

THE GATES OF SKY BY EDE TERÉNYI: MUSIC ANALYSIS

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SUMMARY. In our previous paper, we examined the genesis of the choral work, its textual and musical sources, the intellectual and cultural influences that may have played a role in its creation. Starting from this complex ideological background, in this paper we will examine, through a detailed analysis of the score, how the composition's structure, musical language and techniques bring the text to life, where its message is directed, and what additional conceptual and expressive value they provide. The Gates of Sky is, in a certain reading, a cultural-anthropological journey, partly based on historical references, partly mythical. However, its rich musical language and symbolic meanings only gain significance if they are combined with a suitable and convincing sound dramaturgy. For the author's basic aim is not merely to evoke a ritual, but to give the performers and the audience the opportunity to experience the metamorphosis it embodies.

Keywords: Ede Terényi, Ernő Lendvai, The Gates of Sky, choir music, ritual, world tree

Choral poem or ritual?

In the first edition (Mixed Choirs, 2005), Terényi called The Gates of Sky, along with Black-Red set on Sándor Kányádi's² text, a choral poem. The international literature does not provide much information about this genre. In Romanian musicology³ the term is used to describe larger-scale, frequently dramatic (or ballad-like), multi-movement choral works, a cappella or with instrumental accompaniment, mostly inspired by folk music.

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² Sándor Kányádi (1929-2018), one of the most significant Hungarian poets of Transylvania in the 20th century.

³ Cf. Valentina Sandu-Dediu. *Muzica românească între 1944-2000 (Romanian Music between 1944-2000)*. Editura Muzicală, București, 2002, p. 139.



Terényi's choral poems are not the first ones in the Hungarian composition of Transylvania.⁴ In his case, the two above mentioned works stand out from his other mixed choirs by the high number of voices and, above all, by their multi-movement structure. Another common feature is that their lyrics highlight the folk culture's different states of being seen in a broader time frame.

As we already have mentioned⁵, Terényi developed *The Gates of Sky* probably during the early 2000s into a much larger work by adding two further parts. The initial title was now applied to the trilogy as a whole, while the former, unaltered piece was renamed *Ritual*. This suggests that he has not merely expanded the earlier material, but reinterpreted its function in a broader dramaturgical context. During this period, he dedicated two essays to the relationship of modern music and shamanism, which not only shed light on the reasons for this change, but also help to unravel the creative concept behind the original composition.

The first (*Artists - or Shamans?*, 2001), written half a decade after the completion of the choral poem, was quoted earlier⁶. The starting point for this short contemplation is the Yakut legend on the purpose, method and requirements of shamanic journeys, taken from Jankovics' book, which is used as a motto for the 2013 edition. The essence of Terényi's argument is that the true artist, in the process of creation and performance, traverses a similar path between earth and heaven to that of the shaman. This idea is taken further in his next essay entitled *Modern Music – Shamanic belief* (2011), in which he explores the possibility and criteria of the artwork as a ritual.⁷ As he wrote: "The shamanic journey is in fact a travel between the present world and that of beyond, both by the author himself, and by the transformation that takes place in the events of his work."⁸ In his view, the authentic music ritual is not primarily found in external aspects (title,

⁴ Such examples are *Seven choral poems* by Aladár Zoltán (1929-1978), or *Steaua stelelor* by Albert Winkler (1930-1992).

⁵ See Attila Fodor. *The Gates of Sky* by Ede Terényi: Sources and Context. In *Studia UBB Musica*, LXVIII, 2, 2023, pp. 388-390.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 393.

⁷ One of its important implications for our study is the phenomena of incantation, characteristic of ritual music, which is mainly realized with repetitive means. Whereas for Eastern European composers (e.g. Stravinsky, Bartók, etc.) this technique was a way of reviving their own ancestral traditions, others, mainly in the West, used it to evoke the sacred ceremonies of other continents (Africa, the Far East, etc.). Terényi has had the opportunity to hear works of similar inspiration from the workshop of his colleagues in Cluj (e.g. Cornel Țăranu's *Nomadic Songs* or Péter Szeghő's *Incantations*), but it seems that the spiritual influences of the 1990s (detailed in our previous paper) were more decisive in this respect.

⁸ Terényi Ede. *Harangvirág – harangszó (Bellflower – Ringing Bell)*. Grafycolor, Cluj, 2012. First published in *Helikon*, Vol. 22, No. 10, 25 May 2011.

programme, symbolic references, etc.), but in the underlying structure and the dramaturgical organization of the piece, which allows to be experienced during the performance and reception. As an argument, he invokes two significant works: The Rite of Spring and Cantata Profana. The latter is related to our topic, as is Ernő Lendvai's⁹ reading of Bartók in a general sense.

From structure to sound dramaturgy

It is not very common for a musicologist to be regarded as a composer's mentor.¹⁰ This particular respect was primarily addressed to Lendvai's sound system theory and his insights into the dramaturgy of sound¹¹. Although the relevance of the so-called axial system and the golden ratio to the whole of Bartók's oeuvre has long been a matter of debate¹², Terényi not only in his own treatise on harmony¹³, but also as an artist¹⁴,

⁹ Ernő Lendvai (1925-1993), Hungarian musicologist. He is best known for his innovative analytical approach to Bartók's music. His first paper (*Sonata for two pianos and percussion*, 1937), published while he was still in college, attracted a great deal of attention. He is the author of several volumes, mainly analyzing the major works of the Bartók's oeuvre, but he has also written about the music of Kodály and Verdi.

¹⁰ Besides Lendvai, he also regarded Kodály as his master. Although he did not study with him personally, he took some of his early works to the elderly composer, who gave advice to the young Terényi by means of written notes. His intellectual ties with Bartók were even deeper. In his own words: „I've been fascinated by Bartók since I was a child: he is my musical father, I consider him a genetic relative, I am in music through him.” In Terényi Ede. *Zeném – Életem. Gondolatok – arcképek – emlékek. Életrajz I. (My Music - My Life. Thoughts – portraits – memories. Autobiography I.)*. Grafycolor, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, p. 18.

¹¹ Remembering Lendvai, he wrote the followings on this subject: „The science of sound dramaturgy, in its essence, brings us close to the world of the CREATIVE artist: it sheds light on the CONTENT of MUSIC. The essence of real creation is the conception of content and its expression, its development, its dramaturgical organization through musical elements. At the level of MASTERWORK, the emphasis is mainly on the construction (the structure). In a work seen as CREATION, a high level of artistic ORGANISATION comes to the fore. Big difference. In the latter case, we are looking for an answer to the question of WHAT, WHERE, WHY it is united and how much it is at the service of the work's content. In other words, what kind of content is displayed by the ARTWORK. It raises the question of the balance, the unity and the quality regarding the CREATIVE INTENTION and its fulfillment as SONORITY. To what extent do the content and the sonority overlap? And finally, in relation to the work as a whole, how does the dramaturgy of the SOUND EVENTS unfold in the light of the work's core concept.” In Idem, p. 70.

¹² See, for example: Kárpáti János. *A Bartók-értés zsákutcái (The Dead Ends of Bartók-Understanding)*. In *Holmi*, XIX, No. 8, 2007, pp. 1027-1039.

¹³ Ede Terényi. *The Harmony of the Modern Music*. Grafycolor, Cluj, 2006.

¹⁴ From this point of view, the stylistic grounding of Lendvai's theory seems to be secondary, since the application of his insights as a creative concept can hardly be judged by the criteria of scientific validity.

assumed the dual approach of the geometric and gravitational¹⁵ structures. Moreover, he was concerned with their relationship both in theory and in practice.

His research resulted in the realization that there is no third way¹⁶, which presumably encouraged and, in a sense, validated his musical-historical adventures. After the playful world of the neo-concertos of the 80s, this was reflected more profoundly in the organic works of the 90s. While the aforementioned systems may evoke certain associated periods and styles, these can be detached from their original time horizons through their mixed use and the application of various traditional and modern compositional techniques.

The Gates of Sky is, in fact, such a cultural-anthropological journey, partly based on historical references, partly mythical. It evokes - perhaps as a symbolic gesture - some elements of the Cantata profana's concept and organizational principle¹⁷ as formulated by Lendvai, above all the pantheistic world view and the idea of metamorphosis.

The repetitive tendency, which is characteristic of Terényi's music in general, is of particular importance in this composition, since it permeates the entire deep structure, and is often present on the surface in the form of

¹⁵ Lendvai, referred to Bartók's dual harmonic world as chromatic (the golden ratio system) and diatonic (the acoustic or overtone system). Among others, he also demonstrated his theory with mathematical parallels, namely the geometric and arithmetic ratios. So, he already uses the term geometric, even if not in a generic sense, whereas the concept of gravitational probably comes from Terényi.

¹⁶ He summarizes this as follows: „In music - and here we always mean European polyphony - it was only in the 16th century that the process of tonal thinking was completed. The scales are still modal, but the cadenzas are now tonal according to the major-minor system. Chords are based on root notes, on centers of gravity, so they are PITCH-STALAGMITES. It is an artificially designed tonal system that has been alive and reigning for thousands of years. It radiates confidence, strength, calmness, we always recognize the reference points, we know where we are, that is what atonality has taken away from the audience. Music before polyphonic-tonal music was dominated by the tonal structures based on the golden ratio: la-so-mi, do-la-mi (read from top to bottom in a solmization). [...] In this system, the fixed point is not at the bottom of the chord, but at the top (hangs the notes of the chord, grape-cluster-like), so they are PITCH-STALACTITES. [...] In fact, this is the natural environment of musical sound, and it is as old as mankind. This timeframe is vast compared to the timeframe of the thousand-year-old tonal gravitational music. I, like all my contemporaries, use both systems, so we are moving in a 100-year time frame of a mixed sound system. The neo-styles bring back the tonal system for a while, the followers of the ancient primitive sonority (e.g. folklorism, neo-primitive experiments, repetitive music, etc.) are the vanguards of the primitive sound. The scales tip this way and that. And it will continue to do so until the end of time.” In Balázs Sándor. “Öt érzék és a lélek harmóniája. Terényi Ede zeneszerzővel Balázs Sándor beszélget” (“Five senses and harmony of the soul. Sándor Balázs talks to composer Ede Terényi.”) In Papp Endre [ed.]. *Hitel*, XXX, No. 5, May 2017, pp. 59-60.

