

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: HUNGARIAN COMPOSERS OF PIANO
MUSIC: FROM LISZT TO LIGETI

Szu-Yi Li, Doctoral of Musical Arts, 2023

Dissertation directed by: Professor Bradford Gowen, School of Music

In the nineteenth century, German composers held an almost out-of-proportion importance in the classical music world. However, with the advent of nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, composers in non-German countries such as Russia, Norway, Spain, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, England, and the United States began to compose works in many genres that emphasized the particular national or ethnic qualities of their own native music. This resulted in the production of many works that greatly expanded and enriched the repertoire for the piano, beginning as far back as the Mazurkas and Polonaises of Chopin and the Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt in the first half of the nineteenth century. With Liszt's ethnic-inspired works written throughout his life, followed by the ethnomusicological promotion by Kodály and Bartók in the early twentieth century, Hungary, this small country in Europe, started to play an essential role in music history.

Liszt's early virtuosic pieces changed the world's approach to piano technique; moreover, his late innovations in harmonies and forms shed light on the path of modern techniques. Bartók was an innovator in developing a percussive approach to the piano, and he used folk elements in new ways that changed how later composers would write piano music. Ligeti's exploration of

textures, extreme dynamic contrasts, and hyper-complicated rhythmic and metrical design, established his unique role in music history. These composers altered profoundly the development of piano music in its technique and expression. I have sought to put these Hungarian composers in historical context, and show how their legacies passed on to the next generation.

What is Hungarian style? Generations of Hungarian composers tried to find their own answers through different resources. Liszt's interest in Hungarian style lay in *verbunkos* music — the old recruiting dance of the army from the eighteenth century, which had long been in the repertoire of Gypsy bands.

Kodály and Bartók found their answers in peasant songs, and Bartók later developed his unique style that synthesized folk music and modernism. Dohnányi was another kind of interesting figure who insisted on German Romanticism when his colleagues tried to avoid the influence of European techniques.

Post-Bartók composers like Jenő Takács, Pál Kadosa, and Ferenc Farkas identified with the use of folk music, explored tunes from around the world, and strived to find new paths through modern techniques. Miklós Rózsa, best known as a film music composer, wrote piano music that reflects Hungarian folk elements.

György Ligeti was an influential composer of the late twentieth century who brought piano music to a new level of complexity and virtuosity with his piano etudes. His interest in

extra-musical elements, combined with his knowledge of folk elements like *aksak* rhythm and others, helped him find his answer to the synthesis of folklorism and modernism.

The three recital programs comprising this dissertation were presented on November 26th, 2019, October 20th, 2021, and February 10th, 2023. Recordings of these three recitals can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

Hungarian Composers of Piano Music: from Liszt to Ligeti

by

**Szu-Yi Li
Doctoral of Musical Arts
2023**

**Program Notes submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctoral of Musical Arts
2023**

Advisory Committee:

**Professor Bradford Gowen, Chair
Professor Rita Sloan
Professor Denny Gulick
Professor Mikhail Volchok
Mr. Donald Manildi**

© Copyright by

Szu-Yi Li

2023

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Bradford Gowen, without whom I would not have been able to complete my doctoral degree. Thank you for your wise comments and guidance throughout my study.

I am thankful to my parents, who set me off on the road to this degree a long time ago. And to my husband Alan, thank you for all your support over the years.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Selected Composers and Pieces.....	iv
List of Recital Programs.....	vi
Program Notes: Franz Liszt.....	1
Liszt the Virtuoso.....	3
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10	4
Bach-Liszt: Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor.....	6
Schumann-Liszt: Wigmung	8
Late Liszt.....	9
Les Jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este.....	10
Nuage gris.....	11
Csardas macabre.....	12
Program Notes: Ernst von Dohnányi.....	14
Four Hungarian Rhapsodies, Op. 11	15
Winterreigen, Op. 13	17
Program Notes: Zoltán Kodály	20
Meditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy.....	21
Dances of Marosszék.....	23
Program Notes: Béla Bartók.....	26
Bartók's Pianism.....	28
Seven Pieces from Mikrokosmos for Two Pianos	29
Suite Op. 4b for Two Pianos	31
Piano Concerto No. 3	32
Program Notes: Composers between Bartók and Ligeti.....	36
Pál Kadosa.....	37
Four Caprichos, Op. 57.....	38
Ferenc Farkas.....	39
Three Burlesques.....	40
Jenő Takács.....	41
Drei Bagatellen für Klavier, Op. 10.....	42
Drei Minuten für Klavier, Op. 123	43
Program Notes: Miklós Rózsa.....	45
Kaleidoscope, Op. 19	47
Program Notes: György Ligeti.....	49
György Ligeti and His Piano Etudes.....	50
Compositional Parameters.....	51
Etudes No. 4, 8, and 13	52
Summary	55

List of Selected Composers and Pieces

1. Franz Liszt (1811-1886):

Schumann-Liszt: Widmung, S. 566 (1848)

Bach-Liszt, Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543, S. 462/1 (1852)

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10 in E Major, S. 244 (1853)

Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este (1877)

Nuages Gris, S. 199 (1881)

Csardas macabre, S. 224 (1884)

2. Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960):

Four Hungarian Rhapsodies, Op. 11, No. 1 and 4 (1903)

Winterreigen, Op. 13 (1905)

3. Béla Bartók (1881-1945):

Seven Pieces from Mikrokosmos for Two Pianos (1940)

Suite Op. 4b for Two Pianos (1941)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in E major, Sz. 119 (1945)

4. Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967):

Méditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy (1907)

Dances of Marosszék (1927)

5. Jenő Takács (1902-2005):

Drei Bagatellen für Klavier, Op. 10 (1927)

Drei Minuten für Klavier, Op. 123 (1997)

6. Pál Kadosa (1903-1983):

4 Caprichos, Op. 57, No. 3 and 4 (1961)

7. Ferenc Farkas (1905-2000):

Three Burlesques (1941)

8. Miklós Rózsa (1918-1989):

Kaleidoscope, Op. 19 (1946)

9. György Ligeti (1923-2006):

Etude No. 4, Fanfares (1985)

Etude No. 8, Fém (1988-1994)

Etude No. 13, L'escalier du diable (1988-1994)

List of Recital Programs

First Dissertation Recital

Time: November 26, 2019, 8PM

Location: Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Collaborative Pianist: Jasmin Lee

Program:

Zoltán Kodály: *Dances of Marosszék*

Franz Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10*

Ernst von Dohnányi: *Hungarian Rhapsodies Op. 11, No. 1 and 4*

Béla Bartók: *Piano Concerto No. 3*

Second Dissertation Recital

Time: October 20, 2021, 8PM

Location: Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Collaborative Pianist: Jasmin Lee

Program:

Zoltán Kodály: *Meditation on a Motif of Debussy*

Ernst von Dohnányi: *Wintergeigen Op.13, No. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10*

Pál Kadosa: *4 Caprichos Op. 57, No. 3 and 4*

György Ligeti: *Etude No. 4 Fanfares*

No. 8 Fém (Metal)

Béla Bartók: *7 Pieces from Mikrokosmos for Two Pianos*

Béla Bartók: *Suite Op. 4b, 2nd and 4th movement*

vi

Third Dissertation Recital

Time: February 10, 2023, 8PM

Location: Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Program:

Miklós Rózsa: *Kaleidoscope, Six Short Pieces for Solo Piano, Op.19*

- I. March
- II. Zingara
- III. Musette
- IV. Berceuse
- V. Chinese Carillon
- VI. Burlesque

Bach-Liszt: *Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543*

Jenő Takács: *Three Bagatelles, Op.10*

- I. Prelude-Madrigal
- II. Pastorale antique
- III. Rhapsodietta

Jenő Takács: *Three Minuten for Piano, Op. 123*

- I. Like a Hungarian Folksong
- II. Anti-March
- III. Chasing Shadows

György Ligeti: *Etude No.13, L'escalier du diable*

vii

Franz Liszt: *Les jeux d'eaux a la Villa d'Este*

Ferenc Farkas: *Three Burlesques*

I. Allegro

II. Moderato

III. Allegro

Franz Liszt: *Csardas macabre, S.225*

Franz Liszt: *Nuages Gris*

Schumann-Liszt: *Widmung*

Program Notes: Franz Liszt

As a legendary pianist and one of the most important teachers in the history of piano playing, Liszt's legacy to classical music is beyond comparison. He was the first musician to establish a high social status through his magical playing. He created the word "recital" for a solo piano performance—a new form of performance that avoids the tradition of combining solo pieces with chamber or orchestral music. He invented the concept of the masterclass, a learning platform that profoundly influenced generations of pianists. Nevertheless, his reception as a composer has always been a subject of debate, due partly to the unequal quality in his *oeuvre*, and partly to the technical difficulty of many of his works. However, it is undeniable that his works affected nearly every aspect of music in the nineteenth century. As a composer he invented the tone poem, developed the concept of cyclic composition on a large scale, initiated new approaches to composition that would not reach their full development until decades later (for example, impressionism and atonality), and created some of the most influential works of the nineteenth century. In this sense, his contribution as a composer to classical music is tremendous and irreplaceable.

Liszt's impeccable piano playing allowed him to write a significant number of pieces that pushed the capability of the piano to its utmost. His use of thematic transformation brought another structural possibility to the sonata form. His etudes explore not only piano techniques but raise the genre to a concert-playing level of artistry. His mastery of orchestration also enabled him to apply more color to the piano writing. The virtuosity of his pieces do not end on a physical level of technique—his piano pieces also provide challenges in color, imagination, and taste. More than any other nineteenth-century figure, he shaped piano music into what it is today.

When it comes to innovations in his compositions, Liszt composed pieces that are almost prophetic of what was yet to come in music history. Liszt's *Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* (1877) was written twenty-four years before Ravel's impressionistic work *Jeux d'eaux*; Liszt's *Bagatelle Without Tonality* (1885) was composed twenty-five years before Schoenberg's experiments in atonality. In the prediction of new paths for music, Liszt was radically insightful.

Liszt disapproved of categorizing a composer's stylistic development into early, mature, and late periods, like that of the popular analysis of Beethoven. He argued that a composer can embrace any style at any time in his life, and it would be more accurate to describe the compositional journey as an organic development through continuous interaction on the spectrum between tradition and experiment.¹ Moreover, Liszt's constant revision of his own piano works, including transcriptions, also makes it difficult to identify each piece's period in the early-middle-late scheme.

Liszt was famous for his technique-demanding, virtuosic pieces, but his late music was innovative in its departure from that musical language, and thus deserves further discussion. Below I will separate Liszt's compositions into two parts: the first part on his virtuosic pieces, the second part on his late innovations. I selected pieces for my recitals to present these two perspectives of Liszt's piano music.

¹ J. Kregor. "Stylistic Reconstruction in Liszt Late Arrangements," *The Musical Quarterly* 91, no. 3/4 (Fall 2008): 202.

I. Liszt the Virtuoso

As a virtuosic pianist, Liszt composed many showpieces to play at his own recitals. These pieces are highly technique-oriented with a strong sense of improvisation in their textures, and they greatly expand the possibilities of idiomatic writing for the piano. While some musicians deem these pieces shallow, many enjoy playing them and have made them standard piano repertoire. Among these pieces are Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, which serve not only as displays of his technical innovations but representations of his understanding of Hungarian music.

Other than original solo pieces, Liszt made 208 piano transcriptions from 1829 to 1885, all in different styles, forms, or pianism. Because of the limitations of the piano, it is difficult to make such transcriptions practical— both musically and executively. However, Liszt demonstrated his deep understanding of the piano by means of texture and color in these pieces, and made it possible for pianists to enjoy the beauty of operas, symphonies, art songs, and other genres on the keyboard.

I chose one piece from the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* to present the imagination and colors of Liszt's virtuosic pieces. As for the piano transcriptions, I chose one of Bach's organ preludes and fugues to present Liszt's almost note-to-note instrumental transcription, and Schumann's *Widmung* to show Liszt's work on lieder and its orchestra-like use of the piano.

Selected Pieces

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10 in E Major

In 1839, Liszt traveled back from Germany to Hungary for the first time since his leave in 1821. He received a medal from the Hungarian government in honor of his generous charity concerts for the disastrous floods in Budapest. During the trip, he began his collection of *Hungarian National Melodies*, which are the predecessors of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. The music he transcribed from gypsy bands was essentially a combination of Magyar folk songs, popular music by Hungarian composers, and the improvisation of the Gypsy musicians.² Liszt wrote his first to fifteenth Hungarian rhapsodies from 1842 to 1853, No.16 in 1882, and the last three in 1886. In 1859, Liszt published his book, *Des Bohémiens et leur musique en Hongrie* (translated as *The Gypsy in Music*), describing the instrumental features, rhythms, scales and harmonies of the Hungarian style.³ Despite a lack of systematic approach to the style in his book, it still helps readers understand Liszt's concept of Hungarian music, and helps the performers reach better judgment about the interpretation of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Liszt's Hungarian music, a potpourri of cultural sources, became a matter of debate among later Hungarian composers like Kodály and Bartók. To them, Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* represent only the popular music by Gypsy bands, and thus could not represent the music of all ethnicities in Hungary. For the Hungarian composers in the early twentieth century, the first step to earn a

² Alan Walker. "The Scribe of Weimar," in *Franz Liszt, Vol. 2: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 1127.

Popular melodies were composed by Hungarian composers like József Kossovits, Márk Rózsavölgyi, and Béni Egressy. These pieces include the csárdás, one kind of dance which soon became popular in Europe and was identified as Hungarian music.

