

Dichter-Komponist Graf Géza Zichy¹

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This study is devoted to Count Géza Zichy, a leading personality of Hungarian music life, the first professional left-handed pianist in history, composer, conductor, but also poet and writer, long-term director of the Conservatory in Budapest (1875–1918) and Intendant of The Hungarian Royal Opera House (1891–1894), and, last but not least, an important patron and philanthropist. Now Zichy is relatively well-known in quite a negative sense – as an Intendant he caused the retirement of G. Mahler from the post of the conductor of The Royal Opera in Budapest. Not to see only this negative side of Zichy, we want to introduce also other aspects of his life, first of all his work. Although today it is hard to expect the return of Zichy's operatic works to the modern stage, and his piano compositions appear rather more like curiosities, it is our aim to review some of his works in the context of central European music culture at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

Géza Zichy was born on July 22nd, 1849 in Sztára in Zemplén County in Hungary (now Staré, district Michalovce, Slovakia) as the last of four sons of Count Leopold Zichy (Zichy Lipót, 1805–1869), who was a member of an important line of the Hungarian aristocratic family (he descended from the branch of Vedrőd²). The castle of Sztára belonged to the family of Géza's mother, Countess Mária Sztáray (1821–1891). Like a curiosity we could mention, that the brother of his mother, Viktor Sztáray (1823–1879), was father of Countess Irma Sztáray (1863–1940), well-known as the last lady-in-waiting of the Empress Elisabeth of Bavaria, called Sissi.³ In Zichy's Sztáray-blood-relationship we could find also one interesting person – Count Mihály Sztáray (1749–1798, he was the younger brother of Zichy's maternal grandfather). He was one of the most significant Hungarian thinkers, and in aristocratic circles of that time he was well-known as an outstanding violinist, cembalo-player and composer.

¹ The Poet-Composer Count Géza Zichy. This title appears often e.g., in German press in Pressburg (Pressburger Zeitung, etc.).

² The village of Vedrőd was in that time in the district of Tyrnau in County of Pressburg, Hungary, and now is the part of district Trnava in County of Trnava, Slovakia.

³ Irma Sztáray was lady-in-waiting of the Empress in 1894–1898, she accompanied the Empress also at the day of her assassination on September 10th, 1898 in Geneva, later she wrote her memoirs (*Aus den letzten Jahren der Kaiserin Elisabeth*, Wien, 1909).

From his *Oeuvre* remain until today several polonaises, written in Galant style.⁴ It was also the family of his mother (she was also good pianist), from which Zichy inherited his musical genius; he referred to his father's side as a "totally unmusically family."⁵ Despite being an officer in the Austrian Imperial Army and a court functionary, Leopold Zichy joined to the Hungarian revolution of L. Kossuth, and he did not flee persecution after the defeat of it. The family was forced to move to Tyrnau (Nagyszombat, now Trnava, Slovakia) in 1851, where they lived under the watch of the police. They spent the summers in Szomolány (now Smolenice, Slovakia), to which Zichy later returned sporadically. It was in Tyrnau, where young Géza began to play the piano – already in the age of three years, and two years later he had his first teacher and in the age of seven he began to study also violin. With the partial release of the political circumstances and after the death of Zichy's grandfather Ferenc Zichy (1774–1861), the family moved to Pressburg (Pozsony, now Bratislava, Slovakia), the summer months they spent in the castle of Seregélyes (County Fejér, Hungary). And here came the incident, which would totally change Zichy's life. On September 24th, 1863 through careless handling of a gun during the chase he was injured, which was followed by the amputation of the right hand. But the injury with permanent consequences did not break the young man. His first letter – written with the left hand – was addressed to his tutor Michal von Csíky: "If I will be not able in a year from today to do all things, which the others do with both their hands, I will shoot the bullet in my head."⁶ After several months of convalescence Zichy was able to return to study – he studied at Royal catholic gymnasium and Law academy in Pressburg – and, what is of importance – he began also his music studies (in Pressburg he studied with Karl Mayrberger, 1828–1881) and piano. It was also in Pressburg, where Zichy gave his first concert in public – on March 25th, 1866 he played a cycle of Hungarian folksongs adapted for left hand. The success was unequivocal and in 1867 Zichy performed in Budapest, where he had moved after the death of his father (1869) and completion of his studies (1870). He worked for a short time at the Ministry of Education (1871). In the same year he married Countess Melanie Karátsonyi (1855–1894), from this happy marriage 5 children were born. And he also continued his music studies – with

⁴ See Anna Petneki, "Mihály Sztáray, ein ungarischer Komponist in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 1/4 (Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 349–424. It is the complete issue of Sztáray's works and the musicology study.

⁵ "[...] dieses durchweg unmusikalischen Geschlechts [...]." Géza Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben I.* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags – Anstalt, 1911), 26.

⁶ "Bin ich von heute in einem Jahre nicht imstande, alles, was die anderen mit beiden Händen machen, mit einer Hand zu vollbringen, so schiesse ich mir eine Kugel in den Kopf!" Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben I.*, 82.

Robert Volkmann (1815–1883) and later with Franz Liszt (1811–1886), who influenced him fundamentally and supported him in his artistic ambitions and creation. Liszt was particularly excited about Zichy's ballad *Zach Klára* (1873) and his adaptation of Schubert's *Erlkönig* for left hand. In 1875 he became the Director of the Conservatory in Budapest, and held this position until 1918. The breakthroughs in his pianistic career were the concerts in Paris (1877), in Vienna and in Germany. In the 1880s he gave concerts in Switzerland, Italy, Scandinavia, and in Russia, always with great success. He played only his own compositions, possibly his own adaptations of well-known pieces (in addition to the above mentioned *Erlkönig*, it was a *Polonaise in A major* by Chopin, Bach's *Chaconne in d minor*, or *Liebestraum No. 3* by Liszt). However, he continued to compose. After several smaller pieces, he wrote orchestral and vocal compositions – *Cantatas Dolores* – 1888 and *A Zene* (“The Music”) – 1895, or *Egy vár története* (“The Story of a Castle”) – 1888 – the cycle of 12 orchestral pieces. In 1891 Zichy became the Intendant of The Hungarian Royal Opera House in Budapest, and was the first Intendant with a musical education in the history of the House (the Intendant belonged traditionally to the Court functions). It is in this role that he is still known today, but it should be noted – in a negative sense, namely because of the dispute with the Music Director Gustav Mahler, which was followed by Mahler's retirement. The circumstances of the conflict filled the pages of the contemporary press and until today Mahler's biographers treat it as the “archetypal” conflict of incompetent aristocrat and musical genius. It should be noted, that Zichy did not question Mahler's conducting qualities,⁷ but he did not want to tolerate Mahler's “problematic” behavior with the ensemble.⁸ On the other hand, Mahler did not tolerate the conditions in Budapest (he held office since 1888) and probably he considered his position untenable even for the change on the post of the Intendant. Even before taking office by Zichy (who was appointed on January 22nd, 1891), Mahler acted with Opera Director in Hamburg, B. Pollini, about the possibilities of his engagement (two letters from October 11th and 14th, 1890⁹). As Mahler's successor, Zichy got an important conducting personality – Arthur Nikisch (1855–1922), who was born in Mósonszentmiklós and hereby he was considered to be a domestic artist, in spite of his German origin and education (in function 1893–1895). Zichy's Intendancy

⁷ “Erstens war er ein grosser Mann, und zweitens fühlte jeder Musiker, das sich da eine grosse Musikerseele offenbarte.” Géza Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben III*. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1920), 167.