¹⁷ These will be mentioned in the analysis.

recurring rhythms and percussion instruments. This is related not only to the ritual character, but also to the geometric shift of the soundscape, a correlation that the composer himself has formulated.¹⁸

However, far from resulting in monotony, this concept serves an intentional dramaturgic purpose: on the one hand, it shifts attention from the “external” musical events to the internal experience; on the other, it focuses on the fundamental sonic centeredness of the composition, which, like and closely related to the complex, often symbolically used time organization, can lead to a rich, nuanced and effective acoustic result; and, beyond that, to the experience of a cathartic state. Perhaps that is why the author in *Artists - or Shamans?* compared the performer to the shaman, whom he calls the re-creator.¹⁹ All this raises the idea that Terényi did not intend *The Gates of Sky* merely to evoke a ritual, but to be a kind of genuine ceremonial music that would bring about a real inner transformation.

The motto

As mentioned in our previous paper, the 2013 version has been completed with a musical motto and additional colored geometric diagrams, arranged in horizontal and vertical symmetry, including excerpts of musical scores. Although the latter are not dealt with in detail here, it is worth mentioning that some of the structures (chords, harmonies, tonal systems) they contain are more or less recognizable in the architecture and organization of the original work.²⁰

¹⁸ “The repetitive tendency in my work is most strongly expressed. That’s why one of my critics remarked: ‘T.E. was composing repetitive music before it had even been invented.’ I think that is a correct statement. The structure of repetitive music is similar, sometimes even identical, to the way a plant brings its leaves one after the other, repeats them. See, the previous idea (of structuring music on the basis of natural models) can also be expressed in this way.” In *Idem*, p. 67. Note that the correlation given in the quoted passage comes from Lendvai, who considered that the geometric system reflected the organic existence of the plant world.

¹⁹ In the essay *Artist – or Shamans?* he writes: “The shaman’s work is an immediate, but one-time LIVING CREATION: establishing connections with different energy planes, dimensional systems. In essence, it corresponds to the interpretation of an artwork. The shaman is therefore a performer, but also a creator. Performers are also often said to recreate the work.” Terényi Ede. *Zene tegnap, ma, holnap (Music yesterday, today and tomorrow)*. Stúdium Könyvkiadó, Kolozsvár, 2004, p. 25. Originally in *Helikon*, XII, No. 18, 25 September 2001.

²⁰ Here, we have in mind in particular the figure entitled *The Boughs of Galaxy*. Cf. Terényi Ede. *The Gates of Sky*. Grafycolor, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, pp. 179-182.

The motto

The motto begins with a set of pitches, numbered in a way reminiscent of Allen Forte's pitch class concept²¹, who assigned rising Arabic numerals to each of the twelve chromatic tones. However, Terényi associates C not with 0 but with 1, so we can assume that behind the change there may be symbolic reasons.

The appearance of the trinity is noteworthy, since it contains just so many fragments and each of them (with the exception of the last one) is divided into such a number of "beats". This can refer to the number of movements and broadly, to the overall structure of the extended work ("trilogy"). The central D note of this piece (here presented as a kind of *finalis*) is given this number, and its second occurrence is preceded by a triplet, which has a symbolic significance in the last movement's (*Life Tree*) Christian message.

The tonal relations create a modern impression, while the visual representation of time is rather old-fashioned (characteristic for the first movement), i.e. they bear a distinctive feature of the pre- and post-tonal eras. Likewise, the horizontal and vertical relations involve both the subtonal turn (C-D), reminiscent of modality, and the phenomenon of Bartók's mistuning technique²² (C-C#). The Forte allusion may suggest the idea of liberation from the gravitational system (atonality), but it also contains the intervals of the

²¹ Allen Forte. *The Structure of Atonal Music*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1973, pp. 1-3.

²² This theory was elaborated by János Kárpáti, based on the idea of Bence Szabolcsi. Essentially it means, that the tritone, the diminished (or augmented) octave, as well as the transformation of the major third into a perfect fourth or minor third, which are common in Bartók's music, are not necessarily the result of the of golden ratio relationships as described by Lendvai, but a result of mistuning of the intervals and tonal frames of acoustic origin (overtone-based) by their alteration in ascending or descending directions. This essentially calls into question the legitimacy of the axial system. Cf. Kárpáti János. *Bartók kamarazenéje (Bartók's Chamber Music)*. Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1976; and Kárpáti János. *Bartók-analítika (Bartók-Analytics)*. Rózsavölgyi és Társa, Budapest, 2003.

geometric one (minor second, major second, perfect fourth, tritone²³, respectively minor sixth, diminished and augmented octave in polyphonic setting). The chord at the end of the model combines the two systems (dominant seventh and beta²⁴), while the fermata sign seems to refer to Terényi's statement quoted²⁵ earlier.

The three facture-types (monody, cantus firmus polyphony and layered chordal superimposition) mark certain milestones of the compositional history, each of which is given a dramaturgically distinct role in the piece. Meanwhile, the motto is also reflected in the tonal centers and tritone relations of the outer movements.

The structure of the "final chord" indicates that there is no need for a resolution²⁶, since its D fundamental is not a tonic, but a central pillar, which is complemented, among other things, by its antipole (G#). It also marks the end point of the work's harmonic language (extended tonality). If the model is mirrored along a horizontal axis, we get a synthesized view of the overall symmetric structure, both in vertical and temporal sense. It is on this idea that the work's axis, the second movement, and the macro-structure as a whole are based.

Analysis

World Tree

The opening movement is raw music of elemental energy, evoking the imaginary world of the magical-syncretic²⁷ age. Its ritual character is mainly due to the constant presence of percussion instruments, repetitive elements and the incantation. The melodic writing is simple, consisting of relatively few notes, mostly used in a step-like movement. Vertically speaking, the defining presence of geometrical relations is noticeable. In the polyphonic moments, one finds both old (organum, heterophony) and modern techniques (moving clusters).

²³ Lendvai assigns the augmented fourth to the acoustic system (overtone 11) whereas the diminished fifth is associated with the geometric one.

²⁴ We use this and the other related terms (alpha, delta etc.) according to Lendvai's analysis, which Terényi adopts in his work on the harmony of modern music. Cf. Lendvai Ernő. *Bartók stílusa (Bartók's Style)*. Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1955.

²⁵ „And it will continue to do so until the end of time.” See footnote 14.

²⁶ There are examples of this, as well as of the opposite. Thus, while the gravitational layered chord at the end of the second movement remains suspended, the alpha that appears towards the end of the last movement apparently is being resolved to the central D.

²⁷ Cf. Angi István. *Zeneesztétikai előadások*, I. kötet (*Lectures in Music Aesthetics*, vol. I). Scientia Kiadó, Kolozsvár, 2003, chapter II.

The often-rudimentary overall impression is nuanced by the rich timbral palette (unusual doublings, active role of vowels, sibilant effects, percussion sounds).

The movement is characterized by a continuous construction (expansion, extension), structured in a montage-like manner, with wide dynamic arcs. The sections of the form have a distinctive character, also marked by the author at their beginning with tempo changes. The opening and closing moments, based on incantation, provide the narrative framework (the root of the world tree and its farthest point: the diamond meadow); between them, the wonder and adoration ("Heavenly Lady"), the aural image of the world's resounding tree and its grandeur ("The branches are reaching heaven") are evoked. The whole process is imbued with a kind of elemental excitement and transcendent power.

The opening is mysterious yet suggestive. There vibrates (*pppp*) the still incorporeally floating ten bars of primal sound - the central D²⁸ - and with it the slowly emerging contours of time, first in the gentle vibration of the tam-tam, then in the measured pulses of the drum.²⁹ It carries within simultaneously the misty past, the outpouring of the life-giving sound, and the eternal presence of the fairy tale ("once upon a time..."). However, it also marks the emergence of duality, which here does not so much imply antagonisms or dialectics, but rather a historical-spiritual - and in musical terms, structural - layering.³⁰

As regards the relationship between the aural reality of the work, the symbolic meanings and visual associations behind it, these form a single body in the score, which does not play the role of a mere notation, but often takes on the quality of a drawing or a figure. This can be observed to some extent from the first bars. The visual aspect is both archaic and modern. The value sets evoke the idea of the 13th-14th century Mensural notation, but the rhythmic layering, as well as the detailed elaboration of dynamics and especially of the articulation, give a contemporary impression.

²⁸ In this respect it is related to the *Cantata profana*, and they also have in common the evocation of origins. Bartók's introduction is an unconcealed reflection on the *St Matthew Passion*, with its opening melodic turns and polyphonic texture embedded in his own style. Terényi's intention is more a return to distant, immediate roots, hence the opening of the *World Tree* creates much an archaic impression.

²⁹ Though there is no reference to it in the score, we think that the message and soundscape of the movement implies the possible use of a shamanic drum.

³⁰ The coexistence of such dualities (primitive cult-Christian religion, timelessness-measured time, geometric and gravitational structures) is present throughout the work.

E.g. 2

Adagio mistico ♩ = 60

"...az po-kol ka-pu-já-ban áll ott egy nagy cser - fa

World Tree, m. 1-7.

One might legitimately ask why the author did not use the time unit given in the metronome marking, the “old-fashioned” half value, as the basis for the time signature? Since there is no obvious musical explanation, it is perhaps worth looking for symbolic meanings. Besides the eight permanent vocal parts of the work, according to the legend³¹, the first shaman’s world tree (the turu) had eight branches, which, like the tree itself, expressed the cosmic order. And while this is a pagan ritual, it has some connection with the Christian message of the last movement. We refer to the eschatological significance of the number eight³² or the entry of the drum. The timing of the latter resonates with the decisive event of the sixth day³³, as described in the biblical genesis, which takes musical expression here in the (human)

³¹ See Attila Fodor. Op. cit, p. 398, footnote 51.

³² “The Bible tells us that eight souls were saved in Noah’s ark, which is a foreshadowing of the resurrection, since early Christian theology holds that Christ was resurrected on the eighth day. Thus, the figure eight is a symbol of the resurrection, the last judgment, eternal life and the New Testament.” In Hoppál-Jankovics-Nagy-Szemadám [eds.]. *Jelképtár (Dictionary of Symbols)*, second, revised edition. Helikon Kiadó, Budapest, 1994, pp.195-196.

³³ “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [...] God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.” 1Mos. 27,31.

measurement of time, the *hronos protos*. This is probably why the crotchet (in mensural terms: *brevis/tempus*) became the basis of the time signature. The importance of the eight even pulse units running almost throughout the movement is emphasized here by the *p-f-p* dynamic arc and the tam-tam's *sforzando*.

