



Leo
WEINER

Csongor and Tünde – Ballet (1959 Version)

Ballad for Viola and Orchestra

Máté Szűcs, Viola • Jubilate Girls Choir
Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV
Valéria Csányi

Leo Weiner (1885-1960)

Ballad for Clarinet and Orchestra (Version for Viola and Orchestra) • Csongor and Tünde

I have been fascinated by opera since my childhood. I have been working at the Hungarian Opera House since the age of fourteen, first as a member of the children's chorus, then, after receiving my degrees, as a *répétiteur* and later as a conductor. I have conducted about 700 performances there so far, among them several ballets. *Csongor and Tünde* is undisputedly one of Leo Weiner's most important works. The scherzo *Prince Csongor and the Goblins* and the *Suite* composed from the incidental music appear in the programmes of orchestras to this day. My husband, István Kassai, who has recorded the complete piano works of the composer, drew my attention to the ballet version of the work. It was a real discovery for me to find this excellent score that has not been performed in its entirety since its première in 1959 and the short series of performances that followed. Ballet, like every theatrical genre, focuses on the stage and the music is just one element of the whole unfolding of the story. For this recording we have decided to present the music by itself and have used the composer's original score as our basis. We ignored later deletions and changes of sequential order. I sincerely hope that this recording will help this work to return to the stage again.

Valéria Csányi

Leo Weiner was born on April 16th, 1885 in Budapest. His parents did not give him a musical education. He began his musical studies on his own initiative and learned to compose by analysing the works of the great composers. At the age of 16 he applied for admission to the Liszt Academy in Budapest, where he was a pupil of János Koessler (1853-1926), a representative of the Brahms tradition, and who was the teacher of Bartók, Kodály, Dohnányi, Emerich Kálmán and Victor Jacobi, among others. Weiner himself taught there from 1907 until his death. In his chamber music faculty he taught generations of musicians for half a century. Almost all the world-famous

Hungarian musicians of this period were his pupils. Weiner was not only the living embodiment of a tradition, but he consolidated his pedagogical activity with his writings (text books on music theory, musical analyses).

Weiner's career as a composer began like a comet. In his fifth year of study he won all the awards possible at the Liszt Academy. In 1908 he was awarded the Franz Joseph prize for his compositions, and this covered his study tour around Europe, to Vienna, Munich, Berlin and Paris.

His earliest works were already characterised by his knowledge of classical culture, an imaginative use of colour and *bravura* instrumentation, combined with lyrical emotion. Weiner managed to synthesise in an original way the tradition of Schumann and Mendelssohn together with the language of European and Hungarian music of the period. He composed true Hungarian music, without using folk melodies. He immediately made a stir with his new, captivating sound. The works written by the composer in his twenties were welcomed on the prestigious concert podiums of the world and were published by famous European publishing houses.

The pressure of the new modern, diverse musical developments that were so distant from Weiner's personality, threw him into such a creative crisis that he even relinquished his position as a professor of composition at the Liszt Academy. The inspiration of folk music showed him a way out of the crisis. He made use of folk music in a somewhat different way from Kodály and Bartók. As the writer of a monograph on the composer, Melinda Berlász, says, "For Weiner, folk music represented a solely musical consideration. It was a precious musical material, rich in individual characteristics, which, as he confessed, he could stylize 'with refined artistic self-restraint' in his works and make 'classical'." These works also met with international success. The inferno of World War II caused him another creative crisis that lasted for seven years. After the war he polished and orchestrated his earlier pieces, wrote both works for pedagogical purposes and others that were a

summation of his compositional output. He was awarded the highest Hungarian state award, the Kossuth Prize, twice in this period. He died on September 13th, 1960.

Weiner did not belong among the reformers of the history of music. He remained faithful to the language of his youth, defying the storms of "isms", as well as to his Hungarian identity, despite the persecution of Jews during World War II.

Weiner's *Ballad, Op. 8* was composed in 1908 for clarinet and piano. He also attached a viola part to the score of the first edition, which differed only slightly from the clarinet part due to the different characteristics of the instruments. The impressionistic colours of the piece seemed to demand orchestration and Weiner made two versions. In the 1930s he made an orchestration in which the woodwind were omitted apart from two bassoons, in order to bring the solo clarinet part into relief. This version is musically identical to the version with piano accompaniment. It was not published but it has been recorded on LP and CD. The second version was composed in 1949 with the new opus number 28 and uses all the woodwind. This version is six bars longer than the previous one. The score was finished in 1949 and published five years later, but has so far not been recorded. We have recorded this more colourful orchestration using the viola part of the first edition.

