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Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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

Saturday, May 7th, 2011, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

[Ferdinand David](#) (1810-1873). *Introduction and Variations on a Theme of Franz Schubert*, Op. 8. Dieter Klöcker, clarinet, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gernot Schmalfluss. Naxos 223431. Tr 1. 10:38

[Ignaz Moscheles](#) (1794-1870). Piano Concerto No. 3 in G minor, Op. 58 (1820). Michael Ponti, piano, Philharmonia Hungarica, Othmar Maga. Vox 5065. CD1, Tr 1-3. 25:24

[Felix Mendelssohn](#) (1809-1847). *Paulus*, Overture and first chorus (1836). Orchestre des Champs Élysées, La Chapelle Royale Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe. Harmonia 901584. CD1, Tr 1-2. 10:59.



The famous pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles sat next to the 15-year-old boy on the piano bench, about to give a piano lesson as a favor to the boy's father. In less than a minute, Moscheles, a sensation on the continent, lionized in England, one of a handful of pianists vying for that ever-shifting "greatest" title, knew that he was "sitting next to a master, not a pupil." He had encountered prodigies before, but never had he seen anyone like Felix Mendelssohn.

They became, and remained, good friends. Moscheles named his son after him, and provided Mendelssohn entrée to the musical elite in London, where he was then living. They performed Mendelssohn's Double Piano Concerto there, and loved to amaze listeners in friendly, dueling-cadenza recitals. When Felix became the leader of just about everything musical in Leipzig, including founding and directing a conservatory there, he persuaded Moscheles to come there to be professor of piano. It was during this time that Moscheles gave the very first documented solo piano recital (although Liszt would dispute this).



Ferdinand David was Mendelssohn's concertmaster at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and premiered what may be Mendelssohn's most popular work, the Violin Concerto. Mendelssohn often turned to David for advice on technical questions about the solo writing. David transformed Leipzig into a renowned violin center through his playing, teaching, and writing. He composed new etudes for the teaching of students, but revolutionized pedagogy through his historical study of violin playing. He inspired generations of violinists with modern editions of the earlier models of Tartini, Vivaldi, J.S. Bach, and others.

This matched Mendelssohn's own interest in the past. He began the rebirth of Franz Schubert's reputation with an 1839 performance of the 9th Symphony eleven years after Schubert's death. He conducted the choir at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, where Bach had been music director. In 1829, he led the first performance of the St. Matthew Passion since Bach's death in 1750. That performance accomplished two things. From that time on, Bach would be the standard by which all other composers would be measured (Mendelssohn didn't "discover" Bach, but propelled him to international renown). It also marked the 20-year-old as one of the premier musicians in Europe.



Like Mendelssohn and David, Moscheles had a great love for history. He re-introduced the harpsichord as a viable recital instrument, and dedicated much of his career to keeping Beethoven's music before the public, conducting the London premiere of the *Missa Solemnis*, for instance. Like David, he composed etudes for his instrument, the piano, and most of his orchestral works involve piano solo.

These lives were attached, seemingly, from birth to death. In 1810 Ferdinand David was born in the very same Hamburg house in which Felix Mendelssohn was born the year before. After Mendelssohn's death at age 38, the directorship of his conservatory passed to Moscheles. Among the three, they brought the music of a city to life with an absolute commitment to professionalism and friendship.

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, at the Parkway Central Library of 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](#).