⁸ “Sein nervöses, schroffes, öfters sogar unartiges Auftreten hat mitunter das ganze Personal zur Verzweiflung getrieben.” Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben III*, 167.

⁹ Amadé Németh *Gustav Mahler életének kronikája* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1984), 118. The author gives very subdued descriptions of the events, very critic of Zichy.

is characterized by ambition to support the works by domestic composers and to consolidate relations inside of the theatre – The home order, which was entered into force upon Zichy's entry, remained in force practically until the end of the World War II.¹⁰ Zichy left his time-consuming job after the sudden death of his wife Melanie (she died of diphtheria on April 11th, 1894), to have more time for his children and for his artistic work. After the death of his son Aladár Zichy came to decision to leave Budapest for Pressburg – “for the city, where he was so happy before.”¹¹ Undoubtedly, Zichy had a warm-hearted relationship to the city of Pressburg. He spent his youth and studies here, he returned here very often even later, and after the death of his wife he lived here for the most of the year. Zichy performed as pianist and conductor many times in the city, later his operas was given in the municipal theater. Between 1910–1920 he was a chairman of the Toldykor, Hungarian literature society.¹² Regarding Pressburg we should mention his close friend Johann Batka (1845–1917), lawyer and city archivist and important personality of the cultural life, who was in correspondence with leading personalities of that time including Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, and Clara Schumann.

In later years Zichy devoted himself to the operatic works – between 1896–1912 he wrote 5 operas – *Alár* (1896), *Roland Master* (*Meister Roland, Roland mester* 1899) and the 3 operas of the *Rákóczi-trilogy* (*Nemo*, 1905, *II. Rákóczy Ferenc*, 1909, and *Rodostó*, 1912). During the World War I Zichy was involved in charitable organizations, he gave lectures for the soldiers and even published a book – *Das Buch des Einarmigen* (“The Book of the One-handed,” 1915) with a large photo attachment, in which he tried to help soldiers after amputations of hands by managing of daily activities. After the end of World War I and the following political changes in Hungary, Zichy retired from social and artistic life. He died on January 14th, 1924 in Budapest.

Zichy came from an important family and his aristocratic origin assured him, undoubtedly, a full acknowledgement and acceptance of his work. Apart from his skill as a performer (although we do not know it – there are not recordings of Zichy's playing) and despite the fact that his playing was extremely appreciated by the authorities of the age (E. Hanslick), in the 19th century it was hardly

¹⁰ Jolán Pukánszkyiné Kadár, *A Nemzeti Színház Százéves Története II* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1938), 362.

¹¹ “zu jener Stadt, wo ich einstens so glücklich war,” Zichy's letter to Johann Batka from November 23rd, 1894. In the letter Zichy asks Batka to find a flat for him. See Alexandra Tauberová and Jaromila B. Martinková, *Johann Nepomuk Batka: Auswahl aus der Korrespondenz* (Bratislava: Slovenské národné múzeum. Hudobné múzeum, 1999), 171.

¹² The information about the activities of Zichy in Pressburg you can find in my study “Géza Zichy a Prešporok” (“Géza Zichy and Pressburg”), *Slovenské divadlo* 69, no. 1 (2021), 99–109.

imaginable for an artist to meet after the concert or even stay in conversation at the banquet with the monarchs – including the German Emperor or Russian Tzar. Zichy was aware of his position and dignity, as of his relationship with his non-aristocratic colleagues. In his memoirs Zichy mentioned a concrete event: after his performance on a concert in Karlsruhe (1883), a court officer offered him a honor place in a first row of the audience, but it was refused by him with a comment that he will stay behind the stage with his colleagues.¹³ On the other hand, Zichy's aristocratic origin allowed him not only the possibility to hold court (he was imperial privy counselor and imperial groom of the chamber) and political functions (member of the Upper House of The Hungarian Parliament), but also functions in the artistic region (he became the Director of The conservatory in Budapest in the age of 26, Intendant of The Royal Opera House in Budapest, etc.) and later enabled the performances of his operatic works abroad, especially in Germany. We should also mention, that Zichy played still without entitlement to a fee, respectively he dedicated a fee for a charitable purposes. According to one parisian newspapers, until 1886 Zichy contributed to charity the equivalent of 1 million francs.¹⁴ This fact makes him an important philanthropist of his age.

Literature works

During his whole life, Zichy devoted himself to literary work, which is very extensive and includes lyric poetry, epics, prosaic works, plays, but also travelogs, religious writings, and, of course, memoirs. Zichy entered the scene of Hungarian literature with his comedy *Phrenolog*, which was successfully performed in Nemzeti Színház (only 22-year old author on the National scene!). In 1876, on the same stage, the tragedy *A szerelem harca* ("The Struggle of Love") was performed. The subject of the tragedy is the unhappy love of the young Duke Du Brevault to a young, pretty and worthy chaste actress from the age of Louis XV. *Tízparancsolat* ("Ten Commandments") was premiered in Pressburg in 1898. This play depicts a similar unequal love of the Count Balányi and poor Iluska, but it has a happy and cheerful ending. In 1872, Zichy's only novel was published – *Az álom regénye* ("The Novel of the Dream"), where he elaborates themes, which were certainly well-known for him – the life of magnates and the riche. The lyric poetry was published in two volumes – *Költemények* ("Poems," Petőfi Társaság, Budapest, 1871) and *Újabb költemények* ("The Newer Poems," 1892).

¹³ "[...] mein aristokratischer Rang habe mit der Kunst nichts zu schaffen. Ich sei hier Künstler und stolz, im Kreise meiner Kollegen bleiben zu können." Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben III.*, 19.

¹⁴ Theodore Edel, *Piano Music for one hand* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 28.