Weiner's *Csongor and Tünde, Op. 10* accompanied him throughout his life, and he regarded it as his *magnum opus*. It is based on the dramatic poem written by Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855) in 1830. It is a love story about a prince and a fairy who struggle for happiness against the attacks of evil, and is widely known in world literature. Vörösmarty created a philosophical story out of the simple fairy tale, and his enchantingly beautiful Hungarian text has raised it to the level of an exceptional masterpiece, one of the most important works of Hungarian literature. The play was not considered performable until the

director of the Hungarian National Theatre, Ede Paulay (1836-1894) staged it with great success. The first incidental music for it was composed by Gyula Erkel (1841-1909), the son of Ferenc Erkel, for the première on December 1st, 1879. In 1913 the directorate of the National Theatre commissioned new incidental music from Leo Weiner, and the composer finished the score on November 1st the same year. However, its performance requirements and the size of the orchestra needed were beyond the means of the National Theatre, and the première was postponed. The composer was keen to present his work, so initially the *scherzo* called *Prince Csongor and the Goblins* was performed in public on February 8th, 1914 with the title *Intermezzo*. This piece is still often performed today. One year later the first *Suite* (consisting of four movements) taken from the work was performed. Eventually the date of the première was set for November 1916, but again it was cancelled, due to the death on the 21st of the Emperor Franz Joseph, King of Hungary. A few days later however, on 6th December, 1916, the performance took place. It was greeted with enormous acclaim by both the public and the critics.

As the genre of incidental music for the stage is fixed to performances of the play, Weiner compiled several suites from different parts of the 22-movement piece for the concert podium. He considered the six-movement version to be final. He also composed a ballet from the music of the work so that it could have a theatrical life independent of the play. This one-act piece consists of nine movements and was first performed at the Budapest Opera House on November 8th, 1930. After World War II the ballet was revived. Weiner thoroughly transformed the music and expanded it to 14 movements. The first performance was on June 6th, 1959, one year before the death of the composer. On this recording the final version of the work, based on the manuscript score preserved at the Hungarian Opera House, has been used.

Synopsis

Cast:

Prince Csongor
Tünde the Fairy
Mirigy the Witch
Ledér, Mirigy's daughter
Ilma, Tünde's maid
Balga the Henchman, a peasant boy
Goblins, Phantoms, Witches,
Fairies and Guardian Spirits

Vörösmarty's play is multi-layered and full of meaning, but the ballet version concentrates on the love interest, so the story resembles more the folk-inspired sixteenth-century fairy tale by Albert Gergei that served as the basis for Vörösmarty's poem.

② No. 1. Csongor, a young prince searching for happiness on his long wanderings, is walking along tired when he sees the foliage of a golden apple tree. He is surprised to see Mirigy, a witch, tied to the tree. She implores him to release her. The good-hearted young man unties her, but the wicked witch curses him. ③ No. 2. The apples start to shine and Tünde, a fairy, appears in the sparkling light. They fall in love at first sight. After their love duet they lie down under the tree and fall asleep. A fairy choir sings. ④ No. 3. Tünde's fairy companions arrive with Ilma, Tünde's maid. Their playful dance is interrupted by the arrival of the witch. The fairies run away, but Ilma hides nearby, sensing evil but feeling afraid of the witch. Mirigy sneaks towards the lovers and steals the fairy veil that carries Tünde's magic power. She starts a triumphant dance and Tünde is startled out of her sleep. ⑤ No. 4. Tünde must leave forever because she has lost her veil and Csongor may not see her any more. She bids him farewell and departs on her long journey with Ilma. ⑥ No. 5. Csongor follows them in despair, seeking the newly found happiness he has so quickly lost, no matter how long it takes. ⑦ No. 6. Scene Two: At the crossroads, three goblins chase a fox who is a phantom, and is really Mirigy's daughter, Ledér. She dances with the goblins, teasing them. She then playfully multiplies them and herself. They run away scared, chased by the phantoms. ⑧ No. 7. Balga, a