The logos first resounds in the lowest voice (B2), associated with the root of the world tree: "... at the gateway of hell rises a large oak". In contrast to the following, the prosody here, which is foreign to the natural accentuation of the Hungarian language, has a distinctly ritual purpose: in its subtlety and dynamic nuance suggests some analogy with the rhetoric of biblical verbliness, while at the same time its rhythmically repetitive patterns carry a kind of magic characteristic of incantations. In this way, Terényi seems to reflect on the birth of the melody³⁴ (or our ideas about it), which we can observe unfolding from the following bars onwards, in the manner of shaping musical time. The rhythmically articulated A2 note forms a lower perfect fourth in relation to the D1 of the female voices, which is idiomatic of both folk music and early polyphony. Its significance is well illustrated by the fact that for more than half of the movement (over 36 bars) it is used quasi-independently³⁵, which is also underlined by the changing values and the adaptive (humanizing) rhythm of the prosody. The lyrics invoke the qualities associated with the world tree ("the world's resounding tree", with a new element: "Mother Earth's tree"). Musically speaking it has the role of clanging³⁶, while constructively it is a binding material.

In this context, from bar 8 onwards, the "melody" is being born, even if in a rudimentary form, which serves to evoke the creator divine mother, the Heavenly lady, first in the male voice and then in all other parts. It is especially this trichord cell (F#-G#-A) that provides the basis for the further melodic invention. Here the percussion layer introduced earlier maintains the ritual character of the process, while counterpointing the vocal material in a mostly complementary way.

³⁴ This phase is described by Bence Szabolcsi as follows: „Intonation and melody are closely linked to each other; their origins are the same somewhere in the distant past. [...] Somewhere in the ancient stage of development, to speak is to sing.” In Szabolcsi Bence. *A melódia története. Vázlatok a zenei stílus múltjából (The History of Melody. Sketches from the past of musical style)*. Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1957, p. 10.

³⁵ Although the term "pedal point" would seem obvious in terms of the long, temporally unfolding tonal plane, here the perfect fourth actually implies a geometric relation, which in both musical and dramaturgical terms play the role of juxtaposition (and not functional subordination).

³⁶ The character of this part is somewhat reminiscent of the throat singing, rich in overtones, found in the ancient religious ceremonies of many ethnic groups (for example, the Mongolian Tuvats).

The choir's first collective appearance is discrete but wide ranging. The new quality is represented here by the presence of the (doubled) major third, which has primarily a coloring function. The vertical structure is ambiguous, since there is a perfect fourth frame beyond the octave (D4-A2), which produces a suspended (geometric) sonority, while the major third is a gravitational interval³⁷. This type alternates with a geometric delta chord (A-D-G#).

E.g. 3

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff (S-A 1-2) is a soprano line with a treble clef and a single note 'm' on a whole rest. The second staff (T1-2) is a tenor line with a treble clef, containing a melodic line with lyrics 'É - gi úr - nō min - den - ség any - ja É - gi úr - nō'. The third staff (B1) is a bass line with a bass clef, containing a melodic line with the same lyrics as the tenor part. The bottom staff (B2) is a bass line with a bass clef, containing a melodic line with lyrics 'm. Vi - lág zen - gő fá - ja.' and some notes with accents (>).

World Tree, m. 1-7.

Also fitting into the model is the C# center of the second Lady-invocation, which is the source of the following organum-like melodic development based on isorhythmic movement. The address is now dramatic (ff), almost exclamation-like. This is facilitated by the special “orchestration”³⁸ of the fifth resonance and the rapid opening of the parts.

³⁷ If viewed as a lower sixte ajoutée, it reinforces the geometric system.

³⁸ We have in mind the unison doublings of the different heterogenous vocal parts (S2-A1, A2-T1, T2-B1-1), which fuse and diversify the sonority.

E.g. 4

S1
 S2-A1
 A2-T1
 T2
 B1
 B2

ff
ff

É - gi úr - nō, Ég sá - tor, Is - ten - fa, Ég fűg - gö - nye
 É - gi úr - nō, Ég sá - tor, Is - ten - fa, Ég fűg - gö - nye
 É - gi úr - nō, Ég sá - tor, Is - ten - fa, Ég fűg - gö - nye

- nya a nya - fa

World Tree, m. 17-21.

There is a pillar-like quality³⁹ to this sound, as if it were a musical metaphor for the column “holding up” the sky. The process almost returns to this interval as a gesture of the falling veil⁴⁰, which is particularly striking in the relation of the continuation. However, the enharmonic variants of the “conjunction” (C#-G# and Db-Ab), which marks the meeting point of heaven and earth, indicate the qualitative difference between the two worlds. The descending line of S1 coincides with the deepening of the vowels, so there may be also a timbral consideration behind it.

In the next bar, the parts fall back into the mysterious opening register and a near dynamic range. The contrast is significant, and although the material is not new (see B2, mm. 10-14), the perfect octave setting makes it novel. Its role is both to conclude the earlier process and, because of its text and livelier rhythm, to serve as a transition to the second, more animated section (m. 25, *Più mosso*, *agitato*), which is mainly directed towards developing and enhancing the tonal qualities of the tree (“The world’s resounding tree”) and its grandeur (“The branches are reaching heaven”).

³⁹ The organum-like fifths indicate the initial phase of gravitational (“columnar”) construction, although the fourth played a more dominant role in the first vertical structures of the early polyphony.

⁴⁰ See Attila Fodor. *Op. cit.*, p. 398.

The central C-note onto it is based, is also part of the model. The steady movement of the drum, which was (also) used earlier in an intermittent, bridging role, anticipates the effects of the next moment, thus displaying a latent vocal quality.

E.g. 5

The musical score for 'World Tree, m. 22-24' is presented in a four-staff format. The top staff is for Soprano (S) and Alto (A), marked *ppp*, with the lyrics 'Vi-lág zen-gő fá - ja, zen - gő fá - ja.' The second staff is for Tenor (T) and Bassoon 1 (B1), also marked *ppp*, with the same lyrics. The third staff is for Bassoon 2 (B2), marked *pp*, showing a sustained note with a slur and the instruction '(fa)'. The bottom staff is for the Drum, marked *pp*, showing a steady, pulsating rhythm of eighth notes.

World Tree, m. 22-24.

Above the reprise of the lower layer (B2) (which is now more elaborate in a prosodic sense), there follows as a first phase a contemporary moment with a magical effect, reminiscent of an onomatopoeia, which is also indicated by a notation characteristic of Terényi's music in a graphic sense. Within the process, two different elements alternate (also in a conjoined form) in the manner of the baroque double counterpoint, each of them based on the consonant z. The first recalls the drum's earlier pulsating rhythm (according to the composer's instruction: "Zehehehenng"), the second is a fast flutter-tongue-like effect that, both in itself and in parallel movement, re-emphasizes the major third relation. This is somewhat nuanced by the sounding reality of the outcome, which is in fact (practically) a heterophony. The timbre here is enriched by a prolonged tam-tam, which fits well into the atmosphere dominated by sonants.

E.g. 6

Più mosso, agitato

cresc. molto

SA 1-2

T1-2

B1

B2

Tam-tam

2. 3. 4.

rep.

z z z z z z z z

Ze_n_g Ze_n_g Ze - ng

az po-kol ka-pu - já - ban áll ott, egy

World Tree, m. 25-27.

From bar 30, the heterophonic character (due to the dwindling of repeated effect planes) gradually slips into a short, relatively free polyphony, which, in its melodic material, brings a further expansion of the previously mentioned trichord cell in the form of a serpentine rising sequential movement, thus expanding to a seventh. With the minor third imitation (A-F#), the geometric system comes to the fore again. If we align this with the previous C-center, we obtain the three pillars of the dominant axis (A-C-F#⁴¹).

E.g. 7

S1-2

A

World Tree, m. 30-31, melodic development

⁴¹ The missing Eb occurs in the final section of the movement.

The thinning of the texture is also indicated by the use of agogic (*rit. molto* and *fermata*). We notice here the gravitational sonority of the bass and tenor voices (C#-G#-B), which, in addition to the rhetorical sense of preparation, again serves to emphasize the quality of the tone (m. 35).

E.g. 8

The musical score for 'World Tree, m. 25-27' features six vocal parts: S1, S2, A1, A2, T1-2, and B1. Part B2 is present but contains only rests. The score is marked with 'rit. molto' and includes fermatas over the final notes of several parts. The lyrics are: 'Vi-lág zen - gó fá - ja.'

World Tree, m. 25-27.

The previously heard, layered, anthemic sound of the “Heavenly lady” invocation reaches its climax in bars 37-40. An important change is the incorporation of the hitherto independent part (B2) into this vertically wide-open, modal-chromatic, musically expressive harmonic progression, based on varied fundamental note relations. Its closure, in a modified set-up, brings back the “6/4-like chord position” (B1-B2) known from the beginning of the movement, with the addition of a new note (B) that enhances its gravitational color.

E.g. 9

The musical score for 'World Tree, m. 37-44' features six vocal parts: S1, S2, A1, A2, T1-2, and B1. Part B2 is present and contains notes. The score is marked with 'al tempo' and 'ff' at the beginning, and 'p rit.' later. The lyrics are: 'É - gi úr - nó. Vi-lág zen-gó fá - ja, zen - gó fá - ja.'

World Tree, m. 37-44.

The third larger section of the movement (*Meno mosso, calmando*, m. 45) starts with another textual addition by the composer (“Tree that reached the sky”). Its tonal center is the F#-pole of the dominant axis, which has been used previously for the evocation of the tree. The underlying imitation material is related to the previous one in the outlining of the minor third and the perfect fourth, while its chromatic version suggests the 1:2 distance scale⁴².

E.g. 10

Meno mosso, calmando

ppp

B1
É-gig é-rő FA, Ég-be ér az á-ga,

B2
É-gig é-rő FA, Ég-be ér az á-ga, Ég - be

World Tree, m. 45-47.

The vertical relationships in the polyphony of the rising melodic lines result in mixtures and moving clusters, the density and direction of the texture being used to musically evoke the image of the tree that reached the sky (B2 and S1 rise an octave). This eventually culminates in a widening, again suspended (so-called major 6/4) *fff* sounding column, which results in a clarification and stability.

E.g. 11

allargando

fff

SA
1-2

TB
1-2

Tam-tam

fff

World Tree, m. 54-56.

