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# Ernö Dohnányi

(1877-1960)

## Concertino for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 45 (1952) (15:18)

- 1 I Andante (7:00)
- 2 II Allegretto vivace (3:55)
- 3 III Adagio non troppo (4:23)

Sara Cutler, harp

American Symphony Orchestra; Leon Botstein, conductor

## Sextet in C Major, Op. 37 (1935) (29:20)

- 4 I Allegro appassionato (10:56)
- 5 II Intermezzo (5:32)
- 6 III Allegro con sentimento (7:13)
- 7 IV Finale: Allegro vivace, giocoso (5:39)

Erica Kiesewetter, violin



Karen Dreyfus, viola

Eugene Moye, cello

Laura Flax, clarinet

Jeffrey Lang, horn

Diane Walsh, piano



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## Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 41 (1945) (18:28)

- 8 I Impromptu (2:52)
- 9 II Scherzino (2:20)
- 10 III Canzonetta (2:03)
- 11 IV Cascades (3:45)
- 12 V Ländler (2:16)
- 13 VI Cloches (5:12)

Todd Crow, piano



**Ernö Dohnányi**  
(1877-1960)

**Ernö Dohnányi**, composer, pianist, conductor, teacher and administrator, was a true musical legend. He played a central role in Hungarian musical life for decades, but, especially in his younger years, he was also a major international star, at home in the concert halls of Vienna, London and New York. By the 1930s, however, his administrative duties and deteriorating health began to take a toll on his career.

**Dohnányi ca. 1955** World War II dealt him some further blows from which he probably never fully recovered. He resigned his post as director of the Academy of Music in Budapest as a protest against the anti-Jewish legislations of 1941, which did not save him from being unfairly accused of Nazi sympathies later. He left Hungary in 1944, at the age of 67, and eventually started a new life in the New World; after a short stint in Argentina, he became professor of music at Florida State University in Tallahassee, where he continued to teach until his death.

As a composer, Dohnányi remained unshakably committed to the musical universe of Brahms, whom he had met as a young man. (Brahms personally arranged to have Dohnányi's *Piano Quintet, Op. 1*, performed at the Vienna Tonkünstlerverein in 1895.) He enriched that universe with contributions noted for their wit, elegance, structural sophistication and profound understanding of the soul of the instruments. If that is epigonism, as has sometimes been charged, then epigonism takes real genius.

Dohnányi wrote his *Concertino for Harp and Chamber Orchestra* in Tallahassee in 1952. Its lush post-Romantic idiom, tinged with more than a few

French touches, conveys the composer's nostalgia for a world that used to be his, but no longer existed. The work is in three sections: a lyrical "Andante" in which the virtuosic harp figurations accompany a series of wistful melodies played by the orchestra (mostly woodwind and horn); a scherzo-like "Allegretto vivace" with some Mendelssohnian echoes; and the real surprise, the closing "Adagio non troppo." The harp, playing all by itself, introduces a soulful theme, answered by a delicate oboe line. The entire orchestra gradually joins in, developing and intensifying the melody, but at the end, the harp is left alone with the ominous strokes of the timpani. The suspenseful conclusion turns this charming concert piece into something more: a poignant dramatic statement that is quiet, yet extremely powerful.

The *Sextet in C major* (1935), composed in Budapest, is Dohnányi's final chamber composition (not counting two short works for flute written shortly before his death). Throughout the work, themes of a lyrical nature keep clashing with a baldly stated, and restated, tritone gesture that, as the work's *Leitmotiv*, appears in all the movements except the second. That contrast dominates the opening "Allegro appassionato." The suave chromatic harmonies of the second-movement "Intermezzo" frame an angularly rhythmical middle section whose fierce accents sometimes border on the tragic.



**Dohnányi with his wife Ilona, 1956**



**Dohnányi, Bartók & Kodály  
ca. 1900 carnival in Budapest**

The third movement is a set of variations on a theme of elegant simplicity, introduced by the clarinet. In the course of the variations, the melody displays, in turn, the virtuosic, sensuous, and playful aspects of its personality. After a magical coda, the movement ends with a forceful reiteration of the tritone motive, leading directly into the brilliant finale. The sprightly syncopations in this "Allegro vivace" and "giocoso" have led commentators to describe it as a jazz parody, though some have qualified this assessment by referring to "European jazz." At any rate, the elaboration of this melody is nothing short of hilarious; therefore, the return of the dramatic tritone motive comes as something of a shock. The two characters engage

in a tug-of-war of sorts at the end of the movement

– a conflict Dohnányi resolves with a sleight of hand only he could have performed.

