

Theses of the DLA dissertation work

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Death and mourning in the artistic work of
András Szöllősy

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I. Research background

Throughout my career as a performing artist I have tried to broaden the repertoire of my instrument – the clarinet – by performing contemporary music, as well as relatively unknown pieces from the earlier centuries of music history. I came across the term “the third master” in connection with András Szöllősy during my master studies and this signaling expression immediately took my attention, as on the contrary to the artistic work of the other “two master” – György Kurtág and György Ligeti – Szöllősy’s compositions are rather rarely programmed to be played in the Hungarian performance life.

During my doctorate studies I completed an analysis on his *III. concerto*, and the portrait of a widespread composer has emerged from the works, not only by being an excellent music historian, but also composer who has consistently built a comprehensive oeuvre. Shortly, it became obvious that the thought of one’s passing from life and the grief plays a central role in the opuses of András Szöllősy.

In my doctorate thesis work I am examining how the death and the mourning manifest themselves, as well as which different compositional elements are assigned to represent this focus subject.

II. Resources

As a primary resource I relied on the collection of interviews by János Kárpáti issued in 2005, which is the most comprehensive publication about the life and professional activity of András Szöllősy to date. I find it very important that the rather personal tone of these interviews enables the reader to get to know the artist's way of thinking, virtue and personal opinion or stance on the topic of death and mourning.

An additional primary resource was the extensive study on "Chorals and bells in the works of András Szöllősy" by Zoltán Farkas, which helped predominantly in the detailed examination of the compositional elements referencing to death.

In addition to the above mentioned resources, a significant proportion of the literature used for studying the topic consists of analytical works, concert and recording reviews and performers' reminiscences on Szöllősy's pieces.

Official citation form of the above mentioned resources:

Kárpáti János: *Szöllősy András*. Várbíró Judit (szerk.): *A magyar zeneszerzés mesterei*. Budapest: Holnap Kiadó, 2005.

Farkas Zoltán: „Korálok és harangok Szöllősy András műveiben. [Chorals and bells in the works of András Szöllősy]” *Muzsika* XXXIX/3 (1996. március): 1-8.

III. Methodology

First of all I have found it to be utterly important to present the life and the artistic works (see chapter 1 and 2) of András Szöllősy, thereby helping to familiarize and bring into context the analyzed compositions, as well as to introduce his significant musicology activity in detail.

In the second chapter I have organized the compositions into subcategories based on genre, thus having the opportunity to specify mutual characteristics and the similarities in the circumstances of their creation. The resulting grouping of the works has also proven itself to be useful whilst referencing in the subsequent chapters.

My analysis is approaching the topic from two different aspects: firstly I am listing the compositional elements throughout the oeuvre of Szöllősy, followed by a detailed examination of the pieces: *Paesaggio con morti*, *Elégia*, and the six different *in memoriam* opuses. In the latter analyses I am researching whether due to the title choice and owing to the necrology nature of the

compositions, how the before specified compositional elements reflect on their title and the commemorated person. In the light of that I conducted the analysis not only based on specifying each compositional element, however I found it to be important to analyze the formal structure, the base dodecaphonic lines and the circumstances of the pieces' creation.

The subject of my research is based on compositions that are acknowledged by the composer himself and were published in print – from the *III. concerto* in 1968 until the *Addio Georgii Kroó in memoriam* in 2006. In the detailed introduction of Szöllősy's compositions (see chapter 2. of my thesis work) I am mentioning the applied music, as well as occasional and pedagogic pieces, however those – apart from *Musiche per ottoni* – were not included in the analytical part of my work.

IV. Results

The overview of the compositional elements and the analyses of the examined pieces have highlighted, that the thought of death and mourning as well as facing them plays not only an occasionally appearing factor, but a central, constant, art shaping role in Szöllősy 's oeuvre.

The researching, collection, analysis based on individual aspects and organization of the information and compositions in the bibliography wishes to serve as an assistance for those who desire to study the artistic work of András Szöllősy in the future.

V. Documentation related to the thesis work subject

19th August 2016 – Chamber Music Concert of the
Weiner Ensemble

Orlando Festival (Kerkrade, Hollandia)

Máté Bán – flute, Csaba Pálfi – clarinet, Imre Dani – piano, Réka
Baksai – violin, Janka Jámbor - cello

András Szöllősy: Suoni di tromba (arr.: Csaba Pálfi)

Leó Weiner: Passacaglia Op. 44 (arr.: Máté Bán)

Arnold Schönberg: Kammer-symphonie Op. 9 Nr. 1 (arr.:
Anton Webern)

2017. november 8. – Masterclass and solo recital at
Tokyo College of Music

Máté Bán – flute, Isawa Kumiko - piano

József Sári: Köszöntő Szöllősy Andrásnak

[Salute for András Szöllősy]

Igor Stravinsky: Three pieces for clarinet solo

András Szöllősy: Suoni di tromba (arr.: Pálfi Csaba)