

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music
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Language and musical culture in Hungary in the 1830s

PhD Theses

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I. The topic and the antecedents of the research

In 2009, while investigating the history of the reception of Rossini's opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Hungary, I became aware of the 12-volume 'General Real Encyclopaedia' (*Közhasznú esmeretek tára*), published between 1831 and 1834. It was the language of the lexis that first attracted my attention, the content only becoming of interest subsequently. As I delved into the musical vocabulary, I began to appreciate the significance of this corpus of texts. I was curious about why, for almost two centuries, the 'General Real Encyclopaedia' had not been discovered by researchers studying the history of terminology, the history of culture, and the history of music, or referenced in musicological works on the first decades of the 19th century.

In the initial phase of the research, I collated the music-related glossaries and glossary fragments from the twelve volumes and created digital versions of the texts. The digital version accurately reflected the dimensions of the corpus of texts, and thanks to the digital transformation, this corpus of texts became easily manageable and filterable for subsequent research in a variety of areas, including linguistic, stylistic, content, and statistical analysis. At this preliminary stage of the research, it was evident that the repository of the 'General *Music* Encyclopaedia' should be made available as an appendix to the dissertation, not only to the readers of the dissertation but also to the wider public.

It is challenging to provide a satisfactory explanation for the almost two hundred years of neglect of the 'General Real Encyclopaedia'. Consequently, the dissertation does not seek to investigate the reasons for this, but rather to draw attention to the mere fact of neglect and the lack of reception by means of a few eloquent examples. It is noteworthy that the lexicon was overlooked by eminent researchers of the period, that it was not included in the source material of research on the history of terminology by linguists or music historians, and that the volumes of the lexicon were not noticed by research on the history of culture and language use of the period. Furthermore, the documents pertaining to the public controversy surrounding the lexicon's musical vocabulary, which generated considerable interest among the press, were not included in the collection of texts deemed essential to the debate, despite their close association with the lexicon debate.

The second phase of the research involved mapping the linguistic environment of the 1830s, with a particular focus on the musical subject of the dissertation. During the course of this research, a number of additional valuable and previously unprocessed textual sources were uncovered. Some of these are included in the *Appendix*.

The vocabulary employed in the ‘General Real Encyclopaedia’ is characterised by a lack of consistency and terminological imprecision. However, inconsistencies or even consistencies in lexical language can be considered sensitive indicators from a linguistic-historical and linguistic-sociological point of view. Consequently, the study of musical vocabulary is partly characterised by a linguistic-historical and linguistic-sociological focus. This focus leads to a number of source texts that are worthy of exploration from a music-historical perspective.

II. Sources

In evaluating music articles in the German lexicon, it is essential to map the German linguistic and linguistic context. This is of primary importance when comparing the German lexicon text (1827) and the Hungarian adaptation (1831-1834) in detail. There are also examples of seemingly minor differences between the German version of 1827 and the Hungarian version of 1831, such as those found in the Beethoven lexicon article. It is evident that the German lexicon of 1827 was unaware of Beethoven's demise in 1827. However, István Jakab, the translator of the lexicon, incorporated this information in 1831.

Nevertheless, it is not only the seventh edition of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Real-Encyclopädie für die gebildeten Stände – Conversations-Lexikon* (1827) that may be relevant for comparison. In some cases, the text versions of earlier and later editions may also be pertinent. The description of the terminological and linguistic context of the German-language lexicons is based on an examination of contemporary German lexicons and dictionaries, including Johann Christoph Adelung's dictionary (1811), Joachim Heinrich Campe's dictionaries (1808 and 1807-1811) and Heinrich Christoph Koch's musical dictionary (1802).

In addition to the German lexicons and dictionaries, French (*Dictionnaire de musique moderne*, 1828) and American (*Encyclopædia Americana*, 1845) dictionaries and lexicons, which were pertinent to the subject of the thesis and the period under study, enriched this type of source. Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are listed separately in the bibliography.

The dissertation also considers the music-related but mixed-genre texts of the contemporary press (including articles in Hungarian, German, French and English) and the poetry and prose literature. The works of Dávid Barczafalvi Szabó, Ferenc Kazinczy, Ferenc Kölcsey and Sándor Petőfi, which were produced during the period under study, can be considered valuable sources for the sociological study of language.

III. Research methods and structure of the thesis

In his work on the history of German linguistic purism in the 18th and 19th centuries, Alan Kirkness emphasised the significance of considering linguistic phenomena within the context of the history of ideas and linguistics. This necessitates the consideration of the social and political factors that have influenced the efforts to change language. In a similar vein, it is valuable to examine the language of the reform era in relation to music, not only in itself, but also in its social context. This necessitates an analysis of how language is shaped by social changes and what language itself reveals about social changes.

