

Thesis Statements of the DLA Doctoral Dissertation

Eszter Kökény

Works for Solo Violin in Hungary after 1945

Supervisor: Csilla Pintér, PhD

Research Fellow, Bartók Archives

Institute for Musicology

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music

Doctoral School in Arts and Cultural History

(Classification No. 28)

Budapest

2025

I. Introduction

The most influential and, at the same time, the most frequently analysed works of the second half of the twentieth century are predominantly chamber, symphonic, or vocal compositions. Although dissertations have already been written on the violin concertos of this period in music history, the genre of works composed for solo violin has received relatively little attention, despite the fact that it was enriched by numerous and diverse compositions during these decades. For this reason, I considered this genre a worthwhile subject for my doctoral dissertation.

During my violin studies, I became acquainted with Bartók's masterpiece and the later Hungarian solo sonatas inspired by it in reverse chronological order. From my teenage years onward, in the class of Eszter Perényi and at the summer camp in Balassagyarmat, I learned and performed the solo works of Miklós Kocsár, János Vajda, Miklós Csemiczky, Miklós Sugár, and István Vántus, and I heard works by Lajos Papp, Sándor Szokolay, Balázs Szunyogh, László Tihanyi, and György Orbán performed by my fellow students. I became acquainted with, and later performed, Bartók's Sonata for Solo Violin only during my years at the Academy of Music.

The works that I had known and performed before encountering Bartók's Sonata for Solo Violin, although composed later, acquired a particular significance when I came to know their common source, since the motivic language of Bartók's work no longer appeared technically unfamiliar to me. My admiration for Bartók's art and my acquaintance

with the solo violin works of twentieth-century Hungarian composers played an important role in my studies; consequently, the possibility of investigating this topic attracted my interest already during those years.

II. Sources

In the course of my research, alongside the musical scores themselves, the primary sources for my dissertation were archived interviews conducted by music historians with composers. The composers' views—formed at specific moments in time—on their contemporaries, their own artistic work, and the contemporary state of music are presented in the following interview volumes: Imre Földes, *Harmincasok* (1969); Mária Feuer, *88 muzsikus műhelyében* (1972), *50 muzsikus műhelyében* (1976), and *Pillanatfelvétel. Magyar zeneszerzés 1975–1978* (1978); and Máté Hollós, *Az életmű fele. Zeneszerzőportrék beszélgetésekben*.

The studies published in the journal *Muzsika* on contemporary works, together with reviews of their premieres, further enriched the scholarly literature used in my dissertation. As a starting point for surveying the composers' repertoires, I relied on *Contemporary Hungarian Composers*, a catalogue of works edited by András Bálint Varga and published by Editio Musica Budapest. In addition, the *Magyar zeneszerzők* series published by Mágus Kiadó enabled a more detailed understanding of the composers' professional lives and careers.

III. Method

In selecting my research methodology, I did not seek to develop new analytical approaches. Rather, I drew my conclusions primarily from the analysis of the works themselves, from an understanding of their composers' musical thinking, and from my own experience as a performer.

As methodological models, I regarded the analytical writings and music criticism of György Kroó. In my analyses, I followed the criteria of classical musical analysis, examining and presenting the works' compositional background, their place within the composers' oeuvre, their formal structure, expressive character, rhythmic organisation, tonality, instrumental and technical features, and subsequent reception.

IV. Results

My choice of topic was inspired by my admiration for Bartók's art, as well as by the challenges posed to performers by the Sonata for Solo Violin and the subsequent works for solo violin that followed it chronologically. Works written for solo instruments often condense the most essential elements of a composer's style, while at the same time pursuing an individual path determined by the characteristics of the instrument itself.

In my view, the solo violin works of this period constitute an exceptionally valuable part of the repertoire written for the instrument. The aim of my research was to present this repertoire, to place it within a coherent framework, and to provide a comprehensive overview of the genre. One of my primary objectives was to increase violinists' familiarity with this group of works within the violin literature, thereby offering opportunities to expand their solo repertoire.

I also hope that the overview of instrumental technique and historical development presented in this study will serve as a source of inspiration for present and future composers working within the genre examined here.