



# AMICA International

## Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

### Honor Roll

## Elly Ney

A pianist with a big-boned approach to the repertory, Elly Ney was as assertive regarding her career as she was in approaching the keyboard. Deciding that teaching was too confining, she determined to have an important career and pursued the means to achieve it. In chamber music performance, Ney was just as striking and individual a force as in her solo appearances. A number of recordings document her vigorous dedication to her art. After studying at the Cologne Conservatory with Karl Böttcher and Isidor Seiss, she traveled to Vienna to learn from Emil Sauer and the legendary Theodor Leschetizky. Leschetizky believed that those with slender hands needed to bring more pressure to their touch in order to achieve a sensuous tone. Without any doubt, this issue was addressed in his work with the young German pianist and the results became an integral part of Ney's sound. At the age of 16, Ney won the Mendelssohn Prize and she also placed first in the Ibach competition. After three years of teaching at the Cologne Conservatory, Ney decided she preferred performance to life as an instructor and thereafter committed herself to concert work. Launching her career in Holland, Ney completed a successful tour of Europe. She became equally appreciated in the United States, where she presented herself as both an orchestral soloist and in recital. Following one of the pianist's early American performances, critic H.E. Krehbiel commented, "She presses the truism of reposefulness, beautiful symmetry, and varied loveliness of tone upon nearly everything she plays." Among Ney's many honors was the Freedom of the City of Bonn, granted to her in 1927. That same year, she played the world premiere of Ernst Toch's piano concerto in Berlin, repeating the work the following year in America with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1932, Ney formed her own piano trio with violinist Max Strub and cellist Ludwig Hölscher. In 1937, Adolf Hitler chose to celebrate her birthday by bestowing upon Ney the title of professor. Two years later, Ney received an invitation to assume direction of piano classes for the planned Hochschule at the Salzburg Mozarteum. Married to Dutch conductor Willem van Hoogstraaten in 1911, Ney divorced in 1927 and subsequently married Paul Allais of Chicago. She retired after the end of WWII. Ney expressed particular appreciation for the music of Beethoven with Brahms as another favorite. Even in moments of bold display, however, the lessons learned from Leschetizky remained with her and the tone kept a rounded quality. The evidence of this may be found in her recordings. ~ Erik Eriksson, All Music Guide

