BÉLA BARTÓK AND THE PRO-MUSICA SOCIETY:

A CHRONICLE OF PIANO RECITALS IN ELEVEN AMERICAN CITIES

DURING HIS 1927-1928 TOUR

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
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by
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Presented by Sarah M. Lucas

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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ABSTRACT

An important component of Béla Bartók's 1927-28 transcontinental tour of the United States was a series of eleven lecture-recitals sponsored by the Pro-Musica Society—an international organization founded in 1920 as the Franco-American Musical Society—to promote the exchange of musical ideas between Europe and America. Bartók (1881-1945)—then already established as a pianist, composer, and scholar in Europe—embarked on this endeavor, which also included fourteen other engagements, to enhance his reputation with the American concert public, an audience that had been slow to warm to his efforts. During his first American tour he fulfilled engagements from 22 December 1927 through 27 February 1928, appearing in Pro-Musica recitals in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland (Oregon), Denver, Kansas City, St. Paul, New York City, Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago. In addition to these recitals Bartók performed with major orchestras in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cincinnati, and presented chamber music concerts in Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Published criticism and other accounts of the performances before chapters of the Pro-Musica Society have been brought together in this discussion, providing evidence that while listeners were generally impressed with Bartók's skill as a pianist, they were often disparaging of his modernist compositions, which lacked the familiar Romantic qualities they found appealing.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An important component of Béla Bartók's 1927-28 transcontinental tour of the United States was a series of eleven lecture recitals sponsored by the Pro-Musica Society. Bartók (1881-1945)—then already established as a pianist, composer, and scholar in Europe—embarked on this endeavor, which also included fourteen other engagements, to enhance his reputation with the American concert-going public, an audience that had been slow to warm to his efforts. During the 1920s Bartók's music was performed with increasing frequency in both Europe and the United States, but reception of his works continued to be varied. While he was widely acknowledged as a virtuoso pianist, his compositions did not immediately receive equal acclaim. In 1926 Bartók planned to perform his own music during a ten-week tour of the United States, reportedly sponsored by Baldwin Piano Company, but was forced to withdraw from the series of recitals due to illness.[1] A similar opportunity to concertize presented itself the following year, when he was again asked to perform before local chapters of the Pro-Musica Society in various cities across the United States. He began his first American tour in New York on 22 December 1927 under the partial sponsorship of the organization. The performance represented the United States premiere of his Rhapsody for solo piano and orchestra, played in place of his First Piano Concerto (1926), with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Willem Mengelberg. He then fulfilled engagements in Philadelphia, Los

[1] Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 294-95. Dr. Oja has reported that the tour was sponsored by Baldwin and cancelled due to illness, facts that are supported by correspondence between Bartók and Pro-Musica founder E. Robert Schmitz. Entries in the *Pro-Musica Quarterly* indicate, however, that at least part of the proposed tour would be sponsored by Pro-Musica and that the engagements were cancelled because of conflicts with Bartók's European performance schedule and his wish to finish his Piano Concerto before his American debut.

Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland (Oregon), Denver, Kansas City, St. Paul, Boston, Washington, D.C., Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Chicago. Facts concerning this endeavor are available, but they are scattered among various sources. The following compilation of information regarding this visit will be beneficial to anyone researching Bartók, especially those concerned with his American reception.

A Literature Survey

When completing preliminary research for my thesis, I found that many excellent writings on Bartók contain only minimal information on his American tour of 1927-28. I have located many valuable sources by consulting Elliot Antokoletz's book *Béla Bartók: A Guide to Research* (1997).[2] While Antokoletz's book is a superb guide to many writings by renowned scholars about aspects of Bartók's life and works, it too reveals that there is a decided lack of information available on his tour of the United States, which he completed at the height of his career as a pianist.

Several important Bartók biographies were published, both during the composer's life and in the years following his death. Halsey Stevens's *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók* (1953)[3] is a classic, important for its standing as the definitive English-language work on the composer. While Stevens did not provide much data on reception and criticism, he did record Bartók's point of view on many performances of his music as well as information on his travels. Stevens did not include many details on Bartók's tour,

[2] Elliott Antokoletz, *Béla Bartók: A Guide to Research*, 2nd ed. (New York: Garland, 1997). This volume is compiled and edited by one of the eminent Bartók scholars of our time.

[3] First edition published in 1953. Halsey Stevens, *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók,* 3rd ed., ed. Malcolm Gillies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

however. Other relevant biographies are those written by Emil Haraszti (1938),[4] Agatha Fassett (1958),[5] József Ujfalussy (1971),[6] and Kenneth Chalmers (1995).[7] The value of the present study is confirmed in that these sources also lack information on the 1927-28 tour.

A volume important for its information on the New York musical scene at the time of Bartók's American debut is *Making Music Modern* (2000) by Carol J. Oja. In addition to Bartók, the author writes on many other prominent figures of the time, namely Leo Ornstein, Edgard Varèse, Igor Stravinsky, Dane Rudhyar, Carl Ruggles, Henry Cowell, Ruth Crawford, Virgil Thomson, and Aaron Copland. While Oja does not give a detailed account of the tour, she does supply the reader with dates and locations of several tour performances.

Essential to this study was Béla Bartók, Jr.'s *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (1981),[8] available only in Hungarian. The author accounts for nearly every day of his father's life, information that has been extremely helpful in pinpointing tour performances and rehearsals. This volume is also valuable for its documentation of performance venues as well as places where the composer stayed during his time in the United States. Another book by Béla Bartók, Jr., *Bartók Béla*

[4] Emil Haraszti, *Béla Bartók: His Life and Works*, trans. Dorothy Swainson (Paris: Lyrebird, 1938).

[5] Agatha Fassett, *Béla Bartók's American Years: The Naked Face of Genius* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1958).

[6] József Ujfalussy, *Béla Bartók*, trans. Ruth Pataki (Budapest: Corvina, 1971).

[7] Kenneth Chalmers, *Béla Bartók* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995).

[8] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981).

műhelyében [In Béla Bartók's Workshop] (1981),[9] gives lists of places where Bartók performed and how many times he appeared in each city.

In addition to the many book-length sources on Bartók, which are cited in the bibliography for this thesis, journal and newspaper articles, concert programs, letters, and photographs were also of great importance. Most relevant to this project have been the documents directly related to the composer's tour performances, such as programs and photographs, along with local newspaper advertisements and articles by which his concerts were announced and reviewed. For example, a program from Bartók's Denver performance is presented in *Béla Bartók: His Life in Pictures* (1964),[10] as well as a map of the cities the composer-performer visited on his first American tour. Although this book is filled with iconography relevant to Bartók, it unfortunately does not have any photographs or additional documents pertinent to this specific event. Also instructive were sources containing letters and writings by Bartók himself, as they gave a perspective on works, performances, and criticism different from that contained in the articles by music critics and journalists. Many of the letters have been translated and reprinted in *Béla Bartók Letters* (1971).[11] A more extensive collection of letters pertinent to the United States tour of 1927-28 may be found in *Bartók Béla Családi Levelei* [Béla Bartók's Family Letters] (1981),[12] which is available only in Hungarian. Several *New York Times* articles and advertisements that refer to Bartók's debut performance in the

[9] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Bartók Béla műhelyében* [In Béla Bartók's Workshop] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1982).

[10] Bence Szabolcsi and Ferenc Bónis, *Béla Bartók: His Life in Pictures* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1964).

[11] Béla Bartók, János Demény, and Michael Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, trans. Péter Balabán, István Farkas, Elisabeth West, and Colin Mason (London: Faber and Faber, 1971).

[12] Béla Bartók, Jr., ed. and Adrienne Gomboczné Konkoly, asst. ed., *Bartók Béla Családi Levelei* [Béla Bartók's Family Letters] (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1981).

United States have also provided necessary information. Similar newspaper articles and advertisements from the other cities on Bartók's tour have been equally instructive.

Methodology

This project was completed using information from foundational studies of Bartók's life and career, combined with articles in newspapers and other serials from each city on the tour, as well as letters, programs, and photographs relevant to his Pro-Musica Society performances. The focus of my research was on Bartók's eleven lecture-recitals before local chapters of the Society. The composer also presented concerts on the tour that were in addition to those sponsored by Pro-Musica, however. Basic information on these performances has been provided in Appendix A.

Each stop on the Pro-Musica portion of the tour was systematically investigated and the results have been presented in chronological order according to city and the date of Bartók's visit. As an important part of the research process, I examined major newspapers and other serials from each city. Using the *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (1928),[13] I selected the three daily newspapers with the highest circulations and for which copies were available for analysis. I then used information from the articles or advertisements I found to locate programs and photographs from each performance. Documents were also obtained from public libraries in the cities where Bartók's concerts were given. Because of its relationship to the organization that sponsored the tour, the Pro-Musica Society's journal, *Pro-Musica Quarterly*, was consulted for relevant articles as well.

[13] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1928).

Efforts have been made to quote and cite sources as they were originally printed. In many of the materials used for this study, especially newspapers, the diacritics associated with Hungarian names were omitted (e.g., Bela Bartok instead of Béla Bartók). When citing and quoting such materials, the original markings have been preserved. This is also the case for sources referencing Pro Musica instead of Pro-Musica. In addition, newspaper titles were not always written according to standard capitalization rules. All quotations and citations appear in this thesis as they were printed in their original sources, with the exception of titles originally printed in all capital letters. As a result, such quotations and citations may contain errors in grammar and punctuation. These errors have been preserved and the mistake noted with the indication [*sic*] only in the most egregious cases.

The chapters following this introduction detail Bartók's Pro-Musica recitals and are divided into three large segments: the Western United States, the Midwestern United States and New York, and the Great Lakes Region. The results of my analysis of performances and examination of press coverage for local responses to Bartók's compositions and pianism are presented in chronological order by city according to the date of the lecture-recital.

An Overview of Bartók's Career

It is important to understand Bartók's musical training and performance experiences before embarking on a study of his 1927-28 tour of the United States. A detailed knowledge of his work as a pianist is helpful, of course, to anyone researching the reception of his performances. Information on his compositional influences and his

collections of folk music also assist the researcher in analyzing the success of this series of engagements, which was, to a large degree, dependent on contemporary attitudes toward musical modernism.

Bartók began taking piano lessons from his mother when he was five years old. Even before this point the young musician and his mother had played music together—Bartók on a small drum and his mother on piano. Displaying innate musical ability, he incorporated the rhythms his mother was performing into his drumming. Soon after this he learned to play songs on the piano by ear. He was encouraged in these endeavors by his parents, who were avid amateur musicians. He learned very quickly, and it was soon discovered that he had perfect pitch. He composed his first piece when he was nine years old with the help of his mother, who committed his ideas to musical notation. Soon he was too far advanced for her to continue as his teacher. Following the death of his father in 1888, Bartók, along with his sister Elza, was supported by his mother, who taught piano lessons. He soon moved with his remaining family from his birthplace in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (now Sînnicolau Mare, Romania) to Nagyszőllős (now Vinogradov, Ukraine), where his extraordinary musical abilities were discovered by Christian Altdörfer, an organist and choirmaster visiting the community. After a trip to Budapest instigated by Altdörfer, Bartók was invited to begin studying at the conservatory with Károly Aggházy, a pupil of Bruckner, Liszt, and fellow Hungarian Robert Volkmann (1815-83). Bartók's mother declined the invitation, however, so that her son could finish intermediate school. On completion of this benchmark, the young musician was sent to study at the Gymnasium at Nagyvárad (now Oradea, Romania), where he lived with his aunt. The family relocated frequently to towns where Bartók's

mother found teaching positions, finally settling in 1894 in Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia). During this time of recurrent displacement, Bartók composed over thirty pieces for piano. In Pozsony the developing composer attended the Catholic Gymnasium where he began taking piano lessons from László Erkel, of the prominent Hungarian musical family. Bartók enjoyed many musical opportunities in the town that resulted in furthering his career. He worked as a chapel organist, wrote several chamber works.

In September 1899 Bartók began his upper-level musical training at the Budapest Academy of Music in piano performance under Istvàn Thomàn (1862-1940), a student of Liszt, and in composition with Hans Koessler (1853-1926), who studied with Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901).[15] During this period he was gaining recognition almost solely as a pianist. At the same time, the aspiring composer was also searching for his own style and sympathetic niche in the compositional world. In 1902 he heard the Budapest premiere of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, a work that became a compositional inspiration to the young musician. Frustrated in his composition lessons with the traditional Koessler, Bartók modeled a symphony in E-flat after Strauss's themes. Another of Strauss's symphonic poems, *Ein Heldenleben* (1898), moved Bartók to write his own piece for orchestra that would, in effect, jumpstart his career as a composer. His ten-part, nationalist symphonic poem *Kossuth* (1903) illustrated actions of Hungarian revolutionary leader Lajos Kossuth in the country's war for independence from Austria (1848-49). With this work Bartók gained the attention of Hungarian-born conductor Hans Richter, who invited him to give a concert with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England that would introduce his new symphonic poem and also feature

[15] Rheinberger achieved much of his fame through his students, who included G. S. Chadwick, Horatio Parker, and Wilhelm Furtwängler.

Bartók as a solo pianist. His first performance in England thus occurred in Manchester on 18 February 1904.[16] Along with *Kossuth*,[17] which received mixed reviews from British critics, the orchestra featured Franz Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony (1822) and Antonín Dvořák's Suite for Orchestra, Op. 39 (1881). Bartók performed two piano works on the program: Franz Liszt's *Spanish Rhapsody* (1863) and *Variations on a Theme by Handel* (ca. 1857) by Robert Volkmann. While his symphonic poem was less than warmly received, Bartók did merit a positive response from the critics for his piano technique.[18] The British, it seemed, were not yet ready to welcome Bartók's music to their country. He did not return until 1922 after prominent British critics Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine [a.k.a. Peter Warlock] had promoted his music with some success.

In addition to composing and performing, Bartók conducted extensive ethnomusicological research. He began collecting and transcribing folk music in 1904, activities that occupied him for the next thirty-four years. In 1905 he met fellow Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály, who shared his vision for the preservation of their nation's culture. Bartók went on several folksong-collecting expeditions in various regions of Eastern Europe and Northern Africa, some of which were with Kodály. From these rich compilations of indigenous music, he harvested materials for his own use, quoting many folk songs in his compositions and writing folk-like melodies based on those he encountered in his travels. He returned to the Budapest Academy in 1906 as a piano teacher, yet continued to pursue his ethnomusicological work.

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[16] Malcolm Gillies, *Bartók in Britain: A Guided Tour* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 4.

[17] The world premiere of the work took place on 13 January 1904 in Budapest.

[18] Malcolm Gillies, *Bartók in Britain*, 6-7.

Bartók was not well known outside his home country of Hungary until World War I because of a lack of repeated personal visits and performances in major European cities.[19] He arrived on the world stage after a well-received premiere of his ballet *The Wooden Prince* (1916) at the Budapest Royal Opera House,[20] a success that resulted in many more opportunities for the performance and publication of his music. As his works began to be performed in major European centers, they were met with mixed reviews. This was true in Great Britain, where visits during the 1920s and beyond were intended to increase familiarity with his works.[21] Exposure to Bartók's music caused many British critics and members of the public to change their attitudes. Initially, many thought his music too discordant, but through the growing acceptance of the influence of folk songs on fine art music, the promotion of his works by some critics, news of his growing fame on the Continent, and perhaps the experience of the World Wars, the British public began to appreciate his music.

Bartók revived his performance career in 1919 after several years of withdrawal from the public stage. From 1919 to 1931 he toured over fifteen different countries and participated in over three hundred concerts. Promotional tours for his compositions and his publisher, Universal Edition, gave Bartók and his family much needed financial assistance. Political turmoil and social unrest in Hungary following World War I, issues of transportation from their home outside Budapest, illness, and other factors left the family in a state of difficulty and eventually prompted them to move into the city (1920). Of particular importance to enhancing Bartók's reputation was a series of performances

[19] Malcolm Gillies, "The Canonization of Béla Bartók," *Bartók Perspectives: Man, Composer, and Ethnomusicologist*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz, Victoria Fischer, and Benjamin Suchoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 289.

[20] *Ibid*., 290.

[21] Malcolm Gillies, *Bartók in Britain*, 4.

in 1922, for which he traveled to England, Germany, and France, performing his music and speaking about his compositions.

The composer's growing recognition afforded him opportunities to support himself and his family by writing numerous articles on folk music for various serials published within and outside of Europe. During the 1920s he compiled and published volumes of Hungarian, Slovak, and Romanian peasant music both alone and with his colleague Kodály. As Bartók devoted much time to the collection, transcription, and arrangement of folk songs, as well as to his performance career in the 1920s, he found himself lacking new works to present at his recitals and concerts. At this time, when he was interested in Baroque keyboard works, he added several piano pieces to his repertoire. Two of these important compositions were frequently performed on his 1927-28 tour of the United States: the Piano Sonata (1926) and his Piano Concerto No. 1 (1926). During this tour, which lasted from 22 December 1927 through 27 February 1928, Bartók performed in fifteen American cities, both as soloist for lecture-recitals sponsored by Pro-Musica (the subject of this thesis) and in recitals and concerts with several major musical figures: the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Willem Mengelberg; violinist Jelly D'Arányi, the great niece of the renowned Joseph Joachim; Ukrainian-born composer and pianist Leo Ornstein; the Philadelphia Orchestra, guest conducted by Fritz Reiner; the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky; the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Fritz Reiner; the Eddy Brown Quartet; and Hungarian-born violinist Joseph Szigeti.[22]

[22] See Appendix A for a timeline of performances.

Due to political unrest in Europe preceding World War II, Bartók willingly exiled himself to the United States in 1940. From 1941 to 1942 he worked at Columbia University transcribing the Serbo-Croatian folk music collection of Milman Parry.[23] Bartók toured America again in 1941, performing mainly on university campuses. His last public performance was for a radio broadcast in New Jersey in January 1945.

Bartók was a valetudinarian all of his life, losing his final battle to leukemia. The composer suffered from an undiagnosed illness after April 1942 but continued to work, taking a temporary lecture appointment at Harvard in the spring of 1943. Representatives of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) heard of his health problems and paid for his medical expenses, which included "rest cures" at Saranac Lake in New York and at a sanatorium in Asheville, North Carolina, where he wrote much of his Concerto for Orchestra. In 1944 his health again declined, but in the time before his death Bartók wrote his Piano Concerto No. 3 and worked on his Viola Concerto as long as he possibly could. At his death in New York City on 26 September 1945, Bartók left an enviable legacy as a virtuoso pianist, an internationally acclaimed composer, a pioneering ethnomusicologist, and a revered teacher.

The Pro-Musica Society

Originally called The Franco-American Musical Society, the organization that would later be called Pro-Musica was founded in 1920 to promote the exchange of musical ideas between France and the United States. Elie Robert Schmitz, a French pianist, began the endeavor in New York City "to stimulate and promote a better

[23] The collection was on loan from Harvard University where Parry had been a professor of classical philology. Parry died before he was able to study the collection.

understanding, relationship and cooperation between nations, races, societies and classes by making available the best of the past, present and future artistic compositions in the field of music and allied arts."[24] The group changed its name to Pro-Musica, Inc. in 1925 in order to attract a larger number of musicians and patrons. Among its membership were high society figures, as well as musicians prominent locally, nationally, and internationally. Mrs. Thomas A. Edison, Mrs. Edsel Ford, Mrs. John Henry Hammond, Pierre Monteux, and Carlos Salzedo were a few of the prominent people involved with the organization.[25]

When the organization was at the height of its success, there were over forty chapters throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia, and in 1927-28, its membership numbered over 3,500.[26] With his European musical connections, Schmitz was able to secure engagements, sponsored by Pro-Musica, of well-known European figures in communities where chapters existed. The Pro-Musica Society sponsored American tours of many European composers, several of whom would come to be known as the most important of the twentieth century, including Bartók, Darius Milhaud, Maurice Ravel, and Arnold Schoenberg. Music from the United States by such composers as Edgard Varèse and Henry Eichheim was likewise featured in recitals for the Paris chapter.[27] Some Americans felt that the organization's support of new European music was greater than its promotion of contemporary American works.

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[24] Vivian Perlis, "Pro-Musica," *Grove Music Online*. This brief essay provides an overview of the Pro-Musica Society with information about its creation, aims, activities, and journal. A list of composers who performed on tours for the organization is also present.

[25] *Franco-American Musical Society Bulletin* I/1 (September 1923), 1.; "Pro Musica, Inc. Detroit Chapter," recital program (19 February 1928), 1, Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.

[26] Ely Jade, ed., "Announcement of the New York Chapter," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/2 (December 1927), 40.

[27] *Ibid*. and E. Robert Schmitz, "What is the Contribution of Pro Musica Toward International Understanding," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VII/3-4 (March-June 1929), 64.

Chicago musician and critic Dr. Glenn Dillard Gunn, whose pointed suggestion to rename the organization "Pro-Musica Europa" sparked controversy when it appeared in *Musical America*,[28] brought these feelings to the forefront in a story in the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*.[29] E. Robert Schmitz contended, however, that while European composers and performers were hired to appear before chapters in the United States, American musicians were employed for European appearances.

The journal of the organization, the *Pro-Musica Quarterly*, was published in New York from 1925 to 1929.[30] It comprised a wide variety of articles, including many written by prominent contemporary composers of the 1920s. Bartók served on an Honorary Advisory Board for the journal, along with other prominent musical figures of the time.[31] In the 1930s the majority of Pro-Musica chapters disbanded, likely due to difficulties associated with the Great Depression. Today, only the Detroit chapter remains. The papers of the Society's founder, E. Robert Schmitz, are located in the music library of Yale University.

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[28] Schmitz read Gunn's comment after it was printed in *Musical America* quoted by Albert Goldberg: Albert Goldberg, "Ravel Is Featured in Chicago Concerts," *Musical America* XLVII/15 (28 January 1928), 9. Schmitz responded with a letter to the editor of the publication: E. Robert Schmitz, "President of Pro Musica Protests," *Musical America* XLVII/16 (4 February 1928), 29.

[29] Glenn Dillard Gunn, "Promotes European Interests: Brought Ravel to Chicago as Pianist; Bela Bartoc [sic], the Hungarian Composer, Next," *Chicago Herald and Examiner* (12 January 1928), Part Four, 3.

[30] The *Pro-Musica Quarterly* was published under the title *Franco-American Musical Society Bulletin* from 1923-25.

[31] Members of the Honorary Advisory Board were such composers as Bartók, Alban Berg, Arthur Bliss, Ernest Bloch, Walter Damrosch, Henry Eichheim, Manuel de Falla, Percy Grainger, Howard Hanson, Arthur Honegger, Vincent d'Indy, Zoltán Kodály, Darius Milhaud, Serge Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel, Ottorino Respighi, Arnold Schoenberg, Karol Szymanowski, Germaine Tailleferre, and Edgard Varèse.

Bartók and the Pro-Musica Society

Bartók's relationship with the Pro-Musica Society began long before the organization sponsored his 1927-28 tour. He was a member of the Franco-American Musical Society's (FAMS) Honorary and Advisory Board as early as 1923, and his board membership continued through the Society's name change to Pro-Musica, Inc. in 1925.[32] His accomplishments were noted in nearly every issue of the FAMS *Bulletin* and *Pro-Musica Quarterly*. One such notice advertised Bartók's first scheduled American tour for the 1925-26 season.[33] An announcement of the tour's cancellation, which was reportedly due to European engagements that would interfere with the U. S. performance dates and Bartók's wish to complete his First Piano Concerto before his American debut, was published in the December 1925 issue of the serial.[34] Sigmund Klein, M. D. Calvocoressi, and Ernő Balogh all contributed articles on the composer to the *Pro-Musica Quarterly*.[35] Bartók himself wrote an essay on Hungarian folk music for the October 1928 issue.[36] The ideas set forth therein were likely similar to those he presented in his speech written for his American Pro-Musica recitals. He may, in fact, have read the essay itself, or at least a portion of it, for these lectures.

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[32] *Franco-American Musical Society Bulletin* I/1 (September 1923), 1.; *Pro-Musica Quarterly* [No Volume Number] (June 1925), 1.

[33] "Activities of Some of the Members of the Honorary Board," *Franco-American Musical Society Bulletin* [No Volume Number] (March 1925), 37. Bartók was scheduled to perform before the Denver chapter in either December 1925 or January 1926. Ely Jade, ed., "Activities of Various Chapters," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* [No Volume Number] (October 1925), 20.

[34] "AAtivities [sic] of Some of the Members of the Honorary Board," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* [No Volume Number] (December 1925), 29.

[35] Sigmund Klein, "Béla Bartók—A Portrait," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* [No Volume Number] (June 1925), 4-7.; M. D. Calvocoressi, "Béla Bartók—An Introduction," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* [No Volume Number] (June 1925), 8-12. [Reprinted from "The Monthly Musical Record," March 1, 1922]; Ernő Balogh, "Personal Glimpses of Bela Bartok," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VII/1 (June 1928), 16-18.

[36] Béla Bartók, "The Folk Songs of Hungary," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VII/1 (October 1928), 28-35.

Bartók's 1927-28 tour, with performances planned to begin in December and extend through March,[37] was announced in the June 1927 issue of the *Pro-Musica Quarterly*.[38] According to Society records, Bartók was paid two hundred fifty dollars for each of the recitals in Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Portland, St. Paul, San Francisco, and Seattle.[39] According to the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics website, the equivalent of this amount as of 2 July 2012 was $3,359.87.[40]

[37] Ely Jade, ed., "Activities of Some of the Members of the Honorary Board," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/1 (October 1927), 53.

[38] Ely Jade, ed., "Activities of Some of the Members of the Honorary Board," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* V/2 (June 1927), 38.

[39] E. Robert Schmitz Papers, MSS 54, Box 23, pp. 3-11, Yale University Library.

[40] "CPI Inflation Calculator," United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm/, accessed 2 July 2012.

CHAPTER II

WESTERN UNITED STATES

Introduction

The first lecture-recitals given before local chapters of the Pro-Musica Society occurred in January 1928 in four major cities in the Western United States: Los Angeles, California; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; and Portland, Oregon. For concertgoers in each location Bartók delivered the same pre-concert lecture, which he read from a prepared manuscript, and performed the same program of contemporary works. Most were his own compositions, with two by his fellow countryman and colleague, Zoltán Kodály.

As he journeyed from city to city, Bartók found that the level of awareness of his music in particular and of musical modernism in general varied considerably. Audiences in Los Angeles had several opportunities to hear his music performed previously and were, therefore, more familiar with his works than those in the other three locations. In San Francisco, several pianists had played his shorter works; his first string quartet had been performed by The Hart House Quartet before his arrival. In general, however, he was less well known in the City by the Bay than he was to audiences further down the Pacific coast. To help insure a receptive audience, one San Francisco writer went so far as to encourage amateur pianists to read through several of the composer's easier piano pieces in order to acquaint themselves with his style in the weeks preceding the recital. Seattle readers benefitted from no such guidance. Instead press coverage preceding the concert in this Washington coastal seaport was in large part focused on the activities of

Pro-Musica or Society members rather than the exotic composer/pianist from Hungary and his modernist music.

After the recital, however, lengthy reviews of the performance were published in local newspapers. Portland enjoyed a strong local music scene that was covered favorably by staff writers from the city's newspapers and enjoyed more support from some local writers than did outside artists. Despite the differing levels of public awareness of Bartók's oeuvre, a pattern of reception emerged. Audiences recognized him as a greatly skilled pianist and as an important figure in the contemporary music world but struggled to accept the most recent composition on the recital, the Piano Sonata, which Bartók had completed in 1926. Not surprisingly, listeners were more impressed with the final pieces on the program, short works that Bartók had written much earlier in his career and in which the folk music influence was easier to recognize.

The route Bartók followed on his Pro-Musica tour of the Western United States progressed from south to north, beginning in Los Angeles in the early days of 1928 and terminating in Portland approximately one week later. After spending Christmas in New York, he greeted the New Year making his way across the Continent to his destination in southern California.

Los Angeles

Bartók left New York on a six-day junket to Los Angeles on 2 January 1928.[41] Following a layover in Chicago on 3 January, he passed through Omaha, Nebraska and Cheyenne, Wyoming.[42] At 9:10 a.m. on 6 January he reached Los Angeles, where he

[41] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 255.

[42] *Ibid*.

stayed at the Biltmore Hotel.[43] During the days preceding his performance on 11 January, Bartók went on outings and corresponded with friends and family members.[44] On 7 January he went to Santa Monica, where he gathered algae on the seashore.[45] Two days later he moved from his hotel room into a private home.[46] Bartók reported on a postcard to his mother that from this bungalow on the seashore he could hear and feel the thundering of the ocean.[47] He gave the first of his Pro-Musica lecture-recitals at the newly built Beaux Arts Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles.[48] According to his eldest son, Bartók found giving the speech difficult because of the one hundred women in the audience.[49] It is probable that he had not addressed such a large group of female audience members in performance or lecture before. At the time in America, women's participation in organizations such as Pro-Musica was strong, whereas in Europe this was not the case.

