

31 March 2011. Budapest, Nádor Hall

Rezső Sugár and Miklós Sugár, composers' night:

Participation in performance of Rezső Sugár's  
Frammenti musicali

1 June 2011, Budapest, Nádor Hall, concert of the  
EAR ensemble

Béla Faragó's composer's night on his 50th birthday  
Participation in performance of Faragó's Antifónia

17 June 2011, Óbudai Társaskör, Concert for the 60th  
birthday of Ágnes Szakály

Participation in the performance of Iván Madarász  
Iván: Öt eset [Five Cases] and Miklós Sugár's Cimcor

27 January 2012, Palace of Arts, Budapest, Festival  
Theatre  
Mini Festival

Participation in the performance of Attila Bozay's  
Wind Quintet, op. 6 and Gyula Bánkövi's 4x4

DLA doctoral theses

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Contemporary Hungarian chamber works  
with horn, from duos to quartets

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## I. Research preliminaries and sources

My interest in contemporary music goes back to my years in artist training course. The programme of the exam concert had to include various different musical styles. That was when I first came to play Miklós Kocsár's Echo No. 1 for solo horn. The composer was pleased with my interpretation of the piece and asked me to record, together with cimbalom player Ágnes Szakály, his Repliche No. 2 for the Hungarian Radio. Following the recording I decided to ask Miklós Kocsár to compose a sequel to Echo No. 1. The outcome was Echo No. 2, a piece for two horns. Echo Nos 3 and 4 followed shortly, for three and four horns respectively. The Echo series constituted the backbone of my first solo album, recorded for Hungaroton, entitled 'Born for Horn'.

Following the successful recording of Kocsár's Repliche No. 2., after a break of almost ten years, Ágnes Szakály and I began playing chamber music together again, and our first period was that of path-seeking. Our duo was joined by bassoonist József Vajda, together with whom we first played the Baroque repertoire. Miklós Sugár's Miniature Trios, for horn, bassoon and cimbalom, were composed around that time. Based on our experience of live concerts, however, it soon became clear that there was greater interest on the part of the composers and the audiences in the combination of horn and cimbalom. Scores of contemporary Hungarian composers wrote works for this duo, and in 2009 we published a special album with works for these instruments.

In 2007 in connection with a concert I had the opportunity to meet Miklós Sugár, head of the EAR ensemble, who gave me a chance to experiment with electro-acoustic music.

## Programme:

István Szigeti: Corn Flakes (première)

Miklós Sugár: Kapcsolódások [Connexions] (première)

Béla Faragó: Antifóniák [Antiphons] (première)

Iván Madarász: Öt eset [Five Cases]

Péter Tóth: Scirocco

With: Ágnes Szakály – cimbalom,

István Horváth – sound engineer

3 October 2010, Budapest, Nádor Hall, Music of our Age  
Festival: Works by contemporary composers for brass  
instruments

Gyula Bánkövi: 4x4 (première)

Dubrovay: Concerto

Miklós Maros: Lur II. (première)

Ádám Kondor: *Y los sueos, sue os son* (Bizarrr tárgyak 9/b)  
[Bizarre objects 9/b], première

4 October 2010, Budapest, Nádor Hall, Music of our Age  
Festival, concert of the EAR ensemble  
István Szigeti: Trió (première)

## **V. Documentation of the activities related to the subjectmatter of this thesis**

### **CD recordings:**

Parallel Monologues. Hungaroton, 2001 HCD 31997

Born for Horn. Hungaroton, 2002. HCD 32176

Repliche. Hungaroton, 2009. HCD 32601

New Instrumental Sounds. Hungaroton, 2010. HCD 3267475

### **Concerts:**

19 March 2007, Budapest Spring Festival, Hall of Mirrors

Participation in Ágnes Szakály's solo recital:

Ilona Meskó: 'Adom burkolt című...' [Entitled giving concealed], première

15 October 2008, Hungarian Radio, Marble Hall, launch concert of the CD 'Repliche'

19 February 2008, Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism, Budapest

Solo night, together with EAR ensemble

I was very pleased about the opportunity that enabled me to further expand the means of expression on the horn, and not least the repertoire.

## **II. Sources**

My primary sources include chamber works – and their scores – by contemporary Hungarian composers either dedicated to me and/or premiered by me, as well as interviews I conducted and questionnaires I completed with the living composers. I also drew on telephone conversations or e-mail exchanges with the composers regarding certain information and methods of composition, as well as details regarding their music. Naturally I also considered the instructions received directly from the composers during the rehearsals in the run-up to the concerts or recordings.

It follows from the topic of this paper that very few of the pieces discussed were written by composers have since deceased. Even in such cases, however, I sought to reveal as much information as possible with respect to the standing of the given piece in the oeuvre of the composer. I was aided by monographs, letters, recorded interviews and articles, whose original sources have been given in both the footnotes and the bibliography.

## **III. Methodology**

Given that in the case of contemporary works, the composer him/herself is the most authentic source, I sought to approach the works by means of a wealth of information

gained from the composers. The pieces are next presented by means of musical analysis, and subsequently I seek to offer a key to learning the works on the basis of the methodology employed in my own performance practice. Except for a few pieces, including Ligeti's Trio, none discussed in this paper have been previously analysed.

The questionnaires mentioned among the primary sources included a standard set of questions that I sent the composers. The questions concerned the origins of their composition, the process of composition, the choice of instruments, the structure of the piece, the compositional means and their use, as well as special technical requirements and performance instructions.

I found that, when exploring new possibilities on the instrument, the composers attached great importance to maintaining a constant and active relationship with the performer in order to ask question about the technical features and limits of the horn. In many instances the final form of the pieces would take shape in the course of the rehearsal process. These questions prompted me also to consider, to the smallest detail, the modern possibilities of playing the horn, enabling me to verbalise these for myself and my students.

#### **IV. Research results**

The reasons for choosing this theme was that as a performer and a teacher I literally have a working relationship with these works. The novelty of the analyses provided in this paper lies in the fact that I take a look at the technical and performance aspects of these pieces primarily as a horn player. I sought to select pieces that afforded the best insight

into the technical and interpretational challenges of horn playing. My research has enabled me to provide a detailed analysis of twenty-seven works by seventeen contemporary and twentieth-century Hungarian composers, with a special emphasis on the interpretational and technical issues of horn playing.

This paper provides a cross-section of Hungarian chamber music for horn, ranging from duos to quartets. The duos being over-represented, devoting separate chapters (some divided into sub-chapters) to certain combinations of instruments was called for; chiefly in the case of typical 'sonata settings' such as the horn and sonata duos or special – uniquely Hungarian – combinations like the horn and cimbalom duos. The ensemble of electro-acoustic music and the horn, although it is not chamber music as such, has been given a separate chapter, necessitated partly by the unusual performance requirements, and partly the fact that even today this genre is absent from the music-college repertoire of the horn. Meriting a separate chapter, Miklós Kocsár's four-piece series 'Echoes' has, in my view, opened new perspectives in the genre of chamber music for horn.

This paper does not provide any biographical information about the composers. First, the reader will have ample online access to the updated curriculum vitae of the composers, and second, I attach greater importance to the role the given piece assumes in the oeuvre of the composer (e.g. Ligeti, Durkó) than to providing a sketchy biography.

Finally, I sought to provide inspiration for everyone with an aversion to teaching or performing contemporary works, arguing that these pieces open onto an incredibly rich and motivating musical world.