

The Instrumental Concerto in 20th Century Music in the work of Kamilló Lendvay

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Abstract: *The merit of having recognized the ascending direction of the development of professional Hungarian music and the way in which it attains universality significance, and permanence belongs equally to Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, who, in the first half of the 20th century, going beyond the confines of urban folk and lute music, researched peasant music of the most authentic nature, which they incorporated into their cultivated musical works using their own means and styles, thus contributing to the creation and strong flourishing of Hungarian national musical culture. The Violin Concerto, written between 1961-62, represents a reference creation in the work of Kamilló Lendvay, standing out in the creation of the 20th century as a piece characterized by an innovative language, with folkloric valences, elements of orchestration, melodic-rhythmic and harmonic vigor that is remarkable.*

Key-words: *concerto, instrumental, violin, music, Lendvay*

1. Introduction

For its exceptionally expressive qualities, for its brilliant technique, the violin is considered by many instrumental performers to best meet the demands of solo performance, but if we were to conduct a statistical analysis on the frequency of a specific solo instrument within the genre across a broader geographical area, encompassing Europe with its centuries-old tradition, we would find the piano in first place. This preference for one instrument or another may be said to reflect not only a musical tradition but also a spiritual configuration of the people, a component of their thought and feeling expressed through music.

Delving into the symphonic musical thinking of the West, we can observe how many composers adapt to the characteristics of the existing musical folklore.

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In the years following World War II, the development of the school of composition reveals a constant concern among composers for cultivating and permanently renewing the concerto genre. The preferred instrument remains the violin along its larger sibling, the cello. The compositional concerns also extend towards the more subtle yet deeper timbral modulations of the viola, and even the double bass is not neglected.

The compositional achievements of the instrumental concerto go hand in hand with those of interpretation. The compositional intentions aim at an ever-deeper exploration of interpretative technique, which often incorporates new elements both in the graphic notation of the score and in the timbre of the instrument, as well as a deep understanding of the meanings of new music, even collaboration with the composer in the sense of improvisation from aleatoricism.

String instrument concertos composed since 1950 have enhanced their expressive potential – within familiar elements, covering the entire spectrum of musical languages (from tonalism to serialism and modalism), “seeking the synthesis of forms in an idea of perfection, that primarily serves expressiveness.” (Marinescu: 1983.)

The importance of the solo instrument in relation to the orchestra assumes different proportions, either tending towards complete assimilation into the orchestral mass or being permanently highlighted as a clear, prominent voice. In this regard, the cadences of the solo instrument either disappear or are amplified, encompassing an entire section of the concert.

The intonations of folk songs and their specific rhythm are features of the main theme of the concerto. Also, in line with the general trend of the century is the breaking apart of the banal melody. This makes way for instrumental punctuality (timbre) and introduces instrumental technical effects as an expressive foundation. Expression now emphasizes suggestion, tension, unravelling, concentration, or evasion rather than emotional experience. For these suggestions, pizzicato and glissando, double strings and almost percussive, plate-like chords, harmonics, trills and tremolo, staccato, *sul tasto*, *con legno* are used, producing remarkable effects of classic sonorities and giving string instruments a new timbral dimension.

2. Hungarian National Musical Culture

The merit of having recognized the ascending direction of the development of professional Hungarian music and the way in which it attains universality significance, and permanence belongs equally to Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály,

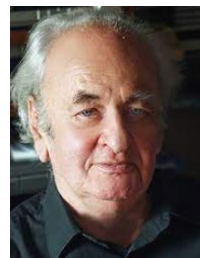
who, in the first half of the 20th century, going beyond the confines of urban folk and lute music, researched peasant music of the most authentic nature, which they incorporated into their cultivated musical works using their own means and styles, thus contributing to the creation and strong flourishing of Hungarian national musical culture.

Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály were two great composers representative of Hungarian music, two friends, two major researchers (Preja, 2022.) of the phenomenon of peasant folk creation; both have definitively entered the gallery of exceptional personalities of the universal musical culture of the 20th century. Initially, this genre began in Hungarian music with János Viski, followed by Gyula Dávid, then Endre Szervánszki, Rezső Kókai, Páll Kadosa, István Kardos, János Gaál, György Kurtág, Emil Petrovics, Sándor Szokolay, and Kamilló Lendvay. The divertimento, suite, and serenade, in symphonic and chamber orchestration, took shape after the model initiated by Bartók, Kodály, and Weiner.