⁴² This model scale, also frequently used by Bartók, belongs to the geometric system. It appears in full extent and on a large surface in the third movement.

At this moment (m. 54), the choir reaches 14 voices. The subsequent sudden fall (in tritones) (G#-D-G#) reduces the tension while maintaining it (G#-G instead of Ab-G). The drastic descent may have prosodic reasons (the lowering of the vowels: “Égbe ér az ága”: é-á-a) besides the aforementioned rebound (return to the original register), somewhat similar to the solution used in the last bars of the first section (mm. 16-21).

The final – longest continuous – section is somewhere between a reprise and a synthesis in musical and semantic terms. It is a reprise regarding the original tempo and dynamics, as well as the incantation character, which prevails here almost exclusively. We can regard as a synthesis the combination of the z-consonants known from the second form part and the prosody of the initial incantation. Additionally, the previous minor-second relations appear here simultaneously in the mistuning technique (C-C#), and the missing note of the axis, the Eb, also appears.

E.g. 12

The musical score excerpt for 'World Tree, m. 60-64' consists of five staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts B1 and B2. B1 has the lyrics 'gyémántrétre heveredtek' followed by a long 'z' consonant line. B2 has 'z' followed by 'tojáshéjba keveredtek' and another long 'z' consonant line. The Drum staff shows a steady, repetitive pattern of eighth notes. The Tam. (Tambourine) staff has a wavy line indicating a tremolo or similar effect. The Tamb. (Tambourine) staff also has a wavy line. The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines.

World Tree, m. 60-64, excerpt (B1-B2)

Terényi also signals the fairytale happy ending with the previously unused rattles⁴³ (tamb.). The drum-like monotony of the process leads back to the timelessness of the beginning, that is, to the repetitive, eternal presence of the ritual. Another special feature is that the composer offers the performers before the conclusion the option of a drum-improvisation evoking

⁴³ This instrument is a frequent accompaniment to his joyful Christmas works, which were so dear to him.

as such the world of instrumental concertos (cadenza)⁴⁴. Besides fitting perfectly into the sonic world of shamanic ritual, it carries a quite modern idea, again pushing the boundaries of choral music.

The final chord is a root position major triad (A-C#-E), rather unusual for the work as a whole, which is here given a prosodic mistuning: the consonant z turns into a rustling, fading s, which is notated in a suggestive graphic form⁴⁵. The latter essentially consumes the pitches, signaling the end of the ceremony: that the fire has burnt out.

E.g. 13

The image shows a musical score for four parts: S1/A1, S2/A2, T1-2, and B1-2. Each part is written on a five-line staff. The first part of each staff contains a note with a stem and a flag, followed by a measure with a note and a stem. Below the first measure of each staff is the notation 'z.' followed by a horizontal line. Below the second measure of each staff is the notation 'SSSSSSSS' followed by a horizontal line. A bracket above each staff spans the two measures. A dot is placed above the second measure of each staff. The staves are grouped by a large bracket on the left side.

World Tree, m. 69-70

Soul Tree

The first movement, raw in many respects, radiating elemental power and full of noisy effects, is followed by a personal, inner ritual. Accordingly, the percussion is paused, and the previous dense texture of divided parts is replaced by a two-chorus layering, resulting in a much more transparent, chamber-like sound.

⁴⁴ At the choir's general pause, he adds the following footnote: "Instead of G. P. it would be possible a drum improvisation with ff/pp dynamic changes in the context of senza misura."

⁴⁵ Since the exact number of s-letters is of little practical significance, it is likely that the author is again confirming - perhaps this time in a more obvious way - the central numerical symbol of the movement. These, in the two final bars add up to just eight, and when read together they form the last letter of the Hungarian alphabet (zs).

The fairy-tale framework and the spiritual journey along the world tree are replaced by the drama of earthly life embedded in a pantheistic⁴⁶ context: the dilemma of desire and passing away. In order to evoke this, Terényi introduces the forest metaphor, in which life and death come together in a natural, yet for man irreconcilable way. This dichotomy is reflected in the confronted message of the two folk songs chosen by the composer, which he uses together with their tunes. In both cases the forest provides the environment for the musical expression of love, and they share the same sense of longing: while in the first, the woman left behind tends the grave of the beloved who died in the army, in the second, the object of romantic desire appears in the image of a bird. Terényi uses the third line of the first folk song (the lamentation) as an opening text to the second melody, thus making the forest a site of transformation (metamorphosis⁴⁷): the bird is now not only a symbol of love, but also the representation of the beloved's soul⁴⁸ whose body is lying in the grave.

The dramaturgy of the movement, articulated in three-part form, is based on two components: the lyrical self, placed in the center (B), which swells into a passionate complaint (second folk song), and the consoling forest murmur (A), which surrounds it musically, thus adding a new quality to the metaphor of the resounding tree. The more laconic return, as a synthesis of these two mood elements, is softened into a contemplation, a memento. The setting invokes the organizing principle of symmetry both vertically and horizontally and can therefore be seen as the central axis of the work in a musical and symbolic sense.

The similar features of the two old-style Hungarian folk songs⁴⁹ used in the movement are unifying factors, giving greater room for compositional experiments. At the same time, they allow the author to combine them into

⁴⁶ The idea of the wooden headstone lurking in the text creates a connection with both the world tree (movement I) and the cross (movement III).

⁴⁷ In his essay *Modern Music - Shamanic Belief*, we find in this regard: "Ernő Lendvai's 1964 paper refers to the metamorphosis of the Cantata profana as follows: the beautiful bridge of the Cantata profana, which the fairy-tale boys would find, is a watershed also in the musical conception of the work: the inner and the outer bank are two worlds, and whoever crosses this bridge must die for the former way of life: according to the saga, he must become a star, he must merge with nature (because in the legend, to become a star or a deer is the same thing)." In Terényi Ede. *Harangvirág – harangszó (Bellflower – Ringing Bell)*. Ed. cit., p. 126.

⁴⁸ This may also explain why the composer omitted the last two resignatory passages of the first folk song.

⁴⁹ Parlando-rubato style, psalmody character, pentatonic ground, same syllable count, some melodic turns.

layers by various means, or to fuse them together in a soundscape that, while having different emotional saturation, still remain homogeneous.

The framing formal sections emerge from the following soldier's song⁵⁰ from Gyímesközéplek (Lunca de Jos - Trei fântâni), of which the author also adopts the tempo markings indicated by the collector, Zoltán Kallós:

E.g. 14

♩ = 72

S er-dó, er-dó ke-rek er - dó, S kö - ze - pi - be gyász - te - me-tó.

S er-dó, er-dó, ke-rek er-dó, S kö-ze - pi-be gyász-te-me-tó.

1st folksong

Terényi combines two relatively modern solutions to recreate the forest murmur in a quite effective way. With the first montage technique⁵¹, he scatters melodic fragments of half a line (in the score, a bar) in space and time, a procedure also used to compress, blend and layer texts/sections. Their order of appearance is not directed by the chronological criteria (the linear structure of the melody), but by the desired sonority, and the potential stereophony⁵² of the two-chorus arrangement, that also plays a significant role in this respect. Still, with the exception of the last line, the continuity of the melody is traceable throughout, despite the variable timing. As the melody progresses, more or less simultaneous excerpts are heard in repeated form or in stretto imitation, embedded in the rhythmic layers of the other parts. The temporal shifts increase towards the end of the A section, so the sound also becomes more blurred, suggesting a kind of decay (a figurative distancing), which serves to lead into the middle section.

⁵⁰ The sources of the two melody quotations presented in this movement were described in detail in our previous paper. Cf. Attila Fodor. Op. cit., p. 400.

⁵¹ One of its first prominent applications is found in Stravinsky's music, above all in his epochal work *The Rite of Spring*.

⁵² As a former member of the Károly Kós Chamber Choir, I had the privilege to sing in his other work conceived for three choirs, *Libera me Domine* (1997), during the rehearsals of which the composer suggested the possibility of mixing the parts spatially for sonority reasons. I think that this movement, because of its much less monolithic character, might be even more suitable for such experimentation.

Thus, the repetitive character of this movement is palpable in the recurrence of the mosaics, which gives individuality to the parts, while at the same time, the differentiated temporal shifts between layers, the slow change of materials and the diversification of the entries' order, result in a unique vertical and rhythmic constellation of each moment. The overall effect is reminiscent of contemporary choral improvisations, but behind the continuous development of the texture there is a conscious organization, which ultimately leads to the idea of heterophony, somewhat similar to the previous movement, but realized in fundamentally different way.⁵³

The starting point of the constantly developing sound surface⁵⁴ is a tetratonic system (A-F-D-C)⁵⁵, which appears in the coincidence of the first and last melodic excerpts (A1, B1). Moreover, they not only represent the beginning and the end of the folk song, but also carry through their synchronic exposition the idea of mirror symmetry. The reason for bringing forward the final line (B1, m. 1-4) may have been that thus, the first section remains open, leading to the middle one with a suspended sense of incompleteness.

⁵³ Its facture and sonority are akin to the middle movement (Adagio religioso) of Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 3*, in which the opening string material also creates a pentatonic texture, albeit realized in an imitative technique. This metaphor of forest murmur is also known in the Hungarian literature, and Terényi refers to it in his own writings. See for example his essay *Swiss Cuckoo Clock*. In Terényi Ede. *Zene, költői világ (Music, Poetic World)*. Grafycolor, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 14. We believe this metaphysical connection to be valid for the present movement (and for *The Gates of Sky* as a whole), especially as it serves as a bridge between the „pagan” (*World Tree*) and Christian (*Tree of Life*) messages of the outer movements.

⁵⁴ We use this term in order to describe a sound space in which the temporal-spatial events (melody, rhythm, etc.) are blended into an overall texture (fr. *mélange*), so that individual moments are musically subordinated to it. The general application of this technique is first seen in impressionism, both in orchestral and piano music.

⁵⁵ The original melody quoted earlier was written down by the collector according to the Bartók's system, with the final cadence on the G note. Terényi transposed it down a perfect fourth, thus aligning its *finalis* with the central D of the work.

