

Next on

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, October 5th, 2013, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

1913: Popper, Butterworth, Britten, Lutosławski

David Popper (1843-1913). [*Hungarian Rhapsody*](#) (orch. Schlegel, 1894). Matthew Allen, cello, Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, Erich Kunzel. Telarc 80745, Tr 8. 8:49

Popper. [*Spanish Dance No. 5, Vito*](#) (c.1884) (orch. Oushoorn). Maria Kliegel, cello, Nicolaus Esterhazy Sinfonia, Gerhard Markson. Naxos 554657, Tr 12. 4:35

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). [*Simple Symphony for String Orchestra*](#) (1934). English String Orchestra, William Boughton. Nimbus 5024, Tr 12-15. 16:51

Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994). [*Dance Preludes*](#) (1953, 55). Janet Hilton, Clarinet, Scottish National Orchestra, Matthias Bamert. Chandos 8618, Tr 3-7. 10:10

George Butterworth (1885-1916). [*The Banks of Green Willow*](#) (1913). English Sinfonia, Neville Dilkes. Angel 65615, Tr 11. 6:05



We enjoyed our 1813 bicentennial so much last month that we thought we'd move a little closer, to the centennial of 1913. In that year, cellist/composer David Popper died, Benjamin Britten and Witold Lutosławski (*pictured, left*) first saw the light of day, and George Butterworth composed *The Banks of Green Willow*.

Popper was one of the great cellists of his time. At 18 he was leading classes at the conservatory for his teacher. Then he went on to premiere new works, play his own, and compose a set of etudes that are used to this day. His legacy continues (the great János Starker studied with him), but one aspect of it has not survived. He was one of the last soloists to hold the cello between the calves (like a viola da gamba); cellists today are probably thankful that the endpin was invented.

He wrote his *Hungarian Rhapsody*, *Spanish Dance No. 5*, and dozens of other pieces for cello and piano, and we can see their popularity by how soon others started orchestrating them. Popper the cellist was known for his deft playing and large, warm sound; Popper the composer evokes those same qualities.

Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* premiered raucously in 1913, but George Butterworth quietly wrote *The Banks of Green Willow* that same year. He died three years later, in a field in France in World War I. Because of that, this work is often used as a memorial, but it is English pastoral music through and through.

He was a brave soldier (winning the Military Cross in another battle), and he was a friend. Ralph Vaughan Williams, never intending to write a symphony, ended up composing nine. He always mentioned the one person who encouraged him to do so. It was George Butterworth.

The great English composer Benjamin Britten was born in 1913. *Simple Symphony* uses tunes he composed as a youth—he admitted that “there are large stretches of the work which are taken bodily from the early pieces”—but he reworked and developed much of the material and re-scored it for strings. Many know Britten's operas and *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, but he wrote prodigiously in many forms. The *Simple Symphony* is a charming example of a 21-year-old's confident technique and unerring taste.

Poland's Witold Lutosławski was also born in 1913. His energetic *Dance Preludes* for clarinet and orchestra come from a difficult time of on-and-off Communist oppression. Earlier, he and his friend Andrzej Panufnik, another excellent composer, worked out piano pieces in cafés, to the delight of entertained patrons, since Polish classical “concerts” were forbidden. Lutosławski later won national and international honors, and became one of the foremost composers of the 20th Century—of any country. 1913 saw much, and also handed over much, to us.

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](#).