

# *Mendelssohn on the Mall*

January 11 – February 27, 2009

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Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of  
the birth of Felix Mendelssohn  
(February 3, 1809 – November 4, 1847)



Presented by the Library of Congress,  
the National Academy of Sciences, and the  
National Gallery of Art under the gracious patronage  
of His Excellency Dr. Klaus Scharioth, Ambassador  
of Germany to the United States

*Admission is free*

The Sixty-seventh Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell  
and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

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National Gallery of Art  
2,706th Concert  
February 15, 2009

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**The University of Akron Concert Choir**  
**Samuel Gordon, director**  
**With Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano, and Steven Combs, baritone**

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*Program performed without intermission*

Psalms, Hymns, and Cantatas by Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

*Verleih uns Frieden* (Grant Us Peace) (1831)

*Hear My Prayer, O Lord* (1830)

*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded) (1830)

*Der 42. Psalm* (Psalm 42): *Wie der Hirsch schreit nach frischem Wasser*  
(As the Hart Longs for Flowing Streams) (1837)

## The Musicians

### **SAMUEL GORDON**

Samuel Gordon is director of choral studies and professor of music at The University of Akron School of Music. His career spans more than thirty years, during which time he has been either a tenor soloist or the conductor in hundreds of concerts, both in the United States and abroad. From 1985–2003, he was the tenor soloist of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble, and from 1988–1996, his Maryland Camerata was choir-in-consortium at the Gallery. With the Vocal Arts Ensemble, Gordon performed vocal chamber music at the Musée du Louvre in Paris and at the Schloß Belvedere Museum in Vienna. He is also the founder and artistic director of Singers Companye, a world-class choir that sang its National Gallery debut concert in November 2008.

Gordon has received top prizes at the Concorso Polifonico Guido d'Arezzo (Italy), the International Musical Eisteddfod (Wales), and the Welsh National Eisteddfod. He was the first American conductor to win the Eisteddfod, where his ensembles sang in Welsh. His conducting skills have also earned the Bronze Horreo in Orviedo, Spain, the Laureate of the Fiat Conducting Prize, and the Trimillennial Medal from the city of Cadiz, Spain. He and the other members of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble won the 1988 Studio Lauda Award at the International Early Music Festival in Zadar, Croatia (formerly Yugoslavia).

Performances at international festivals have included the Ambler Festival, the Bregenz International Festival, the Flanders Festival, the Haydn Festival of a Lifetime at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Holland Festival, the Ljubljana Festival and Mozaik (both in the former Yugoslavia), the Rheingau Musik Festival (Mainz, Germany), the Salzburg Festival, and the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds (Spoleto, Italy). As guest conductor, he has led the Canton Symphony Orchestra (Ohio), the National Gallery Orchestra, the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, the Perugia Chamber

Orchestra, the Santa Fe Symphony, and the Taipei Philharmonic. He has been a featured soloist with the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, El Paso, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Saint Louis; the National Gallery Orchestra; and the National Symphony Orchestra.

Gordon is also active as a composer. In 2006 the Santa Fe Women's Ensemble premiered his *Motets for the Lady Mass*, and the following year he was named composer-in-residence for that ensemble. He has recorded for Koch International Classics and Telarc International and has his own choral music series with National Music Publishers, where he has published more than twenty choral compositions. His works have been premiered at the National Gallery and the Kennedy Center.

#### **ROSA LAMOREAUX**

After winning the Handel Aria Competition at the Aspen Music Festival as a finalist in the Oratorio Society Competition of New York, soprano Rosa Lamoreaux went on to appear as soloist with the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Dallas as well as the National Philharmonic Orchestra. She has won critical acclaim for her performances in the United States and abroad, performing in such distinguished venues as Carnegie Hall, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Kennedy Center, Royal Albert Hall in London, and Usher Hall in Edinburgh. She has been a soloist in the masses, passions, and nearly all of the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach as well as in vespers, masses, and oratorios of Handel, Haydn, Monteverdi, and Mozart. Operatic roles include Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*, Galatea in *Acis and Galatea*, and Romilda in *Xerxes* by Handel; Belinda and Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell; Venus in *Didone* by Cavalli; and Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* by Mozart.

Lamoreaux is the artistic director of the National Gallery Art Vocal Arts Ensemble and a frequent soloist with ArcoVoce, the Folger Consort, and Hesperus, and she has toured with Musicians from Marlboro. Her many recitals include performances at the Chautauqua Institute, the Cloisters, the Corcoran Gallery, the Library of Congress, the Metropolitan Museum of Art,

and the Smithsonian Institution. She has performed overseas at the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Sorrento, the La Fenice Chamber Music Festival in Venice, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Rheingau Music Festival in Mainz, and the Schloß Belvedere Museum in Vienna.

Lamoreaux's recordings include repertoire by Bach, Berlioz, Handel, Hildegard von Bingen, Piaf, Shostakovich, and songs of Thomas D'Urfey.

#### **STEVEN COMBS**

Baritone Steven Combs frequently appears as a soloist with many Washington, DC, arts organizations, including the Washington Bach Consort and the Washington Ballet. He can also be heard in opera and chamber music concerts, including those of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble, with which he has sung intermittently since 2004. He was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Winner and made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1991 under the baton of James Levine in the world premiere of John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*. In 1993 Combs sang the title role in Colin Graham's first staging of Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and he has sung other principal roles with the Boston Lyric Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Minnesota Opera.

(A biography of the University of Akron School of Music Concert Choir appears in the program insert.)

