

# *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  
2,705th Concert  
February 8, 2009

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**Josef Feigelson, cellist**  
**Peep Lassmann, pianist**

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Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)  
*Complete Works for Cello and Piano*

*Variations concertantes in D Major for Cello and Piano*, op. 17 (1829)

*Sonata no. 1 for Cello and Piano in B-flat Major*, op. 45 (1838)

Allegro vivace

Andante

Allegro assai

**INTERMISSION**

*Song without Words in D Major for Cello and Piano*, op. 109 (1845)

*Sonata no. 2 for Cello and Piano in D Major*, op. 58 (1843)

Allegro assai vivace

Allegretto scherzando

Adagio

Molto allegro e vivace

## The Musicians

### JOSEF FEIGELSON

Latvian-born cellist Josef (Yosif) Feigelson's solo career has spanned more than three decades. He has been praised for his singing tone, effortless technique, and sincere, enlightening interpretations. As a child, Feigelson was virtually surrounded by music—his father was an opera tenor and his mother an orchestra violinist. He began playing the cello at the age of six, studying at the Darzin Music School in Riga. After winning first prize at the Concertino Prague International Competition in 1970, he caught the attention of the legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and consequently became his pupil at the Moscow Conservatory. After Rostropovich's departure from the Soviet Union, Feigelson continued his studies with Natalia Gutman. A prizewinner in the Tchaikovsky (1974) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1976) international competitions, he toured throughout the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, appearing in Dvořák Hall in Prague, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, and the Musikbiennele in Berlin.

Feigelson became an American citizen in 1987 and made his widely publicized New York orchestral debut in 1988, when he stepped in on short notice for ailing violinist Nathan Milstein with the New York Chamber Symphony. That year also marked his National Gallery recital debut. He has performed in virtually every major concert hall in New York City as well as Symphony Hall in Chicago and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In addition to other solo performances across Europe, Israel, and the United Kingdom, he has been a soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphonietta, and the Detroit, Knoxville, Pittsburgh, Richmond, and Seattle symphony orchestras. In Europe, Feigelson has taken part in the Bach Festival in Madeira, Portugal; the Handelfestspiele and Schleswig-Holstein Festivals in Germany; the Moulin d'Ande Festival in France; Musiktreffen in St. Moritz, Switzerland; and the Tuscany Festival in Italy.

As a chamber musician, Feigelson has collaborated with pianists Bella Davidovich and Vladimir Feltsman, soprano Barbara Hendrix, violinist Oleh Krysa, and violist Yuri Bashmet. He has appeared with conductors Moshe Atzmon, Lukas Foss, Lawrence Foster, Neeme Jarvi, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Gerard Schwarz, Andre Raphael Smith, and David Stahl.

The recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant, Feigelson has appeared on television and radio, including Public Radio International's "Performance Today." His 1996 performance of the Dvořák *Cello Concerto* with the Detroit Symphony under Neeme Jarvi was recorded for Eurobroadcast and heard on radio stations around the world. His CD recordings have been released on the Panton, Essay, Melodiya, and Olympia labels. Feigelson has given master classes for string players in many venues, including the Aspen music Festival, the Chautauqua Institution, the Detroit Civic Orchestra, and Rutgers University. He is also an artistic director of two festivals of concerts and master classes: the Kindred Spirits Programs in Milford, Pennsylvania, and the Preludes of Pont-Aven in France.

#### **PEEP LASSMANN**

Pianist Peep Lassmann has a distinguished career, not only in his native Estonia but also in Asia, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, and western Europe. Born in Tallinn, Lassmann studied piano at the Estonian Music Academy under Heljo Sepa and at the Moscow Conservatory with the renowned pianist Emil Gilels. While in Moscow, he won a silver medal at the All-Soviet Union Piano Competition. After graduation he was immediately engaged in extensive concert tours, both as a recitalist and as a collaborative pianist. After the re-establishment of Estonia's independence, Lassmann was asked to lead the Estonian Music Academy. He became its director in 1991.

Today, Lassmann continues to collaborate with some of the world's leading musicians, including cellists Josef Feigelson and Raphael Wallfish, singer Yolande Hernandez, and violinists Aaron Rosand and Marianne Boettcher. He has also recorded a solo album of Estonian piano music as

well as the *Piano Preludes* of the renowned Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. Lassmann's repertoire is extremely varied and includes music from different periods and styles. He was the first pianist in Estonia to perform the grand cycles *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus* (Twenty Reflections on the Infant Jesus) and *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* (Catalogue of Birds) by Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992). Lassmann's affinity for the latter work stems in part from the fact that he is a lover of nature and an avid bird-watcher. He serves on the board of the Estonian Ornithological Society.

## 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.

Mendelssohn composed his first work for cello and piano, the *Variations concertantes*, op. 17, for his brother, Paul, who was a gifted cellist. A songlike theme, which highlights both the piano and cello parts, is followed by eight variations. The first two shine a spotlight on the piano, while the ensuing variations turn the emphasis from one instrument to the other, changing color and displaying virtuosity in both performers. Also composed for his brother Paul, the *Sonata in B-flat Major for Cello and Piano*, op. 45, was written in Leipzig in 1838, almost a decade after the *Variations concertantes*. In this sonata, Mendelssohn shows his gift for *cantabile* melodic writing, giving an equal assignment to each partner and providing long, singing phrases for the cello.

Written in 1845, the *Song without Words*, op. 109, was the last piece Mendelssohn wrote for this pair of instruments. It was dedicated to Lisa Cristiani (1827–1853), one of very few women cellists of the time. Having composed eight volumes of *Songs without Words* for piano solo, the composer was particularly adept at writing in this abbreviated form. This is the only such piece that he composed specifically for two instruments (several of the *Songs without Words* for piano were transcribed by others for various instruments). Here the cello is the “singer” and the piano provides beautiful harmonious accompaniment.

The *Sonata in D Major*, op. 58, was written five years after the *B-flat Major Sonata*, and the former work greatly overshadows the latter in subsequent popularity. The first movement of the later sonata (*Allegro assai vivace*) contains few surprises for those already familiar with the earlier one and Mendelssohn's sonatas for other instruments, but each of the subsequent movements has an aspect that makes it unique. In the second movement (*Allegretto scherzando*), the composer plays at first with the cello's potential as a plucked string instrument, sometimes producing sonorities that can be likened to chirps, but eventually returns to the instrument's true forte, lyric melody played with full bow strokes. In the third movement (*Adagio*), both the cello and the piano take turns in the role of a bold declaimer of a full-blown chorale in the romantic style. In the final movement (*Molto allegro e vivace*), some twenty measures pass in which the tonality is indeterminate—a deliberate move on the composer's part that makes the eventual entry of the theme in the tonic key all the more dramatic. The movement continues with an unrelenting forward motion akin to the whirl of a spinning wheel.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**University of Akron Concert Choir**

Samuel Gordon, conductor

With Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano, Steven Combs, baritone,  
and members of the National Gallery Orchestra

Music by Mendelssohn

February 15, 2009

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

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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.





# Mendelssohn on the Mall

January 11–February 27, 2009

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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, watercolors, and the Mendelssohn family scrapbook

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