

BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
BUDAPESTI FILHARMÓNIAI TÁRSASÁG - AZ OPERA

ZENEKARA

160

*years of*

the BUDAPEST  
PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA

OPERA  
MAGYAR ÁLLAMI OPERAHÁZ  
HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA





A CONCERT BY THE BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
(28 OCTOBER 2011) — Photo: Attila Juhász

## Dear Audience,

The 160 years of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra embrace the longest period in Hungarian musical history. During these decades, Erkel, Liszt, Bartók, Kodály and Dohnányi – just to name the most illustrious examples, all of whom are connected to our orchestra in a thousand ways – were all actively composing. While 160 years is not the usual round number for a jubilee, it is nevertheless a key number, since it is twice the 80th that was celebrated under the direction of Ernő Dohnányi with the world première of Zoltán Kodály's work, *Dances of Galánta*. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the piece will also be played at this current jubilee concert, in the company of works by Bartók and Mahler chosen because their first performances are likewise connected to the Budapest Philharmonic.

For today's concert marking the 160th anniversary of the Orchestra's foundation – which as a symbolic gesture I am conducting jointly with the Orchestra's next chairman-conductor – as well as all of the other concerts in this festival season, I wish you blissful relaxation and wonderful musical enjoyment.

*Dr. György Győriványi Ráth*

They say that music is the food of the soul. If this is true, then the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra has nourished many souls by performing the greatest musical works over the last 160 years. Throughout these rich decades, the orchestra has inspired the finest of composers to write masterpieces, and thus the ensemble can boast numerous world premières, not to mention a history of musical direction which includes some of the world's most renowned conductors. As the new chairman-conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic, it is my express aim to bring back to this orchestra, which once played a significant cultural role at a European level, the standing that it deserves.

*Pinchas Steinberg*



DR. GYÖRGY GYŐRIVÁNYI RÁTH  
Photo: Attila Juhász



PINCHAS STEINBERG



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**Publisher:** Szilveszter Ókovács, general director of the Opera House

**Editor:** Anna Scholz

**Photo editor:** Jozefa Iványi

**English translation:** Adrian Courage

**Photos:** Szilvia Csibi, Pál Csillag, Vera Éder, Péter Herman, Attila Juhász, Béla Mezey, Attila Nagy, Tomas Opitz, Mario Pertorini

**Typography and design:** Mátai és Végh Kreatív Műhely

# 160

years of

## the BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Gala concert at the Hungarian State Opera  
Monday, 18 November 2013, 7.30 pm

### PROGRAMME:

Béla Bartók ▶ Dance Suite

Zoltán Kodály ▶ Dances of Galánta

CONDUCTOR – DR. GYÖRGY GYŐRIVÁNYI RÁTH

Gustav Mahler ▶ Symphony No. 1 in D major, “Titan”

CONDUCTOR – PINCHAS STEINBERG

# Z

# Béla Bartók (1881–1945): Dance Suite

I. Moderato II. Allegro molto III. Allegro vivace IV. Molto tranquillo V. Comodo VI. Finale – Allegro

## Programme notes

Endre Tóth

In 1923, there was a movement to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda, which eventually did not compare to the scale of the Hungarian Millennium. Fortunately – at least from the point of view of musical history – one highly significant event did take place: a gala concert by the Philharmonic Society's Orchestra was held in the Vigadó Concert Hall on 19 November 1923.

almost as war criminals for several years. The composers – particularly Bartók and Kodály – performed the request in a unique manner, similarly to how the poet János Arany reacted to the celebration of Franz Josef in his poem, *The Welsh Bards*. Kodály reaped enormous success with the *55th Psalm*, today better known as *Psalmus Hungaricus*, whose text by 16th century poet Mihály Vég Kecskeméti should be read between the lines. For example,

**FŐVÁROSI VIGADÓ** **FŐVÁROSI VIGADÓ**  
 Hétfőn, 1923. évi november hó 19-én este 7 órakor  
**PEST-BUDA EGYESÍTÉSÉNEK 50-IK ÉVFORDULÓJA ALKALMÁBÓL**  
**RENDKÍVÜLI**  
**FILHARMONIAI DÍSZHANGVERSENY**  
 Vezényel:  
**Dr. DOHNÁNYI ERNŐ**  
 Közreműködik:  
**Dr. SZÉKELYHIDY FERENC**  
**A PALESTRINA KÓRUS**  
**Dr. DOHNÁNYI ERNŐ**  
**MŰSOR:**  
 1. Dohnányi . Ünnepi nyitány (Kézirat, első előadás)  
 2. Kodály. . . . . 55. zsoltár, Tenorszólo, ének- és zenekarra (Kézirat, első előadás)  
 3. Bartók. . . . . Tánc-szuite (Kézirat, első előadás)  
 4. Liszt . . . . . Magyar ábránd E-dúr  
 Előadja: dr. DOHNÁNYI ERNŐ  
 A zenekart vezényli: SZIKLA ADOLF  
 5. Berlioz . . . . . Rákóczi-induló  
 Jegyek 5.000–40.000 koronás árban Rózsavölgyi és Társánál (IV., Szervita-tér 5.) várhatók

POSTER FOR THE WORLD PREMIÈRE OF DANCE SUITE (1923)  
 Philharmonic Society Archive

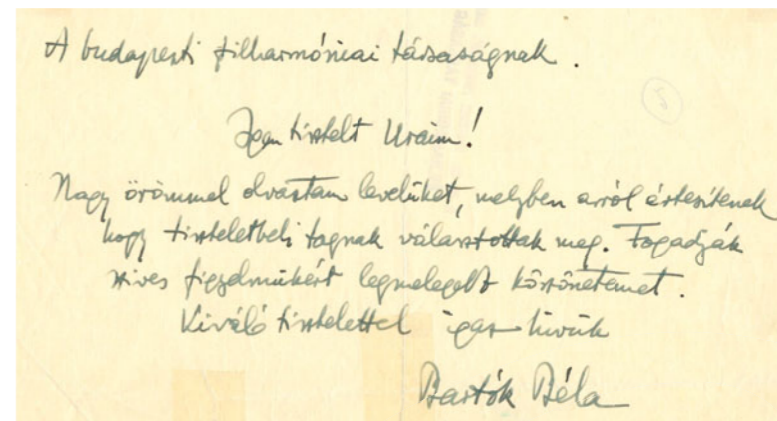
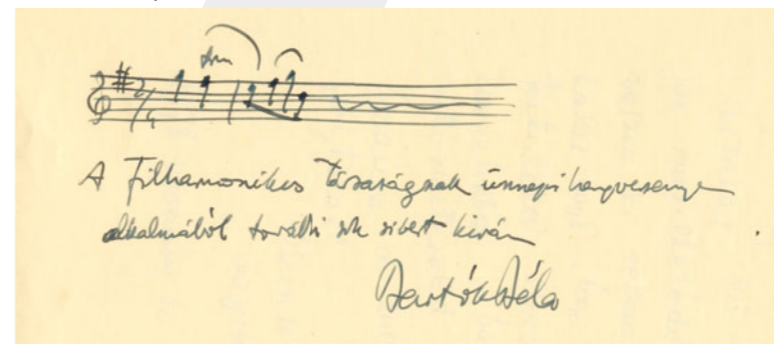
On the occasion of this festive event, the city's leadership asked Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and Ernő Dohnányi (who was also both conductor and soloist for the evening) to compose new works. In the time of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, Bartók and Kodály had both been members of the musical directorate under the leadership of Béla Reinitz, and the commissions for the new works were intended as a symbolic gesture of friendly reconciliation with the composers, who had been treated

one section reads, "the entire city is full of rage". Bartók, meanwhile, encoded into his *Dance Suite*, "the notion of the brotherhood of the peoples", to which a political message could be ascribed a mere few years after the Trianon peace treaty. As Tibor Tallián writes of the work in his book on Bartók, "Bartók [...] sought out those musical layers – with political consciousness – in which ethnic and democratic integration could become reality. Just as in Viennese classicism, the purest opportunity for integration was

offered by folk dance: and it was into this that Bartók placed his new message: the fantasy image of the happy meeting of peoples."

Before the première, the composer spoke of his new composition with customary terseness: "My dance suite is one of my newest works. I wrote it during the summer. It consists of five parts, which come one after the other without a pause, as attaccas. All five dances are original, and have a folk-like, but not folk, character, and in place of pauses, I have employed a little ritornello, an orchestral interlude, between the various dances. These ritornelli are situated between the first and second movements, between the second and the third, and between the fourth and fifth. There is also an attacca-section after the fifth movement or dance, in a finale-like section, in which all the themes that have emerged are repeated." In his essay, *The Effect of Folk Music on Modern Art Music*, Bartók set down on paper more of his analytical thoughts on the *Dance Suite* in 1931, but removed these from the final version. In the crossed-out lines, new material by the composer can be read regarding the "aim" of the work, which was no less than "a kind of ideally conceived peasant music, I would say: composed peasant melodies

BÉLA BARTÓK'S WORDS OF GREETINGS IN THE GUEST BOOK OF THE PHILHARMONIC  
 Philharmonic Society Archive

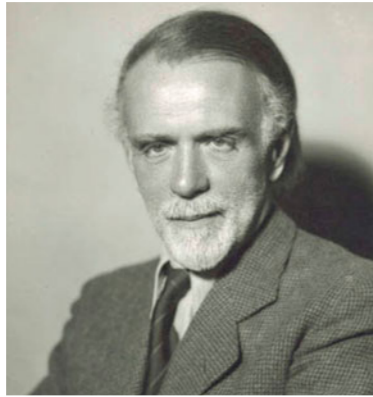


A GREETING FROM BÉLA BARTÓK TO THE HONORARY MEMBERS (1933)  
 Philharmonic Society Archive

placed side by side, and in such a way that the different parts of the work show defined types. The peasant music of all kinds of nationalities served as the model: Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, and even Arab, and there is also the cross-breeding of these types. So, for example, the melody in the first theme of the first movement is reminiscent of the most primitive Arab folk music, while its rhythm belongs to Eastern European folk music. The theme of the fourth movement is an imitation of more complicated Arab music. The theme of the ritornello is such a faithful replica of certain types of Hungarian songs that even the most seasoned ethnomusicologist maybe fooled into

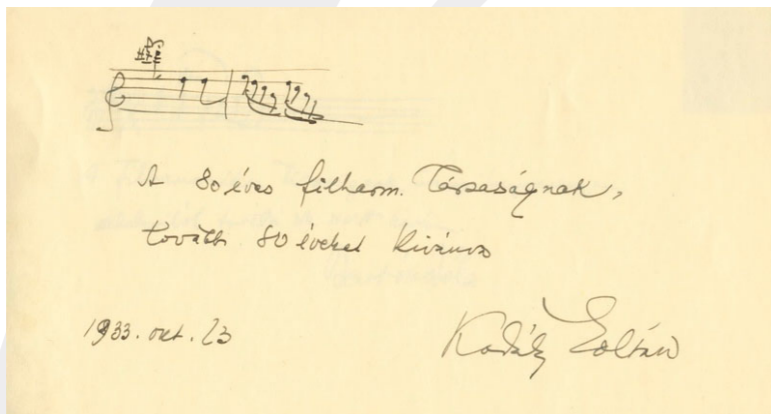
attempting to identify its origin. The second movement is Hungarian in character, and the third is Hungarian in places and Romanian in others." The Budapest Philharmonic Society's concert of exactly 90 years ago was greeted with extraordinary acclaim. István Péterfi, in the next day's *Világ*, stressed, with regard to the *Dance Suite*, "how new and surprising the composer's twists and turns were, and how rich his poetic imagination was". Shortly after the première, several European orchestras included Bartók's new work in their programmes. In 1925 it was played at the Prague Festival, of which the Italian composer Alfredo Casella wrote in his column, *Il Pianoforte*, "bathed in fantasy, rich in colour, like certain magnificent Hungarian embroideries, it is music of astonishing technicality, but in addition to this it is of a cunning and spontaneous poetic nature that makes one gape. In recent years only rarely has anything appeared with such beauty and with such perfection, both intellectual and technical."





ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

“No Musicians get the Verbunkos dance going with their feet like the Galánta Gypsies,” wrote the Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) linguist and medical doctor Sámuel Gyarmathi in his 1794 work, *Hungarian Grammar Taught Rationally*, which Zoltán Kodály also quoted in 1964 in his notes to his already more than 30-year-old piece, *Dances of Galánta*. The composer, in his 1934 foreword to the score, reminisced of the years of his childhood spent in the community (1885-1892) as “the most beautiful seven years of his childhood”, and of the famous Galánta Band, then led by the “Primás” – or lead fiddler – Mihók. This band must have had special significance for Kodály,



ZOLTÁN KODÁLY'S GREETINGS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 80TH JUBILEE OF THE PHILHARMONIC, WITH A QUOTE FROM THE DANCES OF GALÁNTA (1933)  
Philharmonic Society Archive

because, from a statement he made in the 20 October 1933 *Evening News* daily newspaper, it emerged that this had been the first “orchestra” he had ever heard in his life. The composer also noted that in Vienna around 1800, several notebooks worth of Hungarian dance music had been published, and the music of the Galánta gypsies had served as the source for one of them. The composer was alerted to the existence of the publications by musical historian Dr Ervin Major, who had discovered them in the library of the National Music School. The songs in the collection had an inspirational effect on Kodály, and he selected from among them when composing his 1933 orchestral piece, written for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic Society's foundation. In terms of form, the piece is a rondo, since – in the words of music historian János Kovács – “this is the most natural unifier and framework for the songs, offering all kinds of opportunities for elaboration.” A main song, the rondo theme, repeatedly returns between the various episodes, and then a sweeping coda, noteworthy also for its range, closes the *Galánta Dances*. The contemporary press showed

appreciation for the new Kodály composition played at the jubilee concert eighty years ago – which was conducted by Ernő Dohnányi on 23 October 1933 – along with, naturally, its interpretation. The critic from the *Budapesti Hírlap* wrote that the piece “brings to life the fire and radiance of old Hungarian life, with its many magnificent, warm colours”, while Viktor Lányi dubbed Zoltán Kodály's creation as “a masterfully realised new work constructed on a grand scale and influenced by the new, the great and the enduring”. Aladár Tóth devoted many lines in *Pesti Napló* to expressing his view that Kodály “was leading us off to the true fairyland of his people”. Later, he continued, “Kodály's tone poem evokes the figures of a long-lost Hungarian world. At the same time, however, we clearly sense [...] that these same figures are only now, in the tone poem, beginning to live their true lives.” The Philharmonic Society had given its very first concert under the baton of Ferenc Erkel, and in memory of this, the jubilee concert of Kodály's time featured the orchestra founder's *Festive Overture*, as well as Beethoven's *1st Symphony* and Liszt's *Hungarian Fantasy*, with Dohnányi as the soloist. Also aired at this concert was Béla Bartók's work, *Five Hungarian Folk Songs*, also arranged for the occasion, as well as Ernő Dohnányi's composition, *Symphonic Minutes*. The festival concert was attended by the regent and his wife, as well as by Crown Prince József and his family. Viktor Lányi declared in his critique of the ensemble labelled “the most outstanding Hungarian orchestra” by *Magyar Hírlap* reporter István Nádás, that it had “with utter distinction and enthusiastic and selfless work brought Hungarian innovative works to a triumphant victory [...] the orchestra realised with careful teamwork of the

VASÁRNAP, 1933. ÉVI OKTÓBER HÓ 22-ÉN DÉLELŐTT 1/12 ÓRAKOR  
A ZENEMŰVÉSZETI FŐISKOLA NAGYTERMÉBEN

A M. KIR. OPERAHÁZ ZENEKARÁBÓL ALAKULT  
FILHARMÓNIAI TÁRSASÁG

I. NYILVÁNOS FŐPRÓBÁJA

HÉTFŐN, 1933. ÉVI OKTÓBER HÓ 23-ÁN ESTE 1/8 ÓRAKOR  
A M. KIR. OPERAHÁZBAN

JUBILÁRIS HANGVERSENY  
I. BÉRLETI ESTJE

Dr. DOHNÁNYI ERNŐ  
ELNÖKKARNAGY VEZÉNYLETE ALATT  
BASILIDES MÁRIA és Dr. DOHNÁNYI ERNŐ  
KÖZREMŰKÖDÉSÉVEL

M Ű S O R :

1. ERKEL: Ünnepi nyitány

2. a) KODÁLY: Galántai táncok (Kézirat. Első előadás)

b) BARTÓK: Öt magyar népdal (Kézirat. Első előadás)  
A tömlőcben  
Régi keserves  
Párosító 1.  
Panasz  
Párosító 2.  
Basilides Mária

c) DOHNÁNYI: Szimfónikus percek (Kézirat. Első előadás)  
Capriccio. — Rapsodia. — Rondo.

3. LISZT: Magyar Fantázia  
zongorára, zenekarral  
Dohnányi Ernő

SZÜNET

4. BEETHOVEN: I. Szimfónia C-dur op. 21.  
Adagio molto. — Allegro con brio  
Andante cantabile con moto  
Menuetto  
Adagio. — Allegro molto e vivace

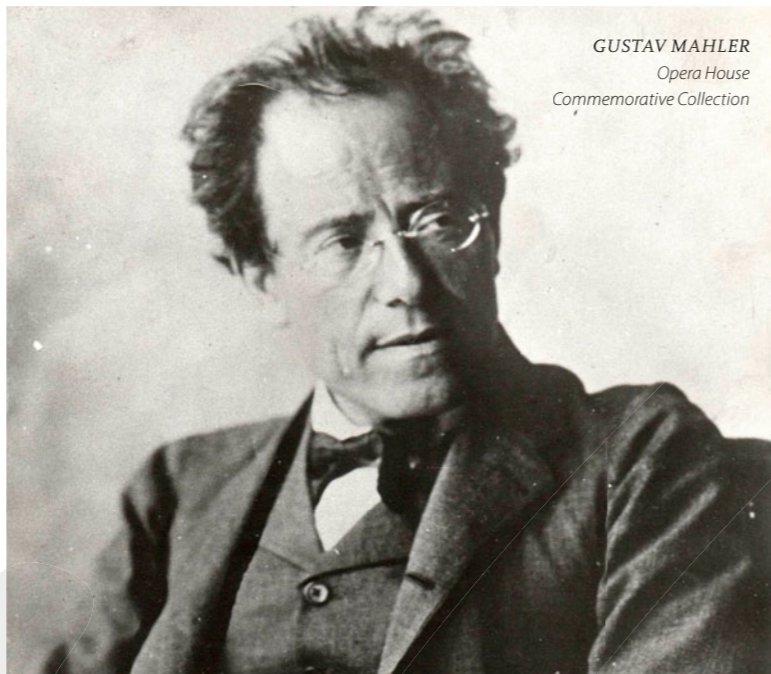
PROGRAMME SHEET FOR THE 80TH JUBILEE CONCERT ON 23 OCTOBER 1933  
Philharmonic Society Archive

highest artistic standard conductor Ernő Dohnányi's grand musical visions.” And, finally, Aladár Tóth wrote of the orchestra, “Anyone who has listened to this beautiful concert through to the end requires no explanation of the artistic significance of the Hungarian Philharmonic, and its cultural function for the entire country and the world.”



## Gustav Mahler (1860–1911): Symphony No. 1 in D major, “Titan”

I. Langsam, schleppend. Im Anfang sehr gemächlich. • II. Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell. • III. Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen. • IV. Stürmisch bewegt.



The Philharmonic Society premiered Gustav Mahler's *1st Symphony*, which at the time still bore the title “Symphonic Poem in Two Parts”, on 20 November 1889 in Pest's Vigadó Concert Hall (for a deeper look into the circumstances surrounding the Budapest premiere, read Dr. György Gyórivány Ráth's piece on page 12). The premiere was conducted by the composer himself, and the other parts of the programme by Sándor Erkel. At the time, the work still consisted of five movements, with three movements in the first part and two in the second, with its structure employing a significantly smaller orchestra, and with no poetic programme added by the composer. Credit is owed to a German romantic poet whose life straddled the 18th and 19th centuries, Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, or, as he is better known “Jean Paul”, for being the stimulating force behind several musical works: Robert Schumann found in his novel *Flegeljahre* inspiration to write *Papillons*

and *Humoreske*, while Mahler drew ideas from the writer's novels *Titan* and *Siebenkäs*. *Titan* relates to the path to adulthood of the protagonist, Albano de Cesara, whom we watch, over the course of nearly 900 pages, grow from a passionate youth to a mature man who winds up on the throne of the small principality of Pestitz. In depicting the main characters, the author criticises various ideas and viewpoints, from idealist philosophy to political calculation to religious fanaticism. Following the 1889 premiere, Mahler's work, after undergoing major revision and now bearing the title *Titan, a Symphonic Poem in Symphonic Form*, was again presented for the stage on 27 October 1893, in Hamburg. Mahler's friend Ferdinand Pfohl assisted with composing the poetic programme. Aside from the above-mentioned Jean Paul novels, his narrative also refers to E.T.A. Hoffmann, whose writings inspired the then fourth, today's third

movement, which had previously borne the title *Funeral March in the Manner of Callot*. This same movement can also be connected to the parody illustration from a children's book, *The Hunter's Funeral*, in which the animals of the forest accompany the

its unusual proportions (overly long introduction and development section). Here we can quote Adorno, according to whom, “It is not only the individual parts within the movements that are irreconcilable with the traditional interpretation of the structures. The

trio form usual in symphonies. The beginning of the third movement, the funeral march, also starts with an interval of a fourth: over the ostinato of the kettle drum unfolds, in a grotesque, minor key, the familiar canon *Frère Jacques*. In the quotations of popular



MORITZ VON SCHWIND: HOW THE ANIMALS BURY THE HUNTER (1850)

deceased on its procession. The finale *D'all Inferno al Paradiso* (From Hell to Paradise) in all likelihood refers to Dante. In 1896, the Mahler opus appeared in a concert programme in Berlin in the form *Symphony in D Major for Large Orchestra*, and in 1900 was premiered as his *Symphony No. 1*. But these were only the broader strokes, since there is not enough space here for all of the composer's revisions and reworkings, since, to quote the music historian Lóránt Péteri, “the piece's philology is one of the hornet's nests of musical history.” But let us add here that Mahler later left out the *Blumine* movement that had originally been inserted between what are now the first and second movements, and also discarded the *Titan* subtitle.

