

The abstract of the DLA thesis of

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The cello–piano sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů

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I. The background of the research

The life and art of Bohuslav Martinů is a blank spot for Hungarian music lovers as his oeuvre is almost completely unexplored in Hungary. One of the main goals of this thesis is to broaden the scope of literature available in Hungarian about Martinů. That is why I decided to dedicate a chapter in the beginning of my thesis to briefly outlining his life, whereas the goal of the chapter on the stylistic elements of his music is to give a general and comprehensive picture of his work.

In my thesis, I try to analyse the three cello-piano sonatas presenting these pieces in detail and examining their compositional structure, rhythmic complexity and harmony. Until 2019, no in-depth analysis of these three sonatas have been written. I try to present the three cello-piano sonatas in more detail than the currently available works on these pieces relying mostly on my own observations and findings especially about *Sonata No.1*. Due to size limitations of the thesis, the analysis of *Sonatas No.2* and *No.3* are less detailed.

II. Sources

The chapters on Martinů's life and the stylistic elements of his music are primarily based on the following works:

Jennifer Crane-Waleczek: *An Overview of Bohuslav Martinů's Piano Style with a Guide to Analysis and Interpretation of the Fantasie et Toccata, H. 281*. DMA thesis, Arizona State University, 2011.

Brian Large: *Martinů*. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1976.

Jaroslav Mihule: *Bohuslav Martinů*. Praha: Supraphon, 1966.

Miloš Šafránek: *Bohuslav Martinů. His Life and Works*. London: Allan Wingate, 1961.

Miloš Šafránek: *Bohuslav Martinů. The Man and His Music*. Scott Goddard (ed): Contemporary Composers. London: Dennis Dobson Limited Edition, 1946.

I made my analysis on the basis of the sheet music that were available at the time of writing my thesis, but these are not Urtext editions and probably contain some mistakes. The critical edition, however, is under preparation at Bärenreiter. They are planning to publish the complete works in about 100 volumes, 7 of which had been published by the time this thesis was finished (between 2015 and 2019) but these did not include the cello-piano sonatas.

The list of sheet music used:

1^{ère} Sonate pour violoncelle et piano. Paris: Éditions Heugel, 1949. HE31218

Sonata No. 2 for Violoncello and Piano. New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1944.
A.S.194312

Sonáta č. 3 pro violoncello a klavír. Praha: Edition Bärenreiter, 2002. H7893

Besides the sheet music listed above, I also relied on the following theses in my analysis:

Janice Tritschler McDivitt: *Bohuslav Martinů: The Compositions for Violoncello*. DMA thesis, University of Arizona, 1983.

Meghan Anne Carey: *Bohuslav Martinů and His First Cello Sonata: A Performance Guide*. DMA thesis, Florida State University, 2017.

III. Method

The significant amount of stylistic influences that can be discovered in his works and that are discussed in the chapter on the stylistic elements of Martinů's music raise the question on what basis you can analyse his works in general, and the three cello-piano sonatas in particular. This thesis discusses the sonatas in a classical approach highlighting the non-traditional characteristics and the typical features of the composer.

This thesis does not focus on how "Czechness" appears in Martinů's art. This could be a topic of a dedicated research and, even then, it would probably be impossible to trace back which exact folk songs the composer might have heard, the work of which Czech composers he knew, which pieces of church music he could have encountered and then which elements he used – consciously or unconsciously – in his own works. Especially since, as Michael Beckerman points out in his paper *In Search of Czechness in Music*, "Czechness" comes from the individual context and is not an objective collection of musical material.

I illustrate musical material, motifs and connections appearing in the pieces with sheet music examples.

IV. Findings

The cello-piano sonatas are the impressions of situations in Martinů's life through which the unique and special musical world of their composer takes shape. Their analysis reveals typical features of the composer like the use of his cell technique, bi- and polytonality, moving tonal centres, modal scales and church cadences. Sudden harmonic changes, mixtures, modal chords, chromatic slides, organ points, scale motives and irregular closes are just as characteristic of his music as imitation, song-like composition, rhythmic complexity with shifts of accents within the bar and metric displacement, syncopation, meter-changing themes,

elision and polymetry. You can also find examples for re-interpreting the grand form and the use of asymmetric blocks of music. It is also noticeable in the cello-piano sonatas – even though countless phenomena cover it up – that Martinů writes essentially tonal music. His works are most often built of third-based chords, triads and four-note chords but you will also find more complicated five-, six- or seven-note chords in abundance.