Andante ♩ = 72 (→60)

S1 ...ke-rek er - dő, ke-rek er - dő ke-rek er - dő,

A1 s Er-dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő,

T1 s Er-dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő, er - dő,

B1 ...gyász-te-me-tő, gyász-te-me-tő, gyász-te-me-tő,

Soul Tree, m. 1-4

The repeated A-notes of the soprano and tenor at the top of the sonority (as a kind of suspended fundamental) suggest a geometric structure. Not least because the minor triad (A-F-D) does not fit clearly into the gravitational harmony, and here neither does the so-called major 6/4 (C-F-A). This is in accordance with the descending slope of the old-style Hungarian folk song, to which the composer also refers in the second chorus by the direction of the voice entrances. Not surprisingly, the texture subsequently consolidates the C-G (perfect fourth) pillar. With the second line, introduced from bar 6, through the simultaneous presence of several melodic materials, the tonal range begins to expand towards the diatonic system.

With the entrance of B2 (m. 10), a complex, individually led vocal heterophony emerges with the exception of the bass parts, in which the latter begin to play more and more the role of harmonic pillar, indicating a shift towards the gravitational system (which becomes a harmonically distinct feature of the middle section). This is also indicated by the fact that Terényi gives an acoustic⁵⁶ color to the folk songs' tonal system by raising the third step in its last line (F#⁵⁷).

⁵⁶ This is what Lendvai calls the diatonic system of Bartók's music.

⁵⁷ We cannot exclude the possibility that the composer, based on Lendvai's analysis of the *Cantata profana*, used the two systems consciously, also with a symbolic purpose. Quote: "The tonal symbolism of the *Cantata* leaves no doubt for a moment that its author identified the basic idea of the miraculous deer-legend, the inherent duality of 'here' and 'beyond',

E.g. 16

S er-dő, er-dő, ke-rek er-dő s kö-ze pi-be

1st folksong, third line

E.g. 17

er-dő, er-dő, ke-rek er-dő s kö-ze - pi-be

Soul Tree, m. 12-14

As observed in the example above, the composer also makes a further modification in the third line (second measure), presumably to keep the melody along the G-pillar, thus providing continuity between the two melodic lines and a slow transformation of the sonority, which results in a kind of gradual emotional and semantic metamorphosis through the successive entry of the solo parts and the steady progression of lyrics, respectively that of the melodic sections. This is underscored by the enrichment of the texture and the intensification indicated by the dynamic signs, as the forest murmur gives way to the lament of the beloved in an almost cinematic approach.

with the opposition of these two systems (referring to the opening and closing notes of the work, F.A.). [...] The double direction of the attractions imbues these scales with an opposite emotional, expressive content: the Golden Section scale [...] is a veritable primary culture of its kind, a dense ancient jungle – like ‘crampy fingers’ of the root-like vegetation; in the other: the acoustic scale has no trace of this spasmodic sensitivity, it is no longer a delicate network of nerves and blood vessels (like the web of the musical opening), but a peculiarly dissolved and melting enamel, one might say a colorful and shimmering musical ‘lacquer surface’, the smooth mirror of which the voice of the deer-boy glides effortlessly over and unfolds the ‘rainbow spectrum’ of the music: the overtone scale.” In Lendvai Ernő. *Bartók dramaturgiája (The Dramaturgy of Bartók)*. Akkord Kiadó, 1993, pp. 225-226.

In bar 19, the Eb alteration, which is also part of the gravitational system, appears, indicating the new harmonic center (Bb-major/g-minor) of the passionate middle section (Appassionato). This is based on the following Phrygian melody collected by Béla Bartók in Csíkrákos (Racu):

E.g. 18

Parlando

Er-dő, er-dő, ke-rek er-dő, Ha e-gyi-ket meg-fog-hat-nám
De szép ma-dár jár-ja ket-tő! Ke-be-lem-be bé-zár-hat-nám!

2nd folksong

As mentioned earlier, Terényi, taking advantage of the folk songs' identical syllable number, places a section of the first text that he still considers important ("I have planted those flowers/ Watered them with my tears") on the second melody (in repeated form), whose otherwise short formulation thus expands into a two-verse material. This was due the polysemy of ideas achieved in the melodic repetition, and not least by the fusion of the two folk songs especially in a spiritual sense, which is realized here for the moment in respect to lyrics, and in the last section in musical terms too. This purpose is also confirmed by the symmetrical arrangement of the text⁵⁸ provided for the second edition of the score.

The focus on individual expression is indicated here by the use of folk song in its entirety, presented in a homophonic arrangement that emphasizes it most. Compared to Bartók's variable time signature, Terényi chooses the 2/4 measure, marking the time delays resulting from the parlando-rubato character with fermata.

⁵⁸ See Attila Fodor. Op. cit., p. 399.

E.g. 19

Appassionato

S a vi - rá - got én ül - tet - tem, S köny - ve - im - mel ön - töz - get - tem, A vi - rá - got
Er - dó, er - dó, ke - rek er - dó, De szép ma - dár jár - ja ket - tő. Ha e - gyi - ket

rit. molto

én ül - tet - tem, S köny - ve - im - mel ön - töz - get - tem,
meg - fog - hatn - nám, ke - be - lem - be bé - zár - hat - nám, bé - zár - hat - nám.

Soul Tree, m. 21-30

This kind of harmonization is unique in the entire work. Though there are chorale-like structures and modal root-relationships also in the first movement, only here occur elements typical for the functional music, such as the lowered seventh (Ab) of the B-flat major ninth chord in m. 22, which result in a secondary dominant, even unresolved. The eight-part setting inevitably leads to different parallel movements, which are exploited by the composer for “orchestration” purposes, by constantly changing the coinciding voices and making subtle harmonic adjustments at the end of the lines.

The middle section concludes in S1 with a slowed-down (*rit. molto*), sigh-like closure reminiscent of the “kuruc” melodic, foreshadowing in character the last emphasized (repeated) measures of the reprise, set partially on the same text. The former is the author’s invention in the spirit of folk music, which Phrygian turn – as a kind of condensed anticipation – occurs in seven voices in bar 26. The cadence is given a particular nuance by the fluctuations of the individual chord tones, acting in a darkening and especially in a brightening sense, even simultaneously. This direction is reversed at the end of the movement. The major final chord is a typical modal element, but also prepares - quasi-functionally - the tonal center of the return (C). We may suspect a deliberate consideration behind this cadential addition,

at least as suggested by one of Terényi's writings on the subject, which may even explain some of the harmonic solutions of the movement.⁵⁹

The reprise shows the intention of a concentrated synthesis. Thus, both folk songs return at once, yet the sparseness of their partial occurrence creates a sense of echo. Their presence is both convergent and divergent. The convergent character is primarily due to the fact that the topmost voice features the common tetrachord of the two melodies (see bar 3 of the musical example below), and that they form a single pentatonic system, except for the *pien*⁶⁰ notes. From the entrances of the parts the following folk-song fusion unfolds with some minor time overlaps:

E.g. 20



The fusion of the two folksongs

The passage is divergent in the sense that the melodic excerpts are given a distinct sonic plane (separated between the two choirs). And although the different technique of their presentation (Choir 1: discursive, imitative, unfolding character, Choir 2: repetitive synchronicity) is not new, here the stretto confrontation is rather alienating, an intention that becomes even more evident in the final measures of the movement. Yet, at least for these five bars, a kind of time-space synthesis is achieved.

Compared to the first section, the forest murmur is introduced in a symmetrical reversal by the second chorus. In this way, the passage common with the second folk song comes to the fore as the upper part, which the author stretches out in a sighing manner (the added “haj”-interjection, S1-A1).

⁵⁹ We quote an excerpt from his essay entitled *Krasznahorka büszke vára (The Proud Castle of Krasznahorka)*: “In the melodies of the Kuruc-times a peculiarly Hungarian musical language was born, worthy of the language of our 16th century melodies. It goes back to earlier roots than the later: it sets down its roots in the world of our minor 6/4 intonations and build on them a strange-sounding major-minor sonority, often conjured back to the medieval world of modes by the archaic gesture of the Phrygian-cadence, which is sometimes tinted by the exoticism of the augmented second closure of Eastern origin. Hence the peculiar mournfulness of these melodies, their subtle timbral variations, the passionate pathos of their expression.” In Terényi Ede. *Zene, költői világ (Music, Poetic World)*. Ed. cit., p. 244.

⁶⁰ Originally filling (transitional) notes occurring in the pentatonic structure, which later became consolidated.

E.g. 21

S1 *p* Er-dő, er-dő, ke-rek er-dő, haj, _____
 A1 *p* ke-rek er-dő, haj, _____
 T1 *p* De szép ma-dár jár-ja ket-tő, _____
 B1 *p* jár-ja ket-tő, _____

Soul Tree, m. 31-34, 1st choir

In the following, the previously familiar folk-song excerpt disappears, the voices seem to become frozen⁶¹ in the rhythmic planes. Terényi, as if contesting the earlier fusion, emphasizes the antagonistic meaning of the two choirs' material by juxtaposing their texts. While in the middle section he placed the lamentation and the uplifting image of the bird on the same melody, here the latter is accompanied by the idea of mourning. For the moment, the musical polysemy seems irreconcilable: the first plane points to the sky with convincing prosody, the second repeats the idea of the graveyard with a rhythm that is incongruous with Hungarian language, thus symbolically recalling the beginning of the first movement ("At the gateway of hell..."). This is somewhat nuanced by the two harmonic layers dispersed between the choruses (C major and F major). The fading character of the closure is enhanced by the *f-p* contrast and the *dim. e rit.* dynamic indication.

⁶¹ The solution is reminiscent of the two-part chorus *Senkim a világon* (*I've no one in the World*), in which Bartók "freezes" the melody of the upper part for a few bars at the following passage: "The rush of the summer stream chills in the winter." This work also displays the desire for love in a pantheistic context. There is an additional analogy of the embracement of nature and its inevitable confrontation with the relative impermanence of human emotions (desires, intentions), reflected in the A-E polarity and the contrasting relationship of the voice-movements. Cf. Szabó Miklós. *Bartók Béla kórusművei* (*The Choral Works of Béla Bartók*). Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1985, p. 102.

The prosody can hardly be justified by musical arguments alone (i.e. the harmonic layering and rhythmic complementarity of the two choirs). The conclusion, as mentioned above, rhymes with the middle section, but its minor harmonic turn reinforces the irrevocability of the lower plane’s message (“the grieving cemetery”).

E.g. 22

1st choir

Ha e-gyi-ket meg-fog-hat-nám, ke-be-lem-be bé-zár-hatn-nám... bé-zár-hatn-nám...