The first movement, properly speaking, could be called a sonata form, although the composer in no way follows the didactic sonata formula specified by Adolph Bernhard Marx, and thus the premiere's critics also took note of

musical thread itself is also contradictory to the schematic understanding of the category of forms, particularly the sonata form, with which Mahler even in his later period never broke completely. It follows from this that music students seeking pre-existing structures perceive chaos and nothing else. György Ligeti's essay *Spatial Effects in Mahler's Music* describes the well-known, quite long musical material unravelling over the harmonic pedal point, “through the harmonics, the position becomes somehow alienated: the orchestra is at once as if it were sounding through the fog. In his book on Mahler, Adorno puts it very nicely when he writes of this moment as if it were an old steam engine hissing.” Despite the unusual forms he implements, we feel that the relationships of the movements to each other is also planned, since, for example, the fourth intervals often appearing in the first movement are also present in the second movement – the movement otherwise is of the

music of the second episode, even among music critics, nearly everyone hears different influences: some hearing Jewish music, others Hungarian music, but always an everyday musical theme from Mahler's homeland, both in the wider and narrower sense: the Austro-Hungarian Empire. With respect to the entire extent of the symphony, however, in the longest movement, the 20-minute finale, with its tempestuous start, the fanfares of the first movement, built from fourths, blare out at the least expected moment. This movement is also in sonata form, but likewise not in the usual manner (as shown for example by the quote taken from the first movement), but it is perhaps precisely in this unfamiliarity, in this unusual mixture of the traditional and the modern that the thrill of Mahler's music can be explained, or, to quote Adorno again, “his music first and foremost grips the listener by always continuing in a way that is different from what they are expecting.”





I have spent a long time studying the origins of Mahler's *First Symphony*, and through analysing the manuscripts of the piece before being able to reconstruct the original version, which the Budapest Philharmonic Society premièred under the composer's baton on 20 November 1889 in the Vigadó Concert Hall. In 2012, with the same ensemble, I performed the work again – for the second time in the history of the piece, in Budapest – which this time was met with the thunderous enthusiasm of those present. On this basis, I feel it safe to state that the *Symphonic Poem in Two Parts* (this was the title of the original version of the *First Symphony*) was even in its original form an extraordinary creative work: Mahler was composing a new type of form-shattering music, but still within the existing frameworks.

We should note that Mahler must have been satisfied with his work, because in his letter to the Philharmonic Society Orchestra, after the dress rehearsal, he writes:

*"Most Honoured Gentlemen, At this moment, still under the effect of today's dress rehearsal, I feel motivated to express my thanks to you and everyone involved in the production for your dedicated work, conducted with a genuinely artistic spirit, with which you have assisted in the realisation of my modest work.*

*Already today at the dress rehearsal, I was convinced that I will never again have the opportunity to hear my work performed with such perfection.*

*I feel myself lucky to be able to stand at the helm of such a group, which, with complete selflessness and pushing all personal matters into the background, works in the service of art, and I want for you to remain as good to me as I am grateful and committed to you.*

*Your sincerely most devoted believer, Gustav Mahler"*

One does not write such a letter simply out of courtesy, and there was every indication that the piece and its performance would have been pleasing to Mahler. The enthusiasm in his tone indicates, in my opinion, that he was expecting a huge, explosive success at the concert. The surprise must have been all the greater when the piece visibly failed. One critic, for example, described the concert with the following ironic words:

*"It is with sorrow that I must say that the expectations attached to the composition have not been fulfilled. If we did know of Mahler's brilliant achievements as a conductor, or that he is a sensitive musician gifted with multifaceted tastes, and the most thorough knowledge of the masterworks of all artistic styles, then we would not know this from this symphony. After the symphonic poem title, and based on the well-known attraction the most avant-garde neo-romanticism has for our ingenious director, we had prepared for the most variegated extravagances, while at the same time we also would have expected something interesting and meaningful in his direction. Instead of this, we heard music that, disregarding a few bizarre elements, in every respect – the melodies, the harmonies, and the instrumentation – in even the best case did not exceed the standard of what is customary.*

*If we were to summarise the overall impression, we could say that Mahler, with his outstanding conducting ability, is not only deserving of being listed among the very greatest of his profession, but that he also, like them, is not a composer of symphonies.*

*The new symphony, which the composer himself coached and conducted, garnered scant appreciation, and at the end even some slight opposition could be detected.*

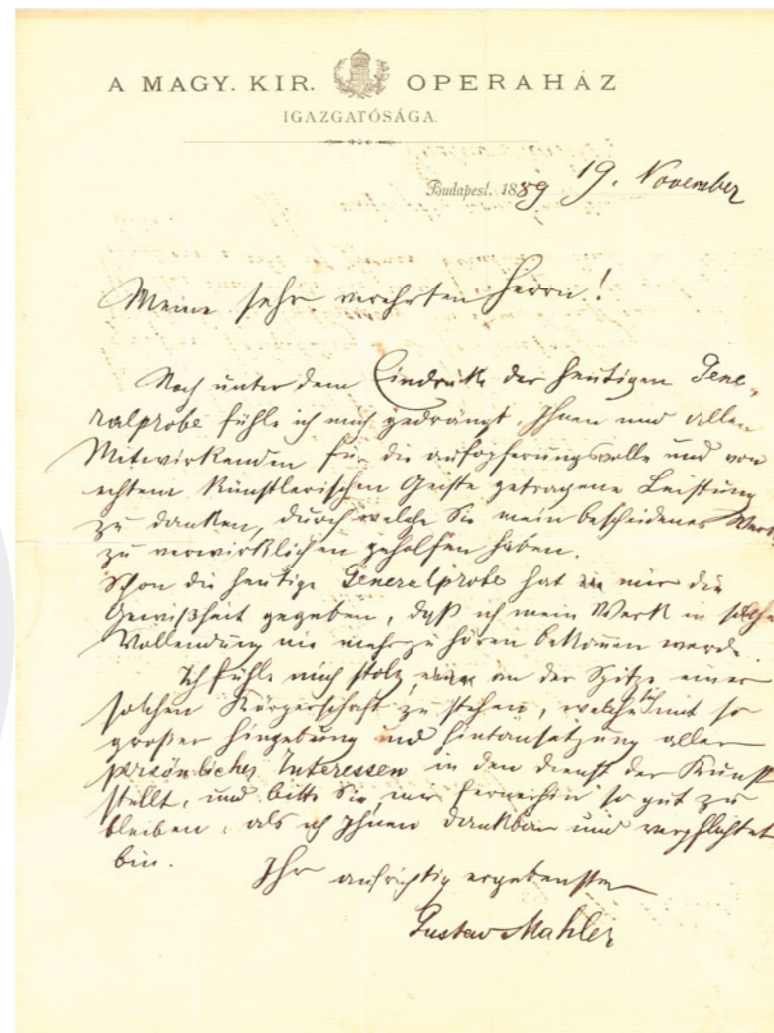
*In contrast to this, Sándor Erkel was applauded almost pointedly when he retook the stage, so grateful was the audience for a conductor who does not compose music."*

This failure, however, could still not have been completely unambiguous, because Mahler's supporter József Keszler, for example, wrote an enthusiastic report, but we must treat his writing with reservation, to say the least, since in a contemporary cartoon, it was he who in Mahler's orchestra beat a bass drum labelled "hype".

What is the reality, then? In order to understand the situation, we must be aware of the fact that the Hungarian Royal Opera first opened its doors on 27 September 1884. When Mahler arrived in Budapest as the opera's director in 1888, the Opera House was in a state of moral, artistic and financial crisis. Within two years, however, Mahler succeeded in leading the theatre out of this crisis. Brahms, for example, wrote forthrightly of the performance of *Don Giovanni* he had personally heard in Hungary, that "if anyone should like to hear the

opera in the way that Mozart intended it to be heard, they must travel to Budapest, in order to experience Mahler's conducting." Most critics of the era also lauded Mahler's work as a conductor, but as an opera director he was subject to continual attacks. They threw in his face the fact that he is a foreigner, and that he directed too many foreign works at the expense of Hungarian operas, including those of Ferenc Erkel. Later, upon the resignation of the government commissioner and intendant Ferenc Beniczky, who had been the one to invite Mahler to Budapest, Mahler saw fit to move on. He signed a contract to work in Hamburg.

We must also attach some importance to the concert life in which Mahler, not yet thirty, had appeared with his first composition. The most legendary composers of the time were Brahms, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák and Verdi, just to name a few. Budapest kept in step with Europe's musical life, and Brahms, Liszt and Dvořák themselves played and conducted in Budapest. In comparison to this, it is no wonder that Mahler's first large-scale orchestral work shocked the Budapest audience. According to one account, a lady dropped her reticule at the start of the fifth movement. But this was exactly the effect that Mahler had been seeking to achieve here, and even later on he never made any changes to the beginning of this movement. In any case, the failure must have been extremely painful to the composer, because years later he reminisced about the period of the Budapest première: "...friends would clear out my path in alarm; not one of them dared speak to me of the performance and my art, and I went about like a plague carrier or an accursed pariah. And, as for how the critics were behaving, you can guess from these circumstances."



GUSTAV MAHLER'S LETTER TO THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY, 19 NOVEMBER 1889  
Philharmonic Society Archive





BUST OF GUSTAV MAHLER IN THE HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA HOUSE (BY JÁNOS KRASZNAI, ERECTED IN 2010 BY THE HUNGARIAN GUSTAV MAHLER SOCIETY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPOSER'S BIRTH)

Photo: Béla Mezey

I am probably not incorrect to surmise that the voices of the critics presented above played a major role in the piece's reworking. It is an interesting fact that several of the Budapest critics who were present quite precisely paraphrased the programme to the piece (the original version did not include these) – and it was in the work's following version that Mahler himself provided it with programmatic subject titles:

Part I: From the days of youth - Flowers, fruits and thorn pieces

1st Movement – Spring and no end

2nd Movement – Flowerine Chapter

3rd Movement – Set with full sails

Part II: Commedia umana

4th Movement: Stranded. A funeral march in the manner of Callot.

5th Movement: Dall'inferno al Paradiso. The Budapest critics likewise found fault with the work's finale – and it is probably no accident that Mahler later drastically revised this movement.

