

1957 feb. 19.

Music: Bartok Program

Dorati Leads Benefit
for Hungarians

By HOWARD TAUBMAN

It is fitting and touching that Béla Bartók's music should be the means of drawing support for Hungarians who need help. His last years were lived here in exile; he had some devoted friends, but he could have used more. It would have given him an ironic pleasure, one suspects, to know that his compositions would become a vehicle for raising money for Hungarian students who have also chosen to live in exile.

The Bartók program at Carnegie Hall Sunday night was for the benefit of the American Hungarian Studies Foundation. Before the second half a number of Hungarian students, sitting in boxes, were introduced to the audience.

The performers were the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antal Dorati, himself born in Hungary, and Yehudi Menuhin, the American violinist. Both Mr. Dorati and Mr. Menuhin were among Bartók's friends.



Antal Dorati



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The Program

MINNEAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Antal Dorati conducting. Yehudi Menuhin, soloist. Hungarian benefit concert. At Carnegie Hall. All-Bartok program: Suite from "The Miraculous Mandarin"; Violin Concerto; Concerto for Orchestra.

Bartók's music, though it has gained steadily in acceptance since his death in 1945, is not all easily accessible. Some of the late compositions, like the Concerto for Orchestra, have elements of popularity, and there are things in the Concerto for Violin which should pose no problems. But taken as a whole, Bartók's music is a world to itself, and a whole program of it may be too much for the listener who has not familiarized himself with the variety and originality of the composer's musical thinking.

Mr. Dorati's approach to Bartók was that of a man who understood the composer's roots. His grasp of the colors, sonorities and rhythmic intricacies of the music was impressive. It was evident that he and his orchestra have made a specialty of Bartók, for they were as one in their interpretations. There were brilliance and tension in the playing. When Mr. Dorati whipped up the tempo to a perilously breathless pace at the end of the "Miraculous Mandarin," the orchestra did not fail him.

It is, of course, impossible to form a fixed judgment of an

orchestra and conductor on the basis of a program, particularly one so special. What one heard Sunday night made one feel that this was an accomplished ensemble, trained with particular attention to crispness of sound and attack and to rhythmic precision. Whether leader and players can relax and sing glowingly is a question not answered decisively.

Mr. Menuhin has had long experience with the Bartók concerto. He values it highly and understands it. His playing Sunday had the technical address it required. It had also a ruggedness and a rhapsodic exuberance which gave it earthiness. It was a striking performance, with Mr. Dorati leading his orchestra in admirably controlled support.

The "Miraculous Mandarin" suite, drawn from a rarely performed ballet, is music made for motion. Mr. Dorati's conducting of it was intensely kinetic in its impact. His conception of the Concerto for Orchestra also stressed its momentum and drama. He saw to it that Bartók's zest and vitality were communicated.

