

THE ROLE OF THE ORGAN IN THE WORKS OF ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

NOÉMI MIKLÓS¹

SUMMARY. Zoltán Kodály composed only two works for organ solo, the *Organ Mass (Organoedia)* and a *Praeludium*, which forms the introductory movement to the *Pange lingua* choral work. Nevertheless, his works involving the organ play a significant role in Hungarian organ music. The Hungarian idiom, characteristic for the composer's compositional style, is also reflected in the organ works, which form a very special, one might say exotic patch of color in the international organ repertoire.

Keywords: organ, orchestra, choir, solo, accompaniment, text

Zoltán Kodály's oeuvre includes several works which involve the organ. In most cases, this involvement consists in an accompaniment meant to confer a harmonic basis for the choir, or to enrich the sound of the orchestra. His large-scale works such as the *Budavári Te deum* and the *Psalmus Hungaricus* have short sections which are supposed to be performed with organ *Ad libitum*. There are also a few choral works in which the organ plays a more important role, such as the 114th psalm, the *Missa Brevis*, the *Pange lingua* and the *Laudes Organi*. Additionally, there are two organ solo works, the *Organoedia* (Organ Mass) and the *Praeludium* to the *Pange lingua*.

The *Organ Praeludium* to the *Pange lingua* choral work had been published by Universal Edition (No. 7941) in 1931. The work was dedicated to Professor Béla Toldy, who had been Kodály's teacher at the Archbishop's High School in Nagyszombat (Trnava, Slovakia). As it is stated in the title

¹ Ph.D. Lecturer professor, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music, Music Department, Cluj-Napoca. E-mail: noemi.miklos@ubbcluj.ro



Praeludium (Ad. Libitum), the *Pange lingua* can be performed with or without the *Praeludium*. Also, the *Praeludium* can be played as an individual organ piece, without being succeeded by the choral section, in which case the playing time of the work is approximately five minutes. The *Praeludium* presents thematic material which is afterwards developed throughout the choral section. The text of the choral sections is retrieved from the Gregorian *Pange lingua* hymn attributed to Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). The melody attributed to the text however is Kodály's own creation. After a first intervention in the pedals, the theme is presented subsequently in the upper voices (E.g., 1).

E.g. 1

The theme of the *Praeludium* (Bars 1-12)²

Although the first intervention of the theme in the pedals begins with a half note followed by two tied quarters, which somehow simulate a duple meter and can be regarded as a *hemiola*, it is interesting to observe that the *Praeludium* presents the theme in a triple meter, whereas in the following choral section the thematic materials are developed in a duple meter. In the first section (Bars 1-24), the theme appears four times, on A \flat , D \flat , E \flat and on C, culminating on a B \flat chord in the 24th bar.

The second section begins with a *canon* between the two upper voices (Bars: 24-32), which present new thematic materials that are combined with the main theme in bar 35. The theme appears once again in the pedals on D \flat , followed by two other interventions in the soprano on A and on C (E.g., 2).

² Kodály, Zoltán. *Pange lingua*. Universal Edition. No. 7941, p. 3.

E.g. 2

The image shows two systems of musical notation for an organ. The first system is in G major (one sharp) and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system is in D minor (two flats) and also features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Two red rectangular boxes highlight specific thematic material in both systems. The first box is in the right hand of the second system, and the second box is in the left hand of the second system. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mf*, and *fortissimo*.

Combined thematic materials in the *Praeludium* (Bars 32-45)³

A second culmination is reached in bar 50, on an F \sharp chord, introduced by the diatonically ascending repetition of the last two notes of the theme. The melodic profile is constantly rising, sustained by a continuous *crescendo*, reaching a climax on an F major chord in the 56th bar. After a short rest, the theme appears again in the soprano on D \flat as an *echo*, followed by the same F major chord in *fortissimo* and once again the *echo*, but this time accompanied by a succession of major chords. After this point, depending on the type of performance, one can play the longer organ solo version, or the short version followed by the choir. In both cases we can handle the last section as a *coda*, where the composer reviews the presented thematic materials, gradually returning to the initial atmosphere of the *Praeludium*.

The following choral sections are to be accompanied by the organ, which has the role to harmonically support the choir, and occasionally is meant to reflect the message of the text. For example, in the *Nobis datus* section, the joy hidden in the text - *Nobis datus, nobis datus ex intacta Virgine*⁴ – is reflected in the organ accompaniment by the trills and rising sixteenths (E.g., 3).