³ Although Liszt's companion, Princess Carolyn von Sayn-Wittgenstein, wrote most of the book and made false claims, Liszt was still responsible for its lack of systematic and scientific approach. There was a childlike idealization of the free lifestyle of the gypsy people, and the musical analysis was generalized without clear examples.

place on the musical stage internationally was to claim Hungary's unique musical idioms. Therefore, it was necessary for them to deny the prevailing European concept of Hungarian style as demonstrated in Liszt's rhapsodies. Liszt's selection of tunes, by the strict definition of Bartók, was from the *verbunkos* music—the old recruiting dance of the imperial army from the eighteenth century, which had long been in the repertoire of the Gypsy bands.⁴ To Bartók, only the 'uncontaminated' peasant music could represent the true sound of Hungary. To musicians nowadays, it seems unnecessary to criticize Liszt's concept of 'Hungarian style' of the nineteenth century—the idea of ethnomusicology was unheard of in Liszt's time. Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* are among the most popular pieces in the standard piano repertoire and are truly displays of color, imagination, characters, and virtuosity.

Special instrumental effects in the rhapsodies include the imitation of the *cimbalom*, improvisation of the fiddles, bagpipe drones in fifths, the parallel thirds and sixths of the Gypsy singing, and the so-called *Kuruc-fourth* figure of the *tárogáto*.⁵ Rhythms include *spondee* (two accented longs), *choriambus* (long-short-accented short-long), *Lombard rhythm* (accented short-long), and dotted rhythm.⁶ The stasis of the harmony might be a result of the lack of academic training of the gypsy musicians, but it could also be an imitation of bagpipe drones. There is normally no preparation or transition before key changes. The use of the gypsy scale adds exotic flavor to the music, and its uncertainty of tonic implies modality in folk music. In the

⁴ *Verbunkos* music features the familiar scheme of slow-fast dance, *lassú* and *friss*. Typically, it includes dotted rhythms, syncopation, simple harmonic progressions, and the embellished melodies that imitate the improvisations of the Gypsy fiddlers. Nineteenth-century *verbunkos* music includes famous dances like the *nóta* and *csardas*.

⁵ J. Bellman. "Towards a Lexicon for the Style hongrois," *The Journal of Musicology* (Spring 1991), 224.

Tárogáto is a shawm-like instrument. The *Kuruc-fourth* is a repeated pattern of perfect fourths in dotted rhythm, a famous example being the opening theme of Schubert's Fantasy in F minor in the *primo*.

⁶ *Ibid.* 231.

performance of the slow section, it is typical to treat the improvisation-like patterns or pauses as written-out rubato to destroy the original structure and create a sense of freedom.

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10 follows the slow-fast scheme of the *lassú-friss* structure typical of *verbunkos* music. Titled “Prelude,” the piece opens with three groups of fast, virtuosic scales, and then continues with a dignified slow section. The melody with varied embellishments, improvisational accompaniments, and the cadence pattern with dotted rhythms, are all traits of *verbunkos* music. Liszt explored to the most the possibilities of variation in his dealing with the same melody and harmonic plan, and the elegance in the slow section is his own style that shines through the gypsy-inspired tunes. The glissando section reflects another virtuosic device Liszt frequently used, and it leads to the climax of the piece. Big leaps of intervals in the left hand, together with the melody in octaves in the right hand, build up the excitement of the last section with its fastest tempo. It is typical of the rhapsodies to gradually speed up to the climax in the fastest tempo to reach its glorious end.

Bach-Liszt: Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor

Liszt’s piano transcriptions range from opera, symphony, lieder, to adaptations of vocal and non-vocal pieces. The complexity of these pieces lies in their massive textures and their creative layout for the hands, which makes them targets to failure in execution. They represent the fashion of the nineteenth century, the desire to reach the audiences, the purpose of giving these pieces more hearings to make them better known, and the expansion of pianistic idioms to serve

performing goals. They have great historical value and they reveal Liszt's total command of the piano.⁷

Liszt learned about the organ and its repertoire from the municipal organist in Weimar, Johann Gottlob Töpfer (1791-1870), and further expanded the techniques of the instrument. He explored the use of all three manuals to enjoy the full colors of the organ, and he was not interested in the dry, cautious renderings of Bach's works prevailing in Germany at the time.⁸ Liszt was dedicated to the revival and promotion of the music of Bach and Handel in his Weimar years, and it seems natural for him to have wanted to make transcriptions of J. S. Bach, the master who was appointed court organist by the previous duke of Weimar. Liszt's letters to his friends and his mother showed his love for "the Great Six," *Preludes and Fugues* BWV 543- 548, early on in his career, and he performed the one in A minor regularly in Berlin between 1842 and 1850. His transcriptions of the six *Preludes and Fugues* present Bach's original textures down to the smallest detail:

There are times when Bach's original would seem impossible to transfer to the piano in all its glorious detail. Yet Liszt never fails to find a way of keeping Bach's texture intact, however complex it becomes.⁹

⁷ James F. Penrose. "The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt." *The American Scholar* (Spring 1995), 273-74.

⁸ Alan Walker. "Years of Struggle II, 1849-1853," in *Franz Liszt, Vol. 2: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 483-85.

Liszt was interested in exploring the use of all three manuals instead of only one; he also created a new notation system for the pedal notes— the stem goes up on the note for the right foot to play, and stem goes down for the left foot.

⁹ *Ibid.* 481.

It is through the imagination of a technically perfect piano-composer like Liszt that these transcriptions are possible. *Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor* provides the pianist a chance to perform the wonderful piece by Bach, and also deepens our understanding of Liszt's compositional and transcribing skill in realizing on the piano all the colors of other mediums.

Schumann-Liszt: Widmung

In addition to instrumental works, Liszt also made transcriptions of opera, vocal, and choral pieces from Giovanni Palestrina (born 1525) and Orlandus Lassus (born 1532) to Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and his contemporaries Verdi and Wagner, among others. To perform Liszt's vocal transcriptions, pianists need to maintain the singing style of the melody while providing a variety of color in the accompanying textures.

Widmung, or *Dedication*, was taken from Schumann's cycle, *Myrthen*, Op.25 (1840). Liszt presented the first theme in the right hand, and later repeated it with the melody embedded in the left hand. The accompaniment is exchanged between hands, and the pianist needs to keep the flowing pulse and the dotted rhythm simultaneously.

Liszt followed Schumann's harmonic plan and kept the middle section in E major. This warm, tender section features repeated chordal accompaniments and a simple melodic line. The music returns to the A section in its most technically-challenging part. After several measures of cross-hand gestures, the first theme appears in the left hand while the right hand provides brilliant arpeggios at the top. This transcription of *Widmung* makes the climax of the lieder more dramatic and passionate with its massive textures and orchestral sonority, and further intensifies the emotion in the original piece.

II. Late Liszt

With its experimental harmonics, audacious forms, and strange sonorities, Liszt's late music was not merely a reflection of his soul in the turmoil of his old age but a sophisticated display of his everlasting search for new paths to modern music. In his late pieces, several unique compositional devices can be found: the use of whole-tone and gypsy scales, frequent dissonances, chains of non-functional harmonies to suspend tonality, and chords built on fourths and sevenths.¹⁰ While some scholars recognized Liszt a nationalist in his continued use of Hungarian materials, others identified that he "prefigured the most advanced music of the early twentieth century" in his late music based on its experimental idioms.¹¹ Other than these devices, Liszt's late music typically features a sense of solitude and retrospection with its sparse textures and few notes. Some pieces drop to silence from monody, while some are simply open-ended.¹²

I chose three important pieces of Liszt's late music to demonstrate the innovation in Liszt's *oeuvre*: *Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, *Nuages gris*, and *Csardas macabre*. The first two pieces show quasi-impressionistic features, the former with the brushes of arpeggios shimmering with pedal, the latter with its atmospheric and atonal chords. *Csardas macabre*, S. 224, is a brilliant example of Liszt's audacious creativity that combines Liszt's interest in Hungarian dance and his exploration in compositional tools, using very lengthy passages of parallel fifths as the main material of the piece without clear harmonic directions.

¹⁰ Alan Walker. "Music of Liszt's Old Age," in *Franz Liszt, Vol. 3, The Final Years: 1861-1886* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1076.

¹¹ David B. Cannata. "Perception and Apperception in Liszt's Late Piano Music," *The Journal of Musicology* (Spring 1997), 178.

¹² Alan Walker. "Music of Liszt's Old Age," in *Franz Liszt, Vol. 3, The Final Years: 1861-1886* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1080.

Selected Pieces

Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este (The Fountains of the Villa d'Este, 1877)

The composition of Liszt's three volumes of *Years of Pilgrimage* spans from 1835 to 1877.

These volumes reflect Liszt's lifelong creative and geographical journey. The first book of Switzerland provides vivid depictions of the natural scenes while the second book of Italy illustrates the inspiration Liszt felt from Italian art and literature. The third volume contains seven pieces with religious allusions and spiritual reflections on death.¹³

Delores suggested the third volume as being a Hungarian cycle in its core. First, she pointed out that there are inclusions of the second Hungarian national anthem, *Szózat*, in the four threnodies of the set. Moreover, she suggested that each title of the seven pieces connects to certain images on the *Holy Crown of Hungary*—namely the cypress trees, the fountain, the guardian angels and other indirect associations that are physically presented on the crown.¹⁴ The image of St. John is on the upper part of the crown, corresponding to the quote from Gospel of John in *Jeux d'eaux*: “But the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life.”

¹³ Liszt mentioned in his letter to his daughter Cosima in 1880 that he wanted to entitle the third volume “*Feuilles de cyprès et de palmes*.” Both cypresses and palms are symbols for the hope for heaven and the triumph through salvation.

¹⁴ Dolores Pesce. “Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage*, Book 3: A Hungarian Cycle?” *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1990), 207–29.

Liszt had seen the *Holy Crown of Hungary* in the coronation of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1867, and newspapers in Budapest provided lots of visual details of the crown. Pesce believes that most of the pieces in the third volume of *Années de Pèlerinage* correspond to an image of the crown.

On the lower part of the crown there is a figure of God with cypress trees on the side, and there are two angels, Michael and Gabriel, looking upward to God. The gesture of looking upon God corresponds to “Lift Up Your Hearts,” the last piece. The counterparts of the two cypresses pieces, *Sunt larymae rerum* (subtitled “in Hungarian style”) and *Marche funèbre* (In memory of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico), represent a death in the Trojan War under described in *The Aeneid*, and the death of Emperor Maximilian, the heroic patron of the Romantic era.

The third volume demonstrates Liszt's mature application of compositional techniques like the use of whole-tone scale, the daring harmonies, some impressionistic sonority, and an avoidance of key center. With the secular title, *Les Jeux d'eaux* seems to be inspired by the fountains in the Villa d'Este; however, with the inscription of Gospel of John, *Les Jeux d'eaux* contains spiritual meanings as well.¹⁵

The lack of apparent melody-accompaniment scheme at the beginning imitates the images of the foundation. The seamless, flowing texture imitates the cascading waters. The ambiguous harmonic direction and parallel brushes of chords make this piece seem like Liszt's *Les Jeux d'eaux* is a prophet to impressionism music in the early twentieth century. This piece was composed twenty four years before Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* (1901). Busoni suggested that pieces related to water afterwards are all influenced by Liszt's *Les Jeux d'eaux*.

***Nuages gris* (Grey Clouds, 1881)**

Liszt was always interested in exploring tonality. After participating in Fétis' lecture series on the philosophy of music in Paris in 1832, Liszt might have been inspired by these discussions about the future of music, and gradually established his belief that music would inevitably go from tonality to polytonality, and eventually shift to atonality.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid. 223.

Obvious religious titles include *Angelus! Prayer to the Guardian Angel* and *Sursum corda (Lift Up Your Hearts)*. With the inscription of the Gospel of John, "But the water I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life," *Jeux d'eaux* reveals Christian meaning.

The rest of the set are four threnodies. According to Liszt's letter to Olga von Meyendorff, the two pieces of the cypress trees describe not only the trees of the Villa d'Este but Michelangelo's cypresses at the Carthusian monastery in Rome, *Santa Maria deli Angeli*.

¹⁶ Alan Walker. "Music of Liszt's Old Age," in *Franz Liszt, Vol. 3, The Final Years: 1861-1886* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1076.

Liszt believed that it is a logical process for music to go from "unitonic", to "pluritonic", and ultimately goes to "omnitonic". He left notes saying that "omnitonic" is a final goal of a historic process. Arthur

According to a report by Arthur Friedheim, Liszt was working on a little book titled “Sketches for a Harmony of the Future” in 1885. Although the book was never published, it contains lots of Liszt’s late piano writings. These character pieces are gateways to modern music. They contain common traits of the twentieth century like the emphasis on dissonance, the use of the tritone, and impressionistic and atonal writings. While it is difficult to determine if Liszt’s late piano writing influenced later composers like Debussy and Schoenberg, it is safe to say that Liszt foresaw the music of the future. His *Bagatelle Without Tonality* (1885) was composed twenty-five years before Schoenberg’s experiments in atonality.

Liszt composed *Nuages gris* seven weeks after a severe fall from the stairs, which caused injuries that compromised his mobility greatly for the rest of his life. Perhaps this piece reflects Liszt’s dark mental state in its uncertain tonality and its lack of harmonic direction in a traditional sense. The sparse texture, the simple rhythm, and the twisted melody with an interval of tritone within, all contribute to the mysterious sonority. Tremolo, the compositional device Liszt frequently applied in his virtuosic *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, now serves as an atmospheric tool. The last two arpeggiated chords end this piece in a state of wandering openness.

***Csardas macabre* (1881-82)**

Liszt wrote three csardas between 1881 to 1884, and these pieces are among the most audacious pieces of his late *oeuvre*. *Two csardas*, S. 225, composed in 1884, are relatively easy in terms of technique and form.

Friedheim saw Liszt’s manuscripts, *Sketches for a Harmony of Future*. Liszt said he did not publish it because “the time for it is not yet to come.”

Csardas macabre, S. 224 (1881), is the best known csardas of the three. It opens with parallel octaves, and gradually adds voices while holding a dark and mysterious atmosphere. The piece then features in the daring use of bare parallel fifths which was Liszt's first attempt in such writing.

