Everyday life and representation in music.

# Pest-Buda in 1857

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PhD defense: in 2023



#### About the PhD project

The present research offers a new approach in terms of describing urban musical life with the case study of Pest-Buda in 1857. As part of the Habsburg Empire, Pest-Buda was the administrational, economical, infrastructural, and cultural centre of the Hungarian Kingdom. The research questions the statement that as part of the "passive resistance" after the revolutions of 1848/49, there was no lively or active musical life; and if there was, it mostly happened in order to establish a Hungarian *national* musical life.

The present research shades this statement based on comparative source processing from a microhistorical perspective. Besides aiming to show the until recently unknown venues of music, their repertoire, and the actors of the musical life including institutions, ensembles, and soloists, the research offers a comparison regarding *Konzertwesen* in and out of the Habsburg Empire. With the day-by-day processing of one year's (1857) press and archive material, several new questions and problems arose.

As a counterpoint to the everyday life, the political representation also has to be mentioned. The outstanding event of 1857 was Franz Joseph I and Elizabeth Wittelsbach's first joint tour in Hungary, which was preceded by several months of preparations throughout the country. In the course of my previous research, examining the role of music in political representation, I dealt with this visit based on the comprehensive processing of the Pest-Buda press in German and Hungarian languages. The research offers case studies in order to prove evidence of the double loyalty in musical representation, especially the first joint visit of Franz Joseph I's and Elisabeth's in Hungary, in 1857.

#### **Research method**

Although writing about urban music history may seem like a fundamentally retrospective choice, the methodology and representation of source research and the processing of sources promise new results.

The dissertation continues the research of Kálmán d'Isoz (1878–1956), which was abruptly ceased during the 1950s, before the death of d'Isoz. Although research continued in related fields (national opera, Ferenc Erkel, Franz Liszt), almost everything had to be started again in relation to the 1850s musical life in Pest-Buda. So, several statements, which were known regarding the 19th century music in Hungary, has to be revised.

In music history writing, there have already been examples of focusing on a single year or event, but in this case the approach is different, and the methodology of processing the sources also differs.

The aim of the research was to collect and evaluate the "objective" facts of the daily press and archival source material (advertisements, posters and leaflets, minutes, correspondence, etc.) about the "realistic" operation of the music scene in Pest-Buda. The processing of the sources and the topic is facilitated by the significant progress of digitization and the tools of the digital humanities.

## Sources and their processing

The starting point of the research was determined by the question: How did the structure of Pest-Buda's musical life look like on a daily basis, in 1857? What tendencies of *Konzertwesen* are relevant based on the sources? How can we interpret these tendecies rethinking the former theories? To answer this question, I used the existing data from my previous research, and supplemented them with additional press and archival materials to build a database.

The day-by-day processing of period's Hungarian and German-language newspapers provided an insight into a topic that we could not see in detail. So, this time-consuming research was needed. The database aimed to process the musical life in Pest-Buda in 1857, the musical institutions (theatre, opera, military bands, chamber music concerts, musical education etc.), and it is still being expanded. So far, I managed to collect nearly 5,051 data in Excel lines: news, advertisements, reports, or critics from the Hungarian and German-language newspapers for this single year, exclusively to the music data of Pest-Buda.

From this data collection it became clear, that in 1857, the everyday musical happenings took place at 112 venues, and around 75% of them were unknown. Some of them can be identified with

geolocational data. We realized a massive amount of unknown data: musicians, repertoire, supporters and organizers, etc.

Most significant press in 1857		
Title	Number of articles	Comments
Budapesti Hirlap	593	
Hölgyfutár	1166	
Pesther Lloyd	~900	ongoing (appr.)
Pesth-Ofner Localblatt	2329	
Appr. final number of		
data in Excel lines	~7000	

I supplemented these data with the musical documents of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, the Pest city council minutes (Budapest City Archives), and institutional archive documents preserved at the National Széchényi Library, and several other libraries and archives.

## Main fields and questions of the research

- Researching press in the digital world. A comparative approach from a microhistorical aspect
- Konzertwesen, venues, and actors. Transferring the repertoire
- Questioning "German" practice. Forming national canon
  - Les Lieux de mémoire and "fáklyászene" (Faklermusik)
  - Hungarian vs. German language press
  - The influence of Sen. Kornél Ábrányi
- Representing national and imperial loyalty. The imperial visit in Hungary, 1857
  - o Celebrating the Habsburgs in Pest-Buda
  - o Military orchestras as the symbols of double loyalty
  - o Erzsébet-emlény piano album

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