³ Kodály, Zoltán. *Pange lingua*. Universal Edition, No. 7941, p. 4.

⁴ Of a pure and spotless Virgin, born for us on earth below

E.g. 3

Con moto ♩ = 120

No-bis da-tus, no-bis-na-tus ex in-ta-cta Vir-gi-ne, et in mun-do con-ver-sus spor-so

Con moto ♩ = 120

Message of the text reflected in the organ accompaniment (Bars 108-114)⁵

Another such place is in the same verse, where the text refers to the word of Christ which was spread like seeds throughout the people (E.g. 4).

E.g. 4

pp

ver-bi se-mi-ne spar-so ver-bi se-mi-ne

pp

ver-bi se-mi-ne spar-so ver-bi se-mi-ne

pp

ver-bi se-mi-ne, se-mi-ne.

Staccato quavers depicting the spreading of the seeds (Bars 115-117)⁶

The silence of the organ in the third verse - *In supraeme nocte coene*⁷ - can be interpreted as the sentiment of desertion felt by Christ, who had to take up all the sins of the world by himself.

⁵ Kodály, Zoltán. *Pange lingua*. Universal Edition, No. 7941, p. 9.

⁶ Idem, p. 9.

⁷ In the night of the last supper

With regards to the technical aspects of the work, the organ parts are not very difficult, and as in almost all Kodály's works one has the feeling that the composer always has the sound of a choir *in his ears*. The registrations are kept simple, and it is up to the performer to decide upon the stop combinations to be used. It is very important to precisely follow the articulations marked by the composer, which significantly contribute to the proper rendition of his music. The rests also play an important role in the performance and create a remarkable sound effect especially between the *fortissimo* and *subito pianissimo* sections.

The second organ solo work composed by Kodály is the *Organoedia ad missam lectam*, also called *Csendes mise* in Hungarian. The work has a rather interesting genesis. It had been composed based on musical fragments played by Kodály during religious services held in the chapel of Galyatető. Since Kodály had accompanied the holy mass many times, he began to outline the drafts for the organ mass. The chapel still houses the harmonium on which the first versions of the mass were composed (Image no. 5). The text on the memorial plaque placed on the instrument states: "*This is the instrument on which the composer had played the first drafts of the Csendes mise during holy mass. This work represented the basis for one of Kodály's most beautiful religious works, the Missa Brevis from 1944.*"⁸

E.g. 5



Harmonium in the chapel of Galyatető⁹

⁸ Antalné Zoboki, Anna. Galyatetői emlékezés (Memento from Galyatető). In: *A magyar Kodály társaság Hírei (News of the Hungarian Kodály Association)*, 2019/3. p. 27.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 26.

When it came to church music and particularly the organ accompaniment of the holy mass, Kodály had a very specific perception regarding its quality, which he expressed during an interview for the *Magyar Kórus* (Hungarian Choir) magazine: “A little while ago I was in a small chapel on the outskirts of town. You may know it: where those beautiful glass paintings are. I was looking at these big, colorful windows with the evening sunlight filtering through them, and I thought this is not such a bad age after all (1932), if such beautiful works can still be accomplished and brought inside the church. But then, as I looked at the altar, I suddenly cooled down. Beneath the masterpiece of stained glass, glowing in the evening light was a ready-made, factory-finished altar, such as a religious artefact company supplied by the dozen. And then a sound struck. The harmonium sounded. But not in the beautiful style of stained glass, but in the style of the altar. [...] Give up your accustomed rhetoric, throw off your factory tastes, rise to the style of the stained glass of the masters!”¹⁰ In accordance with his statement, Kodály’s *Organ mass* was meant for the simple village organist, who should be able to play music suitable for the majesty of the church.

The *Organ mass* was published by Boosey and Hawkes Inc. in 1947 (B&H 19440). In the score edited by Martin Hall, the work is preceded by a registration plan¹¹ worked out by Prof. Sebastyén Pécsi (1910-1991), who had been Kodály’s student at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, where he later became an organ teacher. In contrast with the limited possibilities of the harmonium on which the work had been conceived, the registration plan is based on a much larger organ, with four manuals.

