

Zenészet Közlöny

The *Zenészet* Közlöny (*alcíme: Szaklap a zeneművészet összes ágai köréből. Az "Országos magyar daléregyesület" és a hazai dal- és zeneegyletek hivatalos közlönye*) [Musical Journal (subtitle: A professional gazette from all the branches of music – Official bulletin of the "Country-wide Hungarian Choral Society" and of the national singing and music associations)] was published in Budapest three times a month from 10 January to 5 August 1882. Through May the publication appeared on the 1st, 10th and 20th of the month; thereafter every 5th, 15th and 25th day of the month. We have no information about the reason for the journal's early demise, and none is given in its pages. In all probability financial problems may account for the short-lived run of the *Zenészet* Közlöny. The end of the publication was all the more regrettable because this journal was intended to be the direct continuation of the first significant and relatively long-lived Hungarian music periodical, the *Zenészet* Lapok [Musical Pages]. This is hinted at by the similarity of titles, by the identity of the editor, i.e. Kornél Ábrányi sen., and by the editorial introduction in the first issue, entitled "After six years". For six years elapsed between the *Zenészet* Lapok's cessation of publication and the first appearance of the new journal.

Kornél Ábrányi, who edited the *Zenészet* Lapok for sixteen years with enthusiasm, devotion, and with a serious professional competence, became secretary and professor of the newly established Academy of Music in 1875. It seems that the demise of the *Zenészet* Lapok was due to some extent to the editor's decision to devote his full activity to the new institution. After some years in this function Ábrányi may have become somewhat dissatisfied for the post of secretary required a great deal of purely administrative work. Moreover, as a teacher he was not awarded the full professorship he expected. These elements may have led him to turn back to the editorial work he so much appreciated.

Kornél Ábrányi sen., a leading personality of 19th century Hungarian music life, was born in 1822 in Szent-György Ábrány (Szabolcs county). The fact that he was born into a noble family – whose original name was Eördögh and which only in 1843 adopted the "Ábrányi" name – insured a high level of cultural upbringing for the child who was mostly interested in music. After early and systematic music studies, Kornél Ábrányi at the age of 21 undertook extensive studies in Western Europe. In Munich he made the acquaintance of Franz Liszt, and became one of his most devoted friends and admirers. Later in Paris, he took piano lessons from Chopin and Kalkbrenner. His piano studies were continued and finished in 1846 in Vienna with Joseph Fischhof. In 1847 he returned to Hungary.

Although Kornél Ábrányi was an excellent pianist who also worked as a composer, his greatest contribution is clearly that of his work as music critic and editor. After having realized that the development of musical life in Hungary was dependent in part upon an active musical press, he founded – with Mihály Mosonyi, István Bartalus and Gyula

Rózsavölgyi – the first Hungarian music periodical, entitled *Zenészet*i Lapok. In addition, he played an important role in the organization of Hungarian musical institutions: in 1865, he launched a movement for organizing an annual “country-wide chorus festival”; in 1867, he established in Arad the “Country-wide Hungarian Choral Society. In the early 70s, he was seriously involved in the efforts to found the Academy of Music. And, after its creation in 1875, he was awarded an appropriate position – under Franz Liszt’s presidency and Ferenc Erkel’s directorship – as the Academy’s secretary. However, the purely secretarial functions of this position as mentioned earlier, proved less than satisfying, and interfered with his previously productive editorial and literary activity.

