

Ferenc FARKAS

MUSIC FOR WIND ENSEMBLE

EARLY HUNGARIAN DANCES FROM THE 17TH CENTURY

INTRADA, PASSACAGLIA, SALTARELLO

CSINOM PALKÓ: MISCHIEVOUS TUNE

TOWER MUSIC FROM NYÍRBÁTOR

CONTRAFACIA HUNGARICA

THE SLY STUDENTS: SUITE

TIMON OF ATHENS: SUITE

MUSICA PER OTTONI

Budapest Wind Symphony
László Marosi

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

FERENC FARKAS Music for Wind Ensemble

Early Hungarian Dances from the 17th Century* (1943)

arr. László Zempléni (2015)

1	I Intrada	10:16
2	II Slow Dance	2:26
3	III Dance of Lázár Apor	2:53
4	IV Dance of the Prince of Transylvania	1:22
5	V Leaping Dance	1:59
		1:36

The Sly Students: Suite* (1949)

arr. Tony Kurmann (2013)

6	I Fair in Debrecen	21:07
7	II Air de danse	4:25
8	III Students' Dance	2:43
9	IV Gypsy Music	4:44
10	V Pas de deux	1:40
11	VI Finale	2:20
		5:15

Timon of Athens: Suite* (1935/38)

arr. Tony Kurmann (2014)

12	I Alcibiade's March	12:41
13	II Dinner Music	4:57
14	III Dance	4:37
		3:07

Intrada, Passacaglia, Saltarello (1982)*

15	I Intrada	3:20
16	II Passacaglia	3:06
17	III Saltarello	2:22

18 Tower Music from Nyírbátor (1967) 2:35

Contrafacta Hungarica (1973–74, arr. 1976) 9:33

19	I Basse danse	1:40
20	II Gagliarda	2:05
21	III Passamezzo	1:43
22	IV Saltarello	1:12
23	V Intermezzo	1:05
24	VI Hajdútánc	1:48

Musica per Ottoni (1982) 6:31

25	I Allegro	2:13
26	II Adagio	2:02
27	III Allegro	2:16

28 Csínom Palkó: Mischievous Tune (1949)* 4:45
arr. János Eördögh (1959)/Tony Kurmann (2014)

Budapest Wind Symphony
László Marosi, conductor

TT 76:23

*FIRST RECORDINGS

FERENC FARKAS: WORKS FOR WIND ENSEMBLE

by László Gombos

Throughout his exceptionally long career, the Hungarian composer Ferenc Farkas (1905–2000) composed not only an enormous number of works; he also prepared versions for different ensembles of the same works, too. As the most influential composition teacher in Hungarian musical life after World War II (György Ligeti and György Kurtág were among his students), he understood remarkably well the use of instruments and singing voices, his music always perfectly adjusting itself to the endowments of its current performers. And yet Farkas' music is easy to transpose into another environment, since the majority of his compositions were conceived not with a specific sound in mind, nor were they fitted to the technical possibilities of a given ensemble. Instead, it is the constructional design, the motif-based pattern-making and the handling of the melodic lines that play the major role. Although Farkas began his musical life surrounded by Late Romantics, he was more attracted to the spirit of Baroque masters like Bach and Vivaldi, who lived in an age when craftsmanship was considered the starting point of every creation.

This sympathy might explain why Farkas' orchestral movements sound equally well when played by chamber ensembles, string quartets or wind instruments, and his mixed choirs sung by male or female choirs. The essence of his music is hardly modified if the piano part is played on harpsichord or organ, the viola part on a cello, the flute part on an oboe or violin, or if the piano accompaniment of a song is performed by a string quartet or a wind quintet. Farkas' fellow musicians often begged him to write or transcribe something for them and since, like most of us, he loved being loved, he usually tried to fulfil these requests, transforming the instrumental parts of existing works masterfully, and with a minimum of changes in tone, to suit the personalities of the new performers. Nor was he territorial when other musicians transcribed his music: he would often revise these transcriptions

and, after improving them, endorse them with his signature. Indeed, only three of the eight pieces on this album of music for wind band and brass ensemble can be considered 'original'; one is Farkas' own transcription, and the other four pieces are arrangements by others – but one can be fairly sure that, in view of his openmindedness, he would have given his imprimatur for the recording.

