

Theses of DLA doctoral dissertation

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THE RHETORICAL WAY OF THINKING IN
THE OBOE-CANTATAS OF
G. PH. TELEMANN'S DER HARMONISCHE
GOTTESDIENST

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I. Background of the research

The inquiry of interpretation of Baroque music has been a major topic since the beginning of my career. In addition to a throughout study of compositional devices as well as structure and harmony, a raised understanding of the art of rhetoric and rhetorical analysis can largely contribute in the process of obtaining proper knowledge of the music of this period. While the determining role of rhetoric-oriented reasoning in Baroque music has been remarked by several musicologists already in the beginning of the 20th century, the implication of these ideas in performance practice received far less attention. Specialized literature has mainly been concerned with the history and role of the rhetorical way of thinking, usually providing as well a description of rhetorical figures. Dietrich Bartel's *Musica Poetica* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) and Hans-Heinrich Unger's *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik* (Würzburg: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1941) has long been references in studies concerning this topic and have been of major importance while carrying out my research.

In more recent bibliography, Judy Tarling's book, *The Weapons of Rhetoric, (A Guide for musicians and Audiences,*

Corda Music, 2004) has been outstanding, in which the author's aim is to highlight the connection between an advanced practice of the rhetorical way of thinking and its influence on musical performance. In my dissertation I attempted to follow this direction, emphasizing the interrelation of rhetorics and performance practice by a detailed analysis of the oboe-cantatas of G. Ph. Telemann's *Der Harmonische Gottesdienst*.

II. Sources

In my research the writings of theorists relating to the topic and contemporary to the Baroque period have been of capital importance. Amongst these Johann Mattheson: *Der Vollkommene Cappelmeister* (Hamburg: Verlegts Christian Herold, 1739. Modern edition: Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1999), Johann Joachim Quantz: *Versuch* (Berlin: 1752. Hungarian edition: Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 2011), Athanasius Kircher: *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome: Francesco Corbelletti, 1650), and Johann Philipp Kirnberger: *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes IIe partie* (Berlin und Königsberg: J. G. Decker und G. L. Hartung, 1776) have been primary. To a better interpretation of the works of these theorists the studies and research of 20th and 21th century musicologists has been a great supply. I would

like to mention here Wolf Hobohm and Hartmut Krones, who, with their outstanding work, largely contributed to the international Telemann-research (Wolf Hobohm: „Deutlichkeit“ als kompositorisches Prinzip bei Telemann, Hartmut Krones: Zur musikalischen „Rhetorik“ in G. Ph. Telemann's Kantaten In: Novak, Adolf / Eichhorn, Andreas (ed.): Telemann's Vokalmusik. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2008). Other important sources have been Jan Wilbers's Musikalisches Rhetorik im Bachs Matthäus Passion, Walter Heinz Bernstein's Die Musikalischen Figuren als Artikulationsträger der Musik von etwa 1600 bis nach 1750 (Leipzig: Ebert Musik Verlag, 1994), Frode Thorsen's Georg Philipp Telemann Der Harmonische Gottesdienst (London: Toccata Classics TOCC 0084, CD booklet 2012), Steven Zohn's Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works (Oxford: University Press, 2008), Robert Donington's A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music (Hungarian edition in Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1978), Nikolaus Harnoncourt's Music as Speech: Ways to a New Understanding of Music (Hungarian edition in Budapest: Editio Musica, 1988), Claude V. Palisca's Baroque Music (Hungarian edition in Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), Géza Klembala's PhD Dissertation Rhetorical Elements in

Monteverdi's Vocal Art (The Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, 2005) and Tibor Pintér's PhD Dissertation *Affect and Ration* (ELTE BTK, Doctoral Programs in Aesthetics, Budapest 2001).

Since modern editions of Baroque works can occasionally contain misleading notes and information, I considered to be relevant to examine the analyzed pieces from manuscripts or facsimiles from the Baroque period.