In 1920 Los Angeles was a city of 576,673—the tenth largest in the United States.[50] The population of the greater metropolitan area was 1,250,000.[51] Bartók expressed his astonishment at the city's population growth over a period of the fifty years

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[43] *Ibid*., 256.

[44] *Ibid*.

[45] Béla Bartók, postcard to his mother (9 January 1928) translated in: Béla Bartók, János Demény, and Michael Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, trans. Péter Balaban, István Farkas, Elisabeth West, and Colin Mason (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 184.

[46] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 256.

[47] Béla Bartók, postcard to his mother (9 January 1928) translated in: *Béla Bartók Letters*, 184.

[48] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 256.

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1928), 16.

[51] *Ibid*., 94.

preceding his visit from ten or twenty thousand to its 1928 population of almost 1,500,000.[52] As the city was so large, it supported over one hundred fifty serials.[53] Those chosen for examination in this study are daily newspapers with high circulations in 1928: the *Los Angeles Examiner*, *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.[54]

Bartók's Los Angeles performance was announced as early as 6 January 1928 in the *Evening Herald*. The brief story, found in the society news section, notifies the public that the composer had arrived in Los Angeles under the auspices of the Pro-Musica Society for his first American tour and that only Society members would be admitted to his 11 January recital.[55]

Two longer stories introducing Bartók to Los Angeles readers may be found in the Sunday, 8 January issues of the *Examiner* and the *Times*. A writer for the *Examiner* asserted that Bartók was one of the most important persons from Budapest and that he had "attained permanent significance" through his modern compositional efforts.[56] In her story for the *Times* Isabel Morse Jones declared that Bartók's lecture-recital would be one of the most significant musical events of the year.[57] Following the sensational headline accompanying the article, "Musical Heretic to be Heard," Jones commented positively on

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[52] Béla Bartók, letter to his mother, aunt, and sister (18 January 1928) translated in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 185.

[53] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 94-99.

[54] *Ibid*., 96-98. Circulations: *Los Angeles Examiner*, 197,473 (Monday through Saturday), 425,308 (Sunday); *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 206,933 (Monday through Saturday only); *Los Angeles Times*, 148,039 (Monday through Saturday), 218,203 (Sunday).

[55] "Pro-Musica Event," *Los Angeles Evening Herald* (6 January 1928), B-15.

[56] "Pro-Musica Brings Bela Bartok Here," *Los Angeles Examiner* (8 January 1928), Section V, 10.

[57] "Musical Heretic to be Heard: Bela Bartok, Hungarian Modernist, Advances Upon Los Angeles to Convince Scoffers With Lecture and Performances of His Works for Pro-Musica," *Los Angeles Times* (8 January 1928), 18.

Bartók's accomplishments, namely the composer's early status as a piano prodigy and his work in folk music (which she distinguishes from Roma music heard in compositions by Liszt) in collaboration with Kodály.[58] His works had evidently been presented in the area preceding his arrival, but not with frequency. Jones pointed out that much of Bartók's music had been heard in the Eastern United States as a result of the efforts of Cincinnati Symphony conductor Fritz Reiner, who had performed the American premieres of three of the composer's orchestral works up to that point. She also gave Los Angeles readers an idea of what unnamed critics had claimed regarding Bartók's recent performances on the East Coast:

> He is said to be a strange combination of personal gentleness and musical ferocity. His compositions are described as startling, savage, at times ugly with barbaric abandon and terrifying strength. Now you know the worst. His power among the modernist group is unquestioned and his music is considered to have more organization and less chaos than the work of most others who write atonally. It has decisive rhythmic patterns and sensitive hearers derive definite emotional reactions from his music.[59]

Although she relayed the sentiments of harsh critics, Jones maintained that there were positive aspects of Bartók's music that set him apart from his modernist contemporaries. She also provided a comparison of the modes typical of the Hungarian folk melodies that had influenced some of his compositions to the major and minor modes utilized by Bach and Handel.[60] The author concluded that the members of Pro-Musica would have an opportunity to make their own judgments of his works when they heard Bartók in

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] *Ibid*.

[60] *Ibid*.

recital.[61] Readers might have been suspicious of the language initially used to describe Bartók's work but surely recognized his importance as a creator of modern music after digesting Jones's entire story.

Jones wrote a glowing review of Bartók's 11 January concert for the Sunday, 12 January 1928 issue of the *Times*, hailing the composer as a "Hungarian prophet of music and a leader honored by all who are in touch with the modern trend."[62] She proposed that an earlier Los Angeles Pro-Musica recital by Hungarian pianist Imre Weisshaus comprising some of Bartók's works had inspired interest in the composer.[63] Jones argued that Bartók benefitted from the Los Angeles audience's previous exposure to his works performed by Weisshaus, who did not receive as warm a reception as his compatriot, "for this modern music like Shakespeare's vice 'is first to be endured, then pitied and then embraced.' Weisshaus was merely endured."[64] With the benefit of Bartók's explanation of his compositional goals and work with folk music, Jones recognized the obstacles confronting the audience:

> One understood after listening to this earnest, sincere man and his music that pity must be reserved for those who can not as yet break down the barriers erected by years of absorption of Beethoven, Bach and Brahms, and for those who are honestly baffled by half-meanings, or, better, meanings stated in a foreign musical tongue which depends so insistently upon rhythm and pedal points for its utterance.[65]

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[61] *Ibid*.

[62] "Bartok is Received Graciously: Hungarian Modernist Wins Respect in Inspiring Plea for Music Tolerance," *Los Angeles Times* (12 January 1928), Part II, 9.

[63] *Ibid*.

[64] *Ibid*.

[65] *Ibid*.

Jones cited Bartók's compositional integrity as a source for praise, a common comment from several American critics of Bartók's music during his first tour. The "pity" from Jones's Shakespeare reference she reserved for those who could not appreciate Bartók's modern style because of their strong affinity for music of the Romantic or earlier eras. In her analysis of the pieces she heard at the recital, however, Jones contradicted a statement she had referenced in her story of 8 January with regard to atonality:

> The works of Bartok are not atonal. In them one hears definitely defined keys used in conflict with each other but maintaining their identity. They rest upon a steel frame of rhythm, intricate, beautiful in design. His melodies, if one can be so old-fashioned as to call them so, are phrases and at times complete sentences from folk-songs[…]even Kodaly does not exceed or even reach his heights of individuality in treatment of themes.[66]

Surely Jones did not mean that quotations of folk songs are present in every melody heard in Bartók's recital. For some pieces this is the case, but for others only the influence of folk music is expressed. Jones found the most recent work on the program—the Piano Sonata (1926)—to be the most "arresting."[67] She also detected Debussy's influence on the two Kodály works performed.[68] Of Bartók's pianism, Jones reported: "Mr. Bartok is a splendid pianist and he gains his effects with very little use of the pedal and a surprising sameness of tone quantity. One does not hear any great variation of volume but his playing is not monotonous in the least."[69] Jones completed her Shakespeare analogy by contending:

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[66] *Ibid*.

[67] *Ibid*.

[68] *Ibid*.

[69] *Ibid*.

> Having welcomed Bartok with an earnest desire to listen and understand, it is to be expected that the next modernist to appear before Pro-Musica will be "embraced" with affection. As a matter of fact the next modernist will be Maurice Ravel and he won't seem modern after Bartok.[70]

According to Jones, Bartók was indeed "received graciously," as the headline accompanying her story indicated.

In his 12 January review for the *Examiner*, Patterson Greene contrasted Bartók's person to his musicianship and compositions:

> A mild maker of savage music is Bela Bartok[….] In appearance and speech he is gently inconspicuous. One recurrently thinks of Mrs. J. J. Carter's statement in introducing him, that at home in Budapest he is called "Professor Bartok." Then he sits at the piano and the strong, stern modal tunes of Hungary and Rumania take forthright shape under his fingers. This was Bartok, the musician, who has set the nations agog with his innovations.[71]

The fact that such aggressive music as Bartók's could be conceived and performed by a seemingly meek person was a point of fascination for many other critics of his first American recitals as well. Immediately following his introduction, Greene commented on the music itself, asserting that:

> His harmonies have a distinct quality of newness. Many of our contemporaries are quite as rule-bound as the classics, but they are bound by the violation rather than by the obedience. Bartok has added fresh principles, instead of shattering old ones[….] From the varied scales on which the folk melodies have built, he has evolved chord sequences that are strange to the ear, but they are logical and honestly made.[72]

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[70] *Ibid*. Ravel's Los Angeles performance was scheduled for 8 February 1928 at the Biltmore Hotel.

[71] "Bartok Heard in Pro-Musica Piano Recital," *Los Angeles Examiner* (12 January 1928), Section I, 14.

[72] *Ibid*.

In his comparison of Bartók to other modernists, Greene was kinder to Bartók. He also wrote that the composer's Piano Suite, Opus 14 (1916), must have "beat a horrific tattoo upon the ear drums of the conventionalists. Our more seasoned tympani now accept it as acutely interesting, but not terrifying."[73] The purpose of this comment may have been to assure listeners and readers that even the newest, most radical music may soon sound less so. Both Los Angeles critics who contributed significant articles to the papers examined for this section were somewhat enthusiastic about Bartók's music in general and about his performance in the city.

San Francisco

At 7:45 a.m. on 12 January 1928, Bartók embarked on a twelve-hour train trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco. When he reached his destination, the first thing he allegedly did was set off on his own to visit a Chinese theatre.[74] Bartók documented an account of his first San Francisco experience—a foray into Chinatown—in a letter to his mother, aunt, and sister:

> I arrived in San Francisco at 8 p.m. and went immediately to a Chinese theatre. It was strange to be wandering about alone in the Chinese Quarter in the evening; everything was Chinese, all the people and the signs in the street. I found the Great China Theatre very quickly (luckily its name was written in English as well as Chinese). This is the most interesting thing I have seen in this country so far. I stayed in the theatre till midnight and would so much have liked to stay to the end, but it was not possible. Heaven knows how long a play lasts there! I was the only white man there apart from one attendant. The audience was largely made up of men; there were a few women and a crowd of children of all ages.[75]

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[73] *Ibid*.

[74] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 256.

[75] Béla Bartók, letter to his mother, aunt, and sister (18 January 1928) in: Béla Bartók, János Demény, and Michael Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 185.

Bartók must have learned of these theaters prior to his arrival in San Francisco and decided to seek one out. Although he was apparently interested in exploring America beyond the concert hall, time for independent sightseeing was limited during much of the remainder of the tour.

With a population of 506,676, San Francisco was the twelfth largest city in the United States at the time of the 1920 U. S. Census.[76] The most important commercial hub in California and the financial center and principal port of the West, its major industries were printing and publishing, meat packing, preserving and canning, foundry and machine shop products, rice cleaning and polishing, and ship building.[77] San Francisco was home to branches of the Federal Reserve Bank and the U. S. Mint and stood as the western terminus of three transcontinental railroads.[78] With its status as a major city, it was able to support many musical endeavors. Concerts and recitals were presented the week of Bartók's arrival by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, violinist Georges Enesco, the Persinger String Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, the Pacific Music Society, and the Young People's Symphony Orchestra. In 1928 over 175 serials were published in San Francisco.[79] Analyzed in this study are

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[76] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 16.

[77] *Ibid*., 112.

[78] *Ibid*.

[79] *Ibid*., 112-18.

articles from four daily newspapers: *The San Francisco Call*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, and the *San Francisco News*.[80]

Bartók presented a lecture-recital in Norman Hall at the Fairmont Hotel on 13 January at 8:15[81] before the members of the local chapter of the Pro-Musica Society. Redfern Mason heralded Bartók's performance in the city with a lengthy story, containing musical examples, for *The Examiner*.[82] Mason wrote that, although virtually unknown to San Francisco audiences—save for performances of his "beautiful" first string quartet by the Hart House Quartet and a few of his solo piano works—Bartók would not be obscure to local audiences for long because he "has in him the sap of creative musicianship. Relatively a young man—he was born in 1881—he has come to be recognized by his compatriots as the apostle of Hungarian music."[83] Mason assured readers that Bartók went through an "apprenticeship" typical of classical musicians of his time, as "he had come under the spell of Brahms and Wagner and outgrown both; for a time he thought he had found his musical savior in Richard Strauss, but that idol fell too."[84] By quoting from biographical information written by Adjoran Otvos for the *League of Composers' Review*, Mason acquainted readers with Bartók's work in folk

[80] *Ibid*. Circulations: *The San Francisco Call*, 107,123 (Monday through Saturday only); *San Francisco Chronicle*, 94,184 (Daily), 160,680 (Sunday); *The San Francisco Examiner*, 183,027 (Daily), 363,426 (Sunday); *San Francisco News*, 82,451 (Monday through Saturday only).

[81] "Music Calendar," *San Francisco Chronicle* (8 January 1928), D9.

[82] Redfern Mason, "Bela Bartok, Interpreter of the Music of Hungary, Comes to San Francisco this Month," *The San Francisco Examiner* (1 January 1928), E10.

[83] *Ibid*.

[84] *Ibid*.

music and his collaboration with Kodály.[85] He also attempted to lend credibility to his compositions by quoting the well-known European music critic M. D. Calvocoressi.[86]

After introducing Bartók to San Francisco readers, Mason advised them on how to prepare for Bartók's upcoming recital by urging them to study or play some of Bartók's piano music beforehand. Although he insisted that this would yield positive results, he did caution readers that their first experience of the music may not be entirely pleasant:

> The first contact may be a little discouraging. Bartók does not set down the notes like other people. Those naked dissonances jar a little at first and the changes of time are abrupt and startling. But persevere, and the continent, almost ascetic beauty of the work will take possession of you and, from that time forward, you will be a Bartók enthusiast.[87]

The author supplied readers with excerpts from four of Bartók's pieces. Mason connected elements of the fourth example, which he indicated was taken from the first piece in a book of improvisations, to music of the past, arguing that:

> There are accompanying seconds in the treble which make you think of Debussy and the Russians; Bach liked them, too, by the way. But that succession of fifths which follows carries you back to the organum of the Middle Ages. Incidentally, however, it may be remarked that Debussy knew his organum, too.[88]

By relating Bartók's music to that which was widely accepted at the time, Mason may have aimed to legitimize Bartók's compositions to skeptics. In the caption for the

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[85] *Ibid*.

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] *Ibid*.

[88] *Ibid*.

musical examples, he once again defended the virtue of originality in Bartók's modern music:

> If music sounds well at the first hearing, it is sure proof that there is no novelty in it. Beethoven shocked people at first; Wagner was damned by the pedagogues; Dvorak they would not listen to. Of course it must not be inferred that everything shocking is necessarily good. But of Bartok's music it may be said that, though it startles at the first hearing, the listener, surely comes under its spell, if he listens long enough.[89]

Mason certainly encouraged San Francisco listeners to explore Bartók's music and to give themselves time to be alerted to its virtues. Members of Pro-Musica would have had about two weeks to follow Mason's advice before hearing the composer in concert.

Bartók's recital was again announced the following weekend, on 7 and 8 January, in at least three San Francisco newspapers. A writer for *The San Francisco Call and Post* relayed to readers that Bartók should be credited with creating a national music in Hungary, listing his compositional influences as Brahms, Wagner, Liszt, Strauss, and Dohnányi. The author also conveyed that in Bartók's most recent music "A polyphony, conceived with extraordinary freedom, dominates…with melodic lines developed without respecting any of the established rules of counterpoint, giving rise to unique tonal encounters."[90] This critic did concede, however, that Bartók wrote counterpoint that was at least rooted in a knowledge of the "rules."[91] A writer for the 8 January issue of *The Examiner* announced that Bartók's performance would be the first by the Pro-Musica Society in the new year. This author asserted that "Bartok is a builder; he has elucidated

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[89] *Ibid*.

[90] "Hungary Music Leader Lectures For Pro Musica," *The San Francisco Call and Post* (7 January 1928), 18.

[91] *Ibid*.

in his texts much of the real meaning of Hungary and its traditions, meaning something very different from the 'gypsy' music of the Liszt Rhapsodies."[92] In contrast to Mason's earlier comment that Bartók is virtually unknown to San Francisco audiences, this critic used the reception of the December performance of his first string quartet as evidence that the composer had already won admirers in the city.[93] The author also considered the Pro-Musica Society to be a positive organization, as it "gives to its members and guests certain artists and compositions not obtainable through any other music medium in this country."[94] The program for the recital was printed after the story:

Table 2.1: Concert program (8 January 1928).[95]

Suite, Op. 14…….Bartok
Rumanian Christmas Songs……..Bartok
Epitaphe from Opus 11…….Kodaly
Allegretto Molto from Opus 3……..Kodaly
Sonata……...Bartok
Burlesque, Dirge, Bear Dance, Evening in the Country, Allegro Barbaro…….....Bartok

The program was also printed in an 8 January announcement in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which contained information similar to that provided the same day in *The Examiner*. The author of the story in the *Chronicle* added biographical information from a promotional pamphlet distributed by Bartók's tour manager, Arthur Judson,[96] as well as

[92] "Pro Musica To Hear Bartok," *The San Francisco Examiner* (8 January 1928), E9.

[93] *Ibid*.

[94] *Ibid*.

[95] *Ibid*.

[96] *Bela Bartok, Composer-Pianist*, Promotional Pamphlet (New York: Arthur Judson Concert Management, ca. 1927), 1.

a list of several of the composer's orchestral works.[97] Notices also appeared in the *Chronicle* on 12 and 13 January.[98]

Three reviews of the recital are sufficient to characterize the reception San Francisco audiences gave the Hungarian composer-pianist. Alexander Fried wrote for the *Chronicle* of Bartók's ethnomusicological work, calling the tunes he collected the "crude treasures of his discovery" that he had "polished…into sophisticated art."[99] Fried explained that the Western world's recent interest in modernism and nationalism brought Bartók's efforts into the public eye. He informed his readers of the pieces featured on the recital and praised Bartók's pianism, which he called "magnificent, now ruggedly barbaric, now tender, but always beautifully clear and consummate in detailed perfection."[100] The "barbaric" qualities of the performance, as Fried pointed out, were undoubtedly more descriptive of the way the music was played than of the works themselves. Bartók's treatment of the piano as a percussion instrument in many of his own compositions must have resulted in a type of sound that Fried was unaccustomed to hearing. Yet as Bartók was a trained pianist, it is certain he would have amended his approach when playing works of previous eras or varying styles. Fried commented not only on Bartók's performance, but also on his compositional techniques: "Astringent modernist chords, relentlessly repeated, and the play of cunning rhythm about his

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[97] "Bartok to Present Hungarian Music: Program of Contemporary Works of His Native Country to Be Given by Composer, Now on American Tour," *San Francisco Chronicle* (8 January 1928), 8D.

[98] "Composer in Recital Tomorrow Evening," *San Francisco Chronicle* (12 January 1928), 8.; "Composer to Give Recital This Evening," *San Francisco Chronicle* (13 January 1928), 8.

[99] Alexander Fried, "Bartok, Pianist, Warmly Welcomed: Performance Magnificent, Barbaric, Tender," *San Francisco Chronicle* (14 January 1928), 4.

[100] *Ibid*.

reiterative themes are his predominant type of structure."[101] Small-scale forms, Fried contended, were the best for Bartók's writing style.[102] He suggested, however, that Bartók make more significant use of counterpoint to further develop his larger works and help insure their success.[103] Consistent with his previous comments, the critic found the short pieces from the end of the program most appealing: "Un peu gris" from *Burlesques*, "Bear Dance," *Allegro barbaro*, "Dirge," and "Evening in the Country." Conversely, he found the Sonata "tiresome as it was spun to great lengths on too little and thus turgid material."[104] "Dirge" and "Evening in the Country" won favor with the reviewer for being the more lyrical and expressive. According to Fried, Kodály's works were written with techniques similar to those of his countryman, but Kodály was "less devoted to the use of machine-like rhythms."[105] Fried concluded with a description of the public's response: "The audience heard the program with interest always, sometimes with enthusiasm. Personally, it made its guest warmly welcome."[106] While this author reserved his most positive comment for Bartók's pianism, he was respectful of his compositional efforts, notably the short pieces Bartók had written over fifteen years prior to his visit.

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[101] *Ibid*.

[102] *Ibid*.

[103] *Ibid*.

[104] *Ibid*.

[105] *Ibid*.

[106] *Ibid*.

An additional review was published in the 14 January 1928 issue of the *San Francisco News*, in which the author connected Bartók's recital to another musical event that took place in the city on 13 January—a Young People's Symphony Concert:

> At first sight there would not seem to be much connection between a children's concert and an ultramodern piano recital by Bela Bartok. But the truth is that his music, especially that based on Hungarian folk-music, excites much the same wonder as that of a child in the minds of sophisticated musicians. And the more sophisticated the listener, the more naive the wonder.[107]

The author may have made this association simply to help readers identify with the music. The reviewer also asserted that Bartók's works were "very old music given modernity of expression by the use of harmonic coloring which is itself derived from scales long disused by cultivated musicians while still alive among the Magyar people."[108] Although it would have been more accurate to observe that Bartók's compositions were new and influenced by traditions outside Western fine art music, rather than a simple reworking of existing indigenous material, the author wanted readers to be aware of the central importance of folk music to Bartók's work. This emphasis is referenced in the author's discussion of specific pieces:

> In the Suite and the Rumanian Christmas songs with which he opened, the folk-spirit of the music was abundantly manifest. It sang breezily of wind-swept plains and mountain snows. High animal spirits ran through it all, and the harmonies and melodies, though strange in idiom, spoke of familiar things and primitive impulse.[109]

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[107] Newspaper clipping in music scrapbook at the San Francisco Public Library. [No title preserved], *San Francisco News* (14 January 1928), [no page number preserved].

[108] *Ibid*.

[109] *Ibid*.

Such an illustration avoids musical analysis altogether, which raises the question of the critic's ability or desire to contribute to any discussion of modernism. Describing Bartók's music with words such as "animal" and "primitive" seems to be a frequent method of avoiding true analysis for American reviewers of the new music. According to the author the Sonata was "less intelligible" than other works on the program, as:

> the folk-spirit was absent; the ear tired quickly of the harsh and unfamiliar dissonances; and one soon became aware that frequent repetitions would be needed before one could really assimilate whatever beauty it possesses.[110]

It seems that this author was resistant to musical modernism in general, or at least not entirely comfortable with the new sounds. He gave no indication whether he was willing to listen to multiple performances of the work in order to understand it more fully or to appreciate it. The last set of pieces on the program, which was more enjoyable for the author, "dropped to the lower levels of salon music, however original and charming they may have been."[111] He identified a pentatonic melody in one of the set, "Evening in the Country," which he compared to melodies by American composer Edward MacDowell. Bartók's work was, however, not as sentimental.[112] Upon analysis, similarities between this piece and some of the character pieces of the composer of the Second New England School may, in fact, be found. The writer concluded with the declaration that in Bartók's harmonic language "there is very little that is unassimilable [*sic*]," but that the music in general was "easier for naturally musical people to understand than for professors of

[110] *Ibid*.

[111] *Ibid*.

[112] *Ibid*.

harmony to explain."[113] Perhaps this revelation accounts for the lack of technical comments on the compositions in this review.

A third review appeared in the 14 January issue of *The San Francisco Call and Post*.[114] In his story Charles Woodman reported that there was a problem with Bartók's preliminary lecture:

> Bartok had prepared a written address, but was apparently unable to read with sufficient deliberation to be heard distinctly. However, he was understood to compare the Chinese scale, the Aeolain [*sic*] and other modes with the major and minor scales to the disadvantage of the latter and to prefer the atonal to any kind of key system.[115]

It is odd that the other reviewers did not seem to have the same difficulty understanding Bartók's speech. Woodman insisted that there was not enough space allowed in the paper for him to write an analysis of the music, but he did give his opinion of the program:

> his own short pieces—"Burlesque," "Dirge," "Bear Dance," "Evening in the Country" and "Allegro Barbaro"—came nearest to a form of music with a melodic line, while his Suite and Sonata, and even the excerpts from Kodaly's works, sounded most like the tom-tom refrains of North American Indians.[116]

Although this comment may have been meant as a pejorative characterization of Bartók's music, it does draw attention to a reason why the last set of pieces on the concert was the favorite of most audience members. The association of the piano works with the drums

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[113] *Ibid*.

[114] Charles Woodman, "Hungary Music 'Regenerator' Lectures," *The San Francisco Call and Post* (14 January 1928), 18.

[115] *Ibid*.

[116] *Ibid*.

of the American Indian is somewhat valid in the sense that Bartók approached the piano as a percussion instrument and that rhythmic complexity and ostinatos are features of his music.

Seattle

The history of the Seattle venue in which Bartók performed, The Olympic Hotel, presents evidence of the determination and desire of local citizens to continue to advance the city's growth and elevate its status as an important metropolitan center in the United States. Public bonds were sold to raise money for completion of the building. *The Seattle Times* took submissions of possible names for the hotel from its readers, and a committee chose "The Olympic" from the 3,906 suggestions. The building was erected in 1924, the realization of a local dream to establish a world-class hotel for high-society gatherings.[117]

Figure 2.1: The Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington (1920s).[118]

[117] "Olympic Hotel: Seattle Landmark Since 1924," *History Link: The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://historylink.org/_content/printer_friendly/pf_output.cfm?file_id=2028, accessed 23 January 2012.

[118] "The Olympic Hotel (George B. Post & Sons and Bebb & Gould, 1924), Seattle, 1920s, Postcard," *History Link: The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://historylink.org/_content/printer_friendly/pf_output.cfm?file_id=2028, accessed 23 January 2012. Postcard (1924) without copyright notice.

Following his performance in San Francisco, Bartók traveled north to Seattle, Washington for a lecture-recital for the local chapter of the Pro-Musica Society. At the time of the most recent census (1920), Seattle had a population of 400,000, making it the largest city not only in Washington but in the entire Pacific Northwest. Its proximity to Asia and Hawaii made it an important seaport. With shipping as its major industry, lumber and agricultural products also contributed to the local economy.[119] Bartók wrote of Seattle's growth and the cities he had visited up to 18 January in a letter he sent to his mother, aunt, and sister while he was on the transcontinental tour.

> Everywhere the people are very friendly: they take me for drives; they want to show me all the sights; it makes them sad if the weather prevents them from doing so. They show a lot of interest, they want to progress with the times, but sometimes it is hard for them. These towns are so new, and the various cultural movements are only just taking shape. Seattle was a little place with a population of 3,000 in 1880. Today it has 400,000.[120]

Bartók's sightseeing during the part of the tour the letter references (the beginning through the Portland performance) was likely determined, at least to some degree, by his hosts in each city. Guided tours represent a contrast to Bartók's sojourn into the Chinese district of San Francisco, which he explored on his own.

Further evidence of Seattle's aspirations of progress is found in the large number of contemporary local serials. In 1928, the year of Bartók's visit, there were over eighty newspapers in print in Seattle. They covered a variety of subjects, notably local and

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[119] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 1127.

[120] Béla Bartók, letter to his mother, aunt, and sister (18 January 1928) in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 185.

national events, industry, finance, music, religion, and The University of Washington. The local papers selected for this survey are *The Seattle Times*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *The Seattle Star*, and *Argus*. The first three were published daily with circulation values around 90,000; *Argus* was a Saturday only paper.[121] In these periodicals news of clubs and societies such as Pro-Musica was listed in sections devoted to articles on the gatherings of such organizations along with wedding, travel, and party announcements. One article on Bartók's visit, for instance, appears next to instructions for playing bridge. News of musical events was also placed in the entertainment sections of Sunday papers in segments devoted to discussion of music as well as those that featured information on the latest motion pictures and plays.

The first announcement of Bartók's 15 January 1928 performance in the Seattle press as surveyed in this study occurred on 8 January in the music section of the Sunday edition of *The Seattle Times*.[122] The author reported that the recital would be given for the members of the Seattle chapter of the Pro-Musica Society at five o'clock in the afternoon on the following Sunday in the Junior Ballroom of the Olympic Hotel.

Announcements of the event were more numerous on Thursday, 12 January 1928. An article in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* disseminates the facts of the performance, but its focus is more on the "patrons and patronesses" of the Pro-Musica Society than on the featured performer.[123] The list of their names is nearly as long as the explanation of the

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[121] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory,* 1127-29. Circulations: *The Seattle Times*, 86,843 (Monday through Saturday), 113,228 (Sunday); *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 91,222 (Monday through Saturday), 153,633 (Sunday); *The Seattle Star* 89,857 (Monday through Saturday only). Circulations for *Argus* are not presented in the *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*.

[122] "Bela Bartok to Give Recital in Junior Ballroom," *Seattle Daily Times* (8 January 1928), Society and Clubs, Music and Books, 7.

[123] "Pro Musica Will Present Bela Bartok: Hungarian Composer and Pianist to Appear at Junior Ballroom Sunday," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (12 January 1928), 9.

event. *The Seattle Daily Times* published a similar article in a section titled "Of Interest to Women: Activities in Seattle Society, Clubs, and Other Organizations" which also placed importance on the patrons and patronesses.

