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# Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Saturday, February 9th, 2008, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (2nd Saturday this month)

- John Knowles Paine (1839-1906). Overture to Shakespeare's As You Like It (1876). New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta. New World NW374-2. 10:22
- Paine. Symphony No. 1 (1876). New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta. New World NW374-2. 37:35

John Knowles Paine is one of the greatest and earliest of American symphonists. Not only was just about every work of his eagerly awaited and performed, but a generation of composers taught by him would go on to create what we call American Music. His students include the composers Arthur Foote, Frederick Shepherd Converse, John Alden Carpenter, and Carl Ruggles; the music critic and Metropolitan Opera Quiz emcee Olin Downes (whose son, Edward Downes, ran Opera Quiz for many years after); and the author Owen Wister. Wister, by the way, came from the prominent Philadelphia family for which the Wister neighborhood is named, and first wanted to be a composer, before he went on to invent the Western novel with *The Virginian* in 1902.

Paine, in addition to being the most successful American composer of his time, started the Music Department at Harvard University. Harvard's President, Charles Eliot Norton, agreed to this expansion of the liberal arts after hearing Paine's successful performances and lectures. John Sullivan Dwight, the influential editor of Boston's *Journal of Music* (and composer/critic William Henry Fry's nemesis, as we've heard on earlier *Discoveries*), also convinced Norton to hire Paine.

As would be the case for some time in America (mostly because of a lack of music training in higher education), composers went to Germany to study. Paine was no exception, being encouraged by his first music teacher, who had come *from* Germany, as many did, to escape the political upheavals in 1848. But upon his return, Paine settled in Boston and began his successful career as composer, organist, and educator.

The two works we will hear today are from the beginning of Paine's orchestral triumphs. They are strong, melodic, rich, and formally solid—very German, yes, and very Romantic. Paine's *As You Like It* overture—music not meant to accompany the play, but rather inspired by it—is brilliant and colorful. His *Symphony No. 1* is, in fact, an homage to the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, which was held up as an ideal to which young American music should aspire. This work of John Knowles Paine convinced the 21-year-old George Whitefield Chadwick, who was at the premiere, to believe that a new American symphonic language could be created. Paine's music has continued to do that for so many Americans since.

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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](#).