

## **Main points of the dissertation**

DLA doctoral thesis

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From the natural horn to the French horn  
The life and times of a musical instrument

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### **I. Background to the research**

I have selected the historical development of the horn as the topic of my dissertation, “A natúrkertről a ventilkürtig. Egy hangszer karriertörténete” [From the natural horn to the French horn. The life and times of a musical instrument]. One reason for this is the fact that there is no book available in Hungarian on horns. A rézfűvós hangszerek [Brass Instruments] (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1984) by István Bogár filled a serious gap when it was published, but, since it covers a wide area, it devotes little space to horns and, where it does, this is only with a modicum of depth. Of the books of varying degrees of quality published abroad in the 1990s, none of them deal with the area adequately. These publications are generally intended to popularise the subject.

At the same time, there are a great many books available in English and German that represent important contributions to the field. In the process of gathering sources, it became clear – primarily from frequency of citations in reference books and studies – which were the standard works and state-of-the-field publications on which I could rely. Since some of these were published 40-50 years ago, I endeavoured to incorporate the latest research findings into the dissertation as well.

## II. Sources

One of the most frequently cited sources was *The French Horn* by Reginald Morley-Pegge (London: Ernest Benn, 1960). Based on both objects and written sources (instruments, archives, documents and sheet music), the book paints a comprehensive and credible picture of the history of the instrument. This is rounded out by a great deal of personal experience and oral history. Born in 1890, Morley-Pegge studied in Paris under François Brémond and Edouard Vuillermoz, who were outstanding horn players and renowned figures in the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century French music scene. They represented the traditional French school of horn playing based on the hand horn technique, though Brémond recognized the French horn as well.

The other key work is by Horace Fitzpatrick, who mainly discusses the evolution of the horn and its inclusion in the world of composed music (Horace Fitzpatrick: *The Horn and Horn-Playing and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition from 1760 to 1830*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970). He primarily explores the Czech-Austrian line, using abundant documentation and references to track the spread of the instrument through musicians and teachers principally of Czech descent.

Bernhard Brüchle and Kurt Janetzky trace the stages of the role played by the horn in history and culture not only through collections of instruments and sheet music, but also through works of art

(Bernhard Brüchle - Kurt Janetzky: *The Pictorial History of the Horn*. Tutzing: Schneider, 1976). The slow and steady progress of the horn from the hunt to the world of music is illustrated in depictions in paintings, copper engravings and wall hangings. Janetzky's research has led to the publication of over 200 manuscripts unearthed in various archives, monasteries and libraries.

Barry Tuckwell's informative book represents an engaging look at questions tied to music beyond the history of the instrument (Barry Tuckwell: *Horn*. Yehudi Menuhin Instrumental Series. London: Macdonald, 1983). He looks at certain horn parts in orchestral pieces and concertos through the eyes of the practicing horn player and accompanies this with his own unique commentaries.

These books list and describe their primary sources (collections of instruments, archives, annals and sheet music). In addition, I also relied on the journals for brass instruments that are being published in ever greater numbers (*Horn Call* and *Brass Press*) (in which I received assistance from Virginia Thompson, an editor at *Horn Call*). Here findings from the latest research sometimes shed new light on familiar facts, for example on the origin of Mozart's horn concerti (Alan Tyson: "Mozart's D-Major Horn Concerto: Questions of Date and of Authenticity." In *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990: 246-261).

### **III. Methodology**

In Part One of the dissertation, I describe the changes the horn has undergone in both appearance and construction. Physical alterations in the instrument impacted on playing technique as well. I felt it was important to stress that such shifts were always inspired and necessitated by the requirements of music. Having demonstrated these processes in Part One, the dissertation turns to an explanation of the split between the horn as musical versus orchestral instrument in Part Two. With a broadening of the musical capabilities of and options for the horn, composers devoted increasing attention to it and entrusted it with ever more complex tasks in the orchestra. Part Three covers the horn as a solo instrument. In addition to numerous court composers, such important musical creators as Vivaldi, Telemann, Mozart, Haydn, Weber and Strauss saw potential in the instrument, wrote concerti for it, and, in so doing, acknowledged musical possibilities in it that had existed since the Baroque era.

I took the facts (documents, sheet music and the capabilities of contemporary instruments) into account in a critical reading of the literature and did not merely accept the reasoning used in the various sources. I also needed to consider that certain books and studies reflected viewpoints from over half a century ago and cited even older research (for example on J.S. Bach's use of horns and on Haydn and Mozart's horn concerti). In these cases, I relied on the

latest findings from experts in the given area (H.C. Robbins Landon, Robert D. Levin and Paul Bryan, for instance, in the cases of Mozart and Haydn).

