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Review

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Hárminc írás a zene elméletének és gyakorlatának különböző kérdéseiről, 1929 - 1969 (Thirty Papers on Different Problems of Musical Theory and Practice, 1929 - 1969)

by Lajos Bárdos

Review by: G. Papp

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in Wittenberg anerkannten Kernbestand des lutherischen Liedgutes gehören«, obwohl sich auch in diesem Teil viele Gesänge finden, die später verdienstermaßen weite Verbreitung gefunden haben.

K. CSOMASZ TÓTH

Bárdos, Lajos: *Harminc írás a zene elméletének és gyakorlatának különböző kérdéseiről — 1929—1969* (Thirty papers on different problems of musical theory and practice—1929—1969). Zeneműkiadó (Editio Musica) — Budapest 1969. (Magyar zenetudomány—Hungarian Musicology 13), 508 pages.

A rich—but not yet completed—life-work of exceptional beauty is contained in the written documents of the present volume, more precisely that part of this life-work that—by the very nature of its character—has exercised its effects mainly by word of mouth, and has influenced more than one generation of teachers, choir-masters and musicologists by the suggestive force of personal relations in everyday musical practice. As professor at the Ferenc Liszt Musical Academy in Budapest the author of this volume — whose seventieth birthday was warmly celebrated two years ago by his admirers, friends, colleagues and former pupils—has taught in the faculties of school music, choir-masters and musicology. Also as a leader of choirs Lajos Bárdos belonged to the best. He became a leading personality of the new Hungarian choir singing movement that developed in the thirties and was nourished on the art of Bartók and Kodály, and furthered our choir literature by compositions and interpretations of high artistic standards.

The versatile individuality of Bárdos as a teacher is characterized by his respect for what the music has to say

and for the intentions of the composer, by his longing to convey the feeling of beauty, by his endeavours to turn his pupils into ever better and better musicians, by the unlimited attachment to facts (i.e., to truth) and by the balance between practical and theoretical ways of thinking (to name only a few characteristic traits). But the same characteristics apply also to those of his papers which have been published at different times and in different places (mainly in periodicals) and which have now been republished with highly commendable care by the editors—in the occasion of the jubilee—in the 13th volume of Hungarian Musicology, edited by Ferenc Bónis.

The volume contains thirty longer or shorter papers on numerous aspects of musical analysis in which the subjects are examined from the viewpoint of rhythm, melody, harmony, form and prosody. These very concepts are also the titles of the single chapters into which the papers have been arranged and to which the chapters “Choir life” and “Miscellanea” have been added. The most important papers are those which deal with folk rhythms, scales, tonal systems, harmonies and problems of realistic interpretation. In the following lines an attempt is made to summarize the results of these analyses. Right from the beginning it should, however, be remarked that in the course of his analysis of the various compositions the author met many and many a time with recurrent, almost typical, non-individual phenomena to which musicology has not yet given names. Bárdos felt highly convinced of the necessity to give names to these phenomena which he had discovered (or if not discovered, at least more profoundly perceived than others had done), or to widen the meaning of already known technical terms and

not to content himself with merely describing them. These new keywords and explanations will be found in the last paper under the title "Little Encyclopaedia".

Only one of the papers has so far been published in a foreign language, the study *Természetes hangrendszerek — elterjedésük kulcsa, mérésük módja* (Natürliche Tonsysteme — Methode ihrer Messung, *Studia Memoriae Belae Bartók Sacra*. Budapest 1956, p. 209). In this paper, the author searches for an answer to the question why the major second and the minor third are the basic elements of folk music, wherever on Earth this folk music appears in its primitive form. Before finding the solution to the problem, we have to survey all known (and existing, but not yet recognized) tone systems, from pentatonics — through diatonics — to dodecaphony and even beyond this last, the tones of which can be derived from the uninterrupted quint (fifth) chain (quint measure: Q). But this is not enough: it appears that the so-called infrapentatonic phenomena are not sufficiently explained by the acoustic quint affinity, that in this case the strength of the principle of the closeness of sound, the semi-tone-closeness deriving from the natural intonation of human speech (measuring unit is: S, the semi-tone) will also prevail and that the result of these two forces is the sung interval. But if we look for an explanation of the frequency, range and naturalness of intervals, melodic phrases or even complete melodies, we must also take into consideration the state of development of the quint-rows (marked L after the Chinese Lü). The three-dimensional QSL measuring method offered by Bárdos then gives the answer not only to the initial question but to quite a number of other questions, too, which

have aroused the interest of music researchers. The final conclusion in this respect is that "the more frequent and therefore the more natural the character of a given group of sounds is, the lower is the *common* QSL index that characterizes it". Another result of his research has been described by the author in the following way: his concept "is fit to throw light on primitive melodies of only a few tones, on pentatonics, on hexachords, diatonics, Gregorian octatonics, on the Palestrina tonal system, right up to Liszt and Debussy and their tonal systems".

