

THE OBOE CONCERTOS OF FRIGYES HIDAS: A HISTORICAL AND STYLISTIC
EXAMINATION AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE

by

WILLIAM H. JONES

(Under the Direction of Reid Messich)

ABSTRACT

Frigyes Hidas (1928-2007) made significant contributions in the field of compositions for wind instruments. His concertos for the oboe are great additions to the repertoire for this instrument. Yet, little has been written about them, and they are not widely studied or performed. This study provides background information on the composer, his approach to music, and his oboe concertos: the Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra (1951), the Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble (2000), and the Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Wind Ensemble (2001). It also provides performance notes and suggestions for these works.

INDEX WORDS: Frigyes Hidas, Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble, Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Wind Ensemble, oboe performance, concerto with band

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Ronald Johnson

For a lifetime of inspiring students

To love music and each other

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Need for Study

Frigyes Hidas contributed greatly to the field of music for winds, and he was the most internationally known and performed Hungarian composer of his day.¹ He was called “the last Hungarian Romantic Composer,” both by himself and by other professionals.² His contributions to solo oboe repertoire are distinguished by their skillful combination of the instrument’s registers and timbre, with melodic and virtuosic beauty. However, very little has been written about his works for woodwinds, let alone his solo oboe works. His Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra earned him the Erkel Prize in 1958, Hungary’s highest award for music.³ It was recorded by the Hungarian Radio Orchestra in 1952. His Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble is a significant contribution to the growing list of concertos for oboe and band, and it was commissioned by an American oboist, Dr. Susan Eischeid.⁴ The one-movement Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Wind Ensemble is a unique and highly creative piece, and also exhibits his sense for charming, lyrical melodies. The instrumentation of the wind ensemble that accompanies these has a singular quality that few if any other composers have employed. I believe these works have great potential, either as recital pieces or in their original form

¹ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 16

² “Hidas Frigyes zeneszerző portréja visszaemlékezések alapján 2.rész/angol felirat” (Portrait of Composer Frigyes Hidas based on Reminiscences Part 2 / English subtitles), uploaded by VTV Makoi, February 5, 2019. YouTube. Accessed March 6, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBL7TrXzJms>.

³ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 28

⁴ Dan Stolper, “Oboists in the News”, *The Double Reed* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 46

with orchestra or band. Much is demanded from the performer of these works; they require significant endurance, excellent control of the high register of the instrument, and strong rhythmic accuracy. But, I believe that the resulting music is worth overcoming their inherent difficulties.

Biography of Frigyes Hidas

Frigyes Hidas was born May 25, 1928, and not unusual for a composer, he was born into a musical family. His father was the organist and cantor at St. Stephen's Basilica in Budapest, and he grew up surrounded by music. However, he initially wanted to be an engineer, not a musician. But because of his early talents for organ and improvisation, he decided to pursue music. At the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, he first earned degrees in church music composition and conducting, intending to pursue a career similar to his father's. It was at this time, immediately after World War II, that Hungary had moved toward Communism. Because of this, a career in the church looked unlikely, and he earned additional degrees in composition and conducting.

He had no trouble finding work immediately after graduating. After the war, there was a general shortage of good musicians. Additionally, the record archives of the radio had largely been lost during the war, and so most performances on the radio were live. In 1951 Hidas became musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre. It was in this position and at this time that the Concerto for Oboe was written, for the Hungarian Radio Orchestra. This association is due to the fact that the Hungarian National Orchestra and the Hungarian Radio Orchestra alternated in playing for the Theatre, so Hidas would have been familiar with this ensemble.

During his 15-year tenure in this position, he only completed about 20 compositions, a small number when compared to his final output of over 200 works. Yet in this period he gained important experience for his compositional career. The interaction of stage action and music gave him a sense of the flow of dramatic elements in a musical composition. He learned that it was not about composing “to a stop watch,” but about setting an atmosphere for the drama.⁵ Due to budget cuts, he was dismissed from his position as musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre in 1966.

Though he was now nominally a free-lance composer, he continued working for the radio, and in many areas of music. He tried his hand at many kinds of composition, including film music. The only style of music in which he never had any interest was the avant-garde. He performed as pianist with the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, and he also conducted the same ensemble. He was seen as a kind of an “all-round-musician” at the radio’s performing branch.⁶ His work involved helping other composers finish their compositions, as he honed his skills as a composer.⁷

It was in this part of his career that he wrote his first compositions for wind band. In 1978, he was commissioned by the Hungarian National Band Association to compose a piece for band. The aim of this organization was to establish a band repertoire with national characteristics. Hidas was chosen because he was already a popular composer, and his music was loved by all his colleagues. The common story is that he received the commission and the money for it, and then, very unlike him, forgot all about it. It was only when he was later questioned about the piece that he quickly sat down and composed it. The work, entitled *Capriccio*, was a massive success, and it launched his

⁵ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 10

⁶ Ibid., p. 11

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

career in the wind band world. He would eventually compose over 50 pieces for wind band.