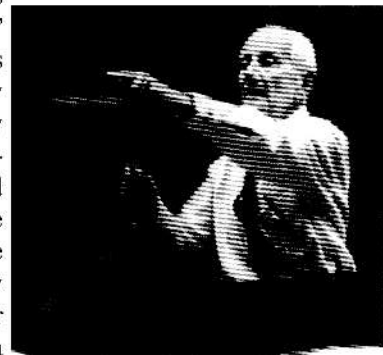
*The Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 41* (1945) were written just after Dohnányi left Hungary, never to return. With Ilona Zachár (who would become his third wife) and her two children, he took up temporary residence in a small village in Upper Austria, waiting for his fate to be decided. During this very uncertain, transitional period, Dohnányi remained active as a composer and performer. He finished his *Second Symphony* (begun in Hungary) and composed the present *Six Pieces*, his first solo piano music in twenty years. The 68-year-old Dohnányi was revisiting many of the musical landscapes of his youth. Elegant virtuosity, spicy harmonies, and intimate lyricism remain important hallmarks. With his creative powers undiminished, the composer was able to fill the traditional character genres (impromptu,

scherzo, ländler, etc.) with new and always attractive ideas. The last piece, "Cloches" (Bells) deserves special mention, because its tone, as Ilona Dohnányi noted in her recently published biography of her husband, is "very different from the five lighthearted compositions that precede it." In this music, marked *mesto* ("sad"), the repeated low octaves of the bass undoubtedly evoke funeral bells and the delicate melody that unfolds over it is clearly a dirge. This piece was written soon after Dohnányi found out that his son, Mátyás, a captain in the Hungarian Army, had died in a Russian prison camp. (Dohnányi later found out that his other son, Hans, who lived in Berlin, had been executed by the Nazis during the last days of their power, for his role in an anti-Hitler conspiracy.)

Dohnányi first performed these piano pieces on a BBC program during a visit to London in the fall of 1946. They were also published in England at the time. One of their first champions in the United States was Dohnányi's former pupil, Ernő Daniel, who was the teacher of the pianist on this recording, Todd Crow.

~ notes by Peter Laki

Peter Laki, a native of Hungary, graduated from the Franz Liszt Conservatory of Budapest with a degree in musicology. He pursued further studies at the Sorbonne in Paris and at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1989. Since 1990, he has been the Program Annotator of the Cleveland Orchestra, and has taught at several colleges and universities in the Cleveland area. Currently he is Visiting Associate Professor at Oberlin College. He is the author of several published articles and the editor of *Bartók and His World* (Princeton University Press, 1995).



**Dohnányi ca. 1955**

**Leon Botstein** is music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra in New York and of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the radio orchestra of Israel. Last season saw the opening of the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College. This is the new home of the Bard Music Festival, of which Mr. Botstein is the founder and co-Artistic Director, and of a new winter concert series for the American Symphony. Mr. Botstein also guest conducts around the world with orchestras including the Bamberg Symphony, the London Philharmonic, NDR—Hannover, Puerto Rico Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Bochum Symphony.

Mr. Botstein's recent recordings include Gavriil Popov's epic Symphony No. 1 and Shostakovich's *Theme and Variations Op. 3* with the London Symphony, (Telarc) and Liszt's *Dante Symphony* and *Tasso* with the London Symphony (Telarc).



Dan Porges

A live performance of Strauss's opera *Die ägyptische Helena* with Deborah Voigt and the American Symphony Orchestra has received great critical acclaim, as has his recording of Gliere's Symphony No. 3, "Ilya Muramets" with the London Symphony. Other recordings for Telarc include Max Reger's *Böcklin Tone Poems* and *Romantic Suite*, Richard Strauss's opera *Die Liebe der Danae*; Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*; music of Karol Szymanowski; symphonies of Karl Amadeus Hartmann; Dohnányi's D-Minor Symphony, and Bruckner's Fifth Symphony (Schalk edition). He has also recorded music of Ernst Toch with NDR—Hamburg for New World Records. His extensive discography also includes works by Brahms, Schubert, Bruch, Mendelssohn.