2nd choir

Kő - ze-pi-be gyász-te - me-tó, kő - ze-pi-be gyász-te - me-tó... gyász-te - me-tó...

attacca

Soul Tree, m. 36-40

Here Terényi once again makes use of the musical potential of the Hungarian diction, thus placing an accent on the high vowel of the old-fashioned - nowadays mainly used in Szeklerland – “bé” syllable, namely in the “down-tuned” A1 and B1. This doubled minor second descending chromatic step is also significant in terms of timbre.

The *Soul Tree* thus ends in the flow of seemingly hopeless expressions of “grieving cemetery” and “I would close it in my heart”, thus the synthesis is given a negative connotation, that is, the message of the movement is a metaphor of absence. It is no coincidence that the composer does not give a resolution here, but at most contemplates the outcome of the musical and semantic dissonance of the folk songs, since *attacca* is followed by the rousing third movement.

Life Tree

In the last, fast movement (*Allegro*, 4/4) the rhythm section returns. The expansion of the instrumentation⁶² indicates that the composer intends to give percussion a more active role. This is reinforced by their quasi-stand-alone, block-like use, and their much denser and more varied writing. While in the *World Tree* they served primarily as a mood creating tool, here the function of dynamizing the choral material comes to the fore.

The steady quaver motion that begins in the second percussion seems to recall the defining rhythmic and symbolic component of the first movement's shamanic ceremony. This is not surprising, since the message of the text is expressed in the form of a highly archaic, proto-Christian ritual. Yet the tension of the movement also conveys a sense of marching, of urging, which is directly linked to the dramatic situation carried by the rune: the wakening encounter and confrontation of Virgin Mary with the evil women. The *Life Tree*, thus, as a kind of synthesis, embodies the different but coherent spiritual-musical layers evoked in the work: the world of primitive magic, the folk character and the liturgical function.

The movement is organized in a threefold structure: the instrumental introduction (bars 1-8) is followed by a long, continuously developing, intense choral section (bars 9-62), which finally leads to a quiet, coda-like, mystical sustained texture (bars 63-74). Interestingly, Terényi does not set the relatively voluminous rune according to the dramaturgy outlined earlier⁶³, but splits it in two after Mary's interrogation ("Where are you going?"), and places the rest of the text as a second verse⁶⁴ on the same musical material, with the rhythmic variations required by the prosody. For the aim here was not so much to express the words in a poetic setting, but rather to highlight the rhythmic nature of the praying, and to emphasize the fundamental conflict of the plot that is being enacted.

⁶² The question of percussion apparatus is not clarified in either edition. The upper two parts have no name, the lower three (according to the score, Drum, Tam-tam, Rattle), judging from the writing, do not always seem to be idiomatic. Since we have not been able to locate the manuscript, in the present study we can only make some observations about the role of the rhythm section. However, it may be noted that the use of some brighter, more resonant instruments (triangle, bell, etc.) seems appropriate to the character of the movement. As regards the question of editions, we recommend the first (2005), which contains relatively few errors compared to the second (2013). In the latter, for example, the second line of the text is completely omitted. Nevertheless, it is also worth reviewing, as it contains some important additional instructions, especially on the last two pages.

⁶³ See Attila Fodor. *Op. cit.*, p. 405.

⁶⁴ Although the term is not really appropriate in this case, for the sake of simplicity we will use it here.

Nevertheless, there are some dramaturgical connections and semantic overlaps between the two verses emerged in this way. These include passages referring to the movement of Mary and the women (“Departed”, “We are headed towards...”), the invocation of Jesus (“with her blessed child”, “let’s clot his red blood”), the three candles and the admonition to repentance, or the dramatic moment of the encounter (the characterization and sending away of the women). It is of particular interest that Terényi makes the first, shorter section of the text the same length as the second by prolonging the word Mary several times. (We will return to the significance of this later.)

According to the score, the instruction *Da capo al Fine*⁶⁵, which complements the end repeat final bar, requires the whole movement to be played again, including the instrumental introduction. A new element of the repetition is the text recited in the concluding section, which the informant detailed as a function of the rune at the collector’s request (“I surround him with candle...”), and the percussion tremolo performed in *crescendo molto senza misura*.

The instrumental introduction creates a contrast, a rebound from the brooding, sigh-like echo of the *Soul Tree*. The 16 bars, consisting of four repeated sections, are based on the steady movement (crotchets) of the second percussion instrument. This kind of rhythmic differentiation is unique to the movement, and was certainly justified by the independent statement of the apparatus. Their gradual appearance foreshadows the progressive unfolding of the vocal parts.

E.g. 23

The image shows a musical score for five staves, all in 4/4 time. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, repeat signs (double bar lines with dots), and fermatas. The fifth staff features triplet markings (the number '3') over groups of three notes. The score is divided into four distinct sections by repeat signs, each with a fermata at the end.

***Life Tree*, m. 1-16.**

⁶⁵ This only appears in the second edition. In a symbolic sense, the instruction may refer to the idea of circularity, which is specific to the cyclical nature of ecclesiastical rites (for example, the monks’ prayer hours), and in a broad sense to the promise of eternal life.

With the entrance of the choir (m. 9) a large-scale process begins, that continues uninterrupted as a composed crescendo until bar 63. As already pointed out, Terényi, similarly to the percussion, treats the voices in blocks. The tutti introduction recalls the first movement, but here it is more of a congregational allusion, as the choir sings the text as one person in the melody that begins on the central (D) note of the work. The percussion instruments partly emphasize its metrics and current meaning (“marching”), and partly contribute to its ceremonial character with coloring effects (*tr*).

The predominantly polyphonic movement is essentially built on a single musical material. Its source is the collection of Szekler religious folk songs of great importance by the 17th century Franciscan monk Johannes Kájoni, the *Cantionale Catholicum*, most of whose melodies were discovered and published by ethnographer Péter Pál Domokos in 1979.⁶⁶ Terényi, in his own writings, repeatedly spoke of the volume with enthusiasm, which he said he not only studied it frequently, but also used as source material, especially for his Christmas choral works.

In accordance with the message of the *Life Tree*, the composer took the following version of the *Salve Regina*⁶⁷ (4th Marian antiphon) and placed on it - with some modifications - a section of the Csángó rune.

⁶⁶ „...édes Hazámnak akartam szolgálni” (...I wanted to serve my sweet country) [ed. Domokos Pál Péter]. Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 1979.

⁶⁷ “Salve Regina (Latin for ‘Hail Queen’): Marian-Antiphon. Its author is unknown, and it is the oldest antiphon after *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. Its invocations are also found in the Church Fathers. Already in the 11th c. it was the subject of a meditation by Anzelm of Lucca (PL: 184-188). Dominicans and Cistercians sang it at the end of the *Compline*, in other monasteries it is used as a processional chant. From the 14th century it was also included in the breviary for the greater part of the year (prayed from Trinity Sunday to Advent).” In *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon*, XI. kötet (*Hungarian Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XI) [ed. Diós István et Viczián János]. Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 2006, p. 826.

433.

SALVE REGINA.

NOTA: IDVEZITŐNKNEK SZENT ANNYA

ME ny-or-szág-nak Ki-rály-né-ja,
 Ir-gal-mas-ság-nak Szent Any-nya:
 E-let, é-des-ség, re-mén-ség,
 Id-vez-légy szép Szűz MA-RI-A.

The Salve Regina chant⁶⁸

The changes, however, go beyond the demands required by the textual adaptation, and thus, by analogy with the second movement, they reveal a kind of re-creating intention. This seems to be confirmed by one of Terényi's statements⁶⁹ that in the 1990s, which he called his *musica sacra*

⁶⁸ In „...édes Hazámnak akartam szolgálni” (...I wanted to serve my sweet country). Ed. cit., pp. 685-686.

⁶⁹ “While browsing the vast volume by Tóth Kálmán Csomasz, Géza Papp and Pál Péter Domokos, which is incomparably rich in melodic material, I realized [referring to the volumes of the *Songbook of Old Hungarian Songs*, F. A.] that besides folk songs there is an extremely precious, impressively beautiful musical world of the religious folksong, a wonderful world of texts made up of original poems or poetic translations. What amazed me most was the way in which foreign melodies, coming from the West and linked to liturgical events, were transformed by the popular consciousness - the collective memory - or how the ‘borrowed’ musical material was melted and turned into perfect melodies. This process of transfiguration has even reshaped the melodies that were created in our country, sometimes not only on a technical level (modifications of the musical scale, ornamentation, transformation of melodic cells), but also in terms of their conceptual content. [...] I like to call it MUSICAL PRECIOUS METAL SMELTING. Is there such an activity in music workshops? - I wondered. What do I myself do in this field? I was looking for an answer to this question with the works of the 90s? Can I ‘fuse’ melodies in my music workshop? And then allowing them to cool in new forms to create new melodic jewels?” In In Terényi Ede. *Zeném – Életem. Gondolatok – arcképek – emlékek. Életrajz I.* (*My Music - My Life. Thoughts – portraits – memories. Autobiography I.*). Ed. cit., p. 106.

period, he himself tried to become a kind of melting pot of old songs, similar to the way in which folk tradition filtered through itself the Western music culture. Although the melody also appears as a quote (in each case only partially), the composer - interestingly - does not schedule its literal exposition to the first choral statement, a moment which, because of its monophonic character alone, would be more appropriate to highlight it. Instead, he employs a kind of vertical montage⁷⁰ at the articulation points of the first three lines by aligning the material of the outer two with the central tone (D).⁷¹ One of the consequences is that the melody becomes broader, and the original pentachord structure is extended to a diatonic one.

E.g. 25

The melody of Salve Regina

Terényi's adaptation

Comparison of the two melodies

Since the rune is not in verse form, the adaptation has called for further modifications. Thus, the first bar is repeated, which is musically justified, as it creates a more organic connection with the instrumental introduction's eight pulses (see percussion 2) and resonates with the drum rhythm of the first movement. The result is an asymmetrical phrase-period of seven bars, which, together with the polyphonic repetition, carries the first conceptually coherent section of the text (bars 9-21).

As for the rhythm, Terényi basically follows the spirit of the original melody. The stiff pulsation, reminiscent of a rhythmized Gregorian chant, not only affects the seemingly rigid prosody, but also lends the melody a certain monotony, which the composer makes more flexible mainly by means of podatus/flexa-type two-note turns and end-of-line melismas. Meanwhile, the varying number of syllables compared to Salve Regina results in a more flexible articulation, sometimes taking an asymmetrical shape. For example,

⁷⁰ The procedure is somewhat reminiscent of what Coca Gabriella, quoting the author, calls key-scordatura. In Gabriella Coca. *Ede Terényi – History and Analysis*. Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010, p. 25.

