

Thesis of a Dissertation

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# The Vocal Art of András Szöllősy

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## **I. Antecedents of the Research**

In the past, the essays and papers associated with the compositional works of András Szöllősy were mainly focused on his instrumental pieces. János Kárpáti, the most prominent researcher of Szöllősy's lifework wrote several exhausting articles and an interview-book, but only one short study, which connects to Szöllősy's vocal technique as presenting his four important choir pieces from the 1980s. Besides, we can find some short writings by Zoltán Farkas, which illuminate more details of these vocal pieces, and a few newspaper columns written after the premiers of each work. In the near past, Csaba Pálfi wrote a doctoral dissertation entitled *Death and Mourning in the Artistic Work of András Szöllősy*, but also avoiding the detailed analysis of its vocal aspects. The usual Hungarian concert programs just rarely contain these pieces, likewise the discussions of the broad profession.

During my work I was inspired by filling this gap. My goal was to present Szöllősy's vocal art. Next to his musical masterpieces I discussed his textual works and

pieces were not part of his list of works, such as causal compositions, revolutionary songs and lyrics made by him for preexisting melodies.

## **II. Sources**

The primary sources of my dissertation are Szöllősy's published musical pieces, and besides articles, critics, essays written by him and can be found in journals, reviews and books.

Next to the primary sources I considered important to show unpublished compositional and textual works, which can be found in libraries and private collections. The photocopies of these sources are attached at the end of the dissertation.

Studies, critics, articles, essays and books associated with the compositional techniques, the premieres of his pieces, or – in the broader sense – the environment and historical age of him also create the skeleton of my work. These materials mostly were

written by János Kárpáti, Zoltán Farkas, Anna Dalos, András Wilhelm, András Tokaji and Lóránt Péteri.

### **III. Method**

I intended to show the formal-logical tendencies of the pieces with their detailed analysis, also illustrating the local and historical situation of each compositional process. The method of my analysis was the same as had been used and quoted by Szöllősy himself in his own textual works.

To make my analysis more understandable, I created my own graphical music examples and every once in a while attached the original examples of Szöllősy and Kárpáti, when it gave additional information.

### **IV. Results**

During my research I have found an exact linear tendency in the vocal lifework of Szöllősy, initiates from

the style of Zoltán Kodály and culminates at the four monumental choir-pieces in the middle of the 1980s.

My analysis showed, that the gesture of reflecting was always part of his compositional behavior, and also that each vocal composition was composed in high professional and esthetical level.

Furthermore, I proved that Szöllősy's structuralism in every case originates from the expression, diction and meaning of the text, and for this reason it is always the *effect* of his compositional intention.

## **V. Documentation of the Activities Relevant to the Topic of the Dissertation**

During the writing process of my dissertation I have finished several musical compositions, in which I applied or developed the post-schoenbergian compositional technique of Szöllősy. These are the *Jam Quartet* for flute, percussion, violoncello and piano; the *Kipling's Speech* for soprano, flute, violoncello and piano; the

*Lerchenquartett* for string quartet; and the *Antiope-fragments* based on Euripides' text for soprano, male choir and cimbalom.