

Ernő Dohnányi's Career in his Vienna Years (1901–1905)

László GOMBOS

Ernő Dohnányi Archives, Institute for Musicology
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Táncsics u. 7, H-1014 Budapest, Hungary
E-mail: laszlog@zti.hu

(Received: 10 February 2006; accepted: 16 March 2006)

Abstract: This study analyses the young Ernő Dohnányi's career as a pianist, his reception, repertory, and the performances of his compositions in Austria, Hungary, Germany, and England. By the first decade of the 20th century, Dohnányi had won almost universal recognition with critics and musicians alike, but his art was truly appreciated not so much by the sensationalist public as by a significantly narrower circle of musically literate listeners. After his first tours, Dohnányi did not enter any such biographical stage which we could term his "virtuoso years", but his "Vienna years" (1901–1905) belong to the next stage of his development. His concert life resembled that of a "classic" performer, who still gives recitals fairly regularly, while also composing symphonic pieces and conducting them himself. He retained his artistic and personal freedom through resisting the travelling virtuoso lifestyle offered by impresarios. The author gives a selection from press reports of Dohnányi's career in the Viennese years.

Keywords: Ernő Dohnányi, works, concerts, music critic, music life, Hungary, Budapest, England, Austria, Vienna, Germany

The first stage of Ernő Dohnányi's musical career was hallmarked by his three tours to England and two to the United States between the end of 1898 and the spring of 1901. In consequence, the unknown youth became a world-renowned and acclaimed performer. In autumn 1901 he settled in Vienna; for another four years he and his family¹ mainly resided here and – to a lesser extent – in Budapest; he would set out on his tours from Vienna. With some

¹ Dohnányi married Elza Kunwald on October 11, 1900. Their first child, János (Hans) was born in Vienna, on January 1, 1902; the second, Margit (Grete) in Budapest, on March 7, 1903.



Figure 1: Dohnányi in his home, Vienna, 1901

generalization, therefore, we may dub the period between 1901 and 1905 as Dohnányi's Vienna years, after which the next stage, from late 1905, would be ushered in by his acceptance of the professorship at the Hochschule in Berlin, and his moving to the German capital.

In the period here investigated, Dohnányi's career took a different turn from what might have been expected after the press reception of his London début in 1898.² For all his unique pianistic and musical abilities, he did not join the elect group of world-touring "stars" who visited dozens of cities, achieved sensational successes, and earned fortunes within a short period of time, filling the papers with news about themselves. Prior to Dohnányi, Eugène d'Albert and Ignazy Jan Paderewski, Ferruccio Busoni, Leopold Godowsky, Moriz Rosenthal, Emil Sauer, and Bernhard Stavenhagen had set the example; as regards violinists, Jan Kubelík, Jaroslav Kocian, and, since 1903, Ferenc Vecsey had reaped laurels. Besides these undoubtedly great artists, dozens of virtuosi – most of them perhaps less talented than Dohnányi – had won overall approval

² For an assessment of Dohnányi's early years, see László Gombos, "Reception of the Young Ernst von Dohnányi: The Background of His Successes during His First Tours to England and America", *Studia Musicologica* 46 (2005), 325–382. Of the press releases from before the Vienna years, the following have been reproduced in the yearbook of the Dohnányi Ernő Archives: László Gombos, György Horváth et al., "Dohnányi Ernő művészi tevékenységének sajtórecepciója, I. rész: A pályakezdő évek, 1887. január–1898. április" [Press Reception of Ernő Dohnányi's Career, Part One: The Early Years, January 1887 – April 1898], *Dohnányi Évkönyv* 2003, ed. Márta Sz. Farkas (Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2004), 137–250; László Gombos, "Dohnányi Ernő művészi tevékenységének sajtórecepciója, II. rész: A nemzetközi karrier kezdete, 1898. október–1901. április" [Press Reception of Ernő Dohnányi's Career, Part Two: The Beginning of His International Career, 1898–1901], *Dohnányi Évkönyv* 2004, ed. Márta Sz. Farkas (Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2005), 99–349.

around the turn of the century. Their activity was by and large characterized by the three factors mentioned above: a large number of concerts, exceptional financial rewards, and a constant media presence. As early as during the American tours in 1900 and 1901, it was clear that although Dohnányi had won almost universal recognition with critics and musicians alike, his art was truly appreciated not so much by the sensationalist public as by a significantly narrower circle of musically literate listeners. His personality and artistic aims were completely incompatible with such fundamental principles of modern life as mass and serial production. He insisted on a core repertoire based on Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert, while his programmes never represented the virtuosity and lyricism of Liszt and Chopin, respectively, to such an extent as might have been expected by his audience.

After his first, highly successful tours, Dohnányi did not enter any such biographical stage which we could reasonably term his “virtuoso years” or even “decades”. As though he had simply skipped this typical period of contemporary artistic careers: in some respect, his four Vienna years may be seen as transitory; from another viewpoint, however, it already belongs to the next stage of his development.³ The unsettled youth had suddenly turned into a well-settled master who would no longer partake of the daily fashions and trends but direct and aim his activity at maintaining his “presence”, rather than at making progress and earning successes. All this may appear unusual, but the phenomena of the examined period support it. From 1901, Dohnányi's concert life resembled not so much that of a young virtuoso as that of a “classic” performer – like Franz Liszt in his Weimar period – who still gives recitals fairly regularly, while also composing symphonic pieces and conducting them himself.

The clearest indication of the changes in Dohnányi's performing career is the amount and proportion of his concerts. After the successful beginning of the preceding three seasons, the number of performances decreased significantly. During the season starting with his London début in October 1898, he gave 29 public concerts, followed by another 63 the next season; his second American tour ended rather early, on March 11, 1901, after 39 appearances. Quite spectacular is the ensuing pause of some nine months, as well as the fact that during the season beginning with his solo recital in Pozsony (present-day Bratislava), on December 6, 1901, Dohnányi gave a mere 14 concerts. During the four Vienna years, up to the summer of 1905, we have to deal with 109 appearances, including those as a conductor. This was doubtlessly a note-

³ For a selection from the press reception of the Vienna years, see László Gombos, “Dohnányi Ernő művészi tevékenységének sajtóreceptiója, III. rész: A bécsi évek, 1901–1905” [Press Reception of Ernő Dohnányi's Career, Part Three: The Vienna Years, 1901–1905], *Dohnányi Évkönyv 2005–2006*, ed. Márta Sz. Farkas (Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2006), 151–338.

worthy achievement; in terms of Dohnányi's artistic career, however, it was, at best, sufficient to keep up his fame. All tours during these four seasons were short; the six journeys encompassed no more than 43 concerts: England, January 11 to 30, 1902 (5 concerts); England, October 28 to December 5, 1902 (12); Germany and Prague, March 4 to 13, 1903 (5); England, January 9 to February 25, 1904 (10); England, February 4 to 24 (7); Denmark, March 18 to 31 (4). This series cannot even be compared to those tours by other artists in the same period which might occasionally include over fifty appearances.⁴

In addition to the purely quantitative factors, the timing and spatial distribution of Dohnányi's concerts did not help his career either. Often, he would not return to a site of success before a long time had passed, almost turning the new performance into a reintroduction. Hence neither the investments into advertisements, nor the "interests" of his artistic achievements could pay off. Since in the 1900/01 season Dohnányi had only played in the US and then held a rather long break, the memories of his earlier successes with English, German, and Austrian audiences gradually faded. After May 1900, for instance, it was not before January 1902 that he had revisited London; and as regards Vienna, his solo recital in February 1900 was (apart from a co-appearance part in late December 1901) only followed by another concert almost exactly two years later, on February 3, 1902. After October 1897 he visited Berlin only in February 1900 (on the latter occasion he played the solo part of his own piano concerto); hence at the time of his recital on December 13, 1904 he was all but unknown to the audience. The sparseness of his appearances in the Hungarian capital in his youthful years is also peculiar. During the eight years preceding his Berlin period, a mere handful of concerts were reported, most of which were joint appearances only. Apart from his début on November 17, 1897 (Beethoven, *Piano Concerto in G*), he appeared in Budapest as the soloist of piano concertos in January 1899 and May and December 1903, whereas his only recitals were given on January 7, 1898 and March 3, 1905.

It was Dohnányi's American appearances that had the longest intermission. The two tours in 1900 and 1901 Dohnányi conceived of as an investment into future triumphs:

⁴ Contemporary newspapers often reported on the tours of other pianists which might run up to several dozens of appearances, as well as the fabulous fortunes Paderewsky and d'Albert would earn each season. During Dohnányi's Vienna years, the most successful violinist may have been Jan Kubelik; for the 1903/04 season he contracted for 110 concerts. Henryk Wieniawski and Anton Rubinstein had probably set a world record during the 1872/73 season; within 8 months, they gave 215 concerts in the United States and Canada, on par with Ferenc Vecsey, who, in the first decade of the 20th century, counted over thousand appearances. On the other hand, the report claiming that Raoul Koczalski, the Polish child prodigy, had given a thousand piano recitals by the time he turned 11 in 1896 might have been due to the exaggerations of the press.

Considering the immense cost of living here, and the immense expenses we have incurred in consequence, I cannot save much at all this year. All the nicer seems the 'business' I might be able to make here in 2 or 3 years' time. – On the whole I can still be satisfied with my tour, for if nothing else, I have built firm foundations for myself.⁵

Nevertheless, this building of "firm foundations" proved quite futile, since Dohnányi would only return to the States over two decades later, in the 1920s.

Due to the relatively small number of concerts in individual places, Dohnányi's name did not permanently feature in either street posters or the press, which naturally had its toll on prospective invitations as well. In almost a quarter of the 109 appearances during these four seasons, Dohnányi was not among the main performers of the event, which inherently decreased his chances of becoming the focus of attention. In a dozen of cases, he only contributed a single piece to a multi-performer concert, or played the piano part of a chamber work at the concert of one string quartet or another.⁶ During the busiest tour of the period, the 12 concerts in England between October 28 and December 5, 1902, Dohnányi gave the same solo programme in five different towns (Bournemouth, Bath, Hastings, Cheltenham, and Cambridge); in London, however, for some unknown reason, he had no individual concert, and as the soloist of a concerto, his appearances were limited to Birmingham and Glasgow.

It is typical of Dohnányi's reception that the amount of contemporary press reports is meagre even in proportion to his concerts, and certainly so in comparison with his peers of like calibre. This is related to the phenomena discussed above; it is precisely the press coverage that serves as the primary evidence for the thesis that as early as after his first tours, Dohnányi had begun to be treated as a settled, "classic" artist. His concerts were scarcely publicized in the form of preliminary reports, interviews, or compilations of earlier criticism and applause; nor were his programmes printed as often as those of established "stars". This relatively small number of concerts and press reports might, of course, characterize the impact of an artist of average talent – or a lack of success. Despite the minimal advertisement, however, Dohnányi usu-

⁵ "Tekintve az itteni élet óriási drágaságát, s ebből folyó óriási kiadásainkat, bizony nem sok amit ezidén félrerakhatok. Annál szebbnek ígérkezik a 'geschäft' amelyet 2–3 év múlva fogok itt csinálhatni. – Egészen véve mégis csak meg lehetek elégedve tourneemmal, mert ha egyebet nem, biztos alapot raktam magamnak." Ernő Dohnányi's letter to Frigyes Dohnányi, New York, March 18, 1901 (National Széchényi Library Budapest, Dohnányi estate).

⁶ On April 11, 1902, for example, he played the *Sonata in F sharp minor* at the Brahms concert of the Wiener Tonkünstler-Verein. A motet for mixed choir, three choral preludes for organ, and three other works for mixed choir had preceded this, and ten more choral works followed, with piano accompaniment for four hands. As regards chamber concerts, Dohnányi raised somewhat more attention, particularly when he featured as a composer as well. In the February 15, 1903 concert of the Fitzner Quartet, however, where Dohnányi played the piano part of Beethoven's trio, he had to share the spoils with the "soloist" of the flute quintet, not to mention the performance of Schubert's string quartet.

ally performed to a packed house,⁷ and his playing not only incited the audience to riotous applause but often also merited the superlatives of critics.

[...] ein solches Spiel, wie jenes Dohnányis, der wie keiner es versteht, orchestrale Wirkungen aus dem Clavier zu zaubern, ein Künstler, welcher nach der Brahms Fis-moll-Sonate die '33 Variationen', Opus 120, von Beethoven spielt, ohne die Zuhörerschaft zu ermüden, muss wohl ein Pianist von Gottes Gnaden sein.⁸

Man kann bei Dohnányi nicht denken an Anschlag, Technik und Auffassung – da ist alles Musik und Poesie, da ist der grosse geniale Zug, die einzigartige Auffassung, an der man fühlt: so muss es sein und nicht anders. Dohnányi spielt Beethoven's C-dur Sonate (Op. 2 Nr. 3) mit solch unmittelbarer Wirkung, dass wir sie mit ihrem Schöpfer nochmals zu erleben vermeinen.⁹

Almost unanimously, the critics emphasized Dohnányi's classicism, his devotion to artistic values, and the suggestiveness of his playing. He was generally listed among the first range of pianists, sometimes credited as the greatest artist alive, a genius of unique talent. The reviewer of the *Neue Musikalische Presse* almost exhaustively summarized the most frequent opinions regarding Dohnányi's piano playing:

Wie da jeder Ton Musik wurde, lebte und leuchtete! In idealer Vollendung erklangen die Tongedanken, wie sie der Phantasie der Schöpfer vorgeschwebt sein mochten; nichts war ergrübelt, alles wie unmittelbar aus den Herzen strömend. Ob Dohnányi Brahms, Beethoven oder Liszt spielt, man hat in jedem Falle das unbeschreibliche, himmlische Gefühl, vor der Offenbarung eines völligen Einverständnisses zwischen dem Schöpfer und seinem Verkünder zu stehen. Dohnányi's Spiel ist im höchsten Grade persönlich und doch vergisst man ihn fast über der Musik, weil er in dem Werke vollständig aufgeht und hinter dem Componisten zurücktritt. Es erscheint darum nebensächlich, beinahe sinnlos, über diesen Anschlag, Rhythmus oder dergleichen Worte zu machen. Vielleicht gibt es Pianisten, die Dohnányi an Technik übertreffen, sicher aber gibt es wenige, deren Spiel so unwiderstehlich unterwirft, so tief und dauernd nachwirkt, als Niedagewesenes, Unvergleichbares, Einziges. Classificiren heisst zwar die Ungerechtigkeit in Rubriken unterbringen, darum braucht man die bekannten ersten Pianisten nicht abzusetzen, wenn man Dohnányi den Einzigen unter den Ersten nannte.¹⁰

The lyricism of his playing and the colourful shading of his touch were often highlighted.

⁷ A good example was the advertisements in the Vienna *Fremden-Blatt* (November 1903): while there were only two mentions of Dohnányi's December 4 concert within a whole month, and even those included in the list of the concert calendar, the same period saw some 6 to 10 references to other events, mostly accompanied by the detailed concert programmes as well. Even on December 3, a short note was all that was published in connection with Dohnányi's concert, to the effect that all tickets had been sold in advance.

⁸ *Deutsche Kunst- und Musik-Zeitung*, February 15, 1902.

⁹ *Neue Musikalische Presse*, March 2, 1902.

¹⁰ *Neue Musikalische Presse*, February 16, 1902.

Herr von Dohnányi is, perhaps, one of the most poetical of the pianists of the day, and his readings of Schubert's Sonata in A minor and Schumann's 'Kreisleriana' displayed this side of his talents in its perfection. We have rarely heard the Sonata played with such tenderness and charm, or such variety of colour infused into Schumann's wonderful series of pieces.¹¹

Another recurrent feature of the criticism is Dohnányi's delineation from the virtuosi; always, that is, due to his added level of musicality, and not to any technical limitation.

His is an independent, complete, generous artistic character. His technique rivals that of any world-famous virtuoso and knows no difficulty whatsoever. Yet Dohnányi does not thrust this technique into prominence for even a single moment. His brilliant objective ability and charming touch are never the end but the means of creating an artistic whole. In his playing it is always the composer and the work that are in front; then comes the interpreter himself, and only then, at last, the glimmering of virtuosity.¹²

Mit den beiden Brahms'schen Stücken hat der Künstler den Anschein nach dem Publikum nur eine teilweise Freude gemacht, dafür als mit dem Beethoven'schen Konzert eine desto größere. Herr v. Dohnányi spielte es nicht wie ein Wandervirtuose, sondern wie ein ganzer Künstler dem die pietätvolle Behandlung eines Monumentalwerkes über alles geht. Wer Beethoven so objektiv und dabei doch so poetisch aufzufassen vermag – von der Technik rede ich natürlich nicht, die versteht sich von selbst –, der kann etwas mehr als Klavierspielen. Da war weder von weichlichem Säuseln, noch von dröhnende Pauken die Rede; Schritt für Schritt ging der Interpret dem Komponisten nach, nichts Fremdes in ihr hineinlegend, aber alles in ihm herausziehend. Der erste Satz namentlich war geradezu ein musikalischer Hochgenuss; Beethovenscher kann er kaum wieder gegeben werden.¹³

Another recurrent feature was the critics' contrastive reference to Dohnányi's musicality as opposed to the technical ability of another artist appearing the same day:

Herr v. Dohnányi erwies sich als der bessere Musiker, Herr Busoni als der größere Techniker.¹⁴

In the review of another event, the same antithesis was emphasized even in terms of the typography of the *Leipziger Tagblatt*:

¹¹ *The Globe* (London), February 19, 1904.

¹² "Teljesen önálló, befejezett, nagystílusú művészcharakter. Technikája bármely világhírű virtuózával kiállja a versenyt és abszolúte nem ismer nehézséget. Csakhogy Dohnányi ezt a technikát egy pillanattig sem tolja előtérbe. Az ő káprázatos dologbeli készsége és elragadó billentése sohasem cél, csupán eszköz egy művészi egész megalkotására. Az ő játékában mindig a szerző és a mű áll legelől, azután jön maga az interpretátor és csak legutoljára a virtuozitás csillogása." *Zenevilág* (Budapest) March 22, 1904.

¹³ *Breslauer Zeitung*, March 17, 1905.

¹⁴ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 3, 1905. Comparing the two artists, the reviewer of the *Hamburger Correspondent* (June 13, 1905) formulated an identical opinion.

Von den Solisten des Abends stellte der Klavier-Künstler Ernst von Dohnányi mit seiner prachtvollen Interpretation des zweiten Brahms-Konzertes den Violin-Virtuosen Fritz Kreisler, der Tartinis Teufels-Triller-Sonate nicht ohne Affektation zum besten gab, weit in den Schatten.¹⁵

For all the positive opinions, however, after each concert, the name of Dohnányi would abruptly disappear from press reports, not only in London and Vienna, but even in the capital of his country. It is highly peculiar that while the Hungarian-based musical papers covered hundreds of various events, including the successes of domestic and foreign artists in St. Petersburg, London or America, Dohnányi's tours were scarcely even mentioned. This belongs to the main characteristics of Dohnányi's reception and can be related to the fact that Dohnányi was not counted among the stars and virtuosos; in spite of his young age, he was treated as an established, "classic" artist.

Thus, the attitude of the press was determined by Dohnányi's overall image and the "news value" associated with the interests of the broader public. Two more factors need to be mentioned here, however: the personality of the artist and the role of the impresarios. All his life, Dohnányi found letter writing a painful burden; what is more, he was reluctant to give any interview. Just as a single press release has been handed down to us from the period of his first large-scale tours (1898–1901), one interview is extant from his Vienna years. In the latter one, he stated: "It is one of my peculiarities that I never let one interview me."¹⁶ His ironical replies, whose withering sarcasm the journalist may not even have completely realized at the time, possibly attributing it to artistic extravagance, unmistakably allude to Dohnányi's aversion which he felt for any interview situation. A similar case is reflected in a Polish review which cited an English article to remind the readers of Dohnányi's response to the question of which composer he liked best: "Composers are not race-horses to pick your favourite from..."¹⁷

Just as in his piano playing Dohnányi avoided excessive sentimentality and showing off, he also refrained from all verbal utterances that could possibly have thrown any light on his innermost self. The sociable and friendly young man, who also had a good sense of humour, raised a wall of silence around certain areas of his life. We may never know whether his reticence, which had a direct influence on the progress of his career as well, concealed some

¹⁵ *Leipziger Tagblatt*, June 13, 1905. The statement quoted above was taken over by the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* the same day; two days later, the *Münchener neueste Nachrichten* followed suit; and on June 16 *Die Zeit* (Vienna) also reprinted it. All these papers used the same typological effect.