Zichy wrote also 3 epics – *A boldogság útja* (“The Path of Happiness,” 1875), *A Leányvári boszorkány* (“The Witch From the Girl’s Castle,” 1881) and *Alár* (1883). The extensive epic *A leányvári boszorkány* (it contains 12 songs and has about 150 pages!) was published in Athenaeum in Budapest with 13 illustrations of Mihály Zichy (1827–1906), Géza’s cousin and leading painter and illustrator of that time. The work represents the considerably romanticized story of Barbara Rössel, the last member of the family of wealthy burghers in Schemnitz (Hung. Selmezbánya, now Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia), who died in poverty in 1575. Barbara (in the epic renamed Marta) loses the inherited fortune through her dissolute life, and her only true love to a singer and fiddler Bartók remains unfulfilled – how ironic, that right in 1881, when the work was published, a certain Bartók was born in Nagyszentmiklós in Banát – with a given name Béla, who later, at the beginning of 20th century, became a leading personality of progressive tendencies of Hungarian music, and thus became an adversary of the conservative line, represented by Zichy.¹⁵ *Alár* is an epic in 7 parts with the subject from the Hungarian middle age and crusades. The work in the spirit of romantism resolve the problem of love and duty and their consequences – Alár, the knight, despite the oath given to his fiancée, falls in love with beautiful Erzsébet, who he met on a singing competition abroad. She bears her lot, brings her son, the fruit of her dirty love, to Alár’s wife and commits suicide. Wretched, poor Alár after his returns from the Crusade had built the chapel on the place, where Erzsébet voluntarily ended her life and together with his wife Ilona takes care of his son in love. This romantic subject was later elaborated by Zichy to a libretto for his first opera (1896).

Experiences from his concert tours are described by Zichy in his travelogs (*Élmények Skandináviában* – “Experiences in Scandinavia,” 1887, *Három hét Petervárott* – “Three Weeks in St. Petersburg,” 1889). The most important source of informations about the first half of the composer’s life are his memoirs in 3 volumes – *Aus meinem Leben*, published in Stuttgart in 1911, 1913, 1920). In this extensive and colorful work Zichy devoted himself to the family conditions, to the ancestries, the carefree childhood and tragic incident behind his handicap, artistic activities, his relationship to F. Liszt, etc. But the work, unfortunately is a torso. The 3rd volume ends with the death of his wife (1894), the author still attaches the chapter “Der Intendant,” where his view of his activity in Royal Opera House is represented, shortly also his relationship with Mahler. Although Zichy’s memoirs are a remarkable depiction of his life and the époque and bring many details from the life of artist, there is little information about his works and concrete pieces, musical or literary ones, or about motivations behind the

¹⁵ To this problematic see Ferenc Bónis, *Béla Bartók: Pictures of a life* (Budapest: Balassi, 2016), 146.

creation of it, respectively about the creative progress. Also the information about the programmes of the concerts are very austere, and at the same time, the social circumstances are often depicted so colorfully. This inconsistency in facts has to be completed with the study of the print of that time, if it is even possible. The memoirs end really in 1894 and thus we have no informations about Zichy's later, first of all operatic works, from his own hand.

There are some articles about Franz Liszt in Zichy's literary output, also some religious disputes (*Katolikus magyar egyházi ének* – The catholic hungarian church song by the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Spirit, 1895, or Lourdes from the same year). After all, Zichy elaborated also his view on revolution circumstances in Hungary during the reign of Béla Kun (*Élvi kommunisták. Élményeim a kommunizmus alatt* – “The truly communists. My experiences during the communism,” 1920).

Regarding this extensive literary work it is understandable that Zichy wrote also the libretti for his 5 operas, as well as the texts for his songs and choirs. This enormous output testifies to a certain degree of literary talent and narration ability, a sense for dramaturgy and culture of the versed text. But also notable is a very conservative approach and incapability to break free from the base of romanticism (which is otherwise apparent also in his musical works). Not only the florid style of his poems, epics and operatic libretti, but also the dramaturgical and ideological principles applied in his works indicates it.

Zichy as pianist; Works for piano

Now, let's consider the specifics of Zichy's piano playing. Playing with only one hand was not unknown at the time of Zichy's youth. Around the middle of the 19th century, pieces for left hand were performed by famous pianists as Czech born Alexander Dreyschock (1818–1869) and Italian Adolfo Fumagalli (1828–1856), but it was only to preview the virtuosity of the otherwise two-handed pianists. Zichy was the first pianist who gave entire recitals with only the left hand. The romantic appearance of young aristocrat with tragic fate, astonishing through his stirring play, was very attractive for the audience. Through his musical education and his professional playing Zichy changed the accusations of aristocratic amateurism – and he had to defend against it. Finally, there were other reason to attribute to him the amateurism – the conflict with Mahler, for which Zichy was criticized almost during his entire life,¹⁶ and later the too conservative concep-

¹⁶ “Sein Streit mit Gustav Mahler, als er Intendant der Budapester Oper war, hat ihn ungerechterweise in den Ruf eines vielseitigen Dilettanten gebracht,” in such mood the conflict Zichy–Mahler was interpreted in an obituary for Count Géza Zichy in *Pressburger Zeitung*. See Géza Zichy (unsigned), *Pressburger Zeitung*, January 1, 1924, 161; *Jahrgang*, no. 17, 3.

tions of his operatic works.¹⁷ Zichy very soon achieved the respect of audiences and critics also abroad, even Eduard Hanslick was one of his admirers. In his reviews published in the *Neue Freie Presse* after Zichy's concert in Vienna (1878) he praised Zichy's technical ability, jumps, arpeggios, but also the outstanding sensitive performance of the lyric passages and the maturity and musicality of his play, which generally significantly exceeded the attributes of the expected curiosity.¹⁸ Zichy's play was so brilliant and substantial, that the suggestions about the specific adaptations of the mechanics of his piano occurred. The fact that he played still on his own concert grand by Bösendorfer – he traveled with this instrument – supported these suggestions. There were speculations about possibilities as “divided pedal” (Teilpedal), or so called Prolongement, technical innovation of the piano mechanic, which enabled to sound the concrete tone in arbitrary length. Zichy reacted to these considerations in his memoirs. He presents three very affirmative critics from the Berlin press from January 1883 (*Die Tribüne*, *Vossische-Zeitung*, *National-Zeitung*), where the technical perfection of Zichy's play is explained just through technical adaptations of the mechanic of Zichy's instrument. He contradicts it and attaches the description of the principles of the playing with one hand – “it is necessary to use three technics of the touch – bass tones, which should sound further, have to be played stronger, middle voices weaker and the melodic voice in soprano as well stronger. It is also role of one hand, to enforce all these principles even by fast jumps, whereby the purpose of it is the attainment of the compact sound result. It demands much practicing, but it is possible – as I achieved, I hope.”¹⁹ This short and apt explanation refers to the majority of passages or the predominant structure of Zichy's

¹⁷ To this problematic see Amadé Németh, *A magyar opera története (1785–2000)* (Budapest: Anno Kiadó, 2000).

