

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *EIN FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT* IN MUSIC LITERATURE

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SUMMARY. Luther was a prophetic personality, meaning he was first and foremost a preacher. He viewed also singing rather as a practical form of preaching. He considered that the liturgical tradition and liturgical order of the Middle Ages was correct and worthy to be kept. He intended merely to remove from it some pieces and texts that were not in accordance with the Gospel. He made preaching in the vernacular languages a compulsory and crucial element of the worship. Due to his reform the congregation became an active participant to the worship by responding in his vernacular language, by singing and praying to the word that was preached. Seeing that there was a lack in proper hymns, Luther undertook himself the tasks of composing hymns. He was mainly the lyricist, but he took part also in the reformation of the tunes adapted from the Middle Age melodies. Luther's hymn entitled *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* is known worldwide and it is a paraphrase of Psalm 46. There are numerous artistic adaptations to this popular tune. In the following I will present some of these.

Keywords: The Reformation, liturgical tradition, vernacular hymns, the Protestant chorale, artistic adaptations.

The Reformation, which had a strong impact on the entire Europe, brought significant changes also in religious life. The reformers who recognized the true teaching of the Gospel wanted to renew the liturgy. Instead of the sacrifice of the mass the Word of God itself, instead of the passive listening to the liturgy the active participation in congregational life was favoured both in worship and singing. The first products of the Reformation were translations of the Bible and vernacular hymns. Luther played an outstanding part in creating the latter.

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1. The reform of Luther and hymns

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben in 1483. He began his studies in the general school of Mansfeld and in the school of the Dome of Magdeburg. Since 1498 he continued his studies in Eisenach at the school of the Franciscan Order. Then he studied philology, logics, astronomy and music at the University of Erfurt. Due to his excellent grades his fellow students called him „the philosopher”, but since he also played the lute well, he was also called „the musician”. Legend has it that in the summer of 1505 on his way home a great storm came down upon the place he was at and since he was scared to death he prayed for help to the protector saint of the miners and vowed that if he was spared he would become a monk. On 18th July 1505 he entered St. Augustine’s Monastery. He was priested in 1507. In 1512 he became professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg.

Luther was so greatly scandalized by the abuses he experienced in church services and ecclesiastical life that he wrote and on 31st October 1517, exactly 500 years ago, published his Ninety-Five Theses, which sparkled the Reformation. The reaction of the Catholic Church was that the Pope excommunicated him in 1521. At that point Frederic III, Elector of Saxony decided to give Luther a helping hand. Luther was taken to Wartburg where he translated in merely three months the New Testament of the Bible from Greek to German. Luther finished the translation of the entire Bible in 1534. And even though this was the eighteenth German translation of the Bible, his version stood the test of time and became the generally accepted German translation of the Bible.² Some of his most important principles were that man can be justified only through faith and that there is no difference between a layman and a priest. He died in 1546 and was buried in the Church of Wittenberg.

Luther was a prophetic personality, meaning he was first and foremost a preacher. He viewed also singing rather as a practical form of preaching. His principles regarding ecclesiastical singing and music are summarized in the introduction to the collection of hymns edited by him.³ Luther held that

² His other writings: in 1529 he wrote the Small Catechism for children and the uneducated people; while the Large Catechism was meant for pastors containing theological writings, principles and instructions.

³ His first collection, created in Wittenberg, but published in Nürnberg in 1524 contained eight hymns in four tunes. The title: *Etlich Cristlich lider Lobgesang, und Psalm dem rainen wort Gottes gemess*. Among the further editions, containing an increasing number of songs the most important are: *Erfurter Enchiridion* (Erfurt 1524, with 25 hymns in the first edition, among them 15 tunes and with an addition of 8 more hymns in the following edition); *Geistliche gesangk Buchleyen* (the hymnbook of Johann Walther, Wittenberg 1524, this was the first harmonized German hymnbook); *Geistliche gesenge ... durch Doctor Martini Luther*

music is a gift from God which can have an effect on our mood, it can affect our personalities and it has an extremely important role in pedagogy.⁴

He considered that the liturgical tradition and liturgical order of the Middle Ages was correct and worthy to be kept. He intended merely to remove from it some pieces and texts that were not in accordance with the Gospel. He made preaching in the vernacular languages a compulsory and crucial element of the worship. Due to his reform the congregation became an active participant to the worship by responding in his vernacular language, by singing and praying to the word that was preached. Luther urged that *besides* the artistically formed and elaborated songs of the priests, of the liturgians, of the cantors and of the choirs, the entire congregation would be included into singing at the worship. Lacking the multi-annual musical training of the clergy, it was impossible for the believers to learn the Gregorian hymns in Latin or the many and varied pieces of mass music, all sounding beautifully and being in several voices.⁵ Therefore Luther himself created the Protestant chorale, the reformed hymn.

