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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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

- [Samuel Coleridge-Taylor](#) (1875-1912). *Romance in G Major for Violin and Orchestra* (1899). Encore Chamber Orchestra, Rachel Barton, Daniel Hege, Cedille CDR 90000 035. 12:33
- [William Henry Fry](#) (1813-1864). *Santa Claus, Christmas Symphony* (1853). Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Tony Rowe. Naxos 8.559057. 26:14
- [Rachel Barton](#) interview

We return to two composers we've heard before on our show. Coleridge-Taylor and Fry have both made appearances on "Discoveries," and why not—as our introduction states, they're "unknown" or "little-known," depending on your point of view, but each is definitely remarkable! Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was an Englishman of African descent who came to be one of the most loved composers of his generation, on both sides of the Atlantic. As a composer, violinist, and conductor, he gained both fame with audiences and respect from fellow composers, and his works based on the Hiawatha legend were particularly popular.

The *Romance* is an example of gorgeous violin writing, and we're happy to welcome the brilliant violinist Rachel Barton to our show and have a talk with her. Rachel's love of classical music fits with her love of blues, heavy metal, and Celtic folk music, and how does she do that? Most of all, her delight in taking classical music to new and young audiences shows her commitment to the power of music to all people, regardless of boundaries. She truly is an inspiration, and you'll want to hear her speak about her life and music.

The *Santa Claus Symphony* of William Henry Fry launched the composer and music reviewer into the forefront of American music in the mid-19th century, and smack into controversy. Critics greeted his (by all accounts) popular successes with this piece and others with a grudging acceptance of his gifts, flavored with more than a trace of condescension. Well, he was a critic, too, and not the shy, retiring type, so he fought back. *Santa Claus* was indeed a symphony if not in the requisite four movements (he said), the people love it, and you who attack me are tearing down an American composer when you should be doing everything in your power to build us up! The Music Department at the Central Library has all the original journals with this dogfight, and it makes for enlightening reading. In the meantime, though, we can make up our own minds and listen to this unique work by a true American pioneer, the first native-born American to compose large orchestral works, and the first American composer of grand opera.

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](#).