

Kentner Stands Among the Great

AS a newspaper columnist, Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, once interviewed the celebrated pianist Louis Kentner. "He told me," she reported, "that sometimes he felt all his time was spent in getting from the railroad platform to the concert platform! One of his friends told me that in between times, however, he managed to practise at least six hours a day."

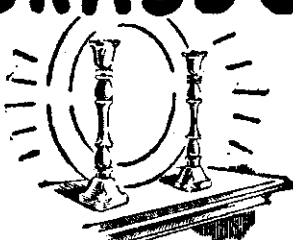
At present performing in New Zealand for the NZBS and the Auckland Festival Society, Mr. Kentner is bearing out Mrs. Roosevelt's remarks. He is giving seven performances during his two weeks' stay, and is demonstrating his command of such diverse composers as Beethoven and Bartok, Bach and Chopin. His schedule includes concerto performances with the National Orchestra at Wellington (May 30), and Auckland (June 9), as well as solo recitals at Dunedin (June 2), Christchurch (June 4), Wellington (June 6) and Auckland (June 11 and 14).

Of Hungarian birth, Louis Kentner was born at Karwin, in what is now Czechoslovakia, in 1905. He was brought up in Budapest, however, and there received his musical education from such distinguished musicians as Arnold Székely, Leo Weiner and Kodály. He soon became known throughout Europe as one of the world's great pianists. In 1935 he first appeared in England, and in 1937 he made his first broadcast for the BBC. He now lives in London and has become a naturalised British subject.

Acclaimed by critics as one of the most versatile artists, Mr. Kentner has what is probably the largest repertoire of any living instrumentalist. His recital programmes during recent seasons have included the performance of all 48 Preludes and Fugues of Bach, the 32 Sonatas of Beethoven, 10 Schubert Sonatas, the entire works of Chopin, most of Liszt and Brahms, and a large selection of French, Russian and Hungarian music. With Yehudi Menuhin, he played all the Beethoven piano and violin sonatas, both at the Edinburgh Festival and on the Continent. On the latter occasion both artists played without music.

Louis Kentner has been compared by the critic of *The Times* with Liszt and Busoni, by the *Manchester Guardian* with Busoni, and by one of Europe's severest critics, "Rathcol" of the *Belfast Telegraph*, with Rachmaninoff. But the acclaim seems not to have affected him for, if Mrs. Roosevelt is to be believed, "he is not a showy artist, there is nothing of the actor in him—he just seems a very nice person."

N.Z. LISTENER, JUNE 5, 1953.

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