The composer once again obtained a full-time position in 1974, when he became musical director of the Municipal Operetta Theatre in Budapest. He sought out this kind of work because he enjoyed conducting orchestras. The reason for his resignation from this position in 1979 came primarily from poor eyesight, which, even with thick lenses in his glasses, made it difficult for him to read musical scores. He did remain, however, the official keyboard player of the Hungarian Radio Orchestra.

As he began his career as a free-lance composer, his fame continued to spread as a composer of wind music. Music for trombones would become one of the most significant parts of his output. This is due largely to his relationship with the trombonist Gustav Höna. Höna was a trombonist in the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, and he encouraged Hidas to write for the trombone. Hidas would eventually receive commissions from all over Europe and America for trombone, and he wrote over 20 solo and chamber works for trombones.

He wrote a number of works for brass quintet, including a set of 24 Training Patterns. This was due to a desire to create something like Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, except for brass ensemble.⁸ He also composed pieces for clarinet ensemble, saxophone quartet, and three woodwind quintets. Early in his career, he had a goal to write a concerto for every instrument. He eventually wrote a solo concerto for these instruments, listed chronologically beginning with the earliest example for each instrument: oboe, trumpet, violin, clarinet, viola, flute, horn, piano, tenor trombone, harp, bassoon, cello, bass

⁸ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 108

trombone, alto trombone, euphonium, harpsichord, violoncello, alto saxophone, and baritone saxophone.⁹

Following the premier of *Capriccio* in 1978, Hidas wrote regularly and prolifically for wind band. Works from the 1980s that helped to further his popularity and recognition for this ensemble include: *Merry Music*, *Suite*, *Festive Music*, *Concertino for Wind Band*, *Fantasy and Fugue*, *Circus Suite*, and *The Undanced Ballet*, among others. Larger scale works (25 min. +) followed in the 1990s. One example is *Save the Sea*, a symphony for winds written for the Royal Dutch Marine Band. One can hear strong influences of Debussy in this work. His Requiem, written for solo voices, chorus and wind orchestra, is generally considered to be Hidas' magnum opus,¹⁰ and was said by Dr. James Croft (former Director of Bands, Florida State University) to be "the most successful and valuable piece of music ever written for band in the 20th century."¹¹ The success of the Requiem generated requests for other works of this kind. His Laudate Dominum and Te Deum were both composed for voices and wind orchestra.

He was also successful as a composer of ballets and operas, though in this area, his music is little-known outside of Hungary. His four operas are: *The Woman and the Truth* (1965), *Bösendorfer* (1977), *Danube Bend* (1984) and *Dream Bach* (1991). His ballets include *Colors* (1960), and *Cedar* (1975), the latter of which garnered an unheard-of 16-minute standing ovation at its premier.¹² It saw immediate success and ran for 75

⁹ In this listing I have included solo concertos and other works for solo instrument and orchestra or band.

¹⁰ "Hidas Frigyes zeneszerző portréja visszaemlékezések alapján 3.rész/angol felirat" (Portrait of Composer Frigyes Hidas based on Reminiscences Part 3 / English subtitles), uploaded by VTV Makoi, February 5, 2019. YouTube. Accessed March 6, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBL7TrXzJms>.

¹¹ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 36

¹² Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

performances. The elements of dance in his music that must have helped to make this work so successful can be seen throughout his compositional output.

One of his best-known works within Hungary was his theme for the 1980s TV series “Neighbors”, which was actually music borrowed from an early piano concerto of his.¹³ Work such as this helped make Hidas a household name, as his name was seen on television daily across Hungary. Nevertheless, he was not receiving very much recognition in his home country for his more serious compositions. This is mainly due to the fact that he had begun concentrating much of his efforts on wind band composing at a time when this was still seen as a lesser art form in Hungary, and in much of Europe. The appreciation for band music was much greater in the U.S.

He received many awards throughout his career. His first major award was the Erkel Prize he received in 1959. This was the highest cultural prize in Hungary.¹⁴ He was given this award specifically for his Concerto for Oboe. He received another Erkel Prize in 1980, and was named Merited Artist of the Hungarian People’s Republic in 1986. In 2004 he won the Prize *Coups de vent* Lille (France) for his *Fantasy for Symphonic Band*. He continued receiving commissions and working up until the last few months of his life, when his health no longer permitted it. He had even been laying plans for the composition of an opera accompanied by band, a kind of crowning achievement for his output. The libretto for this work had been completed, but unfortunately he died before being able to begin work on the music. Hidas died on March 7, 2007, and per his request, his ashes were scattered over Lake Balaton.¹⁵

¹³ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 29

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 126

¹⁵ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

Hidas was known as a generally friendly and jovial person; he claimed it was in his genes.¹⁶ He was known among all his friends as “Frici Basci”- which translates as “Uncle Freddy”. It is no surprise then that these qualities often find their way into his music. Laszlo Marosi gives an example of his humor:

Once we were in the Netherlands for a workshop and premier of some of his music...and we went to a rehearsal of a community orchestra...we asked, “What will you play?”, and they said “a Debussy piece and a Haydn piece”. They didn’t give us any more information than that. They were not in a very good shape this orchestra, they had a lot of problems...and after a half hour listening to those attempts to play the right notes and rhythms, Hidas, with a straight face turned to me and asked me, “Laszlo, what do you think, did they play the Haydn piece, or the Debussy?”¹⁷

Hidas had a sense of humor, but he also knew when to be serious. This sense of the profound was at least partly due to the desperate times he lived through near the end of World War II, when he and his family had to take refuge in the basement of the cathedral in Budapest for three months with almost no food, waiting for the war to end.¹⁸ His nation of Hungary once again survived a world conflict, but not without a toll taken on its people.

Style

His music has sometimes been compared to the music of Debussy. More than anything else, it is because Hidas was a master of texture and orchestration. His idea of using a small group of winds, with the addition of instruments like harp and celesta to accompany a concerto was something that no one else was doing.¹⁹ Often, the textures he

¹⁶ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 22

¹⁷ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

¹⁸ “Hidas Frigyes zeneszerző portréja visszaemlékezések alapján 1.rész/angol felirat” (Portrait of Composer Frigyes Hidas based on Reminiscences Part 1 / English subtitles), uploaded by VTV Makoi, February 5, 2019. YouTube. Accessed March 6, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBL7TrXzJms>.

¹⁹ Telephone conversation with Ronald Johnson, February 27, 2018

creates stand alone in making his music appealing. It is also possible that the limited repertoire for wind bands encouraged him to be more experimental in his use of instruments. These Debussy qualities can also be seen in the colorful and impressionistic influences in his music, such as the use of whole-tone scales.²⁰

Because of his piano improvisations and radio broadcasts of his Piano Concerto, he was known as the “Hungarian Gershwin”.²¹ He composed in a style that was tonal, while not sounding outdated. It respected traditional harmony and forms, while still sounding fresh and contemporary. His style is also recognizable as uniquely his; one can recognize one of his compositions before knowing the identity of the composer. Partly, this is also due to his style staying relatively the same throughout his career. Other characteristics of his that help his music to stand out are the frequent use of asymmetrical rhythms, the use of folk melodies, and harmonies influenced by jazz. Yet no single one of these characteristics predominates over the others, and so his style cannot be pinned down to narrow parameters.

Hidas always wrote music with the enjoyment of the listener in mind. He said that, for him, “music means the conformity of beautiful melody, harmony and form”.²² Yet, In his works there is always a surprise: whatever comes next in the piece is not inevitable or ordinary. He was always able to infuse in his music a turn of harmony or tempo that was largely unexpected, but once it is heard, naturally seems so much a part of the music. Ronald Johnson draws a relevant comparison:

He and Mr. (Kamilló) Lendvay, they were born the same year, they were in school together, they were on faculty at the Liszt Academy together...but they were kind of like Mozart and Beethoven. The music just came pouring out of

²⁰ *Circus Suite* and *Save the Sea*, to name just a couple, have good examples of this influence.

²¹ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 29

²² Ibid., p. 18. “Conformity” here perhaps means something closer to “coordination.”

Frici Basci. Even in his serious music, there was always a smile- he was very much like Mozart. Mr. Lendvay, on the other hand, everything was quite difficult for him, though it was always wonderful music. Mr. Hidas had around 250 pieces, and Mr. Lendvay only around 100.

His music encompassed compositional traditions, while remaining fresh and true to the spirit of the age.²³ His music was sometimes criticized as being too light and easy, though this could also be seen as a strength or trademark of his style. What mattered most to him was not what a critic wrote about him, but the affirmation he received from the audience's applause. He was only happy if the audience was happy.²⁴ He would also sometimes compose in a more intimate style; *228 days* was composed in 2004 in memory of his wife, and it served him as a kind of therapy while grieving.

Inspiration

Hidas found inspiration in many different sources. One of the greatest sources of inspiration, and impetus for him to compose, though, came from great performances of his own music. In Hungary, he was frequently known to attend concerts in which his works were being performed. When a soloist or ensemble would perform one of his works in a way that impressed him, he would spontaneously be inspired to compose a piece for them. This was the case when Dr. Ronald Johnson was conducting the Northern Iowa Wind Symphony in a performance of Hidas' *Concertino for Band*, in Hungary in 1993. He was so impressed that on the spot he decided to compose a piece for them. This would be his work *Almost BACH*.²⁵

²³ "Hidas Frigyes zeneszerző portréja visszaemlékezések alapján 2.rész/angol felirat" (Portrait of Composer Frigyes Hidas based on Reminiscences Part 2 / English subtitles), uploaded by VTV Makoi, February 5, 2019. YouTube. Accessed March 6, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBL7TrXzJms>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Telephone conversation with Ronald Johnson, February 27, 2019

Hidas and his Hungarian contemporaries found general inspiration in the history of Hungary. Hungarian folk music is known around the world, and is very significant in their compositions. Hungary had struggled for freedom from the Austro-Hungarian empire for centuries. Hidas and all those in his generation had lived through armed conflict and occupation during WWII. Hungarian folk songs, and the history of Hungary as a nation, gave Hidas great inspiration. He was also inspired by his travels. The locations of his travels can be seen in the titles of several of his works: *Florida Concerto*, *Ohio Concerto*, *Missouri Impression*, and *Pictures of South Africa*, to name a few.