Sharing interests in Hungarian dances, Liszt's csardas are not like the rhapsodies in terms of the compositional approach. In the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, Liszt followed the slow-fast dance scheme, and managed to convey the improvisational quality of the rhapsody, using melodies of strong *verbunkos* influence. Liszt's csardas are without apparent form, and his thematic materials are very different from those of the *verbunkos*. The sparse layout, ambiguous harmonic scheme, and frequent percussive passages, and angular rhythms strongly remind many of Bartók.¹⁷

As one result of his constant striving on his own to find new musical paths, Liszt's late piano music displays a variety of compositional styles and techniques that were yet to come. His foresight into the unknown future of music makes his pieces ancestors to the impressionism of Debussy and Ravel, a gateway to the atonal music of Schoenberg, and a foretaste of Bartók's unique piano writing. Even within Liszt's early *oeuvre*, one can find countless examples of his significant contributions to pianistic idioms and sonorities. Liszt is a giant who set piano music forward with his restless curiosity and creativity. Without his effort to expand piano writing and playing, the piano music we know today might not be as multi-faceted, colorful and virtuosic as it has come to be.

¹⁷ James M. Baker. "A Survey of the Late Piano Works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt* (Mabridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 444, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521622042>

Program Notes: Ernst von Dohnányi

Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960) is a rather neglected figure in music history, partly due to his being wrongly accused of being a Nazi sympathizer, and partly due to his unwillingness to embrace the artistic trends of the twentieth century. Dohnányi was a legendary pianist, and his pupils included Béla Bartók, György Cziffra, Annie Fischer and Georg Solti.¹⁸ However, due to his rejection of avant-garde techniques, his reputation as a composer suffered. His publications continued the genres of the Classical and Romantic eras: sonata, variation, concerto, chamber music with piano, and lots of character pieces. Although Dohnányi was inspired to write folk-based pieces like *Ruralia Hungarica* Op. 32, he was a conservative Romanticist who refused to follow the younger generation's devotion to ethnomusicology. Miami Herald stated in 1958 that Dohnányi was “the last surviving representative of the Romantic age of Brahms, Schumann and Wagner.”

Dohnányi's music was deeply influenced by Brahms because of his composition teacher Hans von Koessler, who was a friend and promoter of Brahms' music.¹⁹ He also studied with Liszt's pupil, composer and pianist Eugen d'Albert. Dohnányi moved to the United States in 1949 to teach piano and composition at Florida State University until his death in 1960.

¹⁸ Ilona von Dohnányi. *A Song of Life: Dohnányi* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002), 42-7. Bartók studied piano with Dohnányi and respected him dearly. Bartók said, “Musical life in Budapest today (1920s) may be summed up to one name— Dohnányi.” When Bartók was about to give up on composition to focus his career as a pianist, Dohnányi showed Bartók the music of Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which shed light on a new path of art and encouraged Bartók to continue his pursuit of composition.

¹⁹ Ibid. 21.

Brahms heard Dohnányi's composition through Koessler's introduction, and he was impressed by Dohnányi's first Piano Quintet. Brahms even personally arranged for Dohnányi's premiere in Vienna.

As a piano prodigy, it is natural that Dohnányi composed with virtuosic piano techniques in mind. His pieces not only include physical challenges like extensive scalar runs, arpeggios and chordal leaps, but mental tasks to show balance and colors among multiple layers of textures. It is a pity that the recordings of Dohnányi's playing of his own compositions we have now are all from his old age, which do not represent his excellent playing at his golden age.

I choose two pieces to represent Dohnányi's piano music in my recitals. Dohnányi's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* are inspired by those of Brahms and Liszt, which are full of contrasts and improvisational characters. *Winterreigen (Winter Round)* is a set of ten character pieces dedicated to Robert Schumann. Dohnányi took Schumann's character pieces as models, using programmatic titles and different genres in each piece. He also used the sphinxlike acronym, a famous compositional tool of Schumann in his *Carnaval*, to connect the pieces.

Four Rhapsodies for Piano, Op. 11 (1902-1903): No. 1 and 4

From the nineteenth century on, European composers were fascinated by the so-called Hungarian rhapsody. This genre typically embraces several features: slow-fast dance scheme, simple harmonic structure, extensive embellishments of the melody, tremolo, and other virtuosic devices of improvisation. Liszt used melodies he heard from gypsy bands in his nineteen *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Following these examples, Dohnányi used lots of improvisational techniques, imitation of the cimbalom, and combination of contrasting characters in his four rhapsodies.

Dohnányi said that the four rhapsodies “can be considered as a sonata in four movements” following a loose sonata structure of fast-slow-scherzo-variation. He did not call it sonata

because each rhapsody can also be performed separately. He further claimed the difference between his works and those of Liszt's:

These works, however, are not rhapsodies in the sense of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* by Liszt, in which Hungarian folksongs are elaborated. My themes are all original, and when people find their style is Hungarian, it is because I AM Hungarian.²⁰

There is kinship between Dohnányi's rhapsodies and those of Liszt. Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* are in sectional designs— they typically contain lassú-friss (slow-fast) dance schemes in a loose structure. Dohnányi, writing in loose, free sections, also used classical forms in the rhapsodies: Rhapsody No. 1 is in sonata-allegro form, No. 2 in binary form, No. 3 in rondo form, and No. 4 contains elements of theme and variation.

In his first rhapsody, Dohnányi used his favorite pattern, quintuplets, to create a sense of rubato. The mixture of quintuplets and other, symmetrical, patterns secures the freedom in phrasing.

Noteworthy is Dohnányi's meticulous design for cyclic elements in the entire Opus 11. Starting from the second rhapsody, each rhapsody quotes themes from its previous piece.²¹ In the last rhapsody, he included themes from the other three rhapsodies with varied textures. He quoted the *Dies Irae* as the main theme, and inserted themes from other rhapsodies between sections. One can see from the last rhapsody Dohnányi's devoted studies of Brahms' variations in his early years. Variation techniques he used on the *Dies Irae* theme include different articulations,

²⁰ Ibid. 51-2.

²¹ Hwang. "Stylistic Elements within Texture and Formal Structure of Ernest von Dohnányi's Four Rhapsodies, Op. 11," (DMA diss., University of North Texas, Denton, 2010), 23.

chordal treatment, thickening the ostinato, application of thickening textures, and multiple virtuosic figurations. To create a glorious effect of the finale Dohnányi turned this dark tune into E-flat major.

***Winterreigen* Op. 13 (1905): No. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10**

Dohnányi wrote these ten character pieces when he left Vienna for Berlin in 1905, most of them dedicated to friends— with exception of the prelude of the postlude. His choice of model was Schumann, and in emulating that model he rejected the emerging modern trends of atonality, serialism, impressionism and folk themes at the time. The preface to the set is a poem by Dohnányi’s friend, Victor Heindl, who was also the dedicatee of the sixth piece.²² The entire set is dedicated to Schumann.

As in Schuman’s *Carnaval* Op. 9, the short pieces of *Winterreigen* are programmatic. Each of them uses a specific genre: march, waltz, etude, mazurka, and so on. Dohnányi used a sphinx-like acronym ADE in his set, paying tribute to the compositional device Schumann employed in *Carnaval*.²³

The first piece is a prelude named *Widmung* (*Dedication*)— a title Schumann used in his song cycle *Myrthen* Op. 25. Furthermore, Dohnányi alluded to the opening movements of Schumann’s *Papillons* in both the left-hand pattern and the melodic contour.²³ Griffith further argued that the

²² Samee Griffith. “Ernest von Dohnányi’s *Winterreigen* Op. 13,” (DMA diss., University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 2015), 14-5.

It is unknown whether the poem was written before or after the music, but according to Griffith, “almost all of the *Winterreigen* pieces are explicitly referenced in the poem in some way.” Griffith gave details of his interpretation of how each piece corresponds to a line or two of the poem.

²³ *Ibid.* 18-20.

descending tritone figuration of the melody, Eb-A-Bb-C, shows similarity to Schumann's sphinxes in *Carnaval*.

The third piece, *To Ada*, was dedicated to a pianist friend who studied with Theodor Leschetizsky in Vienna. In this passacaglia-like piece, Dohnányi repeated A-D-A in the top voice, and varied the harmonization and texture of the accompanied parts below. The use of the ADA motif shows similarity to Schumann's *Norse Song* from *Album for the Young*, Op. 68, where the name of the Danish composer's GADE was used as the motif.

Sphärenmusik, Music of the Spheres, is dedicated to a friend in the Austrian Air Force who took Dohnányi on a hot air balloon trip. This miniature is in the form of A A¹ B A²A³ B¹, plus a four-bar coda in slow arpeggiations. The beginning A section features a three-staff layout and repeats the theme from different pitches. The main theme in the A section is varied in odd measure numbers of 9, 11, and 13 and thus creates a floating feeling to the music. The accompaniment later varies from eighth note, to triplets, to sextuplets; sometimes the accompaniment even exchanges registers from left hand to high registers for the right hand. The B section features some quiet, repeated and syncopated single notes with limited harmonic movements in the alto voice. The soprano melody is arpeggiated in the high register while the bass supports the crystalline, heavenly sound from the lowest part of the piano.

At Midnight, the seventh piece, is contrary to the heavenly sound of the fifth piece. The driving sixteenth-note pattern in arpeggios and the bass octaves create a sense of anxiety and darkness. Noteworthy is Dohnányi's reference to measure 3 and 4 of *March* of the same set in this piece.

Perhaps this is a reference also to Schumann, since self-quotation is another compositional tool that Schumann frequently used in his character pieces.

The eighth piece, *Wild Party*, is an etude-like piece full of variations on the 8-bar phrase. The 8-bar material is repeated multiple times with slightly varied intervals, and it is accompanied by different harmonizations in varied forms: ostinato, chromatic runs, arpeggiations, leaping bass chords, off-beat broken chords, and so on.

Maurice Hinson suggested that *Postludium*, the last piece of the set, took inspiration from Schumann's *Fantasy* Op. 17 in the left-hand arpeggiation on the dominant.²⁴ Dohnányi changed the melodic motif, ADE, in subtle intervallic manners, and later treated it with contrapuntal movement. The piece ends in three chords with ADE at the top.

²⁴ Ibid. 58.

The left-hand notes on the first measure, [D-Eb-G-C] and [A-Bb-Eb-G], is from the first movement of *Papillons*. The melodic contour from measure 3 to 6, A-Bb-C-D-Eb-F-G-F-Eb-D-C-Bb-Ab, is like the scalar figuration of measure 1 to 4 from *Papillons*, A-B-C#-D-E-F#-G-F#-E-D-C#-B-A.

Program Notes: Zoltán Kodály

Hungarian music had been dominated by German tradition since the classical period. From 1905 on, the ethnomusicological research by Kodály and Bartók shed light on a different compositional path. Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) wrote most of his piano music after 1905, reflecting a new, folk-inspired compositional method. Folk music collections were prevalent at that time because of the nationalistic spirit that began in the nineteenth century. Despite the potential disruption of authenticity to the originally unaccompanied vocal tunes, transcriptions of Hungarian peasant songs were soon adapted with piano accompaniments so they would be more accessible to amateurs and audiences. Both Kodály and Bartók wrote folk-inspired piano pieces as pedagogical materials to introduce the simple beauty of peasant songs to children at an early age. Due to Kodály's devotion to musical education in Hungary, his ideals and compositional style deeply influenced the next generation of Hungarian composers. These composers took Bartók as a role model in spirit, but most of their compositions represented a kinship to Kodály's works more in the use of folk elements.

Kodály's early tendency to make direct transcription of peasant songs later developed into a unique synthesis of Hungarian primitive sound and Western European music. While Bartók established an individual style that combines nationalism and modernism, Kodály wrote in a rather conservative language. He employed some compositional devices consistently in all his piano works. For example, he preferred to replace triads with chromatic chords, and he frequently used chords of fifths and employed a pedal point in the low register.

Although piano music was not the primary focus in his *oeuvre*, it reflects Kodály's approach to folk music. I chose two piano works to represent three stylistic dimensions of Kodály:

Meditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy (1907) demonstrates Kodály's early admiration of the musical language of Debussy. *Dances of Marosszék* (1927) is a set of piano transcriptions of six dances, reflecting not only the colorful language of the peasant instrumental music but Kodály's interest in traditional forms like rondo and variation.

Meditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy (1907)

Meditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy is one of Kodály's earlier compositions. Paying homage to Debussy and French tradition was an intended departure from the German musical traditions.

In 1906, Kodály used a state scholarship to go on a six-month study tour in Berlin and Paris with Béla Balázs, who was later the librettist of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Wooden Prince*.

Kodály encountered Debussy's music in Berlin, and continued his extensive study of Debussy's music in Paris. Among Debussy's various influences were the inspiration he took from ancient traditions like French Baroque and church modes to create a new sound world. Kodály was influenced deeply by this innovative method, and he shared the discovery with Bartók after he went back to Budapest. Debussy's compositional ideas changed both composers profoundly.

With proper treatment of the old and the new, it seemed to them that building a new national art music from ancient Hungary folk music became possible.

Kodály used a motive from Debussy's *String Quartet*, G-F-D-F-Ab-Bb-Ab- G, to construct a loosely structured, atmospheric piece in his *Meditation on a Motif by Claude Debussy*. Rather than using this motif for a set of variations or strict contrapuntal treatment, Kodály treated it freely and completed a piece full of imagination and color. He made subtle changes in the intervals and rhythm of the motif, and applied different textures to accompany the tune. Kodály experimented with Debussian techniques like the use of whole-tone coloring, parallel fourth and fifth, fragmentary melodies, non-functional use of seventh chords, fluid organization of rhythms and phrases, and the overall interest in sound and texture.

This piece is in a loose, undeveloped ternary form, and it is built on different arrangements of whole tone scales. The A section (measure 1 to 29) opens with Debussy's motive, transposed a half-step up. This motive repeats multiple times, each time in slightly different intervals. The absence of melody, frequent rests, and the seemingly random harmonies create a sense of hesitation. The broken chords at measure 5, 11, and 15, are built from whole-tone scales.