2.1. Hungarian Violin School

The greatest violinists that Hungary has produced were: Miska Hauser, Jenő Hubay, Joseph Szigeti, and Kamilló Lendvay.

Kamilló Lendvay was born on December 28, 1928, in Budapest. He studied at the Academy of Music in Budapest, where he was a student of violin professor János Viski, until 1959. Beginning in 1960, he worked as the musical coordinator of the Puppet Theater. This position also included the responsibilities of artistic director of the Hungarian People's Army Ensemble between 1966 and 1968 and the leadership of the institution from 1970. Since 1973, Kamilló Lendvay has been the musical director of the Capital Operetta Theatre and a professor at the Academy of Music. Between 1962 and 1964, he was awarded two Erkel prizes for composition. Like other composers of his generation, Kamilló Lendvay, in his compositional approach, followed the tradition of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály.



The most innovative features of his music can be observed in the melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and formal structures. From 1965 onward, his compositional style developed a distinctive orientation, as seen in works such as the Four Duets for Flute and Piano and the Four Invocations for Orchestra. The change in his conception was not radical, but the influence of the new compositional aesthetics around 1970 is evident, in particular those of the Second Viennese School and of modern Polish music.

2.2. Composition work

Scenic works: *The Enchanted Chair* (comedy opera for television) 1972

Orchestral works: *Violin Concerto* 1938, *Tragic Overture* 1958, *Concertino for Piano, Wind Instruments, Percussion and Harp* 1959, *Violin Concerto* 1961-1962, *Four Invocations* 1966, *Chamber Concerto for 13 Performers* 1969, *Cello Concerto* 1975

Symphonic poem: *Mauthausen* 1958

Choral works: *Winter Morning* 1966, *Orogenesis Oratory* 1969, *Rakocziensis Oratory* 1975

Symphonic suite: *The Fearless Tin Soldier* 1961, *Driveway at Night* 1970

Other works: *Fantasy for violin and piano* 1951, *Rhapsody for violin and piano* 1955, *Three Carnival Masks, for wind orchestra* 1960, *The Three Guards – musical comedy* (premiered in 1962 in Pécs), *Str. Qt – film music* 1962, *Four Duets for flute and piano* 1965, *Expressions, 11 orchestral str/str* 1974, *Arrangements for dulcimer* 1975

In addition to the works mentioned above, Kamilló Lendvay also composed works for choral ensemble, songs, film scores, and accompanying stage music.

3. Violin Concerto and Orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay. Compositional Language

The Violin Concerto, written between 1961 and 1962, represents a landmark in Kamilló Lendvay's work, establishing itself in the 20th-century repertoire as a piece characterized by an innovative language, with folk nuances, elements of melodic-rhythmic and harmonic orchestration of remarkable vigor. The concerto stands among the reference works of the genre in Hungarian music, having enjoyed real success from the very beginning, and it is still part of instrumentalists' repertoire today. Its value lies in the revitalized modal world and, not least, in the extraordinary sonorities created through the original orchestration envisioned. The concerto has a duration of approximately 22 minutes, consisting of three parts:

Part I: Andante cantabile

Part II: Largo, sostenuto

Part III: Presto

3.1. The Orchestration

At the first encounter of the concert, we observe the orchestration conceived by the composer, which, based on percussion instruments, creates sound effects like many 20th-century works, where 'percussive' sonorities were fully exploited. In the ensemble, the composer also includes string instruments – first and second violins, viola, cello, and double bass, whose role is only secondary, to colour the melody of the solo violin, appearing rarely in the score. In certain parts, alongside the piano, the composer associates' partners whose timbre blends with its melody. Wind instruments and various percussion instruments, differing in timbre, accompany and highlight the approach in an original vision of sounds.

The composer uses surprisingly many wind instruments, especially brass (four horns, three trumpets, three trombones), thus aligning with the trends established throughout the century of employing extremely penetrating 'metallic' sonorities, which had been little exploited in the music of past centuries.

At the same time, percussion presents a very diverse component. We could say, in a way, that the percussion score could exist independently, just like a compact piece. The percussion instruments are varied in terms of timbre, precisely to highlight the virtuosity of the final part and, not least, to create ancestral sonorities in unique rhythmic combinations.