The *Organ mass* was composed based on the *ordinary* parts of the catholic mass, with an additional *Introitus* at the beginning and an *Ite, missa est* at the end. The *Organoedia* represented the basis for the *Missa Brevis in tempore belli* (in times of war), which is unquestionably one of the most beautiful religious works of the 20th century. The first version was conceived for choir and organ and was finished in 1944 during a siege which Kodály and his wife had survived in the basement of a convent in Buda¹². The first performance of the work took place in February 1945 in the basement of the opera house in Budapest. The orchestral version of the *Missa Brevis* which had been finished in 1948 was published by Boosey & Hawkes Inc. in 1950 (No. 16647).

¹⁰ Kerényi, György. Kodály Zoltán és a magyar szentzene (Zoltán Kodály and the Hungarian Holy Music). In: *Vigilia*, 1953/3, p. 124.

¹¹ Kodály, Zoltán. *Organoedia ad missam lectam*. Boosey&Hawkes Inc., No. 19440, pp. 2-3.

¹² Antalné Zoboki, Anna. Galyatetői emlékezés (Memento from Galyatető). In: *A magyar Kodály társaság Hírei* (*News of the Hungarian Kodály Association*), 2019/3, p. 27.

It is very interesting to see how Kodály transcribed the music originally conceived for the organ, for choir and organ, and afterwards for choir and orchestra. This is probably the best example where one can observe that during the composition phase, Kodály had always had the sound of the choir in his mind, and that he had submitted the music to the texts of the mass.

In the case of the organ solo and the organ and choir versions, the *Introitus* is kept without changes, whereas in case of the orchestral version, the thematic lines which are later heard in the *Kyrie*, are taken over by the oboe and the clarinet. This orchestration gives us a rather clear idea about what Kodály had in mind while composing the organ solo version, although he only had a harmonium at his disposal.

After a significant *decrescendo*, the *Introitus* flows into the *Kyrie*, where the atmosphere of the music wonderfully reflects the meaning of the text (*Kyrie Eleison* - Lord have mercy) and the spiritual state of people during times of war. In this first section one can observe that the outline of the theme is in perfect harmony with the text (E.g. 6). The organ doubles the voices of the choir, giving it a solid foundation. In comparison with the organ solo version, the organ part is kept with minor changes.

E.g. 6

Kyrie Eleison theme (*Kyrie*, Bars 1-7)¹³

¹³ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ, Vocal score, Kyrie*. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 5.

In the orchestral version, the short *Kyrie Eleison* section is accompanied by the strings, followed by the *Christe Eleison* (Christ have mercy) with its ethereal sound dominated by the high voices, doubled by the flutes and reeds and the *tremolo* of the strings. In the organ and choir version, the organ continues to double the voices of the choir, which in contrast with the orchestral version results in poverty of timbre. However, this can be improved by choosing the proper stop combinations. The *Kyrie* ends with the return of the first section, in the initial somber atmosphere.

In contrast with the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*¹⁴ part begins in D major with a light-hearted, festive music, expressing the joy of men praising the Lord. Once again, the music is perfectly adapted to the text. The first two sections of the *Gloria* are conceived in *forte*, except for the *Adoramus te*¹⁵ line in *piano*, which reflects the intimate nature of adoration. This first section is very lively, with many fast passages and festive entries of the brass, counterweighed by the declamation-like interventions of the chorus, which even more underline the importance of the meaning of the text. The climax of the first section of the *Gloria* is at the *Domine Deus Rex coelestis, Patrem omnipotentem, Dómine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris*¹⁶ verse, which culminates on a C♯ major chord, followed by a sudden *decrescendo* that once again realizes the transition to the intimate atmosphere of the *Qui tollis peccata mundi*¹⁷. The *Gloria* part is particularly suitable for the organ, the performer only needs to find a suitable, festive stop combination.

The *Qui tollis peccata mundi* is one of the most melancholic sections of the *Missa Brevis*. The choice to use soloists in this section, and the many dissonances add to the sorrowful character of the music. The sadness and anguish are also expressed by the rising and falling contour of the *Qui tollis peccata mundi* motif (E.g., 7), and later by the descending, constant repetition of the *Miserere nobis* (E.g., 8).

E.g. 7



***Qui tollis peccata mundi* (Gloria, Bars 35-42)¹⁸**

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest

¹⁵ We worship you

¹⁶ O Lord who reigns over the heavens, God the Father, the Almighty. / O Lord, the one only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who bears the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

¹⁸ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ*. *Kyrie*. Vocal score, Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 11.

no - stram, Qui se-des ad dex - te-ram Pa - tris, mi - se - re - re re - re, mi-se - re - re, mi-se - re - re no - bis.

no - stram, Qui se-des ad dex - te-ram Pa - tris, mi - se - re - re re - re, mi-se - re - re, mi-se - re - re no - bis.