¹⁶ "En Særegenhed hos mig er, at jeg aldrig lader mig interviewe" (*Ekstrabladet*, Copenhagen, March 30, 1905).

¹⁷ "Kompozytorzy nie konie, pośród których wybiera³oby się faworytów..." (*Echo Muzyczne*, Warsaw, March 17, 1904).

professional or private crisis, and the same question is also valid in terms of his apparently facile and seemingly superficial demeanour. A 1903 letter of his father, in which he raised some doubts about Dohnányi's "activity in the last two years", suggests some long-term problem in the background:

[...] You must not treat time as recklessly as other people. [...] One that is created by nature to accomplish great things commits an unspeakably great crime if – instead of producing immortal works – he wastes his precious time chatting with fellows who are so far below him that they do not even deserve to walk in his shadow and, besides, jeopardizes his health and makes himself prone to the risk of being nauseated by work and eventually becoming incapacitated. [...] You have a dear, loving wife, you have beautiful babes, what more do you desire? Your happiness is at home, only take a closer look around yourself...¹⁸

Dohnányi's complex, manifold personality is aptly reflected in his works characterized by dark tones akin to Brahms's world as well as weighty contents filling classic forms. His *Symphony in D minor* (op. 9), completed in summer 1901, is seething with passion and energy; subsequent pieces, composed during the Vienna years – the *Serenade for String Trio* (op. 10, 1902), the *Four Rhapsodies* (op. 11, 1903/4), and the *Konzertstück* for cello and orchestra (op. 12, 1903/4) – the dominance of sombre tones becomes permanent and as evident as possible. Even behind apparently joyful passages one can sense a Schubertian resignation, occasionally turning into deep pessimism.

The decrease in the number of Dohnányi's concerts in 1901, that is, the halt in his career as a pianist, was partly caused by these traits of the artist's character. He probably did not do all that he could to cherish the contacts instrumental in ensuring concert invitations and to exploit all opportunities. This is confirmed by the letter from his father cited above:¹⁹

[...] you must govern your fate with greater energy, grasp it with a firmer grip; you must not let yourself float on the waves of fate, for comfortable as that may be, it is not fit for a man, particularly not for a personality predestined for

¹⁸ "Te neked nem szabad oly könnyelműen elbánni az idővel, mint más embernek. [...] Kimondhatatlan nagy bünt követ el az, aki a természet által nagy dolgok kivételére teremtvé van, ha – a helyett hogy halhatatlan műveket producálna – cimboráival, kik tőle oly messze állnak, hogy nem érdemesek még árnyékában sem járni, drága idejét elfecsérlí, eltrécseli, amellet egészségét rontja és annak a veszélynek kiteszi magát, hogy végre elundorodik a munkától és utóljára munkaképtelenné válik. [...] Van kedves, szerető nő, vannak gyönyörű babáid, mit kívánsz többet? Otthon van a te boldogságod, csak nézz jobban magad körül..." Frigyes Dohnányi's letter to Ernő Dohnányi, July 20, 1903 (photocopy in Bálint Vázsonyi's estate, MTA Institute of Musicology, Dohnányi Ernő Archive).

¹⁹ "[...] nagyobb energiával kell kormányoznod sorsodat, erélyesebb marokkal belé fogódzkodni, nem szabad, hogy hagyjad magad a sors hullámai által úsztatni, ami ugyan kényelmes, de nem méltó férfhoz, kívált nagy dolgokra predestinált egyéniséghez. Avval a passzív resistentiával – csak várni, míg a sült galambok hozzád repüljenek – messzire nem juthatsz! Magadnak kell mozognod és pedig erősen, hogy a saisonokban legyen kellő jövedelmed..."

great things. With that passive resistance – waiting for the plums to fall into your mouth – you cannot make it far! You have to move yourself, and move strongly, indeed, to gain a sufficient income each *saison*...

Still, nothing could be more foreign to Dohnányi's nature than "moving" more, that is, besetting concert agencies with his communications, arranging tours, and seeking patrons.

On the other hand, no such impresarios seem to have contacted Dohnányi who might have been willing to arrange long tours for him, spanning dozens of sites and including a large-scale advertising campaign; though it is equally possible that the artist may, on principle, have refused several unacceptable offers in this period.²⁰ Neither during his early career, nor in his Vienna years did Dohnányi have a permanent agent who could have co-ordinated and arranged his journeys or negotiated on his behalf; all these tasks fell to the artist himself. His links to various agencies could only have some effect within a limited scope both geographically and temporally; his co-operations were restricted to a single country or city, nay, often to a single occasion. As early as during his first tours to England and America, the number of his concerts on the Old Continent had been perspicuously low: Dohnányi's European appearances were limited to Austria, Hungary, and Germany; to seven, ten, and four concerts, with respect to the three consecutive seasons. During his Vienna period, Dohnányi continued to neglect such important European centres of musical life as France, Italy, and Russia.

Of his solo recitals in Vienna, three appearances of the 1901/2 season (Bösendorfer Saal, February 3, 11, and 27) were organized by Haslinger; a year later, however, the task was taken over by Dohnányi's former partner, Albert J. Gutmann.²¹ Simultaneous with this change, the number of press advertisements rose conspicuously. The success of the January 10 concert encouraged the agency to arrange another solo recital for January 29, a "request performance," as it were, after Dohnányi's sonata recital with Hugo Becker (January 20).²² This time, quite exceptionally, the concert was even promoted

²⁰ One such case is reported by Dohnányi in a letter dated May 14, 1901, asking for the advice of a representative of the Bösendorfer company, whether to accept the proposal of the Vienna-based Habertha for a series of 9 concerts in various Central European summer resorts. The addressee, Herr Schnabel replied that the level of the event was inappropriate in terms of Dohnányi's artistic rank (photocopy in the estate of Bálint Vázsonyi).

²¹ During Dohnányi's first concert season, in 1897/8, he had entrusted the organization of his Vienna concerts to Gutmann, but his letter to his father dated October 12, 1897 attests that he was dissatisfied with the attitude of the company. Gutmann – similarly to Hermann Wolff in Berlin – was not prepared to offer more than casual service to the young artist who, in turn, had to pay for all arrangements and accept full financial responsibility for the event.

²² The second recital was, indeed, due to public success, just as Gutmann claimed. Namely, in the concert calendar printed before mid-January, no such event had appeared as yet; on the programme of the January 20 concert, however, it was duly advertised.

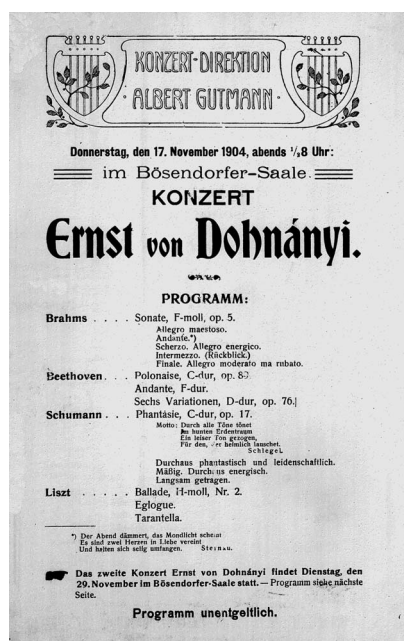


Figure 2: Program of Dohnányi's recital in Vienna (under Gutmann's direction), November 17, 1904

in a large-type advertisement of the size of half a postcard, of which the *Fremden-Blatt*, for example, would publish several dozens in each issue – but, up to this point, only with regard to other musicians. Subsequently, for almost a decade, Dohnányi would give two recitals each season in the Bösendorfer Saal, Vienna; always around the beginning of advent, within a short span of time: on November 16 and December 4, 1903; November 17 and 29, 1904; November 10 and 20, 1905; November 19 and 29, 1906; November 29 and December 9, 1907; November 21 and 28, 1908; November 17 and 27, 1909; November 19 and December 1, 1910.²³ From this strict schedule, Dohnányi only diverged in the early 1910s.

The majority of the chamber appearances of the Vienna years were presumably due more to Dohnányi's personal contact with the members of the Fitzner Quartet than the immediate impact of any of his impresarios. Apart from his tours to England and America, this ensemble had been Dohnányi's

²³ At the initial stage of his career, it was also Vienna that played the most important role in terms of Dohnányi's solo recitals: he performed there on December 2 and 9, 1897 and March 20 and 29, 1898 (the latter concert was probably postponed by a few days); these appearances were only followed by one more concert in Vienna (February 3, 1900). Dohnányi's individual concerts in Vienna were re-launched in 1902, with the three appearances mentioned above (February 3, 11, and 27); the renewal of Gutmann's contract led to the 1903 recitals (January 10 and 29); eventually, the dates were transferred to the end of each year.



Figure 3: The Fitzner Quartet in 1905

almost exclusive chamber partner for several years,²⁴ and this remained the rule up to the summer of 1905. The Fitzner Quartet did not belong to Gutmann but to his rival, the Kehlendorfer agency; each season, Dohnányi appeared in some of their concerts.²⁵ Gutmann only put Dohnányi on in two chamber concerts in Vienna: in January 1903 with Hugo Becker (see above), and on November 25, 1904, with the Bohemian Quartet. It is likely that Dohnányi had already made friends with Becker, the eminent cellist in 1899, when they performed together in London. As a member of the Frankfurt Museumsquartett, Becker was Dohnányi's contact person with the Museums-gesellschaft, in whose concerts he appeared three times during the period here surveyed.²⁶ Besides Vienna and Frankfurt, they also shared a concert in Pozsony (January 19, 1903). Their next common appearance would take place a few years later in Budapest, on March 7, 1906; this event saw the world première of Dohnányi's *Konzertstück* (op. 12), conducted by the composer himself. Presumably, this work, completed during 1903/4, has more to do with the cellist than the dedication and the first performance suggest; his playing must have inspired it

²⁴ He played with the Fitzner Quartet in Vienna (March 29, 1898, probably adjourned a few days; March 22, 1899; and January 3, 1900), Pozsony (January 19, 1899 and February 2, 1900), and Salzburg (around July 31, 1900). At the time, the quartet consisted of Rudolf Fitzner, Jaroslav Czerny, Otto Žert, and Friedrich Buxbaum. With the members of the quartet, Dohnányi performed his own *Piano Quintet* (op. 1), Brahms's *Piano Quintet in F minor* (op. 34), Beethoven's *Trio in E flat major* (op. 70), and Mozart's *Piano Quartet in G minor*.

²⁵ Their joint appearances in his Vienna years were as follows: Vienna, December 27, 1901 and February 15, 1903; Zagreb, April 3, 1903; Prague, December 16, 1903; Vienna, January 5 and November 25, 1904, April 13, 1905. Their Vienna concerts were always held in the Bösendorfer Saal. From late 1901, the members of the ensemble were Rudolf Fitzner, Zajicek, Jaroslav Czerny, and Walther; from the subsequent season, the second violin part was taken over by Hess. (According to contemporary practice, the first names of the members of chamber ensembles were hardly ever reported.)

²⁶ On October 24, 1902 they performed together Dohnányi's *Sonata in B flat minor* (op. 8); at the orchestral concerts on March 13 and November 8, 1903, Dohnányi played Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in E flat* and Liszt's *Concerto in E flat*, respectively.

in the first place. A few years later, in 1909, Becker became Dohnányi's colleague at the Berlin Hochschule, and their artistic co-operation was best represented in their common appearance in trio performances. Two more series of events anticipated the Berlin years around this time: in late 1904, early 1905, the renowned Hermann Wolff concert agency contracted him for three solo recitals in Berlin and one chamber concert appearance;²⁷ and at the end of May 1905, he made four appearances at the Bonn chamber music festival.²⁸ So far, research has shown that Dohnányi and Joachim first performed together publicly on May 28, 1905, playing Beethoven's *Trio in E flat*. Joachim, who taught at and directed the Berlin Hochschule für Musik at the time, would soon play a key role in encouraging Dohnányi to settle in Berlin.²⁹

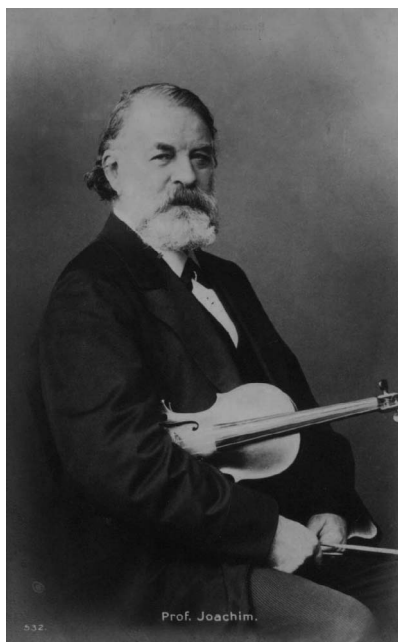


Figure 4: Joseph Joachim around 1900

²⁷ The dates of the solo recitals were December 13 and 20, 1904 and January 28, 1905; on December 21, 1904, Dohnányi appeared in the concert of the Hollaender Quartet, where he participated in Brahms's *Piano Quartet in C minor* and played Beethoven's *Sonata in F sharp major*, while his *Serenade for String Trio* (op. 10) saw its Berlin première. All these concerts were held in the Bechstein Saal. Dohnányi had first worked with Hermann Wolff during his Berlin début in 1897 (with two recitals in the Bechstein Saal on October 1 and 7) and their professional relationship reached its peak in autumn 1905.

²⁸ This distinguished event was launched by Joseph Joachim, honorary president of the Beethoven-Verein, Bonn, in 1890; 1905 saw the seventh festival. As a rule, the series comprised five concerts on consecutive days (on this occasion, between May 28 and June 1). Dohnányi appeared in the first four concerts.

²⁹ Dohnányi had formerly met Joachim several times during his summer sojourns at Gmunden; they had even played together – but only in private.

The concerts of various musical societies probably meant further concert opportunities for Dohnányi, quite independently of the impresarios in charge of chamber and solo recitals. In Vienna, he played Brahms's *Piano Concerto in B flat* (February 12, 1902), Beethoven's *Piano Concertos in E flat* (February 20, 1903) and *G major* (January 18, 1905) with the Concert-Verein; to the Brahms concert of the Tonkünstler-Verein (April 11, 1902) he contributed the *Sonata in F sharp minor*; at the concert of the Männergesang-Verein (December 17, 1903) he participated with his own works and some pieces by Liszt; at the concert of the Akademischer Wagner-Verein (January 19, 1905) he played Beethoven's *Sonata in E major*. At an event of the Brünner-Männer-Gesang-Verein (March 29, 1903), he performed piano pieces by Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt; at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Budapest Philharmonic Society (May 4, 1903), he played Liszt's *Hungarian Fantasia*; at the concert of the Teplitzer Kur-Orchester (November 27, 1903), he performed piano works by Brahms and Liszt, as well as his own piano concerto; in the subscription performance of the Budapest Philharmonic Society (December 2, 1903), he played the solo part of Brahms's *Concerto in B flat major*; and at the Liszt concert of the Filharmonia Warszawska (April 5, 1904), that of the *Concerto in E flat*. It must have been at an occasional request that Dohnányi contributed to the charity event organized by the Reading Circle of the Music Academy to promote the erection of a "funeral monument in memory of József Harrach" (January 5, 1903).³⁰ It was, however, evidently due to no chance opportunity but the activity of a single agency that within a mere ten days in March 1903, he appeared in five different towns at the concerts of orchestras and societies, always as the soloist of piano concertos.³¹

Dohnányi's tours to England and America had from the very outset been organized by one person. In 1898, the musician contracted the London impresario Nathaniel Vert, who arranged his concerts in co-operation with the Broadwood company and his own brother's firm (Vert & Wolfsohn Management) in England and America, respectively. The co-ordination of proceedings led to successes in both countries, although Vert was also quite restrained in terms of publicity. At Dohnányi's London début, for instance, he built upon the fame of Hans Richter, who conducted the first concert, introducing the young musician without any prior announcement, a fact only few critics failed to note. The deficit of solo recitals was assumed by John Broadwood, who even printed a 12-page prospectus compiled from the London criticism that had appeared in late

³⁰ In late December, Dohnányi had travelled to Budapest in order to participate in the rehearsals for the January 7 performance of his *Symphony in D minor*.

³¹ The sites visited were Karlsruhe (March 4, 1903), Wiesbaden (March 6), Mannheim (March 7), Prague (March 11), and Frankfurt (March 13).

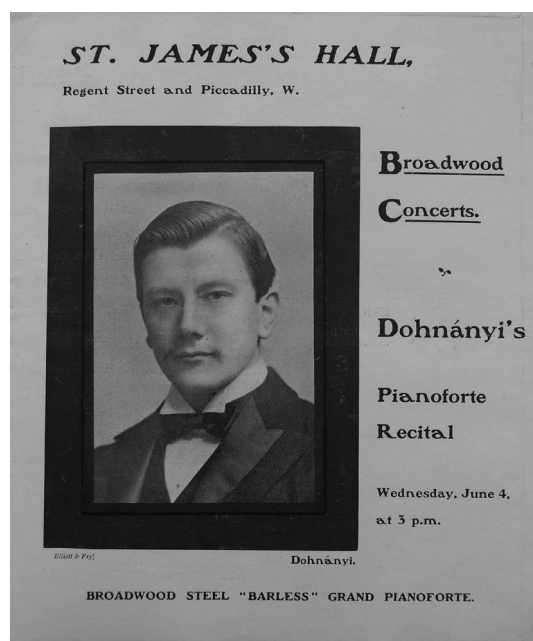


Figure 5: Program of Dohnányi's recital in London (under Broadwood's direction), June 4, 1902

1898.³² As part of the agreement, whenever in England, Dohnányi – in all likelihood – performed exclusively on Broadwood instruments.³³

It was also Vert who arranged the first short tour to England during the Vienna years, taking place in January 1902. In spring 1902, however, a careless decision led to a radical change in Dohnányi's tours. Broadwood arranged a solo recital for Dohnányi for June 4, without previously asking Vert's consent. Although Dohnányi did not have an exclusive contract with his impresario, in his first indignation, Vert removed the *Symphony in D minor* (op. 9) from the programme of its projected London première, scheduled for May 26, under the auspices of Hans Richter.³⁴

³² Due to the first London recital, the Broadwood company lost some 30 guineas. Dohnányi reported this in his letter to his father dated November 27, 1898. The prospectus preserved in Bálint Vázsonyi's estate now belongs to the Dohnányi Archive, Budapest.

³³ Printed concert programmes often included the advertisement of the company, as well as the fact that Dohnányi's instrument was a "Broadwood and Sons's Steel 'Barless' Grand Pianoforte". Dohnányi also took part in the promotion of the firm; the programme notes to his February 15, 1905 concert in Dundee, for example, cited his statement: "There is no difficulty for me in phrasing the Broadwood Pianos. Their beautiful tone, their perfect mechanism, are qualities which place them, especially the new 'Barless' Grands, in the very front rank of all pianos."

³⁴ A copy of the letter can be found in Bálint Vázsonyi's estate; the original is in the Musical Collection of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest.