The genesis of the arrangements lies in a fortunate coincidence: the Swiss clarinetist and conductor Tony Kurmann (b. 1943) bought the orchestral score of a ballet suite, *The Sly Students*, on a visit to Budapest and immediately decided to orchestrate the work for his own ensemble, the Blasorchester Siebnen (based in Siebnen, at the other end of Lake Zurich from Zurich itself), but it was only after his retirement in 2009 that he got around to carrying out his plan. To the first performance, which took place on 15 December 2013, Kurmann invited András Farkas, the composer's conductor son, who is also resident in Switzerland – and who was so enthusiastic about the result that he suggested that Kurmann transcribe further two pieces of his father's, the suite *Timon of Athens* and the 'Mischievous Tune' (from the operetta *Csínom Palkó*). Around the same time András Farkas asked the composer László Zempléni (born in 1947) to prepare a version of the series *Early Hungarian Dances* for concert band. These four arrangements are complemented here by four Farkas works for smaller ensembles, composed in earlier decades.

The *Early Hungarian Dances from the 17th Century* is one of Farkas' most successful compositions: existing in a dozen-and-a-half variants for different ensembles, it has been performed all over the world. The story of its creation goes back to the early 1940s, when Farkas was working on the music of a Hungarian costume-film, *Rákóczi nótája* ('Rákóczi's Song'). At that time he collected a quantity of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musical materials, mostly from manuscripts, and used them not only in *Rákóczi nótája* but also made numerous compilations of them during the coming decades. He dressed up the primitive Baroque and Classical pieces for a wide range of forces, tailoring suites of four to fifteen movements from them, most in a miniature *da capo* form. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musicians who wrote and performed these pieces were often amateurs; Farkas now revisited their sincere but sometimes awkward pieces,

bringing them the benefits of his craftsmanship. A five-movement version for piano was composed in 1943, and another version with partly different movements for wind quintet in the 1950s; in 1961 the last one was arranged for chamber orchestra and expanded into three suites of four, five and six movements each with the title *Choreae Hungaricae*.¹ In 1987, Farkas selected some movements from earlier compositions to put together a sequence for flute and piano, the accompaniment of which he also orchestrated for chamber ensemble in 1990.²

The arrangement featured on this recording was compiled by András Farkas and orchestrated for concert band by László Zemléni at the end of 2015. The source of the first two movements, an ‘Intrada’ [1] and ‘Slow Dance’ [2], was the seventeenth-century Lőcse Tablature Book, and the ‘Dance of Lázár Apor’ [3] is from the Codex Caioni, also from the seventeenth century. No. 4, ‘Dance of the Prince of Transylvania’ [4], and No. 5, ‘Leaping Dance’ [5], are among Farkas’ first arrangements of early music; they were already included in the piano version of 1943 (as Nos. 4 and 3 there, and this latter movement also closed the wind-quintet version as a Saltarello; but none of them appears in the *Choreae Hungaricae* series).

The ballet *The Sly Students* (‘Furfangos diákok’), premiered on 19 June 1949 at the Budapest Opera House, not only brought success to Farkas – the production also represented a remarkable moment in the history of Hungarian music for the theatre. Gyula Harangozó’s choreography, the staging, the set-design, and the quality of the performances, conducted by Jenő Kenessey, was the product of the post-war golden age marked by Otto Klemperer’s presence in Budapest (1947–50). The ballet was played several times during the next half-century, and it was performed abroad, in Poland, France, Germany, the USSR and, in 1963, at the Edinburgh Festival as well. The composition and the material of the suite made from it is extraordinarily diverse, combining traditional intonations of several centuries and elements of Hungarian

¹ The five-movement wind-quintet version appears on Toccata Classics TOCC 0019, and the second and third series (eleven movements) of the *Choreae Hungaricae* on TOCC 0184.

² The last one was released on TOCC 0230. From this work Lajos Lencsés made a version for oboe and chamber orchestra, where the orchestration is rather different; it was released on TOCC 0217.

popular and folk music with the idiom of contemporary new music and the sound of jazz. Farkas said about the piece:

The story takes place in Debrecen: Professor Horváth, Director of the College, wanted his daughter Rózika to marry Józsi, the son of the town treasurer. But the young girl is in love with Ádám, a poor student... I had only one month to write the score: so, when I had written a few pages, I immediately sent them to the copyist and, as I no longer had the parts I had just composed, I had to re-orchestrate the repeated passages. [...] The same year I pulled from the ballet music a Suite for orchestra: the first movement, 'Fair in Debrecen' [6], depicts the picturesque and lively jostling of the crowd in the Debrecen marketplace. The second movement, 'Air de danse' [7], is followed by the 'Students' Dance' [8], a *verbunkos* [a traditional military-recruitment dance performed with slapping on the sides of boots] and 'Gypsy Music' [9]. The 'Pas de deux' [10] is a sentimental dialogue between Ádám and his sweetheart. The last movement, the Finale [11], is composed of three parts: Józsi's drunken dance, then a humorous funeral march depicting his fictitious burial. The work ends with a horseherds' dance.³

Tony Kurmann's other arrangement for symphonic band is of the *Timon of Athens Suite* (2014), of which Farkas himself had already made a brass-band version in 1967. The genesis of the music can be traced back to 1935, when Antal Németh took over the leadership of the National Theatre in Budapest and commissioned Farkas to write incidental music for a number of plays. The first one was *Timon of Athens*, followed by three further Shakespeare plays: *As You Like It*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Farkas said of *Timon of Athens*:

I wanted to write Greek-sounding music; that is why I tried out an arrangement using no strings, only wind instruments, a saxophone, a piano, a harp and percussion. At the time, I had already acquired valuable experience in writing film music, but now I had to learn to write softer music beneath the spoken word. In films, the sound level can be adjusted

³ Typescript in the composer's estate.

as one wants, but in the theatre – as the critics wrote – my music drowned Shakespeare’s words. One learns from experience!⁴

A few years later, Farkas prepared a suite from the incidental music which was first performed in March 1938 and which became the basis of the brass-band version almost three decades later – and Tony Kurmann’s arrangement another half-century on. The suite has three movements: ‘Alcibiade’s March’ [12], ‘Dinner Music’ [13], and ‘Dance’ [14]. What inspired Farkas in 1967 to rework his juvenile score for brass band is not known, but the genesis may also be related to the composition in the same year, 1967, of *Tower Music from Nyírbátor* (*Nyírbátori toronyzene*) [18] with its evocations of Renaissance fanfares. In August that year, the first Nyírbátor Music Days were held in the small eastern Hungarian provincial town of that name; in the intervening 50 years it has grown into a prestigious music festival. Farkas’ composition, commissioned for its opening, was performed again in 2016, for the 50th anniversary of the festival, on three trumpets, four horns, three trombones and a tuba, all located on the balcony of the town hall. The manuscript also bears an alternative title in German: *Kleine Turmmusik* (‘Little Tower Music’). The piece can also be performed without horns and tuba, which naturally changes its character, and there is also version for a larger ensemble, which Farkas made for his son András in 1978.

The next two compositions here, *Intrada*, *Passacaglia*, *Saltarello* and *Musica per Ottoni*, are also related to a particular place and period. Both were written in August 1982 at the bank of Lake Balaton, at Balatonlelle, where Farkas owned a house and where for decades he spent a part of the summer. Both compositions are more modern in style. Indeed, the movement-titles of the *Intrada*, *Passacaglia*, *Saltarello* – which is scored for fifteen wind instruments – might suggest that it is another of Farkas’ arrangements of early music. But although the formal design evokes the distant past, Farkas filled these old bottles with new wine. The fanfare-like *Intrada* [15], which functions as an introduction, is twice interrupted by contrasting musical material, and then in the *Passacaglia* [16] the

⁴ *Vallomások a zenéről. Farkas Ferenc válogatott írásai*, ed. László Gombos, Püski, Budapest, 2004, p. 234 (an English translation, *Ferenc Farkas on Music, Selected Writings 1930–95*, is in preparation from Toccata Press).

ten-note ground bass, descending in fourths from the note D is repeated thirteen times. The final movement, *Saltarello* [17], is a sort of rondo based on a *perpetuum mobile*-theme in $\frac{6}{8}$, interrupted by shorter segments of different character. In one of these passages, the trumpet has a solo role; another one is characterised by repeated notes; in a third, the flutes and oboes play graceful duplets in the upper register, without a bass part. At the end of the movement with its ABCADBCA formal design, the coda is also based on the A material. The work was dedicated to the Philharmonistes de Châteauroux and their conductor, János Kőmives (1932–2005), a former student of Farkas and a dear friend.