Continuous repetition of the *Miserere* motif (*Gloria*, Bars 53-72)¹⁹

In this section, the organ gives harmonic support to the soloists. In the solo organ version, the *Qui tollis peccata mundi* section is shorter, the music corresponding to the repetition of the *Miserere* line is completely missing. Kodály probably considered that in the choral and orchestral versions, to obtain the mournful effect, he sought after, he needed to intensify the music and lengthen this section. The *Gloria* closes with the return of the joyful music presented in the beginning, with a majestic *coda* on the *Amen*.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

The *Credo* begins with a *unison* in piano between the altos and the basses, which could symbolize the unity of people in their faith in God. In the first six bars the music strictly follows the rhythm of the text (E.g., 9), more sustaining the sentiment of dedication and perseverance.

E.g. 9

The image shows a musical score for five parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The Soprano part is mostly silent. The Alto and Bass parts sing in unison, with lyrics: 'Pa-trem om-ni-po-ten-tem, fac-to-rem cae-li et ter-rae'. The Organ part provides accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and G major.

Unison in the first six bars of the *Credo* (*Credo*, Bars 1-5)²⁰

The first section of the *Credo* (Bars 1-40) is characterized by a steady-paced, almost march-like music, which is interrupted several times by the intervention of contrasting musical elements, which are meant to mirror the meaning of the text. For example, the *Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum, de Deo vero*²¹ verse is conceived in the high register, to reflect the purity and majesty referred to in the text. Another such moment are the last four measures of this section, where in perfect harmony with the text - *descendit de coelis*²² - the music descends and ends in *unison*, just like in the beginning of the *Credo* (E.g., 10).

In contrast with the first section, the middle section of the *Credo* portrays the mystery of incarnation. The first verse - *Et incarnatus est de*

²⁰ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ. Kyrie*. Vocal score. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 16.

²¹ God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God

²² descended from heaven

*Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est*²³ - rendered in *pianissimo* in the low register, is followed by a rapid *crescendo* which channels in in *forte* the *Crucifixus*, which is supposed to depict the ordeal of the crucifixion. After this moment, the music once again descends in accordance with the message of the text - *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est.*²⁴ – ending on an E_b major chord, which somehow foretells the serenity of the following section.

E.g. 10

The image shows a musical score for the end of the first section of the Credo. It consists of five staves: four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and one organ staff. The vocal lines are in a low register and feature the Latin text: "ho-mi-nes, et pro-pter nos-tram sa-lu-tem des-cen-dit de cae-lis...". The organ accompaniment is in the low register and features a rapid crescendo leading to a final section marked "f allargando". A red box highlights the final bars of this section, which end on an E_b major chord. The organ part includes dynamic markings such as "cresc." and "f allargando".

Last bars of the first section of the *Credo* (*Credo*, Bars 34-40)²⁵

The next section presents particularly joyful music in D major, depicting the resurrection, with fast moving, rising quavers (E.g., 11). The motifs used in this section are derived from the thematic materials presented in the first section.

²³ He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost out of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

²⁴ He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried.

²⁵ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ*. Kyrie. Vocal score. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 18.

The image shows a musical score for the first bars of the third section of the Credo (Credo, Bars 41-44). The score is in G major and 4/4 time, marked "Allegro mosso". It features a vocal line with lyrics "Et re-sur-re - xit ter - ti - a di - e, se-" and an organ accompaniment. The organ part includes a prominent bass line with a "p cresc." marking. The score is divided into two systems, each with four staves (two vocal staves and two organ staves).

First bars of the third section of the *Credo* (*Credo*, Bars 41-44)²⁶

The last sections of the *Credo* remain in the same triumphant atmosphere, with a short passage in *piano* depicting the faith in the Holy Spirit. Beginning with the *Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem*²⁷ verse, the theme from the beginning of the *Credo* returns in a varied form, along with the march-like atmosphere, which after a long *crescendo* eventually culminates in the *Amen*, closing on a massive G major chord. One could consider this *Credo* a personal statement of Kodály, who even in the darkest hours of war had an unshakable faith in God.

While listening to the *Credo* of the organ solo version, it is once again obvious that Kodály had a choir in his mind while composing. When referring to César Franck (1822-1890), organists tend to say that he treated his instrument like an orchestra, as he himself once stated: "*Mon orgue, c'est une orchestre!*"²⁸ In this case, it is safe to assume, that Kodály on the other hand, many times treated the organ like a choir. In the organ score of the *Credo*, Kodály is very specific regarding the articulations. He noted every intent very precisely to obtain the sound and phrasing he sought after.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁷ And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and life-giver.