At the worship, Luther wanted to keep besides congregational singing also the service of the choir. He liked music, knew how to play the lute beautifully and he composed hymns and even choral pieces in several voices. He was an admirer of organ music; however he did not consider the organ to be fit to be used in the liturgy.⁶

(Wittenberg 1525); *Klug's Gesangbuch* named after the publisher (1529); *Geistliche Lieder auff's neu gebessert* (Wittenberg 1533); the next year an edition in Magdeburg in the local dialect; *Geystliche leder, uppert nye gebetert tho Wittemberg dorch D. Martin Luther*. The extended edition of the *Klug's Gesangbuch*, which contains 52 reformer hymns and the same number of tunes was completed in 1535. Luther's most complete collection was published in 1545 at Valentin Babst in Leipzig. He wrote a new introduction to this hymnbook. The title: *Geistliche Lieder mit einer newen vorrhede Dr. Mart. Luth*. This hymnbook is called after the publisher the *Babstches Gesangbuch*. It contains 128 hymns. This last hymnbook was published after a personal check by Luther himself and with his introduction, therefore this is usually considered the norm as far as the lyrics of the reformer hymns is concerned. Luther made corrections to several of his own hymns during this series of editions.

⁴ See: Csomasz Tóth Kálmán, *A református gyülekezeti éneklés (Ecclesiastical Singing in the Reformed Church)*, published by the Egyetemes Konvent, Budapest, 1950, 32. (RGYE)

⁵ The liturgical order published by Luther in 1523 in Wittenberg is written entirely in Latin and preserved all the elements of a Middle Age mass. He omitted only several elements from the part referring to the Eucharist, the so called mass canon, elements, which he considered not to be in the spirit of the Gospel. Only preaching and the singing of hymns were vernacular. Wittenberg was a university town. And as such Luther deemed important for the students of the university that they would practice Latin also at the worship.

⁶ In the century of the Reformation there was a heavy debate on whether the organ should be used in the liturgy or not. Zwingli from Switzerland did not allow the organ to be used. The Dutch reformers kept the organ, but only for concerts, it was not used during worship.

Reformation cannot be an end in itself. Reformation means to be formed according to the Word of God. Luther composed the hymns not merely for his own amusement; it was a conscientious program of his activity as a reformer. He meant to *sing* the message of the Gospel into the hearts and minds of people.

2. Hymns by Luther

Seeing that there was a lack in proper hymns, Luther undertook himself the tasks of composing hymns. He was mainly the lyricist, but he took part also in the reformation of the tunes adapted from the Middle Age melodies. His most important collaborators in this endeavour were with: Johannes Agricola (1494–1566), Paul Speratus (1484–1551), Johann Poliander (1487–1541), Justus Jonas (1493–1555) and Paul Eber (1511–1569). From among the music specialists he valued Johannes Walther (1496–1570), the organ player of Torgau the most. It is considered that he and some of his fellows were the ones who composed the nice tunes of the Reformation. The new lyrics were sometimes adapted to proper lay tunes, but these tunes were adapted as well. Luther and Walther had a special method of reforming the Middle Age tunes for the purpose of creating hymns for the congregation. They simplified the inflections of the tune, they kept the basic notes, thus forming solid, Puritan and yet very expressive tunes.

Tradition holds it that there are 33 hymns in the case of which it is certain that Luther is the author. The specialized literature classifies his hymns into two main groups: original hymns and adaptations. Research has shown that there are 6 original hymn, but also 7 of his psalms can be considered original. The rest were created either following texts from the Scripture or they are translations of some Latin hymns from the Middle Ages or they are adaptations of some Latin songs and sometimes they are educated variations of the German folk songs.