¹⁸ “Durch sehr geschicktes Arpeggiren, Gleiten, Springen, durch seines Auseinanderhalten von Piano und Forte, weiss er den Schein zu erregen, als spielten die zehn und nicht nur fünf Fingern [...]. Aber es hiesse ihm Unrecht thun, wollte man sein Spiel nur ein Merkwürdigkeit gelten lassen. Was uns am meisten erfreunte, was sein zartes, seelenvoller Vortrag des Mendelssohn'schen Liedes ‘Auf Flügeln des Gesanges.’ [...] wer eine einfache Melodie vorzutragen weiss, sei es mit einer oder beiden Händen, dem ist die Kunst nicht bloss an die linke Hand vertraut.” Eduard Hanslick, “Feuilleton-Concerte,” *Neue Freie Presse* 4810, January 16, 1878, 2. Hanslick is quoted also by Theodore Edel, *Piano Music for one hand* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 5–130; regarding Zichy's second concert in Vienna, 1882 (“the most astonishing thing we have heard in the way of piano playing in recent times has been accomplished by a one- armed man – Count Géza Zichy”), to Zichy's piano playing see also Harold C. Schonberg, *The great pianists* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955).

¹⁹ “Wenn man mit einer Hand Klavier spielt, muss man gleichzeitig drei verschiedene Anschlagsarten in Anwendung bringen. Alle die Töne, die als Basstöne weiterklingen sollen, müssen stark, die begleitenden Mittelstimmen schwach und die Melodienoten wieder stärker gespielt werden. Es ist nun Aufgabe der Spielhand, in äusserst raschen Sprüngen diese Gewichtsverhältnisse zu berücksichtigen und dabei den Eindruck einer geschlossenen und einheitlichen Klangwirkung

one-hand compositions (we could say, indeed, to the structure of piano compositions generally). But we could find here also passages, where the melody is in the middle voice, which makes even greater demands on the differentiation of the functions of the particular fingers of one hand and on balance of the sound. We could mention two examples, where the melody is given to the middle fingers, which have some kind of handicap when they should dominate, in comparison with the outer ones (1 and 5).

5



Example 1 Zichy – *Sonata in G major*, 1st movement, bars 34–42

zu erzielen. Das kostet natürlich viel Übung, ist aber – wie ich bewiesen zu haben glaube – sehr wohl möglich.” Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben III.*, 20–21.

CHACONNE

composée pour Violon seul par J. S. BACH

transcrite pour Piano, pour la main gauche seule et exécutée
par

le Comte Géza Zichy.

PIANO.

Example 2 Zichy/Bach – Chaconne in d minor, opening bars

Regarding the above-mentioned doubt or affirmations about the technical adaptations of the pedal on Zichy's instrument it should be noted, that his usage of pedal had to be very sophisticated. However, this is assumption of all high-level piano play – even in two-hands-playing; but for one-hand-play it is absolutely needed. At the same time it is evident – as mentions G. Neuhaus in his phenomenal book *About the Art of Piano Playing* (“Ob iskusstve fortepiannoj igry”) – that the pedal (on a good piano in perfect condition) enable the differentiation of particular voices through using of so-called half – or fourth-part-pedal (and many “intergrades”). Such a usage enables the further-sounding of the stronger bass tones, also the the stronger played passages in high voice sound clear, whereby the middle voices are weaker.²⁰ Thereby we could come back to Zichy's explanation

²⁰ To the problematic of pedal see G. Neuhaus, *About the art od the piano playing* [Ob iskusstve fortepiannoj igry] (Moscow, 1958), here the Slovak edition was used G. Nejgauz, *Poetika klavíra* [The poetic of piano] (Bratislava: Štátne hudobné vydavateľstvo, 1963), 175–187.

of his piano playing and we could mention the concrete example of such use of the pedal in Zichy's work:



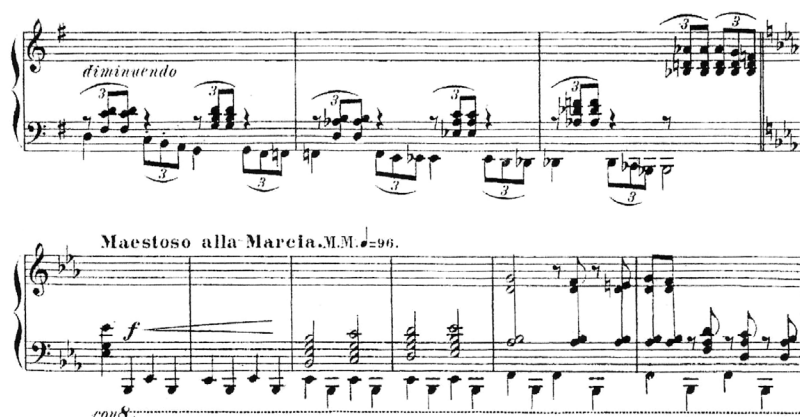
Example 3 Zichy – *Sonata in G major*, 1st movement, bars 9–14

The exploits of his successful career are connected also to Zichy's works in the first years of his compositional activity – because of the lack of the left-handed repertory, Zichy was actually forced to compose his concert repertory. On nearly his first appearance in Pressburg (March 25th, 1866) he played his *Sonata and Phantasy* on Hungarian folksongs (according to his *Memoires* – both compositions are now lost – Zichy commemorates this fact with satisfaction, with regard for his knowledge and compositional abilities in that time²¹). During the 1870s he wrote several piano pieces, later included to the two cycles of etudes, published (with Liszt's support) as *6 Etudes pour la main gauche seule* by Huegel in Paris (1877) and *4 Etudes de concert pour la main gauche seule* (Gutmann in Vienna, 1882). In the first cycle there is only one piece entitled as *Etude (No. 4, E flat major)*. The opening *Serenada (A major)* is followed by *Allegretto vivace (E major)* and *Valse d'Adèle, (B flat major, dedicated to marquise Adèle Pallavicini)*, which was transcribed for two hands by Liszt in 1877. The fifth piece is *Rhapsodie hongroise (f minor)* and the last piece is an outstanding transcription of Schubert's *Erlkönig*. In the following cycle we find *Etude de concert, Capriccio, Allegretto*

