

DLA doctoral paper thesis

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Stylised dances in
Johann Christian
Schickhardt's works

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I. PRECEDENTS CONCERNING OUR RESEARCH

There is relatively little information that can be found about the biography of Johann Christian Schickhardt (1682–1762). Sources of the 18th century, like the writings of Johann Gottfried Walther in *Musicalisches LEXICON, Leipzig, 1732* or the works of John Hawkins in *History of the Science and Practice of Music, London, 1776*, only mention the composer in a few sentences. The issue is similar as we proceed in time: the most renowned music dictionaries of the 20th century like *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, McMillan, London, 2001*; *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart – MGG J. B. Metzler-Verlag, Stuttgart, 2008*, describe the work of Johann Christian Schickhardt poorly and lack a more detailed presentation of the artist and his work. We can speculate though that Schickhardt has been popular in his time, considering that he had published 30 opuses, which is considered to be quite a considerable amount. Most of his works have been published more than once by prestigious publishers like *Roger-Amsterdam* or *Walsh-London*, thus having reached the most qualified musicians of the first half of the 18th century. What constitutes a significant part of Schickhardt's compositions is woodwind chamber music integrating the diverse stylistic elements of that time. Regardless of the genre or orchestration, his opuses are mostly following the structure of the "sonata de camera" making the integration of different stylised dances into the compositions possible. The great number of movements which bear the characteristics of the Italian style, their colourful and often entirely unique character would definitely deserve the attention of today's researchers, considering that there has been no analytical research performed concerning Schickhardt's work that focused on the typology of the dances until now.

II. SOURCES

Most of Schickhardt's work was not published by any modern contemporary publisher, but thanks to the contemporary internet databases, most of them can be accessed in facsimile copies. The most important writing about Schickhardt, entitled *Johann Christian Schickhardt (ca. 1681–1762): a Contribution to his Biography and a Catalogue of his Works*, dates from the 20th century and is written by musicographer David Lasocki based in the USA who studied Schickhardt's life and work in detail. In this article published in 1977 we can find more information about the composer's biography and the people to whom he could have been connected. The article contains the register of the 30 opuses and other preserved manuscripts. Another short article written by Renata Hübner-Hinderling entitled *Johann Christian Schickhardt in Hamburg*, (Tibia, 17, 1992), gives us a better insight into his life. This article is the last publication on this topic.

There is also a Hungarian bibliography regarding the dance genres: *Renaissance Dances and Baroque Dances* (Garabonciás Alapítvány, Budapest, 1997, 1999) by Kovács Gábor; *School of Early Dances* by Széll Rita, and *The French Renaissance* (Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 2001). These books offer plenty of information about the history and practice of early dances.

Concerning the interpretation of the music that accompanied these early dances, we consider Johann Mattheson's metaphorical ideas about the characteristics of different dance types in *Das beschützte Orchester*, (Hamburg, 1717) and *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739) as being an important source.

Johann Joachim Quantz writes extensively about tempo and the characteristics in *Versuch einer Unweisung* (Berlin, 1752,

Hungarian translation: Székely András, Argumentum, Budapest, 2011). Furthermore, I found very useful information in a peculiar travelogue containing exact metronome markings, which can be coupled with some dance characters (Johann Friedrich Hermann von Uffenbach, 1728. Quoted by Gabriele Klein – Christa Zipprich: *Tanz, Theorie, Text* (Lit Verlag, Münster-Hamburg-London, 2002).

III. METHOD

After the introduction and the chapter presenting the biography of Schickhardt, the paper focuses on the analysis of the dance characters, including a comparative analysis of the given character extended to a larger period of time than the beginning of the 18th century. Dances of the Baroque period went through significant changes, but almost all of them can be traced back to the 15th and 16th centuries.

The pulse, the musical accents, the system of expressed emotions, the proportioning of the motivic units sometimes are unaltered for centuries – only the diminution changes and the harmonic structure is adapted to that era's aesthetics. Not to mention certain melodic patterns that live through centuries and reappear anew from time to time in the most unexpected places. This phenomenon is true not only for the dances of the baroque period, but for all kinds of music. But since in the case of middle baroque compositions we cannot disregard the known dance characters, our research offers several possibilities to compare the different sources.

Through the often seemingly exaggerated examples taken from Schickardt I would propose the conclusion that the practice of stylised dances offers a wider horizon of interpretation. The question

is until when can we talk about the presence of a certain dance type or when can we discuss in general about the combined functioning of similar genres or their interaction?

