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IN THE SCORE, BETWEEN THE LINES: TECHNICAL CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN PERFORMING LIGETI'S CHORAL MUSIC WITH A NON-PROFESSIONAL CHOIR[1]

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Abstract

This study explores the collective learning process of selected arrangements of Hungarian folk songs by György Ligeti, as rehearsed and performed by the "Vincenzo Gianferrari" Polyphonic Choir, an amateur ensemble based in Trento, Italy. Integrating analytical, musicological, and Music Performance Research perspectives, the project, adopted a multi-strategic qualitative approach that foregrounds the subjective experiences of the performers. This paper specifically aims to identify the technical challenges these scores present to a non-professional choir, including the intrinsic difficulties of Hungarian pronunciation, as well as issues related to rhythm, phrasing, and articulation; it also examine the strategies developed by the conductor to address them effectively.

Keywords

[1] This paper builds upon research conducted for my doctoral dissertation on Ligeti's early choral works at the University of Trento (Italy), with degree completion expected in April 2026 (supervisor: Prof. Marco Uvietta). It provides an expanded discussion of selected topics previously considered in the essay: Marina Rossi, "(En)chanting Ligeti. Un'indagine qualitativa sul processo di apprendimento della musica del primo Novecento da parte di un coro non professionale," *Polifonie* 10, (2023), in press. Readers are encouraged to consult the scores referenced below, published by Schott Music. Alternatively, low-resolution previews are available on the publisher's website at the following links:
www.schott-music.com/en/magos-koesziklanak-noc22032.html
www.schott-music.com/en/inaktelki-notak-noc22033.html
www.schott-music.com/en/lakodalmas-noc22040.html

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György Ligeti, Hungarian Music, Choral music, Amateur choir

György Ligeti (1923–2006) composed a surprisingly large number of choral works in his youth, highly diverse in terms of language, level of difficulty, and vocal forces, ranging from two to eight parts.[3] Often based on Hungarian and Romanian folk songs, these scores constitute a significant portion of his early output; they reveal both a remarkable command of contrapuntal writing and the precocious development of a personal style. Nevertheless, this repertoire is rarely considered by choirs – not only amateur ones – perhaps due to the reverential awe that the name György Ligeti may inspire. This study aims to show that the challenges posed by these works can be effectively addressed through targeted interventions and specific strategies. It thus seeks to encourage greater awareness and performance of this music, even by non-professional ensembles.

The amateur choir has been the focus of numerous in-depth studies within the field of Music Performance Research; however, much of this scholarship has primarily addressed psychological and sociological dimensions of choral activity. As a result, it has often been published in journals and volumes outside the strict domain of musicological research and rarely conducted by scholars with specific musical expertise. In the Anglo-American academic context, such investigations have typically concentrated on issues such as the conductor's role, the development of musical identity, and the positive impact of choral singing on both music learning and individual well-being.[4] Russian scholars have also contributed significantly to this area of research, with particular attention to topics such as the managerial organization of amateur choirs, their

[3] For a comprehensive recording of Ligeti's choral works see György Ligeti, *Complete works for a cappella Choir*, SWR Vokalensemble, Yuval Weinberg, conductor (CD, Naxos, SWR19128CD, 2023); on Ligeti's early works see Friedemann Sallis, "An Introduction to the Early Works of György Ligeti", (Köln: Studio-Schewe, 1996); Simon Gallot, "György Ligeti et la musique populaire", (Lyon: Symetrie, 2010); Márton Kerékfy, "Folkloristic Inspirations in the Music of György Ligeti: Problems of Identification and Interpretation," in *Paths of Musicology in Central Europe*, ed. Marcus Zagorski and Vladimír Zvara (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, 2016): 243–265.