"In declaring it a failure, we mean only the work's second half. It is an enormous aberration on the part of an ingenious mind. But the first half deserves to remain unmarked by failure. If the composer were to write a fitting finale for his work's first three movements, his calling has been demonstrated especially by the lovely thematic development and the bright

instrumentation, and he could thus premiere a symphony that would be elevated above the everyday crop of mediocre works."

Nevertheless, the next two revised versions of the work would also fail in Hamburg and Weimar, respectively. Ernst Otto Nodnagel, writing in the *Berliner Tageblatt* objected to the titles and the programme, and at the same time declared the piece's instrumentation confused and unintelligent, and the *Blumine* movement trivial. It is striking that it was immediately afterwards that the composer abandoned the offending *Blumine* movement, and also rescored the piece for a much larger orchestra,

despite reporting in a previous letter to Richard Strauss of his intent to slim it down. At any rate, it is certain that, at its Berlin performance on 16 March 1896, under the title *Symphony in D Major for Large Orchestra*, the piece was successful, and the abovementioned Nodnagel even praised Mahler. No further amendment was made to the piece.

The *1st Symphony* in its final form strongly shows the markings of the original Budapest version, as well as of the revisions and patches. For example, the final version, despite being written for a large ensemble, retains in the first and third movements a chamber-music quality that points to the earlier, smaller

orchestra. The slow movement, a role that the *Blumine* movement had filled earlier, is also missing.

We cannot know, therefore, whether Mahler reworked the *1st Symphony* so many times as an effect of the failure and the critics, out of a desire to please, or if he wished to rather improve it as a result of his inner drive. In any case, after the piece took on its final form, the audience responded to it differently: Richard Strauss's symphonic poems had already quite altered the image of how an orchestra should sound, while, at the time of its premiere, Mahler's *Symphonic Poem* had far overstepped the boundaries of both the listeners' expectations and the genre.

## PHILHARMONIAI HANGVERSENYEK.

Felsőbb engedelmel a magyar nemzeti színház zenekar tagjai első karmesterök ERKEL FERENCZ ur vezérlete alatt folyó nov. 20-kán és dec. 8-kán, továbbá 1854-ki mart. 12-kén és april 9-kén a **NEMZ. MUZEUM** teremében a művelt világ nagyobb és középszerű városainak példaiára

**négy philharmoniai hangversenyt**

szándékoznak tartani. Ezen hangversenyekhez, melyeken csak classica zene a lehető tökélyvel adatik elő, az itteni jelesebb művészek közreműködése is igénybe fog vétetni.

### Az első vasárnap 1853-i nov. 20-án tartandó hangverseny programja.

1. 7-ik számú symphonia A-Dur-ban van Beethoven Lajostól.
2. Aria di bravura Mozart „Don Juan“-jából, éneklé Lesniewska kisasszony.
3. Lakadalmi induló a „nyáréji álom“-ból Mendelssohn-Bartholdytól.
4. „Struensee“ nyitánya Meyerbeertől.

Ezen hangversenyekre bérlet nyitattik, a melyre való aláírási ívek Treichlinger, Wagner és Rózsavölgyi urak műkereskedéseikben találhatók.

A bérletárak mind a négy hangversenyre következők:				Minden egyes hangversenyen következő belépti árak lesznek:			
Körszék	—	—	6 ft	Körszék	—	—	2 ft
Számozott szék a teremben	—	—	4 „	Számozott szék a teremben	—	—	1 „ 30 kr. pp.
Belépti jegy a terembe	—	—	2 „	Belépti jegy a terembe	—	—	1 „
Számozott szék az I. karzaton	—	—	2 „ 30 kr. pp.	Számozott szék az I. karzaton	—	—	1 „
				Belépti jegy a II. karzatra	—	—	20 kr. pp.

A hangversenyek jövedelmének egy része a museumi kert javára fordítottik.

Kezdeté esti fél 5 órakor.

Az igazgató választmány.

Az első falragasz

PLACARD FOR THE BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY'S FIRST CONCERT (20 NOVEMBER 1853)  
Philharmonic Society Archive

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# Furtwängler and the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra

Zoltán Rockenbauer



WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER CONDUCTS THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY ORCHESTRA (1937-1938)  
Philharmonic Society Archive

"In his mind, masculinity never equated to coarseness, nor emotion to sentimentality, but in his entire being there exists the harmony that sounds in his orchestra. To his magnificent vigour, there is always a brake, and on his unbelievably rich scale, from the hardly perceptible pianissimo to the pounding, convulsive fortissimo, there exists every colour, in amazingly varied rhythms, every device for producing effect," wrote music critic István Péterfi of Furtwängler's 18 March 1930 Budapest concert in *Magyar Hírlap*. Nothing better shows Furtwängler's international prestige than the fact that a few years previously he had still possessed the title of chief conductor to a trio of star orchestras: the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics and Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra. Only his predecessor Arthur Nikisch had been capable of such bravura. After 1930, however, the director, who had been known for his frequent appearances abroad, kept only the Berlin Philharmonic for himself, while in the case of Vienna satisfying himself to function, as the director of the Musikverein, in essence

as the permanent guest conductor. He also gave these two March concerts – his ninth and tenth appearances in Hungary – with the Viennese orchestra. It was also an unusual development that he only favoured us with the Berliners for the first two pairs of concerts (in May of 1925 and 1926), and afterwards never returned to Budapest with them.

He nearly always played it safe here, and did not really experiment with Pepping or Heinz Schubert, or even his own symphony, as he did elsewhere at that time, nor did he even push Bruckner or Pfitzner, whom he held in high esteem. Mostly he brought what could be called a traditional German repertoire, pieces well known by the Hungarian audience. He primarily made his selections from the orchestral works of Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert and Schumann, the overtures of Weber and Wagner, and Richard Strauss's symphonic poems. Although he upon occasion conducted works from contemporary Hungarian composers – his name is attached to the world première of Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 1* – in Hungary the extent of this was his once placing Kodály's *Peacock Variations* on the programme (in 1943).

We cannot say, either, that he was not attempting to cater to the tastes of the local public, since he did conduct – in three guest appearances – five Budapest Philharmonic Society Orchestra concerts, which was viewed as a special honour by the ensemble and the audience alike. "Furtwängler, who always plays with his own orchestras, the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, even when abroad, has

broken with the practice when here in Hungary, and this year, like the last, gave his concert with the Hungarian Philharmonic ensemble," wrote Péterfi on 25 November 1939. "It is a distinction and mark of respect of great value, and the Philharmonic Society once again proved itself fully worthy of the confidence placed in it. It truly excelled."

Furtwängler's invitation was by every indication the brainchild of Ernő Dohnányi, then filling the post of chairman-conductor. Dohnányi, who himself also appeared frequently abroad, partly out of necessity, and partly in order to ensure the orchestra's international standing, regularly invited guest conductors, including such giants as Felix Weingartner, Erich Kleiber, Bruno Walter, Richard Strauss, Hans Knappertsbusch and Willem Mengelberg.

Furtwängler's concerts took place in three subsequent years. On the first occasion, on 15 December 1937, he arrived at the Opera House with a plan for an inimitably German programme, which included Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5* and Brahms's *Haydn Variations*. In order to create a picture of the passion surrounding the event, it is telling to quote the appreciative report of Aladár Tóth, who wrote, among other comments, in *Pesti Napló*, "in Furtwängler, however, a conductor has now taken the helm of our orchestra who is fully a musician of extremes, of passion and ecstasy. One who disdains the score and the instruments, who practically cuts out of the music all that is moderation and all that might be delimited. He himself said, 'Toscanini is proud to direct what is in the score, but I am proud that I conduct what is not in the score.' Truly, it is sufficient for us simply to pay attention to Furtwängler's motions: this conductor does not beat out the time with steady calm, like [Hans] Richter or his student Kerner, does not draw out

the music's structure with sharp plasticity, like Toscanini or his student Failoni. Furtwängler's hand, vibrating restlessly, nearly drunkenly, as if he were attempting to eradicate all that, as if he wanted to erase the bar lines themselves. These movements drive the orchestra to the point of intoxication: with ecstatic zeal, they compel the orchestra's musicians, for the music to rise beyond every worldly and rational tether. This type of conductor has no time for an orchestra of 'officials'. To comprehend his intentions and to follow his visionary gestures is only possible with a heightened power of imagination."

Furtwängler's appearance and conducting style truly, even in and of themselves, offered a unique sight to behold, of which – beyond the contemporary film footage – Dezső Szomory, a writer who regularly published music criticism in *Theatrical Life*, along with other work, painted a vivid picture in his report from two years previously: "This, as a sight to witness, at the fore of a blaring orchestra, as a sight, it was of the first order! It was so astonishing, so entrancing and fascinating, and so artistic as well, that I had to smile... He crouched down, almost to his knees, and then straightening out, lanky and reedy, the way God made him, he projected the

melodic image of a tree, towering and erect. And another time he stretched out his arms in beatitude, evangelically, as if creating the world, and yet another time when his commander's arm summoned the river of din of the corresponding chords and notes, that once Moses was able to bring forth a spring from the rock with his magical staff."

The picture we gain from the surviving recordings, however, is even more true-to-life than any written description. Although the rudimentary technical conditions in Hungary at the time unfortunately did not allow for recording the concerts, seven recordings of the *Haydn Variations* and no fewer than 13 recordings of the *5th Symphony* conducted by Furtwängler have remained: the earliest from 1926, and the last from the year of his death, 1954. When discussing the conductor's performance style, it is a general practice to distinguish between the romantic period before the Second World War, the wartime ecstatic period, and the mature period after the ban. We also, as it happens, have a recording of the *5th Symphony* from 1937 as well, but the studio recording probably does not really relay the atmosphere of the Budapest concert. Furtwängler's live recordings nearly



WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER CONDUCTS AT THE MUSIC ACADEMY (1937-38)  
Philharmonic Society Archive

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always succeeded more impressively, as though the presence of the audience and the unrepeatability of the moment inspired him more than the security of the studio. From Aladár Tóth's review, we can much better understand the characteristics of Furtwängler's "wartime period" than the somewhat dry performance style that can be heard from the His Master's Voice records: "(...) this wonderful pathos, this dark and wild passion, here too directs Beethoven's struggle more to the bottomless maelstrom of pessimism than to the heights of heroic tragedy. And when Beethoven's triumphant fanfares blare out, the redemptive joy following the catharsis seems to be lacking more than ever. At the same time, we feel only the monumentality of grim power, although this, it is true, we feel in all its terrifying greatness."

Also played at the concert were Richard Strauss's symphonic poem, *Death and Transfiguration*, as well as the overture to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Although it was not the first time that Furtwängler conducted this latter work in Budapest, his rendition did not really meet the fancy of Aladár Tóth, again because of its grave and tragic character. Just as the optimistic resolution was missing from the end of Beethoven's symphony, here he noted the absence of "cheerful humanism" in

the Meistersinger overture. Based on Furtwängler's later opera recordings from Bayreuth, we can rest assured that Aladár Tóth indeed accurately sensed the unique individual characteristics of the conductor's interpretation, although it is a different question as to whether it is just this basic dramatic element that has captivated to this day both the German musician's camp of admirers and collectors of his recordings, in their never-diminishing numbers.