²⁸ "*My organ! It's an orchestra!*". In Vallas, Léon. *César Franck*. Translated by Hubert Foss, pp. 101-102.

Certainly, as in the case of all the other parts of the mass, the registration used in Credo has a defining role. It is very important to have a large organ at our disposal to be able to prepare a colorful registration plan, which brings us as close as possible to the sound of the choir, especially in the first two sections of the *Credo*. The rather instrumental, *toccata*-like last sections (beginning with the *Et resurrexit*) are particularly suitable for the full organ, certainly using the possibilities at hand which allow the dynamic coloring of the music.

The first section of the *Sanctus* presents the development of a four-note motif, which slowly evolves in a continuous *crescendo*. The *Pleni sunt coeli et terra*²⁹ verse brings back the thematic materials used in the *Credo*, combined with the already presented four note motifs. (E.g. 12).

E.g. 12

The image shows a musical score for the Sanctus, featuring vocal and organ parts. The organ part is in the upper left, and the vocal parts are in the upper right and lower sections. A red box highlights a four-note motif in the organ part, which is a descending sequence of four eighth notes: G4, F4, E4, D4. This motif is repeated and developed throughout the section. The lyrics are: "Ple-ni sunt caeli et terra glo-ri-a tu-a." The organ part is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The vocal parts are also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The score is in G major and 4/4 time.

Thematic material derived from the *Credo* (*Credo*, Bars 18-21)³⁰

²⁹ Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

³⁰ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ*. Kyrie. Vocal score, Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 18.

The fanfare-like *Hosanna* represents the climax of the *Sanctus*, with rising quarters in the bass line, which mirror the meaning of the text: *Hosanna in excelsis Deo!*³¹ (E.g. 13).

E.g. 13

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are written in treble clefs, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "Hosan - na, hosan-na in ex - cel - sis, Hosan-na in ex cel -". The piano part features a prominent bass line with rising quarter notes, which are highlighted with red boxes in the original image. The score is in a key with two sharps (D major) and a 4/4 time signature.

Rising quarters in the bass line (*Sanctus*, Bars 22-27)³²

Although the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus* are usually parts of a single movement, Kodály decided to create two separate settings for them, both ending with the *Hosanna*. The continuously waving quarters – first diatonically, and later chromatically – confer a particularly tranquil atmosphere to *Benedictus*. Both in the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus*, the ending *Hosanna* section closes in *pianissimo*, like an *echo* of the rejoicing crowd in the distance.

The *Agnus Dei* brings back the *Qui tollis peccata* theme used in the *Gloria*, along with the *Agnus Dei* motif which is made up of a rising and a descending semitone. (E.g.14)

³¹ Glory to the, o Lord in the highest!

³² Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ, Kyrie*. Vocal score. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 30.

The image shows a musical score for the Agnus Dei section. It includes parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The Tenor part has a 'SOLO' section highlighted in red, with the lyrics '... qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di, mi-se-'. The Bass part has 'TUTTI espress' and the lyrics 'Ag-nus De-i, Ag-nus De-'. The Organ part has a red box highlighting the first two measures of its accompaniment.

The *Agnus Dei* motif and *Qui tollis peccata* theme (*Agnus Dei*, Bars 1-9)³³

The *Dona nobis pacem* section resumes the *Kyrie Eleison* and the *Christe Eleison* motifs, thus one can safely state that the *Agnus Dei* is a recapitulation of the musical materials presented along the previous parts of the mass, giving it unity and a well-defined structure (E.g., 15, 16).

³³ Kodály, Zoltán. *Missa Brevis for mixed chorus and organ. Kyrie*. Vocal score. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., p. 38.

The *Ite, missa est* was intended to be performed at the end of the mass, like an improvisation which reiterates the previously used thematic materials in a virtuosic *toccata*-like movement. From the technical point of view, this is the most difficult movement of the organ solo version, as well as the most brilliant one, where the organist can present his/her mastery in handling the instrument.

After analyzing every aspect of the *Organ mass* in relation with the *Missa Brevis*, one can conclude that it is one of the most complex creations of Hungarian religious repertoire, as well as an important milestone of the international organ literature.