The B section (measure 30-71) is more melodic and unified than the A section, although the composer never fully develops the melody. Kodály instructs pianists to play the broken chords in a style of harp. Scholar Anna Dalos studied Kodály's sketches and discovered that Kodály wrote a ninth chord (C- E- Gb- Bb- D) underneath the modulation plan in the footnote. It is built on an incomplete whole-tone scale (C- D- E- Gb- Bb). Kodály wrote: "(From this chord), it is possible to go to any major chord. ... All its notes can be found." Since any of the notes drawn from a whole-tone scale can serve as tonic or root, Kodály was clearly trying to explore the possibility of non-functional harmony.²⁵

²⁵ Anna Dalos. *Zoltán Kodály's World of Music* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 63.

The C section (measure 72 to 98) combines the elements from the A and B sections. At measure 83, Kodály wrote on the manuscripts in French “Ah! It’s you, my friend!” This coincides with the first complete presentation in the C section of the whole-tone scale.

Kodály closed the piece without unfolding the theme completely to maintain the meditative quality. The meditation ends with a pure C major chord without any added interval of second that has prevailed throughout the entire piece.

Dances of Marosszék (1927)

Kodály claimed his musical idiom to be vocal in its core, and considered instrumental folk music “little more than instrumental transposition of vocal melodies.”²⁶ *Dances of Marosszék* is thus an interesting example of Kodály’s approach to instrumental peasant music. On the introduction of this piece, Kodály considered the Marosszék dances to be a genuine voice of rural Hungary that differed from the urban-inspired voice of the “Hungarian Dances” made known by Brahms and other composers of the late nineteenth century.²⁷ Bálint Sárosi identified the original dances used in this piece from old manuscripts and folk collections, and explained what is marosszék dance:

The “*marosszeki*” (Marosszék dance), to give it its full name the “Marosszéki forgató” (turning dance of Marosszék) is a pair of dances widespread in the area of Maros-Torda (today Mures, Rumania) County. It was also called *korcsos* (crossbred), *forgató* (turning), *vetélős* (shuttling), and *vármegye* (county).²⁸

²⁶ B. Sárosi, “Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály’s Works: The Galánta and Marosszék Dances,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25, no. 1/4 (1983), 23.

²⁷ Z. Kodály, Introduction to the score of the *Dances of Marosszék*.

²⁸ B. Sárosi, “Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály’s Works: The Galánta and Marosszék Dances,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25, no. 1/4 (1983), 30.

After World War I, neoclassicism came to light and became fashionable in the 1920s. In Kodály's post-war compositions, there is a shift of interest from peasant music to Baroque and Classical models. The clarity of traditional forms like sonata, rondo and variation became once again ideal for Kodály's purposes. *Dances of Marosszék* can be analyzed as in a modified rondo form: ABACADA, with an extended E section or coda at the end. However, other than the recurrence of a principal subject, the unrelated melodies between sections suggest a rather loose structural plan common in Hungarian folk music, which is to put unrelated sections together and consequently form an irregular structure. From these perspectives, *Dances of Marosszék* can be seen as a synthesis of Kodály's interest in folk elements and classical forms.

The earliest appearance of the principal subject of the A section can be dated from 1680.²⁹ Rather than preserving its original dance quality, Kodály treated this melody in a slow and majestic manner. This principal subject appears several times with varied textures and characters. Despite his disapproval of Gypsy musicians' mannerism of using the augmented second, Kodály chose to apply it as a variant in this principal subject.³⁰

The original melody of the B and C sections, and the finale, were all collected from Gypsy clarinetists, one from Pista Gálfi and two from Tamás Elekes. These sections demonstrate a strong sense of instrumental improvisation especially in the detailed articulations and melodic embellishments.³¹ The off-beat accompaniment common in *verbunkos*, *csárdás* and other dances,

²⁹ Ibid. 32. The first appearance of this tune is in the *Vietorisz Virginal Book*, a collection from 1680. This melody is almost identical with a folksong in Kodály's own 1910 collection.

³⁰ Ibid. Although Kodály disapproved of the shallow mannerism of the Gypsy amateur musicians, he praised professional Gypsy violinists for their concise tone, flexible rhythm and treatment of rubato. Kodály applied rubato and augmented seconds in his pieces frequently.

³¹ Ibid. 33.

called *dívö*,³² is present in the left-hand part in Kodály's setting in the C section. This lyrical section features an ornamented melodic line with meticulous articulations, creating contrasts to the simpler melodic contour in the other energetic sections.

The D section is a type of fast dance in *csárdás* called *sebes*. *Csárdás*, sometimes spelled as *czardas*, is a traditional Hungarian dance in duple time. Typical features of *csárdás* include a slow-fast scheme with contrasting characters (*lassu-friss*), repeated harmonic progression of the tonic and the dominant, and syncopated rhythms. This D section is in a rhythmic formula from the Middle Ages, generally called in Hungary *the swineherd's dance*.³³ The extended coda, or the E section, features a motivic repetition, an interlude called *aprája*. This *Aprája* motif is normally repeated in a loose two-bar structure, and it is most common in peasant bagpipe music.

³² D. Schneider, "Gypsies, Verbunkos, and Bartok's Debt to the Nineteenth Century." DMA diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2000), 664-66.

³³ B. Sárosi, "Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály's Works: The Galánta and Marosszék Dances," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25, no. 1/4 (1983), 35.

Program Notes: Béla Bartók

Hungarian Music: Verbunkos Music, or Peasant Music?

Bartók wrote multiple articles to discuss the matter of “true Hungarian music.” He dismissed the so-called Hungarian style prevalent in Europe in the nineteenth century, and promoted the folk tunes collected from the peasants as genuine Hungarian music. What is the origin of the popular Hungarian style in nineteenth-century Europe? How is it different from peasant songs? More importantly, how did Bartók use the peasant music as a tool to find his own path to new music?

The *verbunkos* is a type of Hungarian dance music for recruiting purposes in the eighteenth century in the Austro-Hungary army. In the nineteenth century, this music style was spread and identified as Hungarian style in Europe with the help of the traveling gypsy bands. Two dances related to *verbunkos* music appeared in the late nineteenth century: *nóta*, a folk-influenced popular dance, and *csardas*, a later version of *verbunkos* music with a slow-fast tempo scheme. These two dances were important in Hungarian composers’ *oeuvre* in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Characteristic elements in the so-called Hungarian style include: a slow-fast tempo scheme from the *lassú-friss* dance tradition, some wildly arched and ornamented melodies in an improvisational fashion, fiery rhythms, and a simple tonic-dominant harmonic plan.³⁴ Composers like Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Brahms, and Liszt, all wrote pieces in this kind of Hungarian style.

³⁴ Lynn M. Hooker. *Redefining Hungarian Music: From Liszt to Bartók* (New York: Oxford Press, 2013), 172.

Hungarian composers published treatises, listing several rhythmic patterns as “Hungarian rhythm.” While dotted rhythm is also common in Polish music, there are two unique rhythms prevailing in Hungarian folk music. Firstly, there is *choriambus*, the long-short, short-long pattern. Secondly, there is *iamb*, a pattern of short-long with an accent on the short note. *Amphibrachic*, a less common pattern and a variation of iamb, is normally presented as syncopations.

Bartók wrote in the *verbunkos* style in his early works; for example, his *Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra* is in the style of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. However, after exploring the ancient tunes from the peasants in 1906, Bartók turned to folk music for inspiration. He promoted the peasant folk tunes as the true sound of Hungary, and further claimed that the shallow, contaminated popular melodies of the gypsy bands were neither true Hungarian nor Gypsy music but a tasteless mixture of multiple sources. It is rather curious why despite his disapproval of gypsy band music as true Hungarian music, Bartók still used common elements in *verbunkos* music like augmented seconds in his pieces. To justify his seemingly discrepant theory, one might need to know that *verbunkos* music synthesizes old Hungarian popular music with certain ethnic elements from other areas, possibly through the intermediation of the gypsy musicians. For example, the famous gypsy scale with an augmented second was common in *verbunkos* music, but it also exists in Turkish, Arabic, and Balkan folk music.³⁵ When Bartók used the common elements of the *verbunkos* music and folk music, he was still loyal to his belief in peasant music because the *verbunkos* music took folk music as inspiration as he did. As music developed in its own organic form in different areas, it became almost impossible to completely tell *verbunkos* music and folk music apart in some cases. Nowadays, it seems to be too extreme to exclude the existence of *verbunkos* music as Bartók proposed in his writing. One might want to keep in mind that the importance of Bartók's discovery is that he found a way for composers who strived to achieve their unique sound when nationalism was prevailing in the early twentieth century. Bartók's approach led to open doors to more possibilities.

³⁵ Donald L. Bisdorf. "A Concise History of Hungarian Music," *Music Educators Journal* 54, no. 6 (1968): 56-8.

The great achievement of Bartók was rather his genius use of folk materials, not merely the discovery of it. Bartók combined the folk materials with European techniques to achieve his unique, modern music style in his works. He transcribed folk tunes into piano arrangements at first. After years of thorough study in the essence of the folk music, he “captured a general spirit of the style” and used modern techniques to compose his folk-influenced music.³⁶ In combining the old and the new, Bartók and Liszt had shared quality in their musical language. Both showed “an eclectic approach to varied sources,” and a wonderful “synthesis with personal style.”³⁷

Bartók’s Pianism

Bartók’s piano playing was known for its clear execution and rhythmic excitement, but there was also an absence of harshness and violence in his sound that was sometimes neglected by pianists nowadays. The idea of treating piano as a percussive instrument was not to deny the singing quality of the piano, but to embrace the potential of various tone color, duration, and volume of the notes achieved from different executions of the finger-hammer actions.³⁸

As a pianist composer, Bartók gave meticulous performing indications on his piano music due to his obsession with the subtle nuances from his research on folk songs. His specific articulations indicate different types of touches on the keys: staccato, non-legato, legato, tenuto, dotted tenuto, and *portato*-- an articulated legato. He developed his system of markings to indicate different kinds of accents, and his phrases are carefully instructed with detailed slurs, separate signs (|),

³⁶ Victoria Fischer. “Piano Music: Teaching Pieces and Folk Arrangements.” Chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 92–3.

³⁷ Lynn M. Hooker. *Redefining Hungarian Music: From Liszt to Bartók* (New York: Oxford Press, 2013), 256.

³⁸ Victoria Fischer. “Piano Music: Teaching Pieces and Folk Arrangements.” Chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 260.

and commas ('). Bartók used the clean pedal indication of the bracket-type to avoid vagueness from the traditional type (*Ped* and *). He used the soft pedal frequently, and taught his students about the half pedal technique. For pedagogical purposes, Bartók included unorthodox fingerings for some pieces, including pieces from *Mikrokosmos*.³⁹ Pianists should thus pay close attention to all the markings Bartók provided on the score.

Seven Pieces from *Mikrokosmos for Two Pianos* (1940)

Mikrokosmos is a set of 153 progressive pieces published in 1940.⁴⁰ When Bartók started working on it in 1926, his idea was to present folk transcriptions to the Hungarian people. The plan to write a progressive piano method came after receiving a pedagogical book, *Rhythmic Studies*, written by his composer friend Mátyás Seiber in 1933.⁴¹ As a great pianist who had little experience teaching beginner students, Bartók went to colleagues for suggestions on children's technical problems. His son, Peter Bartók, claimed to "serve as a guinea pig in his (Béla's) experiments in *Mikrokosmos*" when he first started piano in 1936. *Mikrokosmos* was completed in 1939, with folk melodies from various ethnic origins.

Out of six volumes, the first two are for beginner students to be familiar with unusual time signatures, irregular rhythm, and melodies from folk music. These finger exercises stay in a

³⁹ David Yeomans. *Bartók for Piano: A Survey of His Solo Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 3-5.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Suchoff. "History of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*," Chapter in *Béla Bartók: a Celebration* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press: 2003), 256.

Suchoff goes into details in his survey regarding the decision on the title, the editing problems and the publication issues of *Mikrokosmos*. Bartók originally intended to have one volume to present his ideas more systematically; he later agreed to divide *Mikrokosmos* into six books as requested by the publisher, but he was unhappy about how the first volume now looked "less impressive." Another intended title for the set was "*Progressive Piano Pieces*."

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 187.

Bartók wrote to Seiber after receiving the latter's work, saying that he is now expanding Seiber's idea to work on a series of piano studies that deal with rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and pianistic problems.

closed hand position, and some pieces focused on building a rational use of the fifth finger.

While the third and fourth volumes are more advanced, the last two volumes are difficult pieces for professional pianists.⁴²

In 1942, Tibor Serley arranged several pieces from *Mikrokosmos* into other instrumental settings for Bartók's 61th birthday: four for string quartet, six for piano and string orchestra, and seven for full orchestra. Seiber's idea of chamber transcription, as well as the need for concert repertoire with his wife Ditta, inspired Bartók to rearrange seven pieces from *Mikrokosmos* for piano four hand and two pianos: No. 113, 69, 135, 123, 127, 145, 146, in the performance order.⁴³

- No. 113, *allegro molto*, is titled "Bulgarian Rhythm." Its 2+2+3 underlying pulse creates rhythmic excitement while the short-phrased melody suggests influence from Hungarian folk tunes.
- No. 69, *Chord Study*, maintains a simple melody over parallel triads. Bartók added scales and trills in the two-piano version for more textual variety and color.
- No. 135, *Perpetuum Mobile*, is an exciting piece with a busy figuration like Schumann's *Toccata* Op. 7. The original piano solo version indicated the pianist to repeat the two closing chords at liberty.
- No. 123, *Staccato and Legato*, is a study for two-voice strict canon in fourths and fifths, with an inverted counterpoint in the last part.
- No. 127, *New Hungarian Folk Song*, contains a beautiful melody in pentatonic scale while the entire piece moves in Aeolian mode.

⁴² John Ogdon. "Bartók's Mikrokosmos," *Tempo* 65 (Summer 1963): 3.

Sources of inspiration for Bartók include Debussy (No. 83), Chopin and Scriabin (No. 97), Schoenberg (No. 102), Hindemith (No. 125), Bach and Gershwin (No. 151), to name a few.

⁴³ Ibid. 195. Bartók premiered No. 123 and 146 in New York with his wife Ditta Pásztory-Bartók in 1942, and they recorded No. 69, 127, and 145 for Continental Records in 1943.