One of the most well-known chorales of Luther is the paraphrase of *the Lord's Prayer: Vater unser in Himmelreich*. Its tune was published for the first time in 1539 in Leipzig. This can be found in its original six-lined version and also in a seven-lined version where the first line is repeated in

Among the Germans there were people both in favour and opposing the organ. Even the Synod of Trent (1545–1563) discussed the problem of the legitimacy of instrumental music at worship. These debates came to a resolution among German Lutherans only at the end of the century of the Reformation. Luther was long dead, when in 1597 at the University of Wittemberg the theological standing was formulated that using the organ during worship was a good and edifying thing.

the hymn book of Huszár Gál.⁷ The two variants had two separate lyrics (*Atya Istentől született [Born from God the Father]* and *Mi Atyánk ki vagy mennyekben [Our Father Who Are in Heaven]*),⁸ and they were parallelly sung by the congregations. Starting with the 17th century only the six-lined variant remained in use with a new lyrics adaptation: *Mennybéli felséges Isten [Great Lord of Heavens]*. This variant is present in the scored hymn book of Kolozsvár both from the 18th and the 20th century.⁹ This hymn is sung with these lyrics even today.

One of the most prominent hymns by Luther is the paraphrase of Psalm 130: *From depths of woe I cry to You – Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu dir*. In Transylvania this paraphrase was included only in the latest hymnbook, even though both its tune and its lyrics are popular throughout the world, especially among German Lutherans. Also great masters of ecclesiastical music have adapted it to many musical pieces.

A less known chorale is *We Now Implore the Holy Ghost - Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*. The first stanza and the tune were well-known already in the 13th century, moreover Berthold of Regensburg (?-1272) one of the famous preachers of the German Middle Ages mentions it several times in his writings left to posterity and recommends it to be sung. Some researchers state that the tune is even earlier than that.¹⁰ To this hymn Luther adds the second, third and fourth stanzas. It was first published in its complete form in a collection of hymns for funeral in 1542.¹¹ The hymn was translated twice, but neither variant survived the test of time. The tune was allocated two new lyrics already in the 16th century: *Hallgass meg minket, nagy Úristen [Hear Us Lord Almighty]*, published in the Hymnbook of Várad (1566) and *Adj Úristen nekünk Szentlelket [Give Us Your Holy Spirit oh Lord]* which is found in the Hymnbook of Huszár Gál. These lyrics were coupled with a slightly localized version of the original tune.

A rarely sung and very little-known piece is *Jézus, ó mi idvezítőnk [Jesus Our Saviour]*. The original title is: *Jesus Christus unser Heiland* – originally it was a Leise song for Easter. Its free Hungarian translation is present in every Reformed hymnbook from the end of the 16th century to the beginning of the 19th century. Even Kájoni included it in his hymnbook.

⁷ Komjáti, 1574.

⁸ Csomasz Tóth Kálmán, *A XVI. század magyar dallamai (The Hungarian Tunes of the 16th Century)*, Régi magyar dallamok tára, I, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1958, 520. In the following: RMDT I.

⁹ Kolozsvár 1744/9, 1778/77, 1923/38, 1996/337. Variants are not mentioned in RMDT I–II.

¹⁰ According to Baumker the tune originates from the sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus et emitte coelitus*. RMDT I., 516.

¹¹ Csomasz Tóth Kálmán, *A református gyülekezeti éneklés (Ecclesiastical Singing in the Reformed Church)*, Egyetemes Konvent, Budapest, 1950, 88.

Another little-known hymn is *Jer Krisztus népe nagy vígan [Come Followers of Christ Let Us Rejoice]*. The original title is: *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein...*

As I mentioned earlier, some of the hymns of Luther are translations or adaptations of Latin lyrics from pre-Reformation times. Luther uses a variant of the antiphon *Da pacem Domine (Give Us Peace)* whose poetic form is almost identical with the tune of the hymn *Veni Redemptor*. The hymnbook presents it in a variant extended to five lines. It has been handed on through many centuries with slight modifications. And the chorale by Luther entitled *Erhalt uns, Herr [Keep us, Lord, faithful to your word]* is an adaptation of the same Gregorian hymn. It is published in the Hymnbook of Huszár Gál of 1574 and in the collection of hymns entitled *Cantus Catholici* with Hungarian lyrics starting *Úr Isten te tarts meg minket [Lord Keep Us Faithful]*.