[4] Michael Bonshor, "Conductor Feedback and the Amateur Singer: The Role of Criticism and Praise in Building Choral Confidence," *Research Studies in Music Education* 39, no. 2 (2017): 139–160; Hermione Ruck Keene, "Swooping in to Save the Day?: Investigating the Effects on Musical Identity of a Choral Collaboration between Amateur and Professional Singers," *Visions of Research in Music Education* 26, no. 4 (2015): https://digitalcommons.lib.uconn.edu/vrme/vol26/iss1/4; Annie A. Mok, "'I Can Follow': Self-Directed Informal Learning Strategies Adopted by Choristers in an Adult Amateur Choir," *Music Education Research* 22, no. 4 (2020): 421–431.

socio-cultural function, and the role of choral singing in fostering spiritual and cultural education.[5]

Rather than focusing on the broader psychological or social dimensions often associated with amateur ensembles, this study places the emphasis on the rehearsal and learning process of an amateur choir engaged in performing so-called "art music."

The methodology combined several tools: active participant observation, a short questionnaire aimed at collecting background information on each choir member, and semi-structured qualitative interviews.[6] At the core of the investigation lies the subjective experience of the singers as they engage with Ligeti's choral writing for the first time, confronting its complexity, technical demands, and the rehearsal strategies developed by the conductor to address them.

To capture these aspects, the project adopts a qualitative methodology rooted in an emic perspective:[7] the aim is to access the lived experience of the music from within, exploring how it is interpreted and made meaningful by those directly involved in its performance.[8] I have been singing in the ensemble since 2017 and my own position as both researcher and choir member, has shaped the nature of the enquiry. This insider role, though uncommon in choral music studies,[9] proved particularly effective: it removed the usual barrier between observer and

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[5] Vladimir Fedorovič Čabannyj, "Metodologiâ upravleniâ lûbitel'skim horovyh kollektivom," *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta Kul'tury i Iskusstv* 11, no. 2 (2012): 160–169; Il'â Sergeevič Koževnikov, "Vospitanie sovremennogo 'Čeloveka truda' sredstvami horovogo ispolnitel'stva: Iz opyta raboty s horom ûnošej Politehničeskogo kolledža," *Vestnik Magnitogorskoj konservatorii: Naučnyj, metodičeskij i informacionnyj žurnal* 2, (2018): 57–62. Research specifically addressing amateur choirs is lacking in Italy; this gap highlights the need for dedicated studies exploring the musical practices, social dynamics, and cultural significance of amateur choral ensembles within this context.

[6] Robert M. Silverman and Kelly L. Patterson, "Semi-Structured Interviewing," in *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*, 4th ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2024): 49–66.

[7] Tobiasz Kubisiowski, "Emic–Etic Analysis as a Research Method for Theory of Music," *Notes Muzyczny* 2, no. 16 (2021): 165–182.

[8] Aaron Williamon, Jane Ginsborg, Rosie Perkins, and George Waddell, *Performing Music Research. Methods in Music Education, Psychology, and Performance Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[9] The only research I identified was conducted by Sigrún Lilja Einarsdóttir, who, however, joined the amateur choir under study only during the months in which the investigation took place. See Sigrún Lilja Einarsdóttir, "Constructing 'My Bach': Relevance of Historical Constructions of Bach for Members in an English Amateur 'Art Music'/Composer-Oriented Bach Choir," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 46, no. 1 (2015): 95–116; Id, "Leaders, Followers and Collective Group Support in Learning 'Art Music' in an Amateur Composer-Oriented Bach Choir," *British Journal of Music Education* 31, no. 3 (2014): 281–296.

observed, encouraging natural interactions and reducing the likelihood of altered behaviour due to external scrutiny. Furthermore, my direct involvement within the ensemble allowed me to perceive and interpret numerous subtle aspects of the rehearsal process, while also experiencing firsthand the technical challenges posed by the repertoire and the conductor's strategies for addressing them.[10] Drawing on my background in Choral Conducting and broader musical training (Music Teaching and Musicology), I was equipped to document and analyse the ensemble's work with a combination of critical distance and informed sensitivity.

Rather than striving for an unattainable objectivity, I adopted a reflexive approach that acknowledged the subjective dimension of the research and sought to regulate its influence by maintaining a constant awareness of the interpretive lens through which I was observing the field. This attitude informed the development of a dual observational strategy: on the one hand, I engaged in active participant observation[11] during rehearsals, taking fieldnotes in real time; on the other, I relied on audio recordings to revisit the same events with a more distanced and reflective perspective. Central to the project was the recognition that my perspective had to be placed in dialogue with those of the other participants,[12] through a continuous process of comparison and negotiation, aimed at constructing a more nuanced and polyphonic understanding of the ensemble's engagement with Ligeti's music.

