

Thesis

Subject of the research

As far as I know, there is no officially available source in the Hungarian language on the development of the classical saxophone and saxophone quartet genre in Hungary, and on the origins of the works for saxophone quartet by Hungarian composers. My own experience has formed the basis of the topic I am working on. Given that classical saxophone education in Hungary was only introduced at the intermediate level in 2000 (at the Leó Weiner Music Secondary School in Budapest) and at the higher level in 2004 (at the Béla Bartók Music Institute of the University of Miskolc), it is apparent that a lack of resources existed not only in the past, but also in the present. As far as I am aware, there are only a few unofficially published papers on the development of the history of musical instruments in Hungarian, which can be found on the Internet, and which have been supplemented since the start of higher education by brief portfolios and theses written by students at these educational institutions. It is difficult to summarise, aggregate and summarize the content of these portfolios and theses, since the small number of graduate students usually worked without any Hungarian-language sources or from glossaries found on the Internet, and the resulting papers were not of a length suitable for a comprehensive and detailed presentation of the subject. Without the knowledge and processing of the significant literature on the classical saxophone in foreign languages, the work of foreign performers and the classical saxophone repertoire, which is still largely unknown in Hungary, the topics covered so far could not significantly contribute to the expansion of the knowledge and source material available in Hungary. During my research abroad, I became acquainted with source materials and musical works that are not available to Hungarian saxophone players or students of the instrument. In view of all this, I considered it important to work on a topic that is incomplete in the Hungarian saxophone literature and that could be suitable to give both students and interested practising artists a comprehensive picture of the beginnings of the use of the classical saxophone in Hungary and the development of the saxophone quartet repertoire in Hungary, which has not existed until now.

Research method

The first stage of my research was to organise my existing and accumulated research material, mostly in foreign languages, to match it to the precise topic, and to organise the whole thesis in a planned structure. The topic and title of my dissertation were based on my professional vision, which drew on my 10 years of experience as a lecturer at university and abroad, as well as my experience as a lecturer at home and abroad, and on the other hand, I took into account the need to do more than just map the situation of the classical saxophone in Hungary, but also to present a retrospective view of the creative and performing process of contemporary Hungarian composition for saxophone quartet, from the perspective of works written after 1995, and the connections and differences in the 180-year history of the saxophone instrument family. As my experience as a teacher and performer has shown that one of the most important areas of research is the tonal world of the classical saxophone, its use and applications from both a performer's and composer's perspective, I have defined one of the main lines of my dissertation topic as the changes in the tonal world of the saxophone. However, given the fact that the role of saxophone quartets - especially the Budapest Saxophone Quartet - is inescapable in the history of the development of the saxophone sound in Hungary, I tried to concretize the topic in the direction of a unique process, of which I myself could be a part. After Kodály and Bartók each introduced the saxophone sound in a piece of music, the role of the saxophone in music in Hungary shifted significantly towards jazz music. The mid-1990s saw the beginning of a process that established the classical music repertoire of the saxophone in Hungary and began to raise the instrument's classical music sound to the public consciousness. The other main topic of my dissertation is therefore to show how the Hungarian classical saxophone and saxophone quartet genre developed and how contemporary Hungarian composers were influenced by the exploitation of the tonal, performance, technical and chamber music possibilities of the classical saxophone and saxophone quartet genre, which first appeared in Hungary after 1995.

However, in view of the fact that the classical saxophone repertoire in Hungary started to develop at a different time and under different influences than in Western Europe and the USA, I thought it important to present the differences between the development of the classical saxophone literature, instrument use and repertoire in Hungary and abroad. To this end, it is inevitable to describe the developmental stages of the saxophone's sound from the time the instrument was patented. The fact that I lived and researched in the United States in the years preceding my doctoral studies determined my research on source materials for these chapters on the history of music and instruments. During this period, I became familiar with source materials in foreign languages concerning the development of the instrument family, the evolution of the development of individual instruments within the instrument family, the performance of instruments in musical works, and pioneer performers, which are not available in Hungarian in Hungary today and are not part of saxophone education in Hungary. The vast majority of my sources on the history of saxophone instruments are based on English-language literature, professional publications, archived materials, and personal interviews with recognized experts on the subject. In writing this dissertation, I have tried to incorporate as much of these sources as the space constraints allowed, since the chapters on the history of the instrument are not the main subject of the dissertation, but are intended to provide a basis for comparison with the Hungarian development of the classical saxophone repertoire and to present the characteristics of the Hungarian classical saxophone repertoire. In this dissertation I wanted to emphasize the pioneering role of Hungarian composers in the development of the Hungarian classical saxophone repertoire. I believed that in this way I could give a clear picture of the process of what is currently defined as classical saxophone playing in Hungary. Having been personally involved in the process of the development and use of the saxophone quartet genre in Hungary, my own experience became the basis for the writing, structure, approach and execution of my thesis. The chapters on the emergence and rapid development of the saxophone quartet genre in Hungary explore the works of Hungarian composers who have significantly determined the spread and success of the genre in Hungary over the last two and a half decades. Given that less than three