Luther's famous Christmas hymn, the *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her [From Heaven Above to Earth I Come]* originates from a Middle Age hymn in major key with a descending melodic line. It was published in Hungary for the first time in the 17th century, in Ráday's Gradual (1596-1607). Later it was extended with an initial stanza: *Es kam ein Engel hell und klar*, translated into Hungarian: *Az Istennek szent angyala [the Holy Angel of the Lord]*. The later editions of the Reformed hymn books preserved it with these latter lyrics. The hymn was noted in Hungarian for the first time in the Gradual of Eperjes in 1635.¹² Through time some parts of the tune were slightly altered. The popularity of the hymn is proven by the numerous folk song variants in the Christmas repertory of the folk.

The first stanza of **Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord –Komm heiliger Geist, Herre Gott** originates from the antiphon *Veni Sancte Spiritu* of the 11-12th centuries and Luther wrote and added another two stanzas to it. The Hungarian translation of this lyrics was published relatively late, in 1642, in the hymnbook of Váradi.

The *Media vita* in the *Életünknek rendiben [Order of Our Lives]* is a liturgical piece from the Middle Ages and also an antiphon for the Lent adapted by Luther.

3. The Significance of Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott in Music Literature

Luther's hymn entitled **A Mighty Fortress Is Our God– Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott** is known worldwide and it is a paraphrase of Psalm 46.

¹² RMDT II/85.

E.g. 1

Ein fe - ste Burg ist un - ser Gott, ein gu - te Wehr und Waf - fen. Der
Er hilft uns frei aus al - ler Not, die uns jetzt hat be - trof - fen.
alt bö - se Feind, mit Ernst ers jetzt meint; groß Macht und viel List sein
grau - sam Rü - stung ist, auf Erd ist nicht seins glei - chen.

Luther's hymn: *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*

It was first published both lyrics and tune in 1529 for the first time and it quickly became popular. According to Péter Bod, the Hungarian translation belongs to Máté Skaricza.¹³ However the beautiful and powerful Hungarian version assigned a syllable to every note of the curved melody, therefore in the Hungarian Reformed Church this hymn is sung in a long-drawn and harmonized manner, unlike the generally accepted form. The new Reformed hymnbook edited in 1996 publishes two variants: the first one is a variant with the lyrics translated by Sándor Payr, a translation accepted by Hungarian Lutherans and a tune with simple rhythm, initial upbeat and melisma, more popular since the 18th century due mainly to its adaptations by J.S. Bach; the second variant is the one well-known from Transylvanian hymn books starting with a stressed time unite and without a melisma. There is also a translation of the lyrics created by Hungarian poet Attila József, but that is published only in the hymn book of the Hungarian Lutheran Church of Transylvania.

This hymn belongs to the class of choral pieces having a repeated introductory part. Its structure is: A B A B C D E F B. There are numerous artistic adaptations to this popular tune by Luther. In the following I will present some of these.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) adapts the chorale entitled *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* in his *Cantata no. 80*, the so-called *Reformation Day Cantata*. The musical piece was written for soprano, alto, tenor and bass solos, for choir, for orchestra and for continuo. It was first presented in

¹³ Bod Péter, *Magyar Athenas (The Hungarian Athenas)*, II Edition, T3 Kiadó, Sepsiszentgyörgy, 2003, 278.

its actual form in 1730. When composing the *Reformation Day Cantata*, Bach used the material of an earlier cantata composed in 1716 in Weimar for the so-called *Oculi* Sunday and added to it other two movements: opening choir no. 1 and chorale no. 5.

The opening choir (1st movement) is according to Péter Várnai "the apex of the choir fugue artistry of Bach"¹⁴. The fugue-like adaptation of the A and B lines of the chorale tune starts in the tenor followed by the alto, the soprano and finally the bass. Besides the tumultuous musical fabric the chorale tune distinctly voiced by the oboe and the trumpet can be heard and caught from time to time. In the adaptation of the next melodic line, C the sequence of the voices is changed: the fugue starts with the low pitch voice, the bass, followed by the tenor, the alt and the soprano. The instruments join the musical text in a fugue-like manner as well. In this movement Bach adapts each melodic line of the chorale in a separate fugue. However, the distinct parts are joined so perfectly that the listener is under the impression that they constitute a compact unit. In the musical texture of the bass aria (2nd movement) two separate tunes come together: one is the tune of the bass solo accompanied by the voice of the violins and the violas moving in the rhythm of the sixteenth notes and creating an atmosphere of excitement; the other tune is Luther's hymn sung by the soprano voice of the choir. Bach interweaves these two tunes with great mastery.

