

Czettel Ladislav

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Costume designer at (suicide)

Metropolitan Opera NY

(Current Biography)

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N.Y. Times 3/6/49 P. 63 (obit)

CURRENT BIOGRAPHY

March 17

subsequent announcement that the recommendation be ignored.

Other concrete examples are not numerous, however, and it seems certain that the most bitter criticism of Conant has come from students and others who oppose his views on the present War. He was a very early, very active member of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, and testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee in favor of the Burke-Wadsworth Bill. He has never made any proviso that aid to Britain must be "short of war." All Harvard students are not of like mind, and as early as the fall of 1939 the under graduate daily, the *Harvard Crimson*, denounced him as among those "earning an unenviable place in the road-gang that is trying to build for the United States a super-highway straight to Armageddon." The lofty positions of these men give their words weight beyond their worth." In January 1941 Conant himself inquired: "How can we give all possible aid to the country in this hour of peril without jeopardizing unduly our fundamental mission, which by its very nature requires long-range planning?"

President Conant was married in April 1921 to Grace Thayer Richards, the daughter of his old chemistry professor, and they have two children: James Richards and Theodore Richards. He is far better versed in literature, history and economics than the average scientist; he enjoys tennis, sailing, mountain climbing; he isn't very fond of the movies. Cigarettes he smokes only occasionally, and he never drinks anything stronger than beer. His well-tailored appearance is probably the result of a strong sense of responsibility toward his position, since it is a definite change from his comfortable chemistry days. He has a nice wit. One story about him tells of the time when he was a guest at the Signet Club. A professor began scolding him (in Latin) for having recommended the elimination of that language as a B. A. requirement. Retorted Conant: "I thought we had come to praise the Signet, not to bury Caesar."

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CONNES, ROBERT (kō-nēs') 1867(?)
—Jan. 15, 1941 American actor who was known to theatregoers on two continents for forty-six years; appeared in several pictures during silent film days.

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N Y Times p17 Ja 17 '41

CSÁKY, ISTVAN, COUNT. See Csáky, S., Count

CSÁKY, STEPHEN, COUNT (chō'ki) 1894(?)—Jan. 27, 1941 Hungarian Foreign Minister since 1938; diplomat and statesman; was firm believer in close friendship between Hungary and the Axis; threw his country's lot in with Central Powers by signing anti-Comintern pact in 1939.

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CZETTEL, LADISLAS (chēt'tel lā'dis-las) Costume and fashion designer

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"I create subconsciously out of my soul," explains Ladislav Czettel, designer of costumes for the Metropolitan Opera House and a well-known creator of modern gowns in the United States, when asked where he gets his ideas. But if it is costumes for the Metropolitan that he is designing, a great deal of study of the history of the period, the country, the people and the customs precedes the creation.

Mr. Czettel designed the 570 costumes used in Verdi's *The Masked Ball*, which opened the 1940 to 1941 Metropolitan Opera season. Since he had received the assignment only five weeks in advance he had to work day and night in order to complete the costumes in time. And before he could begin designing it was necessary for him to do some research, for every item in the production had to be entirely new. This was the first time *The Masked Ball*, which had not been done at the Metropolitan for twenty-four years, was being given in its original setting, the eighteenth century Swedish court of King Gustavus III, instead of in the usual Puritan Boston.

Before Mr. Czettel could begin on his assignment it was necessary for him to find out what was being worn in Sweden during the latter part of the eighteenth century. "The fashion of today," he has said, "becomes the costume of tomorrow." And so it was the fashion of the eighteenth century Swedish court and the history and customs of the people of that country that he had to study, in order to design the costumes for "tomorrow's" opera.

But he had some help. "In designing the costumes for *The Masked Ball*, I must confess," he said, "that I have enjoyed the assistance of a distinguished collaborator—no less a personage than the late Gustavus III of Sweden!" When Czettel went to the New York Public Library to do research on the period he found that the Swedish king had



LADISLAV CZETEL

been a designer and had left original sketches of the dress of his day, both that of the court and of the peasants, and copies of these sketches were at the 42nd Street Library.

