like ‘you’ve given so much to so many other people’s children so this is an exciting moment for you’, so that was very sweet.”

In an interview five years ago Benedetti said: “My sister’s married now and in a very kind of settled place in her life, but she’s 35, and a lot of my friends are in similar circumstances. They live in a house with a partner and have children or are going to have children, and obviously I’m not at that point yet.”

The virtuoso violinist, who currently splits her time between England and Edinburgh, said she didn’t know if motherhood would bring her back to Scotland more.

But asked if she too was now settling down, she replied emphatically: “No. No more than I ever have done.

“I don’t know how I’m going to feel once the baby comes along so we’ll see but no, my drive and dedication is what it has always been.”

Benedetti last week announced the programme for this year’s Edinburgh International Festival, which will feature 161 performances by more than 2,000 artists from 42 nations, running from 2-25 August.

She added: “It’s a huge source of pride – it’s something any country around the world would boast from the rooftops so we should do the same.”



Edinburgh International Festival Director Nicola Benedetti, CBE