Two papers are concerned with the music of Liszt. In the one, under the title of *The 'Popular' Scales of Liszt*, Bárdos proves that in Liszt's rich, so far not sufficiently analysed and evaluated music can be found examples of thirteen popular scales, while so far it has been common knowledge that there exists only *one* "Hungarian" scale in his works. In the title the word popular has been put in quotation marks because these scales are absolutely not characteristic of Hungarian folk music, though examples of a number of them can be found in Hungarian folksongs. For the analysis of these scales the author used in the first place the Hungarian Rhapsodies, the late *Csárdás Macabre* and *Csárdás Obsiné*, the *Sunt Lacrimae Rerum*, then the *Sonate in B Minor*, the *Missa solemnis* for the inauguration of the cathedral of Esztergom, the Christus oratorio and the Dante and Faust symphonies. But what are those scales? It will perhaps interest the reader if we give a list of them: I. Gypsy-minor, or else "ungar" (with augmented fourth), II. augmented fourth Aeolian, III. augmented fourth Doric, IV. melodic Gypsy-minor (the first scale with augmented sixth), V. major third Phrygian, VI. harmonic

Phrygian (with augmented seventh) = Neapolitan minor (with flattened second tone), VII. kalindra (these two augmented second scales are a familiar feature of Hindustani music), VIII. Gypsy Phrygian (with augmented fourth and seventh), IX. harmonic major (with flattened sixth tone), X. melodic major (with flattened sixth and seventh) or in other interpretation: Picardy (i.e. major third) Aeolian ("kuruc scale"), XI. augmented second major, XII. Indolydian (augmented second Lydian: the former scale with augmented fourth), XIII. acoustic scale (scale of a major character with augmented fourth and minor seventh). Several scales, like, for example, VI, VIII, IX and X, can be differently interpreted; establishing a system with the help of relative solmization, one can speak of scales based on *la*, *mi* and *do*.

The other paper is: *Modális harmóniák Liszt műveiben*. (Modal Harmonies in the Works of Liszt.) One reads: "Modal harmony has not died out with the generation of Palestrina. Though the modal scales are increasingly eclipsed in the emerging new order of the functional major-minor music in the seventeenth century, the former yet survives even in the compositions of Bach (especially in his chorale themes); it is perhaps only in the works of the great Viennese composers that the functional harmonic system becomes exclusive. But already in the later works of Beethoven, pointing towards romanticism, (the masses, the A minor string quartet, etc.) there can be found here and there phrases in the old modes. The first step towards a wider, more systematic use of them is made perhaps by Berlioz' Requiem and later romanticism has definitely incorporated this range of sounds. — Ferenc Liszt makes use of it with an exceptional versatility". The

subject belongs among the favourite themes of Bárdos: earlier, he published a short study *A (modális összhangzattan alapjai)*—The Bases of Modal Harmony, Magyar Kórus—Hungarian Choir, 1949) and in 1961 a book under the title *Modális harmóniák* (Modal harmonies). The present paper was written in the time between the two above publications and therefore the author considered it important to clarify—as an introduction—certain basic notions and to introduce an adequate measuring system. Such notions are the measuring of distance on the fifth chain, measuring of the phrases in third relationship, separation of structure from tonality, interpretation of functional and modal phrases, a description of the ranges of modal sounds and chords. Only with knowledge of these will the reader be able to explore, guided by Bárdos, the labyrinthic world of Liszt's harmonies, in search for modal elements. The exploration will consist of two phases: in the first the harmonic elements of the Palestrina style come to the surface in the music of Liszt, in the second it will be those particular harmonic idioms which mean already a novel extension of the modal principles. Among these belong, for example, the use of new cadences, of neomodal seventh chords, the widening of chords into key-blocks, the connection of modality and enharmony, heteromodal transformations etc. These are only names, their contents are disclosed by the profound analyses of Bárdos which allow of the final conclusion that these latter characteristics of Liszt's music lead directly to the worlds of Bartók and Kodály.

