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Strains of Classical Music in Hungarian Beat and Rock of the 1960s and 1970s

One of the first scholars to examine the potentials of aesthetic approaches to popular music was Peter Wicke, who in his work *Rockmusik: zur Ästhetik und Soziologie eines Massenmediums* dedicated an entire chapter[1] to Chuck Berry's 1956 piece *Roll Over Beethoven*. Wicke argues convincingly that this song is one of the standard-bearing works of rock and roll and that it encapsulates the ambitions and strivings of the genre. I cite a characteristic excerpt from the lyrics to the song:

1 ■ Peter Wicke. *Rockmusik: zur Ästhetik und Soziologie eines Massenmediums*. Leipzig: Reclam, 1987, 17-47.

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My heart's beatin' rhythm,
And my soul keeps on singin' the blues.
Roll over Beethoven and tell Tchaikovsky the news.

After listening to the composition, one has a clear sense of how the music attempts to underline the claim made by the text: this early classic of rock and roll strives to go beyond the canon of twentieth-century music. In the song, the newly proclaimed cult of simplicity finds clear expression: the composition is short and easily comprehensible. The instrumentation is dominated by guitars. The basic rhythmic-metric pattern emphasizes repetitive motion and a dance-like mood. This is coupled with a simple harmonic progression, an easily memorized melodic line, and a style of performance that breaks with existing norms and was considered raw and pushy in its time, a style in which loud volumes, achieved with the use of amplifiers and drums, were increasingly important as an identifying feature of the genre.

In 1973, however, Chuck Berry's composition, of which there were numerous cover versions, appeared in a completely new guise in a version by the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO). This British band, one of the pioneers of progressive rock, took a piece originally hardly more than two minutes-long and extended it to eight minutes. The song now began with a long symphonic introduction, in which the cello, violin, and synthesizer quote the opening measures of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and the traditional song form, which consists of an alternation of verses and a refrain, is extended to incorporate two lengthy instrumental interludes.[2]

On the one hand, the ELO cover can be seen as an expression of unbroken respect for the "classics" of rock and the lack of change in the basic principles that defined rock music. On the other, the difference between the original *Roll Over Beethoven* and the ELO cover exemplifies quite clearly a *shift* that had taken place in rock music in the West by the late 1960s.[3] As a result of this shift, trends such as progressive or symphonic rock, art-rock, and jazz-rock appeared, and they remained dominant for several years. Rather than rejecting classical music

2 ■ The main theme of the symphony, or rather its distinctive rhythmic cell, runs through the entire arrangement, but it has an especially important role in the interludes mentioned here.
3 ■ Edward Macan presents a detailed account of the birth of the genre of progressive rock. He believes the dominance of progressive trends was heralded by The Beatles' 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which embraced many musical genres (classical music, jazz, Indian music and rock). See: Edward Macan. *Rocking the Classics: The Birth of the English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 15.

and the musical traditions of earlier centuries, such trends sought to integrate them, and thus they offered a resolution to the dichotomy of *artistic* (or classical, or high in the sense of high art) and *popular*.[4] Rock and roll (and rock music in general) was always interpreted as a kind of revolt, as a kind of youth struggle against adult society and its values and tastes. Insofar as we share the widely held belief that an element of revolt is a basic component of all trends in rock music, it would seem reasonable to presume some kind of "revolution" behind this change of view. Kevin Holm-Hudson, one of the most prominent scholars in the field at the moment, has done precisely this. Holm-Hudson regards progressive rock as a revolt against the tendency to regard rock musicians as amateurs and in support of recognition for the new generation's knowledge of music, which in his assessment rivaled that of "serious" musicians.5 However, the changes that occurred at the end of the 1960s, changes which affected nearly every parameter of music, could be construed differently. By then, rock music had become a universal musical language, which by virtue of its global popularity could aspire—perhaps not without foundation—to integrate and rethink all types of music, both contemporary music and the music of earlier eras.

