

N. C. ESSAY

North Carolina School of the Arts, Vol. 6, No. 1, October, 1971

THE



An Introduction To Nicholas Harsanyi

"During his years at Interlochen Academy, he brought the orchestra to such a high standard that audiences could scarcely believe that they were listening to an orchestra of high school students. During his touring with the Princeton Chamber Orchestra, he encountered and solved the problems he will again face with the Piedmont Orchestra.

"In both these instances and in early experiences with the Trenton New Jersey Symphony, Princeton University and Westminster Choir College, he dealt with the day-to-day matters of professional music training.

"Add to this his vitality and his ebullience and you will know why we are so happy to be bringing him to the School of the Arts."

The speaker is President Ward of NCSA; his subject, the appointment of a new Dean of Music. There is much to be said about this man—his accomplishments and his ideas on music and education.

Though he is now a conductor, the Hungarian-born Nicholas Harsanyi began his study at the age of seven with the violin. He graduated from the Budapest Academy of Music where he studied with Jenő Hubay and Leo Weiner. He then became a member of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Ferenc Fricsay and guest conducted by such other notables as Walter, Munch, Ormandy, and Weingartner.

Mr. Harsanyi was in the United States on a teaching fellowship at Westminster Choir College when World War II began. He describes his start in conducting with the U.S. Second Service Command Symphony:

"I started conducting when I was in the army in World War II. I was a member of a string quartet that formed sort of a nucleus for all the other musicians from various orchestras that had been inducted into the service. They all formed an orchestra and made me their conductor since I was talking at rehearsal more than anyone else."

When the war ended he became violinist for the Lener Quartet touring Europe, North Africa, South America, and the West Indies. In 1948 he was back in Princeton as chairman of the instrumental department at Westminster and playing in the Roth Quartet with Feri Roth, Jenő Antol, and Janos Starker. He became lecturer in music at Princeton University in 1953.

A decade later he was appointed Music Director of the New Jersey Tevcentenary Festival of Music; it was at this event that the Princeton

Chamber Orchestra made its debut under Harsanyi's direction.

From Princeton, Mr. Harsanyi has come to Winston-Salem, not only as Dean of Music, but also as Music Director and conductor of both the NCSA Orchestra and the Piedmont Chamber Orchestra. The latter he took to the two weeks Festival that commemorated the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington. His wife, Janice Harsanyi, an accomplished soprano of recording and recital fame, is here as well and is a welcome addition to the voice department.

(When reading Harsanyi's quotations, as in this article, it is important to know that he does not speak idiomatically. This does not mean that he expresses himself poorly, but that when transferred to paper, his words can at times seem pedantic. If his tone of voice were not lost to the reader, Mr. Harsanyi's thoughtfulness would never need to be emphasized.)

Mr. Harsanyi's being here is a result of his agreement with NCSA's educational foundation:

"Schools that offer an academic education in addition to music training will be the places where future musicians will go...We are really more fortunate than schools like Julliard and Curtis where education is more narrowly confined to the Arts; whereas here, both academic and artistic training is offered."

He also stated in reference to his guest conducting last year for the World Bankers Convention in Chapel Hill, "From the NCSA Orchestra I got a

great response. That was very much a factor in my decision to come."

Along with these favorable impressions, Mr. Harsanyi has also witnessed certain phenomena on campus of which he does not approve. He is distressed to hear some students criticizing NCSA and thinks it a gross error when students do not understand how fortunate they are to be here. Drugs in his opinion are harmful to the kind of education he advocates. Self-discipline and seriousness in studies are basic to him:

"Student years are extremely important and students must realize that they will never come again. This period is a chance to prepare for a future, and not a moment should be wasted. After you leave school you are in the future.

"Self-discipline is the first requirement of an arts education. The music student should operate from an inner self-discipline. A student's education is entirely up to him. The school provides the resources and each student makes use of them according to his desires."

One of the resources Harsanyi feels is important is the faculty. He has lauded his faculty and the demands he puts on them are also great:

"Discipline should be communicated by the faculty....A good faculty can only be effective when teaching by example, not by just talking; also, by inspiring respect on the student's part."

Mr. Harsanyi appreciates jazz "if it's good." He likes "rock that is inventive. But noise, I hate. Today, it is mainly up to the schools and universities to provide the experimentation that is needed for the creation of new music. But too many people go to the extreme and justify any noises they make as music and then declare themselves composers before they have had the training and experience that a good composer has. A school should present all aspects of that which is being."

His first new innovation in the curriculum is a new jazz program with John Lewis. Possible programs for the future include electronic music.

Dean Harsanyi hopes "to build a climate wherein everyone strives to attain his full potential." Such an upward aim and deep commitment is a proof of his sincerity. "His vitality and ebullience", as referred to by President Ward, completes the introduction to the New Dean of Music.

-Sebastian deGrazia
with Young, Martin, and Pajkowski

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