

**University of Theatre and Film Arts  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

# **MUSIC-STAGE-LYRICS**

**THE INVESTIGATION OF THE OPERA PARAPHRASE  
TITLED „MAGÁBAN BESZÉL”, THROUGH THE LENSES OF  
NÁDASDY KÁLMÁN’S CREATIVE AND ART  
PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES**

**THESES OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

**SZABOLCS ZOLTÁN MÁTYÁSSY  
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Supervisor:

<b>Dr. habil. Zsófia Tallér</b> University professor
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**Dr. Rita Termes**  
Associate professor

## **I. The antecedent of the research**

Due to Nádasy's extensive professional career, and his past reaching across several artforms and institutions, I had the presumption that I will have a significant amount of background material and resources to aid my research. In fact, it can be said that the exact opposite was true. It is perfectly clear, that Nádasy never spoke about his pedagogical character, analyses of his lectures, educational topics, and made only a few public statements. Every subject that I have interviewed on this topic agreed that this was a conscious and intentional of his part.

At the same time, it can be said that a lot of people spoke about him, mentioned his name and cited him. I thought and hoped that, like his contemporary Walter Felsenstein, Nádasy also published art professional and theatre pedagogical works of art and exhaustive musical theatre essays. While I did not get find any significantly helpful professional publications, I did acquire plenty of thought provoking, sometimes factual and practical writings which I could utilise later. The obvious reason for the lack of resources is Kálmán Nádasy himself, who – based on the trusted sources I discovered during my research – did not want his professional instructions, pedagogical views or personal life to be documented. Thus, in the beginning I approached the legacy of Nádasy through anecdotal remembrances, but later on, thanks to accumulated resources and specific segments of research, the list of available materials became longer.

## **II. Sources and methods**

My first experience during the research for sources was that in the *Arcanum* digital database near 32 thousand results appear next to Kálmán Nádasy's name. Thus, this became one of my primary source collections, this is what I used to try and reconstruct the background related to Nádasy's life and thoughts. From the series of interviews processed during the research phase, Nádasy's conversations with Marianne Gách from the columns of the "*Film Színház Muzsika*" stand out. It is here, where one can observe the best (and perhaps sole) documented instance of the rare Nádasy attitude, where next to the professional and factual statements, his personal touch and humanity also appears. The same digital database contained other professional analysis from Géza Fodor, Tibor Tallián and Miklós Dolinszky which were extremely valuable during various chapters of my dissertation. However, the broadest and most comprehensive text is György Lengyel's writing titled "*Mire nézvést?*" from 2004 where he commemorates Nádasy through several pages while touching upon his master's main creative fields. In addition to digitized press and internet citations, my primary sources were of course consisting mainly of printed writings. In a significant portion of the books, it is (almost) the same few

anecdotal stories from Nádasy's life which appear again and again, but oftentimes imprecisely, and in opposition with one another. The opposite of this, is the "*A Budapesti Operaház 100 éve*", which was published under the editing of Géza Staud, where writings supported by data and numerical facts can be found.

From an institution historical standpoint, it was Márton Karczag's "*Aranykalickában*", István Nánay's "*Tanodától – egyetemig*" and the book "*Az Operaház története kezdetektől napjainkig*" edited by Márton Devich, that served as my main inspiration. In reconstructing lectures by Nádasy, Károly Kazimir's "*Színház a Városligetben és egyéb történetek*" and Klára Huszár's thorough analysis of Nádasy's conception of opera directing ("*Nádasy Kálmán. In: Operarendezés*"), where she presents the innovative directorial ideas that are characteristic of Nádasy through the use of sheet music examples, which she learned on the side of her master. A few other writings that contributed to the final form of my dissertations and are worth mentioning are: György Szirtes's "*Színház a Broadway-n*", Miklós Szinetár's "*Mester és tanítvány*", Judit Sándor's "*Nádasy, az operarendező*", Ferenc Bessenyei's "*A mester*", Ernő Polgár's "*Nádasy Kálmán*" and János Elbert's "*Nádasy Kálmán*". A complex task of my research period was to process the complete Nádasy heritage, which is located in the Hungarian Theatre Museum and Institute, stored in six boxes and includes Nádasy's personal letters and other documents. Conversations, and Oral History (OH) interviews were also of big help. A key interview for my research was given by László Marton, who spoke about Nádasy, providing extremely useful background material, touching on his childhood, his years as an opera house, his arrangements and his professional legacy.

My conversations with György Lengyel also contain very important elements, where we specifically discussed Nádasy's educational activities, the opera house's nimbus, his followers and enemies and about understanding the underlying details of the almost finished Nádasy book. Miklós Szinetár spoke about Nádasy's instructions, his enchantment with Kodály and Ady, while Mária Fekete spoke about their common music lessons and the musical reform of the College.

With opera singer Júlia Vajda, we performed a detailed analysis of the adequate musical points of the play, examining Nádasy's musical, translational and vocal solutions, while with conductor Szabolcs Sándor we analyzed the musical dramaturgical effect of translation. I was able to incorporate all of these experiences during the writing of my opera oratorio "*Magában beszél*" thus my masterpiece became the origin of my dissertation, it is here from where I approached the Nádasy legend.

### III. Results

Through the creative and pedagogical activities of Kálmán Nádasdy, I strived to examine some areas which are still only partially discovered such as the repertoire system and art policy background of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the underlying details of the Hungarian cinematographic works of the 1950s, the multi-segment problems of opera libretto translations, an overview of the Hungarian productions of the opera “*Manon Lescaut*” and the comparative analysis of its lyrics in different languages, as well as the issue of dramaturgy and music evolution in connection with Erkel's work “*Bánk bán*”. Besides this, as a part of my masterpiece, I overviewed my opera's musical analysis through the introjectional examination of the Barthes-Zsótér texts and the novel of Prévost. At the intersection of the mentioned aspects and analyzed areas is Kálmán Nádasdy, the chapters are organically connected to different segments of his work, especially *Manon Lescaut's* translation and mechanism of action.

My opera-oratorio, submitted as part of my dissertation, was written in the spirit of these directorial principles and influences; my compositional manners and solutions carry the empiricism of my professional and emotional state that I learned and processed during the research period.

By far the most important part of my doctoral dissertation is the presentation of the creative process of my opera. This provides the basis of my dissertation, through my opera I tried to explore Nádasdy's creative and pedagogical career, so the tools of theatrical philology and historical research are present as the inspiration of my masterpiece.