Musica per Ottoni for three trumpets, two trombones, and tuba was commissioned by the Hungarian Radio, and then a studio recording was made of it, but its first public performance only occurred ten years later. Its final movement is identical with the last movement of *Intrada*, *Passacaglia*, *Saltarello*. Farkas commented on the work as follows:

This composition, with its divertimento tone, follows a centuries-old tradition in every respect: both in the succession of its movements (fast – slow – fast) and their formal structure (sonatina, lied form, rondo). Following the energetic first movement [25] (*Allegro*), in the second movement [26] (*Adagio*) the trumpet melody arches over the ostinato accompaniment. In the third movement [27] (*Allegro*), I quote again the saltarello rhythm that frequently appears in my works.⁵

Of the works on this album the one to boast the oldest historical sources is the *Contrafacta Hungarica*: Farkas used sixteenth-century material, both Hungarian and Hungarian-related, from half-a-dozen original hand-written manuscripts. He wrote:

As in other similar works of mine, I was led by a dual purpose: to cast the brief musical works, which are valuable to us though at first glance seem insignificant, into a larger musical form; and also to ennoble the crude, dilettante pieces with richer but stylistically tasteful harmonies, and contrapuntal texture.⁶

⁵ Typescript in the Farkas estate.

⁶ Typescript in Farkas' papers, dated October 1977.

He began work in 1973 and finished in February 1974. That first version, which was for string orchestra, has the title *Partita all'ungaresca*. Two years later Farkas reworked it with the title *Contrafacta Hungarica* for the Berner Bläseroktett, led by András Farkas. The first performance took place in February 1977.

The first movement ('Basse danse') [19] is a set of variations based on a melody transcribed in 1520 by Fülöp Pominóczky; the second ('Gagliarda') [20] is a transcription of Bálint Bakfark's lute piece *Non dite mai*, which is itself an arrangement of an Italian dance tune. The third movement ('Passamezzo') [21] uses two melodies, the first from a modern collection by Oscar Chilesotti,⁷ the second from Petrus Phalesius' dance collection of 1571.⁸ The fourth movement ('Saltarello') [22] is a rondo, the recurring material of which is the melody from Sebastyén Tinódi Lantos' historical song 'Sokféle részöögösről' ('Of several kinds of drunkard'; 1548); the first episode is the Hungarian dance from Haeckel's lute-book of 1562, and the second episode is a version of the Phalesius melody from the previous movement. The fifth movement ('Intermezzo') [23] is an arrangement of the song 'The Story of Eleazar and Antiochus' from the Hofgreff Chant Book (1546). The sixth and last movement ('Hajdútánc') [24] is again a rondo, this one having as theme the Hajdú Dance from the Dresdner Zithertabulatur of 1592. The first episode comes from August Nörmiger's collection (1598), and the second is 'Prince Báthory's Dance' from a tablature manuscript by Jakobides.

The last item is the *Mischievous Tune* [28], heard here in Tony Kurmann's 2014 arrangement. The source of this short, evocative potpourri is *Csínom Palkó*, a radio play composed by Farkas in 1949 and, expanded with half-a-dozen airs, turned into a 'Romantic folk opera' the following year (a second version followed in 1960). It had a huge success, in view of which, in 1973, a spectacular film was made of it, so that it was showing in cinemas while the opera was still being performed in the theatre. The story takes place in the early eighteenth century, during the Hungarian War of Independence

⁷ Chilesotti (1848–1916) was an Italian musicologist and music historian who published a number of collections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music; he also wrote on oriental music.

⁸ Also known as Pierre Phalèse the Elder, Phalesius (c. 1510–75) was an important Flemish publisher and printer of music, based first in Leuven and then in Antwerp.

against Habsburg rule. The name of the fictitious male protagonist Csínom Palkó was taken from a Hungarian folksong. In 1959 János Eördögh made an arrangement for brass band, which he called *Mischievous Tune*, featuring the folksong heard at the outset and four memorable tunes from *Csínom Palkó* that were Farkas' own creations, and it was this brass-band medley which served as the basis for the Kurmann arrangement.