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The research took place over several months, between winter and spring 2024, with the "Vincenzo Gianferrari" Choir, whose conductor and members actively engaged with the proposed repertoire and research process.

The "Vincenzo Gianferrari" Choir, based in Trento, is a mixed amateur ensemble currently comprising 19 members. Founded in 1968, the choir was first conducted by Iris Niccolini and later by Glauco Osti (1982-195), Ilaria Pasqualini (1995–2019), and Michele Weiss. Since 2021, it has been directed by Ivo De Ros, a young and versatile musician currently studying bassoon at the Conservatory of Bolzano (Italy). Over

[10] Anna E. Pezalla, Jacqueline Pettigrew, and Michaela Miller Day, "Researching the Researcher as Instrument: An Exercise in Interviewer Self Reflexivity," *Qualitative Research* 12, no. 2 (2012): 165–185.

[11] See Roland Bannister, "Difficult but Sensitive: Participant Observation Research in Music Education," *British Journal of Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2008): 35–49.

[12] See Franz Breuer, "Qualitative Methods in the Study of Biographies, Interactions and Everyday Life Contexts: The Development of a Research Style," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1, no. 2 (July 2000): Art. 3.

the years, the ensemble has performed at prominent festivals in Italy and abroad – such as the "Città di Fano" Festival, the "Cori sull'Aventino" Festival in Rome, and the Gliwice Choral Meetings – and has received numerous awards in national and international competitions (among them the "Città di Stresa" International Polyphonic Competition, the International Choir Competition "Spittal an der Drau," and the Jodoigne International Choir Festival). Its recent repertoire ranges from early polyphony and Romantic works to contemporary compositions.

The ensemble is characterised by a pronounced heterogeneity in terms of age, educational attainment, musical training, and prior engagement with choral practice. While some members are conservatory students with advanced theoretical knowledge and performance skills, others have followed less formalised musical paths. The coexistence of such diverse trajectories within a single ensemble fostered a research context marked by complexity and analytical richness. From a methodological standpoint, such diversity was a significant asset. It enabled the collection of a broad spectrum of insights, ranging from technically informed observations to more instinctive or affective responses to the music. The variety of interpretive frameworks and rehearsal strategies reported by the singers offered a multidimensional view of the learning process, and made it possible to trace how Ligeti's complex choral writing was perceived, internalised, and negotiated by individuals with differing levels of familiarity and competence. This plurality of perspectives contributed to a deeper understanding not only of the technical challenges of the repertoire, but also of the ways in which participants constructed meaning and developed agency through collective music-making.

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The first complex step of this project involved selecting which of Ligeti's works to propose to the choir. To this end, I submitted to the conductor the sixteen scores published so far by Schott Music, composed between 1945 and 1955. The conductor made a careful selection based on the number of voices (no more than four), the complexity of the writing, and the coherence with the repertoire usually performed by the choir. The more experimental compositions were therefore excluded, and the following arrangements of Hungarian folk songs were preferred:

- *Magos kősziklának*, arrangement of a Hungarian folk song for 3 mixed voices, 1946
- *Lakodalmas*, arrangement of a Hungarian folk song for 4 mixed voices, 1950

• *Inaktelki nóták*, arrangements of Transylvanian folk songs for 2 mixed voices, 1952

From the very first rehearsals, the choir encountered considerable difficulty in reading and pronouncing the Hungarian texts, which led to a marked decline in motivation and overall engagement with the repertoire. The complete unfamiliarity with both the lexicon and phonetics of the language (being a non-Indo-European tongue) generated a sense of disorientation among several choristers, some of whom openly voiced their frustration. Following an extended discussion with the conductor – taking into account both musical and didactic considerations – it was collectively agreed to introduce an English version of the text to facilitate a more accessible point of entry into the piece. This translation, which I prepared specifically for the ensemble, aimed not only to support the learning process but also to rekindle the group's interpretive interest and emotional connection to the work.