The orchestra is not seen as an accompanist, but as an equal partner to the violin, through the achieved timbral contrasts. Alongside the solo violin, we can consider that it completes the picture of an orchestra with a new breath and conception in timbral terms within the concertante genre.

3.2. Musical Form

The violin concerto and orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay is composed of three parts:

Part I: Andante cantabile

Part II: Largo, sostenuto

Part III: Presto

The first part of the concert deviates in several respects from the traditional concerto form (Denizeau, 2000.). Firstly, through its slow tempo and the singability of the main theme, but preceding it, through the quasi-cadenza prelude of the solo violin. The contrasting tempos and the diverse measures, alternating with the secondary theme – in opposition to the singability of the main theme – shape a vigorous, rhythmic profile with harsh chords that embody varying configurations in the development section. Before the main theme, the composer approaches a prelude - quasi-cadenza - consisting of 15 measures. This is followed by Theme I,

characterized by its singable, dolce nature, built from an eight-measure period with the first phrase cadencing on the Dominant.



Fig.1. Violin Concerto and orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay-cantabile Andante

The second theme has a more vigorous character, at an Allegro tempo.



Fig.2. Concert for violin and orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, Allegro, Theme II

Part II of the concert sets up a theme with three variations in - Largo sostenuto - Theme:



Fig.3. Violin Concerto and Orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, Largo sostenuto, p.II.

The first variation (with melodic character) is presented at a slow tempo, and in the transition section, between the second variation (of harmonic type) and the third variation (of orchestral type), the composer reiterates the lyrical theme from the first part of the concerto.



Fig.4. *The Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, *Largo sostenuto*, p.II, var.1

Before the end of the second part, the first theme of the section reappears two octaves higher.



Fig.5. *The Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, *Largo sostenuto*, p.II, *Finale*

Part III, the final part takes the form of a rondo: ABACA. It is a richly orchestrated section and features a strong rhythmic character. The initial theme returns in several variations: transposed to the upper fifth and the octave.

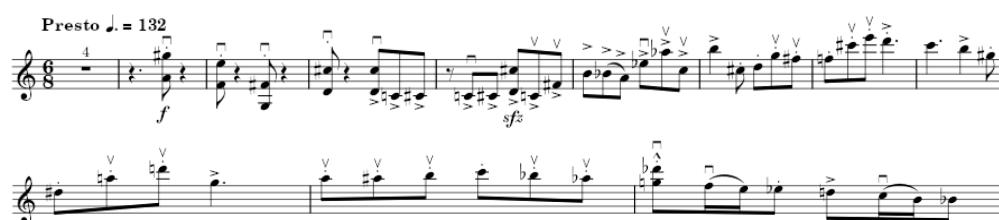


Fig.6. *Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, *Presto*, p.III

The interesting moment is the one attributed to the display of the instrumentalist's virtuosity in the cadenza, which appears only in the final part of the concerto, as there are no solo cadences for the violin in the first two parts.

3.3. Tonal-modal system

Starting with simple arrangements and harmonizations of popular melodies, in which he intuitively perceives the requirements of the modal (in the free chaining of tritones, non-imitative polyphonization, harmonizing the melody with his own sounds and intervals), he evolves towards understanding the immanent creative folklore, which helps him acquire a personal stylistic manner that is also reflected in his tonal-harmonic thinking. A few characteristics of his modal system can be

noted: the principle of symmetry, the golden section ("sectio aurea"), and the acoustic modes (Giuleanu, 1986.).

In the modal diversity created, we can point out several of the modal configurations encountered:

Part one:



Fig.7. *Violin Concerto and Orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, p.I modal configurations*

Part two:



Fig.8. *Violin Concerto and Orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, p.II, modal configurations*

Part three:

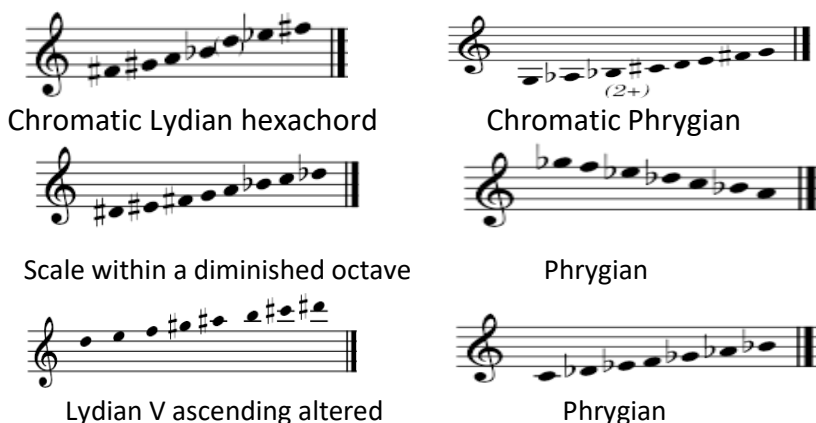


Fig.9. *Violin Concerto and Orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, p.III, modal configurations*

The free adherence of the modality to the total chromatic (unorganized) can be observed in the second part of the concerto, where a scale appears that includes all the sounds of the chromatic scale, its sound material being used freely through recurrences, permutations, inversions, etc. (Herman, 1966.)

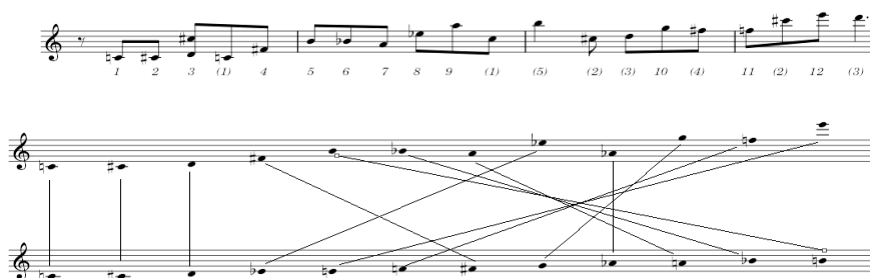


Fig.10. *The violin concerto and orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, p.II, modal configurations*

The 12-note scale forms the basis for melodic elaborations with a clearly defined modal coloring. Three segments of equal proportion can be distinguished, each forming a separate melodic formula (x-y-z), which can be framed within the sphere of native folk intonations.



Fig.11. *Concert for violin and orchestra by Kamilló Lendvay, p.II, formula (x-y-z)*

Taken as a whole, these musical motifs will therefore have an authentic modal color, forming the foundation for more extensive or more reduced modal formulations than the octave framework. The diminished octave is one of the composer's most characteristic intervals. Primary, it is used as a component element of various new chords, though it occasionally appears in the melodic line as well.

4. Aspects of rhythm

It has often been noted that, essentially, folk music presents distinctive rhythmic characteristics compared to European classical music, as it "has its origins in ancestral (primitive) music, preserving the fundamental characteristics of that period). It is known that folk music has better preserved the ancient layers of primitive music compared to classical music, whose evolution is always spectacular and innovative" (Rîpă, 2002.)

Regarding the rhythmic categories, based on the folkloric background, we can delineate both *giusto* and *rubato* categories, even though the composer's instrumentation is clearly oriented toward strict metric framing.

In the concerto, with several moments of *rubato*, the freedom of duration relationships still largely offers the possibility of fitting into the divisional rhythm, through which the composer simplifies and restricts the liberties of the *rubato* rhythm.



Fig. 12. *The Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, highlighting the divisive rhythm.

In the first part of the concerto, at the moment the second theme appears, the solo violin plays in polyrhythm for two measures.

Beginning with a dance-like 4/4 rhythm, through triplets, the composer creates a polyrhythm in which, throughout the total duration of the superimposed patterns, there is almost no space left unoccupied by eighth notes.



Fig.13. *Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, polyrhythm (2 measures)

In the second part of the concerto, we find almost all rhythmic categories, such as: syllabic *giusto*, *rubato*, and dance rhythm.

The image displays a page from a musical score for 'The Violin Concerto and Orchestra' by Kamilló Lendvay, page II. The score is written for a full orchestra and a solo violin. The instruments listed on the left are Flute (Fl.), Flute piccolo (Fl. piccolo), Oboe, Clarinet (Cl.), Trumpet (Tr.), Trombone (Tbn.), and Solo Violin (Solo Vcl.). The Solo Violin part is marked with 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and features a melodic line with red accents. The other instruments are mostly marked with rests, indicating they are silent for this section.

