

# HUNGARIAN ART AND MUSIC IN CANADA

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Hungarian-Canadian artists and musicians have shown distinguished accomplishments in the various disciplines. In the arts they have been honoured amongst the nation's very best in painting, sculpting, engraving, printmaking, etching, as well as in industrial graphics, photography, drawing and, above all, coin design. My bibliography, *Canadian Studies on Hungarians* (2<sup>nd</sup> vol., 1995) includes 87 citations and biographical summaries pertaining to 23 artists practicing in Canada on a professional basis. The reference book entitled *Professional Hungarian Artists Outside Hungary*, by Ernő Gyimesy Kásás and László Könnyű (1977), introduces information on 48 Hungarian-Canadian artists. My own selection was based on the availability of literature on each individual artist published in the English and French languages, including the monumental *Arts in Canada: A Union List of Artists' Files / Artists au Canada...* (1988), the two-volume *Art and Architecture in Canada* (1991), and the seven-volume *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*.

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## 1. Art

One of the most successful artists included are Endre Bőszin, Miklós Hornyák, Ladislav Kardos, Gyula Marosán, Imre Mosdossy, Elek Imrédy, Dora Pédery de Hunt and others. *Endre Bőszin* (1923), a Pilis-born painter and sculptor, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. After the 1956 Revolution he moved to Scotland, then to London, and in 1966 to Canada. His works are represented in the National Hungarian Art Gallery, and several art galleries in Canada and the United States. Another distinguished artist, a painter, engraver, printmaker and etcher, is *Miklós Hornyák* (1896–1965). Born in Budapest, Hornyák studied portrait and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, and did postgraduate work in Vienna, Munich, Antwerp and Paris. He came to Canada in 1929 and settled in Toronto. He began to exhibit with the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists. Some of his etchings had been used by industrial firms for their

Christmas cards. His prints were exhibited at the California Printmakers, the Philadelphia Society of Etchers, the Seattle Northwest Printmakers, etc. He taught printmaking at the Ontario College of Art. Awards received are The Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art, Fifty Prints of the Year (1932, 1933), The Reid Silver Memorial Award, the E. A. Klein First Purchase Award, etc. He is represented in the National Gallery of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum and the University of Toronto Hart House.

The painter *Ladislav Kardos* was born in 1909 in Budapest. He came to Vancouver in 1951. His paintings include scenes of streets, docks, harbours and villages. Exhibited his paintings in Vancouver, Paris, New York, Melbourne, Budapest, Montreal and Lima. Kardos is represented in the Museum of Art, Paris, Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal, at the University of British Columbia, and the Confederation of Art Gallery in Charlestown, P. E. I. *Gyula Marosán*, a painter, is also a native of Budapest (1915), and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. He came to Canada after the 1956 Revolution. A folio of his drawings was published by the World Federation of Hungarian Freedom Fighters. He was well recognized among the leading abstract painters of Europe. *Imre Mosdossy*, a painter, a coin and stamp designer, was born in Budapest. From 1934 to 1942 he designed the *décor* for many Hungarian exhibitions, including the Hungarian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. He was Senior Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts. Left Hungary in 1945 and came to Canada via Germany, France and Colombia in 1963. He did portraits of world leaders and interiors for churches. He designed more than 500 postage stamps for various countries, including Canada's five-cent stamp in 1968.

Amongst the other significant painters who had exhibited at illustrious art galleries are the Montreal-based *Eva Mosonyi* (1935), noted for her surrealist street scene paintings in Montreal, the Hamiltonian *Tibor Nyilasi* (1936), who taught applied anatomy in Hamilton, where his magnificent painting *Ecclesia* is held at the St. Stephen's Church. He did display work at the Expo pavilions and is represented at the Keresztény Múzeum in Esztergom and various galleries in Toronto and Hamilton. *Nori Péter* (1935) started to create clay Eskimo and Indian figures and painted Eskimo people. *Nóra* lives in Peterborough, Ontario and displayed across Ontario and Quebec. *Zoltán Rákos*, who came to Canada in 1929, is a painter of realistic and impressionistic styles, working in oil.

The Vancouver-based painter, novelist *Gabriel Szohner* (1936), known in the artistic world as "Ursus", has accomplished several hundred large canvases in oil and held exhibitions and one-man shows in Vancouver, Ottawa, Hamilton, and New York. As a result of a devastating fire a few years ago, most of his work had been destroyed. One of the talented Hungarian-Canadian artists residing in Victoria is the painter *Judit Fischer*, born in Budapest, came to Canada in 1968, and received her education at the Alberta College of Art in the visual arts. After a

ten-year stint in Calgary she moved with her family to Victoria in 1984. Exhibited her work in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Beijing, Washington, D.C., and Victoria. In her paintings she projects forms and ideas which are beyond restricted, tangible reality. One of her symbolist paintings, entitled *Destiny*, had been selected by a jury of the International Symbolist Artists' Association as one of the best of 40 paintings from among 2000 pieces, and displayed on an exhibition on Internet. *Andrew Posa* (1938) is a sculptor, one of his large scale bronze sculptures is displayed at the Toronto Real Estate Board. The photographer *Gábor Szilasi* (1928) exhibited at Studio 23 in Montreal and at the Baldwin Street Gallery of Photography in Toronto. The late *Klári Kárpáti* was a chemist, but she gave up her profession and became an accomplished painter. In her work she searched to reflect the joy experienced while contemplating the Canadian landscape. She exhibited regularly between 1986 and 2001, the year she died. She is represented in the City of Ottawa's Collection, at the Art Gallery of Sherbrooke and many private collections. *Imre Székely* of Victoria is a graphic artist. His art adorns the walls of the Vatican, the House of Commons in Ottawa and private collections.

The sculptor *Elek Imrédy*, who had passed away some years ago in Vancouver, came to Canada in 1956. He had created a number of religious statues and busts for Roman Catholic schools and colleges in Edmonton and Vancouver. One of these was a 17-foot figure of *Christ the Teacher* for the Holy Redeemer College in Edmonton. He also carved in wood. Imrédy's *Little Mermaid* delights many a visitor to Stanley Park. The painter *Mihály Gergely* (1914–1999) attended the Academy of Fine Arts and the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. After a promising beginning as a painter in his native land, he left Hungary in 1948 and came to Canada in 1949. He spent some decades in Alberta and continued his work as a painter. In recognition of his work he became an honorary citizen of Calgary. Later he moved to Nanaimo, B.C., and made several exhibitions in that city and elsewhere. His painting depicting the 1956 Revolution achieved world wide recognition (40,000 copies were printed and distributed throughout the world), as did some of his portraits.

Perhaps the most celebrated artist as sculptor, medalist, and coin designer, is *Dóra Pédery de Hunt* (1913). Born in Budapest, she was educated at the State Lyceum. Received an M.A. degree from the Royal School of Applied Art. She came to Canada in 1948 and settled in Toronto. She designed the Canada Council Medal, the Canada Centennial Medal (received 1<sup>st</sup> prize for design), and Expo 70. She designed the Canadian one and two dollar, as well as the one cent coins. Her first one-person show was held at the International Exhibitions of Contemporary Medals in The Hague, followed by others in Toronto, Athens, Paris, Prague, Vancouver, Ottawa, Cologne, Helsinki, and Budapest. She was appointed to the Canada Council for the 1970–1973 term. She edited the bilingual monograph, *Ten Contemporary Canadian Medalists / Dix médailleurs canadiens* (1971), which

includes the following Hungarian-Canadians: *Elek Imrédy*, *Hélène J. Maday*, *Julius Marosán*, *Dóra Pédery de Hunt*, and *Imre Szelényi*. She is a recipient of the Centennial Medal 1967, the Queen's Jubilee Silver Medal 1977, as well as the Officer of the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, and the Civic Award of Merit.

## 2. Music

Music is another field that Hungarian-Canadians excelled in. There have been a number of professional composers, educators, performers and coaches working across the country. *György Zadubán* refers to 56 professional musicians of Hungarian origin in Canada. The first distinguished Hungarian musician to have lived in this country was *Clara Lichtenstein* (1860–1946), who came to settle in Montreal in 1889. The violinist *Géza de Kresz* lived in Toronto between 1923 and 1935, and 1947 and 1959. The violinist *Jean de Rimanóczy* settled in Winnipeg in 1925, and the pianist *Paul de Marky* took up residence in Montreal in the late 1920s.

Following World War II, a number of Hungarian musicians arrived in Canada, including the cellist *George Horváth* (1948), as well as the composer-educator *István Anhalt* (1949). In the wake of the 1956 Revolution, a whole string of Hungarian performing groups and ensembles came into existence, including the Winnipeg-based Kapisztrán Folk Ensemble (founded by *Trudi Édenhoffer*, 1960), the Kodály Ensemble of Toronto (founded by *György Zadubán*, 1960), both groups comprising an orchestra, a mixed choir, and a dance group. The Vancouver Hungarian Choir was founded by *József Sallós* in 1967, and conducted by *Tamás Schadl*. The Ottawa Choir – founded by *Gábor Finta*, himself a composer, conducted by *Bea Finta* – is still flourishing today.

Canada has been a place much frequented by Hungarian musicians of world renown. Some of the visiting performers came to appear in this country were *Ernő von Dohnányi*, *József Szigeti*, *Béla Bartók*, *Zoltán Kodály* (the latter received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Toronto in the mid-1960s), *György Czifra*, and *János Starker*. Some other notable and current musicians enriching Canadian and international music as conductors are Miklós Takács, Árpád Joó, and János Sándor. *Miklós Takács*, conductor of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and guest conductor of several Hungarian orchestras, as well as that of the Symphony Orchestra, the Paris Conservatoire, the Manhattan and the New England Symphony Orchestras and several Canadian orchestras. Graduated from Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Sorbonne, at the latter specializing in conducting. He is a member of the Order of Canada and recipient of Pro Cultura Hungarica. *Árpád Joó* graduated from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Julliard School of Music, New York. He was conductor and director of the Calgary

Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. *János Sándor* also a graduate of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, and a Permanent Guest Conductor of the Budapest State Opera, who is an Artist-in-Residence and Music Director of the UVIC Chorus and Orchestra and the Victoria Youth Orchestra.

The Reményi Ház had relocated from Budapest to Toronto and set up the Remenyi Award Competition in that city. The company was originally established at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1904 and was suspended in 1950. The Kodály-principles of musical education were introduced to Canada in 1965 through the courses at the RCMT and at Montréal's Ecole Normale de Musique. *Gábor* and *Bea Finta* were invited by the Canadian government in the seventies to develop the Kodály-principles throughout Canada.

The student of Hungarian-Canadian music should consult some of the major reference works such as the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, edited by Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin and Kenneth Winters (1981). The 1076-page work offers individual entries on István Anhalt, Lóránd Fenyves, John Fodi, László Gáty, Éva Hidas-Hajós, Márta Hidy, Géza de Kresz, Tamás Légrády, Paul de Marky, Dezső Mahalek, Tibor Polgár, and Dezső Vághy. The entry, "Hungarian music in Canada" makes brief references to many other musicians, performers, educators, authors of Hungarian descent. The encyclopedia carries György Zadubán's essay (p. 439), in which he offers a summary of Hungarian contributions to music in Canada, as well as brief histories of the activities of performing groups, visiting musicians and musicologists. Helmut Kallmann's *Catalogue of Canadian Composers* (1952) makes reference to more than 50 Hungarian-born musicians. Kenneth Peacock has published *Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada* (1966), and *A Survey of Ethnic Folk Music across Western Canada* (1963), which include Hungarian folksongs as well. George Demmer's essay "Van-e kanadai magyar népdal?" (Is There Such a Subject as Hungarian-Canadian Folksongs?) has appeared in the 2003 August-September issue of *Szigeti Magyarság*.

### 3. Composers

The eminent composer, *István Anhalt* was born in Budapest in 1919 and studied at the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music. He was Assistant conductor of the Hungarian National Orchestra. Came to Canada in 1949 and taught music at McGill University and at Queen University. His compositions include orchestra (*Interludium*, 1950, *Symphony*, 1958, *Symphony of Modules*, 1967), chamber (*Trio*, 1953, *Comments*, 1954, *Sonata*, 1954, *Foci*, 1969), piano and choir (*Three Songs of Love*, 1951, *Three Songs of Death*, 1954, *Cento Cantata Urbana*, 1967), etc. *Lóránd Fenyves*, born in Budapest in 1918, studied at the Franz Liszt Academy. He came to Canada in 1965 and taught music at the University of Toronto.

*John Fodi*, born in Nagytevel in 1944. In Canada he studied music in Hamilton and Toronto. He was founder of the Contemporary Music Group in Toronto and co-founder of the New Music Society in Montreal. His compositions include works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, and keyboard (*Symphony*, 1964–66, *Symparonekromena*, 1969–71, *Concerto for Viola and Two Wind Ensembles*, 1971–72, *Dragon Days*, 1976, *Variations III, Op. 52*, 1978, etc.)

Paul de Markey was born in Gyula, he studied music in Budapest. Moved to Canada in 1924. His compositions are *Piano Concerto in B major* (1948), *After a Farewell* (1949), *Amber Mountain* (1949), *Echo Island* (1949). *Tibor Polgár* (1907–1993). Born in Budapest, Polgár was conductor of the Budapest Radio Symphony Orchestra (1925–1950). In Canada he became conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra and instructor of the U. of T. Opera Department. His compositions are *Kérők* (The Suitors, 1954), *A European Lover* (1965), *The Last Words of Louis Riel* (cantata, 1966–67), *The Troublemaker* (1968), *The Glove* (comic opera, 1977). He also composed the music to *In Praise of Older Women*, based on a novel by Stephen Vizinczey.

#### 4. Performers, educators

The pianist and teacher *Clara Lichtenstein* (1860–1946) was born in Budapest. She studied music at the Charlotte Square Institute in Edinburgh (later she became principal of that school), and continued her education at the Royal Academy of Music in Vienna. She moved to Montreal in 1899 and organized the Department of Music at the Royal Victoria College. Later she became Vice-Director of McGill Conservatorium. *Géza de Kresz*, violinist, educator, conductor, was born in Budapest in 1882, where he studied at the National Conservatory. Came to Canada in 1923, but soon returned to Europe and taught music in Vienna and Budapest. In 1947 he returned permanently to Toronto and taught at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto until his death in 1954. His publications are: *Course in Violin Pedagogy* (1949), “Some Thoughts Concerning Violin Pedagogy” (1957) etc. *Tamás* (Theodore) *Légrády* was born in Budapest and graduated from the Bartók Conservatory. He came to Canada in 1956, taught solfège and orchestration at McGill University. Compositions are *Divertimento*, *Sunrise and Eclipse*.

The cellist *Dezső Mahalek* (1890–1961) came to Canada as a young man and studied music at McGill University. He moved to Winnipeg and taught music and played in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Later relocated to Vancouver, where he was a Principal of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. *Jean de Rimanóczy* (1904–1958) was born in Vienna and educated in Budapest. In Canada he performed in symphony orchestras in Calgary and Vancouver. In 1947 he founded the Rimanóczy Quartet in Vancouver. Other notable performers included

are the violonists *Márta Hidy* and *Mária Sándor*. The latter graduated from the Győr Conservatory of Music. She is a member of the Victoria Philharmonic Orchestra. *Ilona Bartalus* and *Gábor Janota* are also of Victoria, and have taught music for three decades.

This summary, due to lack of space, is far from being exhaustive. Our intent is to bring the initiated reader's attention to two subjects in which a minority group of some 145,000 has made a significant difference to Hungarian, to Canadian and, to a certain extent, to world art and music.