

# The Washington Post

*"...performances were splendid and idiomatic..."*

The Weiss-Kaplan-Newman Trio  
with guests Edwin Kaplan and Sel Kardan, violas, and Kurt Muroki, bass  
performed at the National Academy of Sciences across from the National Mall on  
the same day as the pre-inaugural concert at the Lincoln Memorial

## Weiss-Kaplan- Newman Trio's Other Celebration

Wednesday, January 21, 2009; C08

Sunday afternoon's "Mendelssohn on the Mall" concert at the [National Academy of Sciences](#) may not have had the same cachet as that other bigger and louder Sunday [Mall](#) event scheduled at roughly the same time, but the several hundred members of its audience got the chance to walk the same exhilarating walk to get there with the many thousands who were headed a block farther south.

This was another celebration -- of the 200th anniversary of Mendelssohn's birth. A number of Mall institutions are sponsoring concerts of his music this winter, and on Sunday the Weiss-Kaplan-Newman Trio and three guest artists contributed a spirited if not always tidy reading of Mendelssohn's youthful (written at age 15) Piano Sextet. This is Mendelssohn on steroids (or, perhaps, testosterone), trying out every musical idea that crowded his youthful imagination, not knowing quite when to stop and daring strange modulations and technical pyrotechnics just because he could. Scored for piano, violin, two violas, cello and bass, it often takes on the character of a piano concerto, and pianist Yael Weiss managed both the lyricism and the subtle percussiveness of her assignment with consummate artistry.

To follow Bright Sheng's pristine and transparent "Four Movements for Piano Trio" that opened the concert with Smetana's opulent Trio in G Minor, Op. 15, was a little like palate-cleansing in reverse. Sheng's delicacy, handled with such refinement and focus by the trio, was overwhelmed by Smetana's barely restrained passion. Both performances were splendid and idiomatic but might have been more satisfying in the reverse order.

-- [Joan Reinthaler](#)