²¹ Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben I*, 96. The *Sonata* is mentioned by Zichy in *Memoires*, but the article in the press says: "Herr Graf Géza Zichy erzielte mit 'ungarischen Liedern,' von ihm zusammengestellt und mit der linken Hand gespielt, einen ungewöhnlichen Erfolg, so das ser noch Eines zugeben musste." See "Die Wohltätigkeitsakademie am 25. März," *Pressburger Zeitung*, March 27, 1866; *Jahrgang* 102, no. 71. The mention about the *Sonata* is probably Zichy's error, and such a composition probably did not even exist, *Sonata and Phantasy* should be lost in the time, when Zichy wrote his *memoires*; at least, it is sure, that it is not the only Zichy's *Sonata in G major*, first published in 1887.

grazioso, and *Wiener Spasse* (“Viennese Pranks”). In 1886 *The Divertimento* and *Sérénade* were published by Durand et fils (as 2 *Morceaux*), in 1887 his only *Sonata in G major* was published, Zichy’s most extensive composition for piano solo, Zichy wrote also his “own” *Liebestraum* (in addition to his transcription of Liszt’s famous *Liebestraum No. 3*). This piece was also transcribed – for violin and piano (both hands) in 1915 by Jenő Hubay (1858–1936, a famous Hungarian violinist and composer). Zichy’s pianistic output is crowned by his *Piano Concerto for left hand in E flat major*, the work was dedicated to Archduchess Isabella (1856–1931). Zichy played it for the first time on January 9th, 1901 in Budapest, and shortly after in Pressburg (January 12th, 1901). The three-part *Concerto (Energico – Andante all’ungharese – Allegro con brio*, with the stylization of Hungarian music in the central part) comes out of the tradition of the romantic piano-concerto and is the first piano concerto for left hand in history.

What is remarkable on Zichy’s short pieces, is the concentration in the form and the distinctive expression. In the majority of the compositions, there is a short reprise-form (aba) dominating, also in the larger compositions (such the *Sonata*). The periodicity is predominating and altered only exceptionally. It was probably Robert Volkmann who instilled in Zichy the sense of classical form. Volkmann (1815–1883, a German composer living in Budapest) also inclined to the “pure” romanticism and his output stays between the styles of Schumann and Brahms. However, it was inconsistent with the principles of the Neo-romanticism preferred by Liszt. Actually, Volkmann disliked Liszt also personally – both men were in sporadic personal contact mediated by Zichy. Liszt influenced Zichy more in the piano stylisation of his works and particularly in harmony – Zichy used also in his youthful pieces chords in chromatic third-relations, although the more elaborated harmonic progression is very rare. Among few of examples we could mention the chromatic modulation from *G major* to *E flat major* before the exposition of the contrasting theme in the third part of the *Sonata* (see Example 4) or the introduction of the *Etude in E flat major*. It begins with a six-four chord in *f sharp minor*, and in the following progression reaches to the dominant *B flat major* using the chromatic and half-tone steps in individual voices (see Example 5).



Example 4 Zichy – *Sonata in G major*, 3rd movement, bars 22–30

Example 5 Zichy – *Etude in E flat major*, opening bars

At any rate, Zichy's form and harmony is very conservative – when we realize, how much time Zichy spent with Liszt during the last years of his life and how progressive the harmony of Liszt was in that time. Indeed, Zichy was not a pioneer or the searcher of new paths – as we have mentioned above, in the years before World War I he was considered to be a representative of the traditional and conservative line of Hungarian music, also in domestic milieu.

Despite the mentioned facts, Zichy's compositions from the 1870s seemed to be relatively modern, with respect to the overall musical rendering. Above-

mentioned pianists – Dreyschock and Fumagalli, who wrote the pieces for the left hand, concentrated on writing of variation forms and paraphrases of predominantly popular operatic arias, according to the dominant period taste. In the period of 1830–1860 it was a typical approach of the composing virtuosi and such conceived works were the main part of the concert repertory.²² Although the cycles are titled as *Etudes*, Zichy conceived these piano miniatures like characteristic pieces, even with programmatic title – like the charming scherzo *Viennese Pranks* (“Wiener Spasse,” No. 4 from *The Four Etudes*). Maybe the nicest from these pieces is *Valse d’Adèle*. It contains striking melodic material in the style of Viennese waltz and the exalted form with short Introduction and Coda – the scheme is a-b-c-b-a. The recapitulation of the “a” and “b” material is shortened and there is also a change of the key by the recapitulation of “c” before the end (from *D flat major* to *G flat major*), which implies the sonata principle. There is also the ingenious connection of lyric (“a,” *dolce con grazia*, Example 6) and comic (“b,” *scherzando*, Example 7) elements in the ordering of sections, but also in one theme (central section “c,” *cantanto-scherzando*, Example 8).



Example 6 Zichy – *Valse d’Adèle*, bars 9–25

²² About the concert life in Vienna of that time, see Carl Goldmark (1830–1915, then important Austro-Hungarian composer) in his *Memoires*: “Das nackte Virtuosenentum, der reine Personenkultus herrschte unumschränkt vom Jahre 1830, kaum dass Beethoven und Schubert die Augen geschlossen, bis zu seinem Erlöschen Anfang der Sechzigjahre [...] Es gab keine Orchesterkonzerte mehr [...] Wien war überflutet von Solokonzerten aller Art [...] Die Virtuosen liebten es, das ganze Programm allein zu besorgen.” Carl Goldmark, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Wien: Rikola Verlag, 1922), 61 and 67.



Example 7 Zichy – Valse d'Adèle, bars 44–51



Example 8 Zichy – Valse d'Adèle, bars 78–86

Rhapsodie hongroise (A flat major), also in the reprise form (a-b-a) in slower tempo (*Andante*), with the slight acceleration in the middle section (*c minor, a tempo più mosso, Allegro maestoso*). The piece ends with a short virtuoso Coda (6 bars). In terms of the form also Zichy did not use the traditional connection of the slow and fast part (Lassú and Friska) derived from Csárdás, as Liszt often did in his *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Sonata in G major is distinguished by a brief and clear formal structure, in the case of the second and third movements, maybe too clear. The most interesting is the first movement (*Allegro*), where the heroic main theme in *G* (Example 9) is followed by the contrasting thematic complex, in the beginning in chromatic mediant relationship (*B major*), after which it reaches the traditional dominant key (*D major*, Example 10). A melodically expressive theme forms the closing section of the exposition (*E flat major*, Example 11), the material of which dominates in the development.