The tunes of the recitativo and of the aria (3rd and 4th movement) are not an adaptation of Luther's chorale, but the Chorale movement (5th movement) is. Bach inserts into the tumultuous musical fabric of the orchestra moving to the rhythm of the sixteenth notes the tune of the chorale itself in unisono, with a rhythm of lengthy, even notes as it is habitual to be sung in the church. The next part (6th and 7th movement) starts with the recitativo of the tenor accompanied by the organ and the strings. Next comes the duet of the oboe da caccia and of the violin whose musical tenure is a nice completion of the tune of the alto-tenor solo. In the Closing chorale (8th movement) Luther's hymn resonates in four voices with an equalized rhythm. On the occasions when this piece is played during a liturgy, the closing chorale can be sung also by the congregation, for Luther's greatest endeavour was that the congregation would not be a mere passive listener of the liturgy, but an active participant.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) includes the tune of the chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* into the musical fabric of Op. 107, the V. Symphony in D major. The musical piece is known as *The Symphony of the Reformation* and it is one of Mendelssohn's early works. However, it was

¹⁴ Várnai Péter, *Oratóriumok könyve (Book of Oratorios)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1983, 92.

published quite late, more than 20 years after the composer's death. The first melodic line resounds on the gentle voice of the flute, in the second melodic line the flute is joined by the oboe. During the repetition of the first part the bassoons and then sequentially all the wooden reeds join in. In the second part of the tune the tumultuous play of the strings comes into the front, while the last melodic lines emphasize rather the metallic tone of the brasses. The next part, the elaboration starts with a vigorous tempo and in a fugue-like manner in which we find the repetitive motif from the introductory part of the chorale played by various instruments. After a longer transitional part we arrive at the second part of the chorale's tune. It starts with the viola, then the tune is taken over by the clarinet, while the instruments of the orchestra provide a soft staccato and pizzicato accompaniment. The closing melodic curve is played already by the wooden reeds. After a gradual crescendo there is another fugue-like part during which the initial repetitive motif resounds again played by the brasses. And at the end of a short accelerando part, as a closure there resounds the powerful, mighty tune of the chorale.

German composer Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864) inserts the tune of the chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* into the musical fabric of his opera entitled *Les Huguenots*. The opera was finished after three years of thorough work, in 1836. It was first brought on stage in Paris. The libretto of this grand opera in five acts was written by Augustin Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) and Emile de Sain Armand Deschamps (1791-1871). The action of the opera takes place during the St. Bartholomew Day's Massacre of 1572. It is based on a novel by Prosper Mérimée entitled *Chronicles of Charles the IXth's Reign*. The plot of the opera is woven by two defining elements: the fight between Catholics and Protestants and the love between the Huguenot youth, Raoul de Nangist and Valentine, the daughter of Comte de Saint Bris, a Catholic. The famous Lutheran chorale is included already in the orchestral prelude. In the first act it is sung by Marcel, Raoul's Huguenot servant who distrusts the Catholic friends of his master. In the fifth act the tune of *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* is sung by the women who have taken refuge from the massacre in the temple. They are massacred mercilessly by the fanatic mob. One of the peaks of the fifth act is when Marcel blesses the lovers and asks that they would confess their faith. This image peaks musically with the unisono play of the *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Critics say that Meyerbeer's work incorporates features from the opera culture of three nations: the Italian melody, the French rhythm and the German harmony.¹⁵ This highly popular musical piece was translated into many languages.

¹⁵ Till Géza, *Opera (Opera)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1985, 218-219.