> Pro-Musica, whose membership includes many of the city's prominent musicians and patrons of art, will sponsor the fourth in a series of musicales next Sunday, presenting Bela Bartok, Hungarian composer and pianist, in concert in the Junior ballroom of The Olympic at 5 o'clock. On the list of patrons and patronesses are Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reading Van Tuyl, Mr. and Mrs. William D. Perkins, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Bogle, Dr. and Mrs. Frederick Bentley, Dr. and Mrs. Stevenson Smith, Dr. and Mrs. F. S. Palmer, Mrs. E. Richmond Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Paige Wood and Mr. Boyd Wells.[124]

Although the description does not supply information on Bartók or the music he would be performing, it does provide an idea of the types of people active in the newly formed Seattle chapter of Pro-Musica. Some were involved in professions outside of music, such as lawyer Lawrence Bogle[125] and Dr. Stevenson Smith, a psychologist and professor at the University of Washington.[126] Important local musicians were also among the chapter's membership. Dr. Franklin Sawyer Palmer, organist and choir director at St. James Cathedral, held a degree in medicine from Harvard University and had studied organ in Paris with renowned organist-composers Charles-Marie Widor and Eugène Gigout.[127] Carl Paige Wood was professor, and later dean, at the University of

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[124] "Pro-Musica Plans Concert at Olympic," *Seattle Daily Times* (12 January 1928), 18.

[125] James H. Boswell, *American Blue Book Western Washington* (Seattle: Loman and Hanford, 1922), 72. Transcribed for the Washington Biographies Project on http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jtenlen/lbogle.txt, accessed 3 March 2012.

[126] Edwin R. Guthrie, "Stevenson Smith: 1883-1950," *The American Journal of Psychology* LXIV/2 (April 1951), 285-87.

[127] "A Golden Age: Cathedral Music under Dr. Palmer," http://www.stjames-cathedral.org/history/music.htm, accessed 3 March 2012.

Washington's School of Music.[128] Boyd Wells was associated with Seattle's Cornish School of Music (Cornish Institute of the Arts), where John Cage would later teach.[129] Another musician affiliated with the Cornish School, pianist John Hopper, was the Seattle chapter's Corresponding Secretary, pro tempore. For the December 1927 issue of *Pro-Musica Quarterly* he wrote that the chapter was "decidedly active, and in its brief month of existence already numbers practically every artist and prominent teacher in the city."[130] According to his report the chapter boasted over one hundred members on 4 December 1927, the date of the chapter's first concert.[131]

Argus concisely advertised the performance in its 14 January 1928 edition. "Bella [*sic*] Bartok noted Hungarian composer-pianist, will appear here in recital before the members of the Seattle chapter of the Pro-Musica Society tomorrow afternoon at 5 o'clock in the Junior ballroom of the Olympic Hotel."[132] This notice appeared in the section on theater and music called "Gossip of Plays and Players" and was accompanied by similar announcements for groups such as The Seattle Choral Society, the Washington Federation of Music Clubs, and the Seattle Oratorio Society. The same day *The Seattle Star* published the program of the lecture recital and reprinted part of a review of Bartók's 22 December 1927 debut performance with the New York Philharmonic.

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[128] "Historical Note," University of Washington School of Music Records, Special Collections, UW Libraries, http://digital.lib.washington.edu/findingaids/view?docId=UA19_15_00UWSchoolofMusic.xml, accessed 3 March 2012.

[129] Charles E. Brown, "Elizabeth Turner, 83, Who Shared Her Musical Talents with Community," *The Seattle Times*, reprinted from Wednesday, 13 February 1991, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=19910213&slug=1266079, accessed 3 March 2012.

[130] John Hopper, "Activities of Various Chapters: Seattle Chapter," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/2 (December 1927), 46.

[131] The concert featured the Polish composer-pianist Alexandre Tansman.

[132] "Gossip of Plays and Players," *Argus* (14 January 1928) [no page number available].

> In any capacity, as composer, soloist with orchestra, recital artist or lecturer, Bartok is one of the most stimulating figures of the present musical season. Of his very recent appearance with the New York Philharmonic orchestra, Irving Weil, critic for *The New York Journal* and *Musical America*, said of him: "There was a tactile concern with minute shadings of expression, a swift search for pointed or powerful effects of color, a feeling, always, for complete, but never crass, revelation." Mr. Bartok will play the following program:
>
> Suite, op. 14…….Bartok
> Rumanian Christmas Songs…….Bartok
> Epitaphe (from Op. 11)……Kodaly
> Allegro molto (from Op. 3)……..Kodaly
> Sonata……...Bartok
> Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)……Bartok
> Dirge, 1
> Bear Dance
> Evening in the Country
> Allegro barbaro[133]

With this story Bartók was introduced to Seattle readers on positive terms.

On the day of the recital notices appeared in several newspapers. *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reprinted its previous article on the subject with minor changes.[134] The Sunday edition of *The Seattle Daily Times* included information on the event in its society section as well as its music section. As in both of the *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* articles, patrons and patronesses were listed on the society page with prominence equal to that found in the original announcement of 12 January.[135] In the music section more attention was paid to Bartók, his reputation, and his program. The writer described him as "equally celebrated as pianist and composer," gave the location

[133] Lillian Keen LeRallister, ed., "Hungarian Composer to Be Presented Here," *The Seattle Star* (14 January 1928), 5.

[134] "Musician Presented at Hotel," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (15 January 1928), Part Two, Society, Fashions, and Clubs, 1.

[135] "Pro-Musica to Present Pianist: Fourth In Series of Musicales Will Take Place at Olympic This Afternoon," *The Seattle Daily Times* (15 January 1928), Society and Clubs, Music and Books Section, 4.

and time of the event, and noted that the recital was open only to members of the Pro-Musica Society.[136] The fact that Bartók was not giving a public concert may have reduced the press coverage and advertisement of the event. One particularly instructive sentence returned in *The Seattle Daily Times* with the same wording found in the announcement in *The Seattle Star*: "In any capacity, as composer, soloist with orchestra, recital artist or lecturer, Bartók is one of the most stimulating figures of the present musical season."[137] The author continued, "The governing feature of Bartók's composition has been his endeavor to infuse new life into our present modes of musical expression by adding to them elements of a nationally strong peasant music, which with its freshness and vigor, provides a striking contrast to our present-day methods of art music."[138] While this article is centered on Bartók and his compositions rather than the society happenings of the Seattle area, it furnishes only a shallow description of his music. Seattle residents reading the account provided here might assume that Bartók was writing in a more Romantic style and that the only new or defining characteristic of his work was the introduction of exotic folk materials, perhaps in the style of Smetana and Dvořák.

The following day the headline "Hungarian Composer Wins Favor" was printed in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* along with an assessment of the performance. As the tone of the article shows, its author, while mildly supportive, was not entirely comfortable with its headline or with modern music.

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[136] "Piano Recital by Bartok Today: Concert by Hungarian Composer is for Members of Pro-Musica Society Only," *The Seattle Daily Times* (15 January 1928), Society and Clubs, Music and Books Section, 7.

[137] *Ibid*.

[138] *Ibid*.

> The works he presented yesterday may have the romance of the classics we all know and love, a romance expressed, in his case, perhaps in terms a little more sadistic than to which we are accustomed. But they did have form, and he did not at all times make malicious detours from the melodic line. I regard Mr. Bartok as a valuable exponent of modernism—though mine is a very humble judgment—for he is much more likely to attract recruits than the few others I have heard. He is not too wholeheartedly surrendering the substance until the shadow has given some evidence of its solidity—if a shadow has any.[139]

The author also noted the presence of Hungarian folk music in all of the works on the recital, whether by Bartók or Kodály. While impressed by the composer and some of his compositional strategies, the author was still not convinced about modern music in general.

A review of the recital was also published in *The Seattle Daily Times* detailing Bartók's speech and performance:

> Bela Bartok, Hungarian composer and pianist, gave a stimulating program of modern music, his own compositions and those of his compatriot, Kodaly, before the Seattle chapter of the Pro-Musica Society in the Junior ballroom of The Olympic last evening. Mr. Bartok, before his recital, gave a brief talk on the evolution of the new music, going back to the ancient pentatonic, Aeolian, Dorian and other scales, in which the satisfying dominant fifth was not important. He described how his own themes were taken directly from the elemental songs of the Hungarian peasants. Mr. Bartok is a musician of strength and vigor. Whether playing the sostenuto e pesante movement from his sonata, the quiet passages in "Epitaphe" by Kodaly or the stirring "Allegro Barbara" [*sic*] that closed his program, the audience felt a presence, a rare intellect in its midst.[140]

[139] E. S. C., "Bela Bartok Chastened in Modern Ideas," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (16 January 1928), 7. The headline "Hungarian Composer Wins Favor" spans the top of the page on which this article was printed.

[140] "Bela Bartok, Hungarian Composer, Gives Recital," *The Seattle Daily Times* (16 January 1928), 5.

The reader can glean a few important pieces of information from the review, the first of which that Bartók described in some detail the scales he appropriated from the peasant songs he collected and transcribed. Offering such an explanation may indicate Bartók's awareness that his audience might not be receptive to his more radical pieces. Secondly, it is striking that the writer described Bartók himself as a "musician of strength and vigor." Such adjectives are not surprising as descriptions of his compositional prowess or of his pianism, but, if this is intended as an overall characterization, it seems out of the ordinary. The comment differs greatly from the attitudes expressed in St. Paul, Minnesota, another city on the tour, where one writer described Bartók as "slight, somewhat below medium height and diffident in manner."[141] At times in his concert career Bartók himself was surprised at his own physical endurance.[142] Third, the article shows that, although Seattle newspapers tended to focus on the patrons and patronesses of the Pro-Musica Society instead of on Bartók's performance, this writer was paying attention to the music and, although the audience may not have enjoyed the performance, they understood, if only through this review, that Bartók's contributions were important and their composer represented a significant force in contemporary music.

Portland

It should come as no surprise that a description of Portland, Oregon today differs substantially from that of 1928, when Bartók presented a concert on 17 January. The city itself has almost doubled in size, from approximately 330,000, according to the 1920

[141] N. B. Abbott, "Pro-Musica presents Béla Bartók in a lecture-recital at University club Wednesday evening," *St. Paul Daily News* (26 January 1928), 3.

[142] Béla Bartók, letter to Istvàn Thomàn (16 December 1903) in: Stevens, *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók*, 20.

census, to 583,776 in 2010.[143] The metropolitan area today greatly exceeds these numbers at approximately 2,260,000, making it the twenty-third most populated region in the United States. Yet even in 1928 at a fraction of today's size the city was a welcoming venue for the arts in terms of the cultural interests of its citizens, its geographical location at the northern end of the beautiful Willamette River Valley, and its ease of access via railways and steamship lines, which utilized the Columbia River on their way to the Pacific Ocean. Its climate was, and remains, equally welcoming with warm, dry summers and mild, though wet, winters.

At a time when information about local events traveled primarily via daily newspapers, Portland's more than 300,000 citizens enjoyed a wide selection of general dailies and more specialized fare. The press coverage of Bartók's concert appeared in both. Articles consulted for this study were found in the local newspapers *The Oregonian* and *The Oregon Journal*, the two daily serials with the greatest circulations in Portland in 1928; *The Spectator*, a local "cultural" newspaper issued on Saturdays; as well as the host organization's journal *Pro-Musica Quarterly*.[144]

A review of such contemporary Portland serials reveals that a vital music scene existed in the city in 1928. Recitals and concerts were given daily throughout Portland by local musicians and by performers from around the United States and the world. The Portland Symphony Orchestra, now known as the Oregon Symphony, was an important contributor to the musical life of the city. Local clubs, such as the Pro-Musica Society,

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[143] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 920.

[144] *Ibid*., 921. Circulations: *The Oregonian*, 104,200 (Monday through Saturday), 154,086 (Sunday); *The Oregon Journal*, 97,930 (Monday through Saturday), 121,084 (Sunday). The circulation of The Spectator was not reported in the *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*.

the Monday Musical Club, the Treble Clef Club, and the Bell Music Club, often featured music at their meetings. Some performers featured in various Portland venues around the time of Bartók's visit were Elly Ney (1882-1968), pianist and former wife of the Portland Symphony's conductor William van Hoogstraten; Johanna Gadski (1872-1932), Wagnerian soprano; Mary Garden (1874-1967), a favorite singer of Debussy who performed the title female role in the 1902 of premiere of his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Claudia Muzio (1889-1936), Rosa Raisa (1893-1963), and Cyrena Van Gordon (1897-1964)[145] of The Chicago Opera Company; and Georges Enesco (1881-1955), violinist, composer, and conductor.[146]

Bartók's visit was announced as early as 8 January 1928 in *The Oregon Sunday Journal*, where he was proclaimed as "one of the foremost and most discussed modern composers."[147] This announcement was dwarfed by those of all of the performers listed above, which were each accompanied by photographs with boldface captions. As the day of Bartók's recital approached, more attention was paid by local newspapers. On Saturday, 14 January 1928, Bartók's lecture-recital, along with Maurice Ravel's upcoming Pro-Musica performance and other events, was twice announced in *The Spectator*. Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, music section columnist and member of the Portland chapter of the Pro-Musica Society,[148] wrote of the nature of Bartók's United States tour as well as the influence she perceived the composer exerted on the music of the time.

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[145] Her birth year is cited variously as 1893, 1896, or 1897 with 1897 as the most likely.

[146] "Great Stars Announced for Portland Engagement of Chicago Opera Company," *The Oregon Sunday Journal* (8 January 1928), Section Two, 12.

[147] *Ibid*.

[148] Helen Van Houten, "Activities of Various Chapters: Portland Chapter," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/2 (December 1927), 47.

> This is his first season in America and he will be presented exclusively by Pro Musica chapters except for several appearances with orchestra. Bela Bartok and Zollan Kodaly [*sic*], another Hungarian, by their research work in peasant music and the ways they found to record the folk tunes have not only founded a new Hungarian school but they have influenced the whole of Europe by their work. On the programme Tuesday evening will be found several groups of Mr. Bartok's own piano numbers which he will play, also some compositions by his friend, Kodaly. He speaks excellent English which he will use to tell us of the native folk music of his country. William G. Purcell is president of the Portland Chapter, Pro Musica.[149]

Her article is valuable for several reasons. First, Thomas confirmed to the researcher that Bartók, although sponsored by the Pro-Musica Society to present his own works and lecture before their members, appeared in separate performances with orchestras. She provided evidence that Bartók's reputation, not only as a composer-pianist but also as an ethnomusicologist, was known to at least some members of the Portland population. The author implied that English speakers had previously found it easy to communicate with Bartók. The inclusion of this assurance indicates that some must have anticipated that understanding his lecture would be difficult. One other bit of information that can be extracted from the piece is that emphasis was placed not only on the fact that Bartók was visiting, but that William G. Purcell, an architect involved in many Portland organizations and editor of the arts section of *The Spectator*, was the current president of the Portland chapter of the Pro-Musica Society.[150]

More stories on the Hungarian musician's Portland performance were published on Sunday 15 January 1928. Bartók's photograph, as well as those of several other artists

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[149] Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, "Bela Bartok Here Jan. 17," *The Spectator* (14 January 1928), 12.

[150] Mark Hammons, "Biographical Notes: William Gray Purcell (1880-1965)," *Guide to the William Gray Purcell Papers*, 1985, reproduced on *Purcell and Elmslie, Architects*, http://www.organica.org/pewgp7.htm; accessed 27 February 2012.

scheduled to perform in Portland, appeared in *The Oregon Sunday Journal*.[151] Although his picture was featured prominently at the top of the page, the article on his performance was short and announced only the sponsor, place, and date of his lecture-recital—Pro-Musica Society, The Little Theater of the Studio Building, Tuesday, 17 January 1928. The writer did offer a brief but revealing commentary, declaring that Bartók was "a composer of extraordinary music" and had "created a great interest."[152] *The Sunday Oregonian* also marked his Portland debut by printing his picture, along with one of Elly Ney, as well as an article proclaiming that Bartók was "an outstanding figure in the world of ultra-modern music."[153] The author continued by calling attention to Bartók and Kodály's work with Hungarian folk songs but distinguished the subject of their study from the Roma music Liszt had incorporated into his pieces. The writer also compares the attitude toward the composer in 1928 to the audience response to a 1912 performance.

> In 1912, when Bartok[']s music was first introduced to a Massachusetts audience, Philip Hale stated that "the composer was regarded with a certain indulgence by the audience as an eccentric person." […]Now, instead of suspecting him of being somewhat strange, his audiences know Bartók to be a tremendous genius, and his music one of the most important products of modern art.[154]

With this story the author informed Portland readers of Bartók's standing as an important creator of contemporary music.

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[151] *The Oregon Sunday Journal* (15 January 1928), Section 2, 8. Other photographs of musical figures appearing are: John Britz, musical director of a local production of *The Mikado*; Mme. Elly Ney, pianist to perform with the Portland Symphony; Edouard Hurlimann, violinist and concertmaster of the Portland Symphony to give a solo recital; Ruby Shearer Brennan, a new faculty member at the Portland Conservatory of Music; Katherine Brumbach, a young pianist to give a recital at the Russelville School Auditorium; and Lota Stone, a whistler performing for the Monday Musical Club.

[152] "The Pro-Musica Society," *The Oregon Sunday Journal* (15 January 1928), Section 2, 8.

[153] "Bartok Here Tuesday," *The Sunday Oregonian* (15 January 1928), 8.

[154] *Ibid*.

On the day of the recital, 17 January 1928, *The Oregon Daily Journal* again mentioned Bartók's performance. The reporter noted that "Bartok writes in the style of the ultra modern and his coming here is therefore a great treat to those who follow the new trend."[155] The title "Famous Hungarian Composer Here to Lecture on Music" does not indicate, however, that Bartók would be giving a recital. The article shares a page with a review and two announcements of performances by Elly Ney, motion picture advertisements, and a notice of an Oregon Federation of Music Clubs concert featuring forty accomplished Oregon pianists playing in a twenty-piano ensemble to be conducted by Willem van Hoogstraten.[156] The following day the same serial printed a lengthy review by J. L. Wallin of Bartók's lecture-recital.[157] The headline "Cubist Music Ancient, Says Bela Bartok," which precedes the article "Composer Sheds Light on His New Music" might be misleading.[158] Wallin wrote the following:

> Both Bartok and Kodaly, from the viewpoint of the public, are cubists, and Bartok admits it in a way, while at the same time he explains that this ultra-modern music is really so old that to the present generation it has lost its meaning. He qualifies this exjlanation [*sic*], however, to the extent, that in the remote districts of his native country there are a few peasants who still know what it is all about, these combinations of sound that so puzzle the musically cultured. These peasants, living their own quiet lives, understand, because this music to them speaks the simple language of their ancestors.[159]

While Bartók's script for the program is unavailable, it can be assumed that he did not mean Hungarian peasants comprehended his fine art music. The folk elements would be

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[155] "Famous Hungarian Composer Here to Lecture on Music," *The Oregon Daily Journal* (17 January 1928), 13.

[156] *Ibid*. Willem van Hoogstraten was the conductor of the Portland Symphony Orchestra.

[157] J. L. Wallin, "Composer Sheds Light on His New Music," *The Oregon Daily Journal* (18 January 1928), 9.

[158] "Cubist Music Ancient, Says Bela Bartok," *The Oregon Daily Journal* (18 January 1928), 9.

[159] J. L. Wallin, "Composer Sheds Light," 9.

understandable to the people he collected folk music from, but his incorporation of those scales and tunes into his innovative compositional style was not intended to result in an accurate representation of an "ancient" music. Wallin's article continued with an account of the contents of Bartók's lecture, beginning by noting that Bartók and Kodály worked together to collect folk music and that they were influenced by it in their modern compositions.

Wallin then observed that the listeners encountered difficulties understanding Bartók's pre-concert lecture. The author, however, must not have struggled, as a description of the speech followed:

> Bartok and Kodaly, in search to enrich the musical literature, found something very old that to them had such wealth or virility that they chose it for their basis upon which to work. And so they built upon it what Bartok is inclined to admit the public may not fully appreciate for another 20 years. Bartok[…]spoke of his music before presenting his program at the piano, but he is such a shy and modest person, that it was difficult for the audience to follow his remarks.[160]

Wallin also recounted Bartók's description of villagers' reluctance to share their songs:

> He said the search from the material chosen began about 25 years ago. To obtain it, uninfluenced by urban culture, he and his collaborators, had to travel to the most remote villages in Hungary. And then they had to turn to the old people, old women in particular to obtain the ancient songs, songs perhaps centuries old. Difficulty was encountered because while they knew the songs very well they were so shy that only after long persuasion could they be induced to sing for the phonograph. They were ashamed to sing before strangers. They were afraid that the other villagers would poke fun and laugh at them. As a matter of fact, they had never seen a phonograph and had not heard it. They did not know that they were parties to the creation of a new form of music that was to startle the critics and the musical world in general.[161]

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[160] *Ibid*.

[161] *Ibid*.

After listing the pieces on the program Wallin declared that of the third set, "only 'Evening in the Country' bore any resemblance to the melodic music."[162] Two other works from the final section of the program, "Dirge" and "Bear Dance," were also reviewed. Wallin remarked that "Dirge," despite its title, was a happy sounding piece. His view on "Bear Dance" was that the rhythm was "fascinating" and that "to dance to it the bear must swing a wicked leg. One can readily see it tempt the jazz kings."[163] After his description of the music, Wallin addressed the topic of the performer, asserting that Bartók was an excellent pianist and that hearing him play was enjoyable regardless of the music because of his great skill at the keyboard. Wallin's final analysis of Bartók's style was the following:

> The conclusion drawn is that his compositions are shorn of everything incidental, leaving but the essential fundamentals for consideration. In many instances the music is homophonic yet absolutely complete. In other instances one finds a tremendously intricate accompaniment without any suggestion of a melodic line, although its absence apparently leaves no void.[164]

Wallin seemed to realize that Bartók's compositions were important and considered by some critics and musicians to be excellent but, lacking a full understanding of the music himself, was still unsure of its merits.

Another opinion of the lecture-recital sent a similar, but somewhat more negative, message. On the day after the performance a reviewer for *The Morning Oregonian*

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[162] *Ibid*.

[163] *Ibid*.

[164] *Ibid*.

reported that Bartók "played a concert of Hungarian folk music."[165] The comment is evidence of either oversimplification or misunderstanding on the part of the author.[166] While Bartók did play compositions based on folk tunes, the elements that seemed so foreign to his Portland audience were probably not those of folk melodies. The author commented, however, that "strange messages though the renditions were, yet they were refreshing. Sometimes Bartók told his stories in a five-tone scale, and the effect was odd."[167] Bartók's excellence as a pianist was once again commended, but his compositions did not enjoy equal celebration. "As a pianist Bartók is an artist, and as a creator of tone he is superb. He was cordially received, although his Portland audience was plainly a little puzzled at his message."[168]

Among those who may have been perplexed at Bartók's music was Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, who wrote a brief description of the events of the recital in her music column in *The Spectator* on 21 January. No full review of the concert was provided, but she did indicate that it was "an interesting evening of ultra-modern piano music."[169] This lack of response to the program by a member of Pro-Musica may indicate that she preferred to write an essay disclosing only the facts of the recital rather than offering a review of music she did not enjoy and failed to appreciate. Thomas's writing on other figures in the Portland musical scene further supports this assertion. Of a symphony concert given

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[165] "Bela Bartok Gives Taste of Old Folk Song: Ancient Hungarian Music Finds Response in Portland," *Morning Oregonian* (18 January 1928), 5.

[166] One indisputable misunderstanding by the writer was Kodály's relationship to Bartók. In the article Kodály was represented as Bartók's "old music teacher."

[167] "Bela Bartok Gives Taste of Old Folk Song," 5.

[168] *Ibid*.

[169] Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, "Pro-Musica Presents Hungarian," *The Spectator* (21 January 1928), 12.

the same week, Thomas reported, "Fine enthusiasm and unanimous praise were heaped on Willem van Hoogstraten, conductor, and Madame Elly Ney, soloist, at the concert of the Portland Symphony Orchestra on Monday evening. It was a beautiful concert, and it is gratifying to record that it drew to the auditorium the largest audience of the season."[170] She also gave a glowing review of a solo piano recital given by Ney the day after Bartók's performance in the same venue.

> The Little theatre was crowded on Wednesday evening to hear Elly Ney in piano recital. And what a recital! Words can not describe the nobility, the tenderness, the poetic imagination wrought into the readings of this pianist of outstanding distinction. One thought when she played Mozart that nothing could be more beautiful, but she followed with a still more lovely Schubert—and then carried us to the heights with her wonderful Beethoven and Brahms playing. It was noble music played by a titan pianist—intellectually and emotionally. She always finds the real beauty of the music and with superb control of emotion holds her hearers fascinated.[171]

The difference in Thomas's reviews of Bartók's recital and Ney's may display her preference for Classic and Romantic music over that of the Modern Era. It is possible that Thomas was more inclined to praise a familiar performer—Ney—than to celebrate the playing and compositions of a stranger. Her lack of comment on Bartók's recital may also indicate that Thomas was unequipped to describe the new music or evaluate its performance.

Even the announcement in the *Pro-Musica Quarterly* of Bartók's Portland appearance was lackluster in comparison to the announcement of Ravel's visit to the chapter. The entry for Bartók appeared: "Bela Bartok, Hungarian composer, will give a

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[170] Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, "Symphony Concert Thrilling," *The Spectator* (21 January 1928), 12.

[171] Mrs. Warren E. Thomas, "Elly Ney in Concert," *The Spectator* (21 January 1928), 12.

lecture recital on Hungarian Folk-music in January," while the separate entry for Ravel read: "Maurice Ravel, noted French composer, will give a concert in February. This will be a great achievement for Pro-Musica and a very memorable one in Portland musical life."[172] This celebration of Ravel and mere announcement of Bartók may be connected to the Pro-Musica Society's roots as the Franco-American Musical Society, but it most likely has to do with familiarity. It seems that Portland residents were more comfortable with modern music that retained a stronger link to Romanticism as found in Ravel's works but that is less evident in many of those by Bartók.

Conclusion

While reception of Bartók's works in the Western United States varied, there are several common threads among the responses to the Pro-Musica Society recitals that should be mentioned. It comes as no surprise that the affinity for music of the Romantic Era with its pronounced lyricism was strong among the audience members and critics Bartók encountered on this first segment of his tour. Resistance to the new was, and perhaps always will be, a typical reaction.

The reviews consulted also show that their authors lacked knowledge of modern compositional techniques, a severe hindrance to their critical writing. Unable to evaluate the music on its own terms and to describe it to their readers, some writers resorted instead to radically negative remarks, not about the performance but about the works themselves. In some cases, such as that of Mrs. Warren E. Thomas in Portland, the writer

[172] Helen Van Houten, "Activities of Various Chapters: Portland Chapter," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/2 (December 1927), 47.

offered little analysis or commentary on the compositions, opting instead for imprecise and essentially meaningless adjectives to characterize the event (e.g., "interesting").

Some listeners came to terms with the foreign-sounding music by attributing its "strangeness" to its so-called ancient origins. While Bartók's explanatory speech on Hungarian peasant music helped some audience members to gain a better understanding of his techniques and influences, it may have led others to believe that more elements of his style were derived from folk tunes than was actually the case. Although Bartók referenced peasant music in many of the pieces performed on the tour, the elements many reacted against were not those derived from old folk songs but created by the modern imagination. Most Pro-Musica Society members present understood that folk music was important to Bartók's career, but fewer grasped the fact that quotation and arrangement of the melodies he collected and transcribed occurred at only one point in his evolution as a composer. While they could easily accept short pieces with obvious melodic lines, they were not ready for the next step in this evolution—the synthesis of folk influences and modern elements into a unique final product, as in the Piano Sonata of 1926.

A complete understanding of the composer's aims, however, was not necessary in order to appreciate the results. Many professional musicians were affiliated with Pro-Musica in the cities Bartók visited, so it is likely that a percentage of audience members at each recital were willing to consider the possibility that modernism had its positive aspects. And whether critics in these cities approved of Bartók's methods or not, most acknowledged his central importance as a creator of modern music.

CHAPTER III

MIDWESTERN UNITED STATES AND NEW YORK

Introduction

Following his performances in the Western United States, Bartók headed in the direction of home to present recitals before the members of the Pro-Musica Society in Denver, Colorado; Kansas City, Missouri; St. Paul, Minnesota; and New York City, New York. The first three engagements were quite similar to those given in the American West, while the New York event was, in fact, a joint recital with fellow Hungarian Joseph Szigeti, a prominent concert violinist. The Kansas City and St. Paul programs were identical, and the Denver concert varied only in the addition of arrangements of Hungarian folk songs performed by soprano Blanche Da Costa. In contrast, the only work the New York performance had in common with the preceding three was the 1926 Piano Sonata.