Example 9 Zichy – *Sonata*, 1st movement, opening bars



Example 10 Zichy – *Sonata*, 1st movement, bars 25–33



Example 11 Zichy – *Sonata*, 1st movement, bars 49–52

The lyric second movement (*Andante serioso, E flat major*) is conceived in short reprise-form (only 39 bars) with the temporary modulation to *c minor* in the middle section. The contrasting third movement (*Allegro con brio, G major*) is

opened with a fanfare-like introduction and the main theme in rondo-character, in the beginning rendered in the form of the dialogue of upper and lower voices (Example 12). This cheerful theme, which recalls through some melodic ideas and general expression Schumann's *Der fröhliche Landsmann* from the *Jugendalbum*, op. 68), is followed by a heroic march theme in *E flat major* (*Maestoso alla Marcia*, see Example 4). The closing recapitulation is a virtuoso, pianistically outstanding culmination of the movement and the whole cycle – there the melody is – main theme-doubled in octaves with jumps up to the highest register (Example 13). The closing movement represents a traditional rondo as the last movement of the sonata cycle. But because of its length (only 84 bars mainly in fast tempo) and form (a-b-a), which avoids the more elaborated progress, it does not exceed the limits of the Liedform.



Example 12 Zichy – Sonata, 3rd movement, opening bars



Example 13 Zichy – Sonata, 3rd movement, bars 68–73

The dating of *Liebstraum-Fantasie* seems to be uncertain, and it was probably written in a later period.²³ The charming melody, as usual treated very periodically, is the base for short variations. The entire thematic material is used only in the first variation, later it is shortened and there is the Coda section, where only the opening motive of the theme is three times repeated.

We have also several pieces for both hands written by Zichy, from which the most interesting is *Idylle* (*Adagio*, *D flat major*, $\frac{3}{4}$). The composer used traditional reprise-form (aba), and the thematic material is also conceived typically for him – namely in most of his compositions he uses steps of seconds up-or downwards in the melodic line (at least at the beginning of the lines), which implies the tendencies of the vocal idiom. There are so many examples of this, that we could speak about a principle. In the *Idylle*, the concentrated form, the detailed work with motives and small-scale forms are remarkable. In the middle section the inverted melodic material of the opening bars (Example 14) is expanded and sequentially elaborated, whereas the original form of the motive is used like a counterpoint (Example 15).

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Adagio. Idyll. ZICHY GÉZA gróf.

Example 14 Zichy – *Idylle*, opening bars

Example 15 Zichy – *Idylle*, bars 15–16

²³ We used the Brietkopf&Härtel edition of the piece from 1917.

Because of concentrated thematic work and the aspect of expression, *Idylle* and also *Valse d'Adèle* are probably the most prominent of Zichy's piano compositions.

Adaptations of well-known compositions are particularly excellent, with respect to pianistic aspects. Zichy's adaptation of Schubert's famous song *Erlkönig* inspired at the beginning of 1870s also Franz Liszt, and this fact was significant for the beginning of their artistic and personal relationship. Liszt was also the author of the probably most popular adaptation of this iconic song (Schubert's *Opus 1!*) – 1838 (1876 revised version) and he played the piece very often and willingly. To the original piano part based on a triplet-ostinato, Liszt adds lower octaves to the theme in the bass, and in the melodic line he distinguishes the characters in the original texts of the Schubert's song – the verses of father and child he leaves in the original register, the part of the *Erlkönig* is exposed with the doubling with the upper octave. For the version for the left hand, such solution would be too difficult to play with only one hand. Zichy also leaves the whole melodic line in the original register, but he uses also mostly, similar to Liszt, the octaves in base. The endeavor to maintain the ostinato-rhythm requires also the very demanding jumps (Example 16).

Vite.

PIANO.

Ped. Ped.

p

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Example 16 Schubert/Zichy – *Erlkönig*, bars 1–6

The adaptation of Bach's *Chaconne in d minor* (published in 1881) is also remarkable. This composition, regarded by right as one of the most significant peaks of compositional creation of all time, inspired many composers. At the end of 1870s Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) wrote his piano version of it (published as *No. 5* of his *Studien für das Pianoforte*). Similar to Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924),

whose piano adaptation from 1893 is probably the most famous piano version of the *Chaconne* (for both hands), Brahms places the theme of *Chaconne* one octave lower compared to the original. In fact, for the violin the one-line octave is the lower register, but by placing the theme to the small octave both Brahms and Busoni must have been motivated by their desire to use better the range and the possibilities of the piano. Zichy leaves the theme in its original register (see Example 2), but uses the possibilities of the instrument in a noteworthy way. Brahms, in general, is very faithful to the original also in the aspect of the structure (with an exception of the above mentioned change of the register) and exposes the chords only where Bach did so. Zichy adds octave doublings, even exposes the theme with the sixths, uses chordal structures, in the arpeggio section adds also the theme in the lower system, which is present latently in arpeggios in the original. Before the return of the theme in *D major* he shows melodic progress in octaves in the bass and at the end he adds the virtuoso Cadenza in octaves *ad libitum* (with the possibility of ending according to the original). These interventions are exhibitions of Zichy's pianistic virtuosity and the use of possibilities of the instrument, whereby the stylistic and structural concentration of the original is not disorganized. Compared to Brahms, Zichy's more experience with playing with only one hand is evident.

Less successful seem to be an adaptation of Chopin's *Polonaise A major, Op. 40, No. 1*, in particular because of very robust structure of the original (which is so exceptionally orchestral in the context of Chopin's works). This is balanced by Zichy through the use of difficult jumps and also very concentrated work with pedal is demanded.

The other works from 1880s

During 1880s Zichy significantly enlarged the ambit of his interest in music composition and wrote several orchestral (Liszt – "March," *Magyar verbunkos* – "The Hungarian Verbunk") and vocal pieces (*Szerenád* – "The Serenade for Choir and Orchestra," *Dolores*, cantata from 1888, which was soon successfully performed also in Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, Leipzig; *A vízaknai hősök* – "The Heroes from Vizakna," for choir and orchestra based on subject from Kossuth's revolution in 1848/1849). He began also successfully to conduct, despite his handicap, which required someone to turn the pages for him.²⁴

At the beginning of the 1880s Zichy wrote his *Ungarische Fantasie*, his only work for violin and piano. It was published in 1884, but Zichy himself played the

²⁴ "[...] trotzdem er nur mit einer Hand dirigierte, beherrschte er das Orchester jeden Augenblick, nur musste ihm jemand die Partitur umblättern." *Pressburger Zeitung*, January 17, 1924, 161; *Jahrgang*, no. 17, 3.

piece with Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) around 1883 in Berlin.²⁵ In this composition written in Hungarian national style the slow part (*Lento*, followed by *Piú mosso quasi Allegretto*) in Csárdás – like a stylization with a virtuoso Cadenza, is traditionally followed by fast part (*Allegro vivace doppio comovimento*). The violin part is written so brilliantly that, despite the fact that Zichy in his childhood studied also violin, we can suppose that the final version of the part (procured also with fingerings in the edition by Bote & Bock, Berlin) could be written under auspices of Joachim alone. It is also evident, that the piano part is playable only with left hand, and *Ungarische fantasie* is also one of the few composition for violin and piano for left hand. Zichy did not compose other chamber music.

