

Listen to

Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

on WRTI 90.1 FM Philadelphia or online at wrti.org

Saturday, September 3rd, 2005, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- Josef Geringer (1892-1979). Gavotte (c.1940), 3:31. Josef Geringer, violin, Stella Richter, piano.
- Geringer. Serenade, (c.1940), 2:55
- Geringer. Mazurka, (c.1940), 2:23
- [Jerzy Gablenz](#) (1888-1937). The Pilgrim (1923), 30:55. Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Christopher Dziewiecki
- Interview with Lilly Drukker, daughter of Josef Geringer

This is a show of journeys.

A more remarkable story would be difficult to imagine. Josef Geringer, a member of the first violin section in the Vienna Philharmonic, is arrested in 1938 along with eleven other Jewish instrumentalists in the orchestra. Geringer is sent to the Dachau concentration camp, where his fate would have been sealed, but he is released two months later. Released because a friend intervened, cutting through the government bureaucracy to gain his freedom. Who would have the power do such a thing? Of course, only a Nazi party member, and the friend, William Jergers, had indeed joined the Nazis as far back as 1932. But a friend he was nevertheless, and he succeeds in gaining Geringer's release.

The incredible story is not finished, because Jergers warns Geringer to leave Vienna as things would surely worsen. So he accepts a job as violinist with an orchestra in, of all places, Berlin. Within a few months must leave there as well, as the orchestra is an all-Jewish ensemble and the authorities have now succeeded in clamping down on all aspects of culture. Geringer barely escapes to the U.S., lands a job as concertmaster in Louisiana, then accepts a position as violinist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, from which he retires in 1970. His daughter Lilly Drukker recounts for us all of this and how he composed in the meantime, on our show this month.

The Polish composer Jerzy Gablenz died tragically in an airplane crash in 1937, leaving behind a number of compositions, and our ruminations about what might have been. *The Pilgrim* is his earliest orchestral work that he did not destroy, and it is a tantalizing example of a budding maturity. He worked all his life in his father's factory and hardly had time to compose, but his craft and invention cannot be denied. This is a work of lushness, whose sonic beauty washes over us. Gablenz does not tell us, and we can only imagine who this pilgrim is, or where the destination lies, but we thank him for the journey.

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](#).