The variety of reactions to Bartók's music in each city was dramatic. Denver and New York listeners had more experience with his works than did audiences in Kansas City and St. Paul. Such pre-knowledge of his modernist style did affect the composer's reception to an extent. In addition, the Denver chapter of Pro-Musica prepared for the recital by staging a preliminary hearing of the works on the program and a discussion on Bartók's compositional techniques preceding his arrival. The published responses in Kansas City were the most negative of the four locations, likely because the two reviewers analyzed in this study seemed to lack the vocabulary necessary to describe modern music accurately or, perhaps, were unwilling to admit that it was a viable compositional trend, and consequently reacted against it. Adding to the complaints was

Harold Bauer, a solo pianist on an American tour at the same time. His comments on hearing Bartók's Kansas City recital were decidedly negative and offered almost surely in the spirit of competition and self-interest. In St. Paul much attention was directed to the discrepancy between Bartók's person and his compositions, an issue that was, in fact, brought up by reviewers across the country. Not surprisingly, in New York City, critics and audiences had more opportunities to experience contemporary music than did their counterparts in other cities. Their exposure to new music likely resulted in a greater appreciation for it or at the least provided a measuring stick apart from Romanticism against which to judge Bartók's compositions.

Denver

On 18 January 1928 at 9:34 a.m. Bartók set out on a forty-eight-hour train ride from Portland to Denver.[173] During the trip he wrote a letter to his mother, aunt, and sister detailing the West Coast portion of his tour and sent them a program from his Portland performance, along with his account of what took place at his Pro-Musica lecture-recitals.[174]

> Here's a programme for you.[175] "The ten-minute address" is, of course, given by me. I daresay it takes 15 minutes. Already I have rattled off 4 times "Ladies and Gentlemen, etc." I shall know it by heart soon. I sit down at a small table and fire away. It's wonderful! Yet they listen quite seriously right to the end and say they can understand me. I find this set speech terribly boring; I would like to make some changes now and then,

[173] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life],(Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 257.

[174]Béla Bartók, letter to his mother, aunt, and sister (18 January 1928) translated in: Béla Bartók, János Demény, and Michael Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, trans. Péter Balaban, István Farkas, Elisabeth West, and Colin Mason (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 185.

[175] See Appendix B for an image of the Portland program.

> to make it sound different, but that would be beyond me. People like the last item (group) best of all, of course—the *Bear Dance* has made people gay everywhere so far. That's one good thing here: they demand very short programmes; for instance, the whole thing, address and all, takes exactly one and a half hours, which is really not too tiring.[176]

Bartók's perception of audience response to the "Bear Dance" is in keeping with reviews written before and after the letter was sent. It is a piece in which the folk influence is more apparent than many others on his program. Because of its short duration (under two minutes) and folk-like tune, it was likely a welcome respite for fans of Romantic music after hearing Bartók's more angular and percussive Piano Sonata (1926) earlier on the recital. It also proved to be a success on Bartók's Denver program, which was altered slightly from his previous Pro-Musica recitals as local lyric soprano, Blanche Da Costa, was available to sing Six Hungarian Folksongs arranged by the composer. Bartók arrived in Denver, where he stayed at the Brown Palace Hotel, on 20 January 1928[177] and performed for the Pro-Musica Society at 8:30 the following evening (Saturday 21 January) in the Y. W. C. A. Auditorium, 1545 Tremont Street.[178]

Denver, Colorado's state capital and chief commercial city, had 280,000 residents at the time of the 1920 U. S. Census.[179] About seventy-five serial publications were produced in the city in 1928, four of which were daily newspapers. The three selected for examination in this study, based on their status as those with the highest circulations, are

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[176] Béla Bartók, letter to his mother, aunt, and sister (18 January 1928) translated in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 186-87.

[177] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257.

[178] "Pro-Musica Denver Chapter Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (21 January 1928). Courtesy of the Denver Public Library Fine Arts Department.

[179] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1928), 136.

The Denver News, *The Denver Post*, and *The Rocky Mountain News*.[180] All articles cited in this survey appeared in *The Rocky Mountain News*, although one advertisement for Baldwin Piano Company that referred to Bartók was found in *The Denver Post*.

The flurry of excitement concerning Bartók's Denver appearance began long before his arrival. His first performance in the United States was noted in "The Sunday News Dramatic Section" of *The Rocky Mountain News* on 8 January 1928.[181] The writer deduced that, based on the reviews of the composer's initial American performance, attendees of Bartók's Pro-Musica recital in Denver "have a real treat coming."[182] In anticipation of the event the local chapter of Pro-Musica took a decidedly proactive approach to understanding Bartók's music—a preparatory hearing and discussion of the works slated for the recital was organized for four o'clock in the afternoon on the Sunday preceding the event "in response to repeated requests of members who feel that one hearing is insufficient for the intelligent appreciation of the works of modern composers."[183] Mrs. Richard Crawford Campbell hosted the meeting, at which the performers were Fred R. Wright, lecturer and pianist, and Blanche Da Costa, lyric soprano.[184] The occasion, as well as the time and place of Bartók's own performance, was announced in the society section of *The Rocky Mountain News* on 11 January 1928.[185] The author of a 13 January notice also mentioned the preliminary hearing, but

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[180] *Ibid*., 136. Circulations: *The Denver News*, 43,687 (Monday through Saturday only); *The Denver Post*, 157,697 (Monday through Saturday), 254,934 (Sunday); *The Rocky Mountain News*, 30,571 (Monday through Saturday), 66,518 (Sunday). *The Denver News* was unavailable for examination.

[181] [No title], *The Rocky Mountain News* (8 January 1928), 13.

[182] *Ibid*.

[183] "Mrs. Campbell Will Entertain Pro-Musica," *The Rocky Mountain News* (11 January 1928), 9.

[184] *Ibid*.

[185] *Ibid*.

lists Mrs. Thomas Patterson Campbell as the hostess.[186] A biography of the composer and another announcement of Bartók's recital were printed in "The Sunday Dramatic Section" of the 15 January edition. Much of the text is derived from the information distributed to Pro-Musica chapters by either the composer's management or by the international leadership of the Society.[187] The end of the article, however, diverted from the flyer's text, in that the author wrote that Bartók had written many operas and ballets—obviously a misunderstanding, as Bartók completed only three stage works (one opera, one ballet, and one pantomime).[188] The Hungarian composer-pianist's advent in Denver was further publicized the day before the recital in a blurb containing details of his biography and the experiences of American singer Blanche Da Costa, who, early in her career, accompanied famed opera singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink to Europe and later performed for two years with the New City Theater in Chemnitz, Germany.[189]

Wallis M. Reef of *The Rocky Mountain News* interviewed Bartók at the Brown Palace Hotel on the day before his Denver debut. Reef told a story of Bartók's only experience with jazz as a prelude to the details of their interview:

> Strains of jazz music whipped at the emotions of an audience in a Berlin music hall and gained generous applause for the orchestra of American Negroes. A little white-haired man with a sharp nose and kindly smile shook his head condescendingly until an encore was played. When the

[186] "Bela Bartok Coming Jan. 21: Pro Musica to Sponsor First Appearance Here of Hungary's Leading Composer," *The Rocky Mountain News* (13 January 1928), 22.

[187] *Bela Bartok Composer-Pianist*, Promotional Pamphlet (New York: Arthur Judson Concert Management, 1927).

[188] "Composer Bartok To Appear Here: Pro Musica Will Introduce Distinguished Hungarian to Denver," *The Rocky Mountain News* (15 January 1928), 17.

[189] "Noted Composer Here Tomorrow: Béla Bartók to Perform in Y. W. C. A. Under Auspices of Pro Musica," *The Rocky Mountain News* (20 January 1928), 7.

> encore was finished, however, the man's mild grey eyes were glowing as his delicate hands were beating in appreciation.[190]

Reef contended that this was the only time the musician had heard jazz and that then, on his first tour of the United States, "his inquisitive ears are seeking again the strains of that encore, the only piece of jazz music which he believes is above the artificial and commonplace."[191] The author's description of Bartók's response to jazz in Berlin may have been an attempt to make the Hungarian composer more relatable to his Denver audience. Reef supplied readers with the details of the recital, after which he relayed the content of his interview with Bartók, commenting that the musician looked more like a businessman than a performer. Reef asked the visitor what influence the war (presumably World War I) had had on music, what he thought of American women, and what his views were on the possibility for the artistic success of young musicians "in the face of modern commercialism."[192] On the subject of war, Bartók reportedly responded, "I cannot say I believe the war had any—what you say—reflection."[193] Reef also conveyed to his readers that Bartók found the women of the United States to be more independent than women elsewhere. The composer apparently gave a more lengthy response to the final question:

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[190] Wallis M. Reef, "Noted Composer to Give Recital at 'Y. W.' Tonight: Bela Bartok Says War Left No Reflection on Music," *The Rocky Mountain News* (21 January 1928), 4. Many American jazz musicians played in Germany in the 1910s and 1920s: Sidney Bechet, Claude Hopkins (to accompany Josephine Baker in the show *La Revue Nègre*), Tommy Ladnier, Herb Flemming, Garvin Bushell, and Eugene Cedric with Sam Wooding for the black variety show *The Chocolate Kiddies*. See Frank Tirro, "Jazz Leaves Home: The Dissemination of "Hot" Music to Central Europe," in *Jazz and the Germans: Essays on the Influence of "Hot" American Idioms on 20th-Century German Music*, ed. Michael J. Budds (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 79.

[191] Wallis M. Reef, "Noted Composer to Give Recital," 4.

[192] *Ibid*.

[193] *Ibid*.

> "Art," the word was summed up in an exquisite gesture, and "commercialism"—a wave of the hand. "Always the two will not go together," he declared. "But art, yes, it is always worth while in the young person to strive for his art. It is by the striving that he may gain success."[194]

It is not surprising that Bartók would give such advice, as he himself had to strive to be a successful artist but never enjoyed overwhelming financial gains as a result of his efforts. Reef offered no commentary on Bartók's music. A promotional photograph of the performer was appended to the article.[195]

The day after Bartók's program the Baldwin Piano Company placed identical advertisements for their products in *The Denver Post* and *The Rocky Mountain News*,[196] inviting prospective buyers to "Choose Your Piano as the Artists Do,"—the artists, in this case, being Bartók and Walter Gieseking, whose career transpired in Germany. Both pianists played in Denver the same week, Gieseking on Friday, 20 January and Bartók on Saturday, 21 January.[197]

The other response to Bartók's performance took the form of a review by John C. Kendel, who revealed that Bartók's audience was "large and representative."[198] The headline for the article, "Great Genius Is Displayed by Bartok in Recital," accurately indicated that the description of the concert that followed was positive in nature.[199]

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[194] *Ibid*.

[195] *Ibid*.

[196] "Facts About the Baldwin," Advertisement, *The Denver Post* (22 January 1928), 7.; "Facts About the Baldwin," Advertisement, *The Rocky Mountain News* (22 January 1928), 5.

[197] "Famous Pianist to Play Friday: Slack Will Present Walter Gieseking at Concert in City Auditorium," *The Rocky Mountain News* (15 January 1928), 17.

[198] John C. Kendel, "Great Genius Is Displayed by Bartok in Recital: Hungarian Folk Music Wins Plaudits at Y. W. C. A.; Blanche Da Costa Scores Triumph," *The Rocky Mountain News* (22 January 1928), 7.

[199] *Ibid*.

Kendel asserted that "No writer of modern music with the possible exception of Ravel is as well known as Bartok as the exponent of the saner type of progressive modernism in composition."[200] He then placed Bartók's music in context:

> Writers in the modern school of music may be roughly divided into two groups. Those who are seriously attempting to express thru [*sic*] this idiom genuine musical ideas and those who are merely trying to gain notoriety thru [*sic*] sensational efforts in creating astonishing combinations of tones. This first group, of which Bartok is a representative, is creating an art form in keeping with the dignity of the calling of music. The second group consists of mere charlatans who, with no continuity of thought are seeking publicity thru [*sic*] channels which they have no legitimate right to represent.[201]

The "charlatans" to whom Kendel referred were likely the composers of the Second Viennese School. For many listeners it would have been easier to accept the music of Ravel and Bartók, as connections between their modern music and the music of the previous era would be more easily recognized than with dodecaphonic music. Kendel cited Bartók's sincerity of purpose in composition as a reason for listeners not to dismiss his music if they did not immediately appreciate it. He then reported on Bartók's talk on folk music and commented on specific pieces on the recital.

> The program of music was of much interest if a bit startling to many of the audience; The "Suite of 14" was full of dissonances and unusual tonal combinations. The "Rumanian Christmas Songs" were characteristic of the folk tune. They were varied in rhythm and expressed real character. Blanche Da Costa sang six songs with the composer at the piano. She was in good voice and gave a very good interpretation of the songs. The songs were not especially grateful to sing as they followed no tone line as in the case of the usual song. This was not the case in the third, fifth and sixth songs. These found the best favor with the audience. The "Sonata" was

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[200] *Ibid*.

[201] *Ibid*.

> the most difficult for the average musician to accept. The continued use of seconds proved a strain on the ear. The rhythmic pattern of the first and third movements were [*sic*] developed in an interesting manner and gave a sense of unity to the composition. [202]

It seems that the author and the Denver audience were not generally comfortable with modern music but were, nevertheless, able to find positive attributes in some of the pieces Bartók presented. As with many audiences, even in the present day, the listeners were comfortable with the music that was most familiar to them.

> In the last group were found numbers of real musical beauty. The "Bear-Dance," "Evening in the Country" and "Allegro Barbara" [*sic*] were the most popular numbers of the evening. They much more nearly approached the usual standards of music composition. In the last number there was heard a diatonic scale which proved startling in a program of dissonances and music conceived in an idiom which entirely ignores the major and minor scales of classic music. The program was intensely interesting as a demonstration of the trend of the times in ultra modern composition.[203]

In keeping with the pattern Bartók observed in his previous Pro-Musica concerts, the "Bear Dance" and the other pieces of the group to which it belonged were the most successful of the night's performance. Although this critic was obviously most secure with an older style of composition, he was still able to describe elements of the music. The same spirit that prompted the Denver chapter of Pro-Musica to understand Bartók's music before hearing the composer perform it himself may have guided the reactions of the audiences and critics alike.

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[202] *Ibid*.

[203] *Ibid*.

Kansas City

Bartók arrived in Kansas City on 23 January 1928, the day of his performance.[204] The prominent Midwestern city, situated near the geographic center of the continental United States, was the nineteenth largest in the nation (population 324,410) and was known at the time for its status as a railroad hub and for its meat packing plants.[205] Apparently Bartók felt clarification was needed as to the state in which Kansas City is located—while on the tour, he pointed out in a letter to his son Peter that Kansas City is located in Missouri, not Kansas.[206]

Kansas City supported a number of publications with substantial circulations. Local newspapers surveyed for this study are *Kansas City Journal*, *Kansas City Journal-Post*, *The Kansas City Post*, and *The Kansas City Star*.[207] The *Journal*, the *Star*, and the *Times* had the largest subscriptions in 1928. The *Times* was not available for review; however, the *Star*, the *Post* and the *Journal-Post* (the Sunday edition of both the *Journal* and *Post*) were.

The Pro-Musica chapter in Kansas City had previously sponsored many prominent composers and performers in recitals for their members. According to Luigi Vaiani in his article for the 15 January Sunday edition of the *Kansas City Journal-Post*, Sergei Prokofiev, Alfredo Casella, and Ottorino Respighi had already visited the chapter and Béla Bartók and Maurice Ravel would be featured in upcoming performances of their

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[204] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257.

[205] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*,16, 600.

[206] Béla Bartók, postcard to his son Péter (24 January 1928) translated in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 187.

[207] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 600-02. Circulations: *Kansas City Journal*, 144,814 (Monday through Saturday); *Kansas City Journal-Post*, 172,606 (Sunday only); *The Kansas City Post*, 154,494 (Monday through Saturday); *The Kansas City Star*, 251,672 (Monday through Saturday) and 288,893 (Sunday).

own works soon.[208] Vaiani asserted that "Just because we are minus a symphony orchestra it is impossible for us to measure the full stature of contemporary composers brought here from time to time by the local chapter of Pro Musica."[209] He contended that, while this situation was less than ideal for performances of works by the aforementioned composers, "to come in contact with them in some way is better than none, so let's be thankful for small favors."[210] While Vaiani did little to hide his frustration over the fact that Kansas City lacked a large orchestra, he did recognize the significance of the composers who had performed there and encouraged his readers to do the same.

Also on 15 January two notices appeared in *The Kansas City Star*. Names of ushers—all women—were listed in the first announcement, which was printed in the society section of the paper.[211] A longer, more descriptive article was written for the music section where the program for the recital, which took place in the ballroom of the Hotel Muehlebach, was provided.[212]

> And here is the program to be played January 23 for Pro Musica and its guests by Bela Bartok. How very different it is. It might be well to mention that the large numbers after the pieces indicate the date of composition, by which index we may form some idea of the length of time it required for Bartok to go from point A to point B[….] The Bartok music to be heard in the Muehlebach ballroom:
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> Bartok—Suite, Op. 14 (1916)

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[208] Luigi Vaiani, "Music," *The Kansas City Journal-Post* (15 January 1928), 5 C.

[209] *Ibid*.

[210] *Ibid*.

[211] "In Society," *The Kansas City Star* (15 January 1928), 16 C. The ushers were Mrs. Sidney Loeffler, Mrs. Edwin Schreiber, Miss Helen Baker, Miss C. Inez Cope, Miss Faye Milburn, Miss Jeanne Rosenberg, Miss Jerene Ultch, and Miss Alice Wells.

[212] "And Bartok Presently Is to Be Heard in a Program to Be Devoted to His Own and Kodaly's Music," *The Kansas City Star* (15 January 1928), 12 D.

Kodaly—Epitaphe (from Op. 11) (1918)
—Allegro molto (from Op. 3) (1909)
Bartok—Sonata (1926)
Bartok—"Burlesque" No. 2 (un peu gris),
—"Dirge," No. 1,
—"Bear Dance," (1908-1910)
—"Evening in the Country,"
—"Allegro Barbaro."[213]

Vaiani alluded to the fact that Bartók's compositional style had changed in the years between the composition of the earliest works on the program and the creation of the new Piano Sonata.

Several announcements of the event appeared on 22 January, one of which supplied another printing of the program—in the *Kansas City Journal-Post*—accompanied by a press photo. The author introduced Bartók to Kansas City readers as the leading Hungarian composer of the time, one whose "tendencies are decidedly radical."[214] Another notice of the recital was printed in the same newspaper's society "Calendar of the Week." The name of the performer, however, was not identified.[215] A similar announcement was also placed in the society section of the 22 January edition of *The Kansas City Star*.[216] Further mention of the recital was given in the music section in an article on several Kansas City performances scheduled for the week.[217] The author called attention to the "refusal of two American orchestras to take the time to prepare"

[213] "In Society," 16 C.

[214] "Bela Bartok Will Be Here Tomorrow Night," *Kansas City Journal-Post* (22 January 1928), 5-C.

[215] "Calendar of the Week," *Kansas City Journal-Post* (22 January 1928), 1-D.

[216] "The Week's Calendar," *The Kansas City Star* (22 January 1928), 4 D.

[217] "Some Big Men This Week; Bauer, Gabrilowitsch and Bela Bartok Are to Play; Bartok Comes Tomorrow for Pro Musica—Bauer and Gabrilowitsch Tuesday for Fritschy—George Howerton Friday," *The Kansas City Star* (22 January 1928), 4 D.

the much-anticipated premiere of Bartók's First Piano Concerto and referred to a report on Bartók by Winthrop Tryon of the *Christian Science Monitor* in an attempt to introduce the composer-performer to Kansas Citians.[218] In addition to Bartók's lecture-recital, area residents heard Harold Bauer (1873-1951) and Ossip Gabrilovich (1878-1936) in a two-piano recital; a performance of *The King's Henchman*, an opera with music by Deems Taylor and a libretto by Edna St. Vincent Millay; an organ recital by George Howerton; and various other local presentations.[219] The headline, "Some Big Men This Week," was accurate. Bauer was an internationally known pianist who, among other accomplishments, gave the world premiere of Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite* in Paris in 1908.[220] Gabrilovich, piano student of Anton Rubinstein, was also the conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in addition to being an accomplished concert pianist.[221] Kansas City was not an exclusive engagement for the three musicians touring around the same time—Bauer and Gabrilovich also performed in New York City the week of the American premiere of Bartók's First Piano Concerto.[222]

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[218] *Ibid*. The article referenced by the writer from the *Star* is: Winthrop P. Tryon, "How Bartók Composes," *Christian Science Monitor* (31 December 1927), 14-15.

[219] *Ibid*. Gabrilovich was a friend and great admirer of Gustav Mahler. He also confessed his attraction to Mahler's wife, Alma, an admission she noted in: Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler Memories and Letters*, ed. Donald Mitchell, trans. Basil Creighton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 127.

[220] Charles Hopkins. "Bauer, Harold." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02351, accessed May 22, 2012.

[221] Richard Aldrich and James Methuen-Campbell. "Gabrilovich, Ossip." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10456, accessed May 22, 2012. He was also celebrated American author Mark Twain's son-in-law.

[222] The American premiere of Bartók's First Piano Concerto took place at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Monday, 13 February 1928 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. Harold Bauer performed Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with the New York Symphony, conducted by Walter Damrosch, at Carnegie Hall on Thursday, 16 February 1928. Bartók also had a New York performance that day with the Eddy Brown Quartet (see Appendix A). Ossip Gabrilovich performed at the Guild Theater on Sunday, 12 February 1928 in a Schubert Celebration in which he accompanied soprano Elisabeth Rethberg and spoke on the featured composer.

After much introduction in the local press, Bartók performed for the members of the Kansas City Chapter of the Pro-Musica Society at the prestigious Hotel Muehlebach, a twelve-story structure built in 1915.[223] Following the lecture-recital a reception, sponsored by members of the Pro-Musica Society and hosted by Mrs. George Forsee, chapter president, and Mrs. Franklyn Hunt, chairman of the courtesy committee, was held at the Hotel.[224] Bartók's train left Kansas City for St. Paul, Minnesota at 11:40 that evening.[225] Although the composer was in the city for less than a day, he was, temporarily at least, a sensation in its musical scene.

Luigi Vaiani, like so many other writers, contrasted Bartók's demeanor and appearance with his compositions in a concert review in the *Kansas City Journal* on 24 January: "A revolutionist at heart—a composer of music you are bound to remember mostly for primitive strength (not to say brutality) and stark rhythms—he cries his Magyar folk songs out of the wilderness and does it in earnest. Yet he is a frail little man, meek and unassuming, almost as shy as a collegian."[226] A predictable, though unmistakably naïve, human response is evident in the multitude of characterizations of the composer similar to Vaiani's that appeared in American newspapers at the time of the tour. Audience and critics alike seemed surprised that a man hailed as a great composer and performer would not be larger in stature and more aggressive in demeanor. Given this behavior, one is tempted to conclude that, perhaps, Bartók's compositions, which

[223] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257.

[224] "Society," *Kansas City Journal* (24 January 1928), 5.

[225] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257.

[226] Luigi Vaiani, "Bela Bartok in in [*sic*] Piano Recital: Hungarian Composer Proves Master of Instrument With Magyar Rhythms," *Kansas City Journal* (24 January 1928), 14.

were already shocking to many, would have been less so if his personality had been more flamboyant.

While Vaiani's comparison of Bartók to his music is notable, it does not represent the greater part of the review, in which he focused positively on Bartók's pianism and touted him as "not only a finished instrumentalist, but also the possessor of extraordinary vitality and intensity."[227] In addition to his praise of Bartók's performance abilities, Vaiani acknowledged that the composer's "obvious sincerity compelled attention and respect."[228] In spite of these factors, he contended that Bartók's music

> demands especially attuned ear and mind, too, to be at all intelligible. Therefore it either impresses as something akin to a revelation or else as a scarcely articulate experiment, often monotonous and agonizing, and the public's reactions range from warm admiration to violent antagonism.[229]

It seems, therefore, that the local response to the recital was mixed, with at least some reacting favorably; however, no indication was made of the number of those listeners who possessed the "ear and mind" to appreciate the unfamiliar style. Perhaps because he believed that many would not accept Bartók's music otherwise, Vaiani provided an explanation for the nature of Bartók's compositions to his readers by summarizing viewpoints of others.

> There are those who see in the works of Bartok, Kodaly and other Hungarians a great cry of hope and life—that is, the true expression of the vitality and virility of a race which in spite of defeat and humiliation is finding the power to sing in bare, austere and rigid outlines its inner soul. This, they say, is music of will power not trying to give sensorial pleasure, but to exalt, to stir, to regenerate. An honest struggle, in sum. A

[227] *Ibid*.

[228] *Ibid*.

[229] *Ibid*.

> sour-searching [*sic*] quest of new modes of musical speech, destined to remain, to expand, to grow greater and in due time, conquer.[230]

While Bartók adopted a nationalist point of view and was influenced by the peasant tunes of his homeland, the motivation for the differences in his compositions from those of the previous generation was not solely motivated by Hungary's national issues. Furthermore, the disparate opinions cited by Vaiani are not those of musical analysis but rather of superficial likes and dislikes.

> On the other hand there is a multitude which contends that this music contains not much more than rhythmic snap and bite of a sort, restlessness and nostalgia. Also, that if these works of young Hungary are expressive of the nationalism of this politically disturbed mountainous land, that the rest of the world must protect itself from its disconcerting cacophonies, curious purrings and whinings, utterly unrelated tonality, angularity, rigor, shouting and all.[231]

Although this judgment was negative, it was similar to the first in that its argument was based, to some degree, on the incorrect assumption that the nature of Bartók's compositions was solely a product of Hungary's political climate. After citing the opinions of those in the so-called, yet unnamed, multitude, the author concluded with his own assessment:

> Personally speaking, though, it is our belief that Bartok has something to say, though he says it in [a] most peculiar way. To us, more than merely freakish, he is a musician with a purpose. After all, the Magyars, whom he represents, basically are Mongols. And Bartok and others of his race evidently are reaching deep to the roots of this primeval humanity whose cradle is Central or Northern Asia. So their music is essentially inspired by folk songs and folk dances of a particular race. It smells of the soil and perhaps for that reason it has its arresting moments. Yet it seems to lack

[230] *Ibid*.

[231] *Ibid*.

> that universalism which makes all arts so intelligible and so appealing in every climate and under very [*sic*] sun. In other words, are good intentions enough? In closing it is our wish to state unequivocally that in music especially we prefer leses [*sic*] effort, less science, less history, less cerebralism, less anthropology, less nationalism and more art pure and simple.[232]

Here the author attributed the nature of Bartók's music to his "race." Vaiani was a regular music columnist, so presumably he had the ability to write more about the music itself if he wanted. On the other hand, the music might have seemed so foreign that he felt he could not describe it in greater detail. Perhaps the writer was revolting against avant-garde modernism in general, rather than only the music of Bartók.

The anonymous reviewer for *The Kansas City Star* was also short on comments pertaining to the musical qualities of Bartók's compositions. This author argued that "touring revolutionaries" should send scores of the works they wished to perform before their recitals, so that interested parties may have an opportunity to understand better the music before hearing it.[233] The following statement may be considered rationale for the lack of meaningful musical analysis in the article:

> It really is too much to expect an audience, or a reviewer, to hear enough in a first hearing of a late Bartok sonata to speak or write intelligently about it. Particularly when the music is, as was most of Bartok's work Monday night, so written or played as to cover up its harmonic texture almost completely, and to disguise its structural virtues or defects. If one might have the score, and thus a means of grasping beforehand the underlying ideas, if any, even a hasty discussion made after the program might be in a small degree helpful.[234]

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[232] *Ibid*.

[233] "Music and Musicians," *The Kansas City Star* (29 January 1928), 17 C.

[234] *Ibid*.

This writer, unlike many American concert critics, questions both Bartók's playing as well as his mysterious compositional techniques. Although it may have been a stretch for the author to connect the Piano Sonata (1926) to past musical experiences, it seems odd that any musician would be unable to discover a way to draw some conclusions as to the nature of the music itself. Such a description may indicate a resistance to accept Bartók's composition in general. To this end, the author also supplies readers with the reaction of other audience members to the recital:

> It was amusing to hear the comments following the Bartok efforts. Only one man, so far as this department found, was candid enough to tell what he really thought. He was Harold Bauer, and his comment was (saving one or two things)—"stupid." Nearly everyone seemed unsure. Many covered up their confusion with slushy generalities.[235]

Bauer is undoubtedly the same man who presented a two-piano recital in Kansas City with Gabrilovich the following day. In that case, such a comment might be indicative of his true feelings about Bartók's music or it may simply show that Bauer perceived Bartók to be a rival performer. In support of the first assumption, Bauer and Gabrilovich did not challenge Kansas City audiences with the literature choices for their recital. Their program consisted of an arrangement of a Bach concerto for two pianos and standard works from the two-piano literature of the Classic and Romantic eras. Bartók's music would have contrasted greatly. The writer's closing wish was that Bartók return to Kansas City and play another recital in which he would perform a blend of "traditional" pieces and some of his new music.[236] The author likely felt that music should function

[235] *Ibid*., 17 C and 19 C.