In 1886 Zichy published (Simrock, Berlin) his only Song cycle on his own verses, titled *Der Künstlerfahrt* (“The Way of an Artist”). The cycle, which contains 9 songs – *Abschied* (*Búcsú*, “Farewell”), *Unterwegs* (*Útközben*), *Der Abt vom Steine* (*A kövesi apát*), *Bei fremden Frauen* (*Titkolt szerelem*), *Gaukler* (*Szemfényvesztők*), *In der Laube* (*Ablak alatt*), *Entsagung* (*Lemondás*), *Das kranke Mädchen* (*A beteg lány*) and *Heimkehr* (*Hazafelé*) – and has a stylized autobiographical dimension. It depicts a pilgrimage of an artist, motivated through the inner necessity of artistic realization. At the beginning, the artist takes leave of his wife and children, on his ways he resists the temptation of love, experiences the bitterness of the artistic life, he heals the suffering of a maiden through his art and after all he returns home. The cycle comes out of the tradition of romantic song cycles – first of all by Schubert, Schumann and Brahms, but it has very optimistic ending, which is not typical for them; in that time Zichy yet lived the happy family life and reaped the full artistic appreciation on European stages. Especially remarkable is the very short song *Gaukler* (No. 5), a kind of “scherzo,” which is different from the predominating romantic stylisation of the whole cycle and depicts the vanity of the life of comedians. It is the declamatory vocal line, short motives and brevity of expression which dominates here.

Among the above mentioned orchestral works, “The Story of a Castle” (*A vár története*, 1888) is also remarkable. It is a cycle of 12 orchestral pieces for large orchestra, interconnected through poems: *A vár alapítója* (*Der Erbauer der Burg*, “The Constructor of the Castle”), *Hunnrajzás* (*Hunnezug*), *A fehér asszony* (*Die weisse Frau*), *Az apród* (*Der Page*), *A várpap* (*Der Burgkaplan*), *A szürke mannó* (*Das graue Männchen*), *A keresztes vitézek* (*Die Kreuzritter*), *Az apácza* (*Die Nonne*), *A dalnok* (*Der Minnesänger*), *A sellő* (*Die Nixe*), *A rabló lovagok* (*Die Raubritter*), *Az utolsó várúr* (*Der letzte Sprosse*). At its première on May 1st, 1888 in the Royal Opera House in Budapest, the work was performed with so-called living pictures, staged by Count Jenő Zichy after the illustrations by

²⁵ Zichy, *Aus meinem Leben III.*, 17.

Count Mihály Zichy reproduced in the edition (Harmónia, Budapest) – The three Zichy's participating on this production wanted surely to be a demonstration of the artistic ability of the family). During the pauses of the performance (the whole cycle was divided into four parts) operatic divas of that time appeared: Gemma Bellincioni (1864–1950) and Etelka Gerster (1855–1920).²⁶ In poetic form, and very strongly romantized stylization, the cycle depicts the story and circumstances of a fictitious castle during the history and the legends connected with it, whereby in the whole conception, the strong relationship of the Hungarian aristocracy to the history of his nation is evident. Although the work as a whole recalls the melodrama, it is a cycle of 12 characteristic pieces (as we have mentioned above), and the particular pieces in their form and contents do not exceed Zichy's piano compositions. The other parts are some meditations, *Hunnenzug* is a heroic march, *Die weisse Frau* and *Der Page* are lyric pieces and *Das graue Männchen* is a cheerful scherzo.

Operatic works

Operatic work seems to be a natural climax of Zichy's compositional ambitions and his endeavour to enrich the Hungarian opera as genre. The first his opera, *Alár*, was premiered in Budapest in 1896. The libretto on the subject from the Hungarian middle ages was his elaboration of his own epic (from 1883, see above). It had 16 performances on the stage of Royal Opera House and in 1905 also a new production. The opera was given also in Germany (Karlsruhe, 1897, Berlin, 1898). The dramaturgy of this romantic work looks archaic enough, but the musical numbers – especially arias and duets of the main protagonists – were very popular by the standards of the domestic audience of that time. Zichy's second opera – *Meister Roland* ("Roland Master," Budapest, 1899) on his own subject and libretto, is different from Zichy's other operatic works – because of the fact, that it is his only opera on a contemporary subject. Undoubtedly it was instantly inspired by Italian verismo, mostly probably by I. Pagliacci (1892) by R. Leoncavallo (1859–1919) – and indeed more dramaturgically as musically – after all, the brutality of Italian veristic one-act-operas was foreign to Zichy. Roland is a sharpshooter in a Parisian circus, and at the end, Roland's wife Yvette and her rival, the tightrope artist Parbleu, die on the stage during the performance, killed by the title's hero. The critics praised the dramaturgy and the technical aspects of the opera, orchestration and advanced harmony used.²⁷

²⁶ Amadé Németh, *A magyar opera története* (Budapest: Anno kiadó 2000), 131.

²⁷ Amadé Németh, *A magyar opera története* (Budapest: Anno kiadó, 2000), 154. The book contains the complete contents of Zichy's operas and also author's short, but eloquent and pretty harsh comments.

Shortly after its première the opera was performed in several cities of Europe – in Germany (Hamburg, Braunschweig, 1900, Magdeburg, 1901) but also in Prague (1900) and Antwerpen (1901). Roland master is one of few of Zichy's works, and even the only opera, where he partially leaves the romantic stylization and heads in a more modern direction. In this sense, the opera could be considered as one of a few examples of Hungarian verismo.

The following three opera form a monumental Rákóczi-trilogy²⁸ – *Nemo* (Budapest, 1905, although written as the first of three operas, it is the second part of the trilogy), *II. Rákóczi Ferenc* (*Francis Rákóczi II.*, Budapest, 1909) and *Rodostó* (Budapest, 1912). The opera *Nemo* in prologue and three acts with a subtitle *Rákóczy Ferencz hegedőse* (sic!) – The fiddler of Ferenc Rákóczi – depicts the circumstances of the life of Nemo, the prince-fiddler, to whom is attributed the authorship of the famous Rákóczi – march and takes place in the first years of the uprising (1703–1706). Zichy was inspired by *kuruc*²⁹ – songs and the Rákóczi march itself (in the last finale). The opera *II. Rákóczi Ferenc* (in prologue and three acts) depicts the youth of the prince and the time before the outbreak of the uprising (1687–1701); *Rodostó* (it is a city in Turkey, now Tekirdag, where the prince lived in exile in 1720–1735 and where he died) takes place after the suppression of the uprising in Paris and in Turkey, its plot is exile and the death of the prince.