It seems as if Bárdos might have written the longest study of all, *Heptatonia secunda* (with the subtitle: A particular system of sounds and its modes

in the works of Zoltán Kodály) just in order to prove the above from another viewpoint. The connection between the subjects, especially with the first paper on Liszt is obvious. But what is the meaning of the notion "second heptatonics"? Diatonics, which ruled European music for centuries and which you might also call first heptatonics, are at any rate only one of the seven-tone sound systems, in which—as is well known—the order of tones and semi-tones is  $3 + 1/2 + 2 + 1/2$ . On the contrary, second heptatonics are characterized by the structure  $4 + 1/2 + 1 + 1/2$  and this sound system, like diatonics, has seven modes. (Among these can be found the melodic minor scale known from traditional composed music—though in this case the interpretation is, of course, different, because its seventh tone in second heptatonics no longer means a modified tone, but a tone of equal rank with the others. Another mode known from the music of Liszt is the so-called acoustic scale). One by one, Bárdos deals with them and quotes examples to prove how much at home these modes are in the works of Kodály. For some of these modes one can find examples also in Hungarian folk music, especially for the fifth mode—called by Bárdos "*kuruc* scale"—which among the seven modes of second heptatonics occurs with the greatest frequency also in the music of Kodály. The question is thus posed, whether the composer has not been inspired from this side to develop these unusual keys in his composed works? Or has he been influenced by the new French music (Debussy) of the beginning of the century, which at that time was still considered as a novelty? Of course, both ways might have been possible. This tone system includes the pentatonics without semi-tones characteristic of old

Hungarian folk music as well as the whole-tone scale of the impressionists (with the exception of one tone). "Thus in the hands of Kodály this system turned into an excellent instrument for a novel setting of ancient folksongs." It has been said above that second heptatonics have seven modes. In the following lines Bárdos completes this statement. He exposes that any of the seven modes "as a mere set of sounds can mean several tonalities according to the live musical content". (In other words: in its relations to its diatonic musical surroundings, as there is no question of a unique and isolated sound system in the analysed music.) If we take e.g. the scale with C-sharp based on A, it can be interpreted in five different ways in respect of diatonics. (The systems thus obtained are called "translocated systems" by the author.) As here too there exist seven modes, one can speak of thirty-five different keys, which form an important and particular group of sounds in Kodály's music, besides pentatonics, diatonics, augmented second systems, whole-tone scales, chromatics etc. For the most frequent and at the same time most characteristic of them, the study offers one after the other the most beautiful examples, but is not loath, either, to give documentation of the less frequent systems. A special subject is the harmonic world of the system in the works of Kodály; its analysis has been performed by the author with the same thoroughness and professional knowledge that he has applied to the previous analyses; but also here he could publish only a small part of the examples he had discovered. (This "apology" will be repeated several times by the author!)

But, after all this, nobody should believe that the results of these analyses are nothing more than an enumeration

of dry data. Bárdos is far from any aestheticism, be it of a scientific or a popularizing character, but—on the other hand—his basic principle is much music, few words (i.e. the essence of music cannot be reproduced in words) and this becomes manifest—if not *expressis verbis*—in his studies. And yet he incessantly points out (often just by one or another appropriate epithet) the role of the phenomena he analyses, as a means of expression, the connection between contents and expression. Let us mention as an example that he claims—and considers it extremely characteristic—that the voice of Liszt takes on a special Hungarian character when he is conveying the feeling of suffering, even in the works he composed in an international style, etc., etc. And the style of Bárdos is probably so informal, because—when writing—he was thinking of his readers, his hearers. In fact the greater part of the papers have been written making use of his Academy and other occasional lectures. They contain just as much theory as is needed by live practice. It will suffice to read the study *Életet az énekbe* (Life Into Song), in which he gives—we believe—the absolutely correct musical interpretation of *arsis* and *thesis* and extends these concepts to different formal units, up to the period and also to the simpler polyphonic forms. He thus deals with the role of the life-giving pulse in uneven measure, in divided and combined rhythm, in pairs of measures (motives), in the musical phrase and the period (in folk music as well as in composed music). And he illustrates this by examples which are well known to singing teachers and choir-leaders from their everyday practice. The aim of his explanations, of his advice—which refers also to problems of methodology—is to make singing teachers and

choir-leaders, as well as all people concerned with music, more susceptible to vivid rendering, beyond a clear intonation, a precise rhythm and a correct pronunciation.