[236] "Music and Musicians," 19 C.

primarily as entertainment and, despite his claim, did not appreciate the new music that was conceived as art.

St. Paul

Following his evening performance in Kansas City on 23 January 1928, Bartók boarded a late train to St. Paul, Minnesota for his performance at the University Club on Wednesday, 25 January 1928.[237] The state capital since 1858, St. Paul registered a population of 234,698 in the 1920 census.[238] The inhabitants of its "Twin City," Minneapolis, east of St. Paul, numbered 380,582 at the time.[239] Chapters of the Pro-Musica Society existed in both cities, yet Bartók did not perform in Minneapolis despite its close proximity to St. Paul. The members of the Minneapolis chapter were possibly allowed to attend Bartók's performance in St. Paul; however, no evidence of such interaction was found in the *Pro-Musica Quarterly*. Three significant serials were chosen to be examined for this study: *The St. Paul Dispatch*, *The St. Paul Daily News*, and *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*.[240]

The *Daily News* and the *Pioneer Press* both printed information on Bartók's lecture-recital in their Sunday editions preceding the event. In the society section of the

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[237] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257. In 1928 the University Club of St. Paul was not affiliated with a specific university. Men who were graduates or students of accredited colleges and universities were eligible for application for membership. "Club History," The University Club of Saint Paul, http://www.universityclubofstpaul.com/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=306762&ssid=194325&vnf=1, accessed 6 July 2012.

[238] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 16.

[239] *Ibid*.

[240] *Ibid*., 562-63. Circulations: *The St. Paul Dispatch*, 92,980 (Monday through Saturday only); *The St. Paul Daily News*, 90,978 (Monday through Saturday), 60,271 (Sunday); *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 75,770 (Monday through Saturday), 152,268 (Sunday).

Daily News, the following announcement drew attention to the Pro-Musica Society concert:

> Mrs. Theodore W. Griggs, 432 Summit ave., will be hostess for the lecture-recital of Bela Bartok, Hungarian composer, at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at the University club. Mr. Bartok is appearing under the auspices of the Pro-Musica Society of which Mrs. Edward R. Sandford is president. Members of the society are allowed to have three guests.[241]

Women were important leaders in this chapter and in Pro-Musica in general. Many of the chapter events entries in the *Pro-Musica Quarterly* were written by women and it was not uncommon for chapters to elect female presidents. A notice of similar length and content was printed in the *Pioneer Press* on the day of the concert, 25 January 1928.[242] The recital differed from those for other Pro-Musica chapters in that members were allowed in bring guests. Perhaps it was this provision that allowed interested members of the Minneapolis chapter to attend.

An earlier announcement of Bartók's recital, as well as an article on the event, appeared in the society section of the 22 January edition of the *Pioneer Press*. The short notice was part of a weekly calendar of society engagements.[243] In the story on the following page of the newspaper, the author compared Bartók's looks to his music and supplied readers with commentary on the composer's previous American performances.

> A man whose appearance is a decided contrast to his compositions, Bela Bartok, the eminent Hungarian composer, pianist and lecturer, will appear in St. Paul this week[….] Although he writes music said to be "unequalled in our day for harsh austerity and brutal strength," Bartok is a

[241] "Pro-Musica Wednesday," *The St. Paul Daily News* (22 January 1928), Society Section, 2.

[242] "News of Society," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (25 January 1928), 10.

[243] "The Society Calendar," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (22 January 1928), Fifth Section, 1.

> "small, slight man, prematurely gray, who looks like the most retiring of tonal pacifists." After his appearance at a Philharmonic concert in Carnegie Hall in New York, a New York paper said of Bartok's music, "For all its apparent harshness of exterior, this is music of wild beauty—a beauty often somber, bitter, puckering, but beauty none the less—music of a dark brooding, music of a strange tenderness, of extraordinary power."[244]

The author continued by describing the types and quantity of works Bartók had composed. The final sentence designated that Mrs. Theodore W. Griggs would act as hostess for the recital, a reminder of the society section which this notice appeared.[245] In the music section of the same newspaper, photographs of Bartók, violinist Jascha Heifetz, and pianist Nikolai Orloff were introduced as "Three Notables On The Week's Music Calendar" and preceded articles on their upcoming performances in St. Paul.[246] Bartók's picture was much larger than the other two, presumably as an indicator of comparative importance. The entire page was headlined "The Bartok Controversy" although it contained information not only of these but other musical events of the week.[247] In the article on Bartók prominent St. Paul music critic Frances Boardman made the assertion that "Hungary has not flooded the musical world with celebrities, despite the dominant fame of Liszt." She did, however, cite several famous musicians born in Hungary: conductors Anton Seidl, Hans Richter, Arthur Nikisch, and Fritz Reiner, composer Ernő Dohnányi, and violinist Carl Flesch.[248] She suggested that, because of the small number

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[244] "Bela Bartok, Composer, Will Appear in Lecture-Recital: Hungarian Musican [sic] to Be Heard in St. Paul Wednesday Evening at University Club Under Auspices of the Pro-Musica Society—Mrs. T. W. Griggs Will be Hostess," *The St. Paul Daily News* (22 January 1928), Fifth Section, 2.

[245] *Ibid*.

[246] "Three Notables On The Week's Music Calendar," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (22 January 1928), Fifth Section, 9.

[247] "The Bartok Controversy," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (22 January 1928), Fifth Section, 9.

[248] Frances Boardman, "Bela Bartok to Play in St. Paul On Wednesday: Noted Hungarian's Appearance Here Offers An Important Opportunity to Music Lovers," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (22 January 1928), Fifth Section, 9.

of internationally significant Hungarian artists, there were greater opportunities for the important ones to be heard.[249]

The second section of the article was devoted to the featured performer:

> And now comes Bela Bartok, whom Europe has known for a score of years past as an arresting voice in the turbulent ensemble of Twentieth century music. But recently listened to and reviewed by his first American audience, he comes to St. Paul on Wednesday of this week under the aegis of the Pro-Musica Society, and the opportunity of hearing him is an important one, for while it is entirely safe to predict warm controversy over the merits and beauties of his work (he will play his own compositions on the piano) and while there will be those among the controversialists who can find nothing but distressing atonalities in what he writes, Bela Bartok is a figure who has established himself permanently in the contemporary music scene.[250]

The author likely anticipated that some members of Bartók's St. Paul audience would find his recital jarring, and, therefore, felt it was important to inform her readers that Bartók was undeniably an important figure in contemporary music as well as a notable ethnomusicologist:

> Those interested in such things know of his very deep research, in collaboration with Zoltan Kodaly, into the ancient Magyar folk-song, a type of music long ante-dating the Gypsy-song cult which passes with the uninitiated for true Hungarian lyric expression, though this is only one of the facets of art which he has exposed and polished. Critics seem agreed that, whatever may be the ultimate judgment of his output, it must be regarded as a tremendously serious, even brutally honest form of endeavor. We in St. Paul await it with keen anticipation.[251]

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[249] *Ibid*.

[250] *Ibid*.

[251] *Ibid*.

In this explanation Boardman drew attention to the authenticity of the music with which Bartók had been working, as well as to the way he had incorporated this music into his own.

The Baldwin Piano Company, Bartók's corporate sponsor, announced his performance in *The St. Paul Dispatch* on 25 January.[252] "Bela Bartok—will give a concert at the University Club tonight at 8:15 p.m. under the auspices of the Pro Musica Society."[253] The advertisement, placed by a local Baldwin piano store, features a photograph of the composer-pianist and a comment attributed to him on the advantages of the Baldwin piano. "The Baldwin mechanism is so perfect as to respond to any demand; in fact the piano ceases to be a thing of wood and wires, but becomes a sympathetic understanding friend."[254]

The day following the recital, reviews were printed in both the *Daily News* and the *Pioneer Press*. In the first of these N. B. Abbott asserted that, while Bartók was practically unknown to the general population, "he has long been a distinguished and imposing figure in the musical world and one of the leading exponents of ultra-modern music."[255] Abbott then called attention to Bartók's valuable ethnomusicological research and offered a brief interpretation of the paper Bartók read during his lecture preceding the recital:

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[252] "Choose Your Piano As the Artists Do," *The St. Paul Dispatch* (25 January 1928), 17. It is known that a working relationship between Bartók and Baldwin Piano Company existed, but the exact nature of the relationship is unknown to the author of this thesis.

[253] *Ibid*.

[254] *Ibid*.

[255] N. B. Abbott, "Pro-Musica presents Bela Bartok in a lecture-recital at University club Wednesday evening," *The St. Paul Daily News* (26 January 1928), 3.

> In seeking out and finding these primitive folk-tunes in which Hungary seems uncommonly rich, it was first of all essential to gain the confidence of the peasants, as apparently in the overwhelming majority of instances these tunes had not been previously transcribed, but merely handed down through succeeding generations much in the manner of the minstrels in the middle ages.[256]

The summary can be interpreted as evidence that the writer privileged the mainstream of Western art music and considered the rural areas of Hungary to be primitive in the cultural aspirations of their inhabitants.

Abbott also compared Bartók's demeanor and appearance to his musical abilities by disclosing that he

> is slight, somewhat diffident in manner, all quite startlingly belying the harsh and uncompromising austerity of his music. To listen to his compositions in a spirit other than of sympathy and an attempt at least to understand their background is manifestly unfair, for the man's honesty and sincerity are not to be questioned—nor his sound musicianship, it should be added.[257]

It seems that Bartók's integrity as a composer earned him a certain amount of credibility with audiences. At the very least it influenced his St. Paul listeners to give his music due consideration, rather than dismiss it immediately for its modern elements. Even so, the author found fault with Bartók's Sonata, complaining that "our usual conception of the term 'music' must undergo radical revision before the composition may properly be placed in this classification. During its progress[…]there was the impression that never before had one realized there were so many wrong notes on a piano."[258] Abbott did,

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[256] *Ibid*.

[257] *Ibid*.

[258] *Ibid*.

however, find value in the rhythmic content of the work: "There was an astounding wealth and variety of rhythms which lent a peculiar and undeniable fascination."[259] The writer also praised Bartók's pianism, observing that "his performance is characterized by a vitality which gives authority to all that he does."[260] Although the members of Pro-Musica and their guests may not have embraced the music, Abbott indicated that they were respectful of the compositions and their performance because their creator had engaged in an earnest effort to generate a new variety of art music. "Those present listened to Mr. Bartok with rapt attention and in every way evidenced a sympathy which of necessity must be granted an artist who is sincerely endeavoring to find or has found a new though unfamiliar medium of expression."[261]

The author of the other major review of the performance expressed similar reservations. Frances Boardman began her review for the *Pioneer Press* with a clear warning for those who had yet to experience Bartók's music: "Those to whom the diatonic scale represents the alpha and omega of potential musical enjoyment may as well forego, at the outset, any notion that such music as Bela Bartok's will please them."[262] Boardman continued with this description of Bartók's pre-concert lecture:

> He did his best, by means of a brief and well written prefatory paper, to prepare his listeners for the excursions which he heads into strange tonal fields and new worlds of lyric ideation. In this introduction he dwelt upon the research into old Hungarian folk-song sources which he and his compatriot, Zoltan Kodaly, have prosecuted with great thoroughness and patience, and explained their thematic relationship to the formal

[259] *Ibid*.

[260] *Ibid*.

[261] *Ibid*.

[262] Frances Boardman, "Bartok Melodies of Rugged Design: Hungarian Composer-pianist Leads Listeners Into New Tonal Fields," *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (26 January 1928), 7.

> compositions by which both are known, crediting Kodaly with the stricter adherence to pure nationalism.[263]

While most reviewers of Bartók's performance supplied their readers with information from Bartók's lecture, it is interesting that Boardman added that Bartók cited Kodály as composing with greater allegiance to the source material.

Boardman called attention to the fact that many writers did not compare the compositions of Bartók and Kodály, even though pieces by both were performed on most recitals for local chapters of the Pro-Musica Society. Later in the article the author made an indirect comparison of the music of the two comrades by finding that Kodály's was the more successful.

> One impression was left very clearly by the more articulate of the Bartok compositions, and especially by those of Kodaly: that the objective is to build with mass rather than line. The completed score nearly always suggested rugged sculpture rather than any arrangement of linear design. In this respect, among others, it marks a divergence from the tendency of the corresponding contemporaneous French school.[264]

Even though the critic differentiated slightly between the music of the two Hungarians, she still considered their styles similar enough to juxtapose them against the predominant French style, which included the works of Debussy and Ravel.

A more striking contrast pointed out by Boardman is the one between Bartók's straightforward arrangements of folk tunes and his compositions in which a connection to folk music was less apparent or nonexistent.

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[263] *Ibid*.

[264] *Ibid*.

> A number of these old folk-tunes served as interesting illustrations of the prevailing primitive employment of the pentatonic scale, and of the various Gregorian modes. This feature of the evening was particularly useful and illuminating. As for the impression left by M. Bartok as a composer of original scores, that is a different matter, and not an easy one to settle glibly.[265]

She also suggested that the milieu in which the recital took place was at odds with the music that was performed.

> With no disparaging implications whatever toward such devoted agencies as the Pro-Musica society, it yet is true that a mise-en-scene like that of Wednesday (it is the usual one achieved in all American cities under corresponding conditions), is probably the most irrelevant and unsympathetic that could possibly be devised for exhibition of the Bartok cult. For if his music is anything at all, it is elemental, and elementally significant. Its free, ancient rhythms, its primitive scorn of soft, suave patterns, and its ominous colors seem fantastically at variance with the socially comfortable and complacent setting arbitrarily supplied them.[266]

Her use of the word "unsympathetic" seems to contradict the review by Abbott, who asserted that the audience "in every way evidenced a sympathy which of necessity must be granted an artist who is sincerely endeavoring to find or has found a new though unfamiliar medium of expression."[267] Boardman concluded:

> There can be no questioning Mr. Bartok's deep sincerity and single-minded devotion. Whether he and his fellow-craftsmen have found in the ancient world a true basis for musical development greater than anything we have ever known—whether their revolt against the contrived beauties of the romantic school is based merely upon impatience, or upon deep-seated truths—these are matters that only time can settle with finality. Meantime, it is important to give an attentive ear to the voice crying into

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[265] *Ibid*.

[266] *Ibid*.

[267] Abbott, "Pro-Musica presents," 3.

> the wilderness, when the voice has so unmistabable [*sic*] a ring of honesty as that of Bela Bartok.[268]

The reviewers agree, however, that Bartók was sincere and honest in his efforts to create new music and that these qualities caused him to be deserving of notice in the musical world.

New York City

After his St. Paul recital Bartók spent five days rehearsing his First Piano Concerto with Fritz Reiner and the Cincinnati Symphony in their home city before traveling to Washington, D.C. for a performance with Joseph Szigeti in the presence of the Hungarian Minister and other dignitaries on 4 February 1928.[269] He returned to New York City to perform again with Szigeti at the Gallo Theater at 8:30 in the evening of 5 February in the third of three concerts constituting the New York 1927-28 Pro-Musica Society season.[270] The first concert, held 19 December 1927, had featured the work of another prominent Hungarian musician—Zoltán Kodály. His *Psalmus Hungaricus*, performed along with works by Ernest Schelling (1876-1939) and Heinrich Kaminski (1886-1946), was given its American premiere by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Willem Mengelberg.[271] The second New York concert featured Maurice Ravel in his first recital in the United States, where he was assisted by Greta Torpadie,

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[268] Boardman, "Bartok Melodies," 7.

[269] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 258.

[270] "Pro-Musica," Advertisement, *New York Herald Tribune* (22 January 1927), VII, 9. The season consisted of three concerts. The Gallo Theater went through several name changes in the twentieth century, finally becoming Studio 54 in 1977.

[271] Ely Jade, ed., "Announcement of the New York Chapter," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VI/2 (December 1927), 40. Ernest Schelling also conducted on the program.

The Hart House String Quartet, harpist Carlos Salzedo, Joseph Szigeti, and others at the Gallo Theater on 15 January 1928.[272] Bartók and Szigeti's joint recital in early February comprised the composer's new Piano Sonata (1926) and Violin and Piano Sonata No. 2 (1922), Franz Schubert's Duo in A Major (1817), *Hungarian Folk Tunes* (Bartók-Szigeti) (1926-27), and *Romanian Folk Dances* (Bartók-Szekely) (1925-26).[273]

In 1920 New York City's population was 5,620,048, making it the largest metropolitan area in the United States.[274] As the nation's commercial center, it was home to over 25,000 manufacturing establishments at the time of Bartók's visit.[275] Their production, as well as the benefit of an excellent harbor, made the city the most important in America for foreign trade—its imports and exports accounted for over half the international commerce for the nation.[276] The city was also an important gateway for immigration. At the time of Bartók's visit over thirty-five percent of New York's inhabitants were foreign-born and over thirty-three percent were of foreign parentage. The diverse city offered a variety of musical performances and opportunities for interested listeners.[277]

Bartók's recital was advertised frequently in the weeks preceding the event with notices scattered amid press coverage of his performances with several of America's

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[272] *Ibid*.

[273] "Third Concert Pro Musica: Bela Bartok Composer-Pianist and Joseph Szigeti Violinist in Joint Recital," recital program (5 February 1928). The final two pieces on the program were arrangements of earlier Bartók works by Joseph Szigeti and Zoltán Szekely, respectively.

[274] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 16.

[275] *Ibid*., 738.

[276] *Ibid*.

[277] For information on New York City's classical music scene in the 1920s see: Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

leading orchestras. An announcement can be found in *The New York Times* as early as 11 December 1927, when it occurred in an advertisement for the Pro-Musica Society concert series.[278] Notices of Bartók and Szigeti's recital were published in the 22 January 1928 issues of both the *Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*.[279] A nearly identical advertisement was placed in the *Herald Tribune* on 29 January.[280] The program was also provided in the same issue, as well as on the day of the recital, 5 February.[281] Press photographs of Bartók and five other musicians who would perform in New York City during the week of 5 February to 11 February were also printed in the *New York Herald Tribune* on 5 February.[282] Other featured musicians of the week were American sopranos Marion Talley[283] and Grace Moore,[284] who were to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House; French conductor Pierre Monteux, scheduled to act as guest artist leading the Philadelphia Orchestra; Polish pianist Moriz Rosenthal, who would perform at the Town

[278] Display Ad 138 -- No Title, *New York Times (1923-Current file)* (11 December 1927), ProQuest Historical Newspapers *New York Times* (1851-2007).

[279] Classified Ad 80 -- No Title, *New York Times (1923-Current file)* (22 January 1928), ProQuest Historical Newspapers *New York Times* (1851–2007). "Pro-Musica," Advertisement, *New York Herald Tribune* (22 January 1928), Section VII, 9. Similar advertisements were placed in both papers on the day of the recital, 5 February 1928.

[280] "Pro-Musica," Advertisement, *New York Herald Tribune* (29 January 1928), VII, 9.

[281] "Pro Musica Concert," *New York Herald Tribune* (29 January 1928), VIII, 8.; "Programs of the Week," *New York Herald Tribune* (5 February 1928), VII, 10.

[282] "A Debutante Soprano and Others Figuring in the Week's Calendar," *New York Herald Tribune* (5 February 1928), VII, 8.

[283] Marion Talley (1907-1983) was born in Nevada, Missouri and performed regularly at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City from 1926-29, singing such roles as the title character in Lucia di Lammermoor and the Queen of the Night from Mozart's *Zauberflöte*.

[284] Grace Moore (1898-1947), a native of Nough, Tennessee, performed at the Opéra-Comique, Covent Garden, and the Metropolitan Opera. In addition to singing operatic roles such as Mimì, Tosca, and Manon, Moore played in Broadway musicals and American films, most notably *One Night of Love* (1934).

Hall; and Australian composer and pianist Percy Grainger, scheduled to play at Carnegie Hall.[285]

Prominent music critics Olin Downes, of *The New York Times*, and Lawrence Gilman, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, wrote reviews of the Bartók-Szigeti recital. Downes referred to Bartók's "romantic and somewhat flimsy" Rhapsody for piano and orchestra (1905), which had been presented with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Arturo Toscanini on 22 and 23 December 1927, proclaiming that the performance of the early work was not an accurate barometer of Bartók's compositional talent.[286] The author identified a similarity between the first work on the program, Bartók's Piano Sonata (1926), and his First Piano Concerto (1926).[287] According to Downes, both works displayed rhythms derived from Hungarian peasant music combined with "a quality which is rather dry and cerebral and opposed, one would say, to romanticism."[288] The second piece on the recital, Bartók's "hard-surfaced and far-fetched" Violin and Piano Sonata No. 2 (1922), was difficult for the reviewer to celebrate. Downes apparently missed the "saving grace of tone-color" that he found to be an essential quality of the Piano Concerto and suggested that the Sonata would have been easier to accept with the benefit of a large ensemble of instruments with varying timbres.[289] He revealed that the final movement was the audience's favorite.[290] The last

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[285] *Ibid*.

[286] Olin Downes, "Music: Toscanini Thrills His Audience. Pro-Musica Society," *New York Times (1923-Current file)* (6 February 1928), ProQuest Historical Newspapers *New York Times* (1851–2007).

[287] *Ibid*. The U. S. premiere of the Piano Concerto would be performed by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Fritz Reiner at Carnegie Hall in New York on 13 February 1928.

[288] *Ibid*.

[289] *Ibid*.

[290] *Ibid*.

two sets on the program, arrangements of folk melodies for violin and piano, merited the approval of the critic, who noted their positive traits as "the national and wholly characteristic features of the melodies, and the simple, appropriate harmonizations which did not err on the side of extravagance or forced ingenuity."[291] In contrast to his general opinions of Bartók's compositions, Downes complimented both Bartók's and Szigeti's performance abilities, noting that Bartók was a "pianist of considerable powers."[292] He found Bartók's accompaniment of Szigeti in the Schubert piece to be as "gentle and mellifluous as the sucking dove."[293] This comparison serves as a reminder that Bartók was trained as a pianist in addition to receiving instruction in composition. In conclusion, Downes added that the Gallo Theater was full for the recital and the performers enjoyed much applause for their efforts.[294]

Unlike Downes, Lawrence Gilman did not praise any aspect of Bartók's pianism in his review of the recital, but did admit that Szigeti "played with amazing bravura."[295] He opened his review by remarking that during the Piano Sonata (1926) the composer:

> smote the keyboard as if he had a secret grudge against it. And as he smote, seemingly with a Berserk fury clangorous and forbidding sounds issued from the dulcet and brilliant instrument of Liszt and Chopin, Schumann and Brahms and Debussy—sounds of an iron severity and rigor, harsh, and menacing, and coldly frenzied.[296]

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[291] *Ibid*.

[292] *Ibid*.

[293] *Ibid*.

[294] *Ibid*.

[295] Lawrence Gilman, "Music: New Music by Bartok; and a New Bruennhilde in 'Goetterdaemmerung,'" *New York Herald Tribune* (6 February 1928), 11.

[296] *Ibid*.

It is true that anyone attached to the more Romantic sounding music of the composers listed would not find many similarities between the Sonata and the compositions of the greats of eras past. The now familiar resentment of modernism determines the tone of the review, but such ideas were normally found in the responses of those who had little experience with new music in general or with Bartók's music in particular. For Gilman this was not the case, however, as he had written two lengthy articles preceding Bartók's first American performance: a biographical sketch entitled "Bartok and His Remarkable Music" and an analysis of Bartók's First Piano Concerto in preparation for the premiere of the work in the United States.[297] Although Gilman complained of many modernists' avoidance of the tonal system, he did manage to find some positive attributes in the Hungarian's compositional style:

> For our part, we happen to find Mr. Bartók's tonal conflicts inoffensive. We find in his music a quality that William James would have called "tough-minded." It has logic, coherence, intellectual clarity and vigor[….] Its defect, for us, is its uneventfulness.[298]

While the critic complained of the lack of contrast in the music, he also found several redeeming traits. It is possible that the sensational comments Gilman made at the beginning of the article were simply there to attract his readers' attention as the review ended on a more favorable note than it began. Gilman concluded: "We are more than willing to concede that Mr. Bartok may have proffered us a trade of masterworks."[299]

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[297] Lawrence Gilman, "Bartok and His Remarkable Music," *New York Herald Tribune* (13 December 1927), VI, 8.; Lawrence Gilman, "A New Concerto for Piano and Orchestra," *New York Herald Tribune* (25 December 1928), VI, 8.

[298] Lawrence Gilman, "New Music by Bartok," 11.

[299] *Ibid*.

With the preceding statement, the critic cautiously admitted the possibility that Bartók's music was something remarkable that would stand tall under the scrutiny of history.

Conclusion

As anticipated, reception of Bartók's performances in the four cities addressed in this section varied greatly. In Denver chapter members exhibited a desire to learn more about Bartók and his musical style. Their efforts to appreciate the composer before his concert likely led to the positive reaction he inspired from the listeners there. On the other hand, writers for the *Kansas City Star* and the *Kansas City Journal* seemed resistant to any modern music and focused on non-musical issues, such as "race." A strong attachment to the music of earlier times, an unwillingness to explore new musical styles, a lack of vocabulary to describe musical modernism, and the belief that music should function as entertainment prevented these authors from objectively evaluating Bartók's music. Their opinions, however, constitute those of only a small percentage of the local audience—there is no evidence to suggest that all Kansas City listeners shared the viewpoints of those writing reviews. It is probable that at least some serious-minded Kansas City musicians in attendance appreciated or even enjoyed the music. Writers in the more progressive city of St. Paul seemed better equipped to review the recital, citing Bartók's compositional sincerity as a reason for praise. Comments on the contrast between the Hungarian musician's appearance and demeanor and his compositions and playing were also set forth in the major newspapers of the Minnesota capital.

New York City critics Olin Downes and Lawrence Gilman both registered their disapproval of Bartók's new Piano Sonata—Downes's commentary is rather lukewarm

while Gilman's is decidedly negative. Downes's stature as a critical tastemaker for music in the United States is important to note, yet this acknowledgement must be combined with the fact that his negative criticism did not always act as an accurate projection of a composer's place in history. Despite their exposure to contemporary music, both critics seemed quite loyal to Romanticism.

In all four cities, no matter the personal opinions of the reviewers, there was still a sense of Bartók's important role in contemporary music. The variation in reception in the four westernmost cities on the tour is slight when compared with that of the next four locations. Differences in reception might be expected between New York City and any other American cities, as citizens had more opportunities to experience modern music. Even when considering only the midwestern cities, however, the disparity of the reviews is greater than that found among the western states and in the Great Lakes region, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

GREAT LAKES REGION

Introduction

The final Pro-Musica Society recitals of Bartók's first American tour took place in Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and Chicago, Illinois. Two other performances also occurred on this leg of the tour: the Cincinnati, Ohio premiere of Bartók's First Piano Concerto (1926) on 24 February 1928 and a second presentation of the work there on 25 February, with the composer himself at the piano joined by the Cincinnati Symphony, conducted by Fritz Reiner.[300]

Audiences in the first two Pro-Musica recitals on this portion of the tour heard Bartók play different selections than did listeners in previous performances. The Piano Sonata (1926) was replaced with earlier works on the programs in Detroit and Cleveland, as Bartók observed that the piece had not been well received by audiences at previous recitals.[301] The importance of an engaging recital was heightened in Detroit, as Bartók's appearance there was for the first concert of the newly minted chapter of the Pro-Musica Society. Contrary to expectations, changes to the program did not succeed in eliminating complaints from critics in Detroit and Cleveland, who still contended that Bartók's music was too radical. To Detroit's credit, however, it was the only city in which a community of Hungarian immigrants reached out to the composer. Unfortunately, Bartók's hectic tour schedule prevented him from visiting the local colony and endearing himself to local supporters even further.

[300]Bartók also traveled to Cincinnati to rehearse in between his Detroit and Cleveland concerts.

[301] See Detroit and Cleveland sections for the recital programs.

For the more progressive city of Chicago, Bartók returned to his standard program, reinserting the Sonata, which he played, as he did wherever he performed, with great vigor. Since the Baroque era, it had been customary for composers who possess the training to do so to perform their own works. As Chicago was a major cultural center, it had benefitted greatly from this practice and found Bartók's performance to be superior to previous similar efforts by other artists. Yet despite Chicago's more liberal milieu, critics there joined those of Detroit and Cleveland in preferring the music of previous eras, an attitude that was strongly voiced in their reviews. Bartók began this portion of the tour in the industrial heart of the Great Lakes region, where the automobile was king.

Detroit

After playing his First Piano Concerto at Boston Symphony Hall, Bartók set out on the final leg of his tour to present three lecture-recitals sponsored by the Pro-Musica chapters in Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago.[302] He performed on 19 February 1928 in the smaller auditorium of the Detroit Institute of Arts at nine o'clock in the evening,[303] the first soloist of the season's series for the members of the Detroit Chapter.[304] Bartók was also invited to be the guest of the local Hungarian colony but was forced to turn down the invitation due to his tight schedule.[305] He arrived in Detroit the evening of his recital and left immediately afterwards in order to reach Cincinnati for rehearsals for the local

[302] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 259. See Appendix A for a timeline.