⁷¹ It is also worth adding that in Gregorian chant the melodic turns play a more important role than the actual pitch system of the tone, so the author's intervention in this sense has less impact on its ethos.

in the upper voices, during the first verse, the emphasis shifts from the fourth bar (mm. 18-21), while the differences in articulation occur simultaneously due to the imitative technique.

E.g. 26

S
1-2

Há-rom szál — gyor tyá - já - val a — szent temp - lom - ba mi se hall - gat - ni, mi - se hall gat - ni, aj —
Tir - je - tek meg, tir - je - tek meg, ne men - je - tek, ne men - je - tek Ró - zsá - nak ke - be - li - be, aj! —

A
1-2

El - in - du - la bó - dug - sá - gos Szűz Má - ri - a az ó ál - dott szent fi - á - vol, fe - hér fá - tyol - já - vol,
Tir - je - tek meg, tir - je - tek meg, ne men - je - tek, ne men - je - tek, ne men - je - tek Ró zsá - nak ke - be - li - be

Life Tree, m. 16-21 (excerpt)

As shown above, the introductory monodic section unfolds in a first phase as a free fifth-imitation between high and low vocal parts. The differentiation of the two planes is mainly caused by the omission of the opening bar, thus resulting in a stretto, canon-like polyphony. In both cases, the melody follows the pattern of the Salve Regina, but is given a Dorian character⁷² compared to the original⁷³, which is the most common tone of early sacred chant. The relative isorhythmic⁷⁴ character of the first three bars seems to dissolve towards the end of the section, due to the melodic and prosodic interventions. While the imitation recalls the later phases of polyphony, the opening empty fifths have a more medieval effect, as does the triplet ornamentation of the upper part, reminiscent of the discant technique.

The dramatic moment of the encounter between Mary and the women (m. 22) - which coincides with the even more powerful imperative of the Virgin in the repetition - is preceded in both texts by the “aj”-melisma, emphasized with *sf*, indicating both fright and threat, the latter also underlined by the exclamation mark. Here, the musical process leaves the previous gravitational system and from now on it is characterized by a continuous mistuning. At this point of the first section (“She met with women bearing ill breezes”) Terényi brings back the text of the opening melody (“Blessed Virgin Mary... departed”), which intensifies the dramaturgical presence of Mary by reiterating her name, which essentially results in a semantic echo. For this reason alone, it is not

⁷² In the first instance it contains Bb, while here, because of the upper part a B-natural is introduced. This fluctuation is not foreign to the medieval ethos of the Dorian tone.

⁷³ A major-pentachord.

⁷⁴ The term is not used in the sense of 13th-14th century polyphony, but to refer to the lack of rhythmic differentiation between the planes.

surprising that the previous markedly even pulsation is expanded into a 3/2 metric⁷⁵ by means of prosody and accentuation, and the previous two tonal planes are also extended into three as follows:

1. A dynamically varying 1:2 distance scale that gives rise to the mistuning, which in this phase unfolds in segments along a G# axis between S1 and T1-T2 (F#-G#-A, G#-A#-B) and in traces recalls some turns of the original melody;
2. A rhythmized part, in longer values, corresponding to the textual reprise (A1-2, B1-2);
3. A third, even broader plane, launched with repeated notes (A2).

E.g. 27

Life Tree, m. 22-27 (excerpt)

It is possible that in using the distance scale Terényi had in mind not only musical considerations but also the literal meaning of the term (distancing). This could also be indicated by the fact that in the first verse, the other two planes display Virgin Mary and the evil women simultaneously, in a cantus firmus manner. In this respect, the role and quantitative ratio of the corresponding parts may also be telling, as well as the highlighted tritone-relation (D-G#), which musically speaking suggests the idea of the axial system

⁷⁵ Here we have in mind a musical reference to the medieval concept of the Holy Trinity, which was expressed, among others, in the so-called perfectum division of the ars cantus mensurabilis.

(and fits the model), especially since, after a brief, perfect fifth clearing (m. 27) it continues with an enharmonic reinterpretation on the subdominant axis (E-Bb). At this point, the narrative thread carried by the upper voices (S-T) is focused on the moment of evil's identification (first stanza: "Seventy-seven kinds of...") and that of dismissal (second stanza: "Go to the...").

From bar 28, the distance scale is further extended from the different segments of S1-S2, amidst the chromatic movements of the other voices. The *f crescendo molto* indicates that the plot is heading towards a new dramatic point.

E.g. 28



The expansion of the distance scale

The importance of this moment is underlined by the five-part rhythm canon in the percussion section, which builds up and decomposes along a horizontal axis of symmetry (mm. 28-41). Its endpoints and axis coincide with important moments, and in addition to its concertante character, it creates a tumultuous effect by intensifying the choral material.

Terényi encodes the earlier, spiritually reinforcing symbol of the trinity in the triplets⁷⁶ of percussion instruments, which here runs as a rhythmic "theme-head" evoking the visual imagery of an arch.⁷⁷ In its symmetrical center, he places the second "aj"-interjection, which this time does not sound as a shock, but like an exclamation (fff), now provided with the corresponding mark (!). The striking power of Mary's presence is also shown by the fact that the choir opens up to its widest range, and the other voices, wedged into it, recall as a reprise the steady rhythmic pulsation of the initial monodic material. Here the facture begins to acquire a truly columnar shape for the first time in the entire movement, while the former mistuning is cleared into an octave, which - beyond the musical reasons - evokes thus the most perfect interval according to the ancient and medieval view (F2-F5).

⁷⁶ This is foretold by the percussion introduction.

⁷⁷ Here, the architectural analogy seems obvious, since the Gothic pointed arch carries a transcendent (in Dante's terms: anagogic) message.

fff

S 1-2

Ajl.

A 1-2

Kér - dé bó - dog - sá - gos szép Szűz
Ott van nék - tek ve - cse - rá - tok,

T 1-2

B 1

Kér - dé bó - dog - sá - gos szép Szűz
Ott van nék - tek ve - cse - rá - tok,

B 2

Ajl.
Ajl.

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Life Tree, m. 34-35.

From this point on, the S1 mostly has an independent presence, as the bearer of Mary's spirit. Her majesty is suggested not only by the placement in the highest vocal register, but also by the unusually prolonged notes that widely span the entire structure. Furthermore, when her name is first heard, it is echoed by the full choir in the next segment (mm. 36-41). Terényi also indicates the dramatic intensity of the situation by the alternation of *ppp* and *fff* dynamics, which seem to coincide with the next stages of the process.

The marching crotchet movement continues in the other parts, and in addition to the repetitions, a new distance scale (F-Eb-D-C-B-A) begins to unfold, in which the B fits as a symmetrical midpoint in the F octave on the strong time units (m. 37 and 39-40). The emergence of the diminished fifth⁷⁸ in relation to the second verses' message coincides with Mary's threat ("I will tie your stalls").

⁷⁸ Unlike the augmented fourth used previously, the diminished fifth here aligns with the geometric distance scale.

At the end point of the rhythm canon, the word *Mary*, formerly articulated over 6 bars, resumes in *fff*. Underneath, on a new text (in the first stanza *Mary's* interrogation and the clause in the second), the middle voices introduce another distance scale in a faster rhythm (in quavers).

E.g. 30



The second distance scale

From this point, Terényi underpins the relatively unstable facture and tonal structure with the mostly synchronous movement of the percussion instruments, which by the analogy of the initial occurrence of the *Salve Regina* melody form a sort of horizontal community. The same function is carried out by the choir's insular clarifications, which evoke the initial isorhythm.

The process clears again at beat 50 with an E-note, foreign to the system (not fitting the distance scale). The moment coincides with the golden section of the movement⁷⁹ and contains an important textual insertion with symbolic meaning. The lowercase *m* unanimously present in all the voices may be interpreted as a closed consonant that produces a color change, but the symbol of the *Mary's-route*⁸⁰ can also be read from the context.

Fig.1



The symbol of *Mary's route*

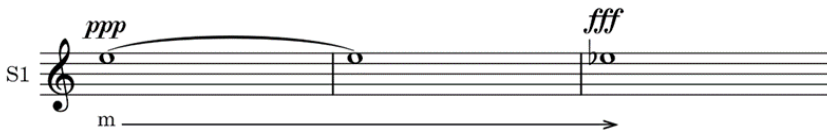
This idea is supported by the arrow next to it, which, in addition to indicate the lengthening of the consonant, shows the spiritual direction to follow rather than a musical effect.⁸¹

⁷⁹ The movement consists of 74 numbered beats. Taking into account the repetitions of the instrumental introduction, the actual length is 82 bars.

⁸⁰ The *Via Mariae* connects pilgrimage sites dedicated to the Virgin *Mary*, widely spread in Central Europe, following the example of the famous *El Camino*. Viewed as a map, it currently outlines the shape of a cross.

⁸¹ The symbol could mean *accelerando*, but in the context of dynamics it also holds the possibility of a fast *crescendo*.

E.g. 31



Life Tree, m. 50-52.

The distinctive quality of the moment is marked by the tremolo of the fourth percussion instrument, and the triplet of the second one. A similar symbolic gesture might be the rhetoric sigh that emerges from the minor-second descent of the sustained F-note, as well as the diatonic and chromatic passage (F-E-Eb-D, or E-Eb-D-C#) contoured by the overall movement of the S1, which virtually include the notes of the Bach-topos: the so-called Kreuzmotiv (Eb-D-F-E).

From bar 52, the process returns to the earlier distance scale and the intense polyphony of its exposition, this time framed by the outer voices with a major second lower (Eb). An essential novelty is that S1, which has hitherto been repeating the Mary's name, is incorporated into the texture, and the lyrics of the two verses include the *m*-consonant independently of the indicated different dramaturgical phases (p. 56). Though the process, musically speaking, seems inexorable at this point, this change signals the forthcoming contemplative final section.

The parts arrive on an alpha chord, accompanied by a percussion tremolo (m. 62), which totalizes the distance scale, according to the following structure: Eb-F#-A-C (dominant axis – upper layer) and D-F-G#-B (tonic axis – lower layer). Its use evokes the idea of completeness. The second edition of the score here suggests the possibility of dwelling on this sonority by means of a *senza misura*.

E.g. 32



The alpha-chord, m. 62.