decades have passed since the emergence and spread of the classical saxophone and saxophone quartet genre in Hungary, to my knowledge no one has yet processed the works written during this period, and thus no published music literature or other publications on this topic have appeared that could serve as source material. Moreover, for most of the works discussed in this dissertation, their scores have not yet been published, and only the manuscripts exist. In view of this, I have only been able to use as sources the process of composition, the scores and manuscripts of these compositions, and interviews with the composers.

Results of the research

In the first years of the saxophone's use in orchestras, it was considered to be merely an adjunct to the clarinet section. The later development of saxophone instruments, changes in timbre and their use by composers depended fundamentally on the way in which the saxophone family of instruments was judged in the 19th century on the basis of professional criteria such as the range of the instruments. The sound of the instrument was significantly influenced by the technical developments that followed its invention, which occurred mainly in the first hundred years after its patenting. Increased bore and hole sizes, improved keys and key layouts have all contributed to the saxophones in use today having a much more powerful sound and higher register than in the early days. The sound of the saxophone in Western Europe and North America has evolved steadily since the 19th century, and the classical saxophone repertoire includes hundreds of works. In contrast, the Hungarian classical saxophone repertoire is considerably narrower than either the Western European or the American repertoire. In the process of my research, I wanted to find an answer to the rupture that leads back to the missing role of Hungarian composers in the classical saxophone repertoire in the first half of the 20th century. However, based on the writings on the use of the saxophone by Bartók and Kodály, there is little information even on how the two composers actually came to know the saxophone and why they considered it important to incorporate these instruments into the symphonic orchestral sound through their works. Given the fact that foreign literature on the classical saxophone did not really reach Hungary until the fall of communism, the composers

themselves were only aware of the new possibilities of this instrumental family through their limited experience abroad or through performers who had already been involved in the foreign music scene.

Conclusions of the research

Based on my research, I have come to the conclusion that the emergence and development of saxophone classical music in Hungary differs significantly from the Western European and American traditions. In Hungary, the classical music aspect of Sax's instrumental family became known through the introduction of chamber music, including the saxophone quartet genre. The composers of the saxophone quartet works highlighted in my dissertation have followed a completely different path, both in compositional technique, performance technique and sound, and not only differ from each other, but also approach the role and usability of the saxophones from a different perspective than Bartók and Kodály. Thus, for example, in László Dubrovay's *Bánat és Öröm* (Sorrow and Joy), the effects for their performance are given a completely unique signal system, while in Gyula Fekete's *Kék moon* (Blue Moon), for example, there are almost no technical performance signals at all, because the composer's concern was primarily to preserve and express the original intimate sound and timbre of the saxophone instruments, typical of Romantic music. The presentation of Gergely Vajda's *Forgó* stands out from the other works because he composed a performance idea into his piece - which had not existed in chamber music before - that changed not only the staging of chamber music as a genre, but also the acoustic and visual relationship of the music to the audience. Balázs Horváth's work for saxophone quartet *Alterego* shows the relationship between the four different saxophones as individual instruments and their unity, while Roland Szentpáli's *Concerto for saxophone quartet and orchestra* turns towards the jazz movement in both stylistics and sound, It uses the four saxophones as a unit, mostly as a single soloist, and in its mixture and style it goes back to the 1940s, when the American musician and composer Glenn Miller, in the Swing era, first used the saxophone quartet as a formation in orchestras, the so-called big bands.

Based on my research, I have come to the final conclusion that there is neither a similarity nor a link that can be called tradition in the use of the saxophone by 20th century Hungarian composers. Bartók, Kodály, Seiber, and all the composers of saxophone quartet music that I consider unique and prominent, have gone their own way not only in their use of the saxophone sound world, but also in their post-1995 works, which contain innovations that I have not previously found in the repertoire of the saxophone quartet genre.