

PhD Theses

Kata Borsos

Neoclassical solosonatas for violin in the first half of the 20th century.  
Works by Paul Hindemith, Arthur Honegger, Sergei Prokofiev and  
Sándor Veress.

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## I. Antecedents of the research

The introduction about the neoclassical solosonatas for violin I would like to start with the piece by Sándor Veress. His solosonata, written in 1935 can be compared with the famous Solosonata BB 124 by Béla Bartók as its forerunner. However, in the Hungarian and international music life, this complex work including the roots of Hungarian folk music, his high expectations towards the performer and hidden musical depths is hardly mentioned. Veress's emigration did not favour his official judgment in Hungary: he has been one of the least played composers to this day, although his oeuvre makes him one of the outstanding composers of the post-Bartók and Kodály generation.

Due to the analytical approach of my dissertation, I sought works similar to Veress's work regarding both scope and stylistic approach. After studying the repertoire, I chose works by Paul Hindemith, Arthur Honegger, and Sergei Prokofiev. In the case of all four authors, it can be stated that the analytical research is incomplete with regard to their solo sonata written for the violin. The above-mentioned works represent a more transparent and lighter level than Bartók's Solo Sonata, both in terms of form and violin technology, so they can serve as a prelude to this in higher education.

## II. Sources

Claudio Veress, the son of Sándor Veress, the custodian of his legacy, who provided hitherto unpublished manuscripts and other materials, and Balázs Mikusi, the director of the National Széchényi Library, where I also worked with valuable manuscripts, helped me review Sándor Veress's oeuvre. To the Veress chapter the starting point was also a book entitled *Sándor Veress* edited by János Demény, Ede Terényi and Melinda Berlász. The materials for the Hindemith chapter are due to Susanne Schaal-Gotthardt and the Hindemith Institut Frankfurt. For the analysis of Prokofiev's solo sonata, I used the manuscript of Joanna Steinhauser's dissertation *The historical analysis and performer's guide to Sergei Prokofiev's Sonata for Solo or Unison Violins*. The writings of Richard Taruskin, Igor Stravinsky and Tibor Tallián also served as a source of inspiration. Lajos Vargyas's dissertation *The Poetics and Stylistics of Folk Ballad* and Béla Bartók's article entitled *The So-called Bulgarian Rhythm* helped the source of Hungarian folk music.

### III. Research Methods

Writing an analytical dissertation on neoclassical solo sonatas composed for violin, I first tried to briefly summarize the historical background, antecedents and outstanding works of the genre, and to place the neoclassical style in time and space, its main features and outstanding musicians. This was followed by an analysis of five works by the four composers, which I analyzed based on the aspects outlined above. In each case, the analysis was preceded by a brief summary of the composers' biographies. The analysis of the sonatas took place on a formal and instrumental level.

### IV. Research Results

The aim of my dissertation was basically to put the listed neoclassical works in the spotlight, thus gaining space for them, perhaps, in higher education. These works, although not as bright as their contemporary unique Solo Sonata by Béla Bartók, are still masterpieces that faithfully reflect the diversity of the solo violin repertoire of the 20th century neoclassical style. I paid special attention to the work of Sándor Veress. Veress, as a composer, but as a folk music collector, a musicologist, left behind an unparalleled oeuvre. The value of the dissertation is enhanced by the fact that, thanks to Claudio Veress, it also contains a valuable document that has not been published so far: Sándor Veress's self-written Curriculum Vitae in Hungarian and English. The analyses provide a basis for a better understanding of the works, both formally and instrumentally.

### V. Presentations related to the topic of the dissertation

September 24, 2021

Researchers' Night at the Eötvös Loránd University Library and Archives

H. I. F. Biber: Passacaglia (To the Guardian Angel)

G. P. Telemann: Fantasia no 1

J. S. Bach: Chaconne in d minor

Sándor Veress: Solo Sonata

January 25, 2022 Liszt Academy of Music, Solti Hall

Closing concert of Kata Borsos violin DLA

J. S. Bach: Partita in d minor, BWV 1004 - 5. Chaconne

Barnabas Dukay: ... God is with us - an instrumental motet

Peter Vasks: The Lonely Angel

Veress: Solo Sonata

Gallo: Trio Sonata (in G major)

Stravinsky: Italian Suite

Kata Borsos (violin)

Featuring: Zoltán Varga Gergő (piano)

Dinyés Soma (harpsichord)

Artists of the Anima Musicae Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Barnabas Dukay