As previously mentioned, Hidas practically grew up in church, because of his father being a church organist, and he had originally prepared for a career as a church organist and director of music. In Marosi's opinion, it was partly due to the fact that he constantly heard the organ growing up- an instrument which can be likened to a big wind band- that he would go on to compose so well for band. Hidas was a deeply religious man, and these feelings inspired him when composing pieces such as his Requiem; indeed, his faith was a great source of inspiration for him as a composer.²⁶ The performance of sacred works was not feasible until after the fall of communism in 1989, and in the mid-nineties he "had been waiting 25 years" for the suggestion and encouragement to write his Requiem.²⁷

²⁶ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

²⁷ Telephone conversation with Ronald Johnson, February 27, 2019

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSES OF REPERTOIRE

Introduction

The following section examines the concerti for the oboe written by Frigyes Hidas. For each piece, I will provide notes on its history. Then I will provide performance suggestions for selected technical problems encountered in the works. These are intended to aid in the preparation of these for performance. My intent in this section is not to give one prescribed way of playing, but rather to give helpful insights and options that the performer can choose from. I will provide the following annotation for each work, as applicable, followed by my commentaries:

- 1. Complete Title:** (as it appears on the score)
- 2. Year of Composition:**
- 3. Publisher:** (as it appears on the score)
- 4. Scoring:** (instrumentation of the work when performed with band/orchestra)
- 5. Duration:** (timed)
- 6. Range:** (Bb3-A6)
- 7. Dedication:** (as it appears on the score)
- 8. Recordings:** (overview of recommended recordings, in order of personal preference)

Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra

Complete Title: Concerto for oboe and orchestra

Year of Composition: 1951

Publisher: Editio Musica Budapest

Scoring: Solo oboe, two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, triangle, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, celeste, harp, and strings.

Duration: I.: 8:00, II.: 7:30, III.: 5:00, Total: 20:30

Range: B3-F#6

7. Dedication: n/a

8. Recordings:

Hidas, Frigyes. Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra. Performed by Péter Pongrácz, oboe, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Hungarian Radio and Television, conducted by János Sándor on *Concertos for Oboe*. Hungaroton Records, 1962. Apple Music Download.

Hidas, Frigyes. Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra. Performed by Lajos Lencsés, oboe, and the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, conducted by Alan Gilbert on *Lajos Lencsés: ...all' ungharese*. Delta Music, 2001. CD.

Historical Notes for Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra

Beginning in 1951, Hidas was the musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre in Budapest, a position which involved the duties of both composing and conducting. Two ensembles shared duties of playing in the theatre: the Hungarian National Orchestra, and the Hungarian Radio Orchestra. Hidas began to develop a relationship with the Radio Orchestra, sometimes also playing keyboard instruments in this ensemble. His Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra was written specifically with this group and their principal oboist, Péter Pongrácz, in mind. Pongrácz's association with the work "made his career," as he went on to become "*the* oboist" in Hungary, as well as oboe professor and chair of winds at the Franz Liszt Academy.²⁸ The fact that Hidas was familiar with and confident in the abilities of the whole ensemble also explains the significant parts for other instruments, such as flute and clarinet.

²⁸ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

This concerto is typically listed as Hidas' first completed work. It was composed as his graduation thesis at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, where he studied composition with János Viski.²⁹ Laszlo Marosi also mentions Ferenc Farkas as Hidas' composition teacher, and that Farkas provided him with inspiration and a wealth of knowledge.³⁰ The work gained quick recognition, as it was recorded soon after its premier, in 1952, along with Hidas' Sonata for Oboe. Eeva Saarela explains:

The reason why the Hungarian Radio recorded so many of his (Hidas') works was not only because of their collaboration but also because of the role the radio played in supporting new compositions. Hidas gave much credit to the conductor György Lehel, who, according to Hidas, had a vocation to promote and help Hungarian composers...during Lehel's time, Hungarian contemporary music was often heard on the airways.³¹

This early composition of Hidas' helped to spread recognition for him at the outset of his career, and the maturity of this work is evidence of his natural compositional talents. The piece radiates with energy, lyricism and a general zest for life. From the first bar, its Hungarian roots are obvious. This can be seen in the melody's energetic, syncopated style, scored for unison strings. Yet it is also a unique voice, unlike anything heard before.