Evidence of renewed appreciation for classical music in pop music culture can be found in an array of rock music compositions written in the decade starting in 1967. The increasing complexity of instrumentation, handling of harmony and rhythmics, evocation of the genres and forms of classical music, growing role of virtuosity, and even changes in the ways in which texts were used (the frequent use of works and themes from belles lettres and philosophy) also indicate a vigorous rapprochement between the two musical cultures. This rapprochement can also be seen in changes in the ways in which the instrumentalists played. In terms of virtuosity and the roles a given musician played, the differences between the soloists and the rhythm section (drums and bass guitar, which in early rock were both limited to the role of accompaniment) became more nuanced. An increasing

4 ■ A detailed comparison of these aims of rock music and similar tendencies in Pop Art and various Avant-garde and experimental branches of art could be the subject of a separate study. Bill Martin offers an interesting though rather one-sided attempt at this: *Avant-rock: Experimental Music From the Beatles to Björk*, in which he deals with the interactions between rock music and the Avant-garde. Bill Martin. *Avant Rock: Experimental Music From the Beatles to Björk*. Open Court Publishing Company: Chicago, 2002.

5 ■ For more see Kevin Holm-Hudson. Introduction, in Kevin Holm-Hudson, ed. *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*. London: Routledge, 2002, 1–18.

number of pianists trained in the classical tradition or proficient as jazz musicians began to try their luck in rock music, and more and more of them abandoned the boogie-woogie and honky-tonk styles (techniques springing from ragtime and blues, which place firm emphasis on rhythm) and instead introduced styles that drew on the compositions of Chopin, Liszt, Bartók, and Debussy.[6]

In addition to the individual rock music compositions that indicated an interest in elements of classical music and the more general changes mentioned above, there was also an openness to the music of the past evidenced perhaps most conspicuously by the arrangements and paraphrases of passages from prominent works of the classical tradition. Innumerable bands and performers produced these kinds of arrangements and made musical allusions to works by classical composers. They included, perhaps not surprisingly, "canonized" artists, whose compositions, according to imitators and fans, were milestones and signposts for further experimentation.

No list is complete, for instance, without the name of Keith Emerson's most important bands (The Nice; Emerson, Lake & Palmer [ELP]). With his fellow musicians, Emerson transformed, arranged, or borrowed from works by many important composers in his own compositions. In his pieces, one recognizes complete works or excerpts from works by Mussorgsky,[7] Sibelius,[8] Bartók,[9] Copland,[10] and Tchaikovsky.[11] Equally worthy of mention is the work of the Dutch band Ekseption, which was active between 1967 and 1989. Ekseption arranged an entire album's worth of works by Johann Sebastian Bach.[12] Its repertoire also included pieces by Mozart, Gounod, de Falla, Kachaturian, Beethoven, Purcell, Schubert, Albinoni, and Saint-Saëns.

It should be emphasized that this new rock music aesthetic only blossomed in musical settings in which the capitalist market and the democratic socio-cultural background provided sufficient room for innovation and allowed non-normative aesthetic thinking to emerge

6 ■ Macan. *Rocking the* Classics, 31 ff.

7 ■ On the LP *Pictures at an Exhibition* of 1971 ELP arranged Mussorgsky's entire piano cycle *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

8 ■ *Intermezzo from the Karelia Suite* on the 1968 LP *Ars Long Vita Brevis* by The Nice and the 1969 *Karelia Suite* on the LP *Five Bridges*.

9 ■ For instance, the arrangement of the *Allegro barbaro*, entitled *The Barbarian*, on ELP's 1970 disc *Emerson Lake and Palmer*.

10 ■ ELP's 1972 album *Trilogy* featured an arrangement of *Hoedown*.

11 ■ The third movement from Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, "*Pathétique*," on the 1971 album *Elegy* by The Nice; *Nut Rocker* on the 1971 album *Pictures at an Exhibition* by ELP.

12 ■ This did not appear in album form (*Ekseption Plays Bach*) until 1989.

without counter-cultural overtones. But how many of these spectacular changes in rock music were perceptible at the same time in Eastern Europe, in the state-socialist countries in the Soviet sphere of influence, where intolerance of Western mass culture (and thus rock music) may have eased, but never completely vanished? Did socialist culture, which set rock music on a different path of development from that of the West, also react to the new musical revolution at the end of the 1960s? I offer a tentative answer to this question based on the Hungarian example, primarily by presenting the possible meeting points of "classical" and "popular" music through a survey of paraphrases and arrangements, in rock-music compositions, of works from the classical tradition.

