

Liszt Ferenc University of Music
PhD Course (7.6 Art of Music)

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SECULAR CHORAL WORKS BY
HUNGARIAN COMPOSERS BEFORE THE
GREAT 20TH CENTURY CHANGES IN THE
FIELD OF MUSIC

(CAPELLA CHORAL WORKS FOR CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND
WOMEN'S CHOIR)

DOCTORAL THESIS ARGUMENTS

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I. Antecedents of the research

The purpose of the paper is to introduce secular choral works composed for children's choirs and women's choirs before the great 20th-century changes in the field of music and before Bartók and Kodály's life-work and choral works were born.

In the world of choirs, concerts and choir competitions, choral works from the period of Hungarian romanticism and late romanticism, or choral works from the turn of the century are not sung except for some works by Liszt, Erkel and Mosonyi.

Working as a choir-master, I often face the fact that I am not able to select choral works from this period; because these collections were last published at the turn of the century, and music publishing houses do not wish to publish them again. Literature on Hungarian romantic children's and women's choral works lies hidden in libraries, and it is complicated and difficult to get access to it.

This is the fact that made me choose this research target area of Hungarian history of music and introduce children's and women's choral works that were born in the last period of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

II. Research methods

The writer of the thesis attempts to explore three different but closely interrelated areas. Therefore, I did several threads of research.

The first part of the paper deals with the birth of Hungarian civil choral movement, the preliminaries of creating Hungarian National Choral Society (OMDE), which was the predecessor

of KÓTA. Moreover, the writer of the paper would like to find an answer to the question what role musicians played in creating Hungarian choral culture. The writer attempts to find out when and where choral competitions were organised for the first time and how different rules of competition were created. She also deals with time and place of the introduction of scoring, and performing compulsory choral works. Furthermore, the writer attempts to find out why multi-category choral competitions were created in the beginning.

How did the language reform, which was one of the most important objectives of the reform era, influence choral movement? Why did fostering and spreading the Hungarian language lead to the exclusion of choirs whose members belonged to ethnic minorities from choral competitions by the end of the 19th century?

How were the first women's choirs formed in the shade of male choirs? Where did they appear on stage? What sort of songs did they sing? How did ad hoc mixed choirs transform into particular high-quality ensembles besides the above-mentioned choirs?

From the works of Kornél Ábrányi Snr., who recorded the history of 19th-century choral societies in a very detailed way, we can get the answers to all these questions. However, some of his works were biased and not exempt from emotions. Besides Ábrányi's works (The Hungarian music in the 19. century, History of the Hungarian National Choral Society, From my life and from my memory), I also rely on related extracts from specialist journals and essays of the age (Apollo, Harmonia, Magyar dal és Zeneközlöny, Magyar Dal, Zeneközlöny, Zenészeti lapok).

The second part of the paper deals with the appearance of different styles and musical trends in Hungary. How did foreign musicians who settled down in Hungary become

Hungarian musicians, and how much of the western music did they preserve? How much of it did they hand over to their Hungarian companions? How was recruiting music first created and why did it become a symbol of expressing Hungarian identity? Why were people interested in music from the period of the Hungarian insurrection at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries? How did folk music research start and what did folksy art songs, folksy songs and folk songs mean to composers of the age?

The third part of the paper gives an introduction to volumes on children's choirs and women's choirs published in the last part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the order they originally appeared; through analysing these works, it attempts to highlight typical composers' techniques of the age. What might have made teachers, instructors and conductors publish their books? How did they systematize materials within collections and how were their publications received by the press of the age? What are the characteristics of these musical compositions? Why is there so little imitation in them? Why did homophony become prevalent everywhere? How did they use elements of classical and romantic music? And how did the uniform Hungarian style – which was a programme of Hungarian Romanticism – appear in the field of choral works?

III. Research achievements

In Hungary the first organised choral societies were started at the beginning of the 1860s. Before that time there had been some choral societies, but they had been operating independently and separately (Győr, Lugos Pécs, Pest, Pozsony, Szentes).

In 1867, under Kornél Ábrányi's guidance, Hungarian National Choral Society (OMDE), the predecessor of KÓTA, which is still operating, was created in Arad, and they laid down their objectives in a constitution. The main principle was "Hungarian songs in Hungarian", which led to the exclusion of ethnic minorities' choral societies, and it also meant that we lost the colourful coexistence of several ensembles coming from different parts of the Carpathian basin.