Performance Notes for Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra

Though all of Hidas' oboe concertos are most suitable for advanced performers, the first movement of the Concerto for Oboe is probably the most accessible for less-advanced players. This is due to more generous periods of rest for the soloist, less time playing in the high register, and somewhat less difficult technical passages. The first four

²⁹ Lencsés, Lajos, Liner notes to Frigyes Hidas, Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra. Performed by Lencsés, oboe, and the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, conducted by Alan Gilbert on *Lajos Lencsés: ...all' ungharese*. Delta Music, 2001. CD.

³⁰ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

³¹ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 13

bars of the first movement (Allegro) serve as a brief introduction to the solo entrance. The main theme begins at m. 5. It requires, above all else, excellent coordination of the fingers and tongue, combined with a clear execution of the slur two-tongue-two articulation. Hidas marked staccatos over almost every untied note in this passage (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 1-8

The second theme, which begins at m.29, shows a marked contrast with the opening theme. The style of this theme introduces longer note values and a broadening which changes the feel from four to two beats to a bar (see Figure 2).

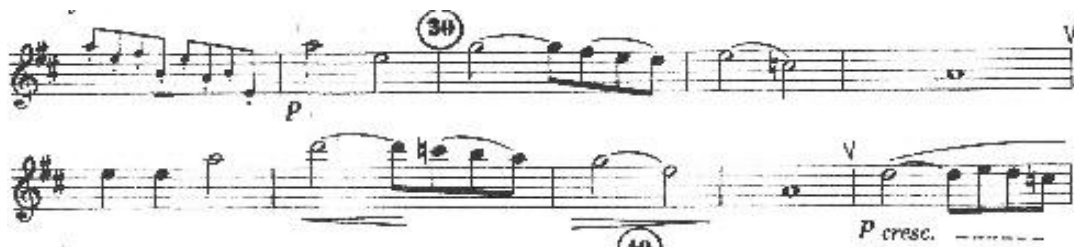


Figure 2. Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 28-37

The closing theme of the exposition begins in the orchestra at m. 52. It combines the melodic outline of the second theme with the playful style of the opening theme. The printed performance direction, *Giocoso*, supports this playful style (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 50-62

M. 72 is a short, codetta-like section which echoes the second theme.

The development begins in m. 78. The first six bars, which are for orchestra alone, cleverly develop material from the orchestra-only introduction. The oboe re-enters in m. 84, and the rest of this section develops material of the first and closing themes. The development is a relatively brief tribulation, and the recapitulation begins with the first theme in m. 111. The first theme is repeated precisely, but the second theme is varied by having the orchestra play the melody while the oboe has virtuosic flourishes.

As this sections closes at m. 155, the oboe rests while the orchestra plays new material as a lead-in to the cadenza at m. 163. This long written-out cadenza comprises about 50 measures of material, which is derived freely from all the previous themes of the movement. It is a lengthy cadenza, and (based on recordings) a typical interpretation lasts a little over two minutes.³² It is written quite well for the oboe, and gives the soloist plenty of opportunities to display all of their capabilities. The closing theme is finally heard again as the orchestra finishes the movement.

The second movement (Andante) opens with an expansive theme reminiscent of Hungarian folk melodies, coupled with a pulsing accompaniment. The tempo is marked “Andante” without any metronome indication. I would suggest a quarter note tempo of

³²Listen, for example, to: Frigyes Hidas, Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra (Performed by Lajos Lencsés, oboe, and the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, conducted by Alan Gilbert on *Lajos Lencsés: ...all' ungharese*. Delta Music, 2001. CD).

around 80. While the meter is 6/4 and most of the movement in the melody is in quarter notes, I think what the composer intended musically is the feel of a very slow dotted-half note (this 6/4 meter, triple subdivision is also relevant to the second movement of *Concerto No. 2*). One interesting area that can support the idea of a slow dotted-half note beat is his use of duplet quarter notes in m. 46-54 of this movement (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 2, mm. 46-53

Circular breathing would be a useful, though not completely necessary technique for the opening of this movement, as the first rest does not occur until m. 14. This passage is repeated from m. 76-89. The overall mood of this movement is beautifully ecstatic and rhapsodic. It evokes a sense of reverentially distant longing. It is also quite tiring to play physically; as an oboist, it brings to mind the closing bars of the Vaughan Williams Oboe Concerto, but instead, this section lasts for around 100 bars. The movement is in a free ABA form: A= mm. 1-34, B= mm.35-75, A'= mm. 76-101.

