

The conductor and composer Antal Doráti was one of the most distinguished musicians of the 20th century. He was born in Budapest on April 9 1906 and rose to become the youngest ever conductor of the Royal Opera House in his native city soon after graduating at age 18. In 1928 he went to Dresden as assistant to Fritz Busch and subsequently was engaged as conductor at the opera house in Münster/Westfalia, where he stayed until 1933. From 1934-1941 he was first second conductor, later music director of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and, subsequently, of the American Ballet Theater in New York. His American debut as a symphony conductor came in 1937, when he guest-conducted the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. He became an American citizen in 1947. From 1945-1949 Doráti directed and greatly revitalized the Dallas Symphony. He became music director of the Minneapolis Symphony in 1949, where he stayed for 11 years.

In 1963 he was appointed Chief conductor of the BBC Orchestra, a post he held for 4 years. This was followed by a similar position with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (from 1965-1972). Parallel to his European activities he became music director of the National Symphony in Washington in 1970, followed by the same position 1977 in Detroit. At the same time (since 1975) Antal Doráti accepted the Royal Philharmonic's invitation to become their chief conductor. From 1981 he became "Conductor Laureate" for life of 3 orchestras (RPO London, Stockholm Philharmonic and Detroit Symphony). Antal Doráti's recording activities commenced in 1936, his total number of recordings reached nearly 600. Many of them won international prizes, amongst others 32 "Grand Prix". His most important recording project was the complete recording of the 107 Haydn symphonies and 8 of the composer's operas.

Antal Doráti's influence in the musical world has been highly significant, not only as a conductor. He has an impressive number of compositions to his credit, which are performed worldwide more and more.

His teaching activities include regular masterclasses at the Royal College of music in London as well as at the Music Academy in Budapest. Both institutions made him their honorary member. Also masterclasses at the Salzburg Festival, Dartington and Bern - Basel are mentionable.

His autobiography "Notes of seven decades" was published in 1975. A second book "For inner and outer peace" - a subject which interested him greatly during his last years- was edited after his death in 1988. In this period he also returned to his other talents, which included drawing and painting.

His distinctions included the post of Honorary President of the Philharmonia Hungarica, four honorary doctor degrees, the rank of Chevalier of the order of Vasa of Sweden, the Cross of Honour, 1st class "Artibus et Litteris" of Austria, the order of "Chevalier des Arts et Lettres" de France and others. The Royal Academy of Music in London honoured Antal Doráti by appointing him an Hon.R.A.M. And in 1983 her Majesty the Queen appointed him an Hon. KBE (Knight of the British Empire) in recognition for his service to music in Britain.

Antal Doráti died in his Swiss home in Gerzensee on november 13, 1988.

Bartok

Concerto for Orchestra

London Symphony Orchestra
Antal Dorati



In 1943, after a year of precipitously declining health, Bartók was diagnosed with leukemia. He had been in the United States for nearly three years, a period in which he had to endure financial hardship, artistic isolation and separation from the source of his inspiration, Hungary, and its wealth of folk music. What income and recognition he did receive came mostly from his appearances as a pianist (or sometimes as duo-pianist with his wife Ditta Pasztory), but poor health prevented him from performing after January 1943. It seemed as if his life had come to a standstill when he received a commission for a large orchestral work from Serge Koussevitzky, music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The funds for the commission came, unbeknownst to Bartók, from his close friends and fellow Hungarian émigrés Joseph Szigeti and Fritz Reiner. Bartók traveled to Saranac Lake, NY, and worked on the Concerto for Orchestra between August and October 1943. The work was first heard in 1944, and though Bartók was unable to attend the Boston premiere, he did hear a subsequent performance in New York City.

Like the fourth and fifth string quartets (1928 and 1934), the Concerto for Orchestra is in five movements, arranged in what is called an "arch" form, in which the first and fifth movements are related, as are the second and fourth, with the third movement functioning as the keystone of the arch. The Concerto's opening bars present a theme of rising fourths in cellos and basses, answered by tremolando strings and fluttering flutes in Bartók's characteristic "night music" style. Trumpets, pianissimo, chant a pungent, short-phrased chorale on which the theme of the main Allegro vivace is based. A lyrical second theme is introduced by the oboe, but the mood remains dark as the material is developed. Only when brass erupt in a modal fugato section is there the suggestion that things may lighten. Bartók

noted that the progress of the concerto was toward light from initial darkness, and that the thematic material of the fugato will return in modified form as the basis of the joyous *moto perpetuo* finale.

The second movement is titled "Games of Couples," and presents woodwinds in successive pairs, with close intervallic relationships derived from Dalmatian folk music. The syncopated rhythm that accompanies these games – performed by side drum without snares – carries over into the middle section, a soft chorale for brass. Bartók described the keystone third movement, "Elegia," as a "lugubrious death-song," in which unsettled "night music" effects alternate with intense, prayerful supplications (again related to the chorale-like material that pervades the first half of the work). The subsequent "Interrupted Intermezzo" presents the first real carefree moments of the work, with its satiric treatment of the march theme from Shostakovich's "Leningrad" Symphony, which Bartók heard in a radio broadcast. Bartók scholar Elliott Antokoletz notes that the movement's warm, cantabile melody for violas quotes a popular song by Zsigmond Vincze, "You are Lovely, You are Beautiful, Hungary," bringing an unmistakable note of homesickness to the music. The finale opens with a leaping call to order for all four horns unison, followed by a wild *moto perpetuo* dance, in which the succeeding episodes hardly stop for breath. Bartók provided two endings, the first rather abrupt, the second more traditionally climactic, and making use of the upward-moving minor third motif that served as an intervallic motto for Bartók in many works. The alternate ending is the one that is usually played.

Bartók

Concerto For Orchestra

Antal Dorati conducting the London Symphony Orchestra

1. Introduzione 9:31
 2. Giuoco Delle Coppie 6:12
 3. Elegia 7:06
 4. Intermezzo Interrotto 4:19
 5. Finale 9:29
- Total Time: 36:37

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Recording Info: Recorded 1964 by Mercury Records on 35mm film

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape



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