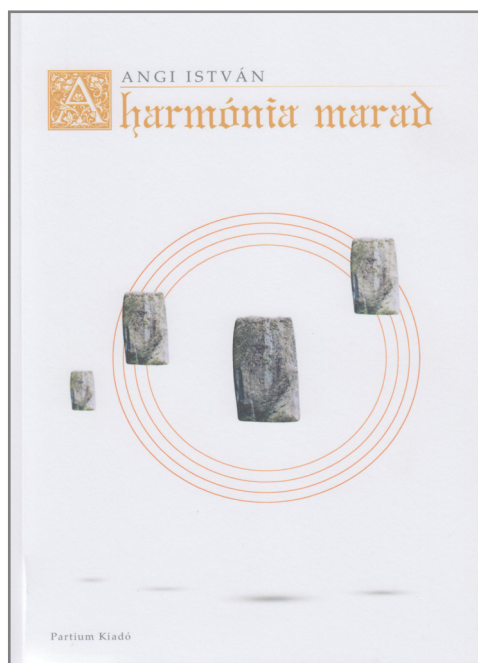


BOOK REVIEW

PROTECTING THE HARMONY – THOUGHTS ON THE MARGIN OF ANGI ISTVÁN'S BOOK ABOUT AESTHETIC PIETY (ANGI ISTVÁN: A HARMÓNIA MARAD, PARTIUM KIADÓ, NAGYVÁRAD, 2013)



Seems like it was only yesterday, when we have celebrated the 70th birthday of the restless and prolific music esthetician from Cluj-Napoca, Angi István, with the presentation of his book edited by the Polis Publishing, entitled *The models of the musical beauty*. Since then a decade has gone, but not in vain, since the author contributed consistently with Romanian and Hungarian works to the domestic literature of music aesthetics, otherwise not too abundant. While these books develop certain aspects of the author's well-known grotesque-transcendent aesthetic system, including its adaptation to the modern and contemporary musical art, the esthetician returns in this

jubilee publication to the main subject of the already mentioned book entitled *The holiest music*. The sacred field of the sound art situated beyond the proper aesthetic, which became for Angi István a lifelong revelation in the catching beauty of the transcendence music experience from the childhood lauds to the practice of Gregorian chant in the recent past, gives birth to this book solely devoted to the aesthetic piety.

It is remarkable the devotion of the author to the care and urge on the church music in the gentler sense of the word, reckoned by him as a sanctuary, a second musical mother tongue, attitude reflected also in the metaphorical waving of the book's title, *The harmony remains*, as an

evocation of Goethe's famous maxim regarding the inner relationship between music and architecture. As once, in the mythical times, the lute play of Orpheus was proclaiming the harmonic power of music, our most holy music – in the millennial Christian tradition – spans the unbridgeable gap between heaven and earth, giving sense beyond the barriers of the thoughts to our transcendental relation in the sacredness of the purest piety.

„The *sound* of the music dies away *but the harmony remains*” – writes Goethe. Though this maxim sums up primarily the prolific aesthetic relationships of music and architecture, Angi István, by placing it in the context of the present book emphasizes the sacred dimension of the sound art, proclaiming at the same time its harmonic power, both in national and confessional sense: “Goethe's thoughts impresses in the world of psalms in a double manner. They protect both our Christian faith and true fairness in the mutual conditioning of their transcendent and aesthetic values.”

The two studies of this volume seize each a very significant chapter of the history of aesthetic piety: the first one examines the structural changes of the psalm singing from the former synagogue chant, through the lauds to Kodály's settings, which evoke the protestant psalmody tradition; the second is a comprehensive effort toward the unlocking of the sacred symbolic hidden in the ethos structure of the Gregorian chant.

The significance of Angi István's work points however beyond the historic-aesthetic exploration of these two subjects. Since the author's effort reaches its original aim – beyond the facilitation of understanding – only by bringing a contribution to the sustenance of the authentic church singing rooted in our millennial traditions, whether catholic or protestant, Latin or Hungarian. Let's protect our songs in order to be protected by them as a stronghold! Let's sing our most sacred chants to evoke our values carried by them in order to reinforce our Christian and Hungarian faith! Since – quoting the author – “Only our own remains ours! Let's keep the harmony as our own.” This is, however, our common mission!

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