Choral feasts and competitions that changed dramatically by the end of the 19th century were organised in different cities once in every two years. (Pécs 1864, 1886, Pest 1865, 1870, Arad 1867, 1898, Debrecen 1868, 1882, Nagyvárad 1872, Kolozsvár 1874, 1880, 1914, Szeged 1876, 1889, 1914, Miskolc 1884, Budapest 1892, 1896, 1911, Fiume 1894, Kassa 1901, Temesvár 1903, Szombathely 1905, Eger 1907, Kecskemét 1919.) These feasts and competitions were held indoors from 1870 (Pest), in 1874 (Kolozsvár) a distinction was drawn between compulsory and optional categories; and, in 1889 (Szeged) a secret scoring system was introduced. By the end of the 19th century, due to the unqualified members of choirs, the performance of choral societies declined. In vain did they organise music reading competitions, choirs appearing in feasts were more and more unprepared.

Gradually, besides male choirs, mixed, female and children's choirs joined in concerts, adding colour to the movement of Hungarian choirs. (Mixed choirs: Petbudai Hangászegylet – Máté Babbnig, Budai Énekakadémia – Antal Knahl, László Zimay, Zenekedvelő Egylete – Antal Knahl, László Zimay, János Richter, Gyula Káldy. Female choirs: Váci Női dalfűzér – Matild Krenedics, Liszt Egylet – Mátyás Engeszer and his wife, Pécsi Női Dalegylet – Károly Wachauer, Budai Zenekör – Ferenc Eisvogel, Magyar Nők Karénekegyesülete – Emil Lichtenberg.) It was not easy in the

beginning, as the presence of women on stage was often considered only a challenge and a wonderful sight; however, women's performance was not appreciated in those days. Despite all these facts, more and more women's choirs were formed in Hungary, which necessitated the appearance of newer and newer choral works.

From the middle of the 1860s several publications appeared providing more serious materials for equal (female) choirs. These collections contained choral works for children's choirs, as well (Bartalus: Női karénekek gyűjteménye, Harrach: Aranylant, Major: Új Magyar Orpheus, Erődi: Ezüst hárfá). Coral works written for equal choirs, serving pedagogic purposes in songbooks, enlarged the amount of literature related to female choirs (Zasskovszky: Egri dalnok, Kis lantos, Kohányi: Legújabb dalkoszorú, Bátor: Énekkönyv, Szebenyi: Daslgyakorlókönyv, Krausz: Dalgyűjtemény).

Various volumes of collections that were published are considerably different in quality. Homophony and modulations that are characteristic of choral works deviate from normal to parallel or dominant directions. Although many of the choral works are not too significant, we can find some interesting and valuable pieces among them. These choral works contain romantic musical harmonies, which is in sharp contrast to the plethora of humble pieces (Ábrányi, Dohnányi, Major).

Choral works can be characterised by the endeavour to accomplish uniform Hungarian style and the programme entitled "Hungarian world music". Recruiting music, romanticism of the period of the Hungarian insurrection at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and folk songs are contained in them. Interest in ancestral Hungarian music came to the foreground because of the need for clearing up the past. Although folk music publications also contain Hungarian folk songs, they focus on folksy art songs and folksy songs. Despite these facts, Erdélyi, Pálóczi, Mátray, Arany, Szénfy, Színi,

Bartalus and Áron Kiss created the foundations of Hungarian folk music research.

During the time of my research I used notes and materials from Liszt Ferenc University of Music, Liszt Museum, National Széchényi Library and Teachers' Training College. Naturally, most publications are from OSZK (National Széchényi Library), some of them are from Music Academy and Liszt Museum. Materials of Teachers' Training College can also be found in OSZK.

IV. Publications

Secular cantatas in Hungary in the 19th century (Institute of Musicology, 1983) Systematic collection with music description and analyses for internal use of the Institute. During the research notes and materials from OSZK (National Széchényi Library) and Music Academy were used.

Hungarian masses in the 19th century (Institute of Musicology, 1986)

Systematic collection with music description and analyses for internal use of the Institute. During the research notes and materials from OSZK, Music Academy and churches in Budapest were used.

Music dictation

(prepared for printing)

Baroque and classical periods for tonic sol-fa classes with "B" curriculum and higher grades.

The International day of Music is 25 years old (Zeneszó, 8/5., 2000)

Mixed choir of the town of Nagykanizsa (Zeneszó, 10/9., 2000)

National Choir has turned 15 (Zeneszó, 3/5., 2001)

News and events (Zeneszó, 8, 9, 10, 2000; 1, 2, 2001)