The third movement (*Allegro vivo*) is an example of one of Hidas' favorite formats. It is a free rondo-like movement with a main theme, but also uses other themes which freely alternate with the main theme. When themes recur, they are sometimes elaborated, transposed, or in the minor mode. The overall mood is buoyant and joyful. One challenging passage in this movement is from mm. 206-220. These straight sixteenth notes in a brisk 3/8 time should be practiced slowly and carefully for evenness and

accuracy of rhythm. I recommend a performance tempo of dotted quarter = 88 for this movement (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 3, mm. 210-217

Concerto No.2 for Oboe

Complete Title: Concerto No. 2 for oboe and wind ensemble

Year of Composition: 2000

Publisher: Stormworks Europe

Scoring: Solo oboe, 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, string bass, vibraphone, glockenspiel, celeste, and harp.

Duration: I.: 6:00, II.: 4:00, III.: 4:30, Total: 14:30

Range: D4-F#6

7. Dedication: “Dedicated to Ms. Susan J. Eischeid”

8. Recordings:

Hidas, Frigyes. Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble. Performed by Kevin Vigneau, oboe, and the University of New Mexico Wind Symphony, conducted by Eric Rombach-Kendall on *Classic Solos for Winds*. Summit Records, 2007. CD.

Hidas, Frigyes. Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble. Performed by Pauline Oostenrijk, oboe, and the Delphi Ensemble, conducted by Lute Hoekstra on *Frigyes Hidas: 5 Concertos*. Storm Records, 2001. CD.

Historical Notes for Concerto No. 2

This work was composed in 2000- nearly fifty years after the first concerto. In the intervening years, Hidas had become a free-lance composer, and had become known

around the world for his compositions for winds. The end of communism in Hungary in 1989 made travel easier, and Hidas would eventually visit every continent. The Concerto No. 2 was commissioned by Dr. Susan Eischeid, Professor of Oboe at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. She chose Hidas for this commission because of her fondness for the first concerto. She first heard a recording of the piece on the radio one day, while she was still a student. She was able to make out that the composer of the work she had just heard was Hidas, ordered a copy of the Hidas Concerto for Oboe, and found that it was that piece she had heard. She was actually surprised to hear that the composer of this tonal work was still living.³³ Years later, after she had begun her position at Valdosta State, she was discussing her appreciation for Hidas' music with a colleague, and discovered that this colleague had a personal connection with Laszlo Marosi, then a doctoral student at Florida State University. Marosi was a close friend of Hidas, and had premiered many of his works for wind bands.

Because of this surprise connection with Hidas, Eischeid was able to open up communications with the composer about commissioning a new concerto for oboe. Hidas expressed his interest in such a project and accepted the commission. Initially, the composer wrote two different scorings- one for band and one for orchestra. For the premier, it turned out that the version for winds was going to be the most expeditious for the situation, and this is the version which was published.

It was premiered by Eischeid on March 5, 2000 in Valdosta, Georgia, and it was conducted by Laszlo Marosi. The concert came at the end of a week of Hungarian activities, planned with Valdosta State's sister school in Hungary, and the composer himself was flown over for the premier. The concert was an all-Hungarian program, with

³³ Reiner Hobe, *Frigyes Hidas* (Bergatreute, Germany: Amicus Auctoris, 2014), p. 82

the premier of the concerto on the second half. The performance was a general success, and the second movement was received particularly well on this occasion. After the concert, Hidas was “the life of the party,” despite speaking very little English. Overall, Eischeid remembers him as a “very gracious and lovely man” in her experiences with him during his stay. The European premier was played by Alberto Cesaraccio, oboe, in Italy in 2007, and was also conducted by Laszlo Marosi.³⁴

Performance Notes for Concerto No. 2

Endurance is probably the first challenge in performing the Concerto No. 2. It is about 15 minutes of playing, with limited rests and a tessitura that leans heavily on the high register. Choice of reed will be important to counter these challenges- it must be light in resistance (for endurance), relatively high in pitch (for stability and pitch accuracy in the high register), and have a relatively small tip opening (for endurance and pitch). If necessary, low register response can be sacrificed somewhat to facilitate the high register. Careful planning of breaths, especially in the first movement, will also help with endurance.

Starting with the first movement (Andante), I have several suggestions for changes to the printed part. In m. 21-22 it is acceptable to articulate the C#6 and the Eb6, for the purpose of adding clarity to these awkward fingerings. In m. 23 the C6 should be changed to an E6. It seems to be a mistake in the printed part, as it is played as a C6 on both recordings, and changing it to an E6 creates the proper leading-tone effect coming from the Eb6 that precedes it. The same is true with the return of this material in m. 129. The following are several other printed slurs to high notes which can articulated for

³⁴ The information for this section comes from telephone conversations with Susan Eischeid and Laszlo Marosi.

facility and clarity: the E6 in m. 35; the D6 in m. 49; the E6 in m. 77; and the D6 in m. 102.