In addition to his editorial activity at the two aforementioned music periodicals – which included a great deal of writing of signed and unsigned articles, studies, reviews and news-, Kornél Ábrányi also carried on extensive journalist activities in many non-music journals, such as *Pesti Napló*, *Magyar Sajtó*, *Pester Lloyd*, *Fővárosi Lapok*, *Kelet Népe*, *Magyarország*, *Családi Kör*, *Athenaeum*, *Alföld*, *Ország-Világ*, *Magyar Salon*, and *Budapesti Hírlap*. As a devotee of Chopin, Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner, he made ceaseless effort to have their works accepted in Hungary and in this way to establish a high level of Hungarian musical culture. Among his many books and writings that deserve special mention are widely used textbooks: *Zenészet*i aesthetika (1877) [Music aesthetics], *A magyar dal és zene sajátosságai* (1877) [Features of the Hungarian song and music], and *Általános zenetörténet* (1886) [A general history of music]. Moreover, Ábrányi was the first to sum up from a scholarly perspective 19th century Hungarian musical history (*Jellemképek a magyar zenevilágból*, *A magyar zene a 19-ik században* [Character portraits from the world of Hungarian music, Hungarian music in the 19th century, both 1900). He died on 20 December 1903 in Budapest.

While when editing the *Zenészet*i Lapok Ábrányi could rely on a group of fine musicians as Mosonyi, Bartalus, Szénfy, and Rózsavölgyi, he found himself rather alone at the head of the *Zenészet*i Közlöny. Among the contributors from the earlier journal, only Károly Megyeri’s and Viktor Vajda’s names are to be found in the new publication, and these in abbreviated forms (see list of pseudonyms and initials). The new contributors, mainly the leaders and officers of the Country-wide Choral Society, include e.g. Ede Bartay, Emil Kovárcz. They no doubt helped Ábrányi in producing the journal, but they were not musicologists or critics. They functioned professionally as choir masters or organizers of the aforementioned choral society.

The journal consisted of eight pages in a rather large (33 x 24 cm) format. On the title page, below the title and subtitles, regular information is found concerning editor and publisher, and the editorial and publishing office [Budapest, Dorottya utca 2. II. 49.]. Also on the title page are references to two music publishers: Rózsavölgyi & Comp. and Tábornszky & Parsch at whose offices subscriptions could be obtained. While a relationship between the journal and these publishers has not been established, their publications are frequently reviewed in the *Zenészet*i Közlöny.

The journal's first pages are regularly devoted to a question of general interest such as the musical life in Hungary or the goals of the choral society. One or two articles follow dealing with historical or theoretical subjects. In the permanent column entitled "tárca" (feuilleton) there are no literary writings, but rather biographical sketches of composers or surveys of single periods of music history. Since the journal is, as a matter of fact, the official bulletin of the Country-wide Choral Society and of other singing and music associations, their communications and reports naturally appear in the journal. Finally, there are four regularly recurring columns; namely, one offering reviews of published music, another concert reviews, a third news from the country and, finally, news from abroad. The last page regularly contains advertisements.

In Ábrányi's editorial work his personal commitment to Franz Liszt is clearly manifested. Liszt's arrival, departure, and activities in Hungary are recurring first subjects in the news column. A commitment to the Budapest Academy of Music is also evident in these columns.

Through the Country-wide Choral Society, Ábrányi had an extended information network at his disposal, and accordingly, news of this society regularly appears in the news columns. Here we find not only a detailed picture of the individual – sometimes rather small – towns' musical activities, but also letters and reviews, written by local correspondents, about concerts and other musical events. Ábrányi noticeably also strove to provide his readers with news from Europe's significant music centers. As he had very few correspondents from abroad, he took his information from the foreign musical press. He worked with a small number of Hungarian contributors, and wrote many articles himself. In order to keep this secret, most articles are unsigned or signed with a pseudonym or initials. Following is a list of the pseudonyms and initials identified.

Ábrányi Kornél id.	á., á. k., ák, r. l., ..i ..l., Radamanthos
Megyeri Károly	mk., m. k.
Vajda Viktor	V., v. v.
Zoltay Lajos	...ys.

For preparing this catalogue, we used the copy of *Zenészeti Közlöny* to be found in the National Széchényi Library, to our present knowledge the only one complete in the country. It must be mentioned that in the Catalogue the text is quoted as it appears in the journal (i.e. a dotted "i" or "ü" might today appear as "í" and "ű"). In bracketed editorial commentary and in the leadterms in the Index today's orthography is employed.