

Thesis of a DLA Dissertation

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Andor Földes, His Life and Art as a Pianist

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Budapest

2011.

I. Research Background

The literature that deals with Andor Földes, is very minimal. The most comprehensive, accessible and relatively easy to obtain in Hungary, is a self-written book entitled “Seventy Years on Music’s Magic Carpet” (Óbuda Múzeum, 2005), which contains for the non-musical reader interesting stories and information, but does not however have ample facts about his career and life in great detail. In my experience, very few in music circles have read his memoirs, and I think he is thrown into the shadow of obscurity undeservingly. There is a text which previously appeared written by Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski entitled Andor Földes (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag GmbH, 1970) - but it deals more with the features of his personality, and is very difficult to obtain. In Lili Földes’ volume “Two on a Continent” (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1947) Andor Földes’ wife, writes about their time in America, which serves as additives to the start pianist’s career, yet ends with their return to Europe in the 1940s with some research on the world wide web it is possible to listen to lectures of Andor Földes, to get to know his thoughts, but a work that combines all of these processes, and connects the missing pieces does not exist in published format.

The Museum of Old Buda’s (Óbuda Múzeum), Director Dr. Írisz Újj, has made great efforts to preserve the memory of Földes – in a memorial room, a plaque-inauguration, plans for a film production, and an ongoing working relationship with the late Mrs. Földes – but with few results so far.

Unfortunately, with the death of Lili Földes the now traditional Andor Földes Piano Competition in conjunction with the Academy of Music held every year severed, which does not allow the rising generation of musicians to know his works, until their teachers or senior colleagues do not bring their attention to it.

II. Resources

My dissertation’s primary source is Andor Földes’ book “Seventy Years on Music’s Magic Carpet”, which offers insight into his more important and decisive events in his life – according to Földes – from his childhood to his senior years. A chapter of my dissertation deals with Lili Földes’ volume entitled “Two on the Continent” which fills in some missing pieces left out of “Seventy Years on Music’s Magic Carpet” – with the exceptions of the U.S. – starts with the exodus from Europe.

Földes’ thoughts on Beethoven, Bartók, and Kodály, were previously published in several languages, however they are now very difficult to access. Földes’ “Gibt es einen zeitgenössischen Beethoven-Stil? (Eröffnungsvorlesungdes Internationalen Meisterkursus für Klavier im Rahmen des XXIV. Beethovenfestes der Stadt Bonn, gehalten am 28th 9th 1963 in der Beethovenhalle. Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1963) entitled lecture, reflections on the Hungarian masters as well.

Contemporary newspaper articles, reviews – including the Pesti Napló, the Az Est, the Magyar Hírlap – play a large part in my dissertation. My personal encounter with Lili Földes gave me an occasion to talk to her for several days; she readily revived the years spent with her husband. I feel this information especially important to distribute, since the passing of Lili herself, there is no one left that had such a close relationship with the pianist.

III. Methods

My dissertation, in contrast with previous literature, focuses on Földes' life-path, a more thorough mapping of his career as a pianist and on the greater awareness of his thoughts, with some analysis on his recordings, which try to uncover the salient features of his artistic individuality.

IV. Results

I chose Andor Földes for the topic of my dissertation for varying reasons. The first was that although a number of recordings are available on his play, very little information is accessible on his artistic activities, and his life-path. The other reason being that Lili Földes – supported by the Academy of Music held annual Andor Földes Piano Competitions – I met her several times and had the opportunity to talk with her about the pianist, and his recordings. As such my dissertation on the one hand provides the most comprehensive and the fullest possible picture of the artist's life-path, career, thoughts, and on the other hand contains more viable information about these things.

V. The Documentation of the field activities related to the thesis

On two occasions, first in 2002 and second in 2006, I was among the top three winners of Andor Földes Piano Competition. After having won a second prize in the first contest, the Director of the Museum of Old Buda, Dr. Írisz Újj request that I record a CD of some Földes' works in the small hall of the Academy of Music for the Andor Földes Memorial-room: Two Miniatures, Three moods, Kodály-Földes Hány János - Intermezzo.