

ANKLAENGE 2018

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Wiener Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft

Herausgegeben von
Christian Glanz und Nikolaus Urbanek

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Die Musikgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts
im universitären Unterricht – The Teaching of Twentieth-
and Twenty-First-Century Music History at Universities
and Conservatories of Music

Herausgegeben von
Juri Giannini, Julia Heimerdinger und Andreas Holzer

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Redaktion: Juri Giannini, Julia Heimerdinger und Andreas Holzer
Umschlagentwurf: Judith Fegerl, Umschlagadaptation: Gabriel Fischer
Satz: Daniela Seiler
Hergestellt in der EU

Veröffentlicht mit Unterstützung der mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien /
The authors acknowledge the financial support by the mdw – University of Music
and Performing Arts Vienna.



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Wiener Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft,
Reihe herausgegeben von Christian Glanz und Nikolaus Urbanek

Manuskripte können eingesandt werden an:
Manfred Permoser
Institut für Musikwissenschaft und Interpretationsforschung
Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien
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ISBN 978-3-99012-616-5

INHALT

- 9 — **EINLEITUNG**
- 19 — **INTRODUCTION**
- 27 — **Julia Heimerdinger und Andreas Holzer**
Die Musik des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts in Vorlesungsverzeichnissen
des deutschsprachigen Raums. Ein Blick auf die Studienjahre 2013/14
bis 2015/16
- 66 — **Julia Heimerdinger and Andreas Holzer**
The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries in Music History Education
in German-Speaking Countries: A View of the Academic Years 2013/14
to 2015/16
- 101 — **TWENTIETH- AND TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY MUSIC HISTORY EDUCATION
IN UNIVERSITIES AND CONSERVATORIES AROUND THE WORLD**
- 103 — **María Paula Cannova**
The Twentieth Century in the Training of Professional Musicians
in Argentina
- 111 — **Megan Burslem and Cat Hope**
Music History Education in Australian Universities
- 121 — **Hong Ding**
A Brief Survey of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History
Education in China
- 125 — **Michael Fjeldsøe**
Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History Education in
Universities and Conservatories in Denmark
- 133 — **Priscille Lachat-Sarrete**
Teaching Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History in France

- 141 — **Philippe Poisson**
The Place of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music in
French CFMIs (Centres de Formation de Musiciens Intervenants)
- 149 — **Danae Stefanou**
Twentieth-Century and Contemporary Music History Education:
A Perspective from Greece
- 157 — **Anna Dalos**
Hungary – Musical Education Without New Music?
- 161 — **Þorbjörg Daphne Hall**
Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History in
Higher Education in Iceland
- 167 — **Wolfgang Marx**
Contemporary Music in Irish Curricula
- 171 — **Assaf Shelleg**
Teaching Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Art Music in Israel
- 179 — **Ingrid Pustijanac**
Teaching the History of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music
in Italy Today
- 185 — **Iwona Lindstedt**
The State of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History
Education in Poland
- 191 — **Heekyung Lee**
The State of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History
Courses at Universities in the Republic of Korea
- 197 — **Carmen Chelaru, Florinela Popa, and Elena Maria Șorban**
History of Modern and Contemporary Music Education in
Romanian Music Universities

- 207 — **Elizaveta E. Willert**
Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music History Teaching in
Russian Conservatories and Universities
- 217 — **Mareli Stolp**
Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music in South African
Academic Programmes: A Short Survey
- 225 — **José L. Besada and Belén Pérez-Castillo**
Teaching the History of Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century
Art Music in Spanish Universities and Conservatories
- 233 — **Oğuz Usman and Ozan Baysal**
Examining the Establishment of Music History Education
at Turkish Music Universities and Conservatories
- 239 — **Mike Searby**
The Teaching of Twentieth- and Twenty-first-Century Music in Degree
Courses in the United Kingdom
- 245 — **David Blake**
Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music
in American Musicology Curricula
- 251 — **ALLGEMEINE MUSIKGESCHICHTEN IN DER KRITIK**
- 253 — **Frank Hentschel**
Von der Unmöglichkeit, eine ‚sinnvolle‘ Geschichte
der Musik zu schreiben
- 257 — **Matej Santi**
Michael Heinemann: *Kleine Geschichte der Musik*
Werner Keil: *Musikgeschichte im Überblick*
Richard Taruskin und Christopher Howard Gibbs:
The Oxford History of Western Music
Arnold Werner Jensen: *Das Reclam-Buch der Musik*

- 263 — **Thomas Glaser**
Werner Keil: *Musikgeschichte im Überblick*
Michael Heinemann: *Kleine Geschichte der Musik*
- 277 — **Andreas Holzer**
Paul Griffiths: *Geschichte der Musik. Vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart*
Michael Heinemann: *Kleine Geschichte der Musik*
Werner Keil: *Musikgeschichte im Überblick*
Richard Taruskin und Christopher Howard Gibbs:
The Oxford History of Western Music
Arnold Werner-Jensen: *Das Reclam-Buch der Musik*
- 283 — **Pablo Cuevas**
Paul Griffiths: *Geschichte der Musik. Vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart*
- 287 — **Juri Giannini**
Die Darstellung des 21. Jahrhunderts in J. Peter Burkholders
A History of Western Music
- 293 — **GLOSSE**
Andreas Holzer
Darmstadt und der Kalte Krieg. Ein Beitrag zur Erhellung
der Ausbreitung ‚postfaktischer‘ Tendenzen in der Musikwissenschaft
- 309 — **NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS**

Anna Dalos

HUNGARY – MUSICAL EDUCATION WITHOUT NEW MUSIC?