## Program Notes

Felix Mendelssohn was born on February 3, 1809. With “Mendelssohn on the Mall,” the Library of Congress, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Gallery of Art join musical presenters around the world in celebrating the bicentennial of the birth of a composer whose works have become essential to the Western canon. Art historians and cultural historians alike are fascinated by Mendelssohn because he was a “Renaissance man” who developed skills in many areas to a highly sophisticated level, including drawing and painting, sports, and writing. He was lionized in his own time as a composer, conductor, and performer, and the world mourned his untimely death in 1847 at age thirty-eight.

Among Mendelssohn’s most enduring contributions to the world of European music was his fostering of oratorio societies. As a youth, he was familiar with the activities of the Berliner Singakademie, an association of amateur singers and music lovers in which his family had been active since its founding in 1791. In 1829, the Akademie engaged the twenty-year-old Mendelssohn to prepare, conduct, and accompany from the piano a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Saint Matthew Passion*, the first public performance of the work since Bach’s death in 1750. The first three works on this evening’s program were composed during the two years following that event and may well have been written for performance by the Berliner Singakademie. During his years in Düsseldorf (1833–1835), Mendelssohn organized and conducted revivals of *The Seasons* and *The Creation* by Haydn and *Alexander’s Feast, Israel in Egypt, Messiah, Judas Maccabaeus, Solomon*, and the “Dettingen” *Te Deum* by Handel. During the same period, Mendelssohn also undertook to write his own first oratorio, *Saint Paul*, based on passages from *The Acts of the Apostles*, as paraphrased by authors Julius Schubring and Julius Fürst.

Mendelssohn's primary opportunity to organize and conduct performances of all kinds came in 1835, when he was appointed municipal music director for the city of Leipzig, which placed its Gewandhaus Orchestra and a number of choirs at his disposal. During the next twelve years, he presented his own works and those of Beethoven, Haydn, Handel, and Mozart in more than 400 concerts. The setting of *Psalm 42* with which this concert closes was composed for performance in those Leipzig concerts in 1837. Ever the perfectionist, Mendelssohn postponed the first performance until 1839, by which time he had revised the work twice.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**Mendelssohn Piano Trio**

Peter Sirotin, violin

Fiona Thompson, cello

Ya-Ting Chang, piano

Music by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schubert

February 22, 2009

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



**Leon Bates, pianist**

Music by Dett, Matheny, Walker, and other composers

Presented in honor of African American History Month

February 25, 2009

Wednesday at 12:10 pm

East Building Auditorium



The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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## Concerts and Events

### JANUARY

#### 11 Ma'alot Wind Quintet

Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, transcribed for wind quintet; music by Ligeti, Barber, and Piazzolla  
Preceded at 6:00 pm by a preconcert lecture: *Mendelssohn and the Visual Arts*

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

#### 18 Weiss-Kaplan-Newman Trio with guest artists Amadi Hummings and Sel Kardan, violas, and Kurt Muroki, bass

Mendelssohn: *Sextet for Piano and Strings*, op. 87; music by Sheng and Smetana

SUNDAY, 3:00 PM

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

#### 18 National Gallery Orchestra,

**Kenneth Slowik, guest conductor**

Mendelssohn: *"Italian" Symphony*;  
Schubert: *Symphony in C Major*  
("Great")

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

#### 25 Fine Arts Quartet

Mendelssohn: *Quartets*, opp. 12  
and 44/1

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

The calendar of concerts and events  
continues on the inside back cover.

## FEBRUARY

Exhibition of Mendelssohn manuscripts, letters, and drawings

THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY 2009  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 1 Ulrich Urban, pianist

Mendelssohn: *Fantasies and Caprices*, op. 16; selected *Songs without Words*; *Variations sérieuses*, op. 54

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

### 6 Cypress Quartet

Mendelssohn: *Quartet*, op. 13; music by Beethoven and Puts

FRIDAY, 8:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 8 Josef Feigelson, cellist Peep Lassmann, pianist

Mendelssohn's complete works for cello and piano

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

### 10 Mira Trio

Hensel: *Piano Trio in D minor*, op. 11; Mendelssohn and Hensel: *Songs without Words*; Mendelssohn: *Piano Trio no. 2 in C minor*, op. 66  
Preceded at 6:15 pm by a preconcert lecture by Susan Clermont, Music Division, Library of Congress

FRIDAY, 8:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 13 Atrium Quartet

Mendelssohn: *Quartet*, op. 80; music by Shostakovich and Borodin

FRIDAY, 8:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 15 University of Akron Concert Choir, Samuel Gordon, conductor

Mendelssohn: *Wie der Hirsch schreit*, op. 42; Chorale Cantata: *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*; hymn: *Hör mein bitten*

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

### 18 Trio con Brio Copenhagen

Mendelssohn: *Piano Quartet in B Minor*, op. 3; Beethoven: "Archduke" Trio

WEDNESDAY, 8:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 19 Lecture by R. Larry Todd, Duke University

*Reflections on the Mendelssohn Bicentenary*

THURSDAY, 7:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 22 Mendelssohn Piano Trio

Mendelssohn: *Piano Trio in D Minor*, op. 49; music by Beethoven

SUNDAY, 6:30 PM  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

### 27 Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, Betsy Burleigh, director

Mendelssohn: *Psalm 55: Sechs Sprüche*, op. 79; music by Handel, Haydn, and Mozart

FRIDAY, 8:00 PM  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

*Mailing address*  
2000B South Club Drive  
Landover, MD 20785

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

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For events at the Library of Congress,  
advance reservation of tickets is recommended.  
Tickets are distributed by Ticketmaster (202-397-SEAT).  
The tickets are free, but there is a service charge  
for the reservation.

[www.loc.gov/concerts](http://www.loc.gov/concerts)

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COVER: Carl Joseph Begas, *Felix Mendelssohn*  
*Bartholdy*, 1821, Private Collection