

Abstract of the DLA thesis

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The role of the harp in Nino Rota's oeuvre

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## I. Background of the research

I began to study the harp works of Italian composer Nino Rota (1911-1979) during my studies at the Academy of Music. My attention turned to the composer while studying the work *Sarabanda e toccata per arpa*, known among harpists. I have always been greatly influenced by works that are not often heard in concert halls. That is why I chose Nino Rota's *Concerto per arpa e orchestra* for the repertoire of my graduation concert in 2014, which was also the premiere in Hungary.

In 2015, my paper on the work of Nino Rota won a special prize in the Instrumental Music I branch of the Arts and Art History Section at the XXXII National Scientific Students' Associations Conference for outstanding choice of topic and research. It was after this that I set myself the goal of studying in more depth the classical works -especially the works for harp- of the composer who became world famous for his film scores. I intended my work to be a gap filler, since there is no literature available in Hungarian on his harp works. In the thesis, I pay special attention to the introduction of the *Harp Concerto*, detailing the technical challenges of the harp solo, the structure and orchestration of the work.

## II. Sources

The chapter discussing Nino Rota's biography, classical and film music work is mainly based on the following sources:

Dyer, Richard: *Nino Rota. Music, Film and Feeling*. London: British Film Institute, 2010.

Kezich, Tullio: *Federico. Fellini, la vita e i film*. Milano: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, 2021.

Latorre, José María: *Nino Rota. La imagen de la música*. Barcelona: Editorial Montesinos, 1989.

Lombardi, Francesco: *Nino Rota. Un timido protagonista del Novecento musicale*. Torino: EDT, 2012.

At the beginning of my research, in 2016, I met Nino Rota's nephew, Marcello Rota, who enriched my dissertation with many interesting stories and background information through his recollections.

I analysed the harp works from scores published by Universal Music Publishing Ricordi. An exception is the cadenza written for W. A. Mozart's *Concerto in C major for flute and harp*, which was published by Schott Musik International in 2004. List of the scores used:

Nino Rota: *Cadenzas. Concerto fer Flute, Harp and Orchestra in C major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*. Mainz: Schott Musik International, 2004.

Nino Rota: *Concerto per arpa e orchestra. Partitura*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1984.

Nino Rota: *Concerto per arpa e orchestra. Riduzione per arpa e pianoforte*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1984.

Nino Rota: *Quintetto per flauto, oboe, viola, violoncello e arpa*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1937.

Nino Rota: *Quintetto per flauto, oboe, viola, violoncello e arpa. Partitura*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1965.

Nino Rota: *Sarabanda e toccata per arpa*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1983.

Nino Rota: *Sonata per flauto e arpa*. Milano: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi, S.r.l., 1939.

### **III. Method**

When writing my thesis, I tried to bring the reader closer to Nino Rota's musical world, make them learn about his attitude to the harp, and give guidelines for the practical implementation of the instrument's technical issues. My goal was a thorough presentation of the works written for harp, paying special attention to the concerto.

In the first chapter of my thesis, Nino Rota's life journey is presented, which is the first large-scale publication in Hungarian. In the second chapter, I examine the role of the harp in his oeuvre, highlighting the person of Nino Rota's muse, Clelia Gatti Aldrovandi. I also cover his minor harp pieces. As the last and main chapter, I included a tonal, formal and interpretive analysis of the *Concerto per arpa e orchestra* in my thesis.

During my analysis, I illustrated the musical materials and motifs with musical notation examples. In the last part of my dissertation, I compared two sound recordings temporally distant from each other in terms of interpretation and technical solutions.

### **IV. Achievements**

The purpose of my dissertation, created as a gap-filling venture, is to ensure that the classical music works of Nino Rota, known for his film scores, do not sink into oblivion, but become

more widely known. During the analysis of his works written for harp, I provide an insight into the composer's life, his special musical world, and highlight his own stylistic features. The thesis also discusses the role of the harp in the oeuvre of Nino Rota and the work of Italian harp virtuoso Clelia Gatti Aldrovandi. From a performance and interpretation point of view, I examine the solutions that can be heard in the recording made at the premiere of the *Harp Concerto* and in another one made in 2018. I am confident that by writing this thesis, I will contribute to Nino Rota's works written for harp appearing more and more on the stage of concert halls.

## **V. Documentation of activities related to the subject of the thesis**

On 20 May 2014, I had the opportunity to present Nino Rota's *Harp Concerto* for the first time in Hungary at my MA diploma concert at the Danube Palace in Budapest under the direction of conductor Mátyás Antal. Prior to this, professor József Gábor was by my side throughout the preparation process, helping my work with his piano accompaniment and his always enjoyable rehearsals.

The *Sarabanda e Toccata* written for solo harp and the *Sonata per flauto e arpa* belong to my permanent repertoire, and have already been on the programs of many of my concerts. Among others, I played the *Sonata per flauto e arpa* with flutist Judit Nagy at the following concerts:

22 February 2017 – Palace of Arts Glass Hall

8 February 2020 – Matinee concert at the Liszt Museum

15 February 2022 – Matinee concert at the Liszt Museum

In the course of my research and still at the moment, I have been and am promoting Nino Rota's solo and chamber works for harp during my performances and interviews (e.g. Part III of the 16 December 2019 broadcast of *Terézvárosi Magazin* on *hatoscsatorna*), as well as during my work as a teacher.