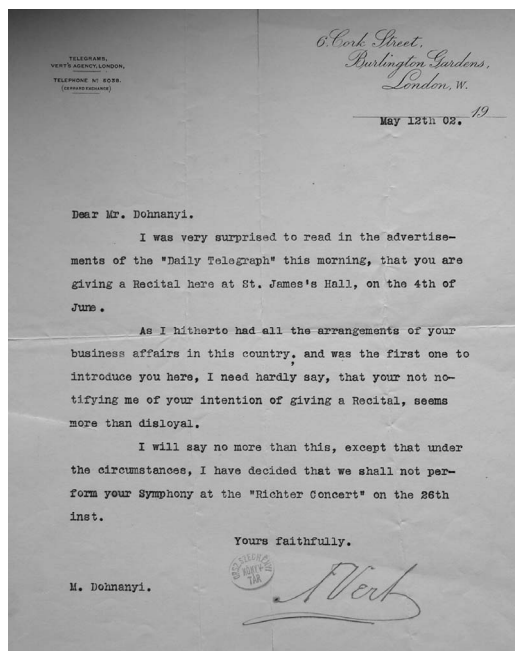


Figure 6: N. Vert's letter to Dohnányi, May 12, 1902

Vert informed Dohnányi about his decision in a letter dated May 12, 1902:

Dear Mr. Dohnanyi.

I was very surprised to read in the advertisements of the "Daily Telegraph" this morning, that you are giving a Recital here at St. James's Hall, on the 4th of June.

As I hitherto had all the arrangements of your business affairs in this country, and was the first one to introduce you here, I need hardly say, that your not notifying me of your intention of giving a Recital, seems more than disloyal.

I will say no more than this, except that under the circumstances, I have decided that we shall not perform your Symphony at the "Richter Concert" on the 26th inst.

Yours faithfully.

N. Vert

A. J. Hipkins, representative of John Broadwood & Sons, a few days later informed the artist of the conflict having been resolved – but the facts appear to show otherwise. The performance of the symphony, adjourned to the autumn, came to nothing; what is more, Vert would never again have Dohnányi appear in the Popular Concerts series; his co-operation with Hans Richter (whose concerts were also Vert's responsibility) ground to a halt; and



Figure 7: Program of Dohnányi's recital in London (under Robinson's direction), February 17, 1904

– for reasons unidentified so far – Dohnányi's earlier projected American tours also fell through. It cannot be a mere coincidence that until 1905, the year of Vert's death, Dohnányi would only give two more solo recitals in London, in the very city he had gained such unanimous acclaim a few years earlier. These two concerts were organized by Vert for February 8 and 18, 1904; the two recitals given in February 1905, however, would already be arranged by the Concert-Direction E. L. Robinson.

From spring 1902, the management of Dohnányi's English affairs was taken over by the Broadwood company. Although (perhaps out of respect for Vert's sensitivity) no recitals were put on in London, compensation came in the form of a number of other concerts both in the capital and in the country. Dohnányi even appeared in the company's own chamber series, the so-called "Broadwood Concerts", which consisted of mixed programmes.³⁵ Apparently, the Broadwood company paid more attention to advantageous public

³⁵ These concerts would, as a rule, have three performers; a singer, a pianist, and a string player (sometimes a string quartet); the latter two usually had their individual numbers as well. In the period here examined, Dohnányi appeared in the following "Broadwood Concerts" after the 1902 solo recital mentioned above: November 6 and December 4, 1902, February 11 and 25, 1904, and February 9, 1905 (London); February 13, 1904 (Birmingham); February 4, 1905 (Malvern).

relations than Vert. They produced programme brochures containing detailed introductions to the works performed, and as early as in the advertisement of the first Dohnányi concert, they made an attempt to exploit the tested techniques of how to announce the prospective appearance of great stars: in the June 2 issue of *The Times*, they not only published the programme of the concert scheduled for the 4th, but also a selection of earlier criticism.

In the press coverage of the Vienna years, another theme emerged in addition to the assessment of the performing artist: more and more was said about Dohnányi the composer. Prior to this, the performance of Dohnányi's pieces was intimately linked to the person of the composer, but his works were now beginning to have a life of their own. At the time of the first tours, it was Dohnányi himself who would play his own works (*Vier Klavierstücke*, op. 2; *Variationen und Fuge*, op. 4; *Passacaglia*, op. 6; *Gavotte und Musette*), as well as the piano part of the *Piano Quintet in C minor* (op. 1), the *Cello Sonata in B flat minor* (op. 8), and the *Concerto in E minor* (op. 5); and even the première of the *String Quartet in A major* (op. 7) took place in his presence. From late 1904, the *Vier Rhapsodien* (op. 11) made the artist's repertoire even richer. The gradual shift was due largely to the publication of the works: from 1902, the Vienna-based Doblinger and the Mainz-based Schott started to publish Dohnányi's compositions one after the other, and by 1906, over a



Figure 8a: Manuscript of the *Rhapsody in G minor* (op. 11 no. 1)

This image shows the first printed edition of the Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 11, No. 1, published by Doblinger in Vienna. The page is titled 'Vier Rhapsodien.' and 'I.' at the top. The tempo marking 'Allegro non troppo, ma agitato.' is present. The notation is printed in black ink on white paper. The first staff is labeled 'PIANO.' and the music is written in G minor. The page number '3' is visible in the top right corner. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: 'Copyright 1904 by Ludwig Doblinger (successors) E. G. Witt, Aufhängermarkt, Vorarlberg.' and the publisher's name 'D. 3107.'

Figure 8b: First edition of the *Rhapsody in G minor* (op. 11 no. 1), Doblinger, Vienna

quarter of all opus-numbered pieces of his oeuvre had been printed. Among the press reports relating to Dohnányi, score reviews soon began to appear, and assessments of concerts independent of the composer were published in increasing numbers.

Personal contacts did, of course, continue to play a central role in the reception of Dohnányi's works: they were frequently performed by his friends and chamber partners, such as the members of the Fitzner, the Hubay–Popper, and the Joachim Quartets, or the Museumsquartett in Frankfurt. In certain places, e.g. in Berlin, Dohnányi the composer even became more famous than the pianist Dohnányi, who had not paid a visit for years.

As opposed to his chamber works, Dohnányi's *Symphony in D minor* was usually played in the composer's presence, who began to take on yet another performing role, that of the conductor. Around the fin de siècle, it was a typical phase of a musician's career that renowned, established performers would follow up the smaller compositions of their "virtuoso years" and the concertos composed for their own use by orchestral or stage pieces, often conducting these themselves.³⁶ Dohnányi's representative orchestral composition had formerly been his *Piano Concerto in E minor*, whose one-movement version won the first prize at the 1899 Bösendorfer competition; within the next two years, he played the piano part of the entire piece in many places.³⁷ In his Vienna years, however, this concerto was only performed once (in Teplitz, on November 27, 1903), and its representative role mentioned above was taken over by the *Symphony in D minor*. According to up-to-date research, the latter work was delivered no less than 14 times within two and a half years in Europe and America, which can be considered a real triumphal march. Dohnányi first took the conductor's baton on February 12, 1902 at the Vienna performance of the 1897 *Zrínyi Overture*, followed by two performances of his symphony, on January 7 (Budapest) and February 3, 1903 (Vienna). But even at those events where someone else conducted his symphony, he would keep faithful to his habit of appearing both

³⁶ It may be a coincidence that the orchestral works of d'Albert, the foremost role model of the young Dohnányi, can neatly be aligned with Dohnányi's compositions: while the German master's piano concerto (B flat minor, op. 2), *Symphony in F*, and overture were followed by his second piano concerto (in E minor) and, some years later, a cello concerto, with Dohnányi, the role of the first piano concerto was taken by the *Piano Quintet in C minor* (op. 1), followed by the *Symphony in F*, the *Zrínyi Overture*, the piano concerto dedicated to d'Albert, written in the same key, E minor, as his second piano concerto had been, and eventually the cello concerto (op. 12), shortly after a second symphony (op. 9). It seems equally accidental that d'Albert's first string quartet also bears the opus number 7, although its key is not A major but A minor (at the time of the first tours, Dohnányi's string quartet was advertised as his op. 11). In late 1902, d'Albert himself conducted his symphony in London, where Dohnányi's work would have been performed, if he had not fallen out with Vert.

³⁷ Budapest, January 11, 1899; Munich, January 29, 1900; Berlin, February 12, 1900; Cologne, February 20, 1900; Leipzig, February 26, 1900; Boston, November 2 and 3, 1900; Philadelphia, November 5, 1900; Baltimore, November 6, 1900; New York, November 8, 1900; Brooklyn, November 9, 1900.

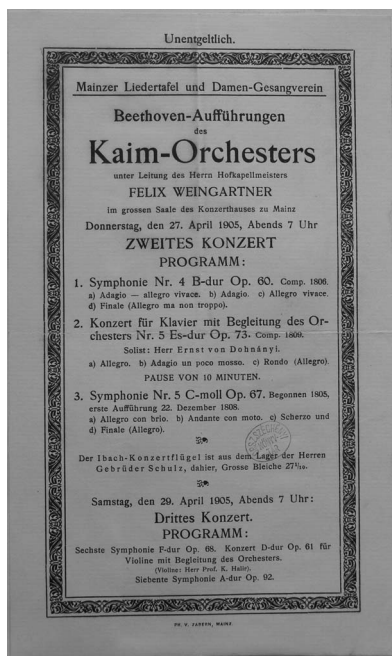


Figure 9: Dohnányi's *Symphony in D minor* and Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in G*, concert in Mainz, November 11, 1903

as a composer and as a performer in the same orchestral concert – just as he had formerly done in terms of playing his piano concerto and conducting his symphony. The performance of his orchestral piece was characteristically accompanied by a piano concerto with Dohnányi's solo, such as in Manchester, on January 30, 1902 (Beethoven's *Emperor*); Frankfurt, November 8, 1903 (Liszt's *Piano Concerto in E flat*); Mainz, November 11, 1903 and Warsaw, March 11, 1904 (Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in G*).³⁸ The Budapest première of the symphony, in January 1903, was an exception: the piano solo of Liszt's concerto was played by d'Albert rather than Dohnányi.

The large number of performances convincingly attests the success of Dohnányi's symphony. Nevertheless, the opinion of the critics regarding the significance of the work was less unanimous. Henry Krehbiel gave the following assessment after the New York performance:

³⁸ Currently we have no evidence to decide whether Dohnányi was present at, or actively participating in, the following performances of his symphony: Montreux, April 1903; Berlin, October and Munich, December 1903 (the latter concerts both conducted by Felix Weingartner); and Cologne, in late 1903 or early 1904. Several sources confirm that in December 1902 the composer was present at a concert in Mainz, conducted probably by Emil Steinbach. In the United States, Dohnányi's long-time friend, Wilhelm Gericke conducted the first performances of the symphony in New York (December 10, 1903), Chicago, and, in all probability, in Boston.

His pianoforte concerto and quintet were beautiful auguries of the dawning of a creative talent of a rare order, and put a keen edge on the expectations aroused by the announcement of his symphony. Those expectations were not fully realized. The work is laid out on larger lines. It has five movements, an intermezzo being introduced between the slow movement and the finale. It is the most sententious and best knit movement of the five, probably because the composer did not feel burdened by the need of elaborating its material to give it symphonic dimensions. A sense of such an obligation rests like an incubus upon the other movements, especially the first, which is a compages of fragments, each exploiting a conceit in rhythmical or other treatment, which has little relationship with either its predecessor or successor. The effect upon an analytic listener was that of a series of abrupt changes and a lack of logical development. [...] The movement which disclosed the greatest amount of continuity and coherency was the finale, a theme with variations, but even this lost itself in the fugued conclusion. To sum up, Mr. Dohnányi has not yet 'found himself' as a composer for the orchestra.³⁹

The Manchester world première on January 30, 1902 had met significantly greater acclaim; and in his native country, Dohnányi was celebrated as the creator of Hungarian symphonic music. The first Vienna performance also brought noteworthy success. As Gustav Schoenaich, the reviewer of *Die Musik* reported:

Eine d-moll-Symphonie von Ernst v. Dohnányi, im letzten Konzert des Wiener Konzertvereins unter der Leitung des Komponisten zur Aufführung gebracht, ist das Versprechen eines grossen, sehr grossen Talentes. Die starken Ansätze zu eigenartiger thematischer Erfindung, die sich in dieser Symphonie allerwärts zeigen, sind eine Gewähr dafür, dass dem Komponisten die verblüffende Beherrschung des ganzen symphonischen Apparates, nie zum Selbstzweck werden wird. Dohnányis Werk hatte aussergewöhnlichen Erfolg.⁴⁰

During his Vienna years, Dohnányi's chamber music also met with favourable reception. Not only the criticism after performances and the reviews of score publications included numerous appreciative and often analytical evaluations, but other musical writings referred to them as well. The critical survey of the *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, for instance, placed Dohnányi approvingly among his most renowned colleagues:

Auf dem Gebiete des Klavierspiels rivalisierten neuerdings d'Albert und Sauer. Nachdem sie beide als Virtuosen uns nichts Neues zu sagen haben, versuchen sie es, das Publikum für ihre Kompositionen zu interessieren. [...] Da erwächst ihnen in dem jungen Ungar Ernst von Dohnányi ein gefährlicher Rival. Als Klavierspieler stellt er schon heute seinen Mann. Zu seinen bedeutendsten Schöpfungen gehören die d-moll-Symphonie, eine Cello-sonate und das Klavierquintett op. 1. Besonders dieses Werk erscheint durch

³⁹ *New York Tribune*, December 11, 1903.

⁴⁰ *Die Musik* (Berlin & Leipzig), March 1903 (Jg. 2, Heft 11).

verschiedene Vorzüge als eines der bedeutendsten in der Kammermusik-literatur seit Brahms' Tod und Dohnányi ist jung an Jahren.⁴¹

The assessment of the *Piano Quintet in C minor* coincides with Hugo Schlemmüller's views of the *Cello Sonata in B flat minor*, expressed in his score review:

Die Sonate [op. 8] des jungen, talentvollen Komponisten dürfte seit Brahms zu einer der bedeutendsten gehören.⁴²

No wonder that the criticism following the Frankfurt-am-Main performance of the *String Quartet in A* (op. 7) also based its comparisons on Brahms's stature; in terms of Dohnányi's music, the German master was indisputably one of the most crucial points of reference.

Daß Dohnányi namentlich im ersten Satz unter dem bemerkbaren Einfluß von Brahms schreibt, gereicht dem Werk an und für sich nur zum Vorteil, umsomehr, als es auch genug Eigenartiges bietet. Trotzdem der Komponist Klavierspieler ist, verrät er in seinem Quartett eine äußerst geschickte Behandlung der Streichinstrumente. [...] Im Ganzen genommen, zeichnet sich das Werk durch ansprechende, glückliche Erfindung, vortreffliche Stimmführung und gutgelungene kontrapunktische Arbeit aus, wenn es auch nicht in dem gleichen Maße wie die ihm folgenden beiden Werke von Brahms und Schubert den Stempel der künstlerischen Reife trägt.⁴³

The novelty in Dohnányi's piano compositions was his *Vier Rhapsodien* (op. 11), whose printed version appeared by and large simultaneously with its world première (Vienna, November 29, 1904). Its reception was less favourable than that of Dohnányi's chamber music, particularly in Vienna and Berlin. The four pieces incited conspicuously manifold and sharply contrasting opinions, which may have been due to the fact that Dohnányi's opus – like many of Brahms's works – was hard to approach even for musicians. Many complained about the dark tones of the pieces, the excessive technical demands, or the lack of musical content or emotions. Some critics preferred the third, scherzo-like piece, others the last composition, based on the *Dies irae sequentia*. Hugo Leichentritt described the series as follows:

Vier Rhapsodien für Klavier sind so gesetzt, wie ein guter Pianist für sein Instrument schreibt, sehr wirksam und klangvoll. Das ist das beste, was ich von ihnen sagen kann.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Neue Musik-Zeitung* (Stuttgart & Leipzig), February 25, 1904.

⁴² *Die Musik* (Berlin & Leipzig), June 1904 (Jg. 3, Heft 17). After the Budapest première of the work, an enthusiastic compatriot of Dohnányi's went even further in the February 18, 1902 issue of *Zenevilág*: "Ez a szonáta remekmű a szó legkomolyabb értelmében; ha be akarnók sorozni a hasonnemű művek közé, egyenesen Beethoven cello-szonátái mellé helyeznők." ["This sonata is a masterpiece in the most serious meaning of the word; should we like to classify it among the works of its kind, we would place it on one rank with Beethoven's cello sonatas."]

⁴³ *Kleine Presse* (Frankfurt am Main), February 28, 1904.

⁴⁴ *Kunstwart* (Berlin), January 1905 (Jg. 18, Nr. 8).

The rhapsodies were better received in Britain. The reviewer of *The Scotsman* observed:

These are rhapsodies that sound like improvisations. They ring with the passions of modern life, the desire for peace and repose, the angry disappointment at the fugitive nature of human aspirations. In many respects the musical contents of Mr. Dohnányi's Rhapsodies seem to pass out of the Magyar into the Slavonic tone. They are nearer Tschaikowsky than Liszt. They reveal the same wrestling spirit as the best works of the Russian musician; they are intensely difficult to play, but they do not contain the empty pianistic trickery which is found in much of Liszt's music.⁴⁵

Examining the solo piano repertoire of the young Dohnányi, we meet something slightly different than could be expected on the basis of legendary accounts. Although Dohnányi had a matchless memory, learnt easily, and sight-read excellently, his working repertoire was nonetheless fairly narrow; moreover, he only added a few pieces to it each year. The programme of his first two solo recitals (Berlin, October 1 and 7, 1897) was obviously selected from those half a hundred works which he had learnt during the past three years with István Thomán at the Budapest Academy of Music.⁴⁶ During the next four years, these works would remain the core of Dohnányi's concert programmes, gradually extended by two or three dozens of compositions – some of them introduced into Dohnányi's performance repertoire from the passive storehouse of works learnt at the Academy. The ensuing list of nearly sixty works gives an impressive image of the repertoire of the young Dohnányi; the mere enumeration of pieces may, however, be misleading, unless one takes into consideration the temporal and quantitative structure of the programmes. Over two-thirds of all programmes would continue to be based on the same two dozens of compositions, while numerous works were played only a few times, or even just once.⁴⁷ For individual tours, Dohnányi

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), February 13, 1905.

⁴⁶ His first Berlin concert comprised the following pieces: Bach–Liszt: *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*; Beethoven: *Sonata in A flat major* (op. 110); Schumann: *Sonata in F sharp minor*; Dohnányi: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of G. E.* (op. 4, première performance); Liszt: *Don Juan Fantasia*. The second programme consisted of Brahms: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Händel*; Chopin: *Ballade in G minor* and *Impromptu in F sharp major*; Dohnányi: *Scherzo in C sharp minor* (op. 2 no. 1, première performance); Liszt: *Sonata in B minor*, *Valse impromptu*, and *Rhapsody no. 13*.

⁴⁷ In addition to the programmes of the two Berlin concerts, the following pieces can be seen as part of a broadly interpreted Dohnányi repertoire between 1898 and 1901: Bach: *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*; Haydn: *Variations in F minor*; Beethoven: *Rondo a capriccio* (op. 129), *Sonatas in E flat and G* (op. 31 no. 1 and 3), *Diabelli Variations*, *Andante in F major*; Brahms: *Rhapsodies in B minor and E flat* (op. 79 no. 1 and op. 119 no. 4), *Intermezzi in E flat minor and B minor* (op. 118 no. 6, and op. 119 no. 1); Schubert: *Sonata in A minor* (op. 42); Chopin: *Valse in C sharp minor*, *Nocturne in F sharp*, and *Variations* (op. 12); Liszt, *Rhapsodies Nos. 3, 9, and 15*, *Soirées de Vienne no. 4*, *Legend in E*; Mendelssohn: *Prelude and Fugue in E minor*; Schumann: *Romance in F sharp major*; Rubinstein: *Barcarola*; and his own works: *Vier Klavierstücke* (op. 2), *Gavotte and Musette*, *Passacaglia* (op. 6); Delibes–Dohnányi: *Naila Valse*.

would choose only as many works as were sufficient for two or three concerts, combining them in various ways. He managed his energies consciously and responsibly, not taking any unnecessary risks by keeping too many works on his programme during his exhausting trips. As opposed to the Dohnányi image prevalent in later days, it is, indeed, surprising, that during two of his American tours, he only played such works which he had already performed publicly before. The only minor exception was Beethoven's *Variations in C minor* (WoO 80), which he included for the sake of an all-Beethoven recital alone, at the end of his second tour, in New York, on March 2, 1901. It is almost symbolical that when on December 6 he reappeared in the new season after an interval of nine months, his opening number was the self-same Beethoven piece.