Fig.14. *The Violin Concerto and Orchestra* by Kamilló Lendvay, p.II

The composer resorts to alternative measures throughout the concerto, with a preference for metric measurement being unusual, although the presence of the infiltration of musical folklore can be felt through the lens of just-syllabic and rubato.

4.1. Elements of expression

Given the composer's extremely extensive vocabulary of expressive terms and intensities, as well as the fact that the author has evidently given major importance to the realization of the concerto from the perspective of dynamics, it is useful to detail the plan of intensities used in the concerto.

<i>pppp</i>	<i>mf (cantabile, dolce, appassionato, energico, grazioso)</i>
<i>ppp (dolce, sotto voce)</i>	<i>f (secco)</i>
<i>pp (sotto voce, smorzando)</i>	<i>ff (energico)</i>
<i>mp (cantabile, subito)</i>	<i>fff (fortississimo)</i>
<i>P (sotto voce, dolce cantabile)</i>	

Table 1. *Terms of expression*

4.2. Progressive changes in intensities

Kamilló Lendvay seeks to suggest to the performer the attitude, the emotional states, the feelings, and the atmosphere that should be created using specific expressive terms in the Italian version (Table 2 and Table 3).

$pp \rhd ppp \rhd pppp \rhd$ niente	$mf \rhd pp$
subito $pp \rhd ppp$	$mf \rhd p$
$pp \rhd ppp$	$mf \rhd sf$

Table 2. *Terms of expression - Intensity*

$mp \rhd pp$ smorzando	subito $mf \rhd sffz$
subito $p \rhd$ dolce p	$f \rhd p \rhd pp$
p espressivo $\rhd mp$ espressivo	$ff \rhd p \rhd ppp$
$pp \rhd$ molto cresc. $sffz$	$ff \rhd ppp$
$mp \rhd mf$	$fff \rhd p \rhd pp$
$mp \rhd f$	$fsfz \rhd mf$
p dolce $\rhd mf$	$mf \rhd f$
subito $p \rhd f$	subito $mf \rhd sffz$
$p \rhd f$	mf gratoso $\rhd f$
$p \rhd$ molto ff	secco $mf \rhd f$
$p \rhd$ molto cresc. fff	subito $mf \rhd f$
$p \rhd sffz$	$fp \rhd sfz$
$mp \rhd mf \rhd mp$	fp molto $\rhd sffz$
p dolce $\rhd mf \rhd p \rhd pp$	$fp \rhd$ molto ff

Table 3. *Progressive plan of intensities*Part I. Tempo: *Andante cantabile*

<i>Cantabile</i>	In a single style
<i>Appassionato, Passione (con)</i>	with passion, with deep emotion
<i>Dolce, Dolcissimo</i>	sweet, pleasant, very sweet, very pleasant
<i>Sonore, Sonevole</i>	loudly, strongly, with amplitude
<i>Risoluto</i>	decisive, strong
<i>Pesante</i>	oppressive, heavy
<i>Scherzando</i>	playful

Table 4. *Terms of tempo cantabile*

Part II. Tempo: *Largo, sostenuto*

Sostenuto	sustained
Semplice	simple, honest
Gratioso	graceful
Sonore	loudly, strongly, with amplitude
Mosso	lively
Dolce	sweet
Pocco piu mosso	a little more active
Secco	dry
<i>Risoluto</i>	Decisive, strong
<i>Agitato</i>	agitated
<i>Expresivo rit.</i>	expressive, clear thinning

Table 5. *Terms of tempo sostenuto*Part III. Tempo: *Presto*

<i>Energico</i>	energetic
<i>Grazioso</i>	graceful
<i>Cantabile</i>	in a singing style
<i>Sostenuto</i>	sustained
<i>Expresivo</i>	expressive

Table 6. *Terms of tempo presto***5. Conclusions**

In the post-Bartók Hungarian compositional school, the concert genre represents an indisputable value, which has asserted itself in the context of universal music through a specific style, with great expressive power. Lendvay combines modal language inspired by folklore with compositional techniques established in 20th-century music. Among these, we note sound systems configured from the notes of the chromatic scale, rhythmic structures alternating specific categories of popular music with complex structures, sound effects anticipated from various modes of execution on the violin, as well as the approach of a wide expressive palette which, alongside the variety of orchestration, creates novel sound timbres.

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