Through this ambitious project on a rich national subject Zichy planned in a fundamental way to intervene in the development of the Hungarian opera and even to do for his nation what Wagner did for the Germans with his Tetralogy. But the intention failed – although the operas were relatively successful on the domestic stage (the most successful was *Nemo*, given in Budapest altogether 27 times, after that *II. Rákóczi Ferenc* 9 times, and *Rodostó* 4 times; the operas were sporadically given also outside Hungary – *Nemo* in Breslau, 1906 and *Rodostó* in Prague in 1916); after all, the operas did not become a permanent part of the Hungarian operatic repertory.³⁰ The reason is above all the anachronism of Zichy's dramaturgical and compositional approach and their total obsolescence. Generally, the composer did not pass the limits of romanticism, which were surpassed in European music almost at the time of his youth. In the trilogy,

²⁸ We use the modern form of writing of the name of the Hungarian prince Ferenc Rákóczi (1676–1735), in Zichy's time you can find also other transliteration – very often Rákóczy Ferencz, etc.

²⁹ Kuruc – in 17th and 18th century the adherent of the anti-Habsburg party in Hungary.

³⁰ In the Opera guide by Viktora Lányi from 1937, which is the guide of European and Hungarian operatic works with an account on repertory of the Royal Opera house in Budapest, there is no mention about Zichy at all. See Viktor Lányi, *Opera kalauz* (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és társa kiadása, 1937).

there is a romanticised rendering of the title hero in confrontation with intriguing enemies. Zichy also maintained his compositional style on the level of his works from 1870s and 1880s. Despite a certain progress in harmony, noted by critics especially for “Roland Master,” in the Trilogy he tried to accentuate the Hungarian color through the inspiration of a Hungarian idiom framed in tonal harmony (earlier used in such way also by Liszt); but this tendency did not represent the original Hungarian folkmusic – do not forget, that in 1912, when Zichy’s last opera *Rodostó* was premiered, Bartók had written many of his progressive compositions including his only opera – in this connection the difference is enormous. Similar to the dramaturgical principles, also the work with form and musical material is very conservative – the periodicity is omnipresent. What was possible and acceptable in the piano miniatures in the 1870s, was absolutely not sufficient for the conception of music drama around 1900. The quotations of the kuruc-songs, which greatly excited especially the Hungarian audience, are presented in very simple way without following particular elaboration. In the rhythm, although the irregular rhythms are sporadically used, the so called choriambic rhythm is dominating, which becomes some rhythmic leitmotiv of the whole Trilogy (Example 17).



Example 17 Zichy – *Rodostó* – prelude, opening bars

In connection to the quoted example it is interesting that the prelude to the opera *Rodostó* was originally written as the prelude to 3rd act of the opera *Nemo*, and adopted without any change.

Thereby, Zichy’s operatic work remains only an attempt, in the European context considerably anachronistic, despite relatively favorable echo by the audience and the critics, which especially in domestic conditions surely reflected also the composer’s social status.³¹

³¹ To this problem, see Amadé Németh, *A magyar opera története* (Budapest: Anna kiadó, 2000), 145, 154, and 172.

Resume

Géza Zichy was undoubtedly one of the most influential figures of Hungarian musical life in the last third of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. As a pianist he achieved world fame; by virtue of his position and dignity not only as a high aristocrat, but also as a director of a Conservatory or Intendant, he made a significant impact on Hungarian cultural life and, as a patron he won the sympathy of the European public. But his extended oeuvre is full of contradictions. As a composer, Zichy is a typical epigone. From his extended literary work, which includes lyric poetry, epics, novels and plays, today just his memoirs and travelogs are most interesting, because of their engaging depiction of the epoch. One should not expect the return of Zichy's operatic works to the stages, and also the orchestral and vocal works do not exceed their time frame. But the piano pieces remain with us. His piano miniatures and also his adaptations are not only a significant part of the repertoire for the left hand, but are also interesting in terms of content and expression – and last, but not least they are exceptional pianistic compositions. For this reason we devoted to this part of Zichy's work the largest space in this study.

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Dichter-Komponist Graf Géza Zichy

Abstract

Géza Zichy (1849–1924) was prominent in artistic and social life in Hungary and Central Europe in the last third of 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. As an aristocrat he belonged to the social elite of the monarchy, as a one-handed pianist he aroused the enthusiasm of European audiences (he gave performances not only in Austria-Hungary, but also in Germany, France, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Norway, and in Russia). Later he established himself as a conductor and also as a composer – at the beginning of his career he wrote several shorter pieces for left hand – his own compositions and some adaptations were written by him because of the entire lack of the left-handed repertory. Later he composed also orchestral pieces, vocal works (Cantatas, choral and orchestral) and operas (between 1896–1912 he wrote 5 operas), whereby he stayed faithful to the principles of romanticism. This strong affinity to romanticism was formed not only by his personal preferences, but also by his teachers R. Volkmann and F. Liszt. The aim of this study is to briefly evaluate Zichy's work through the analyse of some piano, orchestral and operatic compositions and put it into the context of central European music.

Básník a skladatel hrabě Géza Zichy

Abstrakt

Géza Zichy (1849–1924) se významně podílel na uměleckém a společenském životě v Maďarsku a střední Evropě v poslední třetině 19. století a na počátku 20. století. Jako aristokrat patřil ke společenské elitě monarchie, jako jednoruký klavírista vzbuzoval nadšení evropského publika (vystupoval nejen v Rakousku-Uhersku, ale také v Německu, Francii, Dánsku, Švýcarsku, Nizozemsku, Itálii, Švédsku, Norsku a v Rusku). Později se prosadil jako dirigent a také jako skladatel – na počátku své kariéry napsal několik kratších skladeb pro levou ruku – vlastní skladby a některé úpravy napsal z důvodu naprostého nedostatku

levorukého repertoáru. Později komponoval také orchestrální skladby, vokální díla (kantáty, sborová a orchestrální díla) a opery (v letech 1896–1912 napsal 5 oper), přičemž zůstal věrný zásadám romantismu. Tato silná náklonnost k romantismu byla formována nejen jeho osobními preferencemi, ale také jeho učiteli R. Volkmannem a F. Lisztem. Cílem této studie je stručně zhodnotit Zichyho tvorbu prostřednictvím rozboru některých klavírních, orchestrálních a operních skladeb a zasadit ji do kontextu středoevropské hudby.

Keywords

Géza Zichy; composer; Hungary; Central Europe

Klíčová slova

Géza Zichy; skladatel; Maďarsko; střední Evropa

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