Leon Botstein is a prominent scholar of music history, the editor of *Musical Quarterly*, and the author of numerous articles and books. For his contributions to music he has received the award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and Harvard University's prestigious Centennial Award, as well as the Cross of Honor, First Class from the government of Austria. Since 1975, he has been president of Bard College in New York, where he also holds the Leon Levy Chair in Arts and Humanities.

**Sara Cutler** has appeared as concerto soloist at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), the Edinburgh Festival (Scotland), and the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. In New York, where she has worked with conductors including Georg Solti, James Levine, André Previn, and Donald Runnicles, Ms. Cutler is principal harp with the American Symphony Orchestra, the New York City Ballet Orchestra, and solo harpist with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She has performed around the globe, appearing in recital in Tokyo, Tel Aviv, London, Paris, and New York. She has recorded extensively with the

Metropolitan Opera, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Chesis/Cutler, and with soprano Jessye Norman on the Phillips release, "In the Spirit". A graduate of Yale and former student of renowned teacher Lucile Lawrence, she is on the faculty of Brooklyn College's Conservatory of Music.



**Todd Crow** has been widely acclaimed for performances in North and South America and Europe. In recent years he has appeared in recital or chamber music at the Berlioz/Dutilleux Festival in Manchester, England, Washington's National Gallery of Art, London's Wigmore Hall, and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. He made his Carnegie Hall debut as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra in 1992 and his London orchestral debut at the Barbican Centre with the London Philharmonic in 1986. He plays regularly in the major

halls of New York and London and is heard frequently on BBC Radio in both live and recorded performances. Since 1996, he has been music director and pianist of the Mt. Desert Festival of Chamber Music in Northeast Harbor, Maine. His CDs include solo works of Haydn, Schubert, Berlioz/Liszt, Taneyev, and Ernst Toch's Piano Concerto No. 1 with NDR—Hamburg conducted by Leon Botstein. He is an honors graduate of the University of California and the Juilliard School where he studied with Ania Dorfmann, Emanuel Bay, and Ernő Daniel, a pupil of Dohnányi at Budapest's Franz Liszt Academy. He received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of California in 1986 and is currently Professor of Music at Vassar College.



Violinist **Erica Kiesewetter** is the concertmaster of the American Symphony Orchestra and also holds this position with the Long Island Philharmonic, Opera Orchestra of New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, Stamford Symphony, and Solisti NY. She has appeared frequently as concerto soloist with these orchestras and also with the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, New Amsterdam Symphony, New York Chamber Symphony, and the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra. Ms. Kiesewetter performs annually at the Bard Music Festival, OK Mozart Festival, and the Central Vermont Chamber Festival. The former first violinist of the Colorado Quartet and founding member of the Leonardo Trio, she has garnered prizes at the Coleman, Evian, and Concert Artists Guild Competitions, and has toured England, France, Holland, Germany, and Brazil. She has recorded numerous chamber works as a member of the Leonardo Trio, Perspective Ensemble, Bard Festival Players, and Solisti NY among others. Educated at Juilliard, Ms. Kiesewetter now teaches at Columbia University.



Roy Lewis

**Karen Dreyfus** has distinguished herself as a recipient of many prizes both in the United States and abroad, including the Naumburg Viola Competition (1982), the Lionel Tertis Competition (1980), the Washington International Competition (1979), and the Hudson Valley Competition (1978). Ms. Dreyfus has concertized extensively in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and South America. Some of her musical collaborations have been with Musicians From Marlboro, Philomusica, Theater Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center, the New York Philharmonic, and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Karen Dreyfus has performed in recital with Yehudi Menuhin at Carnegie Hall and has also collaborated with such artists as Rudolf Serkin, Alexander Schneider, Leon Fleisher, Chick Corea, and her husband, Glenn Dieterow.

Ms. Dreyfus's first solo recording, entitled "Romanze" (BRIDGE 9016) was received with great critical acclaim. *American Record Guide* cited Ms. Dreyfus as "a terrific player with impeccable technique and intonation, beautiful tone, and real musicianship. Her playing is highly expressive and responsive to the many moods elicited by this varied program."

In 1995, Karen Dreyfus recorded the William Walton *Viola Concerto* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, and she has recorded works for viola and orchestra by eight American composers with the Silesian Philharmonic (MMC). Most recently, Karen Dreyfus along with the ensemble Lyric Piano Quartet, have released a recording of piano quartet works of Strauss and Turina for Black Box Records.



