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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Saturday, November 3rd, 2007, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- [Joaquín Rodrigo](#) (1901-1999). *Soleriana* (1953). Asturias Symphony Orchestra, Maximiano Valdés. Naxos 8555844. 40:30
- Rodrigo. *Cuatro madrigales amatorios* (1948). Kate Royal, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Edward Gardner. EMI 94419. 7:48

In the last few weeks the Philadelphia area has been celebrating [A Festival of Disability Arts & Culture](#). As part of these events, *Discoveries* remembers Joaquín Rodrigo, blind from the age of three, who overcame his profound disability to become arguably Spain's greatest composer of the 20th century. He's certainly one of the most-performed composers anywhere. His *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar has probably been played at least once or twice a week somewhere in the world for generations, and innumerable commercials and movies feature it. You've heard his music even if you didn't know his name. But he has so much music equally as sumptuous, if lesser-known, and we listen to two of those works today.

Soleriana is an orchestral suite based on keyboard sonatas of the Baroque Spanish composer Antonio Soler. He was also a radical theoretician who angered musicians of his time with daring harmonies and modulations. Rodrigo uses Soler's music to create an orchestral palette of color and delicacy. It's an example of one of Rodrigo's greatest strengths: presenting for modern audiences the essence of all that is Spain.

The four love songs elicit whispers of even earlier music. These madrigals are replete with the familiar subjects of pining, sighing, and dying, all in the name of love. But the music bubbles so much with the joy of life that we can hardly take the morose texts very seriously. Rodrigo always delights.

He wrote music far removed from the paths much 20th-century classical music traveled, yet because he went deep into his own country he forged a repertoire that continues to charm the world. Sightless, he used Braille to learn to play the violin and piano, and to compose. Not a guitar player, he nevertheless popularized it as a solo classical instrument as no one else before or since. Because Rodrigo was able to see so much of the world, he could distill it into music for all of us.

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](#).