Furtwängler himself had planned the concert as the starting point for partnering with Budapest musicians, which is confirmed on the signed portrait he dedicated to the orchestra in his own hand: "To the Hungarian Philharmonic, an orchestra of complete earnestness, as a memento of our first collaboration, 15 December 1937, Wilhelm Furtwängler." The second occasion did not require a long wait, since scarcely a year had passed before he was again in front of the Budapest orchestra at the City Theatre (today's Erkel Theatre). In the programme, which was similar in its composition to the previous one, he performed Beethoven's *Coriolanus Overture* and *Symphony No. 6*, Wagner's *Prelude and Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde*, as well as Richard Strauss's symphonic poem *Don Juan*. This concert also marked the occasion of the Philharmonic Society electing Furtwängler as an honorary member.

RECEPTION AT THE MUSIC ACADEMY AFTER WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER IS ELECTED HONORARY MEMBER OF THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY. AT CENTRE, ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI AND FURTWÄNGLER. (1938. NOVEMBER 17.) - Philharmonic Society Archive



WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

Yet another year later, in 1939, he gave a triple concert with the Hungarian orchestra. Between 24 and 26 November, a concert was added to the programme of each of the three advertised subscription series: the *Philharmonic*, the *Youth* and the *Workers'*. On this occasion, Furtwängler broke with his previous practice in several respects: on the one hand, he took the podium with the same programme on each of the three nights – while previously there had been no overlap between his double concerts – and on the other the character of the programme was also changed. This time the lead role did not belong to Beethoven but to Brahms, whose *2nd Symphony* he directed, paired with Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* and Weber's overture from *Der Freischütz*. It was also an innovation that he performed work by a contemporary German conductor, one Max Trapp: two movements from his *First Konzertstück*. Although the concert was extremely successful according to reports, this latter work did less to win over listeners. "The excerpted compositions by the German

composer, hitherto unknown in Hungary, did not make a deeper impression as part of the excellent performance. Eclectic music put together with much knowledge and skill at instrumentation, but with little individual invention," pouted Péterfi.

Perhaps it was exactly this unknown work that inspired the anecdote that was long shared among musicians of the opera house: "The world-famous German conductor, Furtwängler, was not known for his clear, straight and unambiguous timekeeping. On one occasion, when he was rehearsing in the Opera House, there was in the piece a passage where the musicians could not manage to find the moment to come in. Contrabassist Lajos Montag was deeply upset about the matter. Finally he could not stop and – back then still not yet a section leader – publicly and loudly asked the master, "Please, give me a "one". Furtwängler said nothing, and called for a break. Most likely nothing of the sort had ever happened to him before. Montag began to be afraid when his colleagues rushed up to him: how had he dared display such boorishness, to act so offensively? During the break, the master asked the nervous bassist's name, and afterwards resumed the rehearsal, as though nothing had happened. Upon reaching the troublesome spot, he gave a clear downbeat, and, turning toward the bass section, asked, "Mr Montag, will this suit you? There were no repercussions from the occurrence, and the musicians all hit the note on cue together."

It was truly a shame that Furtwängler no longer stood before the Hungarian

ensemble during the war years, although he did appear in Budapest with the Vienna Philharmonic on four occasions. The collaboration with him was nevertheless still very advantageous for the orchestra, and produced unforgettable moments for the Budapest audience. After the war, for reasons that were in substance trumped up, he was not able to take the podium anywhere at all for two years. There exists today a library full of literature on the "denazification procedure" conducted against him: the Ronald Harwood play *Taking Sides* (1995) and its 2001 film adaption of the same name by director István Szabó are based on reports of this process. Although he could conduct again by April of 1947 and resumed his extensive travel all over Europe, he never again received an invitation to perform in any of the countries that were by then behind the Iron Curtain.



PROGRAMME SHEET FOR WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER'S 1939 OPERA HOUSE CONCERT  
Philharmonic Society Archive

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted: István Péterfi, *A Half-Century in the Musical Life of Hungary: Selected Music Criticisms, 1917-1961*, Zenemű Press Company, p. 132  
<sup>2</sup> Reprinted: *ibid.*, p. 239  
<sup>3</sup> Reprinted: *Selected Music Criticisms of Aladár Tóth, 1934-1939*, Budapest, 1968, Zenemű Press Company, p. 372  
<sup>4</sup> Reprinted: Dezső Szomory, *Among the Sounds of Music and Voices*, Musical Writings, Budapest, 2009, Múlt and Jövő Press, p. 398.  
<sup>5</sup> List of Furtwängler Recordings. Discography. Edited by Károly Dán and Zoltán Rockenbauer in *Wilhelm Furtwängler: Music and Words: Musical and Aesthetic Writings*, Budapest, 2002, Q.E.D. 209-361  
<sup>6</sup> Aladár Tóth, *ibid.*, p. 373  
<sup>7</sup> First printing: Béla Csuka, *Nine Decades in the Service of Hungarian Music*, Budapest, 1943, XI, translation, *ibid.*: xxx.  
<sup>8</sup> Péterfi, *ibid.*, p. 239  
<sup>9</sup> Péter Kubina, *Lajos Montag, The Bassist's Outstanding Personality*, doctoral dissertation, Ferenc Liszt Music Academy, 2008 (Handwritten), p. 18





# Music and the Human Mind

József Hátori



Photo: Szilvia Csibi

Everyone is agreed that speech, or the capacity for speech is one of the most important human characteristics. At the same time, many people think that musicality is not at all essential from the standpoint of mankind's physical survival, a luxury feature that can be dispensed with at any time in everyday life: it is nice to have it, but it is also no hardship not to have it.

This view is sadly now part of today's Western educational system, but here, in the land of Kodály, it is particularly prevalent, even though the available data on the functioning of the human mind does not support it. To the contrary, as I will attempt to prove with the arguments below, musicality – and the development of such from a young age – is an integral

part of a human personality becoming a whole. Without singing and music, not only are we deprived of the enjoyment of beauty, but also of the development of, or even the formation of the characteristics related core emotional system for individual communication, which is tightly connected to the cognitive sphere.

Ever since the 1860s, it has been known that in the great majority of people, or, more precisely, in 96 percent of them, the capacity for speech, the language centre of the brain is located in its left hemisphere, in its temporal or frontal area. But where is musicality represented in the brain? Is it a characteristic of the entire brain, or is it restricted to only certain well-circumscribable regions?

It has long been recognised that certain injuries to the brain result in loss of musical ability or "amusia". It has emerged, at the same time, that injuries to the left hemisphere, which can damage the ability to understand speech and speech ability itself, does not affect musical ability. Maurice Ravel suffered a brain injury to the left hemisphere of his brain in a car accident at age 57, as a result of which he underwent a complete speech aphasia, meaning that his ability to understand and analyse speech disappeared. But this was not true for his musical ability, which remained in perfect working order. In examining numerous individuals with brain injuries, Canadian neurologist Brenda Milner has established that, while damage to the left hemisphere does not entail a reduction of musical ability, when the right hemisphere is injured, the tone colour and tonal memory, etc., that is, the

most elemental musical sense is damaged, or might even disappear altogether.

In psychophysical examinations performed later, it was made abundantly clear that the musical sense – such as the ability to differentiate between melodies and to sense pitches, tone colour and harmonies – is linked to the right hemisphere. This hemisphere plays quite a more important role in sight, emotional processing, creativity, and the response to new experiences, while the left hemisphere is the brain hemisphere of speech, logical thought and sensing time. The sense of time is altogether independent of the right hemisphere in the sense that the sense of rhythm, essential to music is – interestingly – exclusively a property only of the left hemisphere. It is also because of this that the right hand (which is controlled by the left hemisphere) is generally the one that is more apt for marking and beating out the simpler sorts of rhythms, regardless of whether the subject is right- or left-handed. In other words, rhythm is a property of the left (dominant) hemisphere.

In addition to identifying the left hemisphere's strong sense of rhythm, it has also been successfully determined that the upper region of the temporal lobes of the left hemisphere is responsible for analysing perceptions, while the sense of musical pitch, including "perfect pitch", is sensed and analysed by the cortex region of the pre-frontal lobe. With regard to memorisation, it is interesting to note that imaginative processing and recall of known and unknown melodies takes place in what is known as the associate region of the frontal and temporal areas of the right hemisphere.

It is known that the speech centre of the left hemisphere is genetically "hard-wired" in the brain of a newborn. The capability's development takes place over the first few years (presupposing the existence of a suitable, stimulus-rich human environment). Therefore, every human being is born with the capacity for speech and its deep linguistic structure (see Chomsky's ingenious theory regarding this). The same applies to musicality, the "speech" of the right hemisphere! At a few-months of age, an infant is already

able to recognise musical structures (as well as the intonation of speech), well before they can recognise spoken content and structural elements.

Probably also playing a part in this is the fact that in the early stages of development, a person's right hemisphere differentiates and develops quite a bit faster than the left hemisphere, and along with it, the sensitivity to emotional, attention and non-verbal (for example, musical) stimulus. Ray Jackendorff's credible hypothesis holds that the perception of singing and music, as a highly specialised cognitive activity, preceded the development of speech in human evolution, and even influenced it. In our contemporary understanding, in any case, it can clearly be stated that the essential musicality – even if musical tastes may differ – is, just like speech, a capability that all humans are born with. The right hemisphere, and through this, the entire human personality, is thus not able to express itself at the linguistic, limited level, but through music and song, this is, non-verbally – forms a close relationship with the creativity and emotions which are



Photo: Mario Pertorini

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Photo: Szilvia Csibi

likewise partly in the right hemisphere. The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy expressed it as, "music is the shorthand of emotion". He stipulated that while through speech we can often only express what we want to say in fragments, music often expresses it much more holistically, whether one is the transmitter or the recipient. Music is thus the "universal language" of communication, which is at the same time, to quote Mendelssohn, "too precise to be expressed in words".

It is not only during composition that the relationship between musicality and creativity comes to the fore: psychological tests have shown that the perception and enjoyment of music enhances creativity and the power of the imagination. In other words, beyond actively singing and playing music, simply listening to it also strengthens the human power of creativity, and greatly assists with abstract thinking. It is worth noting that Alan Greenspan, the outstanding economist and former Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, once in a presentation remarked about education, "The development of the modern business world places great emphasis on the development of the ability to think abstractly. For this, increased attention in the school curriculum to education in music and the arts – among other areas – is absolutely essential. [...]"

Similarly, most great discoveries and concepts can only come about based on an interdisciplinary footing. It is no accident that listening to Mozart's piano concerto in D major entails just as much enjoyment as solving a difficult mathematical problem. [...] 21st century education must take care to ensure that cultivating a love for the arts and music does not fall to the wayside in favour of the necessary training in technical matters and natural science".

