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# Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Saturday, June 7th, 2003, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- [Victor Herbert](#) (1859-1924). *Hero and Leander*, a symphonic poem, Op. 33 (1901). Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; Lorin Maazel. Sony Classical 52491. 28:26
- [George Szell](#) (1897-1970). *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 4 (1913). Carl Topilow, Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra (216-795-3212). 14:13

We know Victor Herbert as a composer of operettas such as *Babes in Toyland*, but forget that he was a respected “long-hair” composer, and actually a giant in the classical music circles of his time. He was a world-class cellist, and his robust *Cello Concerto No. 2* inspired Dvorak to write his famous B Minor concerto. He was for six years Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, bringing it to national prominence, one of the founders of the composers’ rights organization ASCAP, and seems to have been the first to write a through-composed work for a film. *Hero and Leander* depicts the myth of the two lovers separated by the Straits of Bosphorus. Leander swims across each night to be with Hero, but one night he drowns in a storm and is washed ashore below her tower, from which she jumps to be with him in death.

George Szell is of course known most famously as the Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1946 until his death, and established it as one of the world’s greatest orchestras. That he was also a composer in his youth is news to many of us, but the *Variations on an Original Theme* is a brilliant work, even more striking from the fact that Szell wrote it when he was 17. A musical prodigy, he was called “the new Mozart” for his precocious piano and composing talents. This work lives and breathes early-20th-century Vienna, and we can certainly forgive the teenager’s debt to the influence of Richard Strauss.

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Hosted by [Kile Smith](#), Curator of the Fleisher Collection, and [Jack Moore](#), Program Director of WRTI. In *Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection* we uncover the unknown, rediscover the little-known, and take a fresh look at some of the remarkable treasures housed in the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in the [Free Library of Philadelphia](#). The Fleisher Collection is the largest lending library of orchestral performance material in the world. For recording details, please go to our [web page](#). For a detailed list of all our shows, please visit our [archives](#).