V. The documentation of activities related to the topic of this thesis

5 December 2010, Budapest, Old Academy of Music. Martinů: *Sonata for Flute, Violin and Piano*, H. 254. with **Bán** Annamária (flute) and **Dancsó** Diána (violin).

12 March 2012, Kecskemét, the Hall of Újkollégium. Martinů: *Slovakian Variations*, H. 378. with **Jámbor** Janka (cello).

27 March 2012, Budapest, Old Academy of Music. Martinů: *Slovakian Variations* with **Jámbor** Janka.

23 August 2012, Kecskemét, Kodály Institute. Martinů: *Slovakian Variations* with **Jámbor** Janka.

September 2012, Pörschach: 19th International Johannes Brahms Competition. The Special Prize of the Jury for playing Martinů: *Slovakian Variations* to **Jámbor** Janka and **Nagy** Míra.

29 November 2012, Vienna, Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Wien, Kammermusiksaal. Martinů: *Rossini Variations*, H. 290. with Tilly **Cernitori** (cello).

May 2013: CD-recording as a part of the thesis of Sebastian Skocic. Martinů: *Quartet for Oboe, Violin, Cello and Piano*, H. 315. with Susanne **Schäffer** (violin), Sebastian **Skocic** (oboe) and Iris **Cho** (violoncello).

6 December 2014, Budapest, Academy of Music, Room X. Martinů: *Rossini Variations* with **Jámbor** Janka.

21 January 2015, Budapest, Müpa Glass Hall. Martinů: *Slovakian Variations* and *Rossini Variations* with **Jámbor** Janka.

2 May 2015, Budapest, Academy of Music, Solti Hall. Martinů: *La revue de cuisine*, H. 161. with **Jámbor** Anna (violin), **Jámbor** Janka (cello), **Rumy** Balázs (clarinet), **Horváth** Andrea (bassoon) and **Csikota** Gergely (trumpet).

27 May 2015, Budapest, Old Academy of Music. Martinů: *La revue de cuisine* with **Jámbor** Anna, **Jámbor** Janka, **Rumy** Balázs, **Reichert** Pálma and **Csikota** Gergely.

4-11 July 2015, Vaduz, Liechtenstein: the master course of Wolfgang Boettcher. Martinů: *Sonata for Cello and Piano No.1 and No.2*, H. 277 and H. 286, and *Slovakian Variations* with **Jámbor** Janka.

12 April 2017, Budapest, Old Academy of Music. Martinů: *La revue de cuisine* with **Jámbor** Anna, **Jámbor** Janka, **Rumy** Balázs, **Reichert** Pálma and **Csikota** Gergely.

14 March 2019, Budapest, Academy of Music, Solti Hall. Martinů: *Bergerettes*, H. 275. with Miranda **Liu** (violin) and **Kiss** Gergely (cello).

March 2019, Budapest: the master course of Francesco **Dillon**. Martinů: *Bergerettes* with Miranda **Liu** and **Kiss** Gergely.

May 2019, Budapest: the master course of **Kelemen** Barnabás. Martinů: *Bergerettes* with Miranda **Liu** and **Kiss** Gergely.

9 February 2020, Budapest, Ádám Jenő Music School. Martinů: *Bergerettes* with Miranda **Liu** and **Kiss** Gergely; *Fantaisie*, H. 301. with **Illényi** Katica (theremin), **Soós** Levente (oboe) and the Central European String Quartet: Miranda **Liu** (violin), **Soós** Máté (violin), **Máté** Győző (viola) and **Szabó** Judit (cello). The first performance in Hungary.

24 February 2020, Budapest, Academy of Music, Solti Hall. Martinů: *Bergerettes* with Miranda **Liu**, **Kiss** Gergely; *Fantaisie* with **Illényi** Katica, **Soós** Levente and the Central European String Quartet.