I cannot provide, in this short article, a thorough analysis of the differences between popular music in capitalist and socialist societies or a survey of beat and rock music in Hungary. In summary, however, it suffices perhaps to note that, depending on the constraints on the flow of information at any given time and the momentary interests of the cultural authorities of the socialist regime, exponents of the genre in Hungary always reacted to Western trends, albeit with a certain time-lag, while also embracing burgeoning new trends in Hungary. Treading in the footsteps of foreign models, many music groups of international caliber started to expand the boundaries of rock music, and several of them chose the revival offered by *fusion*, even when the band itself had become known not for progressive rock, but for some other style. An example of this is the band Omega, which became the best known Hungarian band of the 1970s and performed many times in the West. Starting as a beat music band, Omega found success first in hard rock and then in what is known as space rock, but from 1973 on, elements of classical music became a distinctive part of its style. The best example of this is Tamás Mihály's six-movement composition *Szvit* (Suite) on the album *Omega 5*, which, as its name shows, evokes the structure and form of a centuries-old musical genre. It does this with the use of a symphony orchestra[13] alongside the traditional instruments of a rock group (drums, bass guitar, guitar, and organ). Works more restrained in their instrumentation but no less broad in scope were composed by the bands Theatrum[14] and Syrius, the latter being a pioneer of progressive rock in Hungary and, after its one-year tour in Australia, one of the

13 ■ The Hungarian State Concert Orchestra played on the album.

14 ■ Although the band did not manage to release an official album, *Apokalipszis*, a composition by Theatrum that is more than 20 minutes long, is available on a demo recording that they made themselves.

most original bands of the international progressive rock music scene.

These bands were comprised mostly of musicians with classical training, who, thanks to their theoretical knowledge and technical skills, started to think in terms of more complex structures and also enthusiastically interpreted and arranged the most complex, challenging foreign compositions. These compositions made recognizable use of classical music arrangements, which were becoming widely known. The Keith Emerson pieces mentioned above, for example, often had more influence on similar Hungarian experiments than the original works. But before looking at the Hungarian arrangements that began to proliferate in the mid-1970s, it is worth looking at some of the precedents in order to have a fuller picture of how "serious" music was present in Hungarian beat and rock.

The compositions from the 1960s and 1970s can be separated into various groups according to stylistic features. Although one can discern a kind of temporal demarcation line between the groups, the boundaries between the eras cannot be clearly defined; for example, the fashions of the 1960s did not immediately sink into oblivion—far from it. Thus, the 1970s bore witness to a coexistence of groups, rather than a succession. Additionally, there were also overlaps between the groups because of certain performers. Thus, the identity of the groups was formed less by the musicians and more by the works: in most cases, the "classics" that were selected influenced the characteristics of the arrangement, revealing a great deal about which contemporary rock music trend (and in some cases, specifically which band) the performer was trying to follow.

The arrangements in the first group are usually those closest to traditional beat music and the popular music of the 1960s. These works have a special status in two respects. First, most of them were composed in 1964–65, before the appearance of progressive rock trends. There were few examples of this in the West.[15] In Hungary, however, even in the period before the creation of independent Hungarian-language beat, musicians were fond of drawing on the classics, and this in a period when the ambitions of the first bands hardly extended beyond copying the songs of their favorite foreign bands and composing works for the guitar in the style of Ventures and The Shadows. The parallels for these

15 ■ One of these is The Byrds' 1965 composition *She Don't Care About Time,* the central section of which is based on the last movement of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Cantata BVW 147*. One could also mention here the a Capella group the Swingle Singers, formed in 1962, which will be mentioned in connection with the second group.

tendencies are found not in the West, but rather among the Roma bands and in the repertoires of (jazz) performers in the tourist industry. In all likelihood (and indeed numerous accounts and memoirs support this hypothesis), this was due to the fact that in the early stages, the guitar bands that performed in the community centers had to be able to play in a diverse array of styles, very much like the coffeehouse musicians who had to play for hours at a time. Thus, it is in fact not terribly surprising that the arrangements bear almost none of the elements that, from the 1960s on, brought popular and classical music closer together. Essentially, they approached the given works from the viewpoint of rock and roll and the spirit of traditional beat, always keeping in mind the cult of simplicity and comprehensibility. All of the pieces in this group are arrangements of what are known as popular classics, i.e. the "hits" of classical music. The band Metro did an arrangement of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*[16] and the first movement of Tchaikovsky's B-flat minor piano concerto in a composition entitled *Kozmosz*.[17] Atlantis provided reworkings of the Gypsy chorus from Verdi's Trovatore in *Trovatore paraphrase*, a song from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko* (*The Song of the Hindu Trader* [in Atlantis's transcription: *Hindu Song*]), and an excerpt from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.[18] The band Bergendy played a beat version of Brahms' *Fifth Hungarian Dance.* These compositions were all purely instrumental pieces without a vocal line, usually written for solo and rhythm guitar, bass guitar and drums. They pluck the main theme and most broadly familiar melodic excerpts from the original works and repeat them over a steady dance rhythm accompaniment at a decidedly snappier tempo than the original. Through repetition, regular strophic song forms take shape, in which the themes are sometimes interspersed with brief solo passages.

