

Theses of DLA Doctoral Dissertation

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THE APPROACH TO COMPOSE SPECIFICALLY  
FOR STRING INSTRUMENTS AND PLASTICITY  
IN LEÓ WEINER'S WORKS FOR CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA AND HIS TEACHING METHOD

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## I. Background of the Research

His chamber pieces, his three string quartets (op. 4, op. 13, op. 26), his string trio (op. 6) and his two sonatas for violin and piano (op. 9, op. 11) are among the most important works of Leó Weiner's oeuvre. These works are representative pieces of his creative period. None of the analyses examine all of Weiner's chamber pieces in the context of his oeuvre and related compositions. András Batta's study entitled *Az ifjú Weiner Leó zeneszerzői stílusa [The Young Leó Weiner's Style of Composition]* (Budapest: LFZF Tudományos Közleményei 2, 1989) provides a stylistic analysis of folk music sources, while Lujza Tari's study entitled *Weiner Leó művészete a népzenei források tükrében [Leó Weiner's Art as Reflected by Folk Music Sources]* (Budapest: LFZF Tudományos Közleménye 2, 1989) identifies folk music sources in Weiner's works. With the exception of contemporary criticism and a few analyses (e.g., a radio series entitled *Hét zeneműve [Music Piece of the Week]*), a detailed analysis of the form, structure and character system of the works have not been carried out yet, and they have not been examined from the point of view of string instruments at all.

The literature found in the course of my research and interviews with his students reported by Melinda Berlász outline the approach to compose for specific instruments distinctive to Weiner and a sort of instinct for string instruments, which provided a high standard of knowledge for him during instrumentation of his works and the teaching of chamber music. His demanding attitude, often mentioned by his students, referring to the differentiated proportion of acoustic patterns and the plasticity encouraged me to seek relationship between the complex expectation of practice and the specific scoring of his works, and subsequently analyse the works for

composition for specific instruments, the technique of accentuation as well as plasticity.

## II. Resources

A major source of my dissertation is Melinda Berlász's work entitled *Weiner Leó és tanítványai [Leó Weiner and his Students]* (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa Kiadó, Second updated edition. 2003) where former students recall Weiner. This work has suggested the methodology of his teaching, his personality and his habitude to me. Additional sources include documents in his heritage where I could explore the early stage of his career through his correspondence with the Hacker sisters. The mosaic of Weiner's oeuvre has been completed and the circumstances of the composition of chamber works have been clarified by letters exchange with Frigyes Reiner, Antal Doráti and Imre Waldbauer. Documents related to his life and notebooks with Weiner's collection of criticism about his works have also been very useful.

Géza Csáth's collection of criticisms entitled *Éjszakai esztétizálás [Aestheticism at Night]* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1970), with a presentation of the musical life of the particular decades, helped my track the performances of his chamber works and their acceptance by the audience, and provided assistance in understanding the style expectations of the particular age (e.g., the interpretation of the fundamental expectation of a Hungarian tone) and Weiner's maturing style. Sándor Kovács's collection of articles entitled *Válogatások [Selected Articles]* suggested details of the career of the young Weiner and the early manifestation of his composition principles. Kovács's analyses shed light on the structure of Weiner's works providing orientation to the interpretation of those works.

Melinda Berlász's series of articles about his correspondence with Margit Varró provided valuable information about the circumstances of the creation of op. 26 (*"Drága Grétém!"*, Leó Weiner's letters to Margit Varró. 1938-1960 *Muzsika* 2005/8, 9, 10).

Sándor Gál György's work entitled *Weiner Leó életműve [Leó Weiner's Oeuvre]* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1959) is a biography published before the death of Weiner, containing unique details and information about the composer. A book of memoirs entitled *Magamról, másokról [About Me, About Others]* by his friend and colleague, Antal Molnár (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974) offers critical remarks to my picture about Weiner.

The interview made by Sándor Devich describes Weiner's ideas about plasticity and encouraged me to conduct further research. Tibor Varga, Ernő Barsi, Ágnes Deák and Endre Kemény provided valuable details about his teaching methods, his methodology, and his relationship with his students.

The following available score publications served as the basis for analysis:

op. 4 Lauterbach & Kuhn, Leipzig, 1908;

op. 6 Bote & Bock, Berlin 1909, 1937;

op. 9 Rózsavölgyi & Co., Budapest, 1912;

Editio Musica, Budapest 1958;

op. 11 Franz Bárd und Sohn, Budapest 1918;

Editio Musica, Budapest, 1955;

op. 13 Franz Bard und Sohn, Budapest (Score) 1923;

Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest (Parts), 1955;

op. 26 Rózsavölgyi és Társa, Budapest, 1949;

Editio Musica, Budapest 1950.

### **III. Methodology**

I have selected the six works for analysis in my dissertation that Weiner identified as his chamber works: op. 4, op. 6; op. 9, op. 11, op. 13 and op. 26. In the first phase of my research, I studied the available literature about his life and oeuvre as well as the documents and correspondence of his heritage, which helped me find missing details of his biography. I have interpreted his entire career in the light of the dichotomy of his oeuvre.