For the Vienna years, Dohnányi had developed the practice of learning six or seven new works during the summer break, enough for a separate recital. These he would always play in the first solo recitals of the new season, but never all of them together; rather in at least two instalments, mingling them with the numbers of his old repertoire. Some of the new works gradually made earlier pieces redundant, while others might disappear altogether after a few performances (or only one concert). In the period examined, Dohnányi never played any new works during the subsequent concerts of the season, including all foreign tours as well.

The 1901/2 season was a period of transition: Dohnányi gave his first solo recital in Pozsony on December 6, 1901; this included the novelties of Chopin's *Nocturne in B major* and *Scherzo in C sharp minor*, as well as Tausig's Strauss transcription, the *Nachtfalter* valse caprice. On January 18, 1902, Dohnányi participated in a multi-performer "popular concert" in London, playing a single solo piece, Brahms's *Sonata in F sharp minor*; and on January 24, he performed Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata* and Chopin's *Mazurka in F minor*. The following season saw the introduction of another six new programme pieces: Brahms's *Intermezzo in E major* and *Capriccio in B minor*, Beethoven's *Sonata in D minor*, Brahms's *Intermezzo in A flat major* and *Capriccio in G minor*, as well as Liszt's *Consolation in D flat major*. The first two numbers were first played in Budapest on January 5, 1903, the event organized by the Reading Circle of the Music Academy; they were repeated (with Beethoven's sonata and Brahms's other two titles inserted) at the solo recital in Vienna on January 10; while Liszt's composition went on the programme for the second Vienna concert. Dohnányi's structuring of his concert programmes is illuminated by the analysis of his repertoire: two numbers of the new programme were only played in advance because the occasional invitation to the Budapest concert – their

“first” performance had originally been scheduled for the two Vienna recitals. In light of this, pursuing the same logic, it becomes evident that the aforementioned Vienna recitals, usually scheduled towards the end of the year and always coming in twos, served the chief purpose of enabling the representative performance of the new titles.⁴⁸

The new items of the November 16, 1903 Vienna recital were Liszt's *B-A-C-H Fantasia and Fugue*, Beethoven's *Sonata in A major* (op. 101), and Schumann's *Kreisleriana*; and on December 4, Dohnányi introduced Brahms's *Intermezzo in A major* and *Ballade in G minor*, Liszt's *Spanish Rhapsody*, and Beethoven's *Sonata in E major* (op. 109). It is of minor import that Dohnányi had already played the first-mentioned Liszt work five days before in Mainz (after his own symphony and Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in G*, as a “pre-arranged encore”), while the two Brahms pieces and the *Spanish Rhapsody* had been performed as the closure of the scheduled programme of a philharmonic concert, after orchestral works and a concerto in Teplitz, on November 27.

The 1904/5 season was exceptional because Dohnányi introduced six new works at each of his two Vienna recitals: on November 17, he played for the first time Brahms's *Sonata in F minor*, Beethoven's *Variations in D major*, Schumann's *Fantasia in C major*, as well as Liszt's *Ballade in B minor*, *Églogue*, and *Tarantella*; and on November 29 he performed Beethoven's *Sonatas in F sharp* and *F major* (op. 78 and op. 10 no. 2), his own *Vier Rhapsodien* (op. 11, world première), and Chopin's *Nocturne in E major* and *Mazurka in F sharp minor*, as well as Tausig's *Ungarische Zigeunerweisen*. Never before had he introduced so many novelties during a single season. His presumption may even have surprised himself, for at his three solo recitals in Berlin in December and January, he returned to his familiar, often-played repertoire pieces, only retaining from the new programme the two Beethoven sonatas.

Dohnányi planned and composed his repertoire consciously and logically – the end result, however, would be influenced by unexpected demands and circumstances. Each season he would continue to handle a repertoire sufficient for two or three concerts, occasionally inserting into his core repertoire a few works from past years. In structuring his programmes, he considered the function and place value of each composition with regard to the concert as a whole: different roles were assigned to the lighter and the weightier pieces, the melodious and the virtuoso works, as well as the opening and the closing numbers of the recitals. This was further modulated by Dohnányi's insistence on certain composers. Besides his own works, he always kept on his repertoire

⁴⁸ The two recitals of the 1902/3 season were postponed to January obviously because of Dohnányi's tour to England between late October and December 5, 1902.

three or four compositions by Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, and Liszt, as well as one or two works by Schumann. Bach, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Rubinstein, and Tausig each contributed one piece to the repertoire of the young Dohnányi.⁴⁹ Equally interesting is the fact that in Dohnányi's programmes the numbers often followed the approximate alphabetical order of the composers' names. This is evidently an accidental feature (Bach is the first in the order of chronology, and Beethoven's and Brahms's weighty music is counterbalanced by Chopin's lighter touch, finally leading to Dohnányi's, Liszt's, and Tausig's brilliancies). Nevertheless, it may be speculated that in Dohnányi's programme plans, the primary concerns – effectiveness and variety – were not only combined with a respect for chronology, but also tinged by Dohnányi's playful fancies.⁵⁰

Dohnányi might equally dismiss a work after several years had passed, or following just a few performances, typically replacing them with another one of similar character. As though each compartment of his suitcase could only contain a specific number of scores, and even if he did change some of the components from time to time, the overall structure remained fundamentally unaltered. This is best demonstrated by Chopin's nocturnes: he started with the F major piece in April 1898, followed by the B major from December 6, 1901, and the E major one from November 29, 1904. Prior to the Berlin years, he played these three pieces 16, 18, and 8 times, respectively, in clearly distinguishable periods, without a single overlap. Of Brahms's sonatas, the F sharp minor one was the first to appear (five times between 1902 and early 1905), and after a "premature" first performance in Vienna (November 17, 1904), the F minor one took over in February 1905. The closing number of Dohnányi's

⁴⁹ Of the permanent repertoire of the first tours, the following were dismissed during the Vienna years: Bach: *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*, while its counterpart, Liszt's transcription of the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* was reintroduced (he played it 18 times prior to 1901, and another 9 times between 1903 and 1905). Of the old favourites, he only played Mendelssohn's *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* and Rubinstein's *Barcarola* once. Haydn's *Variations in F minor* and Schubert's *Sonata in A minor* would remain the only works by those composers in his repertoire (before 1902, he had also performed Liszt's transcription of the 4th piece of the *Soirées de Vienne*). Mozart's *Rondo in A minor* was only played by Dohnányi three times in late 1898 and early 1899, while the sole performance of the *Sonata in F* (KV 332 or 457a) clearly reveals an occasional concert invitation (Salzburger Festspiele, August 3, 1900).

⁵⁰ In those programmes which approximated the alphabetical sequence, Chopin and Dohnányi, Beethoven and Brahms, as well as Dohnányi and Haydn could appear in reversed order; on some rare occasions, Mendelssohn and Schubert were the opening numbers; even more seldom, Chopin could precede Beethoven or Brahms. It is worth noting, too, that between 1897 and 1905 Dohnányi played piano pieces by Bach 49 times; and 48 of these were opening numbers (during the 1904/5 season, featuring fewer works by Bach, Liszt's *B-A-C-H Fantasia and Fugue* opened six of Dohnányi's solo recitals, replacing the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*). Bach was frequently followed by Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Dohnányi, and Liszt, and this sequence characterized many of those concerts as well in which Bach was not represented. The only Haydn piece would always be located in the middle of the concert, while Rubinstein, the Strauss transcription, and Tausig at the end. The final number (Liszt's rhapsody) often meant an exception from the alphabetical order, while Schumann invariably appeared at the beginning or in the middle of the concert.

concerts would for years remain predominantly a rhapsody by Liszt (the 13th, initially, periodically replaced by the 9th – *Carnival in Pest* – and the 15th – the *Rákóczi March*); sometimes he might play one of his own works (the *Naila Valse* or, during his early tours, the *Scherzo in C sharp minor* or the *Capriccio in B minor*). From December 1901, for the next year or so, Tausig's transcription of Strauss's *Nachtfalter* valse would typically feature as a closing number, later replaced by the *Spanish Rhapsody* and Brahms's *Rhapsody in E flat major* – or, for another few months between November 1904 and February 1905, Tausig's *Ungarische Zigeunerweisen*. From late 1905, the Strauss transcription would eventually reappear at the end of Dohnányi's concert programmes.⁵¹

Another characteristic of Dohnányi's programme structure was the frequent grouping together of certain works (two or three of them at a time). Liszt's Valse impromptu, for instance, were performed 32 times before the Berlin years, disregarding all encore appearances, and with a sole exception (in a multi-performer concert in America) they were always played with one of the rhapsodies.⁵² Chopin's *Nocturne in B* was almost exclusively followed by the *Scherzo in C sharp minor* (14 times out of 16 concerts); during the early tours, the *Ballade in G minor* would be joined by the *Nocturne in F sharp* (and later, from 1905, the op. 12 *Variations*); while Brahms's *Intermezzo in A* was played before his *Ballade in G minor*. Of Beethoven's sonatas, the F sharp and the F major pieces, first performed on November 29, 1904, were almost inseparable; they appeared in Dohnányi's concerts consecutively on seven occasions in the season.

Having examined Dohnányi's concert programmes, it is evident that the individual events and the comprehensive programmes of entire seasons were the result of careful planning, in which Dohnányi's definite artistic views can be traced. He would, of course, aim at a certain level of success and popularity, but these were always subordinate to musical values and the service to great masters. A significant part of the public might from the outset be deterred by the prominent role that Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, and Schumann played in

⁵¹ The connection of the Beethoven sonatas is rather more complex, since several of these were always simultaneously kept on Dohnányi's repertoire. Initially, the C major (op. 10) and A flat (op. 110) pieces were the permanent features, while the op. 31 G major and E flat major sonatas had an alternate appearance. The latter two works were, from 1903, more and more often replaced by the D minor sonata and the two E flat major sonatas (op. 31 and 109). From late 1904, the F sharp and F major sonatas became dominant, while the B flat major (op. 106) and A major (op. 101) sonatas, first introduced in early 1902 and late 1903, would only gain prominence several years later.

⁵² The matches were permanent for each period: from his Berlin début in 1897, Dohnányi always played the *Valse impromptu* with *Rhapsody no. 13* (8 times, and one pairing with the 3rd rhapsody); from late 1899, with the 15th (15 times); after 1900, he returned to the first matching for five years (7 times; between 1901 and 1904, he rather neglected this piece, and then played it with the *Spanish Rhapsody* on one occasion). From March 1906, the *Valse impromptu* would be paired with *Rhapsody no. 9*.

his recitals, whereas the regular performance of Brahms's works borders on a missionary enthusiasm, considering the fact that Dohnányi was at the beginning of his performing career. In promoting the latter composer, it was in Hungary that Dohnányi had to overcome the biggest obstacles, where several of the representatives of musical life conceived of Brahms's effect as one of the central impediments in the way of the development of Hungarian music. On December 3, 1903, the following article appeared in the *Budapesti Hírlap*, concerning the philharmonic concert the previous day:

Ernő Dohnányi, the guest of the concert, played Brahms's second piano concerto, and with that work denied himself a grand triumph. Our audience admires Dohnányi and dotes on his art. It would so gladly have celebrated him today. But Brahms's dull, leaden music weighs heavily on the people, and truly oppresses enthusiasm. Though the more serene air of the last movement filled the audience with some minor motion, the boredom of the others could not be overcome even by Dohnányi's grand art. Had Dohnányi played a popular piece instead of Brahms, the applause would have shattered the hall.⁵³

In terms of Dohnányi's success, the musical ideal he pursued in compiling his concert programmes meant a drawback. Neither was his career fostered by the fact that he refused to join the ranks of virtuosi vying for popularity. During the Vienna years, he retained his artistic and personal freedom through resisting the travelling virtuoso lifestyle offered by impresarios and avoiding the constraints of music teaching. The secret of his performing achievements lay not in regular practice, nor in a routine of appearances, but in the longer periods he spent with relaxation, with carefree music-making, and pursuing an eventful lifestyle. These intervals, on the other hand, served as an indispensable part of his activity as a composer as well, while greatly contributing to the success of his tours by means of enabling him to treat his energies responsibly, carefully planning the repertoire of the coming season well in advance. Within a few seasons at the beginning of his career, the young musician had attracted world-wide notice; his subsequent tours helped cement his position on the international musical stage; and eventually – as the press reviews attest – he “skipped” the virtuoso years and entered directly into the hall of fame of the classic masters of piano playing.

Translated by Boldizsár Fejérvári

⁵³ “Dohnányi Ernő, a hangverseny vendége, Brahms második zongoraversenyét játszotta s ezzel a darral egy nagy diadaltól fosztotta meg magát. Közönségünk csodálja Dohnányit és rajong a művészetéért. Ma is oly szívesen ünnepelte volna. De Brahms szürke, ólomsúlyú zenéje ránehezedik az emberekre és valósággal elnyomja a lelkesedést. Még az utolsó tétel derűsebb levegője vitt egy kis mozgalmat a publikumba, de a többinek az unalmával még a Dohnányi hatalmas művészete is hiába küzdött. Ha Dohnányi népszerű művet játszik Brahms helyett, a taps fölverte volna a termet.”



Figure 10: Dohnányi around 1905

Critiques

Pester Lloyd, November 26, 1901

(Concert of the Hubay–Popper Quartet, November 25)

Konzert. Der zweite Abend des Quartetts Hubay–Popper⁵⁴ brachte außer einem sehr gediegen gespielten Beethoven F-dur aus der Rasumowsky-Reihe, als Novität ein Streichquartett von Ernst Dohnányi.⁵⁵ Dieser junge heimische Künstler, der am Klavier schon ein fertiger Meister von Ruf und Rang ist, hat auch mit seinen bisher aufgeführten Kompositionen hohe Erwartungen rege gemacht. Man sah da eine lebhaft Phantasie am Werke, eine überraschende musikalische Gestaltungskraft, wenn auch noch etwas ungezügelt, fortgerissen von jugendlichem Sturm und Ueberschwang. Mit seinen 24 Jahren wäre er auch noch jetzt ein Jüngster, wenn er nicht schon so früh begonnen hätte, sich zwischen Schumann, Brahms und späterem Beethoven durchzuschreiben und auf seine eigene Note zu stoßen. Das neue Quartett zeigt ihn in erfreulichster Entwicklung, es ist reifer, gerundeter, feiner in musikalischem Gehalt und in der Ausführung. Am weitesten holt er im ersten Satze aus, ja dieser

⁵⁴ The quartet was founded by Jenő Hubay (1858–1937) in 1886. The ensemble gave the first public performance in Hungary of Dohnányi's *Piano Quintet in C minor* (op. 1), on March 13, 1896. In 1901, the further members of the quartet were Rezső Kemény, Gusztáv Szerémi, and Dávid Popper.

⁵⁵ *Quartet in A major* (op. 7). This was the first Budapest performance of the work; the world première had taken place in London, on December 18, 1899.

bringt eine solche Fülle von Themen, von sich drängenden und ablösenden Gedanken, daß keine die Oberherrschaft gewinnt. Alle diese farbigen Episoden fließen aber in den hellen, lebenswürdigen Grundton zusammen, der den ganzen Satz charakterisirt. Dohnányi hält sich überhaupt nicht an herkömmliche Formen. [...] Das Quartett fand eine überaus günstige Aufnahme und als der Komponist dankend auf dem Podium erschien, empfing ihn ein Sturm von Beifall. [...] (A. B.) [Dr. August Beer]

The Times, January 13, 1902

(Chamber concert in London, January 11)

THE POPULAR CONCERTS.—If all the Popular Concerts in recent years had been even approximately as interesting in both programme and performance as that on Saturday afternoon, which attracted a very large audience to St. James's-hall, there would never have been any question of jeopardizing their future, and even the Monday Concerts might still have been going their way rejoicing. To begin with, the playing by Messrs. Carl Haliø, [Adolf] Friedrich, [Alfred] Gibson, and [Carl] Fuchs of Beethoven's early quartet in G from op. 18 afforded unalloyed pleasure, and no less splendid, though in a totally different way, was the performance by the first, third, and fourth of these players and Herr von Dohnányi of Brahms's pianoforte quartet in G minor, op. 25 – the quartet with the Gipsy rondo finale, the colouring of which, combined with that of the Hungarian Dances, did so much for Brahms's fame in this country. But quite above the average as were these two performances, even they paled before the remarkable rendering of Beethoven's pianoforte sonata in E flat, op. 31, by Herr von Dohnányi. Since the day when Eugen D'Albert⁵⁶ stood out from his contemporaries as the Beethoven player *par excellence* of his time no more genuine Beethoven playing has been heard here, and never has the young Hungarian pianist touched so high a mark. Since he was last among us he has ripened in thought and method, so that now he cannot but be allotted one of the highest places among his contemporaries. Such beauty and equality of tone, such ease, grace, and finish of technique, and such an exquisite touch in conjunction with a fine intelligence are rarely found in one player.⁵⁷

The London Musical Courier, February 1, 1902

(Recital at the St. James's Hall, London, January 24)

On the afternoon following M. [Leopold] Godowsky's recital, Herr Ernst von Dohnányi was heard at the St. James's Hall for the only time this season. It proved to be no matter for surprise that the hall was very full. The *Times*, in a critique of more than usual insight, very justly differentiated the two artists, though we should hardly put them such worlds apart as [Joseph] Joachim and [Jan] Kubelík. The *Times* also says that both Herr von Dohnányi and M. Godowsky are young, and may be presumed to be speaking not without knowledge; but, from appearances only, the latter is twelve years

⁵⁶ During the summer of 1897, after having graduated at the Budapest Academy of Music, Dohnányi studied with d'Albert in Bernried.

⁵⁷ Carl Haliø played solo works, while Rose Olitzka sang arias and songs.

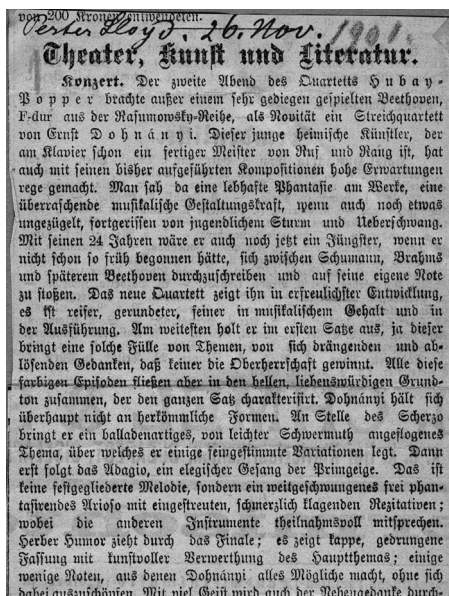


Figure 11: Pester Lloyd,
November 26, 1901

THE POPULAR CONCERTS.—If all the Popular Concerts in recent years had been even approximately as interesting in both programme and performance as that on Saturday afternoon, which attracted a very large audience to St. James's-hall, there would never have been any question of jeopardizing their future, and even the Monday Concerts might still have been going their way rejoicing. To begin with, the playing by Messrs. Halir, Friederich, Gibson, and Fuchs of Beethoven's early quartet in G from op. 18 afforded unalloyed pleasure, and no less splendid, though in a totally different way, was the performance by the first, third, and fourth of these players and Herr von Dohnányi of Brahms's pianoforte quartet in G minor, op. 25—the quartet with the Gipsy rondo finale, the colouring of which, combined with that of the Hungarian Dances, did so much for Brahms's fame in this country. But quite above the average as were these two performances, even they paled before the remarkable rendering of Beethoven's pianoforte sonata in E flat, op. 31, by Herr von Dohnányi. Since the day when Eugen D'Albert stood out from his contemporaries as the Beethoven player *par excellence* of his time no more genuine Beethoven playing has been heard here, and never has the young Hungarian pianist touched so high a mark. Since he was last among us he has ripened in thought and method, so that now he cannot but be allotted one of the highest places among his contemporaries. Such beauty and equality of tone, such ease, grace, and finish of technique, and such an exquisite touch in conjunction with a fine intelligence are rarely found in one player.