Another group consists of compositions in which Baroque music was the strongest influence. The creation of this short-lived group was linked to the appearance of the song *A Whiter Shade of Pale* (1967) by the British group Procol Harum, an extremely popular song which led the hit parade for weeks. In the song, contrapuntal composing, motifs

16 ■ No recording was made of this arrangement; during an interview with Károly Frenreisz on 10 July 2013, I discovered that at one time the band Metro had regularly started their concerts with Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. The interview is accessible on the website of the Archives and Research Group for 20th-21st Century Hungarian Music at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute of Musicology: <http://zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

17 ■ The song was released as a single of the same name in 1965.

18 ■ The latter two arrangements are included in the CD supplement to the book by Csaba Bálint. *Radics Béla a beatkorszakban* ["Béla Radics in the Beat Era"]. Budapest: RetroMedia Kft., 2012.

from Johann Sebastian Bach's Cantata BWV 156 *Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe* and the *Air* from his Orchestral Suite No. 3 (often played separately), and the use of a Hammond organ create a rich evocation of the Baroque style. This new sound, hitherto almost unknown in rock music, prompted several musicians in Hungary to rediscover the music of the Baroque era and create rock music in a style that imitated Baroque music. True enough, the choice of theme and mood in this case was motivated more by a desire to imitate foreign favorites than it was by a deliberate interest in innovation. A good example of this is the work of the band The Wanderers, which was led by Albert Haász. Their song *Prelúdium* won an amateur music festival in 1967 in Salgótarján, and apparently many people[19] believed it to be a Bach transcription, because of the elaborate instrumentation and the polyphonic vocals performed by an ensemble of three singers. *Prelúdium*, however, is a composition by Haász, which according to the composer[20] was inspired less by Bach[21] and Procol Harum than it was by the Swingle Singers' Bach paraphrases. The other paraphrases in the band's repertoire (e.g. Saint-Saëns' *The Swan* and Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*) [22] belong more in the first group.

Pop Consort, a band from Szolnok that won second place in the 1972 talent contest *Ki mit tud* ("Who Knows What?") and also performed as a warm-up band for Syrius experimented with several trends, and their best-known transcription, *Bourée*, also draws on the Baroque.[23] Fans of pop music became familiar with the fifth movement of Bach's *Lute Suite in E minor* in the arrangement by the band Jethro Tull.[24] Pop Consort aimed to make a faithful reconstruction of Jethro Tull's version, as evidenced by the fact that they did not even alter the instrumentation. In the Szolnok band's interpretation the flute-playing of József Angyal and band leader József Blazsek[25] dominates, as does

19 ■ For the Hungarian text of the interview with Albert Haász see <http://www.zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

20 ■ See <http://www.zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

21 ■ Haász's contention notwithstanding, the influence of Bach's *A minor Two-part Invention* on the *Prelúdium* seems clear.

22 ■ These movements can be found on the double CD summarizing the Wanderers' oeuvre, which, however, was not released commercially.

23 ■ József Blazsek recalled that this was not their only venture into the world of arrangements: in the composition they performed in the finals of the talent contest *Ki mit tud?* (Attila József. "Tiszta szívvel" ["With a Pure Heart"]) there were excerpts of Leó Weiner's *Rókatánc* ["Fox Dance"]. For the Hungarian text of the interview see <http://www.zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

24 ■ The composition was included in the band's 1969 album *Stand Up!*

25 ■ In the band Pop, two flautists played simultaneously.

that of Ian Anderson in the version by the British quintet. Blazsek's group tried to adhere faithfully to Anderson's virtuoso solutions and improvisations. Their work is particularly valuable considering that Jethro Tull not only re-orchestrated Bach's composition, but genuinely reworked it, interpreting it as a basis for variation and improvisation. In other words, the basic material in this case was more a pretext for a *new piece of music.*

