

DLA doktori értekezés tézisei

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Inharmonic Structures as Form-Creating
Elements in the Works of Ligeti, Jeney, Kurtág,
and Vidovszky

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I. Background of the Research

Arnold Schoenberg's now over one-hundred-year-old prediction about the music of the future—regarding chords composed of more than six elements and the heightened importance of timbre—inspired me to examine how the ideals he articulated can be identified in four compositions from the period since, which hold personal significance for me.

The existing literature on these works varies in depth. The sources regarding György Ligeti's *Atmosphères* are particularly rich in information relevant to my topic, partly stemming from the composer himself, and partly from scholarly literature. However, I found no detailed analysis on how the piece's sound treatment techniques create a coherent structure. Kurtág's *Stele* has also been the focus of several analyses, though these generally do not aim to draw conclusions about the formal consequences of its vertical structures. Jeney's *Alef* has been discussed in several texts as well, but none offer a

detailed analysis of certain elements of the work's structure (e.g., the cutouts) or its aesthetic context in the way I attempt to provide. As for Vidovszky's *Le piano et ses doubles*, no analysis exists so far. A particular challenge was adapting existing literature on the composer's earlier works to address the questions that arose concerning the piece at the center of my analysis.

Previous analyses typically offer formal readings of these compositions in local terms or within the context of each composer's oeuvre. However, from the Schoenbergian perspective I adopt, there is no comprehensive, cross-stylistic, and cross-methodological study that contextualizes this most fundamental technical issue.

II. Sources

In addition to the analyses, I attempted to trace the composers' own conceptual frameworks. My primary

focus was on sources directly from them, when available (e.g., Selected Writings by György Ligeti, interviews by Bálint András Varga with Ligeti and Kurtág, Zoltán Farkas's interview with Jeney, and Kristóf Weber's conversations with László Vidovszky). Secondly, I relied on texts that deal with the composers' bodies of work in a thorough and insightful manner (e.g., dissertations by Sylvia Grmela and Tünde Szitha). Writings specifically addressing the works (e.g., analyses by Mika Pelo and Jennifer Iverson) also contributed to establishing a technical foundation for analyzing vertical structures.

III. Methodology

The diversity of the pieces necessitated different analytical approaches.

The chordal structures in *Atmosphères*, formed with brushstroke-like gestures, create a form with unique

dramaturgy, which became the focal point of my analysis.

The appendix contains an excerpt of the *Alef*'s irregularly structured cutouts. In analyzing this work, I also applied a theory based on pitch-class sets, which is yet virtually unknown in Hungarian methodology.

I believe analyzing Stele without its aesthetic and stylistic context would mean missing its essence, so I examined the chords of *Molto sostenuto* primarily through the lens of Kurtág's stylistic idiom.

In a personal conversation, Vidovszky mentioned that, as in many of his other works, harmonically constructed components play a crucial role in *Le piano et ses doubles*. Therefore, in addition to stylistic analysis, I also employed a method aimed at analyzing harmonic structures in that chapter.

IV. Results

Schoenberg's epoch-defining significance lies in the fact that he was not only preoccupied with the theoretical currents of his time, but also recognized their long-term implications – how the axioms which contemporary music theory was built upon would be renewed. The works I examined offer radically different answers to the question at hand: the vertical structures of the four compositions are constructed using vastly different strategies. Yet from the Schoenbergian perspective, each work is representative.

V. Documentation of Related Creative Activity

Chords composed of more than six elements, as well as structures that employ timbral techniques to a heightened degree, play a central role in my compositional work. Although I rarely have the opportunity to write for ensembles that allow for the full exploitation of these techniques, whenever I have the chance, I eagerly experiment with them.

Among my compositions created during the doctoral period that are thematically relevant, I would mention the *Házsongárd Cantata* (premiere expected on June 5, 2025, with Anna Molnár, László Tihanyi, and the UMZE Ensemble), and my orchestral piece *REGR* (premiere expected on June 14, 2025, with Lőrinc Muntag and the Szeged Philharmonic Orchestra). These techniques also feature in my orchestral composition *Dal Niente Al Niente*, first performed at my 2019 graduation concert (premiere: May 22, 2019, Óbuda Danubia Orchestra, conductor: Zsolt Serei).