Figure 12: The Times,
January 13, 1902

or so the elder.⁵⁸ But it is most certainly true that Herr von Dohnányi has made immense strides since he was last heard in England, and that for breadth and depth, strength, tenderness, and truth—in fact, for all that is required, in addition to mere technical equipment, to make the great artist, Herr von Dohnányi must now be given place among the greatest upon earth. Three numbers formed the whole programme; the mighty Etudes Symphoniques of Schumann, the great B flat [major] Sonata of Beethoven, with the Fugue, Op. 106, and four items of Chopin. The stupendous difficulties of the great Schumann study-cycle were lost in the grandeur and diversity of its interpretation; while of the Beethoven it can only be said that a work about as abstruse as any of the posthumous quartets seemed as clear as it was deeply impressive. The performance of the Chopin items—Nocturne in B [major], Mazurkas in C [major] and F minor, and Scherzo in C sharp minor—was, for grace and dexterity, no whit inferior to that of any of the great Chopin exponents; while for poetry it was perfectly charming. For an encore Herr von Dohnányi played to a standing house a very wonderful waltz of his own, in which he let loose a lovely tune in a whirling torrent of astounding intensity. The impression of this memorable recital can hardly be better expressed than it was by an aged musician who said to us on leaving the hall: “It was *all* music, nothing but music, from beginning to end.”

⁵⁸ Godowsky was only seven years Dohnányi's senior; the latter, however – as it was often remarked – looked much younger than his age.

Manchester Guardian, January 31, 1902

(Concert of the Hallé Concerts Society, Manchester, January 30)

The Hallé Concerts.⁵⁹ PROGRAMME.

Symphony No. 1 (MS.)	Dohnányi (First performance)
Pianoforte Concerto in E flat. "The Emperor"	Beethoven
Trauermarsch ("Götterdämmerung")	Wagner
Pianoforte Solos	
a) Nocturne, B major (Op. 62 No. 1)	Chopin
b) Scherzo, C sharp minor (Op. 39)	Chopin
Overture "Academic"	Brahms

Mr. Ernst von Dohnányi is an ambitious—indeed one may say a formidable composer. He evidently knows the great symphonists well, from Beethoven to Richard Strauss. In his orchestration he exhibits the modern love of gorgeous and peculiar colouring to the full. On the other hand, in thematic invention he seems to a great extent to reject what are commonly regarded as "modern" tendencies. Taking as an example the second principal theme, which plays so very important a part in the first movement of his new Symphony (the fifth example in yesterday's programme), we there find something which could not fail to exasperate a "Lisztianer," namely a balanced melody, with form of the obvious kind, such as enables a quite unregenerate short-haired person to recognise a *tune*. What is to be done when an enormously talented young man, with modern orchestration at his fingers' ends, permits himself to write a tune like that, with the third phrase balancing the first, so that the heads of the Philistines begin to wag with pleasure? The Lisztianer cannot pardon such a thing. It is like a painted anecdote to the followers of Mr. Whistler. Now, we have great respect for the Lisztianer. Richard Strauss—no doubt the most talented composer now alive, with the exception of Dvořák—is such a one, and that is very important. But Dvořák himself is nothing of the kind, and that is more important still, and we are not at all disposed to quarrel with Mr. Dohnányi because he is not a Lisztianer. We find his new Symphony in D minor a work of great resource and imaginative charm, with nothing actually weak in any of its five movements, and showing a degree of controlling power over the demonic spirit of the modern orchestra which is truly astonishing in so young a man. The slow movement has an exquisite melody for cor anglais, which is treated with consummate skill, except that the version in major, played by the strings just after the clarinet variation with the Gipsy *melismata*, has a short lapse into sentimentality. The recovery is as sudden as the lapse, and the ending of the movement is perfect. Next we have a Scherzo, of which the main section has an almost Beethovenish kind of pithiness, though the detail is more Berlioz-like than Beethovenish. Another point in the composition suggesting Berlioz is the use of the four kettle-

⁵⁹ Sir Charles Hallé (1819–1895) had founded the Hallé Orchestra in 1858, inaugurating the Hallé Concerts series in Manchester. From 1899, the orchestra and the concerts were directed by Hungarian-born Hans Richter (1843–1916). Richter conducted Dohnányi's first orchestral appearance (Budapest, November 17, 1897); he introduced the youth to the London public (October 24, 1898); and he conducted this very concert as well.

drums, which often have thematic work to do, the most striking case being the opening of the Fugue in the Finale, where the drums, tuned D, A, B flat, G, have a simplified form of the subject, consisting of those notes in zigzag line. Before quitting the Scherzo we ought perhaps to point out that the note in the programme describing a variation on the D flat trio theme as in 5/4 time was obviously a slip, only the C major trio being in that time. The whole movement is as simple in form as a Scherzo in an early Sonata by Beethoven. The ensuing Intermezzo, with a return to the cor anglais theme, now assigned to a single viola, is a little unkindly written for the solo instrument, the key being B major and the ordinary tuning adhered to, so that open strings are of little or no use. Musically, however, it is a remarkably well conceived interlude, bringing just the element of contrast which is required by the tone-picture. At the opening of the Finale occurs the only passage distinctly reminding us of something by another composer. In that sweltering and impatiently beating introduction we recognise the influence of Brahms's first Symphony (opening of the first movement). This, however, is a small matter. We soon reach a highly original and expressive theme with Variations, which, though not the most beautiful or charming part of the Symphony, form the most surprising part, if the composer's youth be considered. The theme sounds like a fragment of some ancient, far away romance—perhaps the song about the King of Thule, or something of that kind; and the Variations are subtly conceived, with much more care for the beauty of the whole than for the special effectiveness of any part—just the sort of thing that a young composer would be least likely to think of. A solemn and magnificent effect is obtained in Variation 4 with brass chords over a bassoon bass, and the dithering of the strings in No. 5 leads most aptly to the Fugue, which is a truly magnificent piece of work, full of orthodox device and, at the same time, highly dramatic in effect. The conclusion recalls the March in the “Symphonie Fantastique” by the massiveness of its harmonies. The interpretation of Mr. Dohnányi's score was one of the most formidable tasks ever undertaken by the Hallé orchestra. An immense amount of time and pains had been spent on the rehearsals, a considerable proportion of the time being required for the correction of mistakes in the parts. The composer's fertility in exuberant figuration and love of imposing effects have made the score one of the most intricate and difficult in existence, and it is doubtful whether any other orchestra in this country could have matched the magnificent performance of yesterday evening. The applause was genuinely liberal. Not only at the end, but also after the slow movement, and again after the Scherzo, was it necessary for the composer to mount the stage (in answer to the conductor's signals) and bow his acknowledgments.

The pianoforte by Broadwood used at this concert had a much better tone than any other instrument by that maker that we have heard, especially in the bass. But it scarcely gave the impression of being well suited to Mr. Dohnányi's style. It seemed less satisfactory in the concerto than in the unaccompanied solos, perhaps because in the absence of the contrasting orchestral *timbres* a certain dryness was less noticeable. The rendering of the Concerto was very good, but did not approach the masterly quality of that which was heard under like circumstances a couple of seasons ago. Nor

was the pianist entirely successful in conveying the languorous and perfumed sweetness of the “Tuberoise Nocturne”. In fact, in all his solos he played correctly and well, but in the matter of expression [he] did not seem to be fully master of his resources. [...]

Neue Musikalische Presse, February 9, 1902

(First recital in Vienna, February 3)

Clavierabend Dohnányi und Lamond, 3. und 5. Februar; (Bösendorfer-Saal). Nach einer Pause⁶⁰ ist Ernest von Dohnányi wieder erschienen, noch immer so jugendfrisch, ungekünstelt und hinreissend feurig wie bei seinem ersten Auftreten. Worin er noch Fortschritte gemacht hat, ist die Technik, die Virtuosität, wie er sie in Chopin’s Cismoll-Scherzo und ganz besonders in Liszt’s Rákóczi-Marsch-Bearbeitung erglänzen liess. Das feine, jetzt schon immer mehr entschwindende Verständnis für die Roco-cokunst unserer Wiener Classiker, durch welche er seinerzeit Aufsehen erregte, zeigte er wieder in Haydn’s Grand Caprice F-moll.⁶¹ In Beethoven ist er zur Hammerclavier-Sonate vorgedrungen, welche er mit grösster Klarheit und schöner Plastik zum Vortrag brachte. Mit Recht wurde er von seiner Hörerschaft ganz ausserordentlich gefeiert. – Eine Bemerkung kann ich an dieser Stelle nicht unterdrücken. Dass bei der Hochfluth der Concerte Collisionen nicht zu vermeiden sind, ist selbstverständlich. Müssen sich aber wirklich zwei grosse Künstler derselben Gattung, wie d’Albert und Dohnányi Concurrenz machen?⁶² Länger als Dohnányi, nämlich vier Jahre, war Frédéric Lamond Wien ferne geblieben. Er wird wieder, wie damals, einen vier Abende umfassenden Beethoven-Cyklus veranstalten, und hat ihn genau mit demselben Riesenprogramme eingeleitet wie damals: Opus 106, 111, 112, 53, und 57! Für jeden Musikkennner sprechen diese Zahlen von selbst! Die Vorführung dieser Werke an einem Abend ist an sich schon eine kolossale Leistung. Wie aber Lamond in ihren Geist eingedrungen, wie er diesen Geist den Hörern anschaulich zu machen versteht, lässt ihn als einen der bedeutendsten Beethovenspieler erscheinen. Hie und da schien wohl in den ersten Stücken die Gedankenarbeit zu überwiegen – die unmittelbar zugreifende Art Dohnányis brachte uns vielleicht die Hammerclaviersonate näher [...].⁶³ (M. V.)

Wiener Abendpost, February 12, 1902

(Second recital in the Bösendorfer Hall, Vienna, February 11)

(Concert Dohnányi.) Die Entwicklung Ernst von Dohnányi’s begleiten die schönsten Hoffnungen schon seit seiner frühesten Jugend. Hier noch ganz unbekannt, war er vor Jahren, mit dem gediegenen Geiger Victor von Herzfeld zum Sonatenspiel ver-

⁶⁰ Prior to his appearance on December 27, 1901, Dohnányi had given his last Vienna concert on February 3, 1900.

⁶¹ *Andante con variazioni* in F minor (Hob. XVII: 6).

⁶² D’Albert’s concert also took place on February 3. He played Beethoven’s *Appassionata sonata*, his own transcription of Bach’s *Fugue in G major*, Schumann’s *Carnaval*, his own *Scherzo*, and Tausig–d’Albert’s “*Man lebt nur einmal*” waltz.

⁶³ In addition to the numbers mentioned, Dohnányi also performed Schumann’s *Études symphoniques* and Chopin’s *Nocturne in B major*.

bunden, im kleinen Musikvereinssaale am Clavier erschienen.⁶⁴ Der Jüngling erregte in Musikkreisen sofort Aufsehen, nicht im Sinne der „Sensation“, sondern ein wirkliches Aufsehen, Aufschauen zu einem froh und muthig emporstrebenden echten Talente. Entwickelt hat sich seitdem sein Wissen, seine Technik, sein Geist. Das eigentlich Künstlerische aber war damals bereits in ihm gelegen; man erkannte seine musikalische Natur, seine „poetische Sendung“. Gestern im Bösendorfer-Saale bei einem gewichtigen Programme, das die Brahms'sche Fis-moll-Sonate und Beethovens 33 Veränderungen über einen Walzer von Diabelli enthielt, wurde von einer begeisterten Hörerschaft Dohnányi die Führung in der Pianistenwelt von heute zuerkannt. Seiner wundervollen Technik, die wie ein göttliches Geschenk und nicht wie das Ergebnis mühseligster Studien erscheint, ist alles Mechanische ausgetrieben; sie ist Geist geworden. Dieses rein geistige Fluidum durchströmt Dohnányi's Spiel bis in die kleinsten Tonfiguren, in die kleinsten Schneller und Triller; jeder kleinste Fingerdruck ist musikalischer Ausdruck. Wir gewahren in allen pianistischen Aeußerungen des genialischen jungen Künstlers das lauterste Bestreben, Tonfarben, Tonglanz, Kraft, Geläufigkeit, alles egoistisch und eitel Virtuose in ästhetische Grenzen zu bannen, daß es dem Kunstwerke unterthan werde und dieses nicht beherrsche. Was Dohnányi über seine Rivalen stellt, die ihn an technischen und anderen Specialitäten übertreffen mögen, ist die Freiheit, der freie Aufschwung, das Ausleben heller, lichter Empfindungen in seinem Spiele. Wir werden nicht durch Verbohrtheit, „zwangvolle Plage“, durch pianistische Kleinarbeit, an welcher noch der Schweiß wahnwitzigen Studiums klebt, auch nicht durch das Geheimthum mit tiefscheinenden Gefühlen bedrückt. Nein, es wird uns ganz leicht ums Herz, wenn Dohnányi die größten Schwierigkeiten besiegt. Er ist eine musikalische Siegfried-Natur; seine Kunst hat die Unbefangenheit, die idealische Heiterkeit, die uns erhebt, die harmonischen Kräfte der Seele löst, uns von aller Schwere hilft. Und doch dringt Dohnányi so tief, wie irgend einer der Tiefsten in die Mysterien Beethovens, zu den verschlungenen Wegen der frühesten Brahms'schen Formkunst, in die dunklen, engen Gänge Brahms'scher Jugendleidenschaft. Liszt's Legende („Der heil. Franciscus de Paula auf den Wogen schreitend“) hat nach unserer Erfahrung keiner von den fleißig sich annoncirenden Liszt-Schülern so ergreifend, erschütternd wie gestern Dohnányi zu Klingen gebracht. Dohnányi gehört die Zukunft, eine Zukunft, die uns vielleicht den bisnun unwiderbringlichen Verlust der großen Pianisten des vergangenen Jahrhunderts wird bei neuen pianistischen Thaten verschmerzen lassen.⁶⁵ (r. h.)

The Times, June 7, 1902

(First recital at the St. James's Hall, London, June 4)

Concerts. During the past few days there have appeared in St. James's Hall and the Queen's Hall three pianists of high distinction representing three different countries – MM. Raoul Pugno, Dohnányi, and [Wassily] Sapellnikoff, who come respectively from

⁶⁴ Herzfeld had given sonata recitals with Dohnányi in Vienna on November 31 and December 10, 1895.

⁶⁵ Further pieces on the programme were Schubert–Liszt: *Soirées de Vienne* no. 4 and Liszt: *Rhapsody* no. 13.

France, Hungary, and Russia. Naturally their appearance, coming as they have come so quickly upon each other that the memory retains the liveliest recollection of the characteristics of each, has been a matter of deep interest. It has, indeed, been more. It has been most instructive, since the methods and styles of the three players have also been three. In some respects they represent entirely different methods. M. Pugno treats the pianoforte with the delicacy of a harpsichord; M. Dohnányi's playing is at its best in broad massive effects; M. Sapellnikoff is the wayward Slav held in check by a sense of refinement. The second is the most obviously emotional of the three. M. Pugno plays Bach and Beethoven (the Italian concerto and the sonatas in D minor, op. 31, and C sharp minor, op. 27, for example) in the breeziest, brightest, sunniest fashion. His reading seems superficial. There is as wide a difference between his Beethoven and M. Dohnányi's as between [Robert] Browning's "How they brought the good news [from Ghent] to Aix" and the most obscure of his most obscure poems. It is not true to say it is not Beethoven. Yet it certainly is not the Beethoven we know. Far bigger was M. Dohnányi's reading of the C minor variations [WoO 80] and the early sonata in C [op. 2 no. 3]. Here he is quite at his best, and his best is rarely surpassed for musical intelligence by any pianist now before the public; while M. Pugno's smaller and, if one may put it so, prettier idea of pianoforte playing is better suited to the less rugged and (in the best sense) more obviously romantic music of Schumann, Grieg, and Chopin, of whom we are to have much at the second recital. M. Sapellnikoff showed in the andante in Tschaiikowsky's sonata in G that he has something of a poetical temperament. But his matter-of-fact and quite unmoving performance of the "Moonlight" sonata of Beethoven gave one the feeling of having been taken in, for there was little enough of poetry there. It was, in short, a triumph of mechanical playing, and little if anything more. In his countryman's work M. Sapellnikoff reached a higher level of interpretation, though there was not the freedom in his playing which was strongly characteristic of his earlier appearances here some years ago. Nor has he the depth of M. Dohnányi. To sum up, M. Dohnányi improved his position here, while we cannot help expressing a certain amount of disappointment in the performance of the other two.⁶⁶

Budapesti Hírlap, January 8, 1903

(Concert of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, January 7)⁶⁷

(Philharmonic concert.) Our philharmonic audience, which is only interested in Hungarian things if they find their way to us by detour, from other countries, awaited with great curiosity Ernő Dohnányi's new symphony today.⁶⁸ Last year it was played in Mainz and Manchester,⁶⁹ to us it was first presented today, conducted personally by

⁶⁶ Further numbers of Dohnányi's programme were: Chopin: *Ballade in G minor* (op. 23); Brahms: *Intermezzo in E flat minor* (op. 118 no. 6), *Rhapsody in B minor* (op. 79 no. 1), and *Rhapsody in E flat major* (op. 119 no. 4); Liszt: *Legend in E major*; Schubert–Liszt: *Soirées de Vienne no. 4*; Strauss–Tausig: *Nachtfalter*; *valse caprice*.

⁶⁷ Translated by Boldizsár Fejérvári. The original Hungarian text see in L. Gombos 2006, op. cit., no. 397, pp. 217–218.

⁶⁸ *Symphony in D minor* (op. 9).

⁶⁹ The symphony premièred in Manchester on January 30, 1902; the Mainz performance took place in the second half of December.

the composer. Giant forms, youthful boldness in elaboration, brilliant knowledge, and indubitable Hungarianness – these were our first impressions of the symphony. Immediately, we saw the monumental grandness of the work as well. We sensed that here is at last the Hungarian symphonic composer whose advent we have been awaiting for so long. We dare say in good faith that Dohnányi is now only comparable to Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Bruckner, and Brahms. This is how we conceive of the importance of today's concert. We can claim to ourselves one of the greatest composers of our time. He is truly ours: at last there has emerged a musician whose soul is Hungarian, whose melodies burst with Hungarian blood, whose rhythms with Hungarian boisterousness, who is not national in his fluffs, mannerisms, formalities but in his inspiration, spirit, in that indefinable something which we can only feel, whose life no vivisection can reveal. If there will be any who do not sufficiently appreciate the Hungarianness of the symphony, it makes no difference. The style is so new and unusual that the layman must first learn to know it, before he can recognize it. Whichever way, the symphonic style, the music that builds itself from itself, its own thematic content, is so difficult to understand in opposition to today's polyphony that the lay public is faced with the comprehensive problem of modern production as such. It hears an undulating mass of sounds. It is only the more receptive that notices the boundaries, the symmetry, the construction. A pure, undisturbed aesthetic pleasure, such as provided by an immediately transparent, sensible masterpiece: no such is given to anyone. It is not possible, either, amidst the fashionable immoderation of orchestration and counterpoint. Here we are already beginning to survey the flaws of Dohnányi's symphony, which are, in fact not even his, but of the age. With near astonishment we perceive such technical preparation in a twenty-four-year-old youth. He works with an enormous apparatus, whose complexity is dizzying; but he weaves into it his own work with masterful hands. What a fugue, what canons, what leads, what contrastive opposition of orchestral groups! – scholars of music exclaimed to-night – including those hard-seasoned ones whose motto is "nil admirari". Is it necessary to take things to such an edge, does a young man fighting with the force of his hands and heart need to struggle in such heavy armour? Ask we, who expect freshness, immediacy, and sunbeams of the youth, and no gloomy world of thoughts. Indeed, Dohnányi's symphony is huge, moving, ravishing in its own passionate and stormy way; but there is much excess in it. Its world-pain, its tragic pathos are exaggerated, perhaps its dimensions even – we ask young Dohnányi for serene, gleaming music, a symphony in a major key rather than in a clouded, brooding minor! Finally to mention some details of the piece, we must bring up the slow movement having a tinge of ancient Hungaria, composed masterfully from a melancholy shawm tune, the glitteringly witty scherzo, and the impressive final fugue, whose ending has an almost dithyrambic power. The young poet, who conducted his symphony with vehemence and surprising circumspection, was applauded enthusiastically after every movement, and particularly after the final movement, with unstoppable ovation.