Hungary's principal centre for the education and training of professional musicians is the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. While there are other centres for tertiary music education in some of the larger cities (Győr, Pécs, Miskolc, and Szeged), they are affiliated with general universities, whereas the Franz Liszt Academy of Music is an independent university with a significant past. Founded by Franz Liszt at the end of the nineteenth century, the academy was opened for the education of young musicians – not only for Hungarian students, but also with the intention of attracting foreign students. The Liszt Academy occupies a distinguished position: in addition to offering education in various fields of music (for example, early music, jazz, or folk music), since 2009, when the University of Pécs introduced a doctoral programme, the Liszt Academy was also the only tertiary music institution in Hungary to offer a doctorate, and it remains to this day the only Hungarian tertiary institute at which students may complete a bachelor or master of musicology.

From its beginnings, the Liszt Academy was associated with contemporary music, not least because of its founder. With composers such as Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, György Ligeti, György Kurtág, and Peter Eötvös, and performers such as Zoltán Kocsis, the Keller Quartet, and the Amadinda Ensemble studying and/or teaching at the Academy, one could (falsely) assume that contemporary music played and still plays a principal role in the education on offer. The education of musicians at the Liszt Academy, however, became increasingly conservative after the death of its founder and adhered to the Austro-German canon – in particular the first Viennese school, Wagner, and Brahms. Contemporary music was never an official part of the study plan.

At the end of the 1990s, during my own musicology studies at the Liszt Academy, our head of department and established new music critic, György Kroó, constantly urged students to listen to as much contemporary music as possible, so that we would at least become acquainted with present-day compositional praxis, and learn not to equate contemporary music with the music of the twentieth century. Seminars on contemporary music were not, however, part of our programme of study; as subjects of analysis, contemporary works were addressed in the area of music criticism, not in the context of historical research.

In the last twenty-five years, education at the Liszt Academy has changed substantially, particularly after the debate over the Bologna Process. Nevertheless, much also remains the same. Students must complete various mandatory courses (instrumental

instruction, chamber music, solfège, theory, and music history), as well as elective courses. Instrumentalists may select contemporary music both for their solo repertoire and for their chamber ensemble repertoire, and it is pleasing to see how many young musicians take to the interpretation of contemporary music with such enthusiasm – and not only musicians who are specialising in this area, but also those who, self-evidently, wish to broaden their repertoire. Although contemporary music (as a subject) encompasses the entire repertoire of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it is still possible that the most recent music explored by students was composed an entire century ago, as by Bartók or Stravinsky, for example. The jazz faculty at the Liszt Academy incidentally follows an autonomous programme of study.

Contrastingly, the composition faculty's curriculum does include contemporary music. Alongside traditional, classical composition (theory of form, Palestrina style, etc.), students may study applied and electronic composition. This provides students with insight into popular music cultures and experimental music. Furthermore, the students are expected to immerse themselves in new music and to compose in different musical styles that emerged after 1945 (for example, Boulez, Ligeti, and Stockhausen). The faculty also frequently invites local and foreign composers to present and elucidate on their own works.

The music history lectures which are compulsory for all students only briefly touch on contemporary music. Although the programme of study includes the topic "Hungarian music of the twentieth century", different lecturers take differing approaches to the content, resulting in future Hungarian musicologists not necessarily having a firm grasp on the current state of music in Hungary. Since the curriculum reform in 2008, contemporary music, as such, is no longer addressed in the context of this theme, though various historical topics pertaining to the second half of the twentieth century – music and politics in the 1950s, Zoltán Kodály's oeuvre, and new music of the 1960s – are thoroughly covered. Although current music outside Hungary is not explicitly included in the programme of study, the young musicologists are occasionally exposed to it in other learning contexts, for example, American experimental music in the context of studying North American music history. New music in the musicology curriculum is limited to Bartók, Stravinsky, Webern, and Mahler.

Contemporary music receives the most attention in the context of doctoral studies, with doctoral candidates typically showing great interest in the field. Many young musicians establish connections with contemporary composers, and perform their works. The development of such collaborations is encouraged by the doctoral school, and there are concerts for the young musicians in which they perform works by their composition student counterparts. These collaborations have long been supported by the head of the doctoral school, with Zoltán Jeney, a composer himself, ensuring this collaborative function from 1999 to 2016. The doctoral programme also sporadically

includes seminars on new music, but between 2013 and 2016 only one such seminar (on György Ligeti) was held.

As the production of contemporary music is increasing worldwide, it is impossible for a degree programme to encapsulate all of its facets. However, for the students of the Liszt Academy, it would be beneficial to learn more about tendencies in international contemporary music. In general, Hungarian musical life is not particularly open to international musical developments, which, largely thanks to some Hungarian composers' personal relationships, are occasionally heard in Budapest's concert halls. It would be a large step forward if Hungarian and international music of the last twenty-five years could gain a solid footing in the repertoire of the young generation of musicians, but this process can only be achieved through further education reforms.