After these three-monumental works also instrumental adaptations of Luther's hymn need to be analyzed. The following compositions for organ should be mentioned: *Phantasy in C major* by German composer and musicologist Michael Praetorius (1571-1621); *Fughetta in D major* by German composer and organ player Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706); *Choral adaptation in C major* by Johann Nikolaus Hanff (1665-1711) and *Choral adaptation in D major* by German composer and organ player Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748). These compositions for organ, which were probably played once during the Lutheran liturgy can be used freely in the Protestant liturgy. Composers adapted the tune in two tonalities: D major and C major. All fourth pieces are polyphonic adaptations. The fugue theme starts in the tonic, the elaboration starts in three of the pieces on an adominant note, while at Praetorius on a subdominant note, i.e. the lower fifth. Analyzing the distance at which the voices join in we find a stretto at Walther and Hanff. Pachelbel adapts only the first melodic line of the chorale, while the other composers adapt all the melodic lines. The lowest voice of the adaptations in four voices is played by the pedalboard, except in Walther's work, which was written for a manual.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)'s composition adapting Luther's hymn was written for two manuals and a pedalboard. One of the distinctive features of this composition in D major is that the composer constantly changes the basic unit of the chorale's rhythm: in the first measures of the piece the basic unit is the eight notes, then the quarter note and starting with the second half of the composition it is the half note. The first part of the organ piece (the adaptation of melodic lines A and B from the chorale) is written for two voices and only for one manual. The tune of the chorale is embraced by a counter voice based on sixteenth notes. In the second part the choral extends to three voices. The voice of the pedalboard appears. The composer hides melodic lines C and F interweaving them into the sixteenth notes of the upper voices; and at the same time he brings forward melodic lines D and E, these being played by the low pedalboard voice. The recurring B melodic line is present in the two upper voices. In the closing measures of the composition having a pulsation worthy of a virtuoso the voices go on parallely, at a distance of third and sixth above an organ like maintained tune, then, in the last measure the composition closes on a quick passage of a thirty second note unit.

Max Reger (1873-1916) was a German composer, pianist, organ player and conductor. He was famous for his compositions for organ. These were played by his friend, Karl Staube who was the organist of the St. Thomas Church of Leipzig. Reger preferred Baroque genres (chorale prelude, phantasia, passacaglia, fugue), but he developed these according to his own imagination. He adapted the tune of *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* in

two variants. One of the variants is a simple one, it could be considered even a mere accompaniment of a hymn, for the main voice is played by the pedalboard, where it can be well heard and the upper voices move within the chords. The other adaptation is a grand composition, Phantasy in D major, Op. 27. In the tumultuous musical fabric, the tune of the chorale is always well distinguished. For example, in the first part having a tempo of *Allegro vivace*, the tune of the chorale resounds mightily between the two virtuoso extreme voices in the voice of the left hand.

In the middle part having a tempo of *Piu meno mosso* the main tune is played by the pedalboard. After a transition with rich chromatics, complicated rhythmical pattern and quite difficult and varied as far as technique is concerned the tune of the chorale starts in the upper voice of the pedalboard which contains two independent voices, then it moves to the voice of the right hand moving in parallel octaves. In the closing part of the musical piece there is a grandiose fugue in which the melodic lines of the chorale move from voice to voice.

Finally, two pieces written by Hungarian composer and organ player Gárdonyi Zoltán (1906-1986) need to be mentioned. One of the pieces is a short composition of merely 21 measures, in D major, having the tempo of *Marziale* and written for manual. In this musical piece the composer places melodic lines A and B of Luther's chorale alternately in the upper and lower voice. But the second part of the tune (melodic lines CDEFB) is played only by the lower voice. A specific trait of the accompanying voices is the presence of the triolas and eight notes with counter time, which provides an exposition for the main tune. The other piece was written for the manual and the pedalboard in C major. This piece also presents the special rhythmical elements mentioned above: binary and ternary rhythm patterns, series of motifs with counter time, syncopes and metrical changes. In the varied harmony which is salient the altered notes and chords play an important role.

As a conclusion it can be stated that although Luther's musical reform may seem modest as far as quantity is concerned, but it is highly significant. As a result of his encouragement and example one of the most valuable chapters of the Christian musical compositions, the circle of the German Lutheran liturgical genre: the chorale was constantly enriched. These pieces reflect a pure, biblical message and a simple manner of presentation. The tunes adapt to the folklore-like lyrics and show the features of folklorized gregorians on the one hand and of the independently evolving German lied on the other hand. Their influence was crucial to the development of Western art music and of European ecclesiastical music. In the Hungarian culture it influenced mostly the formation of the musical asset of the Lutheran Church and at a lesser extent and later in time that of the Reformed Church.

Translated by Borbély Bartalis Zsuzsa

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