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**Dissertation of
the doctoral thesis
entitled**

***„Your Body is Music”
Movement analysis and synthesis of music***

„If music is to become common property and not only the privilege of the few we have to look for new ways”, said Kodály in June 1945 in the Preface of the *‘24 Little Canons On the Black Keys’* which was regarded revolutionary at that time. This has been a universal call for every music pedagogue for more than half a century, and it remains so forever. To carry out this noble task – as Antal Doráti quotes one of Kodály’s incentives for revival in his book entitled *‘Notes of Seven Decades’* – „Each must bring their own bricks to the building” to make it noble.

The ability to revive continuously is not only a wish but it ought to be an obligation as well for the teacher who wants to impart his knowledge.

I. Premises of the Research

Upwards of thirty years of my music pedagogical and performance experiences have convinced me of this indispensable attitude. The Schumann–Kodály quotation about the good musician has given me a proper orientation and the execution of it provided „new ways”. To carry out revival, however, is possible, allowed, and worth only from the roots of the knowledge of traditions.

The outstanding personalities in the system of determinative basics and structures and the trustees of twentieth-century music and piano pedagogy traditions were, and could have been my teachers, my masters: Erna Czövek for 6 years in the music school, Erzsébet Tusa for 5 years in the Béla Bartók Conservatory of Music, Pál Kadosa for 5 years at the Liszt Academy of Music, and György Kurtág for 2 years and Ferenc Rados for 3 years, both as Professor Kadosa’s assistants. My piano pedagogy and methodology teacher was Klára Máthé who was Margit Varró’s friend and the carrier and transmitter of her legacy in Hungary. She taught intuitively the physiological reactions of the right technical modes and critiqued instinctively the improper way of playing, and finally showed the right solution as well. In the spirit of this huge and valuable legacy and by using my own experiences, I have developed a method, a specific pedagogical system for piano teaching. This method, named „Your body is music” (or SO-System) has been used for 15 years in international piano pedagogy (at the EPTA international congresses: Sweden, Belgium, England, Greece, South-Korea and Ukraine) and in Hungary at the yearly courses organized in Budapest by the Association of Music Schools. Many years of my experiences have led to the establishment and launching of the Piano Pedagogy Course in the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét as well. This course has built, on the basis of the Kodályian traditions, a special method in piano instrumental teaching. The body, as an inseparable part of the musical mode of expression – since the sounding reality of music does not exist without bodily activities – becomes suitable for a servicing mechanism treated in unity and health. This special training has been a kind of neglected field of the Kodály educational system. This approach helps in the field of instrumental training, in this present case in piano pedagogy, in the „man-centred” training of musical development. (I was asked by ZETA to teach this, as an „animator” in the MUS-E project devised by Lord Yehudi Menuhin.)

Besides the musical field, I learned the special professional knowledge, the knowledge of the body, the art of movement, under the guidance of the world-famous master trainer and musician, Sára Berczik. Thanks to her instructions, I was eight-time Hungarian junior champion in Rhythmic Gymnastics (formerly known as „artistic gymnastics”) and the Hungarian participant of the first World Championship. All this – besides the complete „arsenal” to make music, that is the well-trained four fields, hearing, mind, hand and heart – have led me to the training of the whole human body in order to serve aesthetic-musical expression. Musicians’ self-expression, artistically considered, has to be built upon a base with positive, comprehensive body-awareness that manages serious physical loading, as well as the many hours of daily practice with ease and without injuries. The performer, who ‘dresses into’ the composer’s skin, spirit, and emotions through a musical piece, should have great self-recognition. Empathic abilities, both spiritually and physically, are compulsory on stage and in teaching as well.

Hungarian music pedagogy could have become world-famous because of the prime and importance of the development of inner hearing. Learning instruments is useful only after a year of pre-training, when the

knowledge of the essential elements and the „body parts” of the anatomy of music have been acquired. This is the important foundation that establishes the building of further „bricks” into the future instrumental musical process on inner imagination. Since the musical process is not only a product of the intellectual imagination – because the written scores have to be sounded – the parallel development of the body, as an adequate form of expression, and the awakening of the consciousness of its function, are indispensable. Besides developing inner hearing, a so-called „muscle-movement reflex” has to be created and taught with the help of seeing the score and hearing it from within. One must not stop here, since physical ability in itself does not make it possible to express the aesthetic beauty of musical compositions. This requires an entire man in his intellectual, emotional and spiritual relation. This has become part of my life, trying to highlight this entirety read from the imagery of the musical notation by analyzing the movements of this imagery as the key to technical solution. It teaches to perceive, to make it formulated, and it teaches to teach it. This way of seeing and interpreting things secures that one can immediately be capable of overcoming technical difficulties. It teaches the proper way of practising, gives a key to the right expression. With this approach one can be saved from days, months, and years of sweltering and toilsome work, and it leads simultaneously to joyful, conscious and enthusiastic music making.

II. Methods of the Research

The essence of the system stands on two pillars.

