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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Encore presentations of *Discoveries* every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. on WRTI-HD2

Saturday, July 5th, 2008, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- [Alan Hovhaness](#) (1911-2000). Prayer, Piano Concerto for Symphony Orchestra, Op. 54. Martin Berkofsky pno, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Ruben Asatrian. Recorded live. 8:35
- [Benjamin Godard](#) (1849-1895). Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 131. Chloë Hanslip vn, Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra Kosice, Kirk Trevor. Naxos 8.570554. 25:00
- [David Heuser](#) (b.1966). A Screaming Comes Across the Sky. Columbia Orchestra, Jason Love. Recorded live. 6:42

The United States and France team up again this Independence Day weekend on *Discoveries*. We listen to works by David Heuser and Alan Hovhaness, two American composers with fascinating voices, and the French 19th-century composer Benjamin Godard.

We met pianist Martin Berkofsky on a previous *Discoveries*, learning about his fight against misfortunes threatening not only his career, but his life as well. A motorcycle accident and a battle with cancer could not slow him down. An avid runner, he ran 880 miles from Tulsa to Chicago, concertizing along the way and raising tens of thousands of dollars for cancer research. Benefactors then donated a Steinway concert grand to the Alan Hovhaness International Research Centre in Armenia. It is this piano we hear in this concert recording of *Prayer*. It is not a traditional concerto. Layers of slow-moving textures intermingle and mesmerize as the piano emerges from the orchestra, providing sonic shape to the quote Hovhaness attaches to the score: “There shall be Light and the Meek shall inherit the earth.”

The next piece takes on a more familiar concerto profile. Benjamin Godard was a child prodigy on violin who became a successful composer of salon music, songs, and opera. He perhaps never fulfilled the high expectations set for him, but his relatively early death prompts speculation on what might have been. Nevertheless, he left two concertos for his instrument, and this second one is all French charm and clarity, with moments of nostalgic lightness.

David Heuser is from Texas by way of New Jersey, teaching composition, theory, and electronic music at the University of Texas at San Antonio. *A Screaming Comes Across the Sky* is the first sentence of Thomas Pynchon’s novel *Gravity’s Rainbow*, and it is the image and arc those words depict that inspire this music. The title specifically refers to the supersonic V-2 rockets shot at London by Germany in World War II. If you heard the scream of the approach, you were safe, as the missile had already landed. If one were to strike near you, you would never hear it. Heuser’s work is about trajectory, altitude, and movement. It’s also an exciting concert piece, and this is the second Columbia Orchestra competition winner to come into the Fleisher Collection. Heuser has won other awards, performances, and enthusiastic reviews across the country. Critics praise his energy and independence of spirit, good things to think about this weekend.

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](#).