The mystical tone of the movement's conclusion (bars 63-74) is indicated by the *pppp* dynamics similar to the opening of the *World Tree*, the pause of the percussion, and the quasi-static texture of the choir, that unfolds and decays in a horizontal mirror symmetry on the *m*-consonant. This process, which can also be interpreted as the resolution of the former alpha-harmony, starts with the central D in all voices, into which (S1, B1) a vertically layered incomplete⁸² distance row (D-C#-B-Bb-G#-G-E) is wedged. After a transitional chord (D#-F#-A-B-C#) the sound is cleared again, now for the last time.

A special feature of the concluding section is the recitation, originally an explanatory prosodic addition by the informant to the rune ritual. By adopting this and incorporating it into the composition in this way, Terényi connects the ritualistic character, hitherto evoked by musical means, to a real reference. Meanwhile, he evokes the simplicity, the sincere and fervent faith of the Csángó woman calling on the Virgin Mary, as well as the beauty of the dialect. This very effective solution, also in terms of music dramaturgy, gives the text, embedded in a sonic texture, a distinctly uplifting, poetic character.

E.g. 33

The image shows a musical score excerpt for 'Life Tree, m. 63-66'. It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are written in Hungarian and are distributed across the staves. The lyrics are: "Én egy gyortyával keritem... meggyuótom, Kettőt így eszeteszek az egyiket meggyójtom S amikor elmondok egy verset, osztán elalítom, gyójtom meg a másikat s e menen kilenszer, oggyig a három versbe így háromszor...". The music is written in a simple, quasi-static style with long notes and rests.

Life Tree, m. 63-66 (excerpt)

⁸² It lacks the F-note, which previously (see S1) played an important role (musically speaking it was overused).

The percussion tremolo, indicated in the final measure has a role of retransition in the first instance, but in the second it is supposed to be performed *senza misura crescendo molto al ffff*. The latter can be seen as the musical expression of the missing Amen. At the same time, the crescendo, the arrow-signs and the absence of the barline create the impression of openness.

The common feature of the beginning and ending passages of the work is the suspended note and the simultaneous percussion impulse, which conveys, however a different meaning. The composition is thus born from timelessness and returns to it. The overall ascent along the *World Tree* brings a new quality, expressed in the perfect octave⁸³ relation of the full choir.

Conclusions

The spiritual and musical depths of *The Gates of Sky*, its rich semantic horizons, places it as a representative choral work of Terényi's organic period of the 1990s. Therein we can discover traces of the composer's intellectual aspirations after the Romanian regime change: indirectly his interest in Steinerian anthroposophy and directly the inspiring influence of the Hungarian Academy of Arts' milieu, above all his revelatory encounter with the architecture of Imre Makovecz.

A common element in Makovecz's "architectural beings" is the column reminiscent of the living tree, which, like the world tree, links the organic and spiritual spheres, the earth and the sky. The cultural-historical significance of this relationship emerges from Marcell Jankovics' book, but also from the dialectic of the two major harmonic systems described by Lendvai. Both played an important role in shaping the overall concept of the work.

The tree motif not only marks the titles of the movements, but also connects the situations and states that are being expressed through it. The ritualistic, primitive soundscape of the *World Tree's* shamanic ritual (shaman tree-root) shows the organic existence. Here, the melodic is elemental, the prosody is often incantatory, the time structure is fragmented, the atmosphere is noisy. The intimate tone of the *Life Tree* (wooden headstone-trunk) dramatizes one of the fundamental dilemmas of human life in a love context: the longing for eternity and the pain felt over passing away. With the textual and subsequently

⁸³ Rudolf Steiner associates this interval with the quality of spiritual ascension: "Every time the octave appears in a musical composition, man will have a feeling that I can only describe with the words, "I have found my 'I' anew; I am uplifted in my humanity by the feeling for the octave." In Rudolf Steiner. *The Inner Nature of Music and the Experience of Tone*. GA 283 [ed. Alice Wulsin]. The Anthroposophic Press, 1983, p. 48.

melodic fusion of the two old-style Hungarian folk songs used, the composer achieves the metamorphosis that he formulated as the main criteria of a musical work that exists as a ritual. The negative connotation of the movement's ending suggests that there is no earthly resolution of the tension. This pensive mood is interrupted by the attacca following, poignant *Life Tree* (cross-crown), which is based on an archaic Csángó rune and a version of the *Salve Regina* melody, a religious church song collected in Szeklerland. The proto-Christian ritual, reminiscent of a protective prayer, recalls the dramatic encounter between Virgin Mary and the evil women on her way to the temple with Jesus, and their subsequent sending away. Its music displays strong medieval influences, the rhythm carries a sense of marching and urgency, while in terms of progression it is a polyphonically unfolding, composed crescendo.

As can be seen from the model's pillar relationships and the axial principle emerging in the outer movements, Terényi uses the geometric system as a constructive and symbolic basis for the work, which, like the *Cantata profana*, is primarily the carrier of the ancient, organic world. This is reflected in the feminine quality⁸⁴ that is central to the texts (Heavenly Lady, the beloved left behind, the Virgin Mary). However, the shift of the process in the gravitational direction starting from the final chord of the *World Tree* indicates the disintegration of the former syncretic relationship between matter and spirit and its subsequent reconstruction in a different quality (Life Tree).

The sound systems occur in a mixed way in each movement, but the musical and mainly symbolic aspects set a certain direction. Thus, the *World Tree* has a rather geometric predominance, while the *Life Tree*, despite the extensively used distance scale, seems to carry the message of the gravitational system. Here, in addition to the religious folk song's character and its first elaboration, we are thinking in particular of the almost ever-present framing role of the perfect octave. The *Soul Tree* shows both their separation and blending, which can be seen in their distinct exposition as well as in the slow transformation of the vertical structures.

This process applies in particular to the gradual immaterialization of musical images associated with wood: while the fairy-tale-like resounding tree of the first movement and the subsequent forest murmur still finds an acoustic form, the wooden headstone is only evoked by the memento-like atmosphere of the middle movement's echo, while the cross that symbolically

⁸⁴ In Jankovics' words: „The essence of this role of motherhood at the level of religious philosophy is that the divine spirit, the incorporeal celestial soul, took material form through the mother's body (as in the language 'mother' became 'matter', from *mater* to *materia*). With her own body, the tree creates a living bridge between heaven and earth, spirit and matter.” In Jankovics Marcell. *A fa mitológiája (The Mythology of the Tree)*. Csokonai Kiadóvállalat, Debrecen, 1991, p. 87.

towers above the final movement is to be read from the hidden context of a large-scale melodic process.

The symmetry is fundamental, both musically and symbolically, in the architecture of *The Gates of Sky*. This is clearly shown in the geometric diagrams attached to the 2013 version. Thus, the two floating endpoints on the central D note appear as mirrors of each other on the work's time axis. A similar relationship is apparent in the spatial arrangement of the quasi-independent melodic planes of the opening and closing movements: the rhythimized repetition of the shamanistic incantation (B2) and the part that emphasizes Virgin Mary's name (S1). These horizontal and vertical correlations are also present on a smaller scale in the layout and structural relationships of the middle movement.

In addition to the repetitive rhythmic background, the folk character of the texts and melodies can be seen as a unifying factor, which brings relatively distant temporal-cultural horizons onto a quasi-identical foundation. Terényi's experimental approach to the musical-cultural past suggests an imaginary world: in his melting-pot workshop, former messages and intonations decompose, blend and take new form as they cool. However, similar to the mistuning process, some reference is also provided in this regard. Thus, the text of *World Tree* is framed by folktale material, while the melody and the incantatory prosody are the result of the composer's invention, often reminiscent of the characteristic features of children's songs. The sources of the *Soul Tree* are identifiable, but the primary semantic purpose of textual and musical fusion goes somewhat beyond the traditional concept of folk-song arrangement. The solution used for the *Life Tree* is perhaps the most peculiar in this respect, as it brings together two materials with different purposes and structures, but resonant in their message and archaic character: a prosaic prayer with the melody of a strophic religious folk song. In all three cases, the end result gives a genuine impression, regardless of how the materials used and invented are re-solidified after being melted, either in a lumpy or uniform manner. We believe that this kind of haphazardness is part of the creative concept.

The soundscape of the work is complex, rich and nuanced. The momentary position and constellation of melodic, rhythmic-prosodic and harmonic elements is guided by a broader acoustic consideration, that is, the timbre as a meta-principle appears a prominent structural and structuring, even signifying factor. For this reason, it seems appropriate to speak here of an actual orchestration. This is justified by the inclusion of percussion alone, not to mention the differentiated approach to the sonority of the choir. The almost constant presence of the eight voices leads to unavoidable doublings, which the composer exploits with great awareness - along traditional and

contemporary techniques - to blend, layer and individualize the tonal qualities of the different moments and chords. He is equally attentive to the prosodic potential of the lyrics. For example, the influence of the text's intonation on the melodic and some harmonic developments is clearly visible.

The primary role of the instrumental section is to emphasize the ritual function, to energize the processes and to enhance the variable atmosphere. Its relationship with the choir is evolving accordingly. In the noisy first movement, full of impulses, it merges with it in a kind of syncretic way, thanks to, among other things, the acoustically transitional, densely used sibilant vocal effects. The intimate character of the middle movement makes the presence of noises unnecessary. Meanwhile, the sonority is renewed in several respects: the strong beat is replaced by subtle layers of temporal pulsation resulting from the montage technique, and the texture is transformed into a stereophonic one. The percussion returns in the finale, with increased involvement from the very first bars. Because of their compositional elaboration, they form an independent plane, and in this block-like quality maintain a continuous structural dialogue with the choral material.

The open question remains, to what extent can Terényi's vision be considered a Dantean path, a kind of eschatological position? Is the shamanic ritual any less valid than the protective ritual of the Csángó woman invoking Virgin Mary, or the love of the girl left behind who tends the grave of the soldier resting in the forest? This possibility is inherent in the linear-discursive-historical reading of the composition, and even in its overall dynamic trajectory. Yet, the vertical worldview embodied in the wood, the pervasive presence of folk culture, the circularity of the ritual, reinforce the idea of timelessness and thus of coexistence. That all the essential – both spiritual and musical – expressions of sacred wisdom that have filtered down through the generations, evoked in the work, are authentic and sincerely experienceable transcendent aspirations. This is what the plural of the title may refer to: The Gates of Sky.

(Translated into English by Attila Fodor)

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