In the next step, I placed the six chamber pieces in his composer's eras. I have completed missing details of the creation of the works with information found during my research.

The second phase includes a traditional analysis of his chamber works based on the scores. The characteristics of the pieces are described by genre, order of movements; formal, structural and thematic relationships as well as by the inventory of the versatility of style features and system of characters of Weiner. That was followed by a horizontal, overall analysis of the works with a review of typical formal, structural and thematic features in addition to character contrasts and particular marking of related string articulations.

In the following step, I studied the manuscript of the scores of violin concertos op. 41 (unpublished yet) and op. 45, which, being orchestral arrangements, gave an insight to the fundamental markings of Weiner and thus provided directions to understand his ideas about instrument handling and plasticity. I collected available publications of his scores and used them to conduct analyses. The third area of research was his approach to compose specifically for instruments and his techniques of

accentuation that, together with an analysis of various sound layers, shed light on the plasticity of sound by way of interpreting scores from his chamber music.

The fourth area was a description of Weiner's teaching, an outline of his teaching essence. I contacted currently active Weiner students and collected details of his teaching methods, his ideas about chamber music, and received further information to better understand Weiner's approach to compose for specific instruments and plasticity constituting the basis of my dissertation.

#### **IV. Results**

Leó Weiner respected traditions. His world of sounds means a synopsis of results achieved so far with traditional tools but an individual taste. He adhered to the accumulated professional knowledge and the conservation of values both in his music and his teaching. He consequently adhered to beauty as an idol and that refrained him from applying a different tone in his music. The realm of forms in Weiner's chamber music is derived from the examples of classical forerunners but rich in diversified solutions the understating of which will help in developing the sense of forms. The differentiated sound formulas of his works preserved the richness of tones of the string school of the era. The pieces studied reveal a strong characterising susceptibility in addition to the continuation of the Beethovenian traditions (form creation, order of movements), a romantic world of sounds and the application of pedal point technique—and not only in the contrast of tones and dynamics but in its string aspects as well. A deep knowledge of the playing potential of instruments is apparent from

the manner he uses slurs, accentuation, pauses, drawing directions, articulations and string effects. Weiner's expressive force moves on a wide scale though he uses traditional sound tools.

Weiner applies a particular, differentiated technique of accentuation with the wide-spread application of characters, dynamics, contrasting, emphasis and the fortepiano effect. He is especially the master of handling dynamics and accentuation, which lead to the creation of complex sound layers.

Being a composer and teacher of theory, he approached works from a theoretical point of view, which was one of the pillars of his teaching work. It was important for him that the basis for performing a piece be the deep, analysing approach. He moved from the explanation of parts to the understanding of the whole. Weiner always approached musical works in a complex manner, and the priority between the theoretical man and the performer was determined by the work being performed. The other pillar of his teaching was the development of a differentiated sound. The fundamentals of Weiner's plasticity are the sensitivity of the sound tone, the transparency of various sound nuances, the defined role of the lead and accompanying parts, and the creation of a vivid proportion of sound layers.

## **V. Documentation of activities related to the subject matter of the Dissertation**

### **PROFESSIONAL PRIZES:**

2010	Bárdos Alice National Violin Contest, Special Prize for Instructor
2008	Zathureczky Memorial Contest, Prize for Instructor
2007	Prize of Artis-Jus Music Foundation, for teaching contemporary music
2007	Bárdos Alice National Violin Contest, Special Prize for Instructor
2006	Borsos Miklós Silver Memorial Medal
2005	XII <sup>th</sup> National Violin Contest for Conservatories in memoriam Ferenc Halász, Prize for Instructor
2005	Bárdos Alice National Violin Contest for Conservatories, Prize for Instructor
2004	Péterfy Prize by Győr City of County Rights
2003	Zathureczky Ede Memorial Contest, Prize for Instructor
1999	Title of Chief Councillor
1998	Halász Ferenc Prize
1987	Minister's Merit

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION, LECTURES HELD:**

2006	Lecture: "Talent Management at the borderline between Music School and Conservatory"
1999	Continuing education for Music School Teachers in Velem
1993	Continuing education in Szombathely

### **CONCERTS, COURSES PARTICIPATED IN:**

2008	Knittelfeld Kulturhaus, Austria, Silvesterkonzert, with the Johann Strauss-Orchesterrel, conducted by Hans Schamberger
2007	Vienna, Austria, New Year Concerts with Donautilharmonie, conducted by Georg Kugi
1981, 1982	Pommersfelden (Germany), International Music Camp
1977, 1978	Nyírbátor, participation in a violin course held by István Ruha and chamber music course held by composer György Kurtág
1975, 1979	Pécs, Jeunesse Music Camp, under the leadership of István Gyermán
1972	Yugoslavia, Music Camp (Istria, Grožnan), Carlo Chiarappa violin player (Endre Gertler's student)

### **AS INSTRUCTOR:**

1999	– annual "Music Without Borders" – International Musician Camp in Balassagyarmat, Leader of Master Course
1999	– annual Music Camp for String Players in Kaposvár – Founding Member, Leader of Master Course