- No. 145, *Chromatic Invention*, is a two-voice, chromatic imitation in the style of Bach's inventions. The two-piano version requires pianists to speed up simultaneously to reach a climax at the end.
- No. 146, *Ostinato*, features an oriental melody varied in Dorian and Lydian mode over its intense chord or interval repetition.⁴⁴ Bartók added an effective glissando for the two-piano version towards the end.

Suite Op. 4b for Two Pianos (1941)

Suite No. 2, Op. 4 for Small Orchestra was, according to Bartók himself, his first attempt to use folk elements to compose. It signaled Bartók's departure from the style of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* to the style of peasant music. The first three movements and the opening of the last movement were drafted during Bartók's first trip to folk collections, so they reflect only Bartók's early impression on the folk tunes. Bartók's thorough understanding of folk elements was yet to come. Bartók transcribed this *Suite* for a two-piano version for his performance in the United States in 1941. This two-piano version not only reflects Bartók's idiomatic piano writing but the composer's late style and mature techniques in revisiting his early works.

Suite Op. 4b demonstrates Bartók's earliest adaptation of peasant music, including new melodic idioms, parlando-rubato rhythms, and modal implications.⁴⁵ In a concert program in 1942, Bartók provided titles for the four movements as follows: *Serenta, Allegro diabolico, Scena della*

⁴⁴ David Yeomans. *Bartók for Piano: A Survey of His Solo Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 117-44.

⁴⁵ Ivan Waldbauer. "Bartók's Four Pieces for Two Pianos," *Tempo* 53/54 (Spring 1960): 18. Bartók identified two sorts of rhythms in the folk music: parlando-rubato rhythm and tempo giusto. While the latter refers to strictly metric and even patterns, the former is highly ornamented and more metrically flexible.

Puszta, and *Per finire*. Compared to the orchestral version, the two-piano version provides idiomatic piano writing and a crisper, more advanced style of his late period. In the first movement, Bartók transcribed orchestral tremolos into arpeggios between pianos for better sound effects. The second movement contains pentatonic melodies, rigid modal structures and the parlando-rubato character of peasant music, but at the same time embraces features of Gypsy music like motoric rhythm, chromaticism, augmented seconds in the melodies, and virtuosic ornaments. The melody in unison, sixths and octaves in the second movement is musically similar to the writing of his first movement of the *Third Piano Concerto*. The third movement, *Scena della Puszta*, is a representation of “an old pseudo-folk song.”⁴⁶ The last movement demonstrates strong folk flavor in its use of pentatonic melody (e-g-a-b-d with a distorted B-flat) and the isometric parlando rhythm.⁴⁷

Piano Concerto No. 3 (1945)

Bartók passed away in 1945 before he finished the last page of his third piano concerto. Tibor Serly, Bartók’s friend and disciple, completed the last 17 measures based on Bartók’s sketches. Mátyás Seiber wrote the piano reduction.

This late concerto is unusual in Bartók’s *oeuvre*. His first and second concertos are typical pianist-composer concertos of the Romantic tradition which explore the potential of virtuosity to its most. On the contrary, the third concerto is surprisingly simple, lyrical, and less

⁴⁶ Ibid. 22. *Puszta* means “prairie” in Hungarian, and it also refers to an image of gypsy performers dancing in the wild. The music seems to be a mixture of gypsy dances and peasant folk music.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 20.

technique-driven. It is also noteworthy that Bartók's first theme in the first movement of this concerto connects back to *verbunkos* nature which he embraced in his early works.⁴⁸

Originally a gift to Ditta, this concerto was written according to her playing style. The piano part is written in closed hand positions to suit her small hands, avoiding big stretches that Bartók himself likes to write and play. Since Ditta's strengths in playing did not include thick chords or big sounds, this concerto emphasizes on subtle lyricism and builds its excitement from rhythmic and textual devices. This is not to say the third concerto is easy. Difficult passages include rapid scalar runs, detailed articulations, rhythmic tricks, and fugal sections, to name a few. The notoriously hard section in the first movement requires the pianist to voice the top of the chord in awkward movements.

The first movement, *allegro* in sonata form, opens with the beautiful first theme on the piano over the murmuring strings. Although the overall tonality is in E major, the movement has a strong implication of modes. The first theme of this rather short movement, influenced by *verbunkos* music, is an original theme of folk nature in E, and the second theme is of rhapsodic, playful character in G. The development opens with a variation of the first theme, and later follows an ascending whole-tone harmonic plan (Bb- C- D- E- F#) for the rest of the section. After a short transition, the recapitulation opens the first theme now in C, and continues with the second theme back to the tonic E. It features a witty ending without a traditional cadenza or

⁴⁸ Losseff. "The Piano Concertos and Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion." *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 356. Although Bartók questioned the use of *verbunkos* music to represent Hungary later in his life, he adapted *verbunkos* music in his early works. He also used it to compose his *Violin Concerto* and *Contrast* as late as 1938. There are shared features in *verbunkos* music and peasant music like dotted rhythm, repetitions, short phrase structures, and limited pitches in the melody.

coda— the fragmented first theme now serves as material for a quiet interplay between the flute and the piano in the end.

Andante religioso, the second movement, opens with a *tranquillo* chorale that refers to the third movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132. It is in a simple ternary form. The middle section, night's music, demonstrates Bartók's impulse to transcribe noises into organized sounds. Night's music is Bartók's signature imitation of the eerie sounds made by birds and insects. He used chromatic clusters, dissonant ostinato, random figurations, glissando and other tools to duplicate the mysterious atmosphere of nature. Three kinds of North American bird songs were identified in the middle section (measures 58-67), showing Bartók's everlasting interest to transcribe sounds from nature.⁴⁹

The last movement is in ABA¹CA² form with a coda. The B and the C sections reflect Bartók's mastery in fugue writing. The opening theme of this movement is in a long-short, short-long rhythm typical in Hungarian dances with a hemiola accompaniment. Hungarian theorist Lajos Bárdos argued that the melody came from Bartók's folk transcription, No. 159 of *The Hungarian Folk Song* (1910).⁵⁰ The timpani changes the pulse from quadruple to triple before the piano presents the subject and its tonal answer of the fugue in the B section. After the exposition of the fugue in the B section, there are representations of subject-answer pairs and their inversions. Bartók concluded the B section with a masterful four-voice *stretto* section.

⁴⁹ Maria Anna Harley. "Birds in Concert: North American Birdsong in Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3," *Tempo*, no. 189 (1994): 8–16.

Maria Anna Harley identified Towhee's sound of 'long-short leap with rapid repetition of one note,' and two other families of birds in her research. All three kinds of birds can be found in Bartók's last home in North Carolina.

⁵⁰ David Cooper. *Belá Bartók* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 368.

Before the variant of the rondo theme, the A¹ section, the timpani served as the bridge again in the pulse of triple meter. The C section is the second Bachian fugal section in the movement, featuring lots of suspensions and decorated solutions.⁵¹ Bartók further developed the rondo theme in the A² section before it reaches its climax in *presto*.

Program Notes:

⁵¹ Ibid. 369.

Composers between Bartók and Ligeti—Kadosa, Farkas, Takács

After World War II, the Hungarian music environment leaned towards nationalism and rejected foreign influences. Kodály's rather conservative style, including the preservation of folk melody and relatively less audacious treatment of harmony and form, became more popular than Bartók's bold, experimental approach. The postwar generation of composers, mostly Kodály pupils, were indifferent to European trends like serialism, concrete music, electronic music and aleatory music. Compositions around this time showed folk-influenced features with less and less innovation due to the highly-controlled supervision of the Hungarian-Soviet government.⁵²

However, in the 1960s, due to the lifting of limited access to Western music by the government, Hungarian composers were overwhelmed by new compositional techniques from the West. For them, Western techniques became essential tools to reach an international audience. Bartók's reputation was re-established and his avant-garde approach to folk materials became the model of many Hungarian composers. A new kind of "Hungarian eclecticism" was achieved—a style inspired by folk music and presented with innovative techniques.⁵³ For example, Pál Kadosa tried to find an eclectic way between dodecaphonic music and Bartókian devices; Ferenc Farkas

⁵² The People's Republic of Hungary was the official state name of Hungary from 1949 to 1989 during its Communist period under the control of the Soviet Union. With the rise of Communism, Hungarian composers were under supervision by the government to compose in approved forms and styles. Festive, optimistic, and music directly from folk tunes was the safest presentation. Kodály's more note-to-note quotation from the peasant songs and his rather conservative harmony were in favor during this period of time.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a countrywide revolution against the government of the Hungarian People's Republic (1949–1989) and the policies caused by the government's subordination to the Soviet Union (USSR). Western music gradually came to be heard in Hungary, and Bartók's music regained popularity in the 1960s because of its modern techniques.

⁵³ G. Kroó. "Hungarian music Since 1945," Chapter in *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, trans. Sara Karig and Fred Macnicol (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974), 104.

started to explore twelve-tone techniques and the music of Hindemith; György Kurtág looked to Bartók and Webern for inspiration.⁵⁴

I chose three composers as representative of the post-Bartók generation: Pál Kadosa, Ferenc Farkas, and Jenő Takács. All of them were connected to Kodály and Bartók. The former two composers were Ligeti's composition teachers at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Ligeti spoke highly of his teachers in an essay published in 1949, praising Kadosa as the boldest harmonist with "interesting formal problems, exciting metric and technical bravura," and Farkas as the master of vocal music.⁵⁵ Takács' works reflect a mixture of Kodály and Bartók's approaches using folk melodies and rhythms, and some more advanced piano writing similar to Bartók's writing.

I. Pál Kadosa (1903-1983)

Pál Kadosa studied with Kodály at the Budapest Academy of Music (1921-1927), yet his compositional idiom is closer to Bartók in its rhythms and asymmetrical phrase structures. Kadosa taught piano and composition at the Fodor School in Budapest (1927-1943) and the Goldmark School of Music (1943-1945), and eventually started teaching at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1945. His pupils include legendary composers and pianists such as György Kurtág, György Ligeti, András Schiff, Zoltán Kocsis, among others. Kadosa founded the Modern Music Society between World Wars I and II, and was active in multiple organizations to promote new music in Hungary after World War II.⁵⁶ Like most post-war composers, Kadosa

⁵⁴ Ibid. 100.

⁵⁵ C. Floros. *Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 11.

⁵⁶ Roger Dettmer. "Pál Kadosa— Biography," accessed January 2022, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/pál-kadosa-mn0002168401/biography>

demonstrated an impersonal style of objectivity in his music. Sándor Veress, one of his contemporaries, commented that Kadosa's lyricism is "always followed by a grimace, as a kind of apology for the unintentional sudden emotion."⁵⁷

Kadosa was influenced by neo-classic Stravinsky and modernist Hindemith in the revival of Baroque genres and techniques, and his music shows a "restrained and difficult lyricism" that was highly effective in his instrumental writing.⁵⁸ Kadosa's early compositions demonstrate his desire to present folk elements in avant-garde contexts. He usually inserted modal interludes of Hungarian flavor between extremely complicated passages to add a lyrical character to his music. His well-calculated contrapuntal approach presents a rational, unemotional musical style while Bartókian devices provide rhythmic pulsation for excitement.

After World War II, Kadosa's works are meditative, simple, and completely opposite from the complicated method of his previous pieces. He returned to his signature rhythmic intensity and clear structures, and included more twelve-tone elements in his later compositions.

4 Caprichos, Op. 57, No. 3 and 4 (1961)

Character pieces with motoric movement dominate Kadosa's *oeuvre* from his early folk arrangements and exercises for beginners dating from 1929, to his late series of effective showpieces from 1961: *Four Caprichos* (Op. 57) and *Kaleidoscope* (Op. 61).

Kadosa was vice-president of the Hungarian Arts Council (1945-1949), active member of the Hungarian Composers' Union (1949-1953), and president of the Hungarian Performing Rights Bureau (after 1953).

⁵⁷ Rita Kaisinger, trans. Erzsébet Mészáros. "Pál Kadosa," liner notes for Pál Kadosa, *Pál Kadosa: Piano Music*, Zoltan Kocsis, recorded December 1970, Hungaroton, 2001, CD, 8.

⁵⁸ J. S. Weissmann. "Guide to Contemporary Hungarian Composers (I) The Early Decades of Twentieth Century," *Tempo*, no.45 (1957): 27.

I chose two capriccios from his Op. 57 to perform. The third capriccio is an effective miniature with wide emotional changes. It starts with carefully designed dotted rhythms in a sad mood, and freely fluctuates between *rubato*, *ritardando*, and acceleration markings. As the tempo gradually moves faster, Kadosa uses arpeggiated patterns to sweep through the piano from low to high registers to create a sense of agitated passion. Contrasts can be found everywhere in the piece. There is a sudden drop to the low register, like an unexpected fall to the abyss. The sweeping gesture never reaches a fulfilling climax, but creates a sense of being lost and unsettled. At the quiet ending, the right hand moves up in dissonant chords, and reaches to nothingness as if the struggle and sadness never happened.

The last capriccio of the set, *molto vivace*, shows two typical features of Kadosa's piano writing: he uses repeated and running patterns to create motoric excitement, and writes highly-chromatic melodies. Off-beat accents on dissonant intervals and chords create an anxious atmosphere, while the attacks in the low registers as strong reminders of Bartók's percussive piano idiom.