The choir did not encounter particular difficulties in sight-reading the music; however, during the rehearsal process, some unexpectedly challenging issues emerged. Many of these were not directly related to Ligeti's choral writing, his harmonic or rhythmic choices, contrapuntal lines, or other specific features of his arrangements. Rather surprisingly, the difficulties faced by the choir stemmed from the inherent characteristics of Hungarian folk singing, a style with which the "Vincenzo Gianferrari" choir had little familiarity, since this repertoire was being approached for the first time.

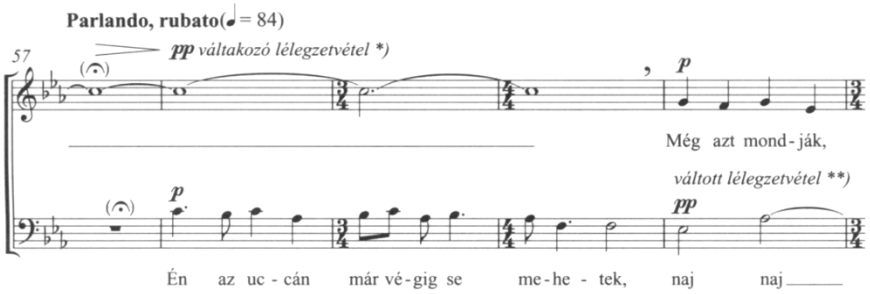
Hungarian folk song constitutes a unique and remarkably rich tradition, shaped by centuries of oral transmission and by the coexistence of diverse ethnic and linguistic influences within the Carpathian Basin. The melodies frequently employ modes that are unconventional and often unfamiliar to ears accustomed to Western tonal systems, featuring inflections that depart from the major-minor framework. Melodic formulas are typically concise and self-contained, often built on descending motifs and symmetrical phrasing, while the rhythmic structure remains often flexible to accommodate a free, speech-like declamation of the text.[13] The intimate relationship between the music and the Hungarian language is particularly evident in the predominance of *parlando-rubato* performance styles,[14] where rhythm closely mirrors the natural stress and intonation patterns of the lyrics, producing irregular metric groupings and a delivery that resembles spoken language. Reflecting this deep connection to the specific characteristics of

[13] Béla Bartók, "Hungarian Peasant Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 19, (1933): 269.

[14] Béla Bartók, "Musica popolare ungherese," in Id., *Scritti sulla musica popolare*, ed. Diego Carpitella, (Torino: Einaudi, 1955): 119.

Hungarian language, a hallmark rhythmic feature of its folk music is the frequent use of patterns such as the short-long figure ⊗±. (referred to in classical music as 'Lombard rhythm') which imparts a distinctive lilt and syncopation to the sound.[15] Texts typically address themes related to everyday life, love, work, and national identity, and are often structured in strophic forms. The heterogeneity of the repertoire – which includes archaic layers alongside more recent, urban-influenced materials – has long attracted scholarly attention, most notably in the work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, whose systematic collection and classification of folk melodies laid the foundations for Hungarian ethnomusicology and profoundly influenced twentieth-century compositional practices.

The most significant challenges faced by the choir from the very beginning of rehearsals concerned tempo and rhythm. The compositions indeed feature numerous tempo changes that tend to disorient the ensemble and frequently cause a slowdown in their performance. For instance, in *Inaktelki nóták III*, the meter continuously alternates between 3/4 and 4/4 time, reflecting the stylistic character of the piece as indicated explicitly by Ligeti in the score, which calls for a *parlando rubato* interpretation (see Example 1). These frequent metric shifts demand heightened flexibility from the choir, complicating the maintenance of a steady pulse and cohesive ensemble coordination throughout the performance. Such rhythmic complexity requires considerable attentiveness from the singers, as well as the need to develop and refine their aural sensitivity to this characteristic style of Hungarian music.