László Gombos, born in 1967, is a Hungarian musicologist, graduating from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest in 1990 (as a choral conductor) and in 1995 (in musicology); in 1995–98 he took part in the musicological PhD programme of the Liszt Academy. He taught music history at the University of Debrecen from 1998 to 2002, and since 1995 he has been a professor at the Béla Bartók Conservatory in Budapest. Since 1994 he has been a member of the research staff at the Institute for Musicology in Budapest. His main area of interest is Hungarian music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

László Marosi enjoys a career leading orchestras and wind bands at concerts and festivals and in recording studios and academies around the world, appearing in such major concert halls as the Nibelungenhalle (Passau), the Hungarian State Opera House (Budapest), El Teatro Libertador (Cordoba, Argentina), Palau de la Musica (Valencia) and Sala São Paulo. The orchestras he has conducted included the Matav and Dohnanyi symphonies of Budapest, the Hungarian State Operetta Symphony, the Symphony Orchestra of Guanajuato and the Symphony of Oaxaca (Mexico) and the National Symphony Orchestras of Kazakhstan, Honduras and Costa Rica. Among the elite wind ensembles he has conducted are the Hungarian Central Army Band, the Royal Military Band of the Netherlands, the State Symphonic Band of São Paulo, the Wind Band of the Teatro Libertador de San Martin (Cordoba), the US Navy Band, the US Air Force Band of Europe and the Wind Symphony or Montevideo (Uruguay). László Marosi is currently the artistic director of the International



Band Festival of Villa Carlos Paz in Argentina and the Artistic Advisor and Conductor for Stormworks Europe Publishing; he also teaches conducting at the University of Central Florida.

A keen proponent of contemporary music, he has premiered many works for orchestra and wind ensemble, including works by László Dubrovay, Frigyes Hidas, Karel Husa, Kamilló Lendvay, Christopher Marshall, Vincente Moncho, Nunzio Ortolano, Shulamit Ran, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Juan Trigos, Guy Woolfenden and Edson Zampronha. He has been making commercial recordings since the 1980s and has appeared on dozens of albums. In 1993, he was asked to serve as conductor and artistic director of the professional Budapest Symphonic Band, in addition to his responsibilities as the conductor of the Liszt Academy Wind Orchestra. These ensembles have produced several commercial recordings for leading European companies, including Hungaroton. About his recordings of wind-band arrangements of music from Wagner's *Ring* Cycle, Classics Today said: 'Marosi conducts these Ringlets in a flowing, energetic manner that some of today's prominent Wagner conductors could learn from.'

Born in Sárvár, in western Hungary, László Marosi began his musical education at the age of five, continuing at the Music Gymnasium, with both piano and trombone as main subjects. He studied conducting at the Liszt Academy of Music with Tamas Breitner, the director of the Pecs Opera. From 1982 to 1997 he worked as the conductor of the Hungarian Central Army Orchestra, during which period he recorded a number of works by Liszt and several contemporary Hungarian composers. He also conducted his ensemble for radio and television productions and toured with the group throughout Europe. His book, *Two Centuries Military Music in Hungary: A History of Hungarian Military Music, Conductor and Marches, 1741-1945*, was published by Editio Musica Budapest in Hungarian in 2011 and in English in 2015.

Between 1989 and 1994, László Marosi conducted more than fifty performances annually with the Budapest State Operetta Theatre Orchestra. He was invited to guest-conduct the Matav Symphony Orchestra, and toured Europe with the Strauss Symphony Orchestra (1996 and 1998). As guest conductor, lecturer and adjudicator, he has appeared around the world.

Following his professional career in Hungary, he matriculated at Florida State University, where he earned a M.M. in Conducting and a Ph.D. in Music Education and frequently conducted the University Symphony Orchestra, serving as Associate Conductor of the FSU Wind Orchestra during the academic year 2002-3.

For his contributions to Hungarian contemporary music, he has twice been awarded the Artisjus Prize by the Hungarian Composers Union. In 1998, he was awarded the FAME prize at the Mid Europe Wind Music Festival in Schladming, Austria, for his international conducting

activities, and in 2013 was awarded the Research Incentive Award from the University of Central Florida for his publications and recordings of the music of Frigyes Hidas.

The **Budapest Wind Symphony** is the elite wind ensemble of Hungary, inviting musicians from the leading orchestras of the country. It draws its members from the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra of the Hungarian State Opera House, the Dohnányi Symphony Orchestra and the Hungarian Central Army Band. The goal of the ensemble is to preserve and promote the wind-band culture of Hungary by performing and recording the music of the country's more important composers, among them Ferenc Farkas and György Ligeti. The Farkas works that the BWS performs include pieces written for both wind and brass ensembles and also his major works for wind band.



Ferenc FARKAS

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR
MUSIC FOR FLUTE AND STRINGS
OLD HUNGARIAN DANCES FROM THE 17TH CENTURY
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SERENATA CONCERTANTE
CANTIONES OPTIMAE
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