Bárdos follows a similar aim when he deals with problems of prosody, as a critic or in the course of a discussion. Here he addresses himself to composers in the first place: what could be learned from the “masterpiece” of Hungarian musical prosody [*The Prosody of the Kodály Canon* “A magyarokhoz” (To the Hungarians)]. By way of an analysis of *A magyarokhoz* he answers all questions that could emerge during the composition of metrical verses in a rhythm foreign to the Hungarian language); how far can the Hungarian folksong be considered a model (*Rhythm of Folksong At All Costs?*); how can the rules of Hungarian intonation be made use of (*On the Melody of Speech*). But in respect of prosody he has also a message for our performing artists, asking “our instrumentalists to show an even higher appreciation for song and to open their hearts even more to singing” (*Singing Instruments* — where there are also new viewpoints for the metrical analysis of Beethoven’s works!), and he has a message for our choir-leaders, to enable them to penetrate the values of music (*The lessons of a chorus by Bartók*).

Besides this last paper, Bárdos is also concerned with the music of Bartók on another occasion, in the study *Népi ritmusok Bartók műzenéjében* (Popular Rhythms in the Music of Bartók). Because of the vastness of the material, the author—right from the beginning—has set limits to his subject-matter and examined only what elements of rhythm, characteristic of quadruple rhythm in Hungarian folk music, occur in the instrumental music of Bartók. His method is clear: first, one by one,

he examines the four-syllable rhythm elements in our folksongs (practically, there exist ten principal types) and then he searches for their manifestations at a more elevated level in the works of Bartók. With the help of rich documentation he proves that the composer of music—who at the same time is also an expert on folk music—“composes a new kind of original Hungarian music with the independent use of folk rhythms”.

A colleague of the author, a historian of music, professor Dénes Bartha, has written an introduction to the volume, the eighteen studies of which cannot be treated in detail within the narrow framework of this review. In his short but just appraisal he writes as follows: “If Bárdos had not chosen to write these studies in the Hungarian language and to publish them here, but, let's say, in the English language territory and in the English language, editors would most certainly have been beleaguering him for years in order to obtain the rights of publishing his papers and books”. It is perhaps not yet too late to remind the world that Lajos Bárdos has a new message not only for Hungarian musicology: researchers all over the world could learn a lot from him.

G. PAPP

Boehmer, Konrad: *Zwischen Reihe und Pop. Musik und Klassengesellschaft*. — Herausgegeben in Zusammenarbeit mit der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Musik, Jugend und Volk. Wien — München 1970. 168 pp.

The new phenomena which have appeared during the last decade in the field of music as well as in that of social thought and activity represent no mere temporal coincidence. The contra-

dictions of existing relations and norms, which have elicited critical reflexions from such outstanding representatives of “vanguard” music as Nono, Boulez, or Ligeti, and have resulted in a break with strict serialism seem to be sometimes of a purely musical nature but are, even then, socially motivated. An awareness of this connection has always been, to some extent, present in vanguardist ideas raised to a philosophical level by such thinkers as the Frankfurt group of scholars. Whether the Frankfurtists and similar trends represent a wall or a bridge in the way towards materialist dialectics has always been decided by the given social conditions which now seem to favour again the second alternative.

In this respect, the book of the young composer and musicologist, K. Boehmer, represents a remarkable progress. An author brought up musically on post-Weberian ideas, philosophically and sociologically on the thoughts of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, attempts here to break out of the circle of these critics of everything “established” yet themselves becoming established with their schemes and patterns arousing a new criticism in a new generation.

Boehmer's main merit lies in his comprehensive view, in his ability to draw common conclusions from analyses of music both “high” and “low”, spheres both musical and non-musical, social structures both past and present. His sharpest criticism is directed against affirmative attitudes conforming to the given social relations. Through keen analyses, he reveals such attitudes not only in light music and drawing-room pieces but also with some renowned composers of late romanticism. Chapter 3, entitled *Volkston und Volksgemeinschaft*, contains some very instructive considerations as to fascism and music including present day survivals