Although it was not meant for solo organ, due to its complexity and the important role it confers to the instrument, one must also mention and analyze Kodály's last work involving the organ. The *Laudes Organi* had been commissioned by the Atlanta Chapter for the 1966 National Convention of the American Guild of Organists, held in Atlanta Georgia³⁶. According to the organ score published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1966, the work is based on a 12th century sequence from the Engelberg Monastery in Switzerland. About the genesis of the work there is an extensive study written by Katalin Komlós entitled *The genesis of Laudes Organi*³⁷, where the authoress describes the origins of the text and sheds light on the fact that Kodály probably got acquainted with the *Audi chorum* sequence either through Peter Anselm Schubiger's: „*Musikalische Specilegien*” (Berlin, 1876), pp. 90-95, or through Peter Wagner's essay: „*Aus dem St. Thomas-Archiv zu Leipzig: ein mittelalterliches Orgellied*”, in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 12/2 (1929), pp.65-70, where Wagner offers a complete modern transcription of the melody and the text, and also a facsimile page of the original.³⁸ In any case, the present study does not wish to reiterate the facts described by Katalin Komlós.

As the title foretells, this work is an ode to the organ, which in this case doesn't only have the role to accompany the choir, but it has several interludes which are meant to *show off* the instrument and create unity between the sections of the work.

The main theme of the work is the *Audi chorum organicum* theme (E.g., 17), which appears in its integrity for the first time in the first choral section.

³⁶ Kodály, Zoltán. *Laudes organi*. Organ score, Boosey & Hawkes, 1966, No. 19463, p. 1.

³⁷ Komlós, Katalin. The genesis of *Laudes Organi*. In *The Musical Time*, Summer, 2007, Vol. 148, No. 1899 (Summer, 2007), pp. 63-71.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

E.g. 17

BASS
p
Au - di cho - rum or - ga - ni - cum in - stru - men - tum mu - si - cum

The *Audi chorum organicum* theme of *Laudes Organi* (Bars 69-70)³⁹

The work begins in *fortissimo* with an organ prelude in D \flat major, which is meant to set the majestic atmosphere which is conventionally associated with organ music. Thematic materials derived from the main *Audi chorum organicum* theme are already present in the introductory organ solo section. (E.g., 18, 19)

E.g. 18

Sw.
p
Sw.
legato
31

Motif derived from the *Audi chorum organicum* theme (Bars 31-33)⁴⁰

³⁹ Kodály, Zoltán. *Laudes organi*. Organ score, Boosey & Hawkes, 1966, No. 19463, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Idem, p. 3.

34

37

Motifs derived from the *Audi chorum organicum* theme (Bars 34-39)⁴¹

From bar no. 44, in a *toccata*-like section, the initial three chord motif returns in combination with the chain of sixteenths which has now completely *fused* with the thematic materials presented earlier.

The introductory section ends with a *decrescendo* and flows into the first choral section, where the *Audi chorum organicum* theme appears in its entirety for the first time (E.g., 20). Here the organ assumes the role of the accompanist, conferring harmonic basis for the chorus.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are in Latin. Red boxes highlight specific musical phrases in the Alto and Bass parts.

Soprano: (No lyrics shown)

Alto: *p* Mo - der - no - rum ar - ti - fi - cum

Tenor: Mo - der - no - rum

Bass: *p* Au - di cho - rum or - ga - ni - cum in - stru - men - tum mu - si - cum Mo - der - no - rum

Section 2:

Soprano: Ca - nen - tem lu - de - re a - ma - bi - li - ter

Alto: do - cu - men - tum me - li - cum Ca - nen - tem lu - de - re a - ma - bi - li -

Tenor: ar - ti - fi - cum Do - cu - men - tum me - li - cum

Bass: ar - ti - fi - cum Do - cu - men - tum me - - - - li -

The *Audi chorum organicum* theme (Bars 69-74)⁴²

The text of this first choral section (Bars 69-91) is: *Audi chorum organicum instrumentum musicum / Modernorum artificum documentum melicum / Canentem ludere amabiliter / Canere laudabiliter / Docens breviter, leniter utiliter, dulciter, humiliter / Ideo persuadeo hic attendere / Jubeo commoneo haec apprehendere, mentifigere humiliter.*⁴³ Just like in case of all of his choral works, Kodály had given great importance to prosody, the rhythm and flow of the music being in perfect harmony with the meter of the text. For example, in the main *Audi chorum organicum* theme he uses dotted rhythms to comply with the accents of the text. Also, in the second part of the theme (*Canentem ludere amabiliter*) he distinguishes between the short and

⁴² Kodály, Zoltán. *Laudes organi*. Organ score, Boosey & Hawkes, 1966, No. 19463, pp. 6.