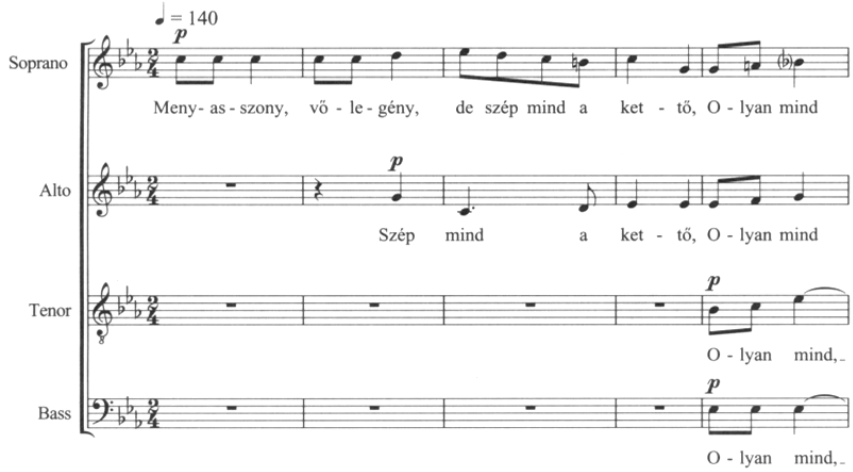
Example no. 1 – *György Ligeti, Inaktelki nóták III,* Bars 1–5

Another notable aspect concerns the presence of unusual rhythms, particularly the figure ⊗±., which appears frequently in *Inaktelki nóták* I and III. This rhythmic pattern demands great precision, posing a

[15] Béla Bartók, "Harvard Lectures", in Id., *Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976): 383–384.

significant challenge for the choir. Due to limited familiarity with such configuration, the choir often performs it inaccurately and frequently applies inappropriate accents, which detract from the expressive quality of the piece (see Example 1). This difficulty highlights the need for focused and thorough work on rhythmic dynamics to enhance overall performance and faithfully convey the stylistic characteristics of the repertoire.

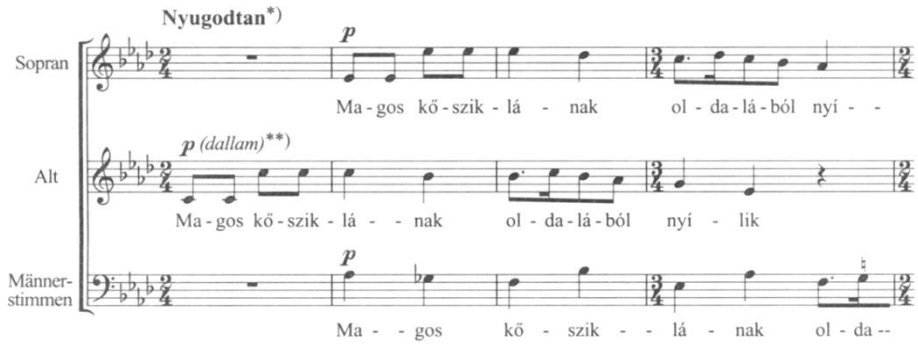
The pieces marked by a fast tempo (*Inaktelki nóták* II and *Lakodalmas*) feature rhythmically intricate passages. When performed without sufficient confidence and control, these patterns tend to lead the choir to rush, compromising both tempo stability and the clarity of text articulation. In *Lakodalmas* moreover, the melodic line is based on the anapaestic foot (√∝±); however, the singers displayed a marked tendency to stress the longer note more heavily, thereby altering the overall rhythmic profile of the piece (see Example 2). This modification affects not only the natural flow of the folk melody but also the internal coherence and phrasing of the choral texture.



Example no. 2 – *György Ligeti, Lakodalmas,* Bars 1–5

Some issues related to phrasing also emerged during the rehearsal process. The choir generally encountered difficulties—particularly in slower tempi—in managing long phrases, which tended to lose directionality and thus affected the musical continuity. Similarly, the incipit of the folk melody *Magos kősziklának* features repeated notes that the choir tends to perform too detachedly, thereby inevitably interrupting the smooth and natural flow of the musical phrase (see Example 3). This detachment in articulation can diminish the expressive intent of the

melody and disturb the coherence essential for conveying its stylistic character.