It follows logically from all of this that musicality, singing and music, is just as fundamental an element to the broader development of the human personality as those well understood things which are related primarily to speech and writing.

Music and singing have an immensely important role in social cohesion. Today's modern person probably has greater need for it now than ever. The emotions aroused by singing in a chorus or playing in a group play a determining role in our miraculous experience of group belonging.

The concerts of the Budapest Philharmonic Society provide precisely these universal experiences that can be expressed by music to music lovers, who with joy and gratitude are celebrating together the 160th birthday of this outstanding orchestra.

# Zsófia Balla – TO AN ORCHESTRA

## 160 years of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra

Let us stand atop the staircase of one hundred and sixty steps,  
Let us inhale the buzz, the haze, the scent,  
Nothingness to us, the way they appear  
and disappear, beyond the edge of our lives, the steps.

The past sounds out purely and in unison:  
a full string section, and brass on cue,  
the way the great conductors of old,  
the Erkel's two, Dohnányi, Mahler,  
or Brahms himself, or Liszt, Dvořák,  
Wagner, the famous names  
and unseen batons – still beat the rhythm.

As the great riders sit upon noble steeds,  
they grasp and guide **the Orchestra**  
in the waste of our souls, redeeming many a hidden hope,  
these great conductors and stern conductors.  
Every concert work another earthly gallop.

The mounted music always reaches the gate.

Not for the prize do the drums roll,  
nor the horsehair split on the bow  
nor sparkle the brass, – but  
because the works must be crossed a thousand times,  
each a part in the Red Sea.

The minute must be brought forward, and a thousand notes with it –  
the sheer fear, the deep-felt understanding,  
And the surging, seething consummation,  
to its god, pulling into no heaven!

For Music starts anew each day,  
sprouting from the everyday muteness.  
**An Orchestra** plays music of all things: the valleys,  
the walls of houses, city lights,  
mountains and forests and stars  
and the seeds in men and woman, with the night  
and individually the animals and the plants.

Everyone plays and we know not who directs.

**An Orchestra** is also stars in the sky,  
they shine together and apart  
the present and the past,

and for whom it is given to live,  
it flags their nights.

The audible and wise stream  
burnishes an order deeper than understanding;  
and names what in us is nameless, –  
that the notes be carved in our flesh.  
One day knowledge with us, happily,  
and unlearned things,  
like morality and beauty.

Music jabs its secret into your body.  
Even in the depths of our days it will dawn there:  
raise it to a higher order,  
there a single sigh shows our life –  
that you too are a colour of the world,  
party to the glittering cosmos,  
For hill and wood, star and sea  
know not what they are.  
Man shows them in sounds,  
for music is the world's secret skeleton.

**An orchestra**, after the concert, only wilts –  
but rises again the next day,  
Musicians – even if they are all stars fixed in the firmament –  
Answer to eternity only as an ensemble,  
Bound to each other, like the seeds of a pomegranate,  
Their souls together are one buzzing instrument.

Music: the stuff of morality, a type of  
immaterial material.  
We know it nowhere grows nor shrinks,  
in nature, outside, music.  
There has a model, a pattern, but nothing else!  
A few demigods: no one else shares in the treasure.

But art, beauty, understanding, when do they  
bring us to a higher existence?

Because God's only sensory organ is man,  
and only in music is he paired with the infinite.

Now let there be champagne! And let there be more  
decades.

Budapest, September 2013



# The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra 2004-2013

Anna Scholz



ISTVÁN HILLER, MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, SPEAKS BEFORE THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CONCERT (20 NOVEMBER 2003)  
Photo: Béla Mezey

Several histories of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra have been compiled since its foundation 160 years ago under the name „Budapest Philharmonic Society”. The first work, described as a memorial volume, was published in 1903 to mark the 50th anniversary of the orchestra, edited by Imre Mészáros and Kálmán Isoz. Forty years later, Béla Csuka, a solo cellist with the orchestra, wrote a book entitled *Nine Decades in the Service of Hungarian Music*. Music publisher Zeneműkiadó published a summary of events in the 125 years since the orchestra’s foundation in 1978, compiled by János Breuer, while a large-scale volume by Ferenc Bónis appeared on the occasion of its 150th anniversary. The latter was published jointly by the Budapest Philharmonic Society and the Balassi Publishing House, relating the story of the ensemble with exemplary thoroughness by tracing the major periods of its history season by season. Attached to this richly illustrated

album was a CD supplement containing data of the orchestra’s performances thus far, which made it easier for both aficionados and scholars to gather relevant information. The decade since Bónis’s exhaustive effort has naturally also seen numerous changes, turning points and memorable concerts in the life of the orchestra. Without claiming to be as exhaustive, I’d like to highlight some of these below in a necessarily subjective manner since, as a cellist in the orchestra, I myself have taken part in – or at least witnessed – a good proportion of the events described.

The awarding of the Pro Urbe Budapest prize to the orchestra in autumn 2004 can be regarded as a fine start to the past decade. According to the citation for the award, the prestigious accolade was bestowed on the ensemble in recognition of the “outstanding standard of its artistic work on the Budapest and international musical scene”. In that season, the orchestra was directed by Rico Saccani, its principal conductor and



RICO SACCANI - Photo: Béla Mezey

artistic consultant since 1997. Following tradition, the bulk of concerts organized by the Society – in 2004, as in the years that followed – comprised concerts for season ticket holders held in the Opera House on Mondays and Tuesdays. Three subscription concert series covered a total of 14 concerts, offering nine different programmes. Besides the principal conductor, several important personalities on the Hungarian music scene – János Kovács, Ervin Lukács, Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro and Domonkos Héja – each conducted the orchestra for one evening. The season’s programme also offered the audience two sets of complete works: all four symphonies by Brahms under the baton of Saccani, and Tchaikovsky’s three piano concertos at the Budapest Spring Festival featuring a regular guest of the orchestra, Russian pianist Denis Matsuev. Violinists Adele Anthony and Judith Ingolfsson, cellist Nathaniel Rosen and flautist Rozália Szabó were all invited to perform as soloists during the season, while the orchestra’s horn player Gábor Tóth showed off his own solo skills with an



BÉLA MELIS - Photo: Béla Mezey

interpretation of Richard Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No. 2*. In autumn 2004, similarly to previous years, a guest performance of the Hungarian Opera in Japan was followed by independent concerts by the BPO in several cities of the island nation.

The next season again began under the direction of Rico Saccani, before conductor and orchestra parted ways in spring 2006; the maestro’s remaining two concerts were conducted by Alexander Sladkovsky and János Kovács. In addition, the beginning of the season brought another painful farewell for the members of the BPO as Béla Melis, chairman of the board and cellist with the orchestra, passed away suddenly having administered the Society’s affairs with unflagging enthusiasm and exemplary dedication since 1995. His official position was assumed by István Mali, already highly active as orchestra director of the Opera House. In the season’s fourteen subscription concerts, the young generation of Hungarian conductors was represented by Gergely Kesselyák with a programme of works by Schubert, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, but there were also returns to the podium for Ervin Lukács and the orchestra’s old friend Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro, while Yuri Simonov reappeared with works by Wagner and Khachaturian. According to the orchestra’s first charter drawn up in 1867, the Society’s goal is “to increasingly awaken and perpetuate interest in music, and particularly Hungarian music, exclusively through the performance of musical works of classical value.” In this spirit, performances of works by Hungarian composers in the 2005–2006 season included *The Sly Students Suite* by Ferenc Farkas, as well as works by Kodály, Liszt and Goldmark. Vanessa Wagner appeared as soloist for piano concertos by Grieg and Schumann, while Pietro de



YURI SIMONOV - Photo: Tomas Opitz

Maria performed Chopin’s *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Mozart’s *Violin Concerto in D major* was performed by concertmaster Ágnes Soltész, and Schumann’s *Cello Concerto* by Tamás Varga. Not long after the Palace of Arts opened in March 2005, the orchestra also provided accompaniment for an evening of operetta there with Andrea Rost on 7 November, conducted by Tamás Pál.

Following the departure of Saccani, the Philharmonic Society operated without a chairman-conductor from 2006 right up until 2011, as direction devolved mainly to the Board. The body made up of elected members, under the leadership of its chairman, carried out both long-term and daily tasks related to planning and organisation, as well as often hopeless-seeming negotiations to procure financial resources. The structure of the subscription concerts remained unchanged in these years, with the Mahler subscription series being made up of Tuesday repeats of the Monday evening Opera House concerts of the Dohnányi and Kodály subscription concerts, and with one subscription concert being held each year at the





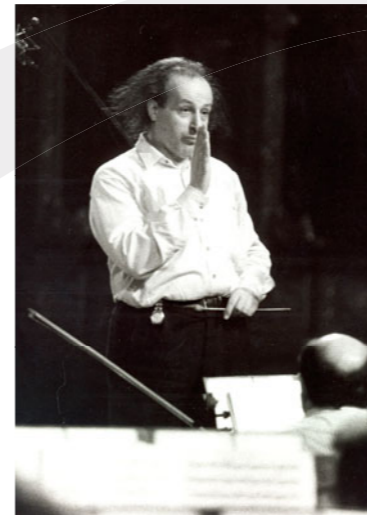
# Z



KOBAYASHI KEN-ICHIRO AND THE BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA (14 FEBRUARY 2006)  
Photo: Vera Eder

Palace of Arts. One consequence of the new situation without a principal conductor was that concerts were planned to involve a considerably greater number of conductors, naturally relying more on domestic talents but with a few invited musicians from abroad. In 2006–2007, for example, János Kovács conducted works by Bartók and Shostakovich in September, while a few days before the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Uprising the orchestra played compositions by Beethoven, Kodály and Sándor Balassa under the baton of Ádám Medveczky. To mark the double Mozart anniversary, the composer's *Requiem* was heard in November under Ervin Lukács. Péter Oberfrank conducted a programme of Grieg in April, while Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro tackled Russian works, György Vashegyi the Viennese Classics, and Zoltán Kocsis the rarely heard *Symphony No. 7* by Dvořák. Of the performance of the latter, János Mácsai said on the Új Zenei Újság magazine on Bartók Radio: "The energy in the fourth movement attained that rare level

which keeps you charged up for days, it is overwhelming. It may be that electric current cannot be directly produced from this kind of energy (though I wouldn't be surprised), but if someone is looking for reserves in the national economy then I heartily recommend concerts and work like this!" Besides Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro, now regarded as an honorary Hungarian, two other foreign conductors also took to the podium. Toshihiko Matsunama, winner of the 2002 Budapest Conductors' Competition, made his debut at a concert in the Hungarian Symphonic Panorama series initiated by the Palace of Arts, while the orchestra performed Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and Bruckner's *Symphony No. 7* in the Opera House under internationally acclaimed Eliahu Inbal, who had already conducted the orchestra in previous decades, in a concert jointly organised with the Budapest Spring Festival. Of the Inbal concert, Lóránt Péteri wrote in Muzsika: "[In Bruckner's symphony] the conductor and orchestra sprouted wings as if by



ELIAHU INBAL (20 JANUARY 1989)  
Opera House Commemorative Collection

magic. The strings had a rich, concise sound through which the phrasing burned – from here on, we listened entranced to the utterly beautiful, full tone of the cellos. The music lived and breathed, and the musical phrases, heated in the manner of speech, finally began to communicate the features of the Viennese symphonic style: entreaties, complaints, big promises and the withdrawal of big promises. The pauses and transitions, meanwhile, imbued the piece with the tension of great expectation. Through a series of so many delicately formed brass and woodwind sounds, and via the labyrinth of musical forms taking shape before us, we reached the great climax of the movement, which became a genuinely cathartic experience."



