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Ferenc Molnár

Ferenc Molnár was born in Budapest in 1878. His many plays, novels, and stories were always written in Hungarian and represented the milieu of Budapest at the turn of the twentieth century. He was among the contributors to the *Nyugat* (*West*), a literary publication introduced in 1908. This magazine stood for free artistic and intellectual expression and presented Molnár, among others, with a critical opportunity to make a cultural contribution to Hungary.

Molnár wrote novels, but given his witty sensibilities, it's not surprising that plays were in his catalogue. He lived in Vienna where his plays were often performed. Many of them reached the Broadway stage between 1913 and 1948. His work *Liliom* was adapted by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein into *Carousel*.

With European problems brewing in the 1940s, a wave of immigration brought many of the country's brightest and best, from the sciences to the arts, to the United States. Molnár, who already was so well known for his work, was among those giants who set up home here. For New Yorkers, here's a tidbit: for the last 12 years of life, Molnar lived at the Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue on the 8th floor in room 835. Interestingly enough, while he was well off due to royalties from his plays, he wasn't happy. His diary from those last years is said to have captured the loneliness and bitterness in his heart. But we are fortunate to have the production of his life with us today and *The Devil* is a fine read for anyone who loves razor sharp dialogue and brilliant wit.

—Linda Fischer

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