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The Baroque Recorder in Hungary
Abstract of DLA Dissertation
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The recorder (furulya, flûte à bec, Blockflöte) is a linear fipple-flute provided with eight playing holes, one of which is a thumb-hole to change the registers. Its history consists of three big periods: the Renaissance, the Baroque, and the period of the modern recorder playing. This paper gives an account of my research concerning the Baroque recorder in Hungarian music culture from ca. 1660 until ca. 1750. In a music-historical context, I tried to collect, study and evaluate all the existing recorders, scores containing recorder parts from the territory of the historical Hungary, and the written and iconographical evidences as well. The aim of this paper is to give a general overview of the instrument and its use in the baroque Hungary, and uncover paths for further research.

On the one hand, this work forms an integral part of the current musicological research on the history of music in Hungary in the first half of the 18th century, a topic which has been neglected before. On the other hand, it is a part of an international organological project intending to discover the details of the history of the recorder. A further topicality of this work is the rise of the recorder in our days. Accordingly, during the last few years, three universities with faculties of music have offered BA or MA study programmes training recorder-teachers in Hungary. As a university lecturer, I hope the results of my efforts of summarizing the pieces of information can serve as a starting point for university students as well.

To the best of my knowledge, I am the first to try to do a systematic, omnidirectional research on this subject. My book (Bali, J.: *A furulya*. Editio Musica, Budapest, 2007 — the greatest and most comprehensive monograph on the recorder ever written) was devoted to the general history, the repertory and the acoustics of the instrument. The present and past of the recorder playing in Hungary was shortly reported in the appendix only. The most important pieces of information were

given by Dr. Péter Király, who obtained a large number of interesting data as a paragon, when having done research on different organological questions. His contributions were so essential that I noted him as co-author of the first chapter of the appendix treating the recorder playing during its early history.

Several years ago at the beginning of my research, I had to face the fact that many important questions of my topic touch areas which either had not been discovered yet, or their study was at an initial stage. For example, more and more articles had been written on the residential and ecclesiastical culture of music in the 18th century in Hungary, however, comprehensive general studies are still missing. Fortunately, this work was supported by fellow scholars of the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. I am especially grateful to Ágnes Sas and Katalin Szacsvai-Kim for having provided me with their yet unpublished material. Among the less treated fields are for example the baroque recorder playing at German universities and in Vienna, the catalogue of baroque vocal and instrumental orchestral compositions containing recorder parts, and in general, the amateur recorder playing in the 18th century Europe. An in-depth discovery of all these questions would have required great effort; dealing with them was beyond my scope. Consequently, I had to concentrate on finding some essential proofs for certain questions. I am grateful for the assistance given by colleagues from several different countries.

The whole primary material, including inventories, music scores, account books, and diaries of monasteries, is far too big and dispersed, which makes it impossible to grasp. Besides, the recorder is very rarely mentioned in them; therefore only well-aimed, archival research is expected to achieve satisfactory results. Accordingly, as a starting point, I used the overview studies of the aforementioned scholars of the

Institute of Musicology of Budapest, and research material collected by Kornél Bárdos and Klára Renner-Várhidi, after which I turned to the increasing research of the last few years dealing with travelling students from the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary and from Transylvania attending foreign universities. Thus this work was based on secondary data of research, and I tried to track down the primary sources only when the secondary ones allowed me to hope promising results. Owing to this, some details produced interesting, worthwhile results, however, some did not. I am going to report on the negative results as well, since the interpretation of a negative result might prove useful in the course of subsequent research.

The first chapter of this paper summarizes the history of the recorder, explains the acoustical differences of the significant recorder types, elaborates on the way they were used in music making, providing a background to the interpretation of the finds in Hungary. The second chapter renders an account of the basic directions of my research.

The substantial body of the work starts with the third chapter. Since the economic and social life in Hungary was much less developed than other countries in Western Europe during the 17–18th centuries, the situation in music culture was similar, modern art-music of the time could hardly strike roots in Hungary. Therefore, when looking for traces of the baroque recorder I studied the aristocratic courts first, among them the ones of German ecclesiastical aristocracy in the first place, which were closely related to Vienna. And indeed, the most fascinating benefit of the investigation is connected with Michael Friedrich Althann, both viceroy of Naples and bishop of Vác and his nephew, Michael Karl Althann, bishop of Vác. I succeeded in proving the two items of “flute” sets of the

inventory, which itself was made after the younger Althann's death, to be *recorder* sets. It was brought to light as well that the Althanns' stay in Naples coincided with the golden age of the Baroque music in the-South Italian city. Both Althanns were member of the Academy of Arcadia (Accademia degli Arcadi), which promoted playing wind instruments, consequently they were involved in one of the most active spiritual centres of Italian flute and recorder playing. Even the striking possibility came up that the recorder sets described in the inventory might have been used in domestic music making in Althanns chamber. The far leading threads of the story resulted in a compound picture worth being treated in its own chapter.