Example no. 3 – *György Ligeti, Magos kősziklának,* Bars 1–4

The conductor regularly employed the exercise of rhythmic speech to read through the parts, aiming to address challenges related to tempo, rhythm, pronunciation, and phrasing. By temporarily suspending the pitch, singers were able to focus primarily on rhythmic accuracy and, aided occasionally by a metronome, on maintaining a steady tempo. Particular attention was given to consonant articulation, which served to refine phrasing and to carefully shape the beginnings and endings of phrases. For example, in the first bar of *Inaktelki nóták I*, the conductor emphasized the /sh/ sound in "Shej," allowing the following vowel to emerge more gently. Furthermore, in measure 9 of the same piece, a clearer articulation of the /r/ in "here" (from the English text) on the final crotchet helped sustain the phrase through to its conclusion.

Focusing on phrasing and the directionality of sound[16] proved effective in addressing several other challenges. For example, in *Magos kősziklának*, the sopranos tended to emphasize the F_4 on beat 6 too strongly, causing the note to sound both falling and harsh due to excessive pressure on the high pitch. The singers were advised not to perceive the melody as a mere sequence of isolated notes but rather to concentrate on the continuous line traced by the phrase. Additionally, they were encouraged to avoid pressing on the F_4 itself and instead to direct their attention toward the following downbeat note. The use of spoken exercises temporarily alleviated the anxiety associated with high notes, allowing the sopranos to experiment more freely with appropriate phrasing. When they subsequently sang the melody again, it emerged

[16] This term is intended here as the complex of interpretive elements (articulation, dynamics, agogics, and tone colour) that convey intentionality and a sense of completeness to the melody.

smoother and more in tune, demonstrating a clearer sense of musical line and expressive flow.

To improve the rhythmic structure of *Lakodalmas*, it proved helpful to emphasize (again through spoken rehearsal) the placement of the first note. The repeated notes indicated by the theme should not be performed detached but rather carried with a firm yet light articulation, as the piece requires a rather fast metronomic tempo.

The frequent use of rhythmic speaking, practiced consistently up to the final rehearsals before the concert, enabled the choir to gain greater rhythmic confidence, achieve more appropriate phrasing, and secure accurate memorization of the text. This method was especially beneficial for those choir members less familiar with the English language, helping them internalize both rhythm and diction with increased ease.

During the choral rehearsals, various spatial configurations were tested to enhance mutual listening and communication among the sections. Singers were encouraged to change their usual positions, move around the space, and sing independently from their section, fostering more attentive listening. Some exercises—such as singing back to back or facing one another in opposing rows—stimulated interaction and expressiveness. Pieces were also rehearsed in alternative settings and under unconventional conditions (like in the darkness). Memorizing the text allowed for greater focus on the conductor and fellow singers

The use of synaesthetic images, metaphors, and sometimes vivid expressions by the conductor was particularly effective—especially for singers less familiar with technical musical vocabulary—in improving vocal quality. In Lakodalmas, the sound had to be “crispy”, whereas in Magos kősziklának it needed to become “round”, “dense”, and “dark”. The poignant folk melodies were to be sung with a “spread” sound, as if with a cello bow: the notes of the melody should not be performed like a series of disconnected train cars, but rather as a single, continuous train.

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In the weeks following the concert, interviews were conducted with the singers and the conductor. I chose to conduct four focus groups, dividing the choir according to its sections, as I sensed they might feel uncomfortable with individual interviews. I aimed to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to express their opinions within the small group where they shared the same experiences: this was also useful for understanding the collective dynamics that typically characterize each section of the choir.

The interviews addressed multiple aspects of this project; here, some significant testimonies are presented concerning the difficulties

encountered by the choir members in approaching this repertoire, as well as the methods they found most meaningful and effective. These firsthand accounts provide valuable insights into the challenges faced during the learning process, shedding light on both technical and interpretative obstacles. Moreover, the interviews reveal how certain strategies, whether related to rehearsal techniques, linguistic support, or collective problem-solving, contributed to overcoming these difficulties, ultimately fostering a deeper engagement with the music and enhancing the choir's overall performance experience.