Naturally, Eugene d'Albert, the guest performer, also received stormy applause after rendering Liszt's Piano Concerto in E flat major with his wonderful plasticity,

steely virility, and his musical intelligence and commanding knowledge illuminating every minute part of the piece. (*k. a.*) [Aurél Kern]

Die Musik, February 9, 1903

(First recital in Vienna, January 10)

Wien. [...] Mit sieghafter Frische wirkte der junge Tonheros Ernst von Dohnányi an seinem ersten diesjährigen Klavierabend. Es ergreift uns ihm gegenüber ein Gefühl, wie es Schumann dem jugendlichen Brahms gegenüber empfunden haben mag. Lässt sich der künftigen Entwicklung seiner produktiven Kraft heute noch kein sicheres Horoskop stellen, so ist seine schon leuchtend zu Tage getretene enorme reproduktive Begabung über jedem Zweifel erhaben. Das nimmt uns mit wie Frühlingswehen, da quillt alles aus der Unmittelbarkeit und Unberührtheit einer kerngesunden musikalischen Empfindung, die nie irre geht. Er spielte alle drei Sonaten op. 31 von Beethoven. Da klang jeder Satz neu. Beileibe nicht durch eine aparte „Auffassung“ oder ein Herauskitzeln dessen, was andere darin nicht gefunden hatten. Einfach dadurch, dass Dohnányi diese ganze Welt von Zartheiten, Innigkeiten, Humoren, Tragik (d-moll-Sonate) mit der vollen Unbefangenheit eines enthusiastischen Künstlers vor uns ausbreitete. Ueber der Freude an diesem üppig sich auslebenden Musikgefühl vergessen wir seine enorme Technik.⁷⁰ (*Gustav Schoenaich*)



Figure 13: Budapesti Hírlap, January 8, 1903 (fragment)

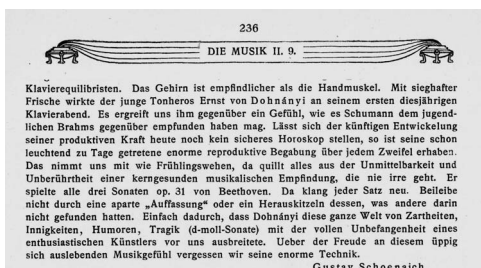


Figure 14: Die Musik, February 9, 1903

⁷⁰ In the second part of the concert, Dohnányi played Brahms: *Rhapsody in B minor* (op. 79 no. 1), *Intermezzo in A flat major* (op. 76 no. 3), *Capriccio in B minor* (op. 76 no. 2), *Intermezzo in E flat minor* (op. 118 no. 6), *Capriccio in G minor* (op. 116 no. 3), *Intermezzo in E flat major* (op. 116 no. 4), and *Rhapsody in E flat major* (op. 119 no. 4).

Wiener Morgenzeitung, January 24, 1903

(Chamber concert with Hugo Becker in Vienna, January 20)

Wenn sich Künstler wie Ernst v. Dohnányi und Hugo Becker zu gemeinschaftlichem Musizieren zusammensetzen, darf man auf ganz Außerordentliches sich gefaßt machen. Mit Sonaten-Abenden hatte vor Jahren der damals blutjunge Dohnányi den Wienern schon imponiert. Er ist inzwischen als Klavierspieler in die vorderste Reihe getreten und hat auch als schaffender Künstler gehalten, was er damals versprach. Dafür legte die Sonate in B [-moll, op. 8] für Violoncell und Klavier ein vollgiltiges Zeugniß ab. In den Themen, in der Anordnung und Durchführung verräth sich ein erfindungsreicher, selbstständig formender Geist. Knapp gehalten ist der interessante, vielleicht gehaltvollste erste Satz. Mehr frappiren die originellen Einfälle und Wendungen im Scherzo. Ein Andantino leitet zum Schlußsatz: Variationen, deren fünfte auf das Hauptthema des ersten, deren siebente auf Motive des Scherzo zurückgreifen. In den Rahmen der Hausmusik fügt sich diese Sonate ihrer enormen Schwierigkeiten wegen nicht. Man wird es einem modernen, über das Rüstzeug der Virtuosität verfügenden Künstler nicht verargen, wenn er von den ihm zu Gebote stehenden Mitteln schrankenlos Gebrauch macht und es verschmäh't, den bescheidenen Fähigkeiten der Durchschnittsspieler sich anzupassen. Mit Becker spielte Dohnányi sein Werk, sowie die Violoncell-Sonaten von Saint-Saëns [c-moll] und Beethoven (A-dur) ganz herrlich. Als Kammermusikspieler hat Dohnányi allen herrischen Manieren des Tastenlöwen abgesagt. Selbst ein Dichter, wird ihm auch das fremde Werk zum Gedicht.

Grazer Tagblatt, February 6, 1903

(Recital in Graz, February 4)

[...] Der Grundzug seines Spieles ist Weltentrücktheit, ist Aufgehen der Person in der Idee. Er schließt die Augen und hält sie geschlossen, damit keine Kraft nach außen strebe; und was von innen kommt, ist elementare Kraft, gepaart mit abgeklärter Ruhe. Er spielt das Pianoforte wie wohl keiner seit Liszt; denn sein Piano ist ein himmlisches Singen, und sein Forte ist ein markerschütterndes Dröhnen und Donnern. Dabei nirgends Virtuosenhumor, sondern überall Kunst, überall Geist, dem das Virtuosenhumor schon längst untertan ward. Er vermeidet strenge, was Aufsehen erregen könnte und zieht den Zuhörer zu sich in jene lichten Höhen empor, wo die Kunst sich Selbstzweck ist. Was man mehr von diesem Jünger und Meister der Kunst sagen wollte, müßte Wiederholung des Gesagten werden.

Dohnányi spielte nur große Sachen; aber groß, wahrhaft groß war auch die Art, wie er sie spielte. Schon bei der Bach'schen Phantasie mit der darauffolgenden Fuge⁷¹ wurde man es inne; denn er wußte das künstliche Tongewebe des alten Meisters mit den Reizen der modernen Spielart auszustatten, er vertauschte das Klaviercembalo mit dem Flügel, ohne den Tonheros durch Subjektivismus oder Anachronismus zu beleidigen. Wie tief er den Geist der Bach'schen Kunst in sich aufgenommen, bewies er übrigens auch in der von ihm selbst gebauten Fuge, mit der er seine, ebenfalls selbst

⁷¹ Bach–Liszt: *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*.

komponierten gehalt- und formreichen Variationen [op. 4] abschloß. Diese Komposition, zwischen Chopin und Liszt eingeschoben, behauptete sich mit Glanz auf ihrem gefährlichen Posten.

Die Cantilene trat zuerst im zweiten Satze der Beethoven'schen Sonate (As-dur, op. 110) auf; später in moderner Gestalt bei der Liszt'schen Konsolation; beide Male fand sie an Dohnányi einen Meister, dem die hölzernen Zungen des Klaviers himmlische Gesänge nachbeten.

Chopin war durch die Ballade in G-moll, durch die Nokturne in H-dur und durch das Scherzo in Cis-moll vertreten. Mit ihm, der auf Bach und Beethoven folgte, war Dohnányi auf der neuen Welt des Pianofortespieles gelandet. Hätte er bloß das Technische des modernen Spieles entwickelt, so hätte die Fortführung seiner Vortragsordnung einen geistigen Rückschritt bedeutet. Aber, ob der Flügel in orchestralen Stakkato-Akkorden ertönte, ob die Tasten in schwindelnden Läufen wirbelten, ob das Melos in bebenden Trillerreihen über dem geheimnisvollen Gewoge der Harmonien schwebte, ob die wie aus der Mitte einer großen Chorgemeinde strömende Hymne der Mittellage bald von den Glockentönen hoher Soprane, bald vom Donnerrollen der Bässe in reichstem Passagenschmucke umflutet wurde, nie erlahmte die Kraft des Geistes, stets blieb die Kunstfertigkeit Dienerin der Kunst.

Dasselbe zeigte sich bei Liszt um so deutlicher, je mehr dieser größte Pianofortespieler mit seiner Technik ins Titanenhafte strebt. Zumal die Rhapsodie Hongroise (Pester Karneval), die Dohnányi mehr um ihrer rhythmischen Schwierigkeiten, als um ihrer Verständlichkeit und ihres abgerundeten Ausdrucks willen sich zum Schlußvortrage aufgespart hatte, müßte als Hauptvertreterin des virtuosenspiels angesehen werden.

Nach dem Ende der Vortragsordnung blieben die Zuhörer wie festgebannt auf ihren Sitzen. Sie wollten nicht an das Ende glauben. Oder warteten sie etwa auf den obligaten Lorbeerkranz? Was hätte dieser noch sagen sollen? Der Künstler trug ihn vor dem inneren Beschauer seiner Kunst längst auf seiner Stirne. Wenn man nicht glauben wollte, daß die Vortragsordnung schon erschöpft sei, so hätte man wenigstens glauben sollen, daß der Konzertgeber erschöpft sei. Die Grausamen, die nicht ahnen, daß der wahre Künstler umsomehr die innere Anstrengung empfindet, je weniger er der äußeren nachgibt. Um den endlosen, tosenden Beifall nach und nach zu beschwichtigen, mußte Dohnányi ungezähltemale auf die Bühne zurückkehren und sich dreimal zu einer bedeutenden Zugabe entschließen, deren jede für sich wieder eine Konzertsnummer bildete. Möge unter der Wucht dieses Geistes das leibliche Gerüste recht lange erhalten bleiben!

Pesti Napló, May 5, 1903

(Jubilee concert of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, May 4)⁷²

National Musical Feast. [...] So there was a Hungarian concert in the Opera. A presentation of the past, represented by three great names: Ferenc Erkel, Károly Goldmark, and Ödön Mihalovich; of the present represented by Jenő Hubay both

⁷² Translated by Boldizsár Fejérvári. The original Hungarian text see in L. Gombos 2006, op. cit., no. 419, p. 239.

as a composer and as a violinist; and, finally, a foretaste of the future, which has already appeared grand, outgrowing the past and present, promising such heights in the development of our musical art which we have hardly approached in any of our intellectual life. And this grand perspective was opened up for us by Ernő Dohnányi. [...]

The audience paid due homage to the past. [...] But the surprise, the true musical feast was brought about by the last number of the concert. Ernő Dohnányi appeared with the piano to play Liszt's "Hungarian Fantasia" beginning with the tune of "Magasan repül a daru". And in the wake of the sounds he enticed from the piano, in the wake of his wonderful power, immeasurable delicacy, ravishing bravura, and yet his spiritual seriousness, with which he interpreted Liszt's piece, immediately established that inner link between the performer's platform and the audience which intoxicates the artist and the audience alike. The artist played so well as, perhaps, never before. Under the impact of this performance, all souls merged into one, many thousands of people formed a unified mass, commanded by Dohnányi's giant artistic personality with infinite power. The small and the big, the weak and the powerful, archduke, prime minister, scholar, politician, the common public, and the musical world kept their breath the same, listening with firing cheeks to the piano. The restrained enthusiasm eventually burst into such applause at the end of the concert that Dohnányi simply could not leave the platform. The audience remained in its place and gave an almost frenzied ovation to this young, grand artist, who, lo and behold, gave a foretaste of a future promising to be even greater than the past commemorated and celebrated today. Dohnányi then played one of Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, and it was not for lack of the audience's applause that he did not add a third one as well. [...]

(*l. t.*) [Tivadar Lándor]

Die Reichswehr, November 18, 1903

(First recital in the Bösendorfer Hall, Vienna, November 16)

(Concerte.) Als Solist wirkte im ersten Mittwoch-Concert Herr Béla Bartók aus Budapest mit. Er spielte Beethoven's Es-dur-Concert [...]. Herr Bartók erwies sich als ein begabter, junger Pianist, der aber gegenwärtig weder technisch, noch geistig die Reife besitzt, sich an solche Aufgaben wagen zu können. Er möge das vorläufig seinem genialen Landsmann Ernst v. Dohnányi überlassen, der gestern wieder einmal den Enthusiasmus des gedrängt vollen Bösendorfer-Saales erweckte. Mag man auch im Einzelnen mit der Auffassung, den Tempi, dem allzu häufig angewendeten Rubato nicht immer einverstanden sein, die eminente Musikernatur dieses gottbegnadeten Künstlers zwingt den Hörer stets zur Bewunderung. Dohnányi ist ein Poet am Clavier. Was er spielt, Alles klingt unter seinen Fingern wie eine Improvisation. Er geht völlig auf in der Musik, in derselben Musik, die vorher ganz in ihm aufgegangen ist. Ob er sich der Stimmungswelt Beethoven's naht, ob er in das romantische Rauschen des Eichendorff'schen Waldes hineinhorcht, so wie es Schumann hörte, immer gibt er Persönlichstes, Individuelles, und gerade in dem Maße, welches das Kunstwerk ebenso sehr als ihr, wie des Schöpfers volles Eigenthum erscheinen läßt. Wenn ich Dohnányi höre, schwebt mir unwillkürlich der begeisterte Ausruf Schumann's auf

den Lippen, mit denen er das Erscheinen Chopin's begrüßte: „Hut ab, meine Herren, ein Genie.“ Nach dem wundervollen Vortrag der „Kreisleriana“ war das diesmal mehr denn je der Fall.⁷³ (*Rich. Robert.*)

Pester Lloyd, December 3, 1903

(Concert of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, December 2)

Viertes philharmonisches Konzert. [...] Als Solist erschien heute Ernst Dohnányi wieder vor dem Publikum, welches dem jungen Künstler einen überaus herzlichen Empfang bereitete. Seitdem man ihn zum letzten Male hier spielen gehört, ist er noch in seiner Kunst gewachsen. Ein tief musikalisches Wesen, poetische Empfindung, ein ursprüngliches und feuriges Temperament zeichneten ihn schon früher aus und er reift nun auch zu edler, abgeklärter Männlichkeit heran. Daß er auf wohlseilen Lorbeer gern verzichtet, bewies er mit der Wahl des B-dur-Konzertes von Brahms. Dieser „Symphonie mit obligatem Klavier“, welche das Orchester mit dem Solo-Instrumente in engste Verbindung setzt. Sie verabschiedet den Virtuosen und ladet nur den Musiker zu ernstem Mitthun ein. Dohnányi hat den Part ganz im Sinne des Meisters gespielt. Prächtig wußte er den Klavierklang mit dem Orchester in Eines zu verschmelzen, ein Instrument unter vielen anderen, das feine Farbe beisteuert, ein Motiv aufnimmt, fortsetzt, wie die anderen. Wo das Klavier mit voller Selbstständigkeit auftritt, stellte auch Dohnányi seinen ganzen Mann. Mit schönem Ungestüm hat er das wilde Scherzo angefaßt, in der Träumerei des Andante holte er aus dem Bösendorfer die intimsten Schattierungen, und bei der Zigeunerweise des Finales pochte ein Ungarherz stürmisch mit. Er wurde unzählige Male hervorgerufen und bot endlich die laut begehrte Zugabe, ein Intermezzo von Brahms.⁷⁴ (*A. B.*) [August Beer]

Fremden-Blatt, December 4, 1903

(First recital in the Bösendorfer Hall, Vienna, November 16)

KONZERTE. Ernst v. Dohnányi, der rasch berühmt und beliebt gewordene Pianist, hat im Bösendorfer-Saale vor dichtbesetzten Reihen ein gewaltiges Programm ertönen lassen. Das Einleitungsstück: Liszt's Phantasie und Fuge über den Namen „Bach“, erbraute in unmittelbarem großem Wurf und mit nicht zu überbietender Klangmächtigkeit von den Tasten des herrlichen Bösendorfer-Flügels. Minder groß wurde die Beethoven-Sonate, op. 101, angefaßt; das überhastete Tempo des Marcia-Satzes und des Finale beeinträchtigte die hier so wichtige rhythmische Prägnanz und oft auch die Deutlichkeit der Thematik. Auch der Vortrag von Schumann's „Kreisleriana“ stand nicht auf der Höhe der Anforderungen, die an eine so ungewöhnliche und eigenartige Künstlerschaft zu stellen wären. Da wir zu den überzeugtesten Anhängern des Klavierspielers Dohnányi gehören und auf seine Genialität schon gelegentlich seines ersten Erscheinens im Konzertleben hingewiesen haben, würden

⁷³ The programme was: Liszt: *B-A-C-H Fantasia and Fugue*; Beethoven: *Sonata in A major* (op. 101); Schumann: *Kreisleriana* (op. 16); Dohnányi: *Passacaglia* (op. 6); Chopin: *Ballade in G minor* (op. 23), *Mazurka in C major* (op. 56 no. 2), *Impromptu in F sharp major* (op. 36), and *Variations* (op. 12).

⁷⁴ The conductor was István Kerner. The concert began with Weber's *Oberon Overture*. The piano concerto was followed by Gluck-Mottl: *Ballet-Suite*, and Berlioz: *Grand Symphonie funebre & triomphale*.

wir uns gewiß lieber dem faszinierenden Gesamteindruck seiner Vortragskunst widerspruchslos gefangen geben und Alles, was nach Silbenstecherei aussieht, unterdrücken, wenn wir nicht besorgen müßten, durch bequemes Stillschweigen mitzuschulden, wenn an diesem Talente das Sprichwort: „Wer rastet, der rostet“ sich bewahrheitet. Wir sagten einst, von der feurigen, großzügigen Art Dohnányi's hingerrissen, daß Rubinstein'sche Keime in ihm stäken. Nun müssen wir die Wahrnehmung machen, daß er Rubinstein'scher ist, als uns lieb sein kann. Der jugendliche Meister scheint nämlich bereits eine Eigenheit des alternden acquirirt zu haben: den Ehrgeiz, mehr als Komponist, denn als reproduzierendes Genie bewundert werden zu wollen. Psychologisch hat dies die Unlust an der mechanischen Arbeit des Tastenstudiums zur Folge, und daraus erklärt sich weiters, daß an Dohnányi seit zwei Jahren ein technischer Fortschritt nicht mehr wahrnehmbar ist, wie er ihn seiner eminenten Begabung trotz der bereits erreichten hohen Stufe noch abzurufen vermöchte. Zweifache Begabung erweist sich meist als ein Danaergeschenk der Musen. Das banale Wort von der gleichzeitigen Jagd auf zwei Hasen hat auch im Revier der Kunst volle Geltung. Wir wollen dabei die tonsetzerische Begabung und Fertigkeit des jungen Künstlers durchaus nicht in Zweifel ziehen; er hat sie in mancher werthvollen Arbeit und jüngst erst in der interessanten „Passacaglia“, welche er in seinem Konzerte vortrug, genügend dargethan. Doch blühen ihm unseres Bedünkens mehr Chancen und Lorbeeren auf dem glanzvollen Gebiete künstlerischer Reproduktion, als auf den steilen dornenreichen Pfaden, die zum Ruhmesgipfel eines Brahms führen. Herkules am Scheidewege.