At one point, the otherwise extremely thorough Horace Fitzpatrick (*The Horn and Horn Playing and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition, 1680-1830*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970: 166) writes that Leutgeb was dissatisfied with Mozart's Concerto No. 3, K. 447. He felt it was too light and so the composer wrote for him what is now known as Concerto No. 4, K. 495. However, stylistic studies and an examination of the watermarks on the sheet music have since demonstrated that K. 447 actually came about later than K. 459 (Robert D. Levin: "The Chronology of Mozart's Works." [www.whrb.org/pg/Levin\\_Mozart\\_Essay.pdf](http://www.whrb.org/pg/Levin_Mozart_Essay.pdf)).

### **IV. Findings**

Topic selection entailed several considerations. In the everyday work of playing music and teaching, a number of questions have arisen to which I wished to find the answers.

As noted in the Background to the research section, no comprehensive history of the horn exists in Hungarian. What has been published is general in nature and represents an effort to popularise the subject. Due to gaps in the terminology, some publications settle for rough translations of foreign terms. In this dissertation, even if I cannot fill all of these gaps, I view this as a first

attempt at an encyclopaedic overview, in which I always see the musical aspects of the topic as being of the utmost importance. The other personal motivation came about in listening to the historical recordings that are ever more easily available nowadays: What is the natural horn? And what does it have to do with the modern instrument? I think I have managed to find an answer: the horn has not stopped evolving. Thanks to efforts in playing historical music, the sound of the natural horn has become a familiar one to concertgoers. In addition, an increasing number of contemporary composers are discovering it for themselves and – just as Schumann did with the French horn in the 1740s – viewing it as an instrument full of new possibilities. Among 20th-century composers, Benjamin Britten was the first to specify the natural horn in a composition, his *Serenade*, a good half a century ago. György Ligeti also happened upon this instrument, first in his *Trio for Horn, Violin and Piano* (*Hommage à Brahms*) and then in his *Hamburg Concerto*. In these works, he creates a new horn sound through a combination of the modern valve horn and the ancient natural horn, which is a singular and strange sound image indeed. Thus, Ligeti created a new language, one which can also inspire other composers to use this instrument even more complexly in their works in a way that reaches down to the roots and to write music for it in a new language.

## V. Documentation of Dissertation-Related Activities

### ◆ Major Solo and Chamber Music Performances:

- 17/10/1995:
  - G. Ph. Telemann: Concerto for two horns and orchestra  
Kazuhiro Ogasawara(horn), Salieri Chamber Orchestra, T. Pál cond.,  
Lutheran Church, Békéscsaba
- 27/07/1998.:
  - W. A. Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante K.297b  
Salieri Chamber Orchestra, T. Pál cond.,  
County Town Musical Events Szeged
- 1998-1999:
  - W. A. Mozart: Concerto for Horn K.447  
Orchestra of the National Theatre Szeged, Mozart-Gala Tour in Germany  
Konzertdirektion Alber GMBh
- 20/04/2004:
  - Zsolt Durkó: Symbols  
The 70th Birth Anniversary of Zsolt Durkó,  
City and County Library Szeged
- 26/05/2004:
  - Richard Strauss: Andante  
Hommage á Richard Strauss,  
City and County Library Szeged
- 13/10/2005:
  - W.A. Mozart: Concerto for Horn and Orchestra K.412  
Orchestra of University of Szeged, University of Szeged
- 16/05/2006:
  - Brahms: Trio op.40  
I. Kosztándi – vn., M. Popescu – pn.
  - „Varadinum”  
Philharmony of Nagyvárád
- 10/06/2006:
  - Richard Strauss: Alphorn  
T. Z. Somogyvári – s, N. Dancsik – p.,  
Hommage á Bartók, Nagyszentmiklós, Castle Nako
- 04/08/2007:
  - W. A. Mozart: Concerto for horn and Orchestra K.412  
Salieri Ch.O. , T. Pál  
County Town Musical Events Szeged
- 17/05/2008:
  - Brahms: Trio op.40  
I. Kosztándi – vn., Z. Zsigmond – p., 175<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Brahms  
City and County Library Szeged

◆ I have taught horn and chamber music at the University of Szeged Faculty of Music since 2000.