[303] "Pro Musica, Inc. Detroit Chapter, Season of 1927-1928, First Concert, Detroit Institute of Art," recital program (19 February 1928). Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.

[304] "Pro Musica Course to Open With Bartok," *The Detroit News* (12 February 1928), Part 12, 6.

[305] Newspaper clipping in music scrapbook at the Detroit Public Library. "Bela Bartok Here Tonight," *The Detroit Free Press* (19 February 1928), [no page number preserved].

premiere of his First Piano Concerto.[306] As Bartók's concert was to be the first for Detroit's new chapter, its success was quite important. International Pro-Musica president E. Robert Schmitz sent a telegram to local Pro-Musica president Louis Ling, warning him of the previously poor American reception of Bartók's Piano Sonata (1926).[307] Schmitz acknowledged that Bartók felt the work was "beyond [the] reach of [the] public in some cities" and that, if Ling was worried about the audience responding negatively at this important initial recital, he could ask Bartók to replace the music in question with a group of earlier works.[308] Although the Sonata was listed on the Detroit program, press accounts of the recital indicated that it was, in fact, replaced by his *Sonatina* (1915) and either one of the *Two Romanian Dances* (1908 and 1910) or a selection from the *Romanian Folk Dances* (1915):[309]

> He performed three groups, including: his own Suite, Op. 10,[310] Rumanian Christmas Songs; Sonatina; Rumanian Dance; Burlesque: "Un Peu Gris;" Dirge; Bear Dance; "Evening in the Country;" and "Allegro Barbaro;" and of Kolady [*sic*], an "Epitaphe" and Allegro and Andante from Suite; Op. 3.[311]

The omission of the controversial composition was expected to lead the Detroit audience to develop a higher opinion of the modern composer than audiences elsewhere on his American tour where the piece was performed.

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[306] *Ibid*. This would be the fifth performance of the Concerto in the United States.

[307] E. Robert Schmitz, telegram to Louis Ling (17 February 1928), E. Robert Schmitz Papers, MSS54 Box 6, Folder 163, Yale University Library.

[308] *Ibid*., 1.

[309] Russell McLaughlin, "Noted Pianist Initiates Pro Musica's Activities," *The Detroit News* (20 February 1928), 25.

[310] "Op. 10" is clearly a mistake, as that work is the orchestral *Két kép* [Two Pictures] (1910), whereas Bartók's Piano Suite, Op. 14 was the standard choice for the Pro-Musica recitals on the tour and is the one listed in the program.

[311] Russell McLaughlin, "Noted Pianist Initiates," 25.

Boasting a population of 993,678 at the time of the 1920 census, Detroit was the fourth largest city in the United States and a center of manufacturing and distribution.[312] Situated on the Detroit River eighteen miles south of Lake Erie, the city served as a port for many passenger and freight steamships. In 1928 over eighty-five percent of all automobiles produced in the United States were manufactured in and around Detroit.[313] Of the seven daily serials published there in the year of Bartók's visit, three with significant circulation were chosen for inspection in this analysis: *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Detroit News*, and *The Detroit Times*.[314] Only the first two were consulted, however, as the *Times* proved to be unavailable for review.

Three similar notices of Bartók's recital appeared in the *News* and *Free Press*. Bartók's recital was announced and the program provided in the 12 February issue of the *News*. The author introduced the Hungarian musician as a writer, pianist, and lecturer and mentioned his fieldwork collecting and transcribing Hungarian folk music.[315] The writer also explained that the reason for the late hour of the recital (9:00 p.m.) was to accommodate the church schedules of the Society members.[316] In a 19 February story for the *Free Press*, it was announced that Bartók's lecture, to be presented in English, would address Hungarian folk music.[317] The author also felt it was important to explain Bartók's inability to accept the Hungarian colony's invitation and gave further detail on

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[312] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1928), 16.

[313] *Ibid*., 502.

[314] *Ibid*., 502-06. Circulations: *The Detroit Free Press*, 203,165 (Daily), 282,060 (Sunday); *The Detroit News*, 321,021 (Monday through Saturday), 354,231 (Sunday).

[315] "Pro Musica Course," 6.

[316] *Ibid*.

[317] Newspaper clipping in music scrapbook at the Detroit Public Library, "Bartok Here Tonight," *The Detroit Free Press* (19 February 1928), [no page number preserved].

the composer's upcoming concert in Cincinnati, reporting that the length of time required for rehearsing the Piano Concerto with orchestra—five days—had delayed its performance in the United States.[318] A story with similar information was printed in the 19 February issue of the *News*.[319] The writers of both articles incorrectly reported that Bartók's concert in Cincinnati would represent the American premiere of the First Piano Concerto[320] and yet the premiere had already occurred on 13 February 1928 at Carnegie Hall.[321] Their confusion may have stemmed from the fact that the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra had traveled to New York City for the concert.[322]

Critical reaction to Bartók's Detroit performance may be assessed from two reviews released on 20 February 1928. A writer for the *Free Press* was apparently a proponent of Hungarian music and of the efforts of the composers represented on Bartók's program: "Bartok is one of the most prominent figures in the musical world and one of the composers to whom Hungary owes her outstanding place among music producing nations. Another is Zoltan Kodaly."[323] This sentiment toward the music of Hungary may be a result of familiarity with Hungarian culture, introduced to the area by Hungarian immigrants residing in Detroit at the time. The author emphasized that the purpose of Bartók and Kodály's work collecting folk tunes was not only to supply them with inspirational material for their compositions but also to preserve a part of the peasant

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[318] *Ibid*.

[319] "Bartok Tonight: Noted Hungarian to Appear for Pro Musica," *The Detroit News* (19 February 1928), Part 12, 6.

[320] *Ibid*. And "Bartok Here Tonight," *The Detroit Free Press*.

[321] Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 259.

[322] *Ibid*.

[323] Newspaper clipping in music scrapbook at the Detroit Public Library, "Bartok Displays Hungarian Tunes: Modernist Composer Shows Great Tonal Daring in Art Institute Concert," *The Detroit Free Press* (20 February 1928), [no page number preserved].

culture almost unknown to those on the outside.[324] Like many other American reviewers, this writer concluded by contrasting Bartók's stature with his musical style:

> The compositions presented last evening showed the imaginative sweep and the radical theories of composition that have made Bartok one of the most original figures in modern music. The composer is a small slight man, prematurely grey, his retiring appearance quite belying the austerity and tonal daring of his works.[325]

Despite praising the composer, the author fails to comment on the specific works on the program.[326]

Critic Russell McLaughlin, in his review for the *News*, provided additional details surrounding the occasion:

> Pro Musica, the new organization which promises us interesting and intimate music, had its first innings last night in the small auditorium for the Detroit Institute of Arts. This initial gesture was important, too, for the society presented Bela Bartok[….] There was an audience of upward of 300, representing, moreover, a highly earnest and intelligent section of the musical public. Louis Ling, president of the new organization, spoke a few welcoming words when the evening began.[327]

McLaughlin also mentioned both Bartók's preliminary address, which was given in "fluent English touched with an undoubted accent," and the pieces performed following the speech. Of the new Hungarian music, McLaughlin emphasized its "strangeness":

> In this music was much sturdy rhythm and likewise a plain honesty in basic melody that was obviously vital and important. But the architecture

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[324] *Ibid*.

[325] *Ibid*.

[326] *Ibid*.

[327] McLaughlin, "Noted Pianist Initiates," 25.

> of it has a dismaying strangeness that is not due to its non-Occidental modes. It takes more than Mr. Bartok's determination to employ the seventh as a consonant interval to make it sound as such to American ears. His dissonances—as well as Kodaly's—were abrupt and harsh to a point of dizziness.[328]

"American ears," while fooled in some instances, were likely not the issue with the acceptance of the music of Bartók and Kodály overall, as listeners in many nations were disturbed by the modern elements in their pieces. Romantic ears or Classic ears may be the more probable causes for the reaction. McLaughlin also proposed that Bartók's radical harmonies might sound less offensive if played by an orchestra than when realized on a keyboard,[329] an attitude that seems to point to the Romantic style with its variety of complementary timbres that this reviewer may have felt would help dilute the level of dissonance. Despite his difficulties enjoying the music, the author asserted that those seeking to understand the contemporary musical world should hear, and judge, Bartók's compositions. "However, this music may be pioneering toward a great goal and therefore, whether it entertains or no, studious persons should hear and weigh it for its oracles and commandments. Therefore Pro Musica does great service in making it available."[330] Other positive aspects of the recital, as reported by McLaughlin, were Bartók's pianism and use of wit.

> Bartok is a first-rate pianist, with nimble fingers and an uncommon pedal-technique, reaching real dynamic contrasts on his keyboard. He is [a] humorist of parts, also, for the Burlesque, which is supposed to indicate a gentleman slightly flown with wine, [and] does so very divertingly.[331]

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[328] *Ibid*.

[329] *Ibid*.

[330] *Ibid*.

[331] *Ibid*.

If this reviewer found the harmonies in the pieces disconcerting—none of which were written after 1918—he surely would have detested Bartók's 1926 Sonata. Despite Detroit's large population, which should have contained patrons of the arts who would be accepting of the newest trends, the audience there was not afforded the opportunity to hear this relatively new work performed by its composer.

Cleveland

Bartók left Detroit immediately following his recital on 20 February and traveled by train through Cleveland to Cincinnati to rehearse his First Piano Concerto with the Cincinnati Symphony.[332] After a morning rehearsal on 21 February Bartók returned to Cleveland for his 22 February lecture-recital at the Cleveland Museum of Art.[333] With a population of 796,841, the city was the fifth largest in the United States in 1920.[334] Of the three newspapers selected for examination for this research project, only two were available for review: the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and *The Cleveland Press*.[335]

Varied press coverage in these newspapers preceded Bartók's performance. A story on New York City musical events was reprinted in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in which the author mentioned Bartók's Pro-Musica recital with Hungarian concert violinist

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[332] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 260.

[333] *Ibid*.

[334] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1928), 16.

[335] *Ibid*., 847-51. Circulations: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 235,132 (Daily), 282,164 (Sunday); *The Cleveland Press*, 235,458 (Monday through Saturday). *The Cleveland News* was unavailable.

Joseph Szigeti.[336] A week later Bartók's Cleveland performance was noted in the same paper, with a line drawing of the composer.[337] In this story critic James H. Rogers recalled that one of Bartók's works was played by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in Cleveland's Masonic Hall the preceding winter.[338] The lively interest among area residents in meeting, or at least seeing, great composers of the time was also reported.[339] Clevelanders evidently had the opportunity to make the "visual acquaintance" of Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, and Ernő Dohnányi prior to Bartók's arrival.[340] In closing, Rogers opined that Bartók was "Hungary's foremost composer."[341] The time and place of Bartók's recital was announced in both the Cleveland Museum of Art weekly calendar[342] in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* on 19 February, and in a list of club meetings in *The Cleveland Press* on 21 and 22 February.[343] The program for Bartók's performance, as printed in the *Plain Dealer,* is as follows:

Table 4.1: Concert program (22 February 1928)[344]

1. Suite from Opus 14……..Bartok
   Allegretto, Cherso [Scherzo], Allegro molto, Sostenuto

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[336] Pierre V. R. Key, "Dresden Royal Opera to Coach American Hopefuls: Many and Varied Concerts," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (12 February 1928), Dramatic and Feature Section, 6.

[337] James H. Rogers, "Bela Bartok at Museum," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (19 February 1928), Dramatic and Feature Section, 6.

[338] *Ibid*.

[339] *Ibid*.

[340] *Ibid*.

[341] *Ibid*.

[342] "Calendar of Week at Museum of Art," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (19 February 1928), Dramatic and Feature Section, 8. The author reports the starting time of the recital as 8:15 p.m.

[343] 21 February: "Meetings," *The Cleveland Press* (21 February 1928), 2. The author reports the time the recital will begin as 8:00 p.m.; 22 February: "Meetings," *The Cleveland Press* (22 February 1928), 4. Here the starting time is recorded as 8:15 p.m.

[344] "Magyar Composer to Play: Bartok to Give 'Music of Hungary' at Art Museum," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (22 February 1928), 6.

Roumanian Christmas songs.

2. Epitaphe……Kodaly
   Two pieces from Opus 3……...Kodaly
   Sonatina……Bartok
   First Roumanian Dance……Bartok
3. Variations on a Hungarian Folk Song……...Bartok
   (b) Burlesque ("a little tipsy")
   (c) Nanie
   (d) Bear Dance
   (e) Evening in the Country
   (f) Allegro Barbaro.

As with the Detroit Pro-Musica Society performance, Bartók's Piano Sonata (1926) was omitted from the program.

Despite the replacement of the recent composition with older, more conservative pieces, Rogers still found some of Bartók's harmonies too discordant. He affirmed Bartók's place as a "pillar" of modern music but was apparently not a strong proponent of modernism in general.

> His harmonies are as acrid as the most eager partisan of the new order of things could desire. Now be it said at once that Mr. Bartok is a composer of skill and resource. He knows what he wants, and he knows how to get it. There is vigor in this music of his, and logical development; and as Mr. Bartok is a very good pianist, it lost nothing, last night, by reason of inadequate performance.[345]

Rogers's review is similar to those of many other critics of Bartók's performance of his own works in his praise of the Hungarian's pianism. Pieces based on folk tunes were also favored by this author, as he acknowledged that their melodic lines were not difficult to understand.[346] Rogers bemoaned modern composers' avoidance of lyricism and other

[345] James H. Rogers, "Finds Moderns of Bartok Tire Ears: Critic Has Praise, However, for His Style and His Peasant Tunes," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (23 February 1928), 16.

[346] *Ibid*.

endearing Romantic elements in their music[347] and voiced his dissatisfaction with new music in general in the following diatribe:

> For my own part, this relentless piling of dissonances on dissonance, all as cutting as it is possible to make them, becomes a burden to the ear. And truth to tell, they sound much alike to me. Overemphasis seems to be the besetting aim of the moderns; and it is certainly quite as undesirable as no emphasis at all, and has much the same result. However, Mr. Bartok did not regale us exclusively with discords. By no means. But his ingratiating moods are rare.[348]

Although clearly unsympathetic with contemporary trends in composition, Rogers was able, nevertheless, to find positive aspects in Bartók's recital. His favorite pieces of the evening were the first and fourth movements of Bartók's Suite, Opus 14; not surprisingly, those based on folk melodies; and one of Kodály's works that displayed "a distinctly Debussian flavor."[349] The writer's conclusions must be considered lukewarm their praise at best:

> Now, Mr. Bartok is evidently a sensitive, sincere musician, extremely well equipped, and endowed with verve plus. No doubt there were many present last night who reveled in his music. For myself, however, I felt that my curiosity as to what is going on in futuristic musical circles was for the moment, anyhow, by way of being appeased.[350]

Rogers acknowledged that, although he disliked some components of Bartók's music, other Cleveland listeners may have been intrigued by them. He also seemed to concede

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[347] *Ibid*.

[348] *Ibid*.

[349] *Ibid*.

[350] *Ibid*.

that the compositions as conveyed in the recital caused him to realize that not all modern music was as distasteful as he had imagined.

C. B. Macklin reviewed Bartók's lecture-recital in an article for the *Press*.[351] Macklin noted that Bartók's remarks constituted an "outline of the material now being used by Hungarian composers."[352] Bartók's lecture addressed folk music, a repertory that was being employed by only a few Hungarian composers at the time, namely Bartók and Kodály. To his credit, the author did grasp the general idea of the new musical style based on or influenced by peasant culture. Macklin explained that many of the selections evidenced the use of modal and pentatonic scales.[353] Although he admitted that the music displayed some redeeming characteristics, he complained of its repetitive nature: "In places, there were quite beautiful effects, but there was a killing sameness about the compositions which made for tiresomeness. In rhythmic, melodic and harmonic treatment, the lack of variety was truly amazing."[354] While Macklin was not blaming the uniformity of the music on Bartók's playing, he was not entirely impressed by the composer's pianistic efforts either—an unusual response for an American critic during this tour.

> I do not believe that this monotony can be explained on the basis that Bartok is a rather wooden pianist, tho [*sic*] it must be admitted that, whilst apparently accurate as to notes, his range of dynamics is limited to a piano and a forte, with neither a crescendo nor a diminuendo. In spite of this, however, I believe the monotony is inherent in the music itself.[355]

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[351] C. B. Macklin, "Hungarian Folk Songs Basis of Music Lecture: Bela Bartok Gives Recital at Cleveland Art Museum on Contemporaries," *The Cleveland Press* (23 February 1928), 15.

[352] *Ibid*.

[353] *Ibid*.

[354] *Ibid*.

[355] *Ibid*.

The comment stands at odds with Rogers's assertion that Bartók "is a very good pianist"[356] and seems to betray the fact that Macklin longed for a romantic approach. In terms of composition, Macklin complimented Bartók's originality and conceded that despite its sameness, Bartók's music was "charming" at times.[357] He criticized the composer, however, for having "but two moods—morose brooding alternating with feverish and abandoned gaiety."[358] He was most positive in his response to the Sonatina (1915) and the *First Romanian Dance* (1908), but he still found repetitive aspects of the works difficult to endure.[359] Therefore, even without the performance of the significantly more dissonant Sonata (1926), both reviewers found the modern elements of the music jarring.

Chicago

In 1920, with a population of 2,701,705, Chicago was the second largest city in the United States and the third largest in the world.[360] Located on Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, this hub for twenty-five railroads was a major national and international commercial center.[361] The city was home to a branch of the Federal Reserve, seven colleges and universities, twenty-nine medical schools, nine law schools, six theological

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[356] Rogers, "Finds Moderns of Bartok Tire Ears," 16.

[357] Macklin, "Hungarian Folk Songs," 15.

[358] *Ibid*.

[359] *Ibid*.

[360] *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 238.

[361] *Ibid*.

seminaries, three dental colleges, and twenty-nine preparatory schools. Five years before Bartók's visit Chicago boasted 9,334 manufacturing establishments with over 385,000 employees. Over six hundred and fifty serials were published in Chicago in 1928, three of which were chosen for review in this study: the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, *The Chicago Daily News*, and the *Chicago Tribune*.[362]

On 26 February Bartók traveled from Cincinnati to Chicago for the final performance of the tour,[363] which took place at the Cordon Club on Monday, 27 February at 8:30 in the evening.[364] His visit to Chicago was preceded by three 1928 stories in the city's newspapers that, although not directly related to his performance, are relevant to the role of Pro-Musica in Chicago, the events of the contemporary Chicago music scene, and for the local awareness of Bartók prior to his visit. In the *Herald and Examiner* Glenn Dillard Gunn, staff music critic for the paper from 1922 until 1936, voiced concerns about the aims of the Pro-Musica Society: he even demanded that it be renamed "Pro Musica Europa" due to its promotion of European composers.[365] Although Gunn's views could be considered harmful press preceding Bartók's recital, their dissemination did not seem to create a more negative reaction than occurred in other cities. In the *Daily News* other soloists giving musical presentations in Chicago around the time of Bartók's visit were introduced: tenor Glenn Drake; Hungarian dramatic soprano Louise Fernald; English pianist Myra Hess; American composer, conductor, and

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[362] *Ibid*., 238-61. Circulations: *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, 403,806 (Daily), 1,185,881 (Sunday); *The Chicago Daily News*, 432,189 (Monday through Saturday only); *Chicago Tribune*, 761,548 (Daily), 1,182,602 (Sunday).

[363] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 260.

[364] "The Chicago Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc. Presents Béla Bartók in Lecture Recital," recital program (27 February 1928).

[365] Glenn Dillard Gunn, "Promotes European Interests: Brought Ravel to Chicago as Pianist; Bela Bartoc [*sic*], the Hungarian Composer, Next," *Chicago Herald and Examiner* (12 January 1928), Part Four, 3.

pianist of English birth Ethel Leginska; pianist Harold Bauer; pianist Helene Pollenz; and violinist Fritz Renk.[366]

In addition, a response to the New York City premiere of Bartók's First Piano Concerto appeared in the 19 February issue of the *Sunday Tribune*.[367] In this story important critic Alfred Frankenstein reported that listeners were warned that the concerto "was to burn the hair from our heads," but that German audience members at its world premiere in Frankfurt regarded it "as the latest word in musical modernism."[368] Although Frankenstein was not negative in tone, he did introduce several descriptive terms that may have made Chicago readers wary of Bartók's upcoming recital. The critic elaborated that the composer's rhythms had "teeth and claws" and that during one "movement of the piano concerto the battery clangs without pause."[369] Although the writer ultimately regarded the music as "a release of ancient, primitive forces, and a dive into the future" and ended the article on a positive note, his description of harshness may have influenced readers' opinions of the Hungarian musician and his works.

Several announcements of Bartók's Chicago performance notified the public of the date, time, place, and sponsor. In the *Daily News* it was announced that Bartók would give a ten-minute speech in English, followed by his playing of his own compositions as well as those of his compatriot, Zoltán Kodály. The writer counted the recital, which was to include the Piano Sonata, as "one of the musical events which might be added to a

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[366] "Artists Appearing Here Soon in Musical Affairs," *The Chicago Daily News* (25 February 1928), 21.

[367] Alfred Frankenstein, "Bela Bartok Concerto Links Yesterdays and Tomorrows," *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (19 February 1928), Part Seven, 4.

[368] *Ibid*.

[369] *Ibid*.

season of unusual interest."[370] A similar story was published in the *Herald and Examiner* on 26 February.[371] The following day a writer for the *Sunday Tribune* provided readers with biographical information and a summary of Bartók's compositional output and biographical information.[372] According to the author of the story, Chicago audiences had already heard two of the guest composer's orchestral works, both of which were performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Frederick Stock.[373] Bartók's ethnomusicological work was also mentioned, with the warning that, because of the new style Bartók had adopted, his music might, at first, be difficult to appreciate.[374] The recital program was printed in the same paper:

Table 4.2: Concert program (26 February 1928)[375]

Ten Minute Address in English
(By Mr. Bartok.)

I. Bartok—(a) Suite, Opus 14 (1916)
(b) Roumanian Christmas songs (1915)

II. Kodaly—(a) Epitaphe (from Opus 11), (1918)
Allegro Molto (from Opus 3), (1909)
Bartok—(b) Sonata (1926)

III. Bartok—(a) Burlesque (un peu gris), (1908-1910)
(b) Dirge (1908-10)
(c) Bear Dance (1908-10)
(d) Evening in the Country (1908-10)
(e) Allegro Barbaro (1908-10)

[370] "Music during the Week," *The Chicago Daily News* (25 February 1928), 21.

[371] "Bela Bartoc [*sic*]," *Chicago Herald and Examiner* (26 February 1928), Part Four, 3.

[372] "Music Notes," *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (26 February 1928), Part 7, 5.

[373] *Ibid*.

[374] *Ibid*.

[375] "The Week's Recitals and Concerts," *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (26 February 1928), Part 7, 7.

The listing shows that the Sonata Bartók had removed the Sonata from his previous two recitals (in Detroit and Cleveland), was reintroduced for the Chicago performance.

In an interview for the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* conducted at the Congress Hotel, the composer commented on the connections he believed existed between jazz and the Roma music of Hungary.[376] He was quoted as asserting that "Jazz is a stimulant and has something in common with the music of the gypsies."[377] Emphasizing any correlation between the Hungarian musician and jazz may have helped Chicago audiences identify with the composer because of the recent arrival of so many New Orleans jazz musicians in the city. The story could also have been meant to place Eastern European peasant music by the Roma on the exotic periphery, which Bartók may have believed applied to jazz as well. It is possible that he meant only to refer to Roma music, but it is more likely that he was speaking of rural Hungarian music, which comprises both Roma and peasant traditions. The reporter for the *Herald and Examiner* gleaned some information about the influence of Hungarian peasant music in general on Bartók's style from the composer's own comments: "My early wanderlust determined my career[….] While touring through villages I heard the genuine music of my people. It was a revelation to me. I took down the songs of the Magyars. I aimed to recapture their spirit and harmonize the melodies in modern style."[378] With this statement Bartók explained his approach to folk tradition in his work: his goal was to create music that combined the essence of the folk tune with contemporary compositional techniques.

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[376] "Reveals Gipsy Strain in Jazz," *Chicago Herald and Examiner* (28 February 1928), M 11.

[377] *Ibid*.

[378] *Ibid*.

Bartók's treatment of these folk melodies did not find favor with reviewers from the *Daily Tribune* and the *Daily News*. The day following the composer's Chicago debut, *Daily Tribune* critic Edward Moore contrasted his recital to a performance of J. S. Bach's Mass in B Minor that had occurred simultaneously at Orchestra Hall; he asserted that the musical distance between the works "was about like going from Chicago to central Hindustan."[379] Moore explained that Bartók spent a great amount of time traveling and collecting folk music throughout Eastern Europe and that the influence of the folk tunes extended beyond mere transcription. His compositional style, which the writer correctly attributed only partially to the influence of peasant music, did not inspire positive commentary:

> He says that his treatment has developed out of the tunes themselves, but the development would seem to have evolved a new set of rules which he keeps to himself and whose results are frequently disconcerting. It is apparently based on the theory that the louder and the more clashing the dissonance, the better fitted it is to accompany a peasant tune. This may possibly surprise the peasants.[380]

Moore found the folk melodies engaging enough without modern accompaniments but objected to Bartók's treatment of the tunes. In his estimation Bartók's compositional style did not reflect the "peasant soul" and cynically asserted that he would not be convinced otherwise without the approval "of an accredited committee of peasants in good standing."[381] Moore conceded, nonetheless, that of the composers who had recently

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[379] Edward Moore, "Bartok Peasant Folk Tunes Apt to Surprise Folk: They're Hard to Listen To, if That's a Virtue," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (28 February 1928), 31.

[380] *Ibid*.

[381] *Ibid*.

performed their own works for Chicago audiences, Bartók was the best pianist.[382] In conclusion, the critic admitted that he would rather listen to the music of Bach than that of Bartók.[383]

Another critic who applauded Bartók's piano technique was Maurice Rosenfeld, a writer for the *Daily News*.[384] In his opinion the Hungarian "showed that he was a virile, gifted piano virtuoso" who "played his works perhaps better than most composers play their own works."[385] Of the lecture prefacing the recital, Rosenfeld reported that the composer spoke on the sources for Hungarian composers and the techniques for transforming themes from folk tunes into fine art music.[386] According to the critic, the address was given "in English for the most part, clearly enunciated and conclusive in argument."[387] This comment contradicts the majority of reviews of Bartók's lecture-recitals—most writers found his delivery to be clear, but none mentioned that any portion of the talk was not delivered in English. As Bartók's speech was translated into English before the tour began and the composer had indicated, as previously stated, that it was not in his power to rewrite or change it on the spot, it is unlikely that he would have spoken in any language except English while reading the document aloud for his audiences.

Rosenfeld was more descriptive of Bartók's compositions than his lecture, but, nevertheless, avoided musical analysis:

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[382] *Ibid*.

[383] *Ibid*.

[384] Maurice Rosenfeld, "Bartok Bela Gives Glimpse of Skill: Brief Recital, Following Talk, Shows Versatility as Pianist-Composer," *The Chicago Daily News* (28 February 1928), 13.

[385] *Ibid*.

[386] *Ibid*.

[387] *Ibid*.

> The pieces themselves have strength of motive, vitality and sharp rhythms, but we cannot say that they are ingratiating, that they have an emotional appeal or that from the standpoint of tune they possess any captivating melodic lines.[388]

It seems that Rosenfeld, like so many other critics assessing the modernist's recitals in the United States, would rather have listened to an older, more lyrical style of music. Ravel's works, which the French composer presented to Chicago listeners in concerts that preceded Bartók's visit, were likely more appealing to this author.[389] In closing he indicated a distinction between the new music of Hungary and that of France. In his view, modern Hungarian music "has strength, virility, backbone, and turmoil," while modern French music "has affectation, imaginative symbolism and diffuseness."[390] As intriguing as these adjectives are, the reviewer fails to comment further on the merits or disadvantages of either style.[391] Although he was not a strong proponent of Bartók's compositions, Rosenfeld did not condemn them as did his counterpart from the *Daily Tribune*.

Conclusion

Despite differences in programming for the Pro-Musica Society chapter concerts in the Great Lakes Region, critical responses remained similar. Recitals in Detroit and Cleveland were the only two on the entire Pro-Musica portion of the 1927-28 tour for which the new Piano Sonata was omitted. Consequently, no piece by Bartók on these

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[388] *Ibid*.

[389] Dates of Ravel's Chicago concerts: 18, 20, and 21 January 1928. "Ravel in Chicago," http://www.maurice-ravel.net/chicago.htm, accessed 29 June 2012.

[390] *Ibid*.