Auch Emil Sauer hat neuestens mit Vorliebe seine tonschöpferische Seite hervorgekehrt; doch liegt bei ihm der Fall wesentlich anders. Als souveräner Meister des Klavierspieles längst in sich fertig, besteht für ihn keine Gefahr mehr, daß er durch Zersplitterung seiner Kräfte mit sich fertig werden könnte. Zudem schien der Komponist Emil Sauer bisher keine höheren Aspirationen zu haben, als dem Virtuosen Emil Sauer etwas Rechtes auf den Lieb zu schreiben. [...]

Musical News, February 13, 1904

(Recital in the Æolian Hall, London, February 8)

“Prodigious!” those might well have exclaimed who heard **Herr Dohnányi's** performance of Liszt's *Fantasie* and *Fugue* on the name “Bach” last Monday at the Æolian Hall. The pianist fairly hurled this piece of “sound and fury” at his astonished audience. He, however, made amends by following it with a thoroughly artistic interpretation of the same composer's “*Consolation*” No. 3. This little work shows Liszt in one of his best and really musical moods, and forms indeed an extraordinary contrast to the first-named pseudoscientific creation. Herr Dohnányi has clearly a keen sense for effective contrast. He went on to play the same composer's “*Legende*” (St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots), “*Valse Impromptu*,” and “*Rhapsodie Espagnole*”. (Why, by the way, is the French word “*Rapsodie*” always spelt with an h in programmes?) The realistic picture of the rolling waves so finely conjured up by Liszt in the “*Legende*” was splendidly brought out by the player, who showed also the

utmost brilliance in the last piece. Herr Dohnányi on the whole in these works of Liszt showed himself to have arrived at a dangerous stage in his artistic career. His technique is so brilliant and complete that it threatens to overwhelm his undoubted artistic gifts. He is prone to mere “finger-joy” as well as exaggerated contrasts. In the extraordinary volume of tone which he produced, one was at time reminded of that muscular and energetic young virtuoso, Herr Mark Hambourg. That, however, Herr Dohnányi is by nature a true and sympathetic artist, one was also reminded at several points in these performances. It only remains for the artist’s nature to conquer aggressive virtuosity.⁷⁵

***Schlesische Zeitung*, April 21, 1904**

(Recital in Wrocław, April 19)

Konzert. Ernst von Dohnányi, der am Dienstag einen Klavierabend gab, ist ein vielversprechendes Klaviergenie. Was natürliche Veranlagung und Fleiß vermögen, das hat er: eine den höchsten Anforderungen genügende Technik, ebenso besitzt er ein außerordentlich lebhaftes musikalisches Temperament, das freilich oft genug mit ihm durchgeht. Der noch in sehr jugendlichem Alter stehende Künstler hat als Techniker schon jetzt die Höhe der Meisterschaft erreicht, als Musiker zeigt er die Vorzüge und Nachteile der Jugend. „Himmelhoch jauchzend – zum Tode betrübt“ – das ist oft genug die Signatur seines Vortrages. Sein Ton, jetzt wie ein Hauch vergehend, ersterbend, dann wieder zärtlich, weich, losend, streichelnd, lieblich, innig erwärmend, verwandelt sich nur zu leicht in das Gegenteil. Wie ein verheerender, alles vor sich her niederwerfender Orkan prasseln dann die Tonfluten hernieder, das auf solche Angriffe nicht vorbereitete Ohr des Hörers beinahe erschreckend. In solchen Momenten scheint sich der Vortragende an den von ihm hervorgezauberten Tonkatarakten ordentlich zu berauschen, und es dauert lange, allzulange, bis er wieder in die gemäßigte Temperatur des Beruhigten, Kontemplativen, Sinnigen und Leidenschaftslosen einlenkt. Auf alle Fälle ein Spieler, der in hohem Grade interessiert. Wer sein Ideal in akademischer Korrektheit sieht, wird das Spiel des jungen Ungarn verwerfen; wer aber der künstlerischen Individualität größere, über den sogenannten objektiven Vortrag weit hinausgehende Rechte zugesteht, wird mit lebhafter Anteilnahme das Auf- und Abwogen einer außerordentlich impulsiv veranlagten musikalischen Natur verfolgen.

Nach dieser allgemeinen Charakteristik mögen die einzelnen Nummern des trefflich zusammengestellten Programmes Revue passieren. Gleich die ersten Takte der grandiosen G-moll-Fantasie für Orgel von Bach im Lisztschen Klavierarrangement ließen etwas Außerordentliches erwarten. Diese intensive Art des Musizierens, wo jeder Ton, jede Phrase, jede Akkordkombination wie herausgemeißelt erklingt, nimmt sofort für sich ein. Die Fortsetzung hielt, was der Anfang versprach. Die darauf folgende Fuge war von einem ungewöhnlichen Reichtum der Schattierung, von einer ungemein satten Farbengebung und von einer alle thematischen Verzweigungen klar und scharf beleuchtenden Plastik. [...] Dieser gute Vorsatz, sich zu mäßigen, schien

⁷⁵ Further numbers of Dohnányi’s programme were: Beethoven: 32 *Variations in C minor*, *Sonata in E major* (op. 109), and *Sonata in D minor* (op. 31 no. 2).

bei dem Vortragenden auch den Versuchungen der Liszt'schen Franciscus-Legende gegenüber standzuhalten. Die erste Hälfte dieser Tondichtung wurde mit bewundernswerter Plastik durchgeführt – das leise beginnende Wellengekräusel und die immer kecker werdenden Schaumköpfe und Spritzer waren ein pianistisches Tonbild zum Greifen –, aber dann brach der Sturm los, zuerst großartig, aber zuletzt gab es doch wieder eine richtige Belastungsprobe in bezug auf die Haltbarkeit der Klaviersaiten und auf die Widerstandsfähigkeit der Gehörsnerven. Nach der beinahe zu ätherisch behandelten vierten [dritten] Nummer aus den „Consolations“ von Liszt zog dann noch die wenig bekannte 13. ungarische Rhapsodie desselben Verfassers meteorartig vorüber, hinsichtlich der ebenso eleganten als schneidigen Ausführung ein pianistischer Leckerbissen. Hier war der Konzertgeber so recht in seinem Elemente, entstammt doch der melodische Kern dieser Lisztschen Bravour- und Virtuosenstücke dem Volksliederschatze seiner Heimat. Nicht endenwollender Beifall veranlaßte den Künstler zu einer den üblichen Rahmen solcher Gefälligkeiten weit überschreitenden, sehr anspruchsvollen Zugabe. Wer Ernst von Dohnányi gehört hat, wird ihn so leicht nicht vergessen und seinem Wiedererscheinen mit großen, berechtigten Erwartungen entgegensehen. Die Anwartschaft zum höchsten auf dem Gebiete pianistischer Reproduktion kann ihm niemand absprechen.⁷⁶ (*Ernst Flügel*)

Neue Musik-Zeitung, May 19, 1904

(Quintett in C minor op. 1, review)

Quintett (c moll) für Pianoforte, 2 Violinen, Viola und Violoncell op. 1 von Ernst von Dohnányi. Des warmblütigen Ungars erstes Werk ist wohl geeignet, von der Begabung seines Autors günstige Meinung zu erwecken; glanzvoll und prächtig steht sein Quintett da. Zwar ganz frei von Anklängen und Gemeinplätzen ist es nicht, – aber die Lichtseiten des Werkes überwiegen derart, die Arbeit besitzt so viel Lebenskraft und Zug, daß man kleine Schwächen, wie die erwähnten, leicht in den Kauf nimmt und

Quintett (c moll) für Pianoforte, 2 Violinen, Viola und Violoncell op. 1 von Ernst von Dohnányi. Des warmblütigen Ungars erstes Werk ist wohl geeignet, von der Begabung seines Autors günstige Meinung zu erwecken; glanzvoll und prächtig steht sein Quintett da. Zwar ganz frei von Anklängen und Gemeinplätzen ist es nicht, – aber die Lichtseiten des Werkes überwiegen derart, die Arbeit besitzt so viel Lebenskraft und Zug, daß man kleine Schwächen, wie die erwähnten, leicht in den Kauf nimmt und sich vor allem an der mitunter weit ansholenden Melodik, dem satten Wohlflange, sowie – last not least – der prächtigen Maché erfreut. Welcher Tondichter überhaupt spräche schon in seinem op. 1 eine ganze selbständige Sprache? Ist beispielsweise die C dur-Sonate von Brahms durchaus frei von Neminiszenzen? – Nach diesem vielversprechenden Quintett darf man von dem Komponisten, der übrigens durch ein Klavierkonzert und eine Symphonie bereits vorteilhaft bekannt ist, noch Hervorragendes erwarten. Tüchtige Künstler werden zweifellos mit Dohnányis Quintett überall, wo Sinn für Kammermusik herrscht, großen Erfolg haben.
Severus.

Figure 16: *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, May 18, 1904

⁷⁶ Before the three Liszt pieces, Dohnányi played Beethoven's *Sonata in D minor* (op. 31 no. 2), Brahms's op. 24 *Variations*, and Chopin's *Nocturne in B major* (op. 62 no. 1).

sich vor allem an der mitunter weit ausholenden Melodik, dem satten Wohlklinge, sowie – last not least – der prächtigen Make erfreut. Welcher Tondichter überhaupt spräche schon in seinem op. 1 eine ganze selbständige Sprache? Ist beispielsweise die C-dur-Sonate von Brahms durchaus frei von Reminiszenzen? – Nach diesem vielversprechenden Quintett darf man von dem Komponisten, der übrigens durch ein Klavierkonzert und eine Symphonie bereits vorteilhaft bekannt ist, noch Hervorragendes erwarten. Tüchtige Künstler werden zweifellos mit Dohnányis Quintett überall, wo Sinn für Kammermusik herrscht, großen Erfolg haben. (*Severus*)

Wiener Morgenzeitung, November 30, 1904

(First recital in the Bösendorfer Hall, Vienna, November 17)

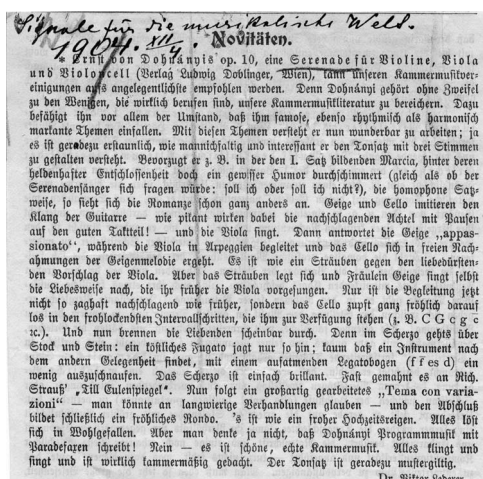
Unter einem viel glücklicheren Sterne steht die endlose Reihe der Pianisten, ihre Konzerte sind gut besucht, wenn auch deren zwei oder drei an einem und demselben Abende stattfinden. Ernst v. Dohnanyi kam nach d'Albert. Es steckt eine gesunde Freude an Klang und Rhythmus in dem jugendlichen Ungarn, die nichts gemein hat mit jener blasierten Lust an Klängen und Rhythmen, die stets nur nach neuen Sensationen fahndet. Nichts ist bezeichnender für ihn als sein Schumann-Spiel. Man sieht einmal den Romantiker aus der ewigen Nacht weg in die Sonne gestellt. Rein pianistisch umschmeichelt Dohnányis runder, weicher Anschlag, wenn er ihn nur rund und weich haben will, ebenso das Ohr wie seine bezaubernd gleichmäßige Skala. An bravourösen Stellen geht es oft wie ein feuriger Renner durch – Brahms Sonate F-moll op. 5, Scherzo – über Stock und Stein. Wie wundervoll hat er die Polonaise in C-dur op. 89 von Beethoven exponiert und wie ernüchternd wirkte die überhastete, gehackte und gestochene Tarantella von Liszt.⁷⁷

Signale für die musikalische Welt, December 4, 1904

(Serenade for String Trio in C minor op. 10, review)

Novitäten. Ernst von Dohnányis op. 10, eine Serenade für Violine, Viola und Violoncell (Verlag Ludwig Doblinger, Wien), kann unseren Kammermusikvereinigungen aufs angelegentlichste empfohlen werden. Denn Dohnányi gehört ohne Zweifel zu den Wenigen, die wirklich berufen sind, unsere Kammermusikliteratur zu bereichern. Dazu befähigt ihn vor allem der Umstand, daß ihm famose, ebenso rhythmisch als harmonisch markante Themen einfallen. Mit diesen Themen versteht er nun wunderbar zu arbeiten; ja es ist geradezu erstaunlich, wie mannichfaltig und interessant er den Tonsatz mit drei Stimmen zu gestalten versteht. Bevorzugt er z. B. in der den I. Satz bildenden Marcia, hinter deren heldenhafter Entschlossenheit doch ein gewisser Humor durchschimmert (gleich als ob der Serenadensänger sich fragen würde: soll ich oder soll ich nicht?), die homophone Satzweise, so sieht sich die Romanze schon ganz anders an. Geige und Cello imitieren den Klang der Gitarre – wie pikant wirken dabei die nachschlagenden Achtel mit Pausen auf den guten Taktteil! – und die Viola singt. Dann antwortet die Geige „*appassionato*“, während die Viola in Arpeggien begleitet und das Cello sich in freien

⁷⁷ Further numbers of Dohnányi's programme were: Beethoven: *Andante in F major*; *Six variations in D major* (op. 76); Schumann: *Fantasia in C major*; Liszt: *Ballade no. 2 in B minor*, *Eglogue*.

Figure 15: *Signale*, December 4, 1904

Nachahmen der Geigenmelodie ergeht. Es ist wie ein Sträuben gegen den liebedürstenden Vorschlag der Viola. Aber das Sträuben legt sich und Fräulein Geige singt selbst die Liebesweise nach, die ihr früher die Viola vorgesungen. Nur ist die Begleitung jetzt nicht so zaghaft nachschlagend wie früher, sondern das Cello zupft ganz fröhlich darauf los in den frohlockendsten Intervallschritten, die ihm zur Verfügung stehen (z. B. C G c g c¹ c²). Und nun brennen die Liebenden scheinbar durch. Denn im Scherzo gehts über Stock und Stein: ein köstliches Fugato jagt nur so hin; kaum daß ein Instrument nach dem andern Gelegenheit findet, mit einem aufatmenden Legatobogen (f f¹ es d) ein wenig auszuschmausen. Das Scherzo ist einfach brillant. Fast gemahnt es an Rich. Strauß' „Till Eulenspiegel“. Nun folgt ein großartig gearbeitetes „Tema con variazioni“ – man könnte an langwierige Verhandlungen glauben – und den Abschluß bildet schließlich ein fröhliches Rondo. Es ist wie ein froher Hochzeitsreigen. Alles löst sich in Wohlgefallen. Aber man denke ja nicht, daß Dohnányi Programm-Musik mit Paradefaxen schreibt! Nein – es ist schöne, echte Kammermusik. Alles klingt und singt und ist wirklich kammermäßig gedacht. Der Tonsatz ist geradezu mustergiltig. (Dr. Viktor Lederer) [Siegwart Gerber]

Pester Lloyd, December 17, 1904

(First recital in the Bechstein Hall, Berlin, December 13)

Ernst von Dohnányi in Berlin. Man schreibt uns aus Berlin: Die tiefe und vornehme Kunst des Pianisten Dohnányi hat am 13. d. M. das zahlreiche und überaus musikalische Publikum des Bechstein-Saales begeistert. In Deutschland ist der Komponist Dohnányi bekannter und geschätzter als der Virtuos. Das philharmonische Orchester, das Quartett, das stolz den Namen Joachim's führt, das böhmische Streichquartett haben die starke Eigenart des ungarischen Tonkünstlers oft vermittelt. Diesmal hatte er auch als Klavierspieler unbegrenzte Anerkennung erreicht. Er spielte die Phantasie und Fuge über das Thema B-A-C-H von Liszt, Schubert's A-moll-

Sonate, ein eigenes Opus, die „Passacaglia“ [op. 6], drei Piècen von Beethoven und vier Stücke von Brahms.⁷⁸ Mit besonderem Schwung, mit ganz ungewöhnlich tiefem Nachempfinden interpretierte er die Werke Beethoven's. „Passacaglia“ – in Berlin schon von Béla Bartók gespielt – brachte auch dem Komponisten Ehren. Der Berliner Ungarverein mußte diesmal für keinen Lorbeerkranz sorgen; die Kunst Ernst v. Dohnányi's kann der roth-weiß-grünen Schleifen entrathen, denn sie hat Rang und Bedeutung in der internationalen Musikwelt. Sein Publikum applaudirte nicht, weil er ein Ungar ist; der frenetische Beifall war umso höherer Stolz, umso größere Freude für die zufällig anwesenden Kompatrioten.

Der Tag, December 28, 1904

(Second recital and concert of the Hollaender Quartet, Berlin, December 20 & 21)

Herr Ernst v. Dohnányi spielte an seinem zweiten Klavierabend Schumanns Sinfonische Etüden, die Sonaten op. 109 und op. 10 (F-dur) von Beethoven, vier Rhapsodien eigener Komposition [op. 11] sowie zwei Stücke von Liszt.⁷⁹ Und tags darauf stand er im Mittelpunkt des Quartettabends, den die Herren Gustav Holländer [Hollaender], [Willy] Nicking, [Walter] Rampelmann und E. [Eugen] Sandow veranstalteten, denn nicht nur hielt er den Klavierpart in dem C-moll-Quartett von Brahms, sondern trug auch Beethovens Fis-dur-Sonate vor und kam als Tonsetzer mit einer Serenade für Streichtrio [op. 10] zu Wort. Der Künstler ist längst als höchst beachtenswerter Komponist und ausgezeichnete Spieler bekannt, und er gab nun hier Gelegenheit, sein Können wieder recht aus der Nähe zu betrachten. Als Pianist muß er den ersten beigerechnet werden. Nicht wegen seiner Technik. Ein sehr hohes Maß [an] technischer Kraft und Bravour werden heute als selbstverständliche Requisiten des Vortragskünstlers vorausgesetzt, und ohne daß Herr Dohnányi irgendwie Gelegenheit suchte, seine Kompetenz in diesem Ressort besonders zu betonen, zeigte er doch durch die selbstverständliche Leichtigkeit, mit der er gewisse, unter der Oberfläche liegende Schwierigkeiten überwand, welche Herrschaft er hier ausübt. Aber er hat daneben eine Eigenschaft, deren sich nicht viele rühmen können: er spielt nichts, was nicht empfunden wäre; der intensive Gefühlsprozeß ist Grundlage jeder seiner Vortragsnuancen, und darum gibt es niemals leere Stellen bei ihm, Stellen, bei denen man nur das durch Gleiten und Tasten der Finger veranlaßte Klingen hört, während die Schwingungen, die von Geist zu Geist gehen sollen, aussetzen. Niemals. Freilich sind auch Flecken in diesem hellen Bild. Ein stürmisches Temperament drängt überall nach Betätigung, bisweilen selbst dort, wo gar kein Feld dafür ist, wie in Beethovens F-dur-Sonate, und das veranlaßt dann ärgerliche Auftritte; und in der E-dur-Sonate fielen ebenfalls mancherlei Härten und Seltsamkeiten auf, wobei man allerdings die Beobachtung machen konnte, daß Beethoven die Stilisierung ins Herbe und Männliche selbst in den weichsten Partien seiner Werke besser verträgt als ein allzu weibliches Anfassen. Die Gewaltsamkeiten im Forte wird sich Herr Dohnányi mit der Zeit wohl noch abge-

⁷⁸ Beethoven: *Polonaise in C* (op. 89), *Andante in F*, and *Rondo a capriccio* (op. 129); Brahms: *Intermezzo in E* (op. 116 no. 4), *Capriccio in B minor* (op. 76 no. 2), *Intermezzo in E flat minor* (op. 118 no. 6), and *Rhapsody in E flat* (op. 119 no. 4).

