

There are in Hungary three first-rate orchestras today. The State Philharmonics, the Radio Symphonic Orchestra, and the State Opera House Orchestra, which is actually a double orchestra with two full-size personnel teams, so one can speak of four first-rate orchestras with about 360 musicians thus employed. Beside these there are four second-rate orchestras, the MAV (State Railroads) Orchestra, the Szeged Philharmonics, the Debrecen, and the Miskolc orchestras. Beside these, there are some quite acceptable orchestras in plants, the MAVAG machine factory, the Vasss paying two-three forints per session for the members. Beside these there was the Honved Orchestra (Army orchestra), primarily made up of students. So one can say that beside the 360 employed musicians there were 100 additional excellent musicians who were employed part-time, and 100 or more fully qualified musicians who were unemployed. The overall cultural level in Hungary was high and all levels and groups in society participated in enjoying or playing music. A contributing factor was that prices of tickets were cheap. Salaries were not bad, and I as first clarinetist made 2300 forints a month and 2000 forints was an average. Orchestra leaders made an amazing amount of money, like Somogyi of the Radio Orchestra. In 1952 the conductor of the Philharmonics was fired when all members of the orchestra signed a protest and threatened to quit unless he was fired. This man's income was 25,000 forints a month and he made 8000 forints

on the side. Thus Aladar Toth was fired and then immediately rehired as a musical expert with a 25 percent raise as the only professor of conducting.

Except for rent and food, which is cheaper, everything else is much more expensive in Hungary than out in the West. Of course if someone was unemployed, as I knew of nine French horn players who were all top musicians, they lived under horrible conditions. I made 4000 forints counting all my side income also, but we had to live in a one-room concrete-floored edifice in a room that was always wet and damp.

Beside the horrible living conditions the main complaint that we musicians had was that they did not let us travel abroad. Only a handful of ^{politically} reliable ~~XXXXXXXX~~ party members, musicians, were permitted to go abroad.

As members of the orchestra, we had compulsory three-hour rehearsals daily, but most of us had three, four, or five three-hour rehearsals with various orchestras on various occasions in order to make a living. Thus no one had a chance to practice, and practicing went into *disuse* altogether.

The musical taste, of course, followed the party line strictly, and good party cadres like Kadosa spent a great deal of their time by denouncing Hindemith. As a result of such brilliant party activities, there were no saxophones in the radio jazz orchestra because these were Western capitalistic bourgeois decadent instruments.

In 1955 saxophones were readmitted to good grace and a few more musicians could make a living. During those days a Communist party member would not wear lipstick either, of course. In 1952 I traveled to the USSR with the Honved military orchestra and we were much surprised to find jazz bands there, but in Hungary ~~THESE~~ had to be modified at the expense of the saxophones.

Lika
The musical life was in the hands of a handful of party musicians ~~by~~ Kadosa and Ferenc Szabó. This latter was a composer and a major in the Russian army, the head of the music department in the Ministry of Education. Fortunately, to counteract this pernicious short-sighted incompetence, we had people like Kodaly, whose worldwide reputation protected him and he made good use of his privileges to aid his fellow-musicians. After his trip to the United States, Shostakovich stopped off in Budapest and a dinner was given in his honor. Kodaly was, of course, seated next to him, together with Szabo, the musical dictator, who translated. Apparently Shostakovich started denouncing Hindemith and Honegger and he advised the Hungarians that their musical life is somewhat backward and need certain socialistic corrections. ~~MAKING~~ ^{Hearing} this, Kodaly gave a blistering speech, telling Shostakovich that he considered Hungarian music way ahead ~~XX~~ of the Russian musicians and he did not feel that Shostakovich should lecture us on what kind of musical life we should have. Szabo, the musical tsar and interpreter flustered and bustered, hammed and howed, got red in the face, and

said a few awkward words in Russian. Kodaly was a wonderful influence in Hungary and he still is. His wife, who is in ^{her} ~~the~~ nineties, is quite deaf, and on another occasion the following dinner conversation has been reported about her: Mrs. Kodaly: "And who are you, young man?" Mr. Kadosa: "I am musical director in the Ministry of Education." Mrs. Kodaly: Tell me, are you a member of the Communist Party?" Mr. Kadosa: "Yes, I am, Madam." Mrs. Kodaly: (shouting across the table to her husband) "Zoltan, watch out, he says he is a Red. Watch what you say."

A meek old man, Kodaly never used any of the privileges offered him and took the ^{bus} ~~bus~~ to go to the Academy

Once he crossed against the red light and he was caught by the policeman for jaywalking. He took his name, which Kodaly gave, but there was no reaction. He asked for his job and he told him that he was a composer and teacher. No reaction. He asked him where he worked and he pointed to the Academy. No reaction. He asked him his salary and Mr. Kodaly mentioned 40,000 forints. Then the policeman got green in the face and apologized and let him go.