I analysed the dance genres by taking the main dances of the suite (*allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue*) followed by the freely inserted movements (*menuet, passepied, gavotte, bourrée, loure*). This specific order was generally used first of all in the second part of the 17th century by German composers in their works for keyboard instruments and it was not at all typical in French music or in the Italian *sonata de camera*. Although this traditional order of the dances can be found in Schickhardt's works, following a certain pattern in organising the order of the dances does not seem to be a priority in his work.

Yet I chose to follow the traditional order, because it facilitates a more organised analytical view over the tempo, metre and other characteristics of the works. It is important to note that Schickhardt composed only stylised dance music and his work can only indirectly be linked to everyday dances of his era. Despite this, I extended my research to various dance descriptions and books, especially when I hypothesised an influence on the analysed movements. The analysis starts with the short presentation of the dance type in which I underlined only those historical and etymological details that were relevant to this paper.

After that – based on a set of criteria – I conducted a comparative illustration with examples based on the title, character designation, possible varieties of bars, types of upbeat, ornamentation and diminution solutions, harmonic relationships and questions of symmetry. Besides Schickhardt's examples I cited solutions from well-known pieces, but in most cases I did not annex any musical

scores, considering that I used almost a hundred examples from Schickhardt's unknown and very rich work.

Since I presented the composer's work according to the dance types, I presented some of his opuses and sonatas in a more detailed manner in the section with the list of his works.

IV. RESULTS

Early dances have always been a part of my musical activity, especially since more than 20 years ago László Czidra drew my attention towards the variability of the baroque dances. That moment represented a milestone in my work as a musician and as a pedagogue.

The forgotten world of Schickhardt caught my attention through its individual sounds and extravagantly experimenting compositions during my studies. I had to realise soon that it is almost impossible to find any information on him and only a few of his works were accessible. I found a way to harmonise these two interests in my dissertation. At the moment, this research is the most detailed presentation of Johann Christian Schickhardt.

There was no Hungarian biography to be found until now, and it is also more complete compared to the German and English versions. Schickhardt's works are only enumerated in the above-mentioned articles, thus this dissertation is the first to present several important works and other small details of his life.

I consider the series Op. 30 a significant publication in music history, since this is the only book that contains a series of works that are composed in all the 24 keys that are not written for a keyboard instrument in the 18th century. I tried to present various works from this series and I also paid particular attention to it in the biography

of the composer and in the list of works to increase its popularity among the readers.

The comparisons of the dance types could offer helpful information regarding interpretation, since it offers the possibility to bring a more differentiated interpretation into the presentation of a particular piece. László Czidra intended to publish such a research, for which my work can be only a partial substitute. In my opinion, Schickhardt's works have a relevance first of all as pedagogical instruments and secondly as concert pieces. I hope that my research will contribute to the fulfilment of this purpose.

V. RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Concerts:

As a member of the Musica Historica ensemble I participated in more than a hundred renaissance and baroque dance manifests and historical performances along with *Arbeau Historikus Táncegyüttes*, *Company Canario*, *Garabonciás Együttes* (Budapest), *Amaryllis* (Kolozsvár, Romania), *Dramsam* (Gorizia, Italy).

Recordings:

- *Nicolas CHÉDEVILLE: Les Deffis ou L'etude Amusante*
- Ensemble LE BERGER FORTUNÉ, artistic director: Németh Pál (Hungaroton Classic, Budapest, 2008, HCD 32540)
- *Renaissance dances. Musical material of Gábor Kovács's edition of dances (Reneszánsz táncok. Kovács Gábor történelmi társastánc-kötetének zenei anyaga)* – Musica Historica, (Garabonciás Alapítvány, Budapest, 2010, GA-A-R01)

LECTURES:

- *Baroque Dance Types* – Vocational training for pedagogues, Debrecen, Simonffy Emil Music School, January 19, 2000
- *Typology of Baroque Dances* – Vocational training for pedagogues, Miskolc, Egressy Béni Music School, March 6, 2006
- *The Role of Early Dances in Teaching* – Vocational training for pedagogues, Szőlősardó, September 28–30, 2007
- *The Typology of Baroque Dances* – Vocational training for pedagogues, Székesfehérvár, Hermann László Music School, 2008
- *In memoriam Czidra László* – Early Music Festival, Csíkszereda, July 11, 2011
- *Dances in Music* – Lectures and concert series (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megye, 17–26 April, 2012
- *Stylised Italian Dances in Baroque Instrumental Music* – Early Music Festival, Csíkszereda, 9 July 2015
- “*The unknown acquaintance: Johann Christian Schickhardt*” – Conference, Miskolc, Palace of Music, 30 March 2016