

Abstract of DLA Thesis

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Relationship of notation and performance in the organ works of
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I. Background of the research

Ligeti's most radical organ work, *Volumina* has made a determinant impact on the organ literature of the second half of the twentieth century. The notation of this work fills a unique role not only in the organ literature, but in Ligeti's life's work. The so called mass-notation – a term given by Ligeti himself – has been developed specially for this composition, which he has not used anywhere else. The *Volumina* appears regularly in the specialized literature discussing Ligeti's life's work, in places his other organ works appear as well. However, the number of such studies are not too extensive. Of the specialized literature dedicated to Ligeti's organ works, Martin Herchenröder's study stands out prominently, providing not only useful information, but shedding light on connections between events of Ligeti's life and his other works. Kimberly Marshall's writings communicate indispensable information regarding performance instructions given by the composer for *Ricercare* and *Harmonies*. Ulrich Schmiedeke and Zsigmond Szatmáry also give foundational information about the organ works.

At the same time, the aspect of performance and notation of these works is not discussed in much detail in the literature.

Learning of the work presents the performer with a complex task. One needs to learn new playing techniques on the organ, as well as solve and realize the composer's vision of performance through the unusual notation. At first glance the notation offers great freedom of performance. However, according to the composer's instructions, the forms of clusters must be followed with utmost precision. With Ligeti's words this method offers great freedom to the performer, but only in interpretation and not as co-composer. Where does the performer's freedom end and where does trespassing the composer's territory begins? This is the question I asked not only in connection to *Volumina*, but Ligeti's other organ works as well.

II. Sources

The sources studied during my research can be grouped into four main categories. The first contains Ligeti's writings and interviews. Out of the writings *Öninterjú (1971)*, *Új Notáció – kommunikációs eszköz vagy öncél* and the lecture *Mit vár el a zeneszerző az orgonától* stand out the most. The Ligeti interviews used, fall between the years of 1967 and 2002. The second category contains those Ligeti compositions that somehow relate to the organ works. The manuscript of *Ricercare* and *Two etudes*, as well as the copy owned by Zsigmond Szatmáry, containing the composer's performance instructions belong to this group, attached to the appendix. The publications about Ligeti and his compositions belong to the third category, including the especially prominent analytical work by Martin Herchenröder discussing Ligeti's organ pieces. The fourth category is made up of interviews of musicians whom worked together with Ligeti. The compilation of these interviews with Péter Eötvös, Zsigmond Szathmáry and Pierre Charial are attached in the Appendix.

III. Method

At first I studied Ligeti's definitions of his notation. For him, notation is primarily a tool for communication, to serve the goal of passing compositional thoughts on to the performer with the most accuracy possible. Basically he differentiates between two types of notation: result notation and realizational notation. I studied the appearance of these two types of notation in his organ works. Besides this, I also examined the composer's thought-system, into which the organ works fit in an organic manner. I studied the connections between the organ works via analytical comparison of the listed sources.

The examination of notation and performance relationship is ultimately a foundational necessity of performing art. The ultimate task is to understand the composer's intentions behind the composition, with the guidance of notations in the score and utilizing available background information. The researcher-performer's first and foremost task is to gather these resources and study their authenticity. This process is followed by understanding of the notational system and placement of that into context.

IV. Results

The most prominent result of my research is the study of the compositional instructions in *Ricercar* and publication of those, which has not been done before.

Also an important result is the presentation of Ligeti's organ works in Hungarian language as well as compilation of background information related to these pieces. The approach to these works was twofold: based upon notation, but also from the angle of Ligeti's life's work, together placing performance questions in a new light.

The three interviews made during my research contribute to a better understanding of Ligeti's way of thinking as a composer and as a scientist as well. The twofolded aspects of Ligeti's personality is a key to understand his musical intentions. These aspects are precision and emotion. The intention to note his musical ideas with an extreme precision must be modulated by the understanding of his musical gestures. The simultaneous consideration of both aspects helps to understand and to interpret Ligeti's organ works in a most appropriate way. This helps to understand the multilevel relationships between notation and performance.

V. Documentation of professional activity related to the research topic

Ligeti's Volumina has occupied me for several years, both as performer and teacher. As an educator I have prepared my students for performance of this work in three venues in Budapest:

Saint Frances church, Franciscan church and Müpa. (Soma Lozsányi 2015). The different instruments presented various tasks in terms of performance. During preparation for these performances it became necessary to clearly define the meaning of the notated layers. Also, the realization of playing techniques on different instruments represents an important aspect of my teaching. The later one assumes thorough knowledge of both performance technique and the instrument itself.

I also taught the Two etudes on the occasion of preparation for the 2013 Budapest masterclass of Zsigmond Szatmáry.

I have performed Volumina numerous times within the past years.

Stuttgart, Stiftskirche, 02/07/2010

Berlin, Konzerthaus, 20/11/2010

Würzburg, Neubaukirche, 27/10/2011

Dortmund, Konzerthaus, 03/06/2012

Hamburg, Laeis-Halle, 26/03/2012

Ljubljana, Cankarjev dom, 13/03/2012

Sanary, Eglise Saint-Nazaire, 18/03/2012

Luxemburg, Salle Philharmonique, 06/07/2012

Budapest, Müpa, 06/05/2014

Budapest, Müpa, 14/03/2015