The printed tempo of quarter note (dotted-quarter note in 12/8) = 96 is suitable musically, but I would suggest 104 to aid in endurance without sacrificing musicality. Breathing is very challenging in the first movement. Frequently, the performer has only the occasional eight or dotted-eight rest to catch a breath. For this reason, it may be necessary to plan out in and out breaths. Circular breathing would be another useful technique, if the performer is comfortable with it. There are several places in this movement where the composer has written dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythms next to triplets. Examples of this can be found in mm. 16, 21, 78 and 79 (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 1, mm. 15-16

The performer must be careful not to assimilate these; there must be an audible difference between them. This frequent juxtaposition of duple and triple is one of the hallmarks of Hidas' style and should therefore be brought out.

Between the two recordings I mentioned above, I have noticed some interesting discrepancies of pitches. The first page of this movement of the concerto alternates between F natural (sometimes written as E#) and F# almost incessantly. This frequent alternation of Fs could cause the performer to doubt the accuracy of the printed pitches in some bars. Kevin Vigneau, in his recording, plays the written F natural in m. 26 as F# (creating a more pentatonic sound consistent with the previous bar), and plays the last F# in m. 31 (carrying over the accidental from earlier in the bar) as an F natural.

This sounds more consistent with the previous bar. Pauline Oostenrijk plays both bars as they are printed. Whatever the composer actually intended, I think both ways of each are good options for the performer (see Figures 7a and 7b).



Figure 7a. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 1, mm 25-26



Figure 7b. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 1, mm. 29-31

The second movement (Comodo)³⁵ features a simple, yet beautiful melody that frequently ascends into the high register of the instrument. The great difficulty of this lies in making sure that the high register notes retain a gentle and unforced quality, smoothly integrated into the rest of the musical line. As noted at the beginning of this section, a stable and up-to-pitch reed will be essential for a good performance of this movement, as well as excellent embouchure and air support. When everything is in place, the effect of this movement should be effortlessly lyrical.

The printed part gives a tempo of quarter note = 80. I would recommend a tempo closer to quarter note = 96. This is much more practical for the endurance of the oboist, while retaining the expression of the movement. It also helps to bring out the underlying large triple meter. One of the central points of interest of this movement is the juxtaposition of duple and triple groupings, but at a slow quarter note speed (see Figure 8).

³⁵ Comodo- “Easy, leisurely, at a convenient pace.” Theodore Baker, ed., *Schirmer Pronouncing Pocket Manual of Musical Terms*, 5th ed., Revised by Laura Kuhn (New York: Schirmer Trade Books, 1995), p. 58

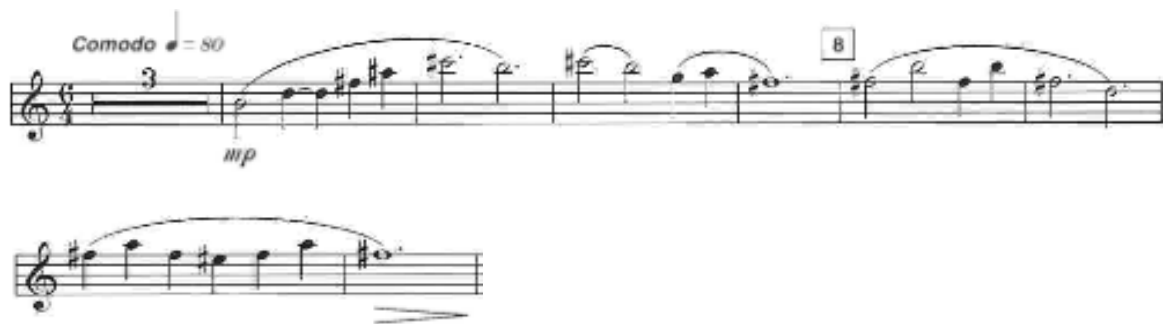


Figure 8. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 2, mm. 1-11

This contrast, inherent to the music, is subtler than those of this kind (duple against triple) in his fast movements. It is integrated into the melody in such a way that one might not recognize it upon first hearing. The rhythm which divides the bar into half note subdivisions is absent from the contrasting section (mm. 25-35). After 6 measures of the opening material (mm. 36-41) which brings back the conflict of duple and triple, several bars of 5/4 begin to ease the tension. The last six bars are entirely triple groupings in 6/4 (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 2, mm.44-54

In the end, triple groupings win out, and the conflict is resolved. The brilliance of this movement lies in the perfect matching of melodic and rhythmic contour.

The rondo-like third movement (Moderato Giocoso) wraps up the concerto in a mood that is light and playful, yet full of contrasts. A main theme (mm. 9-24) alternates

with several others (see Figure 10).

