

DLA thesis abstract

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The Saxophone's Place in Hungarian Music

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I. Antecedents of the research

As the saxophone has been taught only for some years at colleges in Hungary, there has been no research done in this subject, also none of the foreign treatises deal with the saxophone use of either of the composers or works I have analysed. Numerous researchers deal with Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály és László Lajtha, there are several books on Péter Eötvös, also there are many articles on new works by Péter Eötvös and Miklós Maros, and critical writings about their premieres and performances of their works, but no one has dealt with their use of the saxophone. As a saxophonist, I feel it is important to be aware of the Hungarian repertoire, also the detailed analysis of the works endorses a better performance.

During the research I managed to dispel some misbeliefs. I often heard regarding László Lajtha's saxophone use, that he must have got to know the instrument through his French composer-friends. In connection with Bartók there has been a speculation, that he used the saxophone instead of tárogató. Zoltán Kodály's use of saxophone in Hány János has been originated from jazz, another theory comes from Anna Dalos, who in a paper described the saxophone as the symbol of the French in Kodály's work. I think there is a lot of rationality in this last theory but maybe the alloyage of the two is the answer. In connection with László Lajtha I have found an obvious ideal, Ralph Vaughan-Williams' symphonies and their instrumentation must have been the inspiration of Lajtha's saxophone use. The most complicated question is the origin of saxophone parts in the ballet of Bartók. Although I have found some similarities and possible inspirational works, I do not feel this subject is complete, in my opinion I may have just opened up new possibilities that might generate further research.

It was easy to research the saxophone-use of the two contemporary composers, as I could ask them personally. Still, I find important these parts of my research, as they are both world-renowned composers, who both have implied saxophone to a great extent in their works, even though their ways of use differs greatly. Both topics need further research, as I only dealt in detail with five out of Maros' thirty works, and regarding Péter Eötvös apart from the fact that I looked only into several works, it would be an interesting aspect to research in detail the connection between his love for jazz and his use of the saxophone.

II. Sources

There are numerous treatises that deal with Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and László Lajtha, their detailed biographies and part of their correspondence is available in print. I found important to read their own writing as they gave me an insight of what composers and works and topics they found important (Szöllősy András (közr.): *Bartók Béla Összegyűjtött írásai I.* Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1966. Bónis Ferenc (szerk.): *Kodály Zoltán Visszatekintés II.* Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1964., Berlász Melinda (szerk.): *Lajtha László összegyűjtött írásai I.* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992).

Regarding the history of the saxophone, the most important source was the treatise of Fred Hemke (Hemke, Fred L.: *The Early History of the Saxophone.* D.M.A. Music. The University of Wisconsin, 1975.) and *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone.* Both works provide an overwhole picture of the early history and repertoire of the saxophone, and were of great help, as to what momentums to look for in the Hungarian musical life around the time Bartók's, Kodály's and Lajtha's compositions were conceived.

In order to form a picture of the saxophone's presence in Hungary around 1910-1920 I made a great use of János Gonda's and Béla Szilárd Jávorszky's books on Hungarian jazz history (Gonda János: *Mi a jazz?* Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1982., Jávorszky Béla Szilárd: *A magyar jazz története.* E-könyv. Kossuth kiadó, 2014) and of László Marosi's book about the history of the Hungarian Army Bands (Marosi László: *Két évszázad katonazenéje Magyarországon.* Budapest: Editio Musica, 1994).

Besides the literature mentioned I found it important to examine the original parts for Bartók's and Kodály's works at the archives of the operahouse. I took ideas as to where to look for possible inspiration of the saxophone use from the books by László Somfai and László Vikárius. (Somfai László: *Bartók Béla kompozíciós módszere*. Budapest: Akkord Zenei Kiadó, 2000., Vikárius László: *Modell és inspiráció Bartók zenei gondolkodásában* Pécs: Jelenkor Kiadó, 1999.)

The primary source of Miklós Maros' saxophone use was the interview I made with the composer, the text of which can be found in the 1st appendix. I received useful answers from Carina Rascher, the former soprano player of the Rascher Saxophone Quartet and Miklós Maros also answered some further questions of mine (the texts of both e-mails can be found in the 2nd and 3rd appendix of the treatise). The published interviews gave an insight into his compositional world (Földes Imre: „Sorsok. Három beszélgetés Stockholmban élő zeneszerzőkkel. 3. Maros Miklós.” In: *Muzsika* 37/12. (1994. december): 12-15., Tar Károly: „... nagyjából megteremttem egy világot, amelyben jól érzem magam. Beszélgetés Maros Miklós zeneszerzővel.” In: *Ághegy* 3-4. sz. (2003). 381-397). There is also an extremely important writing by Miklós Maros himself, in which he describes his compositional method through a painting of Árpád Illés (Maros Miklós: „Néhány mondat Illés Árpád: Bábszínház című képéről.” In: Illés Eszter (szerk.): *Illés Árpád*. Budapest: Orpheusz Kiadó, 2005. 193-197).