To mark the Day of Hungarian Culture in the Palace of Arts, György Győriványi Ráth conducted works by Dohnányi, Brahms and Kodály. On the 100th anniversary of the birth of János Ferencsik, again in the Palace of Arts, excerpts from the late maestro's most important operas and symphonic pieces were heard under the baton of János Kovács. Under the same conductor, the orchestra also made another guest appearance in Japan in autumn 2006, performing works by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Liszt, Mozart and Rachmaninoff to great success in nine cities. In 2007 the world of music celebrated the 125th anniversary of the birth of Zoltán Kodály; in two concerts, the Philharmonic Society commemorated the composer who entrusted its orchestra with world premières of four of his works. In September the Palace of Arts hosted a performance of the *Háry János Suite* and *Dances of Galánta* under György Győriványi Ráth, while the orchestra's cellist Balázs Kántor performed the *Sonata for Solo Cello*. In

December, Ádám Medveczky conducted the *Hungarian Rondo*, *Concerto* and *Two Songs*, on a programme which also featured a work by Kodály's composition teacher Hans von Koessler. In the 2007–2008 season, the orchestra once again welcomed Zoltán Kocsis and Gergely Kesselyák as guests, while János Kovács conducted at the January concert of the Hungarian Symphonic Panorama in the Palace of Arts. In February, János Rolla led the orchestra from the concertmaster's seat for a performance of Vanhal's *Symphony in G minor*, Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* and Mozart's *Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra* (where the soloists were orchestra members Zsuzsanna Menyhárt and Júlia Szilvássy). In September, Okko Kamu conducted a programme of Sibelius works, while April saw István Dénes in charge of a concert of rhapsodies by Liszt, Ravel and Enescu. The ambience of the latter concert was described by Zoltán Végső thus: "I sat down with curiosity to the fourth performance in the current Mahler subscription series



JÁNOS FERENCSIK (1984)  
Opera House Commemorative Collection

MEMORIAL CONCERT AT THE PALACE OF ARTS TO MARK THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF JÁNOS FERENCSIK (18 JANUARY 2007) - Photo: Vera Eder





VERDI: REQUIEM IN THE OPERA HOUSE (31 OCTOBER 2006) CONDUCTOR: ERVIN LUKÁCS  
Photo: Vera Éder

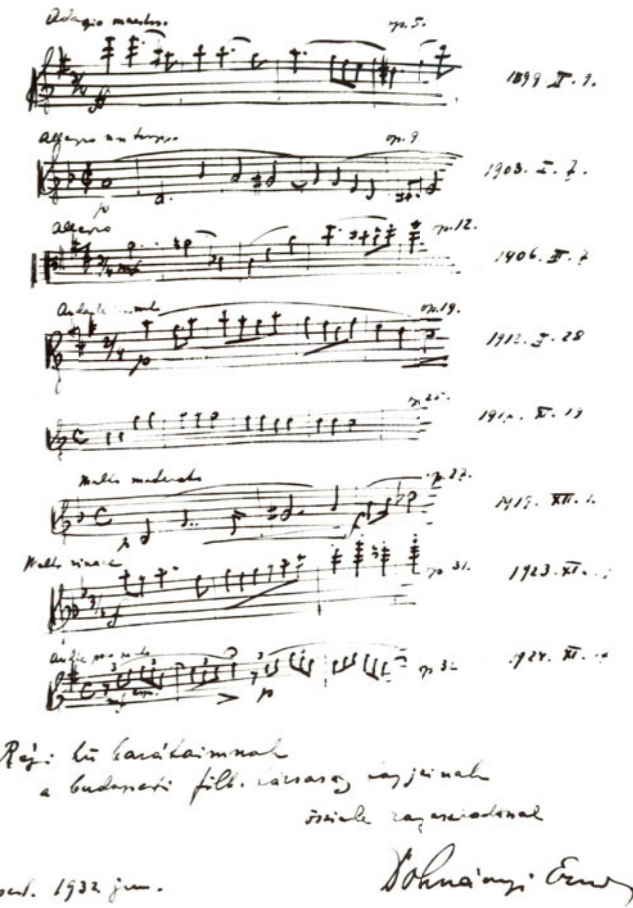
of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, and to my great surprise experienced an intense and intimate atmosphere. [...] The orchestra conducted by István Dénes had a marvellous sense of what the audience needs, while the audience knew exactly what it would get from the orchestra: it's been a long time since I witnessed a more wonderful connection between artist and recipient." A highlight of the season was the appearance of Nicola Luisotti in May, under whose direction the orchestra performed a programme of orchestral excerpts from Puccini operas and the *Messa di Gloria*, accompanied by the Hungarian National Choir. The 2008–2009 season opened in October with concerts under the baton of Tomomi Nishimoto, a conductor already known from the orchestra's Japanese tour, while November concerts featured György Vashegyi conducting works by Rameau and Brahms, as well as Mozart's *Piano Concerto in E-flat major* with soloist Peter Frankl. In December, Howard Williams compiled a programme of works by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Voříšek (with Andrea Rost singing

Mozart concert arias). Domonkos Héja conducted the *Symphony No. 2* by Emil Petrovics and Orff's *Carmina Burana* in February, while the orchestra presented a Mendelssohn evening in April under conductor Pier Giorgio Morandi. The season saw the return of János Rolla as concertmaster, under whose expert direction the ensemble performed works by Haydn, Schubert and György Orbán at the Palace of Arts (with István Várdai as soloist for Haydn's *Cello Concerto in C major*). A pair of concerts in March proved particularly memorable, featuring Bartók's complete pantomime ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and the opera *Bluebeard's Castle* with László Polgár and Ildikó Komlósi in the singing roles. The audience had the chance to hear some of Dvořák's rarely performed works, *The Noon Witch* and *A Hero's Song*, not only at two Opera House concerts in May but also during the Dvořák Marathon at the Palace of Arts, where the *Rondo for Cello and Orchestra* was also performed by the orchestra's solo cellist László Pólus. In the preface to the programme advertising the concert season of 2008–2009, István Mali wrote that "in spite

of difficulties, we have endeavoured to put together high-quality, varied subscription series." From this short observation it is evident that financial worries continued to dog the orchestra, rendering its plans unpredictable and often keeping organizers and even artists in a state of uncertainty, sometimes until the last minute. In light of this, it is particularly telling that at the end of the season, on 19 June 2010, the orchestra received the Hungarian Heritage award in recognition of the past and continuing present of the Budapest Philharmonic Society. Another important event in the season was the orchestra's performance of Ernő Dohnányi's pantomime *The Veil of Pierrette* (with Domonkos Héja conducting) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of its one-time chairman-conductor. In addition, it celebrated the bicentennial of the birth of its founder Ferenc Erkel with an abridged performance of the opera *Dózsa György*. Marking the 120th anniversary of the world première of Mahler's *Symphony No.1* in Budapest, the work was heard in its complete form including the Blumine movement and the composer's orchestral *Lieder*. Of this performance János Malina wrote: "The performance of the *Symphony No.1* picked up the line of the *Lieder* in terms of the discipline, broad range and poetic richness of their means of expression – with the added achievement of managing to truthfully evoke the organic sweep of a monumental cyclical composition, rendering the symphony's status as a masterpiece immediately and strikingly perceptible. Mahler's distinctive voice, his monumentalism and sarcastic tendencies appear in full cry in this revolutionary work, and the performance of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and János Kovács was not merely impressively faultless and evocative,

but clearly displayed this explosive revolutionary quality. Indeed, this "explosive" potential is one of the most important epithets that might be applied to the performance itself." With János Rolla as concertmaster and Júlia Pusker as soloist, the ensemble gave a concert of Mozart works, while István Dénes entertained the audience with a humorously playful concert at carnival time. At almost the opposite end of the spectrum, Ádám Medveczky conducted Verdi's *Requiem* in November, while Ervin Lukács presented a programme of

Romantic works. October saw Swedish conductor Johan Arnell introduce the Hungarian public to the *Gustav Adolf Suite* by his compatriot Hugo Alfvén. A special occasion in the season was a concert held in Saint Stephen's Basilica, which featured Saint-Saëns' *Cyprès et lauriers* and Scriabin's *Symphony No. 3* under conductor Alpaslan Ertüngealp, with Gyula Pfeiffer on organ. Outside the subscription concerts, the orchestra performed in Szeged and Pécs, as well as at the Beethoven Marathon at the Palace of Arts.



LINES WRITTEN BY ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI IN THE GOLDEN BOOK OF THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY; THE SCORE SAMPLES SHOW THE STARTING LINES OF THE WORKS PREMIÈRED BY THE ORCHESTRA (JUNE 1932)  
Philharmonic Society Archive





# Z



ÁDÁM FISCHER AND THE BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA (2010) - Photo: Vera Éder

In October 2010, Béla Simon succeeded István Mali as orchestra director at the Opera House, and he has acted as managing director on the Board ever since. The season continued according to the customary schedule, although a further significant change as regards the future came in February 2011 when, after a long hiatus, the Society once again appointed a chairman-conductor in the shape of György Győriványi Ráth, who had already collaborated with the orchestra on several occasions in concerts and on CD recordings. Concerts this season focused in particular on vocal music, as Júlia Hajnóczy performed Debussy's *Ariettes oubliées* (*Forgotten Songs*) and Beatrix Fodor sang Beethoven's concert aria *Ah perfido!* Mária Celeng, Viktória Mester, Tibor Szappanos, Gábor Bretz and the MR Choir performed Mozart's *Requiem*, Ildikó Komlósi and Attila Fekete appeared as soloists in Mahler's *The Song of the Earth*, and the National Choir featured in a carnival concert. As conductors the orchestra welcomed Zoltán Kocsis, János Kovács, Pier Giorgio Morandi, Ádám Fischer, Michael Boder, Ion Marin and Ainars Rubikis, the latter winner of the 2010

Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition in Bamberg, as well as János Rolla, who again took the stage as concertmaster. At the Schubert Marathon in the Palace of Arts, the ensemble played the Viennese composer's incidental music to *Rosamunde* with conductor János Kovács and soprano Gabriella Fodor. In September it gave concerts of Erkel's music at the Károlyi-kert gardens in Budapest and in Székesfehérvár, with Ádám Medveczky conducting, while October saw a performance in the Opera House in memory of László Polgár. When planning the next season of 2011–2012, György Győriványi Ráth – given that, when appointed chairman-conductor, he also held the post of chief music director at the Opera House – was able to introduce numerous changes to the system of the subscription series and the concert schedule. Besides the traditional Dohnányi subscription concerts on Mondays, an Erkel subscription series of Friday concerts and a Saturday evening Mahler subscription concerts were announced. Not by accident, the name of the renowned musical educator Kodály was attached to a series of dress rehearsals on Sunday mornings,

occasions where an explanatory introduction by the conductor preceded the performances. Noted conductors invited to give concerts during this season included Christoph Eschenbach, Christopher Hogwood, Christoph von Dohnányi (whose regrettable withdrawal sparked serious media coverage, and who was eventually replaced by Ion Marin) and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos (who was indisposed and replaced by Pinchas Steinberg). After Győriványi left his post as the Opera's chief music director in September 2011, the planned season could only be maintained under the new system and new principles with great difficulty and by carrying out a number of changes. The orchestra's concerts nevertheless garnered great acclaim from audiences and critics alike, providing inspiration to



GYÖRGY GYŐRIVÁNYI RÁTH (2013) - Photo: Attila Nagy

its musicians. Particularly memorable were the interpretations of Strauss by the young Juraj Valčuha, Hogwood's Mendelssohn concert, Domonkos Héja's

evening entitled *Latin Carnival*, and the concerts conducted by Eschenbach. Writing about the latter's performance of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*, Kristóf



MOZART MARATHON AT THE PALACE OF ARTS (26 FEBRUARY 2012) CONDUCTOR: JÁNOS KOVÁCS - Photo: Pál Csillag





PETER SCHNEIDER (27 MAY 2013) - Photo: Péter Herman

Csengery said: "A mixture of grace, charm, playfulness and melancholy characterized the rhythms of the Valse as Eschenbach and the Philharmonic Orchestra became perceptibly more and more inspired and liberated in their playing together, leading into the finale with its stately, proud bearing, the noble pomp of its processional character, and the passion and sweep of the march rhythm."

Győriványi's planned programme placed great emphasis on the past and colourful tradition of the orchestra. Eschenbach conducted Brahms' *Piano Concerto in B-flat major* (with Tzimon Barto as soloist), a piece which the composer himself premièred with the orchestra in 1881. Several works by one-time chairman-conductor Ernő Dohnányi also featured: Tamás Varga performed the *Konzertstück* for cello and orchestra in September, while the composer's *Symphony No. 1* featured on the programme in May. As part of the Symphonic Discoveries series at the Palace of Arts, János Kovács paired two symphonies named after Lajos Kossuth by Bartók and Emánuel Moór, and also conducted the orchestra

at the Mozart Marathon at the same venue. The audience was introduced to several young soloists, with János Palojtay performing Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto in G minor*, and multiple prize-winner Evgeni Bozhanov playing Rachmaninoff's *Paganini Variations*.

In 2012–2013 the orchestra returned to its traditional Monday concert slots, announcing two subscription series



CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH WAYNE MARSHALL (17 DECEMBER 2012)  
Photo: Tomas Opitz

comprising a total of ten concerts. The Kodály series, besides featuring the orchestra's chairman-conductor, gained holders entry to an evening of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky with Finland's Leif Segerstam, Verdi's *Requiem* conducted by János Kovács, and a concert by renowned Wagner interpreter Peter Schneider. The Dohnányi concert series, meanwhile, featured a Russian programme with Yuri Simonov, a jazz-inflected Christmas concert with American pianist and conductor Wayne Marshall, and a frenetic display of percussion with Nebojsa Zivkovic. Simonov's November appearance was named the most memorable classical concert of 2012 based on the votes of nearly 2,000 readers of the website fidelio.hu. Győriványi conducted two genuine rarities at his November concert: marking László Lajtha's double anniversary, he presented the symphonic poem *Hortobágy*, originally written as film music, as well as the first version of Mahler's *Symphony No. 1 (Symphonic Poem in Two Parts)*, which was premièred by the orchestra in 1889. Reviewing the performance of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* under Győriványi, Sándor Kovács said in Bartók Radio's *Új Zenei Újság* in April 2013: "I know many recordings of the work. With all due respect, I can say here that this live performance surpassed perhaps all of them in precision, elaboration and impact. Of course this required enthusiasm, commitment and discipline on the part of the orchestra. The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra delivered a stunning performance. Practically everything succeeded, every solo part sounded inspired. Next time I won't ask for a complimentary ticket for Shostakovich or for some work that seems interesting to me. Instead I'll be curious about the orchestra and, above all, the concept of György Győriványi Ráth." I have not yet mentioned several of the

orchestra's other very important regular appearances. Since the founding of the Prima Prissima Awards in 2003, the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra has performed at the televised awards ceremony. In addition, for more than a decade we have been invited guests at the prestigious festival held in the beautiful German spa town of Bad Kissingen with Johan Arnell as conductor, while each summer we take part in opera productions on the Margaret Island Open-Air Stage, and in gala concerts marking the Anna Ball in Balatonfüred. For the members of the Society, masterpieces of chamber music have always occupied an important place alongside operas and symphonic orchestral concerts. For many years the orchestra's musicians have regularly appeared at Saturday matinee concerts organized by the Franz Liszt Memorial Museum at the Old Music Academy, in a variety of formations from string quartet to piano trio, and from piano quintet to string sextet, or more rarely flute quartet or cello trio. On occasion smaller chamber ensembles have been assembled, for example to perform Dvořák's *Serenade for Strings* or to



MUSICA E PAROLE – CHAMBER CONCERT IN THE BERTALAN SZÉKELY ROOM - Photo: Szilvia Csibi

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accompany unusual concertos (the 2009 season, for example, featured concertos with Dóra Gjorgjevic on piccolo, Veronika Botos on viola d'amore, Róbert Lugosi on trombone and Dávid Hornyák on double bass). Arranging and organizational tasks for these concerts have been carried out with great devotion and diligence by orchestra member Emília Csányki (now retired), and by Ágnes Peták since 2010. On several occasions the Society has celebrated International Music Day on 1 October with chamber concerts; the orchestra's cellist Csaba Bartos deserves credit for the idea of organizing and playing music at several venues (the Klebelsberg Culture Centre, Opera House, Bartók Memorial House and Bartók House of Music in Rákoshegy). Since the autumn of 2011, the musicians of the Philharmonic Society have held an independent chamber music series in the Bertalan Székely Room of the Opera House under the title *Musica e Parole*. Visitors to these concerts – which cellist Anita Miskolczi has taken the lion's share of organizing – have been able to hear the superb actress Anna Kubik recite poetry to accompany the music performed. The programme often



Z



PINCHAS STEINBERG (16 SEPTEMBER 2013) - Photo: Péter Herman

features works connected to current new opera productions (with concerts of works by Verdi, Strauss, Mozart and Bartók having already taken place). Great emphasis is also placed on the works of Hungarian composers (recent years, for example, have featured pieces by Dohnányi, Liszt, Mosonyi, Lajtha, Goldmark and our colleague Zoltán Kovács, the composer and bassoonist). On most occasions, vocalists also feature alongside the instruments.

In 2012 the Society opened a new chapter with the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Opera House, which it hopes has settled the relationship of the two institutions in the long term. An important event in the 2013–2014 season will be the arrival of Pinchas Steinberg as chairman-conductor in February 2014, replacing György Győriványi Ráth on the expiry of his three-year mandate. In a show of continuity, both will appear at a special event in this celebratory season, the jubilee concert in November. Celebrations of the orchestra's 160th anniversary effectively began in March 2012, when the orchestra awarded Gold and Silver Shields to a number of

noted public figures whose efforts have helped the work of the Society over the past decade. The winners received their accolades in Parliament, among them Dr. János Horváth, the oldest member of the House, chief legal counsel Dr. Péter Szegvári and Count László Zichy, as well as Levente Riz and Dr. Zsolt Láng, mayors of the 17th and 2nd districts of Budapest. The Philharmonic Society closes this extraordinarily rich decade, replete with struggles but also with unforgettable concerts, with gratitude for the events outlined above and with a plethora of plans for the future. Seizing the momentum of our jubilee year, keeping our traditions in mind while remaining open to new directions, we have compiled our programme for 2013–2014, when once again we look forward to many musical treats, welcoming soloists both young and well-established, and conductors from both Hungary and abroad.

We thank our audience for their kind support and interest, and we await you with more valuable and lasting musical experiences, hopefully for many more decades to come!

## Members of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra

**CONCERTMASTERS:** András Csontha, Galina Danyilova, Pál Éder, Ágnes Soltész Kovács

**FIRST VIOLIN:** Anikó Ecseki, Imola Rajka, Éva Mihályi, Tamás Biró, Beatrix Bugony, Hajnalka Csikós, Péter Foskolos, Károly Gál, Márta Kisfaludy, Judit Kovács, Ágnes Beke Ligeti, István Ludvig, Zita Novák, László Nyuli, Éva Paul, Ludmila Romanovskaya, Johanna Tóth Kiss Szántó, Magdolna Závodszy Tomsics, Gabriella Ürmösi Farkas

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**CELLO:** Balázs Kántor, László Pólus, Csaba Bartos, Ágnes Fodor Czeglédi, Dénes Karasszon, Gábor Magyar, Anita Miskolczy, Ildikó Rönkös, Anikó Sabján, Anna Scholz, Tibor Wambach

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**FLUTE:** Zsuzsanna Menyhárt, János Rácz, Dóra Gjorgjevic Ács, Dr. Csilla Éva Somogyvári Somodi, Zsuzsanna Ittész, Márta Kunszeri

**OBOE:** Krisztina Szélpál, Eszter Horváth, József Erős

**CLARINET:** Sándor Kiss, Beáta Andrea Várnai, Péter Csongár

**BASSOON:** Zoltán Kovács, Judit Polonkai, László Hunyadi, Ágnes Breszka Jandácsik, Aladár Tüske

**HORN:** Sándor Tamás Endrődy, Péter Lakatos, András Kovalcsik

**TRUMPET:** Zsolt Czeglédi, Tibor Péter Király, Csaba Nagy

**TROMBONE:** Róbert Lugosi, Sándor Szabó, Lajos Fülöp

**TUBA:** Miklós Wrchovszky

**HARP:** Ágnes Peták Juhász, Júlia Szilvásy

**TIMPANI and PERCUSSION:** Antal Eiszrich, Miklós Béla Kovács, Gáspár Sente, János Tóth

**LIBRARIANS:** László Héja, József Spengler

**ORCHESTRAL ASSISTANTS:** Gyula Kovács, Attila Szász, Zoltán Szabó, Károly Gjorgjevic

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Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra  
1065 Budapest, Hajós utca 8-10.  
Telefon/Fax: +36 1 331 9478  
[info@bftz.hu](mailto:info@bftz.hu)  
[www.opera.hu](http://www.opera.hu)  
[www.bftz.hu](http://www.bftz.hu), [www.bpo.hu](http://www.bpo.hu)  
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