In the Academy, like everywhere else, there was a Communist Party secretary, usually appointed for reliability and not for competence. On one occasion Kodaly was lecturing to a class when a lady burst into the classroom, announcing that she was the new party secretary, and not having had a chance to introduce

herself she came to do it now. Kodaly, who was surprised, asked her what became of her predecessor. She noted that she went back to work. He asked her what her line of work was. She said, she was a hatmaker and she is back making hats. In all naivety, Kodaly asked: "And what is your line of work?" The party secretary replied: "I don't have another line of work." Kodaly: "So what will you go back to?" Such were the little compensations we musicians had, depending ^{on} ~~of~~ the great to help us maintaining our self-respect. Of course we were in continual fight with our conductors who were party bigwigs. For five years I tried to get permission to travel abroad, at least to East Germany, but the chance was not given. The official reasoning in the Ministry went like this: If you are a good enough musician, we need you at home. If you are a bad musician, we don't want you to establish a bad reputation for us abroad. Thus they could not take the orchestras abroad, because if one single person defected, it busted the entire orchestra. Two members of the Honved army orchestra, however, escaped in East Berlin and the risk they took in sneaking out of their East Berlin hotel belongs to a criminal mystery. In spite of such adverse conditions, we had some excellent musicians in Hungary who grew up in the last few years, and we had some half-independent orchestras, supported by large corporations, which

gave a good start to many fledglings.

The orchestras were very reliable, and although it was not possible to avoid mistakes, these were very costly for people were easily replaced. Yet they could not play politics with us, and they had to settle for musical competence; and no one stayed for quick political meetings after rehearsals or programs. The MNDSZ had agitated with my wife to persuade her to plan for another child. We lived in one wet concrete-floored room and they asked us to raise a large family. She told them to go to hell.

One thing, however, was good, and this was the very active cultural life that was carried on. People were pessimistic, but 24-forint seats to a good play sold for 100 forints on the street or in cafes. This, of course, did not apply to propaganda plays, but those are the ones where we made money. There was a horrendous play entitled "The Unforgettable 1919," which had "gunfire" in it that I created every evening for about two minutes with kettledrums ~~for~~ for 110 forints a night. This was very good side income. Anything that was propaganda ~~were~~ ^{was produced} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ addition to their regular propaganda plays they had special Soviet months. Every program was filled with Russian programs and 'progressive' Hungarian ~~products~~ ^{products}. ~~Stans~~ ^{Stans} Kadosa, the Communist conductor turned composer-~~and~~ teacher-~~and~~ politician wrote an opera that was quietly dropped after two performances. As a musician, we had to play some horrible things

but I never knew or cared what I played. On one occasion, during a propaganda play, a simple old woman in the audience ~~went~~ defacated right in her seat, offering a much needed relief for everybody. I think the play thus honored was entitled "Honor and Glory." The trouble with Kadosa was that he was an excellent pianist, a competent teacher and theoretician, but he prostituted himself intentionally, aspiring to have power, to control music, and to compose. At the same time, however, the masses of people did not compromise and these propaganda things had to be dropped very quickly, for they were obvious flops. In other instances, of course, we played for free and earlier we played regularly in church orchestras, performing ~~concerts~~ oratorios. The way they ended this was by pilloxying names of people who thus volunteered their services for church oratorios, but refused to play in propaganda concerts in plants. After 1954, church ~~music~~ music was altogether prohibited.

Literally and figuratively we were eating up our ~~own~~ future, as we were using up the resources of tomorrow. In November, for instance, the food situation was excellent and I think primarily because the Russians did not steal it that month. The exploitation of the country benefited a few handful of ~~the~~ party functionaries and the Russians. In many instances also the Russians reverted ~~to~~ to cheap tricks and a friend of mine, an engineer, noted that

once when they received a new automatic drill marked as the gift of the Soviet people, under the protective cover on the bottom, ^{of the machine} he noted the Royal Hungarian Manufacturing Company stamp. Thus our country was exploited and fooled, and life was made forever harder. Before 1952, all got vacations, but after 1952 only ^a ~~the~~ top handful of musicians were given this as ^a ~~the~~ privilege and later nobody was given vacations. Whenever someone gave a free concert, which meant hours of preparation, transportation, and time spent, the reward was a medal as an honored volunteer deserves it. The situation has deteriorated and we were waiting in vain for a solution when finally the Revolution brought one.

Characterization of Respondent.

Respondent is a quick-witted, very practical-minded person. In spite of being a musician, he has always managed to solve his personal problems advantageously in a practical manner, and as such his complaints are obviously not those of a failure. He played several instruments in the orchestra, the Radio Symphony Orchestra, of which he was member, and by continuing his studies at the Academy, he was entitled to fellowships, and thus he was acquiring more and more musical skills. In addition, of course, he played for money in theaters, plant concerts, trying to make ends meet

for his young family. His self-reliance has once again proved a great advantage in the emigration, for here in Munich he has built up a far-flung business interest, selling stationery supplies wholesale throughout Bavaria. This he started once after two months as an extra in the Munich Opera orchestra he discovered that he was not to stay there permanently and that he was not welcome. He then went into business and is doing very successfully, renting a house and owning a car, and supporting two or three musician friends who are less fortunate or able.