peasant boy, arrives. He is also seeking his love, as he has lost his wife, Ilma, just as Csongor has lost Tünde. Csongor arrives and adopts Balga to be his servant. ⑨ No. 8. The goblins enter again, fighting over their inheritance, a magic cloak that makes its owner invisible and takes him wherever he tells it to go. The goblins ask Csongor to dispense judgement. He tricks them into letting him have the cloak and flies off to find Tünde. ⑩ No. 9. Scene Three: We see the witch Mirigy in her den, where she aims to acquire Prince Csongor for her daughter. She covers her daughter with the stolen veil, which immediately makes her beautiful. Csongor arrives, having been attracted by Mirigy's magic, which is more powerful than the goblins' magic cloak. Csongor begins an amorous dance with the phantom, thinking it is Tünde. Balga arrives with Ilma and they also take Ledér to be Tünde until the real Tünde arrives. Csongor tears the veil off Ledér and is astonished to see with whom he has danced. Then Mirigy intervenes and grabs the veil and Csongor as well, due to the magic power of the veil. ⑪ No. 10. The fourth scene is the Kingdom of the Night. The despairing Tünde is being consoled by the fairies of the night, but they cannot alleviate her pain. ⑫ No. 11. We are again at Mirigy's den. Ledér keeps tempting Csongor in different ways, but the young man resists. Mirigy takes the initiative again, a real Witches' Sabbath takes place, but it is useless. True love is stronger than any evil art. In the end Csongor manages to grab the veil and the witches have to escape. ⑬ No. 12. The witch's homestead sinks down and our hero finds himself near the golden apple tree of the first scene. He adoringly gazes at his lover's veil, remembering Tünde, then falls asleep exhausted. ⑭ No. 13. The guardian fairies arrive and bring a new veil for Tünde, but she chooses earthly happiness and Csongor instead of being a fairy. Balga arrives with Ilma, whom he has finally found, and they walk happily towards their hut. ⑮ No. 14. Tünde wakes up Csongor and the choir of fairies sings about eternal love: "Come sweetheart, come with me and enjoy the night, the only thing now awake is love."

István Kassai

English translation by Paul Merrick



The three Goblins: Tamás Koren, László Seregi and Győző Zilahy



Balga and Ilma: Ágoston Balogh and Edit Dévényi



Mirigy: Erzsébet Ángyási



Mirigy and Ledér: Erzsébet Ángyási and Alice Erdélyi



Csongor and Tünde: Viktor Fülöp and Zsuzsa Kun



Csongor and Tünde: Viktor Fülöp and Zsuzsa Kun



Ledér: Alice Erdélyi



The three Goblins: Tamás Koren, László Seregi and Győző Zilahy

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Máté Szűcs



The viola player Máté Szűcs was born in 1978 in Debrecen. In 1988 he won the Special Prize of the Hungarian Violin Competition for Young Artists, and in 1994 he was awarded First Prize at the Szeged Violin Competition and First Prize for the Best Sonata Duo in the Hungarian Chamber Music Competition. At the age of seventeen he changed from violin to viola and graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and the Royal Conservatory of Flanders with the highest distinction. At the age of twenty he was awarded First Prize for viola at the international violin and viola competition in Liège, Belgium, and was a finalist in the Jean Françaix International Viola Competition in Paris and a laureate of the Tenuto International Music Competition in Brussels. From 1998 to 2001 he studied at the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth where he

graduated with the highest distinction. Since 2003 he has served as principal viola player in various prestigious orchestras. Between 2007 and 2009 he taught at the University of Music in Saarbrücken and since 2012 has been viola tutor at the Britten-Pears Festival in Aldeburgh, England. He makes regular appearances as a soloist and in chamber ensembles. Since September 2011 he has served as first solo viola player in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, where he is also a teacher at the orchestral academy.

Jubilate Girls Choir



The Jubilate Girls Choir began as the children's choir in a music school in Buda, later becoming well-known first in Hungary, then all over Europe. Since 1988 it has been the girls choir at the Zoltán Kodály Hungarian Choir School. It has won first prize at several international choir competitions (1990 Giessen, Germany; 1994 Debrecen, Hungary; 1995 Arnhem, The Netherlands; 2010 Riva del Garda, Italy). In 1995 it won first prize and the grand prix at the International Choir Competition in Budapest; in 2000 in Linz it was declared

'champion' at the First Choral Olympics in the category of Gregorian chant. In 2004 it was awarded the Kölcsey and Europe prizes, and in 2006 the Hungarian Heritage Award. Its repertoire extends from Gregorian chant to modern choral music.

Ferenc Sapszon Jr.



Ferenc Sapszon Jr. graduated in choral conducting from the Ferenc Liszt Academy of music in 1977. From 1973 to 1990 he directed the choir at the Church of the Sacred Heart. Between 1978 and 1988 he taught at an elementary school of music, where he founded the Jubilate Children's Choir. In 1988 he founded the Zoltán Kodály Hungarian Choir School, based on the example of choir schools belonging to cathedrals, becoming its artistic director. In 1996 he founded the Cantate mixed choir. With both choirs he takes part in local and foreign tours, festivals and competitions in which they have been awarded several first prizes. He won five golden medals at the First Choral Olympics. He taught choral conducting at the Ferenc Liszt University of Music until 2010. He is the chairman of the Gregorian Chant Society and is a member of the Board of the Hungarian Kodály Society. His awards include the 1995 Liszt Award, the 2003 Kodály Award, the Pro Scholis Urbis Award, the 2008 Hungarian Heritage Award, and in 2011 the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic. In 2012 he was elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Art and in 2015 was awarded the Kossuth Prize, the highest Hungarian state distinction given for the promotion of Hungarian culture.

Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV (MÁV Szimfonikus Zenekar)



The Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV (MÁV Szimfonikus Zenekar) was founded in 1945 by Hungarian State Railways. The orchestra currently consists of ninety professional musicians, and is ranked among the best professional orchestras in Hungary. In recent decades it has developed a wide-ranging repertoire from music of the baroque era to works by contemporary composers. The orchestra has performed throughout Europe as well as in Cyprus, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Japan, China, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru and Oman. Performances have taken place at many of the most important and respected concert halls, such as the Musikvereinssaal, Vienna, the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Suntory Hall, Tokyo and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre. The orchestra has also

participated in several European festivals, in Lourdes, Vienna, Thessaloniki, Rome and Assisi. In 2012 Péter Csaba became the orchestra's new Artistic Director and Chief Conductor, and since 2014 Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro has been its Honorary Guest Conductor.

Valéria Csányi



Born in Budapest in 1958, Valéria Csányi completed her piano studies at the Bartók Conservatory in 1977, continuing at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, where she gained her choir-master's degree in 1982 and a conducting degree in 1984, with further study in Vienna and Salzburg. In 1983 she joined the Hungarian State Opera, first as a répétiteur, later as a conductor. Since 1995 she has worked mainly in ballet, having been appointed First Ballet Conductor in 2003. Her career has included tours with the Hungarian State Opera and a number of appearances with the Stockholm Strauss Orchestra. For Naxos she has recorded the operetta *Fürstin Ninetta* by Johann Strauss II [8.660227-28] and the first complete recording of Ferenc Erkel's opera *István király* (*King Stephen*) [8.660345-46].

For over half a century at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Leo Weiner taught successive generations of Hungary's leading musicians, and won his country's highest awards. As a composer his career was comet-like in its early brilliance and his music marked by an imaginative use of colour, masterful instrumentation and lyrical emotion. He regarded *Csongor and Tünde* as his *magnum opus* and its incidental music was later to take independent form as a ballet, heard here in its final 1959 version. The impressionistic *Ballad, Op. 28* for viola and orchestra derives from an earlier work for clarinet and piano.

Leo
WEINER
(1885-1960)

Ballad for Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 28
– Version for Viola and Orchestra (1949)*

12:37

① **Allegro non troppo – Andante – Allegro agitato – Allegro non troppo**

Csongor and Tünde, Op. 10 – Ballet (second version) (1959)

53:35

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|---|---|------|
| ② | No. 1 Csongor és Mirigy (Prince Csongor and Mirigy the Witch) | 3:48 |
| ③ | No. 2 Aranyalmafa. Tündérek kara (The Golden Apple Tree. The Choir of the Fairies) [†] | 2:40 |
| ④ | No. 3 Tündértánc és Mirigy (Fairies' Dance and Mirigy) | 6:26 |
| ⑤ | No. 4 Tünde búcsúzik (Tünde Bids Farewell) | 0:47 |
| ⑥ | No. 5 Csongor barangol (Csongor Roams) | 4:08 |
| ⑦ | No. 6 Az ördögfiak (The Goblins) | 8:23 |
| ⑧ | No. 7 Balga (Balga the Henchman) | 3:38 |
| ⑨ | No. 8 Az ördögfiak marakodása (Fight of the Goblins) | 1:47 |
| ⑩ | No. 9 Mirigy és a csábleány (The Witch and the Temptress) | 3:40 |
| ⑪ | No. 10 A bánkódó Tünde (The Sorrowing Tünde) | 6:08 |
| ⑫ | No. 11 Boszorkányszombat (Witches' Sabbath) | 5:06 |
| ⑬ | No. 12 Tünde győz a gonosz fölött (Tünde Triumphs over Evil) | 2:05 |
| ⑭ | No. 13 A nemtők (The Guardian Spirits) [†] | 2:40 |
| ⑮ | No. 14 Boldog szerelem (Endless Love) [†] | 2:17 |

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Máté Szűcs, Viola* • Jubilate Girls Choir[†] • Ferenc Sapszon Jr., Chorus-master[†]

Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV • Valéria Csányi

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