[391] *Ibid*.

programs was less than ten years old. Audiences were thereby presented with a composer much earlier in his career before he had fully adopted the modernist features of his compositional style that would characterize the Sonata. Listeners should, therefore, have been more willing to accept these replacement works as they were significantly less austere than the composition for which they were substituted. Nonetheless, reviewers complained of the contemporary compositional techniques that made their appearance in these earlier pieces.

While many parallels exist among the responses to Bartók's music in Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago, several characteristics of the news coverage serve to differentiate the criticism by city. One unique feature of the press surrounding the Detroit performance was the explanation as to why Bartók could not accept the invitation to visit the local Hungarian colony. Reference to the Hungarian population in Detroit, a large percentage of which arrived not directly from their homeland, but Eastern American cities, provides evidence that a significant group of citizens with Hungarian roots resided there.[392] Cleveland was also a center for Hungarian immigrants, as well as New York City, Pittsburg, and Chicago.[393]

Detroit press coverage also evidenced that critics praised the Hungarian composer for his originality and compositional integrity, whether or not they celebrated the compositions themselves. Reviewers of the recital in the Motor City displayed a preference for earlier musical styles but conveyed a positive tone overall. The familiar resistance to new music was also evident in Cleveland, where a major complaint against

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[392] Paula Benkart, "Hungarians," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980), 465.

[393] *Ibid*.

the choices on the program was that they were monotonous and redundant. In a Chicago interview for readers in a city where jazz was a vital force, Bartók speculated that similarities between jazz and rural Hungarian music might exist. The inclusion of this comment in the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* may have served to make the foreign composer more relatable to the readers, most of whom were certainly more familiar with American jazz than Hungarian peasant music. Despite this connection, critics there were skeptical of any composer performing his or her own compositions, as efforts of the sort had not been overly successful at past Chicago events.

Two commonalities in the reviews from all three cities, and many others on the tour, were the comparison of Bartók's appearance to his music and the praise of his pianism. Reviewers did not believe that Bartók's slight stature matched his bold compositions but still found his playing to be excellent, even virtuosic. Critics from these cities acknowledged the composer's place as an important modernist but were not convinced of the merits of the new style in general. Yet the fact remains that Bartók's performances in these cities, whether embraced by critics and audiences or not, raised awareness of his importance as a contemporary composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The original purpose of this research was to amass information on Bartók's 1927-28 American tour and analyze the details concerning his Pro-Musica engagements in terms of reception. This reception history is dependent on the stories and reviews by staff writers for newspapers in cities where he performed before members of the Pro-Musica Society—only a portion of his tour. Research on his other engagements was also conducted, but analysis of the resulting documents is beyond the scope of this investigation. They served to provide a better understanding of the entire tour, however, and will certainly be helpful in further exploration of Bartók's early American reception.

Many questions were raised prior to and during the course of this examination: Was the tour of Pro-Musica chapters in the United States a success? Did Bartók's contact with musicians in America change his compositional style? What effects did his first American experience have on his life, career, and reputation? What was Bartók's motivation for embarking on a tour of the United States and were his expectations or goals met? What effects did these recitals have on the contemporary American concert scene? Some of these questions can be answered, and others can only be addressed by speculation based on the facts accrued in this inquiry.

One of Bartók's aims was undoubtedly the promotion of his compositions. Despite initial setbacks early in his career, the composer entered the world stage a decade before his first American tour and from that point on was recognized as a major figure in contemporary music. This recognition, however, did not ensure his positive reception with audiences and critics, as many of them were not inclined to embrace modernism. In

order for listeners to begin to support a new style, they first had to become acquainted with it. To this end, Bartók's music reached many ears for the first time at his Pro-Musica recitals.

A related problem, the accurate performance of a work, has been and likely always will be a difficulty for composers. Bartók was no exception. His student Ernő Balogh reported, for example, that the composer "fled the hall" during the poorly executed performance of his *Két kép* [Two Pictures] (1910) by the Budapest Philharmonic.[394] At his Pro-Musica recitals this was not an issue, as he was able to present most of his music himself.[395] He possessed the pianistic powers not only to play his works, but also to perform them exactly as he had created them to sound. Bartók was especially pleased with the Cincinnati Symphony's performances of his First Piano Concerto, as evidenced by his letter to the organization's conductor, Fritz Reiner, on 29 October 1928:

> I've played my piano concerto a few times since I came home; the performances have been as diverse as the receptions! The Budapest performance was conscientious enough, considering how things are here (through the brass instruments simply hadn't the required volume); the Berlin performance—under Kleiber—had lots of life, but the orchestra had a few misadventures. Of course, not one of the European performances came up to the standard of precision shown in Cincinnati.[396]

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[394] Ernő Balogh, "Personal Glimpses of Bela Bartok," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VII/1 (June 1928), 16-17.

[395] He performed the piano parts for all the pieces on his Pro-Musica recitals. For the Denver recital he was assisted by soprano Blanche Da Costa and in New York City he performed with violinist Joseph Szigeti.

[396] Béla Bartók, letter to Fritz Reiner (19 October 1928) translated in: Béla Bartók, János Demény, and Michael Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, trans. Péter Balaban, István Farkas, Elisabeth West, and Colin Mason (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 190.

Thus, Bartók was able to achieve his goal of disseminating his music to a broader audience through excellent performances, whether as a solo performer or in collaboration with other superior musicians, as this letter attests.

Another important objective of Bartók's American sojourn was monetary gain. The endeavor was certainly a financial boon for the composer. Pro-Musica documents reveal that he was paid $250 for several of his performances.[397] If he was paid the same rate for all eleven of these recitals, he would have made $2,750, currently equivalent to $36,958.57.[398] This excludes any money he may have been paid for other appearances on the tour. A potential additional pecuniary benefit of the tour is the increased sale of his works in the United States as a result of heightened awareness of his music.

While Bartók was in America his schedule was quite rigorous, leaving little time for interaction with Pro-Musica Society members and major musical figures beyond rehearsals and performances. Despite this fact, Bartók made connections in the United States that would affect his future. On 18 December 1927, Bartók's first evening in New York, he attended a dinner given in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of singer Marcella Sembrich's operatic debut by the prominent New York City musicians' club, "The Bohemians."[399] Over seven hundred distinguished musicians and music lovers attended the gala, held at the Hotel Commodore on East 42nd Street.[400] Among the notables

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[397] "CPI Inflation Calculator," United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm/, accessed 2 July 2012.

[398] *Ibid*.

[399] "The 'Bohemians' Honor Marcella Sembrich," *Musical America* XLVII/10 (24 December 1927), 3.

[400] *Ibid*.

Bartók may have interacted with at the function were Dusolina Giannini, Benjamin Gigli, Willem Mengelberg, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Joseph Szigeti.[401]

Szigeti, a fellow Hungarian who played on recitals with the composer in New York City and Washington, D.C., had worked with Bartók in Europe. Their contact in the United States in the early months of 1928 afforded Bartók the opportunity to cultivate their friendship. In the months following the performances Bartók composed Rhapsody No. 1 (1928) for Szigeti and wrote to him asking for his friendship and the opportunity to ask him questions about the work he was preparing for the violinist.[402]

> My dear Friend, I hope you'll allow me to address you in this way. When I was in America, I had already thought of suggesting it to you, but in that mad bustling country there isn't even time for a quiet talk! What I want to say is that I simply have to talk to you[….] I've written a minor (12-minute) composition for you (based on folk dances); and I want to talk to you about one or two points.[403]

Bartók also asked the violinist to give him information on Russia, as he was preparing to tour there and Szigeti had performed there previously. He would later dedicate *Contrasts* (1938) for violin, clarinet, and piano to Szigeti and jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman. Szigeti and two prominent conductors who directed performances of Bartók's works on the tour of 1927-28[404] were instrumental in the commission of one of Bartók's most famous and celebrated works—Concerto for Orchestra (1943). Szigeti and Fritz Reiner,

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[401] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 255. Bartók's son provides an account of the dinner in his chronicle, listing the names of these attendees specifically.

[402] Béla Bartók, letter to Joseph Szigeti, October-November 1928, translated in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 190-91.

[403] *Ibid*.

[404] Reiner conducted Bartók's Rhapsody with the Philadelphia Orchestra on 30 and 31 January 1927 and Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in three concerts: 13 February 1928 at Carnegie Hall—the American premiere of the Concerto—and on 24 and 25 February at Emory Auditorium in Cincinnati. Koussevitzky conducted Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 17 and 18 February 1928.

Hungarian-born conductor and student, promoter, and friend of Bartók, proposed the commission to Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who offered the composer one thousand dollars to write an orchestral piece dedicated to his late wife Natalie.[405]

An acquaintance Bartók made in Seattle proved an ally to the composer much later in his life. Pro-Musica Society member and music professor at the University of Washington Carl Paige Wood endeavored to acquire a year-long position for the Hungarian musician at the University between 1942 and 1944 following the termination of Bartók's research position at Columbia University in New York.[406] The appointment at the University of Washington, made possible by the Walker-Ames Foundation, would have provided stability in a time of financial hardship, an unfortunate condition the composer struggled with during the years he lived in the United States. The uncertainty of wartime and potential financial difficulties at the University of Washington threatened to prevent the job from being offered. Wood, however, was persistent in his efforts to employ Bartók, offering him the appointment once again in June 1943.[407] By that point Bartók was debilitated by illness (leukemia), undiagnosed at the time, and could not accept any employment offers.[408] Although he was unable to benefit from Wood's endeavors, it is significant that such efforts were made. Had the composer not journeyed

[405] David Cooper, *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 19.

[406] Carl Paige Wood, letter to Béla Bartók (22 May 1941) printed in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 302.

[407] Carl Paige Wood, letter to Béla Bartók (12 June 1943) printed in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 326.

[408] Béla Bartók, letter to Carl Paige Wood (30 June 1943) printed in: Bartók, Demény, and Tippett, *Béla Bartók Letters*, 326-27.

to Seattle to perform for Pro-Musica in 1928 Wood likely would not have worked so diligently, if at all, to procure a job for him in the early 1940s.

The greatest impact of Bartók's tour on the American music scene was likely that of exposure to contemporary music. As evidenced by numerous reviews by listeners in eleven American cities, critics and the public were not familiar with elements of modern music. While many were not ready to embrace Bartók's work, or that of his contemporaries, awareness of the Hungarian musician, his compositions, and his collecting folk music was increased by his Pro-Musica tour.

Bartók's encounters with prominent musicians on the tour did not end when he left New York. He was photographed on the *S. S. George Washington* en route to Europe with E. Robert Schmitz, concert pianist and international president of the Pro-Musica Society; Schmitz's wife and daughter; Italian violinist Mario Corti; and Spanish cellist Pablo Casals.[409] His relationship with Schmitz continued to be important as long as Pro-Musica existed, as Bartók's accomplishments were noted in the Society's periodical until its penultimate issue in 1929.[410]

The Pro-Musica portion of Bartók's first American tour must be deemed a successful endeavor, despite mixed reviews of his compositions and his playing. The benefits of the tour itself, as well as of the places Bartók visited and the people he met, are numerous. While existing research has acknowledged that the tour in its entirety, which included Pro-Musica recitals, orchestral premieres, and other concerts, was a success, the extent to which the Pro-Musica portion was responsible for this success has

[409] Ferenc Bónis, *Béla Bartók: His Life in Pictures and Documents* (Budapest: Corvina, 1981), 169.

[410] "Activities of Some of the Members of the Honorary Board," *Pro-Musica Quarterly* VII/3-4 (March-June 1929), 58-59.

remained hidden.[411] One of the advantages of touring the United States in the 1920s and especially those experiences in New York City, surely helped Bartók to adjust to life in the United States when he was forced into exile, as were many other, by the Second World War. The Pro-Musica performances and other engagements on the tour also afforded him opportunities to meet other eminent musical figures and to cultivate relationships with those he already knew, who in several instances stood to benefit his career. As previously noted, Szigeti, Reiner, Koussevitzky, Wood, and Schmitz assisted and promoted him in various ways. Not the least of the benefits of the tour was the significant financial gain the composer enjoyed as a result, not to mention the increased sales of his musical scores in the United States. Particularly gratifying to Bartók must have been the opportunity to introduce his works to new listeners, many of whom had never heard his music. Not only were the works themselves falling of different ears, but the manner in which they were interpreted came from their creator himself. Thus it was that through the mechanism of the Pro-Musica Society, whose mission it was to promote understanding and cooperation among various classes, nations, and societies via music, at least a segment of American audiences acquired a greater knowledge of trends in Hungarian music and modernism in general.

[411] See Appendix A for an account of the entire tour.

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE OF BARTÓK'S 1927-28 UNITED STATES TOUR

1927

10 December	Left Europe on ship *Columbus* for the United States[412]
18 December	Arrived in New York City; The Bohemians' Club dinner[413]
22 December	American premiere of Rhapsody at Carnegie Hall with New York Philharmonic conducted by Willem Mengelberg[414]
23 December	Repeat performance with New York Philharmonic
30 December	Performed Rhapsody with Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by guest conductor Fritz Reiner[415]
31 December	Repeat performance with Philadelphia Orchestra

1928

1 January	Performed for The Society for Contemporary Music in Philadelphia in Foyer of the Academy of Music on recital with Leo Ornstein and Jelly D'Arányi (in place of Joseph Szigeti)[416]
2 January	Embarked on train trip from New York City to Los Angeles[417]
6 January	Arrived in Los Angeles[418]
11 January	Los Angeles Pro-Musica Society Recital at Beaux Arts Auditorium[419]

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[412] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája* [Chronicle of My Father's Life] (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1981), 254.

[413] *Ibid*., 255.

[414] F. D. Perkins, "Bartok Plays His Rhapsody In Debut Here," *New York Herald Tribune* (23 December 1927), 11.

[415] *Ibid*.

[416] "'Show Boat' Safely Makes Broadway Port: Another Philadelphia Success Scores in New York—All Current Offerings to Hold Over Next Week—Some Attractions to Come," *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (31 December 1927), 5.

[417] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 255.

[418] *Ibid*.

13 January	San Francisco Pro-Musica Society Recital at Norman Hall, Fairmont Hotel[420]
15 January	Seattle Pro-Musica Society Recital at Olympic Hotel[421]
17 January	Portland Pro-Musica Society Recital at The Little Theater[422]
21 January	Denver Pro-Musica Society Recital at Y. W. C. A. Auditorium[423]
23 January	Kansas City Pro-Musica Society Recital at Hotel Muehlebach[424]
25 January	Saint Paul Pro-Musica Society Recital at University Club[425]
27 January	Arrived in Cincinnati for rehearsals with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner[426]
2 February	Left Cincinnati for Washington, D.C.[427]
3 February	Arrived in Washington, D.C.[428]
4 February	Performed in Washington, D.C. for Hungarian Minister and Countess Széchényi and 200 guests[429]

[419] "Los Angeles Chapter of Pro Musica Presents Béla Bartók," recital program (11 January 1928). Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

[420] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 257.

[421] "The Seattle Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc. Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (15 January 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

[422] "Pro Musica, Portland Chapter Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (17 January 1928). Courtesy of the Multnomah County Library.

[423] "Pro Musica Denver Chapter Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (21 January 1928), 1. Courtesy of the Denver Public Library Fine Arts Department.

[424] "Pro Musica The Kansas City Chapter," recital program (23 January 1928), Geneve Lichtenwalter Collection, *The* State Historical Society *of* Missouri Manuscript Collection.

[425] "Pro-Musica Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (25 January 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

[426] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 258.

[427] *Ibid*.

[428] *Ibid*.

[429] [No title], *The Washington Post* (5 February 1928), 4S.

5 February	New York Pro-Musica Society Recital with Joseph Szigeti at the Gallo Theater[430]
6 February	Perform again with Szigeti for members of The Bohemians' Club[431]
7 February	Returned to Cincinnati for rehearsals with Reiner for American premiere of Piano Concerto No. 1[432]
13 February	American premiere of Piano Concerto No. 1 with Cincinnati Symphony conducted by Reiner at Carnegie Hall – benefit for Hungary Society of America[433]
14 February	Rehearsals of Concerto in Cambridge, Mass. with Serge Koussevitzky and Boston Symphony Orchestra[434]
16 February	Performed with Eddy Brown Quartet in New York City with singer Crystal Waters or Mária Sámson at Ritz-Carlton Hotel[435] Performed recital with cellist Jean Bidetti at Boston Academy of Arts and Sciences[436]
17 February	Performed Boston premiere of Piano Concerto No. 1 with Koussevitzky and Boston Symphony Orchestra at Boston Symphony Hall[437]
18 February	Repeat performance with Boston Symphony Orchestra[438]

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[430] "Third Concert Pro Musica: Bela Bartok Composer-Pianist and Joseph Szigeti Violinist in Joint Recital," recital program (5 February 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

[431] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 258.

[432] *Ibid*.

[433] Lawrence Gilman, "Bela Bartok Plays His Piano Concerto With the Cincinnatians," *New York Herald Tribune* (14 February 1928), 23.

[434] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 259.

[435] *Ibid*.

[436] *Ibid*.

[437] *Ibid*.

[438] *Ibid*.

19 February	Detroit Pro-Musica Society Recital at Detroit Institute of Arts[439] Travel to Cincinnati for rehearsals with Reiner and Cincinnati Symphony[440]
22 February	Cleveland Pro-Musica Society Recital at Cleveland Museum of Art[441]
23 February	Rehearsed Piano Concerto No. 1 in Cincinnati with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner[442]
24 February	Performed Piano Concerto No. 1 in Cincinnati with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner at Emory Auditorium[443]
25 February	Repeated performance with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra[444]
26 February	Traveled to Chicago[445]
27 February	Chicago Pro-Musica Society Recital at Cordon Club[446]
28 February	Traveled to New York City[447]
29 February	Left New York City on *S. S. George Washington* for Cherbourg

[439] "Pro Musica, Inc. Detroit Chapter," recital program (19 February 1928). Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.

[440] *Ibid*.

[441] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 260.

[442] "Symphony Notes," *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (21 February 1928), 8.

[443] *Ibid*.

[444] *Ibid*.

[445] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 260.

[446] "The Chicago Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc. Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (27 February 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

[447] Béla Bartók, Jr., *Apám életének krónikája*, 260.

APPENDIX B: PRO-MUSICA RECITAL PROGRAMS
AND PROMOTIONAL PAMPHLET

Los Angeles Program[448]

Los Angeles Chapter

of

Pro Musica

Presents

Bela Bartok

at

BEAUX ARTS AUDITORIUM

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 11, 1928

Fifteen-Minute Address in English by MR. BARTOK

. . . *Program* . . .

I BARTOK—(*a*) Suite, op. 14 (1916)
1. Allegretto
2. Scherzo
3. Allegro molto
4. Sostenuto
(*b*) Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915)

II KODALY—(*a*) Epitaphe (from op. 11) (1918)
Allegro molto (from op. 3) (1909)
BARTOK—(*b*) Sonata (1926)
1. Allegro moderato
2. Sostenuto e pesante
3. Allegro molto

III BARTOK—(*a*) Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)
(*b*) Dirge, 1
(*c*) Bear dance
(*d*) Evening in the country
(*e*) Allegro barbaro
} (1908-10)

Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin Piano

The Mason and Hamlin is the official piano of Pro Musica, Inc.

[448] "Los Angeles Chapter of Pro Musica Presents Béla Bartók," recital program (11 January 1928). Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

Seattle Program[449]

The Seattle Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc.

Presents

BELA BARTOK

Hungarian Composer-Pianist

in

RECITAL

JUNIOR BALLROOM, OLYMPIC HOTEL

Sunday Afternoon, January 15th, at 5:00 o'clock

PROGRAM

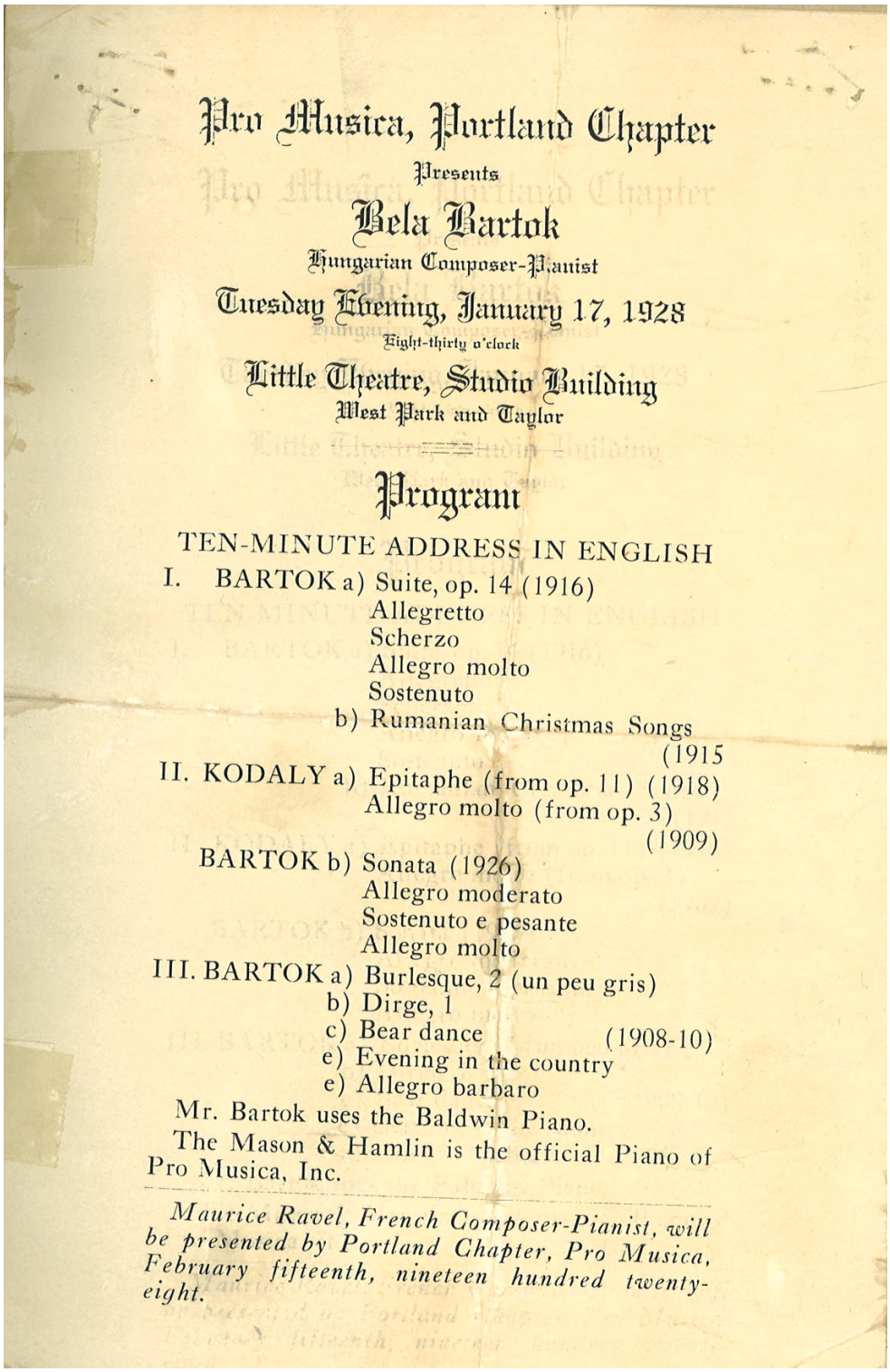
Ten Minute Address in English

I	BARTOK	(a) Suite, op. 14 [1916]	
	1	Allegretto	
	2	Scherzo	
	3	Allegro molto	
	4	Sostenuto	
		(b) Rumanian Christmas Songs [1915]	
II	KODALY	(a) Epitaphe [from op, 11] [1918]	
		Allegro molto [from op, 3] [1909]	
	BARTOK	(b) Sonata 1926	
	1	Allegro moderato	
	2	Sostenuto e pesante	
	3	Allegro molto	
III	BARTOK	(a) Burlesque, 2 [un peu gris]	[1908-10]
		(b) Dirge, 1	
		(c) Bear dance	
		(d) Evening in the Country	
		(e) Allegro barbara	

Mr. Bartok Uses the Baldwin Piano
The Mason and Hamlin is the official piano
of Pro-Musica, Inc.

[449] "The Seattle Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc. Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (15 January 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

Portland Program[450]



Pro Musica, Portland Chapter

Presents

Bela Bartok

Hungarian Composer-Pianist

Tuesday Evening, January 17, 1928

Eight-thirty o'clock

Little Theatre, Studio Building

West Park and Taylor

Program

TEN-MINUTE ADDRESS IN ENGLISH

I. BARTOK a) Suite, op. 14 (1916)
Allegretto
Scherzo
Allegro molto
Sostenuto
b) Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915

II. KODALY a) Epitaphe (from op. 11) (1918)
Allegro molto (from op. 3) (1909)

BARTOK b) Sonata (1926)
Allegro moderato
Sostenuto e pesante
Allegro molto

III. BARTOK a) Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)
b) Dirge, 1
c) Bear dance (1908-10)
e) Evening in the country
e) Allegro barbaro

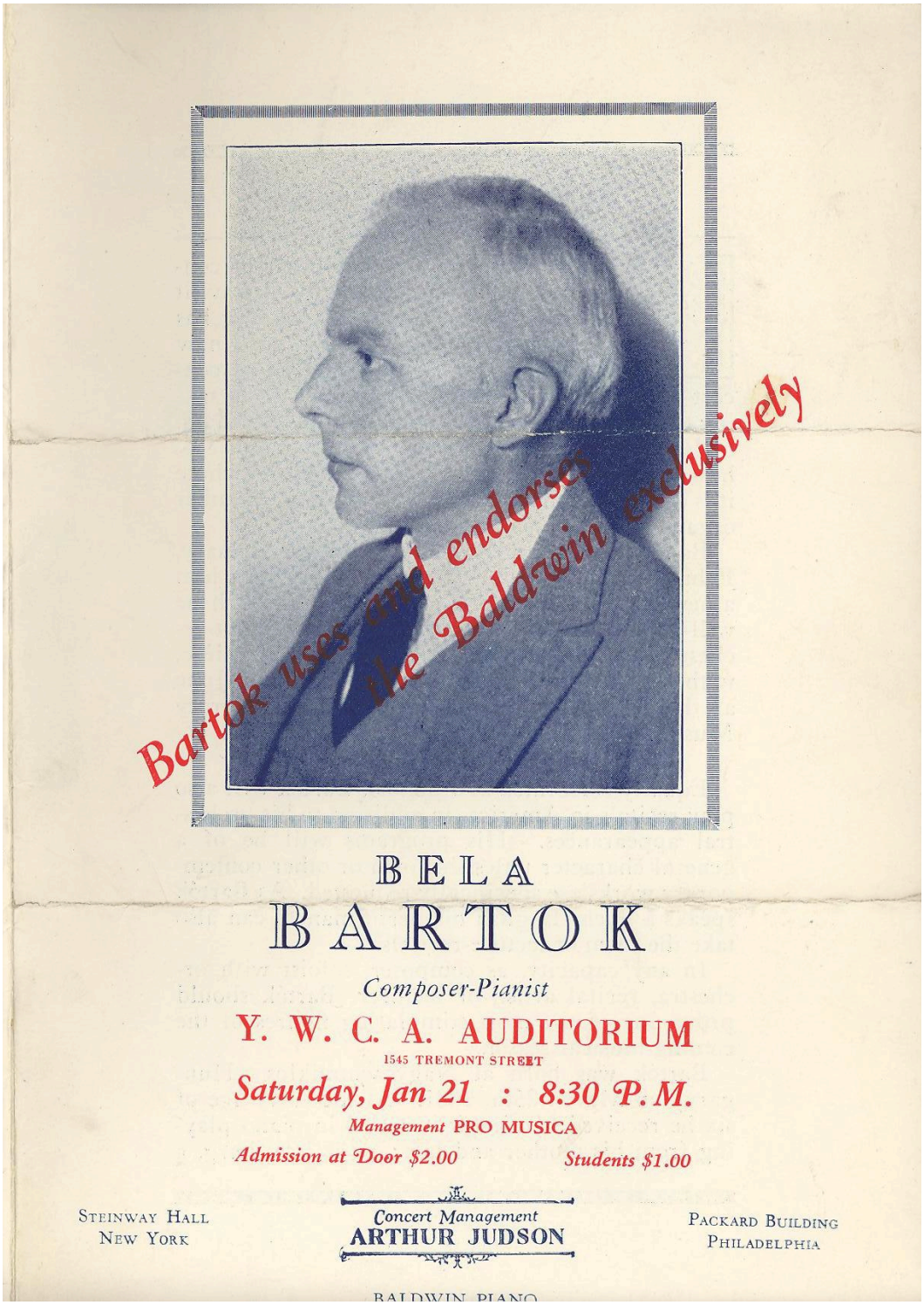
Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin Piano.

The Mason & Hamlin is the official Piano of Pro Musica, Inc.

Maurice Ravel, French Composer-Pianist, will be presented by Portland Chapter, Pro Musica, February fifteenth, nineteen hundred twenty-eight.

