

Thesis of a DLA Dissertation

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Melody, as an Internal Organizing Power in Zoltán Jeney's Funeral Rite

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I. Preliminaries

Zoltán Jeney's oeuvre has a rich documentation, so far. The composer provided an own numbering for his music directory. Based on this list, representative publications were presented in 1996 by András Wilhelm and János Demény¹ as well as a biography by Tünde Szitha in 2002.² These contain only a few themes of the *Funeral Rite*. Besides the premiere in 2005, the finished composition has not been put on a formal record and has not made a comprehensive analysis of work, neither. The articles appeared in cultural publications (Holnap, Muzsika), emphasise some stylistical characteristics very carefully but the function of the choir has not been examined, so far.

The tones of the fractal line called motto, leading through the performing apparatus, connect the ritual items as an internal principle. The main features of the tune and its dramatic interpretation have been first examined by Zoltán Farkas.³ The tune and the topic, that is the combined analysis of the musical sounds and the dying process, much less published in literature. With my dissertation I wish to fill this long-felt gap focusing on vocal innovations and characteristic composition techniques.

II. Sources

The main source of my dissertation is the opus representation written by László Dobszay⁴ for the premiere and a recorded conversation between him and Zoltán Farkas.⁵ Dobszay instructed it, Farkas was present from the beginning. In addition, Dobszay offered his own choir, the Schola Hungarica, and gave the possibility for the composer to listen to the completed music parts in concerts. I got further information about the Gregorian style from the book of László Dobszay⁶, the opus presentations and other analysis helped me to understand the background of the oratorio as well as to form the structure. Beside the

¹Demény János-Wilhelm András (közr.): *Jeney Zoltán. Műjegyzék angol és magyar nyelven Wilhelm András bevezető tanulmányával*. Budapest : Editio Musica, 1996.

²Szitha Tünde: *Jeney Zoltán*. Magyar Zeneszerzők 19. Budapest : Mágus, 2002.

³Farkas Zoltán: „Lélektől lélekig”. *Muzsika* XXXVII/5 (1994. május): 30–33.

⁴Dobszay László: „Jeney Zoltán: Halotti szertartás – Funeral Rite. Az ősbemutató műsorfüzetének bevezető tanulmánya”. *Magyar Egyházzene* XIII/3 (2005/2006): 265–275.

⁵Farkas Zoltán: „Spekuláció nélkül nincs intuíció - »Jób könyvé«-től a fraktálokig. Jeney Zoltánnal beszélget a »Halotti szertartás«-ról Farkas Zoltán”. *Holmi* XVIII/7 (2006. július): 869–902.

⁶Dobszay László: *A gregorián stílus kézikönyve*. Budapest : Editio Musica, 1993.

professional publications, Huba Rózsa's Bible Translation with Word-interpretations from 2006 has always been a helping hand to me.⁷

III. Methods

According to my opinion it is a prior thing to study the emphasised details from an analytic point of view, focusing always on more characteristics. It is important to me that the musical and ideological message has to be interpreted in symbiosis. In my Thesis neither the text, nor the sounds have been handed more important. These interact to each other and after the composer's implementation they gain their originality in every sounding. The six-part oratorio's music is possessed by the Editio Musica and Zoltán Jeney, in addition to this I studied the versions, as well made for the previous premieres. My basic sound source was the unofficial recording of the premiere. Although I could not get all of the musical items, I had four available recordings.⁸ Beside the study of the mentioned publications and recordings, it was inevitable to examine the music of passed times like Ockeghem's recordings and the volumes of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*. The last chapter of my thesis is about the concept of mourning, the culture of death for a person and/or a family, since I felt it necessary to examine it in case of such a significant opus as this.

IV. Results

Since my youth I have been concerning myself with the sounding of contemporary vocal music in practice. My university thesis is about this type of music⁹, too and as a singer I have the opportunity to get to know a rich repertoire. I chose my dissertation topic because the choir and the vocal parts have particular importance in the mentioned opus, it is a rarity and the birth of this life-work, the oratorio composed through 18 years, inspires respect in me.

In the first chapter I highlight the composer's early vocal compositions and I deal with the stages of his life which aroused his interest of the Gregorian music. In the next chapter I discuss each compositional technique of the *Funeral Rite* in musical analysis with a special

⁷Rózsa Huba (szerk.): *Biblia – Ószövetségi és Újszövetségi szentírás*. Budapest : Szent István Társulat, 2005.

⁸„Music Colors - Hungarian Contemporary Music 1989-2004”. CD 003649, Budapest Music Center, 2004.

⁹„Kis esti zene. A LocoMusic és az MTV komolyzenei sorozata 1992-1996.” 37. és 42. rész. Kiadatlan DVD.

⁹Darázdsdi Zita: *Ligeti György Lux aeterna című művének elemzése*. Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem, 2005.

attention to the choir. The third part contains analysing examinations and the fourth focuses on the possibilities of the chorus-master. The appendix contains the *Funeral Rite*'s date of publication and its presentation just as its concert performances. I try to demonstrate the opus from more perspectives, its vocal parts, and suiting the comprehensive analysis in a broader context in order to create a complex unity.

V. The author's list of concerts connected to the subject-matter

24 January, 2004: Budapest, Ceremonial Hall of the Music Academy, Choral Conducting Diploma Concert: *László Sáy*: Három madrigal: 1. Két harangvirág 2. Szerelmes ének 3. Molnár alszol...

20 October, 2003: Budapest Autumn Festival, Rudas Bath (as a singer): *Judit Varga*: Mad(á)rigál, *Bolcsó Bálint*: L'Oiseau blessé d'une flèche, *Opánszki Dávid*: Átfedések.

8 February, 2004: Budapest, Making New Waves Festival, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts (as a singer): *Dilara Basak Özdemir*: Y los sueños, sueños son... *Judit Varga*: Mad(á)rigál, *Balázs Horváth*: Madrigali/I.

24 May, 2005: Budapest, Old Music Academy, Ceremonial Hall (as a singer): *Paul Hindemith*: Frühling, An eine Schmetterling, An eine Tote, Judaskuß, Trink aus!, Magisches Rezept.

17 February, 2005: Budapest, Russian Cultural Centre (as a singer): *Igor Stravinsky*: Cantata, *Béla Bartók*: Štyri slovenské náodné piesne, *Elene Camoletto*: Geistlich, *György Ligeti*: Éjszaka, Reggel, *Henk Badings*: La Dance des Dieux, *Seiber Mátyás*: Three Nonsense Songs.

14 June, 2005: Budapest, Music Academy Chamber Room (as a singer): *Igor Stravinsky*: Négy orosz népdal, *András Mihály*: Apokrifek I., II., *Zoltán Jeney*: Madárhívogató, *György Ligeti*: Két kánon, *Béla Bartók*: Falun.

15 June, 2010: Budapest, Old Music Academy Chamber Room (as a singer): *György Ligeti*: Magyar Etüdök/ I. II., és Hälfte des Lebens, *Zoltán Jeney*: Békák, *Péter Eötvös*: Insetti Galanti.