

Dohnanyi Regrets Exodus from Europe

Here on Brief Visit, Says His Place Is with His People and He Will Return—Financial Conditions Attract Young Musicians to North and South America—European Countries Need Their Best Blood.

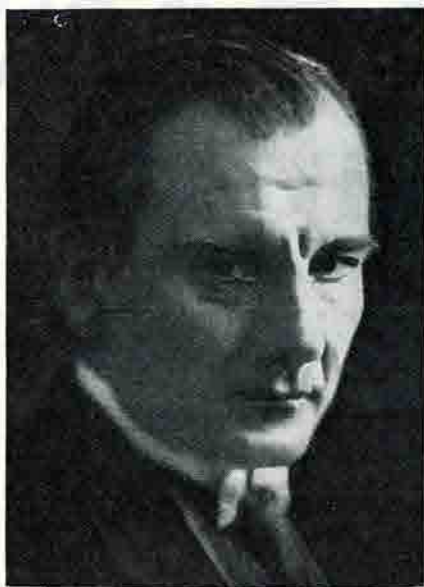
ERNO DOHNANYI is an exceptional artist in more ways than one. Perhaps the most striking characteristic he reveals when you meet him, is that instead of wanting to run up a ladder with a flag, he positively retires within himself, simply conscious of the dignity of his profession and his achievement therein, but utterly impersonal in his attitude toward it.

"I have not been in America for twenty years," said Mr. Dohnanyi to the interviewer, "and naturally I find everything completely changed. I mean all the physical aspects of New York. I am prepared to find the same thing true of the artistic side of your country as well. We have been here only four days and, of course, have not had time to hear much music, but the performance of 'Carmen' at the Manhattan last night was superb. Your Mary Garden is a great artist, and with Muratore opposite her the opera was splendidly given. I shall be interested in hearing concerts as well, but what a lot of them you do have!"

"Far too many!" said the interviewer with feeling.

"Yes," said Dohnanyi, "and too many concerts means too many bad concerts because it is impossible to keep the standard high in the face of such a tremendous number."

"But why," asked Mme. Dohnanyi, "do people go out before the opera is over? If they have to do that, why do



Erno Dohnanyi, Celebrated Hungarian Composer-Pianist, Now on Brief Visit to United States

they come at all? And they don't seem to pay as close attention as they might while they are there. You know, in Budapest they sit as quiet as mice when my husband plays. His concerts are never announced ahead, but they are always packed. This winter the manager saw two people who were inattentive, and he said: 'They shall not have tickets again! There are too many who appreciate music and who would be interested, for tickets to be wasted on those who do not!'

"You see, they treat my husband's concerts almost with religious fervor, and when he comes in a hall the entire audience rises."

"But, my dear," interrupted Mr. Dohnanyi, "you put me in a curious position! What will Monsieur think? You see," he went on, turning to the interviewer, "it is not that I play better

than anyone else, but simply that I stayed in Budapest and did what I could for music there when many of the other musicians were going to other countries. One thing of which I am really proud is that I was able to put the Philharmonic Orchestra on a firm basis. It is not a new organization by any means, seventy years old, in fact, but it had fallen on evil days. Now, however, I am happy to say it is in a flourishing condition, and," with a little laugh, "it wants to come to America! The only trouble is that it can get away only in the summer which, I understand, is not a favorable season for symphony concerts in the United States."

War Had No Effect on Music

"Do you find that the war has had any particular effect on music in Europe?"

"Do you mean on the composition of music or the performance?"

"On either."

"No, I cannot say that there has been any perceptible effect upon musical composition, but, perhaps, the time is too recent for us to tell, as yet. As far as the performers are concerned, there are a number of young artists in every branch of music now just starting on their public careers, who had their final training during the war years. They are all admirably equipped and have made propitious starts, so the war could not have had any particular effect on the student. Of course, because of the financial conditions, most of the artists want to come to America, North and South, and I think that that is regrettable, because all the European countries need all their best blood, artistic and otherwise."

"You will wonder, probably, why I have come to America just now, when I feel so strongly on the subject; but I am here only for a brief time, and I had four different managers from New York try to persuade me to come. And already my manager, Jules Daiber, tells me inquiries are coming in about concerts for next season. But that is a long way off and I doubt if I shall come back

another season, at least, not at present. My work is there in Hungary and, as I seem to have a following in my country, I must do what I can for it. I want to keep the price of concerts down, for one thing. At all my appearances there I have insisted positively that the price of tickets for my concerts be not raised under any circumstances, as I want them to be within reach of anyone who cares to hear me."

Music Under Bolshevik Régime

"Did anything of especial significance to music happen during the Bolshevik régime in Hungary?"

"Nothing at all. Of course, there was a lot of talk about giving the best music free to the proletariat, but they showed no particular interest in it. As a matter of fact, it was said that they complained that they had too many baths and too much music!"

"There was the usual tendency toward not working and just letting things look after themselves. My wife, who is an actress, was engaged at the largest theater in Budapest at the time, and they never seemed to rehearse at all."

"It was extraordinary," broke in Mme. Dohnanyi. "And I wondered how they thought performances could be given. I used to report for rehearsal and there would be no one there. I asked the intendant about it and he said they had to stand in the bread line so long that they had no time to rehearse. It looks as though the paternal attitude of communistic government were not all it is claimed to be!"

"And you are not going to let America persuade you to stay here?" asked the interviewer.

"No," said Mr. Dohnanyi. "I think not. I am glad to come here for a short visit, but my place is with my people, so I must go back to them."

J. A. H.

Elizabeth Lennox Sings Frank Grey Songs

At her appearance at the *Globe* concert at Stuyvesant High School on the evening of Feb. 9, Elizabeth Lennox, mezzo-contralto, sang an entire group of songs by Frank Grey, including "Mammy Dear," "Think, Love, of Me" and "Last Year's Roses." She was accompanied by the composer.

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