

# SOUTH PEEL'S PEOPLE

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**PORT CREDIT**—Bob Madjarow, the business man, stands behind the counter in his Lakeshore Road television-hi-fi store and looks through a pile of sheet music he wrote when he was Bebel Madjarow, composer, orchestra conductor.

"Four hundred and forty songs, printed sheet music and records," he says and tells you about his other life, the one he had in Europe before he came to Canada.

Born in Bulgaria, he studied music, taking his Master of Arts in Vienna, Austria. He began composing and had his own orchestra while he was still in university.

Then he began the tour circuit, travelling across Europe and into Africa with his orchestra, giving concerts.

## RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

"The first two or three years, you don't want to sleep, you want to see the cities but after that every city is like every other and you stay in the hotel," he remembers.

But with the Russian occupation in 1945, everything changed for Bob Madjarow. As a Bulgarian in Austria, he was picked up to be checked because he was a foreigner.

"The communists were shocked to see my passport with so many countries," he says. "They couldn't understand I was a musician."

"They called me an American spy — I'd never been in America, I didn't know any Americans; I didn't speak the language."

## SIX LANGUAGES

He didn't speak English, but he did speak six other languages and that confirmed the Russians suspicions.

"They couldn't believe how it was possible to speak six languages and not be a spy."

There was no trial, no conviction. Five years in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in East Germany.

"When I got out, I had only one wish—to leave Europe."

"I wanted to move to a country where there is democracy, a country where I can put myself in the place I want and not depend on any party in power," he says.

"I heard lots about Canada. I came here and I was not disappointed."

## SERIES OF JOBS

"When Bob Madjarow came to Canada in 1952, he didn't speak any English.

"I was like a deaf mute," he says. "The first words I learned in English were 'give me a push' because I bought a second-hand car."

The former orchestra conductor had a series of jobs when he first came to Canada—a railway worker in Port Arthur, a house painter, a truck driver—until he saved enough money to go into business for himself.

He went into the business of selling television and stereo because it was something like he did before in Europe. His store, Custom Stereo and TV, was opened here two years ago, after he had had the same business in Toronto.

Sitting in the back of his store with two colored television sets going at once, Bob Madjarow talks about why he never went back to his earlier career in music.

## QUITTING TIME

"When I got out of concentration camp, the style of music had changed. It's like

sports—don't wait until they tell you to stop . . . know when to stop."

The Russians took his records off the market in Bulgaria when they took over after the war.

"They put all new songs on," he says, "about activists and street car drivers."

Two years ago, the records came back on the market but the money from the royalties can't be taken out of Bulgaria.

Now, Madjarow is content to keep his music as a hobby. He taught his daughters Monica and Luba to play. Monica plays the clarinet, Luba the piano. He plays the piano and double bass himself.

But his biggest hobby is movie making.

## MOVIE-MAKER

Each year, he makes one movie, working in the basement studio of his home—writing the script, doing the filming and adding the sound.

Last year, he made a half-hour movie on Bulgarian national crafts; this year he is working on a film on the Canadian way of life. The rest of his spare time he spends collecting stereo tapes, being treasurer of the Bulgarian-Canadian Association of Canada and last year, secretary of the Bulgarian Ethnic Group Centennial Committee.

And he's a big Toronto Maple Leaf hockey fan.

"I've had my application in for tickets for seven or eight years, but I go to the games anyway and buy tickets from the people on the sidewalk."

Bob Madjarow composer-conductor-turned-businessman.

"You know," he says, "the happiest part of my life was when I came to Canada."



**BOB MADJAROW**  
Sketch of early 40's