The book co-written with Pedro Amaral was of a great help to me in order to understand the compositional process of Péter Eötvös (Eötvös Péter-Pedro Amaral: *Parlando Rubato*. Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2015.). Also there were two interviews that provided a basic source (Farkas Zoltán: „Számomra a zenélés az artikulációval kezdődik. Földvári találkozás Eötvös Péterrel.” In: *Muzsika* 47/9. 2004. szeptember: 32-27., Rácz Judit: „Settled in the Present.” In: Zachár Zsófia (szerk.): *The Hungarian Quarterly* 192/49. 2008/tél: 56-70). In shaping the overall structure of this chapter I was inspired by the treatise of Krisztina Megyeri (Megyeri Krisztina: *Eötvös Péter Love and Other Demons című operájának dramaturgiája és kifejezőeszközei*. DLA disszertáció. LFZE, 2013)

III. Method

The different chapters called for different analytical methods. Apart from reading the existing literature – books, interviews, critical writings on their compositions - I have made an interview and exchanged several e-mails, these materials can be found in the Appendix of the treatise. I have investigated their works in a different way. With Miklós Maros the chronological order made the most sense, as that way it was possible to follow up the development of Maros' compositional process and compare the works to other compositions of similar genre written around the same time. Péter Eötvös' use of the saxophone differs, the chronological order did not make sense, so I examined the different musical aspects of his saxophone parts instead. I have examined the saxophone quartet by Eötvös in great detail in order to legitimate the composer's concept given in the description of this work.

I have examined the works of Bartók, Kodály from several different aspects. Firstly, I examined the original parts at the Archives of the Hungarian State Opera, secondly I have read their letters written around the time these works were composed, and finally I read numerous books and studies that deal with the works examined or their compositional process. I then conferred this information with the details known about the saxophone history of the same period, and made my conclusions from it. In order to find the inspiration of László Lajtha's saxophone use I have read his writings on other composers, and also examined the composers that he was in connection with. This is how I got to Vaughan-Williams and the quote in Lajtha's 5th Symphony.

IV. Results

I think that I have connected Béla Bartók and László Lajtha to composers that they haven't been brought in comparison yet, it would be interesting to get a deeper insight into these connections from other aspects than the saxophone-use. There is a study on the connection between Lajtha and Vaughan-Williams, but it doesn't draw parallels between their works. I have connected the saxophone-use of Béla Bartók to two composers whom his works have never been compared with. It would be interesting to examine whether there are further similarities or parallels to be found.

A have made a short historical overview of Miklós Maros' and Péter Eötvös' saxophone-use with their biographical aspects and personal thoughts.

Although it is not part of the main text, I found it important to try and make a list of all the possible compositions written by Hungarian composers, whether the saxophone was used as a solo instrument or as part of the orchestra. When I began the list, I thought there would be approximately 80-100 compositions, my list currently contains 170 works. This list can be found as the 5th appendix of the treatise. I intend to continue, I would like to add publishers' informations and dedications and make it available for everyone who is interested in the Hungarian saxophone repertoire.

V. Artistic activity

Works studied in the treatise:

- 2016. Nov. Maros M.: *Burattinata* – Fészek Művészklub, (Selejto Irén – piano)
- 2014. Mar. Eötvös Péter: *Shadows* – BMC Budapest (UMZE)
- 2013 Jan. Lajtha L.: „*Revolutionary*” *Symphony Nr. 7.* – Művészetek Palotája Budapest (Győr Philharmonic Orchestra)
- 2012 Mar. Bartók B.: *The Wooden Prince* – Művészetek Palotája Budapest (National Philharmonic Orchestra)

Selection of the works performed, listed in the 5th Appendix:

- 2017 Febr. Duo SeRa recital, FUGA Építészeti Központ
 - premieres: Horváth Balázs: kb 10
 - Kutrik Bence: Divergences
 - Illés Márton: Én-Kör II.
 - Bolcsó Bálint: Metszéspillanat
 - Gryllus Samu: SeRanade
- 2016 Okt. Kedves Csanád: Tegnap és holnap FUGA Építészeti Központ, premiere km:
Bali J.-recorders, Zétényi T.-cello, Borbély L., Németh A.-piano)
- 2016 Apr. Duo SeRa recital, FUGA Építészeti Központ
 - premieres: Láng István: Lüktető szálak
 - Rózsa Pál: SeRapsodia
 - Pócs Katalin: Két noktürn
 - Kocsár Miklós: Duó (saxophone version)
- 2015 Sept. Bolcsó B. *30 Days* - Aurora Saxophone Quartet
- 2015 Apr. Duo SeRa recital, FUGA Építészeti Központ
 - premieres: Tornyai Péter: Narcissus
 - Maros Miklós: Lyria (sax. version, Hungarian premiere)
 - Fekete Gyula: Pyramus és Thisbe
 - Wetl Mátyás: My Favourite Instruments
 - Horváth Bálint: DEAC No. 2
 - Zarándy Ákos: Bethin

- 2014 Nov. Borbély Mihály: Sonata Rapsodia – Solti-terem, Zeneakadémia, premiere,
Selejto Irén-piano
- 2014 Apr. Duo Sera recital, FUGA Építészeti Központ
 premieres: Virágh András Gábor: Waves
 Maros Miklós: Games (szax. version, Hungarian premiere)
 Horváth Márton Levente: Litany
 Solti Árpád: Why Are You so La Violetta?
 Zombola Péter: Choral
- 2012 okt. Horváth M. L. *Psalmoid* – Assisi Szent Ferenc Plébánia Templom km: Virágh
 András Gábor - organ
- 2012 máj. Virágh A. G. *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* – MüPa NFZ
 Próbaterme, premiere
- 2011 márc. Sály L. *Keringőféle Eszterháznak* – (Rozmán Lajos – klt, Lakatos György –
 fag, Budai Rita – zg) Katona J. Színház
- 2011 ápr. Virágh A. G. *Tetra* – premiere
 Selejto Irén - piano
- 2011 jan. Virágh A. G. *Quintet* – premiere, Kortárszenei Mini-Fesztivál, Művészetek
 Palotája
- 2009 nov. Sály L.: *Hexagramm* - Tomkins Ensemble – Hadtörténeti Múzeum, Budapest