II. Ferenc Farkas (1905-2000)

Ferenc Farkas studied composition with Leo Weiner, a romanticist who focused mainly on a conservative style yet shared Kodály and Bartók's interest in folk music. The earlier works of Farkas showed similarity to Weiner's music: both of them used repeated melodies, diatonic harmony, clear structure and traditional forms. Further musical influences came from Impressionism and Italian lyricism. Farkas went to Rome to study with Ottorino Respighi from 1929 to 1931. This experience influenced Farkas' compositional style profoundly— Respighi's

music not only demonstrated the art of instrumentation but opened Farkas' vision for modern art.⁵⁹

Like all the post-war Hungarian composers, Farkas often employed folk elements in his early works. He used modern techniques more in his operas and orchestral works—he was the first in Hungary to use dodecaphonic techniques in orchestral works in his *Prelude and Fugue for Orchestra* (1944-47). Overall, the diversity of styles in his compositions ranges from folk music to dodecaphony, and from German romanticism, Italian lyricism to Impressionism.⁶⁰

Three Burlesques for Piano (1941)

In the 1940s, Farkas' interest shifted from his earlier folk enthusiasm to ancient airs and Baroque genres. Consequently, he wrote several works inspired by old traditions, including *Three Burlesques*. Burlesque is “a title for musical works in which serious and comic elements were juxtaposed or combined to achieve a grotesque effect”.⁶¹ All three burlesques create humor through their contrasting textures and characters.

The first piece, *Allegro*, opens with a serious statement followed by tremolos played by both hands, and then quickly switches to a dance-like variation in hemiola. Farkas constantly changes the meter and creates rhythmic excitement through different groupings and accents in the 5/8 and

⁵⁹ “Biography by A, Farkas” accessed January 2023, <https://ferencfarkas.org/biography/>

⁶⁰ Imre Fabian. “Modern Hungarian Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* Volume LI, Issue 1 (1965): 205–14, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mq/LI.1.205>

Farkas briefly experimented with dodecaphonic music in his *Preludio e Fuga for Orchestra* (1944-1947). He soon returned to a more conservative approach in 1949 for fear of sanction from the Communist government of Hungary.

⁶¹ Erich Schwandt. “Burlesque,” Grove Music Online, last modified January 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.04381>

7/8 measures. The humor of this piece lies in its wide range of dynamics and registers, and frequent sudden reveals of character.

Contrary to the lengthy first piece, the second piece is a short yet effective piece with a memorable, folk-like melody. It is clearly structured by two contrasting materials: a unison of sweeping, abrupt chromatic patterns, and the folk melody with detailed articulations. The melody is always interrupted abruptly by the sweeping gestures, making the ending of the piece even more grotesque and bold.

To end the humorous set, the last piece features endless running notes with lots of abrupt accents. The motive repeats in a stubborn manner and thus creates a sense of innocent madness. It is bold and effective that Farkas ends the piece simply with ascending broken triads from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*.

III. Jenő Takács (1902-2005)

Takács was a concert pianist who toured around Europe, Asia, North Africa and the United States. He also taught piano in Egypt (1927-1932, 1934-1937), The Philippines (1932-1934), and the United States (Cincinnati, 1952-1970). His exposure to highly diverse cultures helped him shape a unique musical language that combined folk music with modern techniques. His compositions cover all twentieth-century styles from neoclassical, neoromantic, twelve-tone technique, jazz, to music of totally abstract constructions.⁶² While it is difficult to define the constantly developing styles of Takács, three periods of different characteristics can be

⁶² J. Perkins. "An Introduction to the Piano Music of Jenő Takács," last modified 2004, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/An+introduction+to+the+piano+music+of+Jeno+Takacs.-a0115407421>

recognized. Takács' early compositions focus on Hungarian folk music, and show Bartókian language in their vivid rhythms. In his middle period, his interest in folk music expanded to music worldwide— particularly folk music of the Philippines and Egypt and other Arab countries. Takács learned about the compositions of the Second Viennese School after he settled in Cincinnati. His late compositions explore multiple avant-garde devices like dodecaphonic and other serial techniques. In the 1980s and 1990s, Takács synthesized all the styles in his compositions and “shows his affinity for lively synthetizations in the spirit of composers from the Baroque or Classics, ...”⁶³

Takács was friends with important composers of the twentieth century like Kodály, Bartók, Dohnányi, Berg, Hindemith and Ligeti. He shared Kodály and Bartók's interest in folk music. *Philippine Island Miniatures*, Op. 34, and *From Far Away Places* Op. 37, are two collections of children's pieces that were inspired by folk music of Asian and North African countries. Lots of his piano compositions are character pieces that embody widely differing styles from Renaissance to twentieth century.

Drei Bagatellen, Op. 10 (Three Bagatelles, 1927-1929)

Drei Bagatellen (Three Bagatelles), Op. 10, is a set of three character pieces with Renaissance influences. The first piece, *Prelude-Madrigal*, subtitled “*Song of Exiled Warriors*,” is based on a chant-like melody in a quasi cantus-firmus arrangement. This slow-paced melody acts as the basis of the polyphonic chorale, while other voices apply contrapuntal devices. It is in simple ternary form: Andante- Allegretto grazioso- Andante.

⁶³ C. Heindl, “Path of Life and Work,” last modified 2007, http://www.takacsjeno.com/biographie_en.html.

The following *Pastorale antique* is also in simple ternary form. The constantly changing meter and the irregularity of phrase structures create a sense of freedom. Section A opens with a folk-like melody in irregular meters. The B section varies on a two-measure, four-pitch melody for multiple times, each time with different length and different contrapuntal treatments. The returning A section is a simple repetition of the beginning.

Takács concludes the set with a *Rhapsodietta*. This small-scaled rhapsody shares the tradition of the slow-fast tempo scheme in Hungarian rhapsodies by Liszt and other European composers. The slow section begins with a three-note motive (B-E-B) in the soprano voice for three times, and the bass echoes the motive afterwards. This section is curiously in an irregular phrase structure of 6+ 5. Unlike the prolonged building up process in Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, this piece goes into the *Vivace energico* immediately. A unique, drum-like accompanying pattern opens this grotesque section with trills on weak beats. The opening pattern also serves as an interlude between variations of two essential melodic statements. Corresponding to the irregular phrase structure of the slow section, the grouping of these two melodic statements is in 5+ 6. Variation techniques in the *Vivace* section include changes or expansions of intervals in the melody, doubling in octaves, embellishment, and rhythms. The brilliant, wild coda, *Presto*, ends the piece with exciting dissonances and melodic octaves in extreme registers.

Drei Minuten für Klavier, Op. 123 (1997)

As suggested by the title, Op. 123 is a set of three-minute pieces. This piano set represents a synthesis of folk tunes and avant-garde techniques that is typical of the late compositions of Takács'.

The first movement, *Andante rubato*, bears the title “*Like a Hungarian Folksong*.” The melody in its narrow range of pitch resembles a peasant song, and the dotted rhythm is typical of Hungarian dances. The left-hand accompaniment is in Bartókian four-note clusters.

The second movement, *Anti-March*, highly resembles the idiom of Bartók’s percussive movement, “*With Drums and Pipes*,” in his suite *Out of Doors*. While left-hand clusters punch accents on irregular beats, the right-hand melody starts in a low register in a grotesque style. Random repetition of notes and intervals appear briefly for four measures in a higher register, then the melody quickly drops back to the bass. The piece ends with an exchange of clusters between hands, then fades away into quietness.

Chasing Shadows, the last movement, is a written-out improvisation in the style of Impressionism and modern techniques. It starts with rapid sweeps of scalar or arpeggiated patterns like that found in Debussy’s music, and later surprisingly leads to dissonant intervals between hands. The most audacious technique here is a sudden appearance of a cluster on black and white keys, played simultaneously by right and left lower arms. This abstract piece ends with quiet patterns in dissonance, which are to be repeated at the pianist’s desire until the end.

Program Notes: Miklós Rózsa

Hungarian-American composer Miklós Rózsa (1907-1995) was a composer best known for his award-winning film music, yet he claimed he “lived a double life” in his memoir, *Double Life* (1982) as he never stopped writing music for classical concert purposes.⁶⁴ His music was highly regarded by musicians like violinist Jascha Heifetz, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, and conductors Pierre Monteux and Bruno Walter. However, the majority of the classical world tends to assume that a popular film music writer would not be a top-rated composer, a likely underestimation of the composer. Rózsa’s classical *oeuvre* covers all genres: orchestral music, chamber works, instrumental solos, and vocal pieces. He composed in almost all traditional genres: sonata, variations, concerti, suites, piano trios, string quartets and quintets, art songs, and chorus. His pieces have yet to enter the standard repertoire in spite of the fact that his dramatic effects and melodic lyricism would have great appeal to classical audiences.

Born in Budapest, Rózsa was concerned about the lack of individuality in contemporary composition in Hungary due to the overall focus on folk music. Thus he chose to complete his musical training in Germany. It did not mean Rózsa opposed the music of Kodály and Bartók—his admiration for these two composers motivated him to write lots of compositions with unquestionable Hungarian folk influences. In his early years, he often played the violin with local gypsy bands and collected tunes in his notebook, from which he was inspired to compose his *Variations on a Hungarian Folksong*, Op. 4, *North Hungarian Peasant Songs*, Op. 5, and *Dance* from his ballet *Hungaria*. Rózsa was fascinated by the expression and the rhythm of folk

⁶⁴ I. S. Mowis. “IMDb Mini Biography,” accessed January 2023, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000067/bio?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm
Rózsa’s classical pieces include violin and piano concertos, concerto for string orchestra, and others. His *Notturmo Ungherese* is influenced by Bartók.

tunes he heard in his childhood, but his folklorist interest was not as methodical as Bartók's; he was never interested in transcribing the melody note by note or to record the words.⁶⁵

Rózsa went to Leipzig to study chemistry per his father's request, yet soon turned back to music, the calling from his heart. Having internalized folk influences in his writing, his main goal was to pursue his unique style that was different from the compositional style of the others in Hungary. He turned to film music for financial reasons, but his thorough classical training allowed him to use his expertise in orchestration and counterpoint to his film scores. He realized that his introduction "to certain asperities of rhythm and harmony which would not have caused anyone familiar with the serious musical scene to bat an eyelid" would "cause consternation in certain musical quarters in Hollywood."⁶⁶ He insisted on his own style in *Double Indemnity* (1944) despite arguments with the music director of the film company, *Paramount*, and eventually proved himself right. He won seventeen awards for his film music, using techniques common in classical music writing which were new to Hollywood filmmakers' ears.⁶⁷

Rózsa received positive feedback on his classical pieces from his childhood idols. Kodály spoke warmly of Rózsa's music to Eugene Ormandy, and Bartók happily cited all Rózsa's publications with Breitkopf & Härtel from Op. 1 onward to Rózsa's friend in 1941.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Christopher Palmer. "Biography," The Miklós Rózsa Society, accessed January 2023, <http://www.mrs.miklosroza.info/bio.html>

⁶⁷ Rózsa said that his writing, like the clashing sounds of minor seconds and other dissonances, common to classical music, was too innovative and unpleasant to his director's very conservative approach and led to some arguments. Rózsa insisted that it was perfect to convey the moods of the plots.

Kaleidoscope, Op. 19 (1946)

Rózsa only wrote five pieces for solo piano: *Variations for Piano*, Op. 9 (1932), *Bagatelles*, Op. 12 (1933), *Kaleidoscope*, Op. 19 (1946), *Sonata*, Op. 20 (1948), and *The Vintner's Daughter— 12 Variations on a French Folk Song*, Op. 23 (1952).

Kaleidoscope, Op. 19 is a set of six character pieces with joyful depictions of childhood images, dedicated to his son Nicholas and his daughter Julia.

The first piece, *March*, is full of energy. With the steady, regularly accented left-hand chords, Rózsa creates a vivid image of a soldiers' march. Expression markings like *vigoroso*, *energico*, *molto ritmico*, *deciso*, *risoluto*, all suggest the military character of this spirited piece.

Second piece, *Zingara*, is marked *Lento all' ongarese*. It is the most Hungarian influenced piece in the set. Both hands take turns playing tremolos throughout the entire piece to imitate the sound of the cimbalom. The opening melody of the interval of fourth, and the rhythm of “long-short-short-long”, are common techniques composers used to write in Hungarian style. This expressive piece ends with the right hand repeating a four-note pattern, which strongly resembles the improvisational performance practice of the gypsy band.

Musette, marked *allegretto giocoso*, is with a pastoral touch. While the left hand takes the role of the drones of the bagpipes, the right hand sings melodies within limited pitches— a typical characteristic of folk songs. In the middle section of this ternary-form piece, marked *più tranquillo*, Rózsa instructs the player to stay quiet yet to bring out the ostinato bass simultaneously.

The fourth piece, *Berceuse*, is a simple lullaby in ternary form with a tender, soothing quality. Although most berceuses are in 6/8 time, Rózsa wrote this gem in 4/4 time. The beautiful melody simply floats above the repeated accompanying pattern, and creates a sweet, innocent atmosphere without much dynamic shaping.

Chinese Carillon, the fifth piece, is marked *quasi campanelli*—like bells. This lovely piece chimes in the high register of the piano throughout in a playful manner. The overall crystal sound, the repeated accompanying pattern in quartal harmony, and the busy, crisp staccato articulation for both hands are reminiscent of the fourth movement, *Empress of the Pagodas*, of Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* for piano duet.

The last piece, *Burlesque*, concludes the set with grotesque humor. It is as if the set comes home to an energetic style after visiting pieces of lyricism, pastoralism, simplicity and playfulness. The seemingly serious opening quickly gives way to its childlike, dance character. Rózsa used *fortissimo* and *subito piano* here for the first time in the set to achieve a sharp contrast between sections. The entire set ends with quiet, crisp chirps in the opposite registers of the piano after a loud, pedaled sweeping arpeggiated gesture, which brings extra humor to the lively concluding piece.

Program Notes: György Ligeti

György Ligeti and His Piano Etudes

Influenced by Kodály and Bartók, Ligeti (1923-2006) collected and published Hungarian and Romanian folk tunes in the 1950s. In the 1970s, Ligeti started to blend diverse ethnic elements with Western techniques to present a unique synthesis. Like most post-Bartók composers, Ligeti embraced Bartók's legacy in his early years, and later strived to break with the Bartók tradition to establish his own style.