The forth chapter deals with the courts of aristocracy, above all the ones of the Esterházy family and of the archbishops of Esztergom residing in Pozsony. Although the documents show a very rich music culture, only one single episcopal inventory mentions an item which might raise the possibility of referring to recorders.

In the fifth chapter I am tracking recorders in the music culture of the Catholic Church. Jesuits and Piarists settled down in the country to provide up-to-date education. The activity of the orders was considered as a tool of recatholization promoted by the Habsburgs. Building churches and monasteries does not cover the whole range of activity of the orders. Among the walls, sciences and arts, consequently music likewise played an important role. It is not surprising that a considerable part of inventories which mentions recorders is to be found in this group. Indication for recorder music came up in five monasterial churches and in one parish church. The music material of one of the inventories sheds light upon the fact that in accordance with its pastoral symbolism the recorder was generally used in compositions for Christmas. Agreeably, the analysis of a huge catalogue of a Piarist monk

revealed more than a dozen of pieces which required recorder. However the collection is to be seen as a result of the monk's enthusiasm inspired by scientific interest only, it cannot be considered as a proof of recorder playing in Hungary, unfortunately.

The sixth chapter gives account of recorder related documents of protestant music culture. The spirit of Puritanism was strong among Protestants oppressed by the Habsburg court. Not only were their financial possibilities limited compared to their fellow believers in the West, but as a result of the puritanism they did not tend to set up a claim for complicated music. In Germany, in congregations outside the area influenced by pietism, cantata performances were traditionally held on Sundays, where a wide range of instruments was used. Besides, the same practice was documented in German speaking Lutheran congregations of Hungary – naturally to a considerably lesser extent due to the limited scope for action and the lack of resources. Until now, traces of recorder playing have been found in Saxon of Transylvania, in Upper Hungary (now Slovakia), and in the Western Borderland. Further research seems to be worthwhile in these areas, especially in smaller Transylvanian towns.

Hunting for non professional recorder players, the seventh chapter focuses on the aristocracy and the students of foreign universities. The amateur aristocrats during the Baroque era played primarily the lute or any keyboard instruments, it was only towards the end of the era that noblemen playing the violin or the travers flute appeared. Unfortunately, in this connection no trace of the recorder could be found. Although László Amadé's poem mentions a recorder, it does not offer any proof of his playing the recorder. Among the students of foreign universities the students who studied in Germany were dominantly German speaking Lutherans whose

music activity contributed to the music culture of the Lutheran Church in Hungary. Despite the fact that several travelling students of the reformed faith got as far as the Kingdom of Great Britain, the most important centre of amateur recorder playing in the Baroque era, the examination of accessible diaries and other sorts of documents did not uncover any evidence of recorder playing by any students. An interesting letter written by Mihály Bethlen's mother to his son came to light however, with pieces of advice for the journey, which illustrates the contemporaneous negative attitude towards the Western life style.

In the eighth chapter, I render an account of existing instruments and iconographical documents. Only four recorders have been known from the territory of the historical Hungary, they have been preserved in the collection of musical instruments of the Hungarian National Museum. My research did not result in any newly discovered instruments, nevertheless the analysis of the four instruments and their comparing with other recorders in different museums turned out to be fruitful. I succeeded in finding the twin of the ivory bass flute which is now a piece of a Munich collection, and managed to produce new results regarding the origin of an Oberlender alt recorder. The analysis of the Stanesby fragment is also a novelty.

Until now no one has tried to give an account of the recorder related iconographical documents in Hungary; unfortunately the practice of recorder playing has not been verified by the so far uncovered iconography.

The existing music scores are under examination in the ninth chapter. An analysis is given of the three pieces of "Harmonia Caelestis" by Esterhazy, and that of the four pieces in the Sopron Lutheran Archive, and an effort has been made to define the style and the context of the two anonym pieces. As a

conclusion, it is pointed out that the music preserved in the Sopron Archive was not likely to be performed in Hungary. The analysis of music material of other libraries served with several interesting details, sadly though they cannot be considered as a verification of the existence of recorder playing in our country.

To summarize, I have come to the conclusion that although the baroque recorder appeared here and there in Hungary, to speak about its “presence” would be an overstatement. The very few appearances of the baroque recorder belonged almost without exception to the German-language culture. Accordingly, the name of the instrument must have been any form of “Flauto” or “Flöte”. The Hungarian name “furulya”, which appeared in the 17th century, cannot be connected with the aforesaid instrument.