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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Saturday, April 7th, 2007, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- [Joel Eric Suben](#) (b.1946), Fantasy-Variations on a Theme by [Maria-Theresa von Paradis](#) (2000). Vladimir Tsypin, violin, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Suben. archival. 7:38
- [Alan Hovhaness](#) (1911-2000), Three pieces for two pianos, Ko-ola-u (1962). [Martin Berkofsky](#), Sergei Podobedov. Black Box BBM1103. 2:19
- Hovhaness, Three pieces for two pianos, Vijag (1946). Martin Berkofsky, Sergei Podobedov. Black Box BBM1103. 3:44
- Hovhaness, Concerto for two pianos and orchestra (1954, 56). Martin Berkofsky, Atakan Sari, Globalis Symphony Orchestra, Konstantin Krimets. Black Box BBM1103. 20:51

On this *Discoveries* we dream of masquerading instruments playing fantasies for us from across the oceans. Eighteenth-century Vienna is translated to the 21st century by Joel Suben, who takes a gorgeous tune by the blind composer and pianist Maria-Theresa von Paradis and constructs a subtle fantasy. Suben, an internationally commissioned composer, draws delicate lines from the orchestra, weaving them around the enticing violin solo. He is a much-recorded conductor on many labels as well as through his own Save the Music foundation, with vast experience conducting the works of living composers.

Von Paradis (1759-1824) knew everyone who was anyone in musical circles at the time in Vienna and beyond. She traveled, composed, and performed works written for her by Mozart, Haydn, and Salieri. She refused to let her blindness slow her down, and memorized over sixty concertos. The tune here, and the piece Suben composes around it, is hauntingly beautiful.

The just-released premiere recording of Alan Hovhaness' *Concerto for Two Pianos* allows us to take a look at this remarkable composer. This is a fascinating work invoking his lifelong love of the folk music of many cultures. Because of this, we must listen to the pianos as if they were not keyboards, but rather zithers, dulcimers, or tuned percussion instruments. His musical worldview has been described as medieval, evoking meditative echoes reaching across expanses of time. Or perhaps it is simply the rustic Armenian music of Hovhaness' ancestors, played in front of a fire while trays of food are carried back and forth. It is music to sit with, music of fellowship—passionate not with heat, but warmth.

Martin Berkofsky has done us all a service in bringing this to light. A champion of Hovhaness, he worked with the composer and resurrected this concerto decades after the scheduled premiere never happened. Berkofsky has spent a career bringing music to life. After a severe motorcycle accident and a battle with cancer, he—like von Paradis—refused to let physical suffering slow him down. He founded the Cristofori Foundation, and raised tens of thousands of dollars for cancer research. Over a four-month period he ran 880 miles from Tulsa to Chicago, concertizing along the way. Folks who had never before attended a classical music concert were moved by what they saw and heard, and perhaps it is this connection between people—beyond the music—that also moved Hovhaness.

Hosted by [Kile Smith](#), Curator of the Fleisher Collection, and [Jack Moore](#), Program Director of WRTI. *Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection* uncovers the unknown, rediscovers the little-known, and takes 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](#).