For instance, Dávid Szabó's 1841 text (*Sketches from the History of Italian Dramatic Poetry*) exemplifies a shift in vocabulary in response to cultural innovations, reflecting an ideologically committed use of language. In the latter case, the linguist László Kálmán (2019) has argued that "the vocabulary associated with cultural innovations (in the broadest sense, from the names of foods to the vocabulary of professions, customs, etc., to the names of objects) tends to follow the cultural influences themselves". If this axiom of the history of language is taken to apply to the subject of this dissertation, namely the nature of linguistic change in relation to music and the development of modern musical terminology, then it can be hypothesised that if the vocabulary associated with music is changing and expanding, this is a clear indication that the culture of music itself is changing.

This dissertation examines the Hungarian music culture of the 1830s and the presence of Western music culture in Hungary, primarily from a linguistic-sociological perspective. The primary source of the study is the 'General Real Encyclopaedia', which, as originally intended, is not a mere translation but an adaptation. The objective of the adaptation was to provide a comprehensive and original source of material pertaining to domestic topics. It is somewhat disappointing that the case of the music articles ultimately resulted in few newly elaborated texts. Concurrently, the translation, interpretation and modification of the German lexicon text illuminates the considerable intellectual capacity required for this specific subject. Some translators not only supplemented the German articles, in some cases they expressed a viewpoint that was contrary to that of the original text, or, to put it another way, a more modern one.

The introduction of the dissertation reveals the similarities in the patterns of linguistic polymaths in Hungary and in Germany. It has been demonstrated that the linguistic discourses of the reform era were closely related to, and contemporaneous with, linguistic developments in Germany: the Hungarian linguistic debates reflected the German polemics in an almost

conscious manner. In contrast to the prevailing view, the Hungarian linguistic revival can be understood not as an opposition to German linguistic influence, but as an expression of German aspirations. This is particularly evident in the purist approach to the construction of musical terms.

In the chapter entitled "*Muzsikus, hangász, zenész*," the narrative of three competing concepts is presented. The terms based on the dictionary 'sound' ("*hang*") were modelled on the German terms based on the dictionary 'Ton'. As is the case with the history of the Hungarian language, not every new word created in this way has been successful in the history of the German language. The linguistic function of the term 'music' ("*zene*"), which is now in general use, and the linguistic need it fulfilled, is demonstrated by means of examples from poetry.

The subsequent chapter, entitled "Terminology – A Word History", examines the historical evolution of the term "piano" ("*zongora*") between 1787 and 1840. This period encompasses the publication of Dávid Szabó Barczafalvi's "Siegwart, a Tale of the Cloister" in its novel translation and Mihály Vörösmarty's "To Ferenc Liszt". The dissertation seeks to address the paucity of data on the use of the word between its inception (1787) and its literary "legitimation" (1840). This inquiry aims to elucidate the sociology of language in relation to the history of music.

The primary focus of Chapter 4 is the press controversy and terminological debate that emerged in the wake of the musical glossaries published in the 'General Real Encyclopaedia'. The dissertation chapters 5-9 examine the translation in terms of terminological history, content and linguistic context, grouped according to the thematic of the articles.

Chapter 10 of the dissertation analyses the work of Ferenc Kállay, an opera aesthetics treatise written in the last third of the 1830s. Kállay was a personal acquaintance of Ferenc Kölcsey and played a crucial part in the early days of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was one of the last polyhistorians to engage with theatre issues, in addition to his research in linguistics, philosophy and prehistory. As a translator of dictionaries, he contributed to the creation of the 'General Real Encyclopaedia'. In his extensive essay on the aesthetics of opera, he posits that the Hungarian language, Hungarian history, and culture are suitable subjects for operatic treatment. In 1990, Péter Domokos published a summary monograph on Kállay's scholarly work for the series 'Hungarian Scholars of the Past'. Nevertheless, the bibliography does not include Kállay's work on opera aesthetics. Consequently, the full text can be found in the Appendix.

The dissertation is accompanied by several tables. The glossaries and glossaries serve to supplement the 'imaginary Hungarian musical dictionary' outlined in the 'General Real Encyclopaedia'. In order to facilitate

comparison of the different text versions, some "text pairs" are also included in the tables.

IV. Results

The dissertation, which deals with a period of significant change in the history of musical terminology in Hungary, draws on a considerable number of sources in addition to those cited in the works on the history of terminology. In addition, when evaluating the new sources included in the scope of the investigation, equal weight is given to linguistic-critical aspects and questions of content. Furthermore, the author of the dissertation wishes to draw attention to the linguistic-critical approach itself, given that this approach has become particularly topical in the period of the explosion in the number of digitised source texts.