Mr. Czetel's work was not finished when he had completed his designs for the 570 costumes. He has to be on hand during the production of an opera to see that the costumes are all right and that the performers have make-up and hairdresses according to instruction. Every change of costume must have his approval before the actor goes on the stage. "Not until the last change has been made do I breathe freely," the designer has confided.

Born in Budapest, Hungary, Ladislav Czetel had had a successful career before coming to this country in 1936. When he was only three years old he began sketching. When he was five he designed a wedding dress for his grandfather's cook. By the time he was 12 he was designing clothes for his mother, and when he was 15 he did costumes for Sári Fedák, the second Mrs. Molnar, the great Hungarian operetta star. "I always wanted to be a designer," Mr. Czetel explains, "and I never had a second choice." As a little boy he dressed many dolls in all kinds of fantastic costumes. Today in the Vienna State Library there are other dolls, 20,000 of them, each about a foot high, which are dressed in exact replicas, accurate in every detail, of costumes and dresses that he has designed.

He studied first at the Academy of Art in Munich. Then at the age of 16 he went to Paris, where he became the only pupil of Leon Bakst, the famed designer for the Russian Ballet. Bakst introduced him to Poiret, who launched him on his career. For 12 years he was head designer of the Vienna State Opera, and during that time he created costumes for hundreds of glamorous divas. He designed also for the Moss-Empire Theatrical Corporation, the Gaumont-British Film Company and Max Reinhardt's Theatres in

Berlin, Vienna, Salzburg. The first designs by him widely shown in the United States were in the film version of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

In 1941 Mr. Czetel is designing for the Metropolitan Opera Company for the third season, and by February 1941 had done costumes for *The Daughter of the Regiment* as well as for *The Masked Ball*. In order to work in this country he had to join the stage designers' union, and to qualify for that had to pass an eight-hour examination. Prior to this season he did, among other costumes, those for *Falstaff*, *Thais*, *The Wedding of Figaro*, and costumes for Lotte Lehmann in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Kerstin Thorborg in *Tannhäuser*, Grace Moore in *Faust*, Jan Kiepura in *Manon*. For the Allied Relief Ball of 1940 he designed costumes for Mrs. Edward Warburg, Mrs. Howard Dietz, Mrs. Irving Berlin, Mrs. George Kaufman and others. For the Beaux Arts Ball (1940) one of his creations was a dress for a five-and-ten-cent store salesgirl, at a cost of \$7.28.

But costume designing is only one of his activities. He is also an "ace-high designer of haute couture," and has created clothes for many prominent women here and abroad, including Countess Esterhazy, Princess Elizabeth Bourbon, Lady Dorothy Meynell, Mrs. Herbert Lehman, Marlene Dietrich, Lady Chichester, Mrs. Wood Halifax and a number of others. Late in 1940 he designed a group of day and evening clothes for Henri Bendel's exclusive 57th Street specialty shop in New York, and he is now working on another collection for that shop. In addition he lectures on these two separate and distinct phases of designing at the New School for Social Research. He holds the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts from the Berlin State Art Academy.

Though none of Mr. Czetel's 20,000 Viennese dolls has been shown in this country designs of both his costumes and his modern gowns have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art (New York City), and the American Federation of Arts has exhibited his designs from coast to coast.

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DALY, THOMAS A., FATHER (dā'li) 1864(?)—Jan. 8, 1941 Catholic missionary; member for many years of the Paulist Mission Band; established the Good Shepherd parish in New York; former secretary-treasurer of the Catholic Missionary Union of America; First Consulor of the Paulist Community in the United States since 1934.

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DARLAN, JEAN (LOUIS XAVIER FRANCOIS) (dār-lāN zhāN) Aug. 7, 1881-Commander in chief of the French Naval Forces; Vice-President of the Cabinet;