⁴³ Listen to the chorus of the pipes / The musical instrument of modern artists / An epitome of melody which plays sweetly and sings full of praise / Which speaks without words, friendly, beneficially, pleasantly, and humble. / So, I advise you to be attentive and urge you to listen to it with humble attention.

the long syllables. (See E.g., 21). The first choral section closes in *piano* with downward moving musical motifs which depict the humbleness referred to in the text.

The second choral section (Bars 92-126) begins in D \flat major with a declamation - *Musice! Milites te habilites, usum exercites artem usites / Habilem corpore te prebeas facilem pectore te exhibeas / Follibus provideas bene flautes habeas. Istare prætereas diligenter caveas. / His præhabitis sonum elice doctis digitis modum perface neumis placitis*⁴⁴ - which urges musicians to perfect themselves in the art of music and prepare themselves to be worthy of their instrument. In the first part of this section the organ accompaniment opens with half note chords which remind one of trumpet signals. At first, only the lower voices sing the new verse, and are afterwards followed by the altos who sing the same verse with a half tone higher, in D major (Bars 99-105). This second time around, the atmosphere is mellower, due to the *piano* indicated by the composer and the long melismas which accompany the *Musice!* theme. The sopranos appear only in the 106th bar, which returns to the original D \flat major. Here, the theme is introduced gradually in all the voices, a procedure which shows Kodály's exceptional compositional skills.

In harmony with the meaning of the text - *Gravis chorus succinat / Qui sonorus buccinat / Vox acute concinat / Choro chorus succinat / Diafonico modo et organico. / Nunc acutas moveas / Nunc ad graves redeas modo lyrico*⁴⁵ - the third choral section (Bars 127-152) in D major presents a rather interesting sound world, ensured by the parallel chords, and the canon between the lower and the higher voices at bars 137-145. The section ends with another dialogue between the higher and the lower voices, once again mirroring the meaning of the text. In this section the organ acts like a liaison in the dialogue between the *two choirs*, and in the middle section (Bars 127-152) it doubles the voices to sustain the chorus and give a fuller sound.

The fourth choral section in G major (Bars 153-176) is conceived in *fugato* and begins with the intervention of the altos, the middle voices mentioned in the text: *Nunc per voces medias transvolando salias, / Saltu melico manu mobile, delectabili, cantabili* - followed by the tenors, the

⁴⁴ Musician! Serve and perfect yourself, practice playing and use the art often. / Prove yourself to be physically agile and of cheerful disposition. / Take care of the bellows, so that you have good pipes, be careful not to forget this. / When it's done, lure out the sound with agile fingers, create a melody of pleasing neumas.

⁴⁵ The choir of the deep voices which "trumpets" sonorously / The bright voices resound, / One choir accompanies the other, in two voices and in harmony. / Once move to the high, then return to the low voices in a lyrical way.

sopranos and the basses.⁴⁶ The lively character of this section, and the agile hands to which the text refers to, are depicted by the *staccato* quavers in the organ accompaniment (E.g., 21), and the following chain of rapid sixteenths which lead to the second organ solo section.

E.g. 21

149

154

Beginning of the *Nunc per voces medias* section (Bars 149-157)⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Now through the middle voices jump and rush ahead, / With lyrical movement and agile, pleasing, singing hand.

⁴⁷ Kodály, Zoltán. *Laudes organi*. Organ score. Boosey & Hawkes, 1966, No. 19463, p. 17.

The first part of the organ solo section (Bars 176-195) remains in the previously settled restless atmosphere, and after a long *decrescendo* it leads to a contrasting lyrical section (Bars 196-221), with beautiful *solo* lines in the soprano, which are meant to transport us to the melodious atmosphere of the next choral section. In case of this organ section, the first part can be played with a *plenum* registration, whilst in the second lyrical part one can choose a romantic sound with *Gamba* and *Vox celestis*, and a solo stop like *Hautbois* or *Flute harmonique* for the melodic lines in the soprano.

The fifth choral section is the shortest one, and once again perfectly reflects the meaning of the text. The first verse - *Tali modulo, mellis æmulo placens populo*⁴⁸ - (Bars 222-226) depicts the sweetness of the melody, whilst the second one - *Qui miratur et lætatur et cantatur et laudatur / Deo sedula qui regnat in sæcula*.⁴⁹ - is conceived in a rapid *crescendo*, with the music constantly rising and climaxing on the verse *qui regnat in saecula* - who reigns forever.