Furthermore, the dissertation aims to bring to the fore a number of figures who have been either partially or entirely overlooked by musicological research. The quality of the quoted writings of István Jakab, Sándor Dömény, Sándor Győry, Ignác Pusztay, Dávid Szabó, Lázár Petrichevich Horváth and Ferenc Kállay is sufficient reason for musicology to reassess the role of Gábor Rothkrepf (Mátray), who represented the period almost exclusively in music historiography.

Sándor Dömény is regarded as a significant figure during the period under discussion. Dömény's name has never been forgotten due to his pioneering role in a piano school he helped to establish and his contribution to the founding of the first private music school in Pest. However, his role in the history of Hungarian musical terminology has remained unknown until now. By translating the phonetic-phonetic chapters of Johannes Peter Müller's epochal work (*Handbuch der Physiologie des Menschen*), he attempted to create a terminology in Hungarian for experimental phonetics, phonetics and the anatomy of the vocal organs. Unlike his contemporaries, he did so in a rather conscious manner that included a critique of modern terminological theory. This endeavour, which may be described as heroic and which touches on a multitude of fields of knowledge, could be the subject of independent research in the future. The text is reproduced in full in the Appendix.

The interconnectivity of the histories of language and music is exemplified by the works of Ignác Pusztay and Lázár Petrichevich Horváth, which provide not only linguistic history but also, somewhat unexpectedly, new contributions to the picture of a thoroughly researched period and representative personality. This is exemplified by the imprint that Ferenc Liszt's return to Hungary left on the language itself.

The musical glossaries of the 'General Real Encyclopaedia' ("*Közhasznú esmeretek tára*") were translated and written by István Jakab and Sándor Győry, respectively. Sándor Győry's abilities as a translator and writer were previously unacknowledged. Győry demonstrated a high degree of flexibility in his approach to the German source text, frequently abbreviating it for translation, extracting selected passages and incorporating his own reflections. In some instances, he also overruled the data presented in the German article. Some of the articles he drafted were notable for their originality. For instance, he characterises the cimbalom as an instrument "commonly used by our gypsy musicians." Győry provides a comprehensive account of the instrument's physical characteristics, including its shape, construction, stringing, range, and timbre. His reflections on the necessity for improvement of the instrument are particularly noteworthy. The cimbalom is commonly crafted by carpenters without any knowledge of the craft. It may therefore be posited that if it were to be subjected to the attention of intelligent clay players, it could be brought to greater perfection.

Győry also modified the structure of some of the glossaries, resulting in a revised version that introduced significant alterations. This updated version of the original German text for the Instrumental Music glossary represents a fundamental shift in the structure and content of the text.

Győry's erudition is exemplified by the addition of the names of German song composers. The German lexicon lists fifteen names from Beethoven to Zelter, Reichardt to Mühling. It is somewhat surprising that the name of Franz Schubert is absent from the German lexicon, particularly given that Győry not only mentions Schubert, but also provides a brief appreciation of his work. He posits that Schubert's songs in their original style represent a distinctive era in music. This almost imperceptible sentence demonstrates Győry's ability to perceive the defining trends of the time with a keen sense of perception and to anticipate the developments of the following decades.

V. Publications and conference papers relating to the subject of the thesis

Publications

1. "Musical terminology, debate and character assassination, 1831-1832", *Magyar Zene* 53 (2015)/3, 263-276.
["«Mesterszónak okos formálása»: Zenei terminológia, vita és karaktergyilkosság, 1831-1832"]
2. "Ferenc Kállay and the beginnings of Hungarian opera aesthetics", *Zenetudományi dolgozatok*, 2017-2018 (Budapest: BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, 2019), 157-176.
[„Kállay Ferenc és a magyar operaesztétika kezdetei”]
3. "Why 'piano' (*zongora*) is 'piano' (*zongora*)", *Magyar Narancs*, 29, VIII-X. (2017)
[„Tzintzerezz egy jó szomorótát!: Miért zongora a zongora?"]

Conference papers

4. "Ferenc Kállay and the beginnings of Hungarian opera aesthetics", XIII. scientific conference of the Hungarian Musicological and Music Critical Society 'From the Criticism of Music History to the Art of Music Criticism' in honour of Tibor Tallián's 70th birthday, 14-15 October 2016.
5. "Why shouldn't the Hungarian have a Weber or a Bellini?" Hungarian Musicology and Music Criticism Society Conference "Model and Inspiration", 6-8 October 2022.

Lecture

6. "Musical terminology, debate and character assassination, 1831-1832", Tuesday afternoon musicology in the Academy of Music Ferenc Liszt, 11. 11. 2014.