This was the distinguishing characteristic of the third group of arrangements in Hungary, which is the largest of the three, and not without reason. Chronologically, it coincided broadly with the renaissance of classical music arrangements in the West, i.e. with the golden age of progressive and symphonic rock. It saw the rise, predominantly, of new musicians who had been trained at classical or jazz conservatories or colleges and who sometimes had studied composition. In addition to the classics in the repertoires of bands like The Nice and ELP, they also took an interest in the important Hungarian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially Béla Bartók, whose piano piece *Allegro barbaro* was also arranged by ELP in a composition entitled *The Barbarian*.[26] *Allegro barbaro* was also included on the Bartók disc by the Debrecen-based band Panta Rhei, alongside *Rumanian Dance No. 1*[27] and *Fourths* and *Ostinato* from *Mikrokosmos*.[28] The band V'73, which toured with Omega, won the greatest recognition within this group. Its adaptation of Leó Weiner's *Fox Dance* was even played on Hungarian Television. All three members of this trio, which was led by István Lerch, had studied at the jazz conservatory, and they were the first people to being spreading the music of ELP in Hungary.[29]

If one places the transcriptions that fall into the third group in chronological order, it becomes apparent that in the mid-1970s a cautious change in trends took place. In addition to popular classics and more traditional pieces by Hungarian composers with the feel of dance music, musicians gradually also became interested in more abstract works. These compositions included works by contemporary composers. One of the best known examples is the first and fifth movements of Pál Kadosa's *Six Studies for Piano*, of which László

26 ■ See Note 11.
27 ■ This is the spelling which was used when Bartók gave English titles to the compositions.
28 ■ The album was made in 1977 and given the title *Bartók*, but the Bartók heirs did not give their consent to its release.
29 ■ This is also shown by the fact that the band regularly played movements from the album *Pictures at an Exhibition* by the British band and the adaptations by The Nice of Tchaikovsky's symphony *Pathétique*.

Szűcs (who studied composition at the Bartók conservatory, Budapest) and his orchestra Theatrum composed an adaptation, which includes elements of jazz and rock music and which won the approval[30] of the composer himself.[31]

Considering the prevalence of experimentation in the pieces by this third group (both more traditional and more progressive) and the creative and performing skills of the artists (not to mention their reputations abroad), it is perhaps surprising how few radio and disc recordings there are of their performances, including performances of their own compositions. Why is one forced to rely on poor quality, amateur recordings and a few written documents (newspaper articles) to describe the history in Hungary of a trend that was popular the world over? Why did the musicians playing progressive music not manage to find a place in socialist popular (musical) culture and overcome the obstacles to being heard publicly in an era when the party state no longer stood in the way of pop music (indeed in some cases the party state provided support for rock bands whose music suited its cultural policy)?

The architects of cultural policy and the leaders of the (popular) music scene in Hungary in the Kádár era saw no potential uses, either commercial or pedagogical, for quality rock music or the classical music arrangements that formed a part of it, even though the principles of art and education policy (established in 1958 by the party with the aim of cultivating good taste and socialist morals among members of the younger generation) were still in force two decades later, albeit with minor modifications. Nor was the cause of progressive rock aided by the conservative swing in the official view of popular music, which began to become increasingly palpable in 1969. This resulted in the political elite and the press again attempting to interest young people in "serious" music and also jazz, which in their assessment opened a window onto classical music. As part of this, though with some delay, positive statements began to be made about "jazz-rock" bands that

30 ■ This information was shared with me by László Szűcs during a telephone conversation.
31 ■ According to János Zoltán, Péter Nemes Nagy, and Ervin Budai, the authors of *Széttört* álmok: *A Syrius együttes története* ["Broken Dreams: The History of the Syrius Band"], the arrangements in question were made for a competition held by the People's Education Institute (Népművelési Intézet), which was specifically for rock adaptations of works of classical music. In a telephone conversation László Szűcs also referred to this competition, yet in the archives of the National Education Institute (Nemzeti Művelődési Intézet) no documents confirming the existence of such a competition can be found. The authors of the book do not cite their source for this information. János Zoltán, Péter Nemes Nagy, Ervin Budai. *Széttört álmok: A Syrius együttes története*. Üröm: Staen Hungária, 2006.

allegedly represented "superior musical culture" and went beyond the "crude musical stylistic traits" and "aggressiveness" associated with rock.[32] Some progressive rock ensembles with excellent technical skills found roles in the official Hungarian entertainment industry, albeit as backing bands for popular singers of dance songs and Hungarian pop stars[33] or as guests at official state celebrations.[34] It is likely, however, that the institutions and organizations in the state monopoly required them more as professional performers than as creative musicians who further the aesthetic education of the youth.