⁷⁹ *Consolation in D flat major* (no. 3), and *Rhapsody no. 9*.

wöhnen. Meisterhaft in jedem Zuge war dann die Wiedergabe der Fis-dur-Sonate; so kann eben doch nur ein bis auf den Grund musikalischer Mensch spielen.

Von den Rhapsodien erschien mir die dritte, lebhaft, am interessantesten, daneben die zweite in ihrer breiten, eigentümlichen Melodik. Die letzte soll wohl etwas wie einen Rückblick auf das vorher Dagewesene geben, wenigstens klingen die Themen der früheren Stücke wieder an, aber ein Ganzes entsteht nicht, der Gesamteindruck ist nicht besonders glücklich. In dem Streichtrio kann das Scherzo mit seinen frisch und lustig wirkenden Fugatos wohl ebenfalls als der gelungenste Satz gelten, doch auch sonst findet sich viel Anziehendes, die Melodik ist durchweg eigenartig, ja vielfach eigensinnig, ebenso wie die Harmonik, die sich selbst in gelegentlichen Schrullen gefällt; ungarisch nationale Motive klingen an, Leben und Phantasie geben jedem Stück ein Gepräge, man erkennt das Wirken einer künstlerischen Persönlichkeit und grollt ihr nicht, wenn sie in Übermut und Tatenlust gelegentlich über alle Stränge schlägt. (*Carl Krebs*)

Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt, January 3, 1905

(Second recital in the Bösendorfer Hall, Vienna, November 29, 1904)

Concerte. „Wer in der Jugend Außerordentliches leistet“ – sagte einmal Robert Schumann – „wird bei stetigem Fortlernen im Alter Außerordentliches zu Wege bringen.“ Ernst v. Dohnányi ist solch' ein Glückskind. Sein großes Talent hat frühzeitig Blüthen getrieben. Langsam reift es zur Männlichkeit ernster Künstlerschaft. Als Pianist rangirt Dohnányi heute schon in erster Reihe. Urfrische, fröhliche Natur spricht aus seinem Spiele, das frei ist von Virtuosenmätzchen. Technisch fehlt fast immer die letzte Feile, das glatte Ausspielen der Passagen und Läufe. Aber sein großzügiger Vortrag verwischt

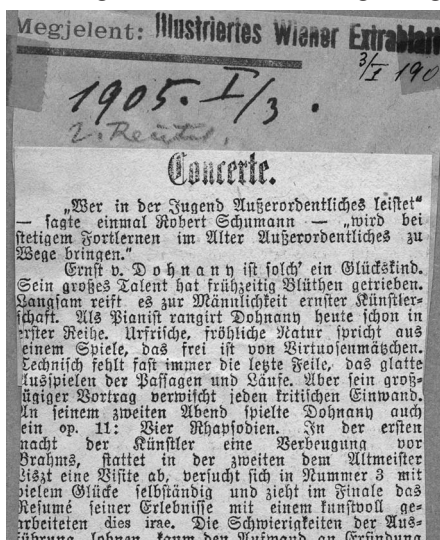


Figure 16: *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, January 3, 1905

jeden kritischen Einwand. An seinem zweiten Abend spielte Dohnányi auch sein op. 11: Vier Rhapsodien.⁸⁰ In der ersten macht der Künstler eine Verbeugung vor Brahms, stattet in der zweiten dem Altmeister Liszt eine Visite ab, versucht sich in Nummer 3 mit vielem Glücke selbständig und zieht im Finale das Resumé seiner Erlebnisse mit einem Kunstvoll gearbeiteten *dies irae*. Die Schwierigkeiten der Ausführung lohnen kaum den Aufwand an Erfindung und melodischem Reiz.⁸¹ Weit werthvoller dünkt mir des Künstlers C-moll-Quintett, das vom Quartett Prill und einige Tage später von Frau Adele Radnitzky-Mandlick zu Gehör gebracht wurde.⁸² Bei Prill debutierte ein jugendlicher Pianist, Herr Ernst Laßlo, mit vielem Erfolge. [...]

Signale für die musikalische Welt, January 18, 1905

(Four Rhapsodies op. 11, review)

Novitäten. E. von Dohnányi: Vier Rhapsodien für Pianoforte, op. 11 (Verlag L. Doblinger, Wien). – Den Vorzug geben wir unbedingt der vierten Rhapsodie, einem wirklich stimmungsvollen Stück. Die alte Kirchenmelodie des „dies irae“, von der sich schon die Großmeister Berlioz und Liszt fesseln und zu genialen Schöpfungen anregen ließen, hat unser Komponist hier ebenfalls verwendet. Schattenhaft leise beginnt sie in Es moll und steigert sich alsbald zu größter Kraft, gestützt von wild drohenden Dissonanzen. Ein zart flehendes Thema in Es dur setzt nun ein, wird zu schöner breiter Melodik ausgesponnen, zu der jedoch bald aufgeregere Elemente hinzutreten, die nach mannichfachen Steigerungen zu einer rezitativischen Stelle führen, an die sich dann wieder das unheimliche Lied von der Vergänglichkeit des irdischen anschließt; zunächst – wie in der Einleitung – ganz leise und von schemenhaft schwebenden 32teln umwoben, dann mit höchster Wucht auftretend, muß es schließlich dem nun ebenfalls kräftig ausstrebenden zweiten Thema weichen, welches nach kurzem Ringen zu einem sieghaften Es-dur-Schluß führt. – Einem ganz anderen Stimmungsgebiet gehört die dritte Rhapsodie an. Im Charakter einer Friska beginnend (der Komponist schreibt Vivace), nimmt sie allmählich breitere melodische Linienführung, ohne jedoch den lebhaften Charakter fallen zu lassen. Die chromatische Melodik erinnert oft an Liszt. Sind die beiden besprochenen Stücke wenn auch immerhin nicht leicht zu spielen, so doch nicht direkte Virtuosenmusik, so ist die zweite Rhapsodie in dieser Hinsicht ihr absolutes Gegenteil. Zwar enthält dieses Stück sowohl in dem Adagio capriccioso, womit es beginnt (Fis moll), als namentlich in dem darauffolgenden Meno adagio (Fis-dur) einfach empfundene, ansprechende Tongedanken, allein die ganze Durchführung betont das virtuose Element mehr, als für die rein künstlerische Wirkung gut ist. Die erste Rhapsodie ist von allen am breitesten ausgeführt und ist besonders durch den Dur-Moll-Charakter ihrer Melodik interessant, bekanntlich ein allgemeines Merkmal der ungarischen Musik;

⁸⁰ This was the première of the work.

⁸¹ The complete programme was: Liszt: *B-A-C-H Fantasia and Fugue*; Beethoven: *Sonata in F sharp major* (op. 78), *Sonata in F major* (op. 10 no. 2); Dohnányi: *Vier Rhapsodien* (op. 11); Chopin: *Nocturne in E major* (op. 62 no. 2), *Mazurka in F sharp minor* (op. 59 no. 3); and Tausig: *Ungarische Zigeunerweisen*.

⁸² Adele Radnitzky-Mandlick performed Dohnányi's first opus with the Fitzner Quartet.



Figure 17: *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, January 18, 1905

auch in der abwechslungsreichen Rhythmik spricht sich ungarischer Charakter aus, so daß hier einmal die Nationalität des Komponisten energisch zum Durchbruch kommt; zu spielen ist dieses Stück ziemlich schwierig, doch dürfte es eine dankbare Vortragspiece sein. Harmonisch sind die Stücke alle sehr interessant, No. 4 übrigens, wenigstens für moderne Begriffe, sehr einfach, was aber gerade sehr charakteristisch wirkt. Bezüglich der klanglichen Behandlung des Instruments wird man, wie öfters bei Dohnányi, an Brahms erinnert: gerade so herb und spröde („doch sag ich nicht, daß das ein Fehler sei“) klingt es und auch die vielgenannten Brahms'schen Sexten und Terzen fehlen nicht. (*Eugen Schmitz*)

Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, February 8, 1905

(Piano Concerto in E minor op. 5, review)

Neue Musikalien.

Dohnányi, Ernst von. Konzert (E moll) für Pianoforte und Orchester, op. 5. – Wien, Ludw. Doblinger.

Melcer, Henryk. I. Concerto pour Piano et Orchestre (E-moll) (s. o.). – Wien, Ludw. Doblinger.

Cleve, Halvdan. Konzert No. 2 (B moll) für Pianoforte und Orchester, op. 6. – Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel.

Dohnányi, der Ungar, Melcer, der Pole, Cleve, der Norweger, gehören sämtlich der jüngsten Komponistengeneration an und sind erst mit wenigen Arbeiten hervorgetreten. Das bedeutendste der drei vorliegenden Konzerte ist unstreitig das

von Dohnányi, denn in ihm halten sich – was den andern nicht nachzusagen ist – Erfindung, geistvolle Arbeit, selbständiger Klaviersatz und einheitliche Durchführung des Konzertprinzips die Wage. In die Diktion und in den Klaviersatz spielen Brahms'sche Vorbilder mit hinein, namentlich hat Dohnányi dessen Vorliebe für Mischung ungleicher rhythmischer Gebilde geerbt. In der Anlage, besonders des ersten Satzes, spürt man Liszt'schen Einfluss (Es dur-Konzert). Auch die thematische Verknüpfung der einzelnen Teile geht auf Liszt zurück. Im Besonderen aber gibt Dohnányi vollständig Eigenes, vor allem erfreut, dass er das Konzert nicht einseitig als Tummelplatz für Virtuosen auffasste, sondern ein wirkliches Rivalitätsverhältnis zwischen Solo und Orchester hergestellt hat. Das ist zu betonen, weil die beiden andern Konzerte und viele der neuesten Zeit sich dessen entschlagen, zu eigenem Schaden. Der sehr schwierige Solopart greift eine Reihe neuer, schöner Wirkungen auf, obwohl über Brahms nicht hinausgegangen wird. Natürlich spielt die Oktavtechnik, wie in allen modernen Klavierkonzerten, eine Hauptrolle. Daneben finden sich aber als Kontraste wundervoll zart gehaltene Episoden, besonders im letzten Satze, zum Teil elegisch, zum Teil leidenschaftlich gefärbt. Leidenschaft ist überhaupt Schlagwort dieses Konzerts, aber nicht jene Pseudoleidenschaft, die im Wüten und Toben mit groben Pianisteneffekten besteht, sondern jene feinere, die sich im Charakter der Themen und ihrer Verarbeitung ausspricht. Gleich in den feurigen ersten Soloeinsätzen und ihren Fortführungen, die sich wie ein grosses Portal dem Eintretenden öffnen, ist der Schlüssel zu Dohnányis Begabung und pianistischer Künstlerschaft gegeben. Wir machen mit Freuden auf sein neuestes Werk aufmerksam und raten Pianisten, die vom herkömmlichen Programm-Schablonenweg abweichen wollen, zu Dohnányis dankbarem, ernstem Werke zu greifen. Es ist Eugen d'Albert gewidmet, von dem wir es am liebsten zum ersten Male hörten.

The Times, February 25, 1905

(Second recital at the Æolian Hall, London, February 24)

Concerts. [...] In the afternoon the same hall was occupied by Herr von Dohnányi, whose second recital was less well attended than the first, no doubt because the programme was even less conventional. With what complete and easy intellectual grasp everything was played need not now be said, as every one who can appreciate the finest kind of pianoforte playing knows it already. Liszt's fantasia and fugue on the name "Bach" was immediately followed by two of the shorter sonatas of Beethoven, op. 78 in F sharp [major], and op. 10, No. 2, in F [major], the vivacious finale of the last being played with wonderful spirit. The player has given us nothing from his own pen, for piano alone, of quite equal importance with a set of four rhapsodies, Op. 11, played yesterday for the first time. He shows in all of them a rare wealth of invention, and a power of thematic development and rich design that is most delightful in days when musical design is rather at a discount. He uses modulation with the utmost freedom, but without endangering the continuity of his creations. The strenuous piece which stands as the first of the rhapsodies is full of these high qualities, and the second, with a *sostenuto* melody at the beginning and a charming second subject beautifully con-

trasted with it, serves as the slow movement of a sonata, as the whole group might well have been called. The climax comes in the solemn yet vigorous finale, built on the theme of the *Dies irae*. Two pieces of Chopin⁸³ and Tausig's enormously difficult "Zigeunerweisen" completed the programme.

Pester Lloyd, March 4, 1905

(Recital in Budapest, March 3)

Konzert. Schon in ganz jungen Jahren, kaum aus der Schule geschlüpft, hat Ernst Dohnányi in seiner eigenen Weise das Klavier gemeistert. Wir waren ja hier in Budapest, es ist nicht gar zu lange her, Zeugen dieses raschen Aufstieges, der ihn gleich mitten hinein versetzte unter die Besten der modernen Pianistengarde. Von allem Anfange, da er in die Öffentlichkeit trat, war Dohnányi ein durchaus individueller Künstler, der sich hoch emporhob über die große Menge der korrekten, glatten oder den sensationellen Kunststücken nachjagenden Tastenhelden. Musiker durch und durch, macht er alles Technische nur seinen höheren künstlerischen Zwecken dienstbar, gibt uns das Werk wie ein eigenes interessantes Erlebnis wieder. Wie warm und süß vermag Dohnányi auf dem Instrument zu zaubern, und andererseits das Feuer, das heiße Temperament, dieser frische, kühne Jugendmuth! Man gab sich heute wieder seinem Spiele gefangen, der gesunden, blühenden Kraftnatur des poetisch empfindenden und zugleich heißblütigen ungarischen Künstlers. Etwas Chopin und Liszt'sche Bravour bildeten diesmal nur die Garnirung seines ernsten, gehaltvollen Programms.⁸⁴ Durch Schumann's C-dur-Phantasie ging der schöne Gefühlssturm eines liebenden, von bangen Zweifeln, leidenschaftlicher Sehnsucht und endlich von neuer Hoffnung erfüllten Herzens. Manches geht bei Dohnányi noch zu sehr ins Gewitterhafte, er läßt sich gelegentlich noch von seiner glühenden Phantasie fortreißen zu scharfem Temposturz, zu dröhnenden Klangwirkungen. Aber selbst solche Uebertreibungen haben ihr Anregendes, weil sie einem urwüchsigen Empfinden entspringen, nirgends die Pose, ein absichtliches Spiel, mit dem Effekt verrathen. Beethoven stand in der Mitte. Wundervoll, mit weichstem Anschlage spielte Dohnányi die Fis-dur-Sonate, in sonniger Heiterkeit die beiden ersten Sätze der F-dur-Sonate aus opus 10. Das drastische Finale wirbelte dann in athemversetzender Eile vorüber; Jokus, den die Windsbraut auf ihre Flügel nimmt. Erstaunlich immerhin, wie dabei doch Alles noch klar herauskam. Vier Rhapsodien aus eigener Feder zeigten Dohnányi auch als ernsten Komponisten. Leidenschaftliches, in düsteren Stimmungen wühlendes Pathos ist allen gemeinsam. Die interessantesten Stücke sind die dritte Rhapsodie, eine Art Gnomenszenen mit eigenartiger, treibender Rhythmik und dämonischem Ausdruck und das Andante lugubre, ein finsternes, tief zerknirschtes Bußgebet, harmonisch geistvoll umspielt von Glockenklängen in tiefer Klavierlage. Unser vornehmstes Konzertpublikum füllte den „Royal“-Saal und ehrte den Künstler durch stürmischen Beifall. (A. B.) [August Beer]

⁸³ *Nocturne in E major* (op. 62 no. 2), and *Mazurka in F sharp minor* (op. 59 no. 3).

⁸⁴ Chopin: *Nocturne in E major* (op. 62 no. 2), *Mazurka in F sharp minor* (op. 59 no. 3); Liszt: *Tarantella* (Venezia e Napoli).

Hamburger Correspondent, June 13, 1905

(Beethoven Festival in Bonn, 4th day, May 31)

Das Beethovenfest in Bonn. Mögen auch hier und da in anderen Orten Deutschlands sich allmählich größere Musikfeste eingebürgert haben, ihre Heimat bleibt doch das Rheinland mit seinen musikfrohen Bewohnern. [...] Am schönsten war sicherlich der vierte Festtag, ein Beethovenabend, an dem Joachim und Genossen das liebenswürdige *G-dur*-Quartett op. 18 Nr. 2 und das weihevollere Werk op. 131 spielten, und die Bläser das Quintett vorführten im Verein mit dem jungen Wiener Pianisten Dohnányi,⁸⁵ der seine solistische Meisterschaft in der *Fis-dur*-Sonate bewies. Von allen Mitwirkenden hat er mich am meisten interessiert wegen seiner ursprünglichen gesunden Art, Musik zu machen, die himmelweit abstand von der Manieriertheit Busonis. Kein Zweifel, Busoni ist der größere Virtuose, der alle technischen Möglichkeiten seines Instruments beherrscht, der auch in Einzelheiten, wie der Fuge aus der großen Klaviersonate op. 110 ein staunenswertes Können zeigte, aber Dohnányi ist der bessere Musiker, der einen das Klavier ganz vergessen läßt, um das Kunstwerk desto deutlicher hervortreten zu lassen. Seine Art zu spielen paßt trotz der Jugend schön zu der reifen Kunst Joachims, mit dem er mehrfach zusammenwirkte, am vollendetsten wohl in der letzten Violinsonate von Beethoven, die der Altmeister mit entzückender Frische, fast ein wenig kapriziös geigte. Wie Joachim und seine Genossen in Bonn geliebt und gefeiert werden, davon kann man sich kaum einen Begriff machen. [...] (Dr. Gerhard Tischer)

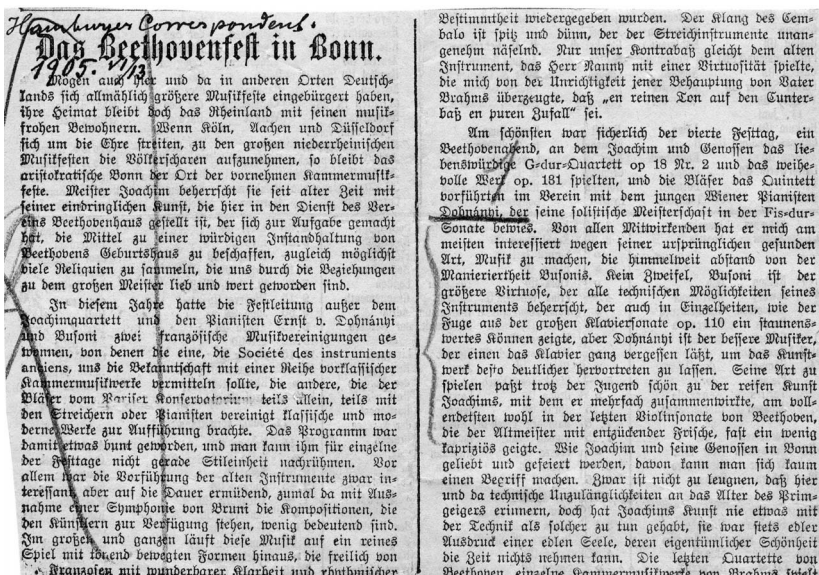


Figure 19: Hamburger Correspondent, June 13, 1905

⁸⁵ Dohnányi performed the *Piano Quintet in E flat major* (op. 16), with Paris musicians: Louis Bleuzet (oboe), Prosper Mimart (clarinet), Emile Vuillermoz (horn), and Léon Letellier (bassoon).