**Eugene Moye** has been ranked as "one of the foremost cellists of his generation" by *The New York Times*. Principal cellist of the American Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York and Westchester Philharmonic, he is also highly visible as a performer of chamber music. Mr. Moye has recorded with and accompanied many leading pop music stars including Michael Jackson, Britney Spears, Ricky Martin, Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, KISS, and countless others.



**Laura Flax** is recognized as one of New York City's most versatile players. She is principal clarinetist with the American Symphony Orchestra and the New York City Opera orchestra. Ms. Flax has recorded Joan Tower's *Wings* and performs on Bridge Records' recording of Shulamit Ran's clarinet music (BRIDGE 9052). She lives in New York City with her two daughters, Fanny and Amalie.



**Jeffrey Lang** is principal horn of the American Symphony Orchestra in New York City. He is active in New York recording studios, and performs regularly with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera. Mr. Lang has also been engaged as acting principal horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the New York City Opera Orchestra. He was formerly principal horn of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Lang is a member of the Graham Ashton Brass Ensemble and has performed and recorded with the Canadian Brass. He is an frequent soloist having performed with the American Symphony Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Stamford Symphony, New York Chamber Symphony and AVANTI! of Helsinki. Mr. Lang is also principal horn of Disney's hit show, *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway. Originally from Wall, New Jersey, he attended Temple University and received his B.M. Degree from the Juilliard School. Mr. Lang lives in New Jersey with his wife, cellist Elina Snellman-Lang and their two sons, Johannes and Markus.



**Diane Walsh**, whose many awards over a 35-year international career include the top prizes at the Munich International Piano Competition and the Salzburg International Mozart Competition, has given solo recitals and performed concertos worldwide. Ms. Walsh has played concertos with the radio symphonies of Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Berlin, the San Francisco Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and orchestras in Brazil, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Russia. She has given solo recitals in New York City at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum and Merkin Concert Hall; at the Kennedy Center in Washington, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad, the Rudolfinum in Prague, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and in other major cities in the United States, Canada, Venezuela, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands. She has performed at many of the world's top music festivals, including Bard, Marlboro, Santa Fe and the Skaneateles Festival in the Finger Lakes region of New York State where for five years ending in 2004 she was artistic director.

Ms. Walsh's many recordings include *Sonatas and Preludes* (BRIDGE 9151), which offers piano sonatas by Barber, Bartók and Prokofiev and the *Preludes* of Frank Martin, and, on the Biddulph label, the Bartók Sonatas for Violin and Piano with Emerson String Quartet violinist Eugene Drucker. She has also recorded for Sony Classical, Newport Classics, Nonesuch, Koch International, Stereophile, CRI, Music and Arts, and Book-of-the Month Records.



### American Symphony Orchestra

"It is more and more obvious how necessary the **American Symphony Orchestra** and its conductor, Leon Botstein, are to New York's art music life" asserted the *Village Voice*. Founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with a mission to "perform concerts of great music within the means of everyone," today the American Symphony Orchestra has been called "a virtuoso exercise in musical outreach" (*The New York Times*). As part of Lincoln Center Presents Great Performers, the Orchestra performs thematically organized concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, linking music to the visual arts, literature, politics, and popular culture, often in collaboration with museums and other cultural institutions.

In addition to its main subscription series at Lincoln Center, the American Symphony Orchestra performs a lecture/concert series with audience interaction at Columbia University's Miller Theatre called Classics Declassified. It is also the resident orchestra of the new Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, where it participates in a winter concert series as well as the summer Bard Music Festival. The American Symphony Orchestra also offers a variety of music education programs at high schools in Manhattan and New Jersey.

The American Symphony Orchestra has toured the world, and made numerous recordings and broadcasts. Under Leon Botstein, it inaugurated São Paulo's new concert hall, and made several tours of Asia. Its most recent recording is Richard Strauss's opera *Die ägyptische Helena* with Deborah Voigt, which was recently released by Telarc to outstanding acclaim. This recording joins the American Symphony's recording of Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae*, also from Telarc. Other recordings with Leon Botstein include *Franz Schubert: Orchestrated* on the Koch International label, with works by Joachim, Mottl, and Webern and, on the Vanguard Classics label, Johannes Brahms Serenade No. 1 in D major, Op. 11 for Orchestra (1860).



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Dohnányi photographs courtesy of:

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Front: Dohnányi ca. 1927

Back: Dohnányi in 1897 at the National Hungarian Royal Academy of Music

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