

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music
Doctoral School (7.6 Musical Art)

**LAJOS MONTAG,
AN OUTSTANDING FIGURE OF
HUNGARIAN DOUBLE BASS PLAYING**

DOCTORAL THESIS

BY

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In our days Lajos Montag (1906-1997) is considered to be one of the greatest contrabass virtuosos of the history of the instrument. In the course of his long carrier he acquired a lot of experience as a soloist and instrumentalist playing in symphony and chamber orchestras. During the six decades he dedicated to teaching he educated his many students to loving the instrument and serving music. Completing by his own experience the traditions his teachers passed on to him he represented a novel way of thinking and became through his activity one of the best known figures of Hungarian double bass playing recognized at an international level, too. The impact of his artistic and pedagogical work and that of his exceptional character are still perceptible. The purpose of this paper is to explore the roots and important stages of his carrier and present the musical milieu this influential 20th century double bass player lived in, the artistic effects he was shaped by, the principles he followed while making use of his talent and knowledge. His activity is examined in conjunction with the history of the instrument, putting an emphasis on Montag's most valuable work, the „*Nagybőgőiskola*”

(Double bass method), taking also a look at some of his compositions as well as his mode of teaching.

No comprehensive survey has yet been made on Lajos Montag's work. Research and the collection of materials have been mostly prevented by the fact that unfortunately his heirs did not appreciate his oeuvre and threw away as rubbish an important part of his legacy: notes, manuscripts and letters. Interviews made with his former students, documents they possess and my own materials and memories - since I was a Montag student myself - served as a basis to writing the present paper.

Montag has exerted a considerable influence on both my artistic and teaching activity. It is the philosophy of the „*Nagybőgőiskola*” (Double bass method) which inspired the compilation of two collections of mine to be used in teaching. The „Collection of orchestral parts” (1996) is a selection in 4 volumes intended for internal use by students of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. Another collection comprising short and easy to play pieces is meant for music school pupils, compiled and edited together with Attila Ferenc Kovács and published by „Zeneműkiadó” (Editio Musica Budapest) as part of

the series „Répertoire”. This is a welcome addition to book I of the „*Nagybőgőiskola*” (Double bass method) as feedback by professionals suggests.