The following organ interlude is a *decrescendo* which slowly descends to a mellower atmosphere. The musical materials developed throughout this section are derived from the *qui regnat in secula* motif from the previous choral section and remind us of the three-chord motif used in the introductory section.

The sixth choral section on the verse *Huius artis præceptorum secum Deus det Guidoni / Vitam æternalem*⁵⁰ (Bars 253-270) presumably praises the medieval music theorist and teacher Guido d'Arezzo (991/992-1033) who had developed the modern solmization system. This section is once again conceived in *fugato*. The *Huius artis* verse brings back *Audi chorum* theme which is presented first by the tenors, followed by the altos and the sopranos, and finally by the basses in an augmented version (E.g., 22).

⁴⁸ With such modulation, sweet as honey, pleasant to the people.

⁴⁹ Who are astonished and delighted, singing, and praising and serving God, who reigns forever.

⁵⁰ To the teacher of this art, Guido, may God give eternal life.

S. *p* se - cum De - us
 A. *p* Hu - ius ar - tis prae - cep - to - ri se - cum
 T. *p* Hu - ius ar - tis prae - cep - to - ri se - cum De - us — det Gui -
 B.

S. *cresc.* - - - - - *poco* - -
 A. *cresc.* - - - - - *poco* - -
 T. *cresc.* - - - - - *poco* - -
 B. *p* *cresc.* - - - - - *poco* - -
 Hu - ius ar - tis prae - cep -

The *Huius artis* (*Audi chorum organicum*) theme (Bars 253-261)⁵¹

After a long *crescendo* the section climaxes on a bright F major chord and is followed by the last organ interlude of the work (Bars 271-319) where the first four-note motif of the *Audi chorum organicum* theme is slowly dissolved in the musical context. In bar no. 295 the composer introduces a new melody which due to its rhythm and character somehow forecasts the upcoming *Fiat* (So be it) motif and the theme of the *Amen* section sung later by the chorus (E.g., 23).

⁵¹ Kodály, Zoltán. *Laudes organi*. Organ score. Boosey & Hawkes, 1966, No. 19463, p. 26.

The image shows a musical score for organ. The top staff is the right hand, and the bottom staff is the left hand. A red box highlights a new melody in the right hand starting at bar 294. The melody is marked 'Solo' and 'tempo calmato'. The left hand provides accompaniment. The score is numbered 284 at the beginning of the system.

New melody forecasting the *Fiat* motif and *Amen* theme (Bars 294-298)⁵²

The last section of the work is set to the *Amen*. It is conceived in the form of a complex fugue with a long plainchant-like theme which appears for the first time on the bass and subsequently in all the other voices. The *Huius artis praeceptorum* verse appears once again, but with a different musical setting, which according to Katalin Komlós's analysis can be related to Johann Sebastian Bach's *d minor fugue* BWV 565 theme⁵³. The music is constantly rising in a perpetual *crescendo*, which is doubled by the *toccata*-like organ accompaniment. The pinnacle is reached in bar no. 365 where the *Amen* resounds for the last time in the form of massive chords in *fortissimo*. The work ends with an organ *coda*, which reprises the new *Huius artis* motive in the pedals.

After thoroughly analyzing the *Laudes Organi*, one can conclude that in accordance with the subtitle, it is a fantasia with a very clear structure. The sections are divided by the composer with double bar lines. Every section is the musical setting of a different verse and can be distinguished not only based on their tonality, but also based on their atmosphere and overall sound. One can say that the separate sections are musical images of their texts. From the technical point of view, the *Laudes Organi* presents more challenges than the other organ works. There are many passages and various articulations which demand a good technique from the performer. Also, one needs a refined stylistic sense to conceive a proper registration plan, which contributes significantly to the rendition of the music and in defining the *architecture* of the work.

⁵² Ibid., p. 29.

⁵³ Komlós, Katalin. The genesis of *Laudes Organi*. In *The Musical Time*, Summer, 2007, Vol. 148, No. 1899 (Summer, 2007), pp. 63-71.

While studying Kodály's organ music one can observe how he developed and perfected his compositional style and his approach toward the organ over the years. The *Laudes Organi* represents the pinnacle of this endeavor, at the same time expressing Kodály's faith in God, and his loyalty toward the art of music and his calling as a teacher.

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