[450] "Pro Musica, Portland Chapter Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (17 January 1928). Courtesy of the Multnomah County Library.

Promotional Pamphlet (Denver)[451]



[451] "Bela Bartok Composer-Pianist," (New York: Arthur Judson Concert Management, 1927), 1. Courtesy of the Denver Public Library Fine Arts Department.

BELA BARTOK

BELA BARTOK, the leading composer of contemporary Hungary, makes his first visit to America next season. His coming has been awaited for some time but until now the pressure of creative work and of concert engagements has prevented Bartók from taking the time necessary to cross the ocean. Although he has never appeared here in person his music is, however, as well known here as in Europe where it is constantly offered by every orchestra, chamber organization, pianist, and singer of note.

Bartók will be in this country during January, February and March, 1928. He brings with him a new concerto for piano and orchestra which he will play here with a number of the important orchestras. This concerto has its world première, with Bartók at the piano, in Frankfurt this June at the International Festival for Contemporary Music.

Composer, Pianist, Lecturer

Equally celebrated as a pianist, Bartók will also play recitals in America, in addition to his orchestral appearances. His programs will be of a general character unless his own or other contemporary works are specifically requested. As Bartók speaks a fluent English his performances can also take the form of lecture-recitals.

In any capacity, as composer, soloist with orchestra, recital artist, or lecturer, Bartók should prove one of the most stimulating figures of the coming musical season.

Bartók was born at Nagyszentmiklos (Hungary) on March 25th, 1881. At the early age of six he received his first instruction in piano playing from his mother and later on at Pressburg, a

[452] *Ibid*., 2.

musically active provincial city of Hungary, continued his studies of piano and theory with László Erkel, who was the grandson of Franz Erkel, a famous Hungarian composer. It was then that Bartók's first compositions were written. Having graduated from High School, he followed the advice of his close friend Ernö Dohnányi who prompted him to finish his studies at the Budapest Royal Conservatory under the guidance of Prof. Franz Thomans (piano) and Hans Koessler (composition).

First Compositions

In 1903 Bartók finished a symphonic poem entitled "Kossuth" which was accepted by Hans Richter for a Manchester première, as well as a Violin Sonata and a Piano Quintet both of which were successfully produced at Vienna but have hitherto remained unpublished. His first important composition was a Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra, op. 1, finished in 1904 and performed with great success at Budapest (in 1909), Zurich and elsewhere. In 1905 Bartók completed his First Suite for full orchestra which was at once accepted for Vienna.

Exponent of Folk Music

As far back as 1904 Bartók had devoted his time to studies of Hungarian national music. In 1905 he associated himself with Zoltán Kodály in these studies, at the same time extending his research work also to Roumanian and Slovak national music, and in 1913 made an extensive trip to Africa for the purpose of studying the national element in the music of the Biskri, an Arabian tribe resident near Biskra in Algiers.

The governing feature of Bartók's composition

[453] *Ibid*., 3.

has been his endeavor to infuse new life into our present means of musical expression by adding to them elements of a nationally strong peasant music which, with its freshness and vigour, provides a striking contrast to our present-day methods of art music. Gradually Bartók has come to abandon the customary system of major and minor keys, reverting instead to the tonal system of ancient church composition. His collection of "350 Roumanian National Melodies," edited by the Roumanian Academy of Sciences, of Bucharest, may be considered the outcome of Bartók's research work.

Later Works

In 1907 he was appointed professor of the Royal Conservatory of Music at Budapest and, in that period of his life, composed his Second Suite, op. 4, and the "Deux Portraits," both for small orchestra, as well as a number of piano compositions, the First String Quartet and the "Deux Imáges," op. 10, the latter for full orchestra.

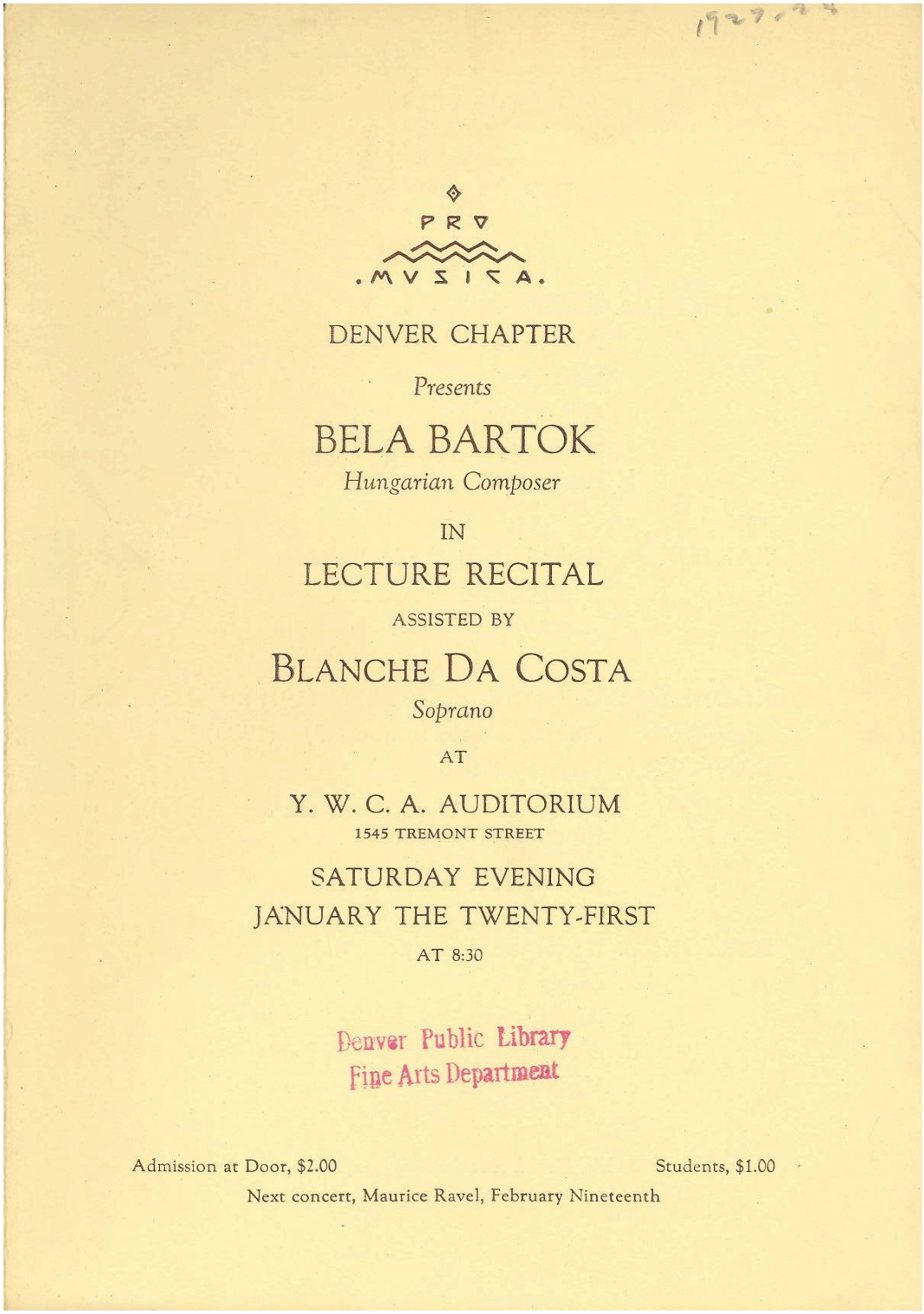
Bartók's first stage work, a one-act opera entitled "Duke Blue-Beard's Castle" (libretto by Béla Balázs) was written in 1911 and successfully produced at the Budapest Royal Opera on May 24th, 1918.

Opera and Ballet

The same opera house had on May 12th of the preceding year performed, for the first time anywhere, a dance play by Béla Balázs, entitled "The Wooden Prince," the accompanying music for which Bartók had completed in 1916. Both of these works were produced, for the first time in Germany, April, 1922, by the Frankfurt Opera. In 1921 Bartók finished the music for a pantomime by Melchior Lengyel, entitled "The Wondrous Mandarin."

[454] *Ibid*., 4.

Denver Program[455]



1927-28

PRO MVSICA

DENVER CHAPTER

Presents

BELA BARTOK

Hungarian Composer

IN

LECTURE RECITAL

ASSISTED BY

BLANCHE DA COSTA

Soprano

AT

Y. W. C. A. AUDITORIUM

1545 TREMONT STREET

SATURDAY EVENING

JANUARY THE TWENTY-FIRST

AT 8:30

Admission at Door, $2.00 Students, $1.00

Next concert, Maurice Ravel, February Nineteenth

[455] "Pro Musica Denver Chapter Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (21 January 1928), 1. Courtesy of the Denver Public Library Fine Arts Department.

Denver Program, p. 2[456]

PROGRAM

BARTOK *a.* Suite, op. 14 (1916)
Allegretto
Scherzo
Allegro molto
Sostenuto
b. Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915)

BARTOK Sechs Ungarische Volkslieder
BLANCHE DA COSTA
Mr. Bartok at the piano

KODALY *a.* Epitaphe (from op. 11) (1918)
Allegro molto (from op. 3) (1909)
BARTOK *b.* Sonata (1926)
Allegro moderate
Sostenuto e pesante
Allegro molto

BARTOK *a.* Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris) (1908-10)
b. Dirge, 1 "
c. Bear Dance "
d. Evening in the country "
e. Allegro barbara "

Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin piano

[456] *Ibid.*, 2.

Translations—Six Hungarian Folk Songs

(1)

Black the earth,
My kerchief, snow-white.
He abandoned me—
Love's curse weighs me down!
Tearless, heartlessly
He cast me aside:
Soon, now, will strike
My heart's death hour.

(2)

God, oh God in heaven,
Let the waters rise
And bear me, that they see my plight,
Even to my father's door
Before my mother's eyes.

A cruel bandit, he,
Hiding in the wood
Listening, waiting victims.
For pennies he sheds blood.

(3)

Winter departs, Sweet Love,
Spring comes again.
Oh, that I were a rose
In your little garden.
I cannot be a rose
For Franz Joseph calls me.
I shall languish
In tall Vienna barracks
Instead of in your garden.

(4)

My mission was to guide the plow,
Young seed to scatter,
The harvest garner.
But, Oh, unhitched
I take to the saddle.
Instead of the whip, the sword
Which better becomes the warrior.

To-day alas, we march away
Leave parents, beasts and farm:
Weeping leave behind the wife,
The true one, in tears.

(5)

Would I a-hunting go
Into the mountains blue,
I'd surely waiting find
Another love—or two.
O, soft my sweetheart's heart—
If why I only knew.

What use the newer love
Whoever she may be
When I my old one love
And truly she loves me.

(6)

Women, Women,
Now can I call you companions:
Now, with you, can I bleach baby-clothes.
Never have I seen a girl
Offered for sale or lashed
By a master's cruel hand!

Often would I have begged my mother
To let me have a beau
But mothers are so heavy-handed.
When the dogs barked:
"Hark!" I rejoiced,
"Here come the fellows"—
(So I thought.)

English translation by Blanche Da Costa, Alpheus Elder.

[457] *Ibid*., 3.

[458] *Ibid.*, 4.

Kansas City Program[459]

PRO MUSICA

The Kansas City Chapter

BALL ROOM HOTEL MUEHLEBACH

Monday Evening, January Twenty-Third, Nineteen Twenty-Eight

At Eight-Fifteen O'clock

BELA BARTOK

Guest-Member From Hungary

PROGRAM

I. Bartok — (a) Suite, Op. 14 (1916)
1. Allegretto
2. Scherzo
3. Allegro molto
4. Sostenuto

(b) Roumanian Christmas Songs (1915)

II. Kodaly — (a) Epitaphe (from Op. 11) (1918)
Allegro molto (from Op. 3) (1909)

Bartok — (b) Sonata (1926)
1. Allegro moderato
2. Sostenuto e pesante
3. Allegro molto

III. Bartok — (a) Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)
(b) Dirge
(c) Bear dance
(d) Evening in the country
(e) Allegro barbaro
} (1908-1910)

Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin Piano.

The Mason and Hamlin is the official piano of Pro Musica.

[459] "Pro Musica The Kansas City Chapter," recital program (23 January 1928), Geneve Lichtenwalter Collection, *The* State Historical Society *of* Missouri Manuscript Collection.

St. Paul Program[460]

Originally with ZX Scrapbooks Nos. 5-6

Pro-Musica

Presents

Bela Bartok

University Club, Saint Paul
Wednesday evening, January 25th, 1928

I	BARTOK	(a) Suite, op. 14 (1916)	
		Allegretto	
		Scherzo	
		Allegro molto	
		Sostenuto	
		(b) Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915)	
II	KODALY	(a) Epitaphe (from op. 11) (1918)	
		Allegro molto (from op. 3) (1909)	
	BARTOK	(b) Sonata (1926)	
		Allegro moderato	
		Sostenuto e pesante	
		Allegro molto	
III	BARTOK	(a) Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)	1908-10
		(b) Dirge, 1	
		(c) Bear Dance	
		(d) Evening in the country	
		(e) Allegro Barbaro	

Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin piano

The Mason and Hamlin is the official piano of Pro-Musica Inc.

[460] "Pro-Musica Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (25 January 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

FIRE NOTICE: Look around NOW and choose the nearest Exit to your seat. In case of fire, walk (not run) to THAT Exit. Do not try to beat your neighbor to the street.
JOHN J. DORMAN, Fire Commissioner.

SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 5th, 1928, at 8:30 o'clock

THIRD CONCERT

PRO MUSICA

BELA BARTOK
Composer-Pianist

—and—

JOSEPH SZIGETI
Violinist

IN JOINT RECITAL

PROGRAM

I.

NEW PIANO SONATA (1926) ..... BELA BARTOK

Allegro moderato
Sostenuto e pesante
Allegro molto

[461] "Third Concert Pro Musica: Bela Bartok Composer-Pianist and Joseph Szigeti Violinist in Joint Recital," recital program (5 February 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

New York Program, p. 2[462]

II.

VIOLIN AND PIANO SONATA NO. 2.....BELA BARTOK

Molto moderato

Allegretto

III.

DUO IN A MAJOR.....SCHUBERT

Allegro moderato

Scherzo

Andantino

Allegro vivace

IV.

(a) SEVEN HUNGARIAN FOLK TUNES..BARTOK-SZIGETI

(b) SEVEN PEASANT DANCES.....BARTOK-SZEKELY

The Mason and Hamlin is the official piano of Pro-Musica.

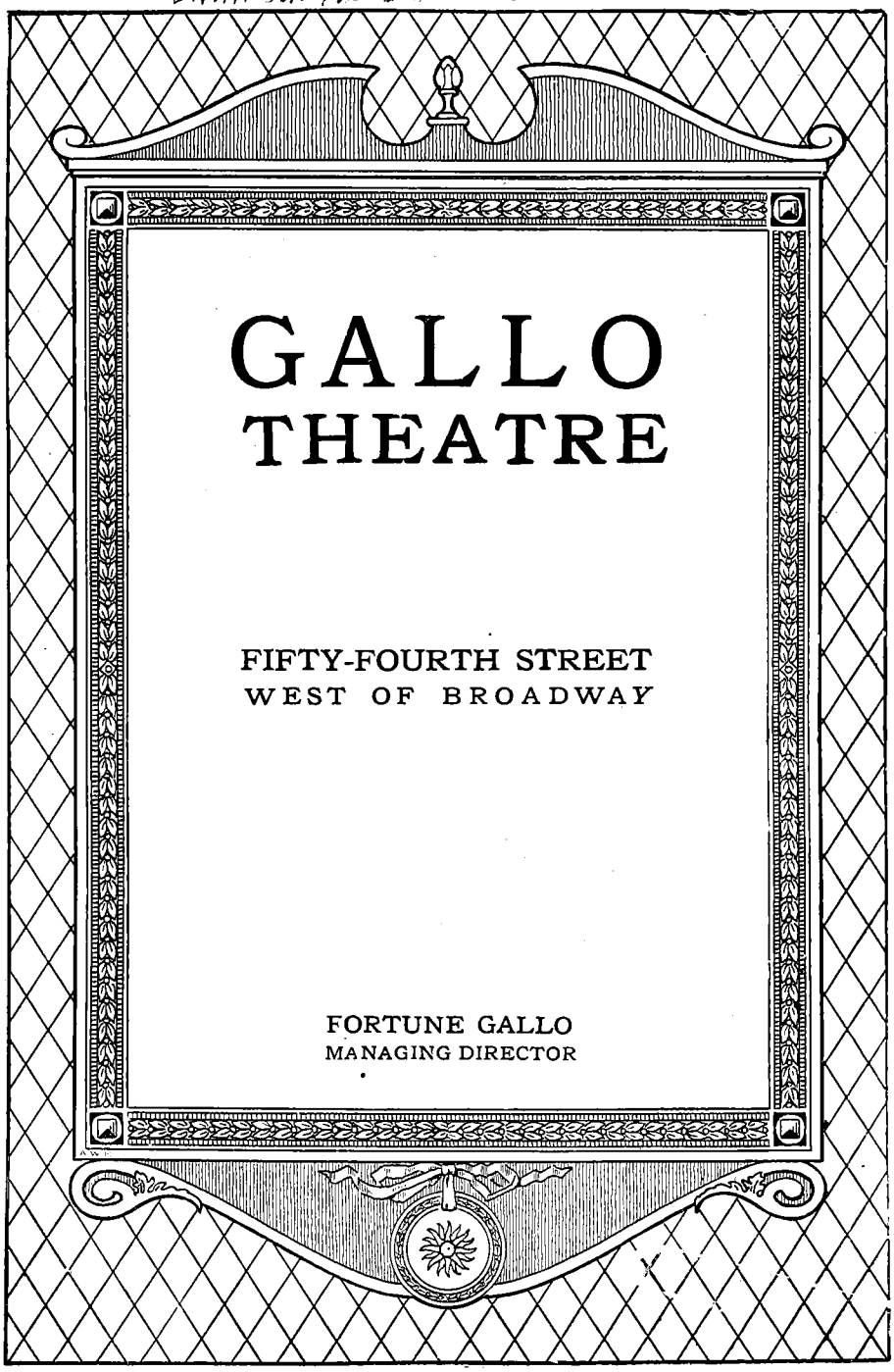
Mr. Bartok and Mr. Szigeti use the Baldwin Piano

Mr. Bartok records for the Welte-Mignon.

Mr. Szigeti records for the Columbia Phonograph Co.

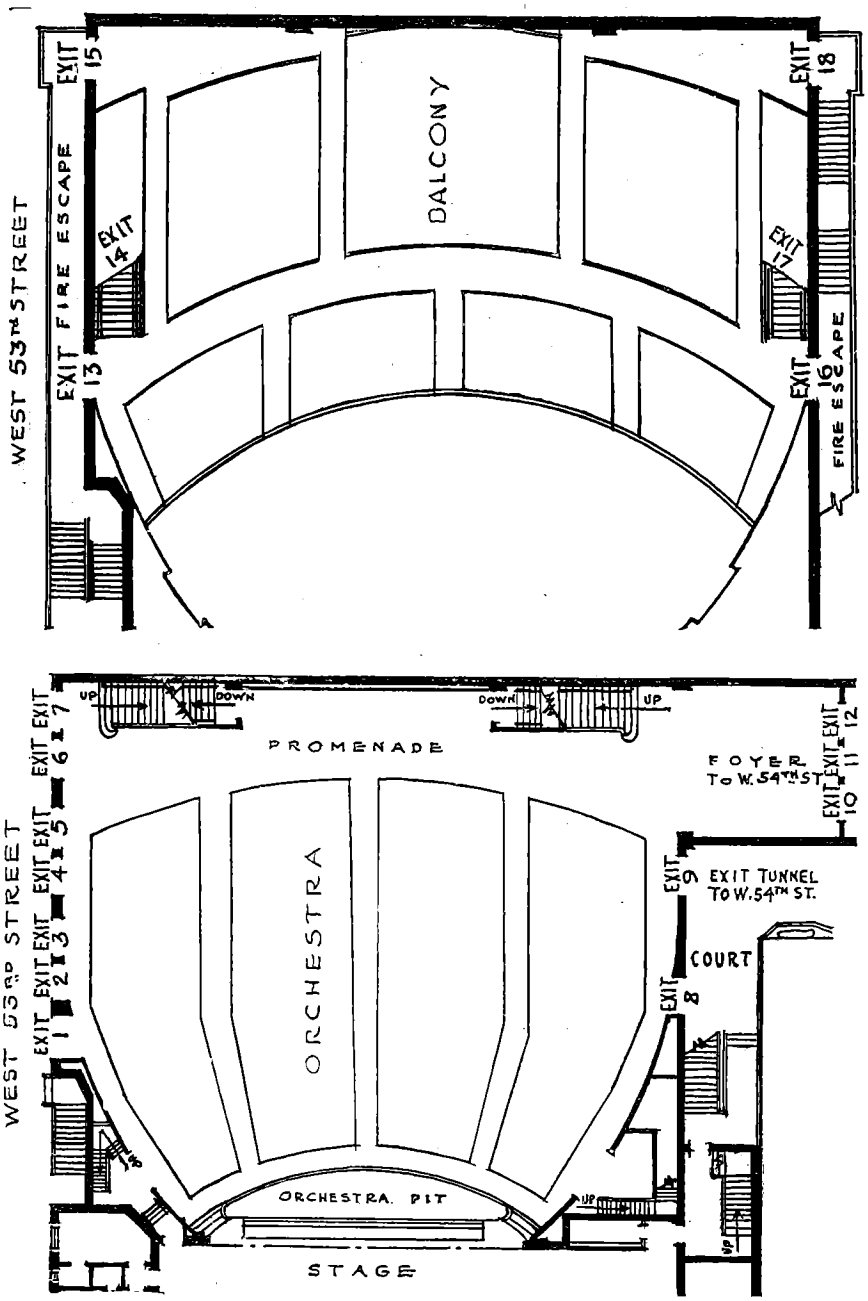
CONCERT MANAGEMENT ARTHUR JUDSON

[462] *Ibid.*, 2.


GALLO
THEATRE
FIFTY-FOURTH STREET
WEST OF BROADWAY
FORTUNE GALLO
MANAGING DIRECTOR

[463] *Ibid*., 3.

New York Program, p. 4[464]



[464] *Ibid*., 4.

Detroit Program[465]

Pro Musica, Inc.

DETROIT CHAPTER

SEASON OF 1927-1928

First Concert

Detroit Institute of Art

Sunday Evening, February 19

At 9 o'clock

[465] "Pro Musica, Inc. Detroit Chapter," recital program (19 February 1928). Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.

Detroit Program, p. 2[466]

BELA BARTOK

HUNGARIAN COMPOSER, PIANIST MUSICOLOGIST

PROGRAM

Presented by a ten-minute talk in English

I.	BARTOK	(a)	Suite, op. 14 (1916) 1 Allegretto; 2 Scherzo; 3 Allegro molto; 4 Sostenuto
		(b)	Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915)
II.	KODALY	(a)	Epitaphe (from op. 11) (1918) Allegro molto (from op. 3) (1909)
	BARTOK	(b)	Sonata (1926) 1 Allegro Moderato; 2 Sostenuto 2 pesante; 3 Allegro molto
III.	BARTOK	(a)	Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris) (1908-10)
		(b)	Dirge, 1
		(c)	Bear Dance
		(d)	Evening in the Country
		(e)	Allegro Barbaro

MR. BARTOK USES THE BALDWIN PIANO
THE MASON AND HAMLIN IS THE OFFICIAL PIANO
OF PRO MUSICA, INC.

[466] *Ibid*., 2.

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EDWARD G. KEMP, Recording Secretary
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[467] *Ibid*., 3.

Chicago Program[468]

14 [From scrapbook #6 1927, 28, 29]

THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF PRO-MUSICA, Inc.

Presents

BELA BARTOK

in

LECTURE RECITAL

at the CORDON CLUB, FINE ARTS BUILDING

Monday, February 27, 1928, *at 8:30 p. m.*

PROGRAM

ADDRESS by MR. BARTOK

I. BARTOK
- (a) Suite, Opus 14 (1916)
  1. Allegretto
  2. Scherzo
  3. Allegro Molto
  4. Sostenuto
- (b) Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915)

II. KODALY
- (a) Epitaphe (from Opus 11) (1918)
  Allegro Molto (from Opus 3) (1909)

BARTOK
- (b) Sonata (1926)
  1. Allegro Moderato
  2. Sostenuto e Pesante
  3. Allegro Molto

III. BARTOK
- (a) Burlesque, 2 (un peu gris)
- (b) Dirge, 1
- (c) Bear Dance
- (d) Evening in the Country
- (e) Allegro Barbaro

} (1908-1910)

Mr. Bartok uses the Baldwin Piano.

The MASON and HAMLIN is the Official Piano of Pro-Musica, Inc.

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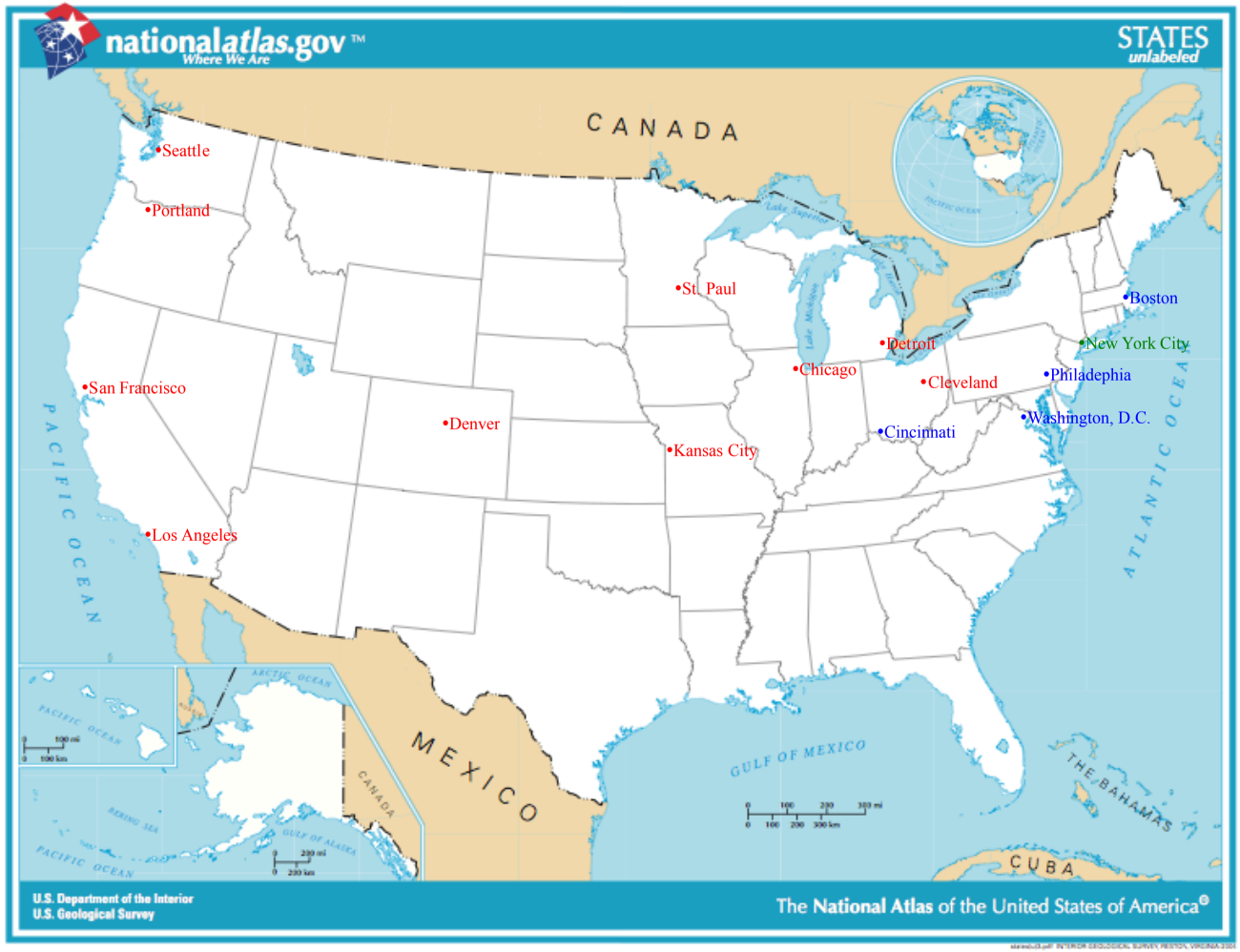
[468] "The Chicago Chapter of Pro-Musica, Inc. Presents Bela Bartok," recital program (27 February 1928), MSS 54, The E. Robert Schmitz Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Courtesy of the Yale University Library.

APPENDIX C: CITIES WHERE BARTÓK PERFORMED ON HIS 1927-28 AMERICAN TOUR



Legend: Red = Pro-Musica Lecture-Recitals
Blue = Other performances
Green = New York—Pro-Musica and other performances

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