III. Method

The novelty of my method is due to the approach of the topic. As a performer, I aimed to make theoretical knowledge applicable for the use of today's performing musician, deepening the relation between theory and practice. Judy Tarling's above mentioned work oriented me in this practical approach. In my dissertation I did not want to suggest the reader concrete and exclusive instructions, but to draw attention to certain factors which are present in the score, and could propose keys to reading that can influence the idea of interpretation and of the music itself. As a basis for my analysis vocal examples have been chosen, since according to my opinion, rhetorical references can be observed in a more

direct way. Another objective has been to suggest rhetorical hints in purely instrumental music as well. For this reason, after the analysis of the cantatas, I choose two movements from two oboe – sonatas by Telemann (a-minor Twv 41: a3, g-minor Tafelmusik III. Nr. 5), and used them to highlight certain elements that can be observed in the cantatas as well, where, due to their textual background, their musical meaning and character can be easier understood and retraced. A careful attention has been drawn to certain momentum, where the composer uses more than one rhetorical figure.

IV. Results

A considerable part of the oboe – repertory comes from the Baroque period. For this reason a certain awareness of the main tendencies of this epoch is of fundamental importance for oboe players. In the preserved musical material and in the modern editions based on facsimiles we find only few instructions in regard to performance. In my opinion it can be very useful to today's performer to get insight into the most determinant way of musical thinking of the Baroque era. The art of rhetorics has long been considered primarily by performers and teachers of modern instruments, as a purely theoretical parameter, unrelated to the performing process.

Drawing light to the practical aspect of the rhetorical way of thinking is the main result of my research. As a performer specialized in both Modern and Baroque repertoires, it is a vivid personal experience that these hints can be used by colleagues playing either on modern or on early instruments. Another fact of special importance is that the result of my research bears a practical aspect which makes it adaptable and applicable in music education as well, a proper knowledge of the different styles being a basic requirement in all the educational levels. In my experience the importance of the impact of the rhetorical way of thinking on historically informed performance practice is a so far hardly discussed area.

V. Documentation of activities in connection with the thesis

CD recordings:

J. S. Bach: Magnificat in E-flat major TXCD-009 (Ars Longa Choir and Orchestra, 1999), J. S. Bach: Christmas Cantatas MAE-003 (Ars Longa Choir and Orchestra, 2000), Noël English Renaissance and French Baroque Christmas Music OVA-031 (Musica Profana 2002),
S. Kusser: Orchestral suites, volumes I. & II. HCD 32337

(Aura Musicale, 2005), HCD 32552 (Aura Musicale, 2007), S. Kusser: Two Serenatas HCD 32633 (Aura Musicale, 2010)

Concerts:

June 1, 2004. J.S. Bach: Brandenburg concerto no.2, MTA Congress Hall (Patrick Henrichs, Anneke Boeke, János Pilz, Aura Musicale)

June 16, 2006. J.S.Bach: oboe-d'amore concerto in C-major, Eszterháza, Castle Concerts (Aura Musicale)

August 17, 2007. Summer Chamber Music Festival of Miskolc, Miskolc, opening concert in the Deszka Church, Miskolc, Baroque chamber music (Balázs Szabó, organ)

August 24-26, 2007. Kusser: Orchestral suites, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, (Aura Musicale)

December 22, 2008. Palace of Arts, Orfeo Orchestra, Purcell Choir, J.S.Bach: Cantatas BWV 64, 63 and 121, Magnificat in D major

December 7, 2010. Marcello: oboe-concerto in d minor, Reformed Theological University of Debrecen, Ceremonial Hall, Early Music Ensemble of Debrecen University

June 22, 2012. Sopron, Early Music Days, J. S. Bach: Brandenburg concertos nos. 1-2 (Capella Savaria)

July 20, 2013. Budapest, St. Michael's Church, A. Marcello: oboe-concerto in d minor (Ars Longa Chamber Orchestra)