In reality, piano music is my main area. For the piano etudes, the sound worlds of Debussy and Ravel played a major role [...] although my piano etudes are not at all Chopinesque or Lisztean, and not Debussy-like either.⁶⁸

Most of Ligeti's major late compositions are in traditional forms and techniques, and the three volumes of *Piano Etudes* (1985-2001) are striking examples of this feature.⁶⁹ These etudes entered the recital repertoire within a short time after their composition, and they have been topics of scholarly publications for their novelty and virtuosity. Ligeti claimed that his etudes are based on the European tradition, especially of the piano music by Schumann, Chopin, and the hemiola writing by Brahms. However, Bulgarian rhythms, African drumming, Indonesian

⁶⁸ Floros. *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 156.

⁶⁹ Ligeti used some traditional forms in his later works: *Passacaglia ungherese for Harpsichord* (1978), *Horn Trio* (1982), *Violin Concerto* (1993), and *Piano Etudes* (1985-2001). He embraced baroque techniques like ostinato and retrograde canon in his *Passacaglia ungherese for Harpsichord*; his *Three Pieces for Two Pianos* (1976), *Le Grand Macabre* (1977), and the first *Magyar Etüdök* (1983) are all in retrograde canon.

gamelan, Caribbean salsa, Brazilian samba, and Conlon Nancarrow's music for player piano, all contributed to the creation of these three volumes of unique piano works.⁷⁰

Piano etudes by composers such as Clementi and Czernyi are primarily extended technical exercises that were not meant for concerts. In the hands of Chopin and Liszt, the etude as a genre was transformed into concert repertoire and reached a high level of artistry. For composers after the nineteenth century, piano etudes represent both pianistic and compositional challenges. For instance, while each of Debussy's twelve etudes represents a particular pianistic technique, it also demonstrates compositional challenges that Debussy set for himself, such as limiting himself to the interval of a fourth or writing particularly to create sonorities. Other examples in this trend are Bartók's *Three Etudes*, Op. 18, and Messiaen's *Quatre Etudes de Rythme*— the former deal with unusual intervals and complex harmonics, and the latter deal with rhythmic problems.⁷¹ Following the example of these and other twentieth-century composers, Ligeti's piano etudes each represent several compositional experiments with rhythm, micropolyphony, and other complex compositional techniques.

Compositional Parameters

It is natural for a post-Bartók Hungarian composer to treat rhythm as a central musical parameter. Ligeti's rhythmic complexities include even multiple rhythmic layers in different parts in the etudes— a trait inspired by the late medieval isorhythmic techniques.⁷²

⁷⁰ Floros. *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 157.

⁷² Wolfgang Marx. "Ligeti's Musical Style as Expression of Cultural Trauma," in *Ligeti's Cultural Identification* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 244.

Isorhythmic techniques are methods to develop the same melodic material at different speeds, typically in different parts of a piece.

Ligeti applied his best known compositional tool, micropolyphony, into the etudes. These seemingly unstructured pieces are actually highly organized in complex ways, and there is no “predictable structural development or goal that they aim for.”⁷³ He abandoned the traditional formal structure of development to create forms that seem static “as if the music stands out of time.”⁷⁴ Related to his favor for micropolyphony, scholar Wolfgang Marx argued that destruction is another important parameter. Ligeti “liked to establish an ordered structure which is then gradually destroyed by changing small, initially imperceptible details.”⁷⁵

Ligeti embraced hyper-extreme dynamics and registers in the etudes to create an illusion of spatial perspective. Loudness represents an abstract object getting closer, while softness represents distance. Quiet endings and expressive effects can be observed frequently in Ligeti’s three books of etudes.⁷⁶ Expression markings to indicate distant or fading-away effects like *morendo*, *lontano*, *perdendosi*, or *pppppp*, occur frequently in the ending of the etudes.

⁷³ Ibid. 238.

⁷⁴ Dalos. “Ligeti and the Beginnings of Bartók Analysis in Hungary,” in *Ligeti’s Cultural Identities* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 402.

⁷⁵ Marx. 248.

The most obvious example is the first etude, *Désordre*. The complicated yet regular patterns were played simultaneously between two hands. With the right hand missing gradually more and more notes to shorten the pattern, it gets out of sync with the left hand. The sense of highly organized chaos, or a process of destruction, is built on this meticulous design.

⁷⁶ There are only four etudes with loud endings in Book I, two in Book II, none in Book III. Out of eighteen etudes, there are thirteen pieces with quiet endings. In the last two measures of Etude No. 7, *Galamb Borong*, Ligeti even wrote the following indication for quietness: “Here so soft, that the transition to the final rest is imperceptible.”

Notes on the Selected Etudes

No. 4 Fanfares

The fourth etude, *Fanfares*, is a study in ostinato. This ascending ostinato is in a rhythm of 3+2+3 eighths, played by either right hand or left hand. Some scholars claimed this pattern of *aksak* rhythm, while some argued it is a Bulgarian rhythm.⁷⁷ Regardless of this pattern's derivation, Ligeti is here clearly duplicating Bartók's techniques of using an asymmetrical rhythmic pattern unchanged throughout an entire piece as an organizing principle. Perfect specimens of this technique are Bartók's *Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythms*, the final pieces in his six-volume *Mikrokosmos*.⁷⁸ Opposed to the ostinato, there are frequent leaps and irregular rhythmic groupings in the other voice. While the ostinato is always accented on the first, the fourth and the sixth notes, the melody simultaneously presents irregular accents and thus creates a sense of displacement to the listener. The fanfare-like melody first appears in an intervallic manner, a distortion of traditional so-called "horn fifth". Another characteristic of Ligeti's work is the spatial illusion created by his use of extreme dynamics and registers. While the ostinato stays mainly in the background, the fanfare motif sometimes sounds from afar, sometimes close. Ligeti originally considered entitling the piece to either *Fanfare* or *Bartoque pour fêter Bartók*.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ C. Floros. *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 161.

Aksak means "limping" in Turkish. Aksak rhythm is a pattern of unequal beats like 2+3, 3+2, or their extensions like 2+2+2+3. It is common in music of the Middle East, namely Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and the Balkans. Ligeti used this rhythmic system to create additive meters.

⁷⁸ For other piano pieces based on *aksak* rhythms, see *10 Etudes on Aksak Rhythms* (1969) and *12 Preludes on Aksak Rhythms* (1969) by Turkish composer A. Adnan Saygun (1907-1991).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

No. 8 Fém

Referring to the metallically hard character of the eighth etude, Ligeti entitled this one *Fém*, which means ‘metal’ in Hungarian.⁸⁰ This piece is dominated by intervals of fifths; however, unlike the second etude which is strictly constructed in fifths, *Fém* embraced other intervals too.

The polyrhythmic structure of this etude consists of two parts. While the right hand is in 18 eighths (3+2+2+3+4+4), the left hand is in 16 (4+2+2+4+4). The ends of both parts coincide every twelve bars, and thus form five cycles in the pieces.

After the intense, metallic cycles, Ligeti ends the piece with a slow coda in quietness. This coda is a display of Ligeti’s ideal sound, “a tonal world where dissonance and consonance coexist and reconcile.”⁸¹

No. 13 L’escalier du diable

This etude is constructed on an alternation of the *aksak* rhythm of 2+2+3 and 2+2+2+3. The latter rhythmic structure is characteristic of a folk dance, *cadâneasca*, of a region in Romania where Ligeti visited in 1954.⁸² The rhythmic pattern established at the beginning is later expanded and contracted.

This etude consists of multiple chromatically ascending gestures that begin with pianissimo in low registers. These gestures then rise to harsh clashes in the highest register in multiple fortes. The climax immediately sinks into the abyss, followed by yet another futile attempt to climb the

⁸⁰ Ibid. 168. He abandoned his originally simple title of *Quintes*.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Temes. “Ligeti and Romanian Folk Music,” in *Ligeti’s Cultural Identities* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 364.

staircase. Ligeti described this process as a search for light in vain, a nightmare of constant failure to get to the top.⁸³

The indication “wild ringing of bells” and “like bells, gongs, tam tams,” appear in sections where motives in thirds or tritones are repeated. Floros argues that the bell-like motives are “obvious evocation of the demonic.”⁸⁴ The expression direction *minaccioso e maestoso* is marked toward the end of the bell section, requiring the music to be intimidating in a majestic manner.

⁸³ According to Constantin Floros’ interview with Ligeti, Ligeti originally planned to end his second book with a bright piece to contrast with the ending piece of the first book, *Automne à Varsovie*. His original intention to compose a piece like Debussy’s *L’isle joyeuse* changed drastically after his visit to Santa Monica, California in 1993, where he witnessed floods and human misery due to a severe winter storm. The thirteenth etude eventually received the current dark title, *L’escalier du diable*.

⁸⁴ C. Floros. *György Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), 162.

Summary

Liszt, Bartók, and Ligeti were three influential figures who altered the development of piano music profoundly. They expanded the possibilities of piano technique, and created new ways of expression that continued to inspire the next generations of composers. In the process of understanding these composers in their historical context, my curiosity about Hungarian style gradually shifted to awe about the legacies composers passed on. Their eternal urge to search for creation, the ideal, and beauty, is beyond time and borders.

Liszt was an irreplaceable icon whose impact on piano music has lasted until the present time in Hungary and worldwide. Dohnányi continued to compose in a Romantic style while embracing minimal folk materials. The potential of the folk elements, brought out by Kodály and Bartók, continued to influence Hungarian composers like Takács, Kadosa, and Farkas, who combined their ethnomusical interests with modern compositional techniques. Rózsa's musical language remained Romantic while Ligeti's compositional techniques expanded to a hyper-complex level that no other composer had reached before.

In great composers' hands, the answer to the question of "what is Hungarian style" transformed from nationalism to a synthesis of folklorism and modernism appreciated universally. Their resources of inspiration and compositional techniques were the tools that enabled these composers to achieve their unique voices.

Annotated Bibliography

Books

Dalos, Anna. *Zoltán Kodály's World of Music*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020.

Instead of writing a biography of Kodály, Dalos focuses on his thinking as a composer through analyses of his pieces. Discussion of Kodály's pieces includes his *String Quartet No. 1 and 2*, *Peacock Variations*, *Meditation on a motive of Debussy*, *Háry János Suites*, and other vocal and instrumental pieces. The author uses these musical examples to examine Kodály's stylistic development through compositional devices like folksong materials, church mode, counterpoint, fugue, and so on.

Marx, Wolfgang. *Ligeti's Cultural Identification*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019.

Marx considers Ligeti an icon of a new cosmopolitanism, a composer born in a Hungarian Jewish family, trained in Austria, and influenced by modern compositional techniques. Lots of Ligeti's own notes on his compositional journey are provided in the book. The author summarizes Ligeti's music as a highly original synthesis of "diverse ethnic influences with masterpieces of the Western repertoire," and lists his musical parameters like micropolyphony and complex rhythmic techniques.

Cooper, David. *Belá Bartók*. London: Yale University Press, 2015.

As a biography of Belá Bartók, this book describes the composer's life story along with detailed discussion on his important compositions, mostly with harmonic and formal analyses. Chapter nine covers Bartók's extension of interest to Arabic and African folk music, as well as jazz. Chapter ten discusses "the Liszt problem," trying to demonstrate how the diverse ethnicity of Hungary contributes to the difficulty in defining what Hungarian music is.

Floros, Constantin. *Ligeti: Beyond Avant-garde and Postmodernism*, trans. Ernest Bernhard-Kabisch. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014.

The book is divided into two main parts: the first part concentrates on Ligeti's biography, and the fundamental aspects of his work. This includes his wide range of interests like the complex of music from the Middle Ages, the folk elements of Hungary and Africa, the elegance of Debussy's and Stravinsky's neoclassical works, and electronic music by Stockhausen and Boulez. The extra-musical associations with science and math, visual arts, outer space, philosophy of time, and so on, altogether shapes the complexity of Ligeti's music. The second part goes into analyses of all Ligeti's fundamental works, which includes his etudes.

Hooker, Lynn M. *Redefining Hungarian Music: From Liszt to Bartók*. New York: Oxford Press, 2013.

The author provides a summary of important scholars' research focused on Liszt and Bartók. The book starts with the development of art and music in Hungary's history, continues with Liszt's legacy and the question of his "Hungarianness", and then discusses the shift of musical focus from gypsy music to peasant songs. Hooker then goes into details on Hungarian music writing from the standpoints of genre and rhythmic motives, to theoretical writings of what Hungarian music is. She points out how both Liszt and Bartók achieved their own voices through blending the old with the new, and that in this sense they are cosmopolitan composers who took inspiration from various national sources.

Suchoff, Benjamin. *Béla Bartók : A Celebration*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press: 2003.

The book consists of multiple essays, lectures, and scholarly papers. The discussion of Bartok's folk transcriptions from East European, Arabic, and Turkish music shows the reader Bartok's methodology. Suchoff makes harmonic and formal analyses of some of Bartok's important works to discuss his compositional development. There are a large number of musical excerpts in this book which serves as a great research tool.

Dohnányi, Ilona von. *A Song of Life: Dohnányi*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002.

Written by the composer's wife, this book provides lots of first-hand information of the composer and stories behind his compositions, but it often lacks evidence, supporting documents, or analyses on the musical works. Mrs. Dohnányi's description of the composer's achievement might seem exaggerated, but the detailed life stories help readers know Ernst von Dohnányi better as a human being.

Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt, Vol. 3, The Final Years: 1861-1886*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1996.

As the last volume of the author's three books of Liszt's biography, this book focuses on Liszt's artistic frustration and personal struggles in his final years. In addition to his health issues, the book illustrates Liszt's unfulfilled pursuit to marry Princess Carolyne and his subtle, complicated, and troubling relationship with Wagner. Walker also discusses Liszt's concept of "music of the future," which appeared in his later works like *Nuage gris* and *Bagatelle without Tonality*.

Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt, Vol 2: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Liszt's achievements in his Weimar years include his career as a conductor and Kapellmeister at the court of Grand Duke Carl Friedrich and later his son Carl Alexander, the piano masterclasses, the promotion of music of old masters like Bach and Handel as well as new music by Wagner and Berlioz, and the formation of the new Weimar School. Liszt's controversial treatise on

Hungarian music, his relationship with Wagner and the influence that each had on the other's musical development, are also covered.

Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt, Vol. 1, The Virtuoso Years: 1811-1847*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1987.

This volume focuses on the virtuosic pianist's early life, his transcendental technique, and his contribution to the revolution in writing for the piano. Pieces discussed include the *Transcendental Etudes*, *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, and many others. Walker also covers "War of the Romantics" between the conservatives in Leipzig and the innovation led by Liszt in Weimar.

Yeomans, David. *Bartók for Piano: A Survey of His Solo Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

The author provides a detailed explanation of Bartók's pianism, which includes articulation markings, dynamic accents, phrasing, fingering, and pedal use. The book serves as a great tool for pianists with its chronological survey of all of Bartók's piano works.

Szabolcsi, Bence. *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, trans. Sara Karig and Fred Macnicol. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974.

The author gives a clear outline of the history of music in Hungary from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. Musical influences through those centuries range from ancient Asian tunes, church music, troubadour songs, the *verbunkos* of the nineteenth century, to the folk-oriented music of Bartók. There are more than a hundred and twenty pages of musical examples at the end of the book to demonstrate the development of music in Hungary.

EBooks

Baker, James M. "A Survey of the Late Piano Works," *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

The author begins the chapter with the physical and mental stresses Liszt faced during his late years due to health issues and his never-ending travelings. He compares Liszt's earlier song *Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth* with the composer's late transcription of it to demonstrate the stylistic difference between his middle and later years. Baker groups Liszt's late piano works into six categories: music based on other composers' works, abstract pieces, nationalistic music, sacred works, music of death and mourning, and programmatic music. Analyses of multiple pieces are presented with musical examples.

Fischer, Victoria. "Piano Music: Teaching Pieces and Folk Arrangements," Chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Fischer discusses Bartók's logical and detail-oriented teaching and his focus on articulations and accurate rhythm, as well as his treatment of the piano as a percussion instrument for an extension of tone color. Bartók's *Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csík District*, *Bagatelles*, and *For Children* serve as examples to demonstrate how the composer uses folk materials in his works.

Losseff, Nicky. "The Piano Concertos and Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," Chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Losseff discusses Bartók's three piano concertos and *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* from several aspects: form, folk influences, percussive use of the piano, inspiration from nature. The author illustrates that when performing Bartók's music, one should treat the asymmetrical rhythms as a matter of accentuation rather than rigid notation.

Journal Articles

Kregor, Johnathan. "Stylistic Reconstruction in Liszt's Late Arrangements," *The Musical Quarterly* 91, no. 3/4 (Fall 2008): 202.

Kregor illustrates how earlier biographers of Liszt like Peter Raab tended to describe Liszt's late works as failures, and then points out how the prevailing idea of "late style" and its association with death and personal struggles, deepened by aestheticians like Theodor W. Adorno, can be misleading, especially in Liszt's case. The author gives examples of Liszt's earlier works, *Apparition* and *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, to demonstrate that the evocative quality and the seemingly vague harmonic plan are not sudden innovations during his late years.

Cannata, David B. "Perception and Apperception in Liszt's Late Piano Music," *The Journal of Musicology* (Spring 1997): 178.

Cannata uses three pieces to demonstrate the experimental aspects of Liszt's late piano works—namely *R. W. Venezia*, *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, and the "*Angelus!*" from the *Années de pèlerinage*. The author describes how the former two pieces have extra-musical associations, and illustrates experimental devices like augmented sonority and innovative structural plans. He writes about the exchange of musical opinions between Liszt and Wagner. The author also discusses in great detail the religious aspects and novel structural plans in the third volume of *Années de pèlerinage*.

Penrose, James F.. "The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt." *The American Scholar* (Spring 1995): 273-74.

The author disagrees that Liszt's transcriptions are empty virtuosity, and argues that the imperfect execution of the pieces is the reason why people do not always enjoy Liszt's works. Penrose admires Liszt's orchestral treatment of the piano in his transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, and *Liebsteod* from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

He also describes how Liszt's note-to-note transcription of Bach reflects Liszt's brilliant piano technique. He believes that transcriptions are just another kind of musical beauty.

Harley, Maria Anna. "Birds in Concert: North American Birdsong in Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3," *Tempo*, no. 189 (1994): 8–16.

Bartók's interest in birdsongs, according to the author, is reflected in the middle section of the slow movement in his *Piano Concerto No. 3*. A letter from Béla to Peter Bartók contains the composer's transcription of the bird call of the Towhee, which is certainly the motive of the middle section of the concerto. Harley lists three kinds of birds that can be found in North Carolina where Bartók lived in his final years. She provides transcriptions of the calls of the Towhee, the Hermit Thrush, and the Wood Thrush, and tries to find motivic resemblance in the concerto.

Bellman, Johnthan. "Towards a Lexicon for the *Style hongrois*," *The Journal of Musicology* (Spring 1991): 224.

Bellmann gives plenty of musical excerpts from Haydn, Schubert, Brahms, Liszt, and so on, to demonstrate the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements that define Hungarian style. Specific rhythmic patterns like *spondee*, *choriambus*, *Lombard rhythm*, and dotted rhythm are introduced. Many elements are used to imitate the sounds of certain instruments: the use of parallel fifths to imitate the sounds of bagpipe drones; the use of tremolo to create the effect of the *cimbalom*; the improvisational flourishes of melody to imitate the virtuosity of the Gypsy violinists, to name a few. Bellmann gives detailed examples for comparison.

Pesce, Dolores. "Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage*, Book 3: A Hungarian Cycle?" *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1990), 207–29.

After some analysis of each piece in Liszt's third volume of *Années de Pèlerinage*, Pesce provides an interesting argument that this volume is a Hungarian cycle with religious components. She describes how Hungarian elements are used conceptually and musically. She provides evidence that Liszt knew about the *Holy Crown of Hungary*, and how each piece in the third volume reflects the image of parts of the *Holy Crown*— from the cypresses, the guardian angels, the lift-up gesture, and so on. The melodic fragments of the second national anthem of Hungary, *Szoszt*, and materials of *verbunkos*, are included in Liszt's set.

Sárosi, Bálint. "Instrumental Folk Music in Kodály's Works: The Galánta and Marosszék Dances," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25, no. 1/4 (1983)

The author states that Kodály shows appreciation of the instrumental traditions of the Gypsy musicians, and includes many musical examples to show how Kodály's *Dances of Galánta* was strongly influenced by Gypsy violinists. The author then gives multiple examples of folk collections by Kodály and Bartók that reflect in great detail the melodies used in Kodály's *Dances of Marosszék*.

Bisdorf, Donald L. Review: Szabolcsi's "A Concise History of Hungarian Music," *Music Educators Journal* 54, no. 6 (1968).

Bisdorf gives a great summary of the book. He concludes that Magyar melody took inspiration from Asian influences, church modes, and troubadour songs of the Middle Ages. Well into the eighteenth century, *verbunkos*, the recruiting music of the army, took an important role and influenced composers from then on like Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Kodály and Bartók.

Fabian, Imre. "Modern Hungarian Music," *The Musical Quarterly* Volume LI, Issue 1 (1965): 205–14.

Fabian stands with Kodály and Bartók's claim and describes Liszt's music as "superficial Romantic Magyarism of Gypsy music," which is not the genuine sound of Hungary. He continues to introduce works by Kodály's contemporaries, Leo Weiner and László Lajtha, and Ernst von Dohnányi. The author points out how the pupils of Kodály treated the promotion of peasant music as their mission, and further introduces the next generation of composers, which include Pál Kadosa, Ferenc Farkas, Ferenc Szabó, György Ránki, János Viski, and so on.

Ogdon, John . "Bartók's Mikrokosmos," *Tempo* 65 (Summer 1963).

Ogdon argues that the achievement of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* is beyond most other progressive pedagogical materials, especially in its drill on articulation and its explorations of tonality. He also gives examples of pieces influenced by other composers, such as Bach, Chopin, Scriabin, Gershwin, Schoenberg, to name a few.

Waldbauer, Ivan. "Bartók's Four Pieces for Two Pianos," *Tempo* 53/54 (Spring 1960).

Waldbauer describes the *Suites* Op. 4a, Sz. 115a as a display of Bartók's compositional drive after his discovery of peasant songs in 1905, and provides the background of its later two-piano arrangement. Waldbauer analyzes the movements and points out that despite the traditional harmonic language, the *Suites* Op. 4a, Sz. 115a is full of novelty in its rhythm, meter, melody, and form. He briefly compares the orchestral version with the two-piano version, and points out the idiomatic pianistic changes Bartók made.

Weissmann, J. S. "Guide to Contemporary Hungarian Composers (I) The Early Decades of Twentieth Century," *Tempo*, no. 45 (1957)

This article provides brief introductions to multiple composers and their styles, including Pál Kadosa, Ferenc Farkas, Ferenc Szabó, György Ránki, and János Viski. Weissmann gives one musical excerpt of each composer's works to demonstrate their compositional styles and their influences from Kodály and Bartók.

Dissertation

Griffith, Samee. “Ernest von Dohnányi’s Winterreigen Op. 13,” DMA diss., University of North Carolina, 2015.

This dissertation meticulously analyzes each of the ten character pieces in *Winterreigen* Op. 13, from its motivic resemblance to Schumann’s *Papillons*, its use of cyclic elements, its structural arrangement similar to Schumann’s *Carnaval*, and its dedicatee and extra-musical components. Griffith shows how each character piece in this set corresponds to a verse or even only a line from the preface-poem by Victor Heindl—a lawyer and writer whose works were used by Dohnányi multiple times in his compositions. Performance notes are also provided in this dissertation.

Hwang, So Myung. “Stylistic Elements within Texture and Formal Structure of Ernst von Dohnányi’s Four Rhapsodies, Op. 11,” DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2010.

The dissertation includes a brief history of nineteenth-century rhapsody and the background of the composer that includes reviews of Dohnányi’s piano playing. Hwang examines the textural and formal structure of Dohnányi’s *Four Hungarian Rhapsodies*, and carefully analyzes the cyclic elements of the entire set.

Schneider, David E. “Gypsies, Verbunkos, and Bartók’s Debt to the Nineteenth Century,” DMA diss., University of Texas, 2000.

Verbunkos, music of an eighteenth-century Hungarian dance, was used in recruitment by the Austro-Hungarian army. Schneider explains how through the use of *verbunkos*, the dichotomy between peasant music and “Gypsy music” claimed by Bartók is not always sustainable. The development of *verbunkos* music was coeval with the growth of professional “Gypsy bands.” Schneider points out that the appearance of *verbunkos* elements in Bartók’s compositions can be considered evidence that is opposed to Bartók’s negative comments about “Gypsy music.”

Websites

Mowis, I. S. . “IMDb Mini Biography,” accessed January 2023,
https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000067/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm

This concise biography of Miklós Rózsa’s concise biography helps readers understand in a few sentences the prodigy’s musical training and his transition to film music. Rózsa’s classical pieces are mentioned, but the author gives a more detailed list of Rózsa’s film music in Hollywood, from *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940) to *El Cid* (1961). Rózsa’s own words are quoted here as evidence of how difficult it was for the composer to learn about writing music for films.

Palmer, Christopher. “Biography,” The Miklós Rózsa Society, last modified 2000,
<http://www.mrs.miklosrozsasociety.com/bio.html>

A lengthy biography is provided to tell Miklós Rózsa's life story, and the composer's own words at each state of his life are quoted. This biography focuses more on Rózsa's classical pieces rather than his film music. Information on the website include his recollection of childhood memory of novels by Hungarian authors before his immigration to the United States, his less-methodical approach to collecting folk songs, and his insistence to perform pieces by Bartók in school piano exams, all reflecting his love for Hungary and the achievements of Kodály and Bartók. The layout of the website makes it difficult to read, but the content is full and interesting.

Dettmer, Roger. "Pál Kadosa— Biography," accessed January 2022,
<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/pál-kadosa-mn0002168401/biography>

Without many details of the composer's life, this short biography serves as a good tool to understand Pál Kadosa's stylistic traits from Hungarian folk influences, to neo-classical examples like Stravinsky, to modernist techniques used by Hindemith. Kadosa is remembered as a promoter of modern music and a great teacher whose students include composers György Kurtág, György Ligeti, and pianists András Schiff, Zoltán Kocsis, and Desző Ranki.

Farkas, Andras. "Biography," accessed January 2023,
<https://ferencfarkas.org/biography/>

Written by the composer's son, this website carefully gives an outline of Ferenc Farkas' life and provides audios and videos of the composer's pieces. Andras Farkas provides the composer's own description of his stylistic changes, and photos with other important figures like his teacher Ottorino Respighi.

Heindl, C. "Path of Life and Work," last modified 2007,
http://www.takacsjeno.com/biographie_en.html.

This is the biography on Jenő Takács' official website. It provides an introduction to his style changes from impressionistic colors and Hungarian folk influences of his early works to Bartókian rhythm, and his later interest in the Second Viennese School and avant-garde playing techniques.

Perkins, J. "An Introduction to the Piano Music of Jenő Takács," last modified 2004,
<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/An+introduction+to+the+piano+music+of+Jeno+Takacs.-a0115407421>

As a piano student of Jenő Takács, Professor Jerry Perkins introduces the composer's piano works from pieces for young students to his concert works. Perkins emphasizes Takács' interest in music from many countries, especially music of the Philippines, Hungary, and North Africa—the pianist composer toured the world and was on the faculty of universities in Egypt, The Philippines, the United States, and Hungary. Perkins provides a short summary of Takács' life at the end of the article.

CD liner notes

Rita Kaisinger, trans. Erzsébet Mészáros. "Pál Kadosa." Liner notes for Kadosa, Pál.

Pál Kadosa: Piano Music, Zoltan Kocsis, recorded December 1970, Hungaroton, 2001.
CD.

The liner notes for this CD include a short biography of Pál Kadosa, and give a brief overview of his works on the CD in chronological order. Selected pieces include his *Six Etudes*, *Four Caprichos*, *Six Sketches*, *Sonatas No.1 and No. 4*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Sonatina on Hungarian Folksongs*, and his *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra*.