

# **Hungarian variations on *Improvisations sur Mallarmé*: Zoltán Jeney's early reception of Pierre Boulez' music**

Anna Dalos

Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary  
dalos@zti.hu - <http://www.zti.hu>

## **Abstract**

Hungarian composers, who were searching for new sounds in their music after the political and cultural seclusion of the 1950's, reacted with enthusiasm to the three *Improvisations sur Mallarmé* by Pierre Boulez in the mid-1960's. As serialism was alien to them, they turned toward the "neo-impressionistic" orchestration technique of Boulez, which resembled the music of Debussy. The melodic shape of Boulez' three songs enabled the Hungarian composers to break with the typical melodic turns and prosody of the Bartók-Kodály tradition, and the procedure of the transitional tempi opened the gate to the use of aleatory. Zoltán Jeney (1943), who represented the youngest generation of Hungarian composers in the sixties, however, had two different phases of Boulez-reception. The second, serial phase, which is unique in the history of Hungarian composition, was inspired by Boulez' book, *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* (ed. 1964), which Jeney read in Rome, and can be traced in his works written between 1968 and 1972 (*wei wu wei*, *Rimembranze*, *Alef*). This paper, however, studies the first phase, analysing Jeney's first mature composition, his diploma work for Budapest, *Omaggio alla notte* (1966), through which the characteristic features of the Hungarian Boulez-reception and the local interpretation of avant-garde music can be shown paradigmatically.

## **CV**

Anna Dalos (Budapest, 1973) studied musicology at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, from 1993 to 1998; between 1998 and 2002 she attended the Doctoral Program in Musicology of the same institution. She spent a year on a German exchange (DAAD) scholarship at the Humboldt University, Berlin (1999-2000). She attained her PhD degree in 2005. She is currently working at the Musicological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Since 2008 she is lecturer at the DLA Program of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Her research is focused on 20th century Hungarian music; she had journal articles published on this subject, as well as short monographies on several Hungarian composers (Pál Kadosa, György Kósa, Rudolf Maros). Her book on Zoltán Kodály's poetics was published in 2007 in Budapest.