The initial impression with the pieces was not positive, as has already been mentioned. Linguistic difficulties, the distinctive musical characteristics of Hungarian folk music, and the reverential apprehension that the name Ligeti can inspire did not facilitate the choir's first approach to the repertoire. These factors combined to create a challenging entry point, requiring time and effort to overcome initial hesitation and build familiarity with the stylistic and technical demands of the works: "For a long time, I was groping in the dark. I couldn't grasp the 'mood' of the pieces. However, during the final rehearsals, we all entered into that music […] we had fully taken hold of that kind of rhythm and harmony and managed to make it our own." [17]

„The initial impact was extremely demanding: neither the sonority, the harmony, nor the language would come naturally to me."[18]

Many choir members admitted that they often feel too attached to the score, even when the conductor asks for greater attention to their own gesture and to the other sections: „As long as the choir was focused solely on the part, in my opinion, we were not truly able to interpret this music."[19]

The conductor himself expressed a decidedly critical view on this matter:

> The first measures of *Inaktelki nóták I* went well: there was sound, body, and intention. Then the choir stopped focusing on the sound to look at the score, and everything was lost. We needed to listen to each other more […] if you think only of yourself, you cannot create a beautiful sound with others.[20]

Among the most useful strategies proposed by the conductor, the choir members identified the use of extramusical devices, such as the

[17] Interviews with the members of the choir.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

encouragement to use the body or the recourse to synesthetic and metaphorical expressions during singing. This aspect was regarded as particularly effective by those less familiar with musical notation and who do not always know how to translate the conductor's suggestions into the score: „When I moved my arms, I felt I sang better."(…) „I wrote on my score 'no duck' as the conductor always told us, to remind myself to darken the sound."[21]

The majority of the choir admitted that one of the most complex elements to implement was listening between the various sections. Many found it helpful to adopt different spatial arrangements: „I started listening to others when we stood face to face and 'passed the sound' to one another."[22]

Despite the difficulties, both the choir and the conductor were ultimately happy and satisfied with the final result, also because it allowed the choir to grow:

> Starting from different expectations and skills, everyone in the end appreciated […] With an amateur choir, you have to work differently because they need more time to thoroughly understand the pieces. The work is long but necessary […] It was a very complex journey. We started with little enthusiasm, but in the end, it went very well. This process brought the group together a lot: we grew stronger both humanly and musically, and we went from 'not understanding' Ligeti's music to saying: what beautiful music.[23]

The translation of the text into English decidedly improved the choir members' mindset, not only with regard to pronunciation but also in terms of understanding the texts and thus being able to interpret the pieces with greater empathy.

> English certainly helped the interpretation because we were aware of what we were saying: by understanding the words, we could enter the piece more deeply. But if we had done it in Hungarian, I would have liked to do that as well: I was inspired to perform it in the original language.[24]

The improvement was evident even to the conductor: „The translation was useful; you have to make this music 'appealing' so that the choir

[21] Interviews with the members of the choir.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*

appreciates it. I saw the change on their faces, especially among those with less musical background".[25]

However, for many choir members, not singing the pieces in the original language was a source of some regret: „Singing in the original language… would imprint, I believe, a different kind of authenticity even into the sound."[26]

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Introducing new and unconventional repertoire to an amateur choir can serve as a powerful stimulus for musical growth. Exposure to unfamiliar styles and languages fosters curiosity, adaptability, and a renewed motivation to improve: in the case of the "Vincenzo Gianferrari" Choir, the challenge of approaching Ligeti's arrangements of Hungarian folk songs, repertoire far removed from their usual musical landscape, sparked a noticeable increase in engagement and collective commitment throughout the rehearsal process.

The study phase revealed that working with a non-professional choir requires a multifaceted approach. Simply conveying instructions verbally (especially when using overly technical language) is often insufficient, given the diverse levels of competence, motivation, and experience within the group. Choir members tend to respond more effectively to concrete strategies, such as exploring sound through bodily movement, experimenting with vocal projection in space, and employing metaphors and figurative expressions. Overall, this multi-pronged methodology enhances the ensemble's cohesion and musical development, demonstrating that a flexible, embodied, and creatively communicative approach is essential for successful collaboration with amateur choirs.

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