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## Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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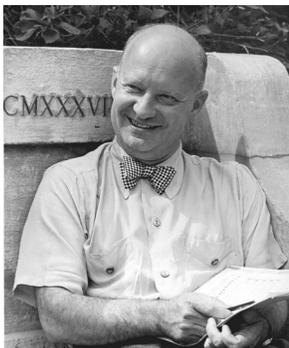
Encore presentations of the entire *Discoveries* series every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. on WRTI-HD2

**Saturday, May 5th, 2012, 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963). [\*Five Pieces for String Orchestra\*](#), Op. 44, No. 4 (1927). Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Werner Andreas Albert. CPO 999783. 12:00

**Hindemith**. [\*Trauermusik\*](#) (1936). Dmitri Jakubovsky, viola, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Saulius Sondeckis. CBS/Sony 48372. 7:55

**Hindemith**. [\*Symphony in E-flat\*](#) (1940). BBC Symphony Orchestra, Yan Pascal Tortelier. Chandos 9060. 29:58



Once the darling of new music and his country's rulers, Hindemith ran afoul of both groups, and lately it seemed as if nothing was going right.

This was new to him. He was one of the best-prepared composers of the 20th Century. He played violin so well, at 23 he was concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera (he also married the conductor's daughter). He founded a string quartet, moved to viola, and eventually learned to play every instrument he could find, modern or ancient. He founded music festivals, wrote theory books, soloed and conducted internationally. Everything he wrote was immediately performed and published.

But he made some enemies along the way. He had long since rejected the 12-tone orthodoxy in new music's rising tide, and its influential disciples were quite happy to ignore him.

The new German Reich liked his educational leanings (exemplified by *Five Pieces for String Orchestra*, written for intermediate players), but finally wearied of his dissonances and thinly veiled swipes at authority. His wife was partly Jewish, and he worked with too many Jews to suit their purposes. Goebbels had him placed on the *Entartete* ("degenerate" music) list.

In 1936 London he was trying to make the transition to a more international profile, as opportunities in Germany dried up. He was to perform his viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The folk-tune-filled *Schwanendreher* (the person who turns the roasting swan on the spit: always humorous, Hindemith identified with the swan) would be a springboard for his usefulness as both composer and soloist.

But two days before the concert, England's King George V died, and all performances were cancelled. It was a national tragedy, but a personal blow to Hindemith, trying to patch together a career. A lesser artist might have moped, cursing his fates, but Hindemith was practical to the core. From 11 am to 5 pm he sat down in an office at the BBC and composed *Trauermusik* ("music of mourning") for solo viola and strings. Sir Adrian Boult gathered the BBC string players into a studio the next day, and they performed it in a live broadcast with Hindemith as soloist, galvanizing a grieving country.

*Trauermusik* quotes from *Schwanendreher*, from *Mathis der Maler* (his operatic jab at national-socialist repression), and from a Lutheran chorale, usually translated into English as "When in the hour of utmost need." This last melody made the British perk up, not because they knew it, but because it sounds very much like the beloved "Doxology," or "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Hindemith hadn't a clue, but proved Seneca's dictum, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."

Four years later, an almost unknown immigrant in the U.S., he would write his outstanding *Symphony in E-flat*, and his career blossomed, commissions and students flocking to him. Hindemith was nothing if not prepared.

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Hosted by [Kile Smith](#), former 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](#).