Mendelssohn on the Mall
January 11–February 27, 2009

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

cover: Carl Joseph Begas, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, 1821, Private Collection
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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 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 8, 2009
Josef Feigelson, cellist
Peep Lassmann, pianist

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 Dvorak Hall in Prague, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, and the Musiktienale 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 Händelfestspiele 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 Rozdhestvensky, 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 histori­
ans 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 com­
poser 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 whir 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

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.
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 53: Sechs Sprüche, op. 79; music by Handel, Haydn, and Mozart
FRIDAY, 8:00 PM
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS