

(continued from front flap)

in that order.”

Living in cheap hotels, he drifted between America and Europe and indulged in messy affairs that became fodder for the tabloids. He rarely performed; he didn't even own a piano. Yet such was his talent and charisma that he numbered among his friends and champions Rudolph Valentino, Harry Houdini, Jack Dempsey, Bela Lugosi, Ayn Rand, Theodore Dreiser (with whose mistress he had an affair), and Gloria Swanson (also a likely lover).

He was rediscovered playing in an old church in the 1970s, and enjoyed a sensational and controversial renaissance, but by the time he died, in 1987, he had slipped back into obscurity.

Kevin Bazzana explores the restless life, and brilliant but troubled mind of a genuine Romantic adrift in the modern age. At once engaging, deftly researched, passionate, and judicious, *Lost Genius* is one of the finest biographies of recent years, and Nyiregyházi's story is among the most fascinating—and bizarre—in the history of music.

KEVIN BAZZANA is the author of *Glenn Gould: The Performer in the Work* and *Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould*, which won the Toronto Book Award and an ASCAP Deems Taylor Award, and was named a Notable Book by the *Washington Post*. He lives in Brentwood Bay, British Columbia.

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“Nyiregyházi comes off as a cross between Mozart and Charles Bukowski—a person endowed, in equal measure, with enormous gifts and an appalling drive toward self-destruction. One of the great musical biographies.”

—TIM PAGE, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING MUSIC CRITIC AND BIOGRAPHER

“In a chronicle crowded with colorful characters—a famous novelist, a prize-fighter, unscrupulous managers, divas, movie stars, whores, and even Count Dracula, Bela Lugosi—the most colorful and conflicted figure of all was Nyiregyházi himself. . . . Bazzana's enthralling biography conducts us through Nyiregyházi's life with compassion, insight, humor, humanity and a proper degree of amazement.”

—RICHARD DYER, FORMER BOSTON GLOBE MUSIC CRITIC

“Passionate, level-headed, scrupulously detailed, affectionate, this is a wonderful biography about an intriguing and difficult figure, handled with supreme delicacy.”

—STEPHEN HOUGH, PIANIST

“Kevin Bazzana loves the piano and is intrigued by the often strange creatures who play the instrument. In this new biography, he has hit the center of a mad genius. It is a tragic story that readers will not put down and it is written with care and scholarship.”

—DAVID DUBAL, WQXR BROADCASTER AND AUTHOR OF *THE ART OF THE PIANO*

PRAISE FOR WONDROUS STRANGE:

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—MICHAEL KIMMELMAN, NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS

“Expertly paced, admiring yet sensible, touched with wit and intensely readable.”

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Biography



The Curious and Tragic Story of an Extraordinary Musical Prodigy

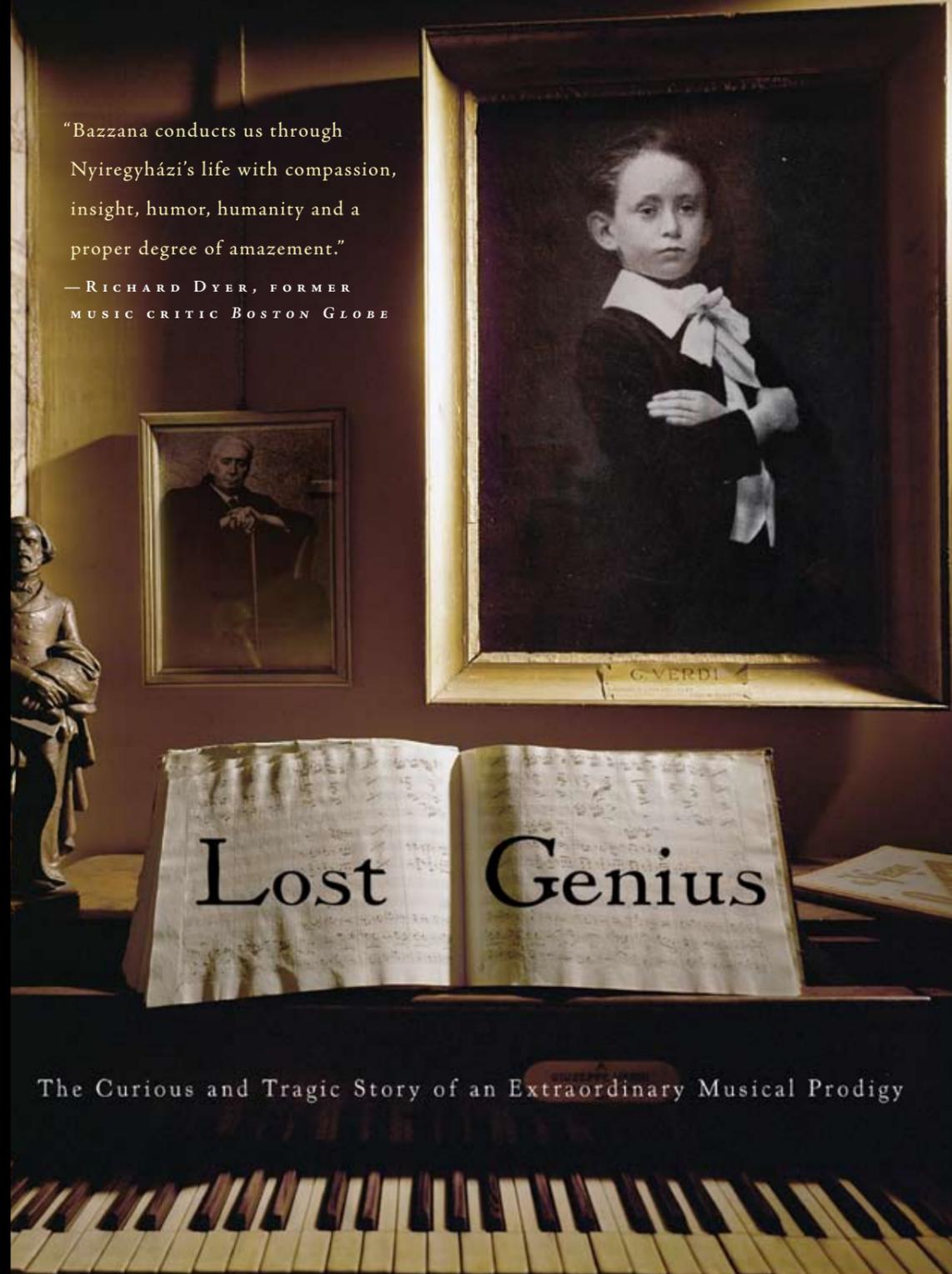
Lost Genius

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Award-winning author of *Wondrous Strange*

\$27.99

“His hands were like flashes of lightning, globules of perspiration beaded his forehead, his body writhed in an uncanny choreography to his music. Mercilessly, his fingers pounded out the anguished notes until the faintest traces of blood appeared on the keys.”

—ROBERT CREMER, BELA LUGOSI'S BIOGRAPHER

As a child, Ervin Nyiregyházi provoked comparisons with Mozart. Born in Budapest in 1903, he was a remarkable piano prodigy; composing at three, performing publicly at six, he became the subject of the first book devoted to the scientific study of a single prodigy at thirteen.

Managed by his super-domineering mother, he was paraded before Europe's artistic and social elite and praised by many of the great musicians of the day. As a teenager, his idiosyncratic, intensely Romantic playing electrified audiences and astounded critics in Europe and America. But by twenty-five he had all but disappeared. Exploited, mismanaged, and infantilized, he was reduced to penury, occasionally sleeping on the subway, or a park bench.

In 1928, he settled in Los Angeles, where he worked briefly for United Artists, playing in some of the early “talkies.” Psychologically, he remained a child, and found the ordinary demands of daily life onerous—he struggled even to dress himself. He drank heavily, was insatiable sexually (he married ten times), and candidly declared himself “addicted to Liszt, oral sex, and alcohol—not necessarily

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