

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, November 2nd, 2013, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
Shakespeare: *Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Elgar*

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968). *Antony and Cleopatra Overture* (1947). West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Penny. Naxos 572500, Tr 3. 17:49

Edward Elgar (1857–1934). *Falstaff, Symphonic Study in C minor* (1913). Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis. Nederland 6004, Disk 2, Tr 5. 35:34



Falstaff and His Page,
Adolf Schrödter (1805–1875)

Since the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music at the Free Library of Philadelphia is the world's largest lending library of orchestral performance materials, and since it holds more than 21,000 titles, it should be no surprise that conductors make use of its resources for almost any concert theme imaginable. Searching the Collection's catalog is easier than ever. Access it through the Free Library's website, freelibrary.org (in the top left corner of the home page, under Find, in the "Search for..." box, type a title, composer name, or anything you like, include "fleisher" in the search, and off you go).

Over the years, Fleisher staff have also compiled lists of works for popular requests. So, there are lists of Latin American works, women composers, and so on, which Fleisher provides to anyone who asks. Recently, it put together a list of every title in the Collection associated with the works of William Shakespeare.

On this Discoveries we begin to explore the dozens and dozens of such pieces in the Fleisher Collection. Tone poems or other orchestral works with background "programs" are thought to be the particular province of the Romantic period in music—that is, a 19th-century phenomenon. But from before Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* until now, composers have always used extra-musical prompts. Literature plays a big role, and the greatest English writer inspires not only composers from his own country, but from around the world.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco is a perfect example. He fled his native Italy in 1939 after the Fascist government banned his works, along with those of other Jewish artists. Ending up in Hollywood, as many European refugees did, he excelled at film composing (check out a list of titles he worked on [here](#)), but continued to produce concert pieces, including eleven overtures to Shakespeare plays.

He loved Shakespeare throughout his life, so it would be cart-before-horse to call this music cinematic, as if Hollywood caused him to compose a certain way. Rather, he always had a flair for color, emotion, and the precise gesture. The *Antony and Cleopatra Overture* captures this gift of expression, evident in all the music of Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

For an English take on Shakespeare, we could hardly do better than to call on Edward Elgar. It's something of a head-scratcher, though, why *Falstaff* isn't more well known since its premiere exactly 100 years ago. Elgar thought this to be his finest orchestral work, but whatever the reason for its scarcity from the concert stage, it repays a hearing with variety, humor, pathos, and a formidable orchestral palette. The composer divides up the score this way:

I. Falstaff and Prince Henry

II. Eastcheap—Gadshill—The Boar's Head. Revelry and sleep—Dream Interlude: 'Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk' (Poco allegretto)

III. Falstaff's march—The return through Gloucestershire—Interlude: Gloucestershire. Shallow's orchard (Allegretto)—The new king—The hurried ride to London

IV. King Henry V's progress—The repudiation of Falstaff, and his death

Two 20th-century works from two different composers offer a glimpse into the vast Fleisher holdings of works indebted to Shakespeare. The Collection is happy to provide a list of all its Shakespeare works; just call or write.

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](#). (215) 686-5313, fleisher@freelibrary.org.