Whatever interest was shown by consumers in the "intellectual" thread in rock music was of no consequence, as it did not meet with the interests of the official sphere. The trend's lack of success and failure to engender interest probably influenced the debates on education in the early 1970s within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. In 1973, these debates led to the separation of the concepts of education and entertainment[35] (which until then had been intertwined in socialist culture) and, thus, to the recognition of a raison d'être for pop music in socialist culture. What meant a success for mainstream rock music spelled disaster for those working on reconciling the "high" and the "low" spheres. Their situation was further complicated by a shift in the interests of the Hanglemezgyártó Vállalat ("Hungarian Record Company") and a man named Péter Erdős, who was the manager of the company and an influential figure on the popular music scene. Having witnessed the major successes of beat and rock music, the officials in charge of pop music began to sponsor bands that promised good returns, which also meant providing them with favorable conditions and helping them become internationally known in the hope that the resulting profits might help provide finances for the classical music sphere, which never brought in revenue.

When asking about opportunities for V'73 to release a record, Lerch twice received a blunt refusal from the officials in charge of decision-making. "Don't pick a quarrel with the classics," ran one opinion from

32 ■ Hungarian National Archives. XIX-I-9-a 7. d.
33 ■ For instance, the band V'73, which was the main backing band for the TV festival Metronóm '77.
34 ■ For instance, the band Theatrum, which had a role in the 1975 "liberation" celebrations.
35 ■ For instance, *Zenekultúra és közművelődés* ["Music Culture and Public Education"]. Hungarian National Archives. 288. f./36/1973, 46, I. dossier; *Szórakozás és közművelődés* ["Entertainment and Public Education"], ibid.

an unidentified source.[36] Erdős, who had ultimate power in popular music, gave a reply that has become infamous, saying "Hungarians don't make love to this kind of music."[37] This statement illustrates quite clearly that even in the world of pop music, by the 1970s in socialist Hungary commercial considerations could trump ideology.

Yet the recollections of certain individuals suggest that the fusion experiments in the early 1970s may have had some role in popularizing classical music among young people. When I asked them about the possible influences of their music on the younger generation, Lerch, József Sáfár (the bass guitarist of V'73), and Szűcs each confirmed independently that in many cases the audience of V'73 or Theatrum, which consisted mainly of students and young intellectuals, was first exposed to certain works of classical music by their arrangements.

Albeit with a slight time-lag compared to international trends, by the end of the 1970s there was a perceptible upturn in the genre of progressive rock in Hungary. In the TV festival Metronóm '77, in which V'73 performed the most frequently as a backing band, the symphonic rock band Color triumphed, and in the same year the band Panta Rhei got to the semi-finals of the talent contest *Ki mit tud?* with their adaptation of Bartók's *Dance Suite*. By this time, however, new fashions were unfolding in Western Europe and the United States, such as punk, techno and heavy metal, which, reaching back to the roots of rock music, adopted a style of minimalism and simplicity again. The possibility for a fusion of classical and rock music seemed to have been missed, and probably few people suspected that, with the proliferation of technologies in music production and performance, beginning in the 1980s the influence and interaction between classical and popular music would be far stronger than hitherto. As the socialist countries increasingly caught up with the West, by the time of the political changes in 1989 the phenomenon of *crossover* had reached them and had become an integral part of local pop cultures.

In summary, classical music and pop music intersected in many different ways in the history of rock music in Hungary. The trend in Hungary was defined by events in the West, and in Hungary of the 1960s and 1970s neither the market nor the cultural systems permitted

36 ■ The sentence was used in the interview with Sáfár. This opinion harmonizes with the request made by Lajos Bolba, director of the Light Music Department at the Radio, to Albert Haász: "Leave the classics. Play dance music instead!" For the Hungarian text of the interview with Sáfár and Haász see <http://www.zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

37 ■ Lerch said this in the course of an interview with me. For the Hungarian text of the interview with him see <http://www.zti.hu/mza/index.htm?m0703.htm>.

such experiments to break out of their marginal status. When the first transcriptions were made, beat and rock were still struggling to establish their own legitimacy, and the works born in the shadow of the international golden age of progressive rock faded into the background following a radical change in the relationship in Hungary between music, education, and entertainment. The history of allusions to and paraphrases of compositions from the classical tradition in rock and pop music in Hungary offers a revealing example of how rock music ceased to enjoy the support of the architects of cultural policy precisely at the moment at which it might best have served one of their primary aims, namely "quality entertainment." ❧

Translated by Richard Robinson