The first pillar:

„Get to know yourself!” – by keeping the body in good condition, by recognizing the healthy every day movements that are necessary for healthy music making, and making yourself aware of them and finally by practising them. The importance of the notion of gravity in piano playing techniques manifests itself in producing beautiful, healthy musical sounding full of rich overtones. In order to understand it and to consciously develop how to feel it, primarily non-instrumental practices and trainings are of great importance. The realization of the movements and directions employed during the music making are also indispensable, as well as teaching the relationship between the instrument and the player. The whole human body resonates in the sound produced by the instrument, like a continuation of the instrument itself; body and instrument are realized as being one unit.

The second pillar:

Analysis of the imagery of the musical notation, or notation-graphics. The musical notation, the modes and signs give us a complete image of the composer’s specific gestures or even characters. It is most noticeable in the musical pieces written for piano. The hand positions, carried by the “imagery”, inform us about the composer’s build and physical qualities. The dynamical shading of the musical pieces give clear information about the soul, the emotions, and the impulses that orient the performer with regards to emotions and content when playing, and they also show the boundaries. Sounding the musical score has to be carried out with a complete body-consciousness by focusing on the individual sounds. The graphic code of the music contains, by following it correctly, the technical solution as well. (I illustrate this statement partially with a few pieces of Bartók’s *Microcosmos* in my dissertation.) In this country where the aim once was to terminate musical illiteracy, today we have to cultivate and teach musicians, amateurs or professionals alike, how to sound the composer’s instructions correctly, without misinterpretation. As a “re-notation”, together with the elements of the acoustic space and sounding, as sound-writing, live music expresses what notation as graphic renders. The “sounding-notation writer” performer has a great responsibility towards the audience, because only the original piece of music should be performed at all times.

The aim of my efforts in piano pedagogy and of this dissertation is to give a written formulation of the above conscious attitude, view and practice. Perhaps this “brick” can also be needed...

III. Results of the Research

Since 1991, I have tried the SO-system, a method of proper music reading and performing, with Hungarian and foreign students as well. In the twenty-first-century’s performance method, the main emphasis is on the justification of gestures and emotions as forms of free expressions. Proceeding on this ‘Kurtágian’ way, with the gestic direction of the imagery of the musical notation, a new type of technical freedom has evolved. The acquisition of this method is a tremendous psychical help in music making that demands great efforts and discipline.

By reflecting upon and by using this method when we look at the imagery of the musical notations of the geniuses of the previous centuries, we can obtain a huge amount of knowledge. The system of gestures, which emerges in the imagery of the musical notation as the choreography of music, means an enormous security for the twenty-first-century reader and musician. Music is art; sounding music is performing art. Art conveys the

general in the singular, so from the music of Chopin or Liszt we get the archaeological imprint of the nineteenth-century music history. One must be suitable for this.

The task is to learn the analysis of the imagery of the musical notation not only in its linear (melodic) but also in its vertical (harmonic) frame, its directions, its emotions, its dynamics, its rhythm and its gestures. In order to sing or memorize a melody, the ear needs to learn the note distances and the heights or depths of intervals; in the same way, the singer or instrumentalist needs to learn these which demand directions, centimetres, and movement-innervations. The movement relations in the imagery of the musical notation are the basis of the "relative movement system". Relative solmisation made it easy to teach the whole music literature; similarly, all the pieces of music literature can be prepared and learned by movements as well. Musical activity as live performing art is inseparable from bodily activity. Training and using body-consciousness in this way are thus indispensable for music artists. This is the freedom and discipline that are the basic requirements, without taking sex, age or instrument into consideration. A healthy mind only resides in a healthy body, and vice versa. This system is extremely effective, especially at postgraduate level, with Hungarian and foreign students. The healthy future generation can only be trained by good and healthy teachers. Accordingly, musical training can indispensably be nurtured from two sides: from teacher training and from beginners. Music is beauty, harmony, and aesthetic quality. Its catharsis-creating character and quality is therefore society-forming. Listening to music releases the soul from the agonies of daily life and turns one ethereal. Its sublimated quality solves earthly problems. It utters truths without saying them, if it is healthy, professional, and masterly crystallized. For those who are interested, the SO-system helps to reach this consciousness-function. Getting to know ourselves, stretching the boundaries of our own physique, making it capable of identifying with the masterpieces of genius composers is a great gift. By this initiation, we can genuinely intervene in the training of the future generation. With a deep commitment and dedication, we can lay the foundations of training the cultured youth.

"Your body is music", the SO-system can be taught because it trains for health, in bodily, intellectual and spiritual sense as well. Its trainings solidify the imagery of the musical notation into the exercises; it teaches and practises the recognition of unknown materials. It gives an easy orientation in the vast empire of music by developing directions, tendencies, melodies, harmonies and the primeval feeling of rhythm. Relieved, cheerful musicians can be born with the help of this love- and delight-sourced analytical system. During the years of my career as a piano teacher many of my "music great-grandchildren" have enriched me with their positive feedbacks.

One of my former British piano student and another English student of mine, who uses the Kodály method, established and operate an educational centre successfully. In the "SÓ-Centre" based in London, music, the art of movements and visual arts are taught together on the basis of my notions and method.

Bibliography

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