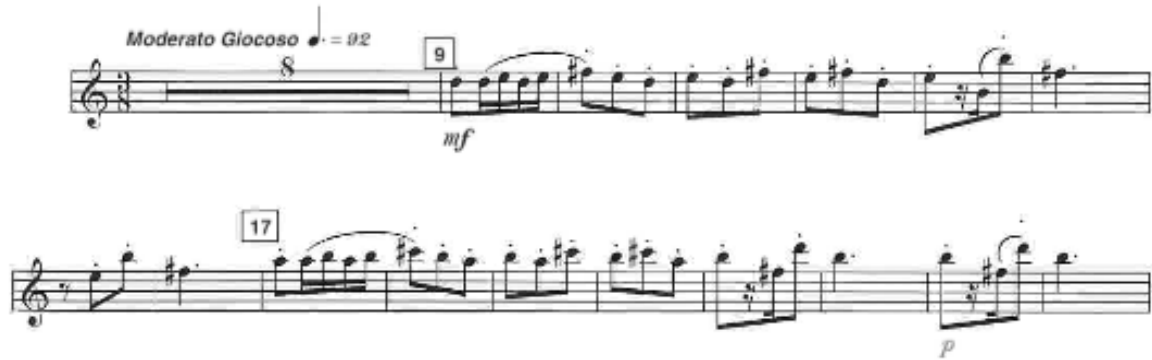


Figure 10. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 1-24

The main themes, and several of the subsequent themes, are also varied by changing the mode, tempo, or by inversion. The main theme is played by the ensemble in one instance (mm.194-210), creating a variation in texture while also giving the soloist a brief break.

Beginning at m. 104, the main theme is varied by mode, inversion and tempo (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 104-111

One of the contrasting themes is first heard beginning in m. 83. This theme returns with the same general character but inverted in m. 176 (see Figures 12a and 12b).



Figure 12a. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 83-89



Figure 12b. Concerto 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 176-182

There are several places in this movement where I recommend breaking slurs to facilitate clarity and security of attack on high notes. These are: the D#6 in m. 66; the C#6 in m. 68; the D6 in m. 101; the D6 in m. 188; and the Eb6 in m. 189. This movement also has stretches without any rests that can be challenging for finding places to breath. I would advise breaths after the F#5 in m. 84; after the G5 in m. 86; after the A5 in 88; and after the D6 in m. 103. I also advise breathing after the similar areas in m. 177, m. 179, and m. 181. Throughout the rest of the movement, many breaths have to be taken during quick eighth or sixteenth rests. It may be useful to plan “in and out” breaths in these circumstances.

Mm. 15-16 (see Figure 10) should be marked *piano* and played as an echo of mm. 13-14. I would assume this is a mistake in the part, since the same dynamic is printed in

the corresponding place, mm. 21-25. Depending on the performer's speed of tonguing, it may be necessary to double tongue the repeated D5s in mm. 210-215 (see Figure 13).



Figure 13. Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 210-215

It would also be tasteful to play a *ritenuto* in mm. 224-225, before the fermata over the bar line.

There are surprising discrepancies in printed tempos between the oboe solo part and the piano reduction score. The opening tempo for the first movement is given as 96 in the part and 108 in the piano score. For the second movement, 80 is printed in the part while 92 is printed in the piano score. For the third movement, 92 is given in the part and 104 is given in the piano score. I cannot say which tempos are truly the “correct” tempos, but in general I would recommend tempos closer to those in the piano score. Glaring inconsistencies such as these are no doubt due to the fact that Hidas’ eyesight was very poor, and to the fact that he did not use computers.³⁶ Between his mistakes and the mistakes of those readying his music for printing, there was much room for errors and inconsistencies of these kinds.

Double Concerto

Complete Title: Double Concerto for oboe, bassoon and wind ensemble

Year of Composition: 2000

Publisher: Stormworks Europe

³⁶ Telephone conversation with Laszlo Marosi, February 18, 2019

Scoring: Solo oboe and bassoon, two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, string bass, timpani, vibraphone, celeste, and harp.

Duration: 12:00

Range: C#4-E6

7. Dedication: “Dedicated To Pauline Oostenrijk (Oboe) and Dorian Cooke (Bassoon)”

8. Recordings:

Hidas, Frigyes. Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Wind Ensemble.

Performed by Pauline Oostenrijk, oboe, Dorian Cooke, bassoon and the Delphi Ensemble, conducted by Lute Hoekstra on *Frigyes Hidas: 5 Concertos*. Storm Records, 2001. CD.

“Frigyes Hidas: Double Concerto (2001) – Northern Iowa Wind Symphony, Ronald Johnson conductor” Video of live performance, uploaded by Richard Rauch, June 7, 2016. YouTube. Accessed February 3, 2019.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGWfBLCYFRA>

Historical Notes for Double Concerto

The Double Concerto for oboe, bassoon and wind ensemble came as a result of the recording of the CD *Frigyes Hidas: 5 Concertos*. Both the Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and the Concerto No. 2 for Bassoon (1999) were recorded for this project. The soloists were the Dutch oboist Pauline Oostenrijk, and the Dutch bassoonist Dorian Cooke (who was also the dedicatee of the Bassoon Concerto No. 2). Inspired by their beautiful playing, Hidas completed this work in one month. The work is in one movement, with many contrasting sections. It is a drama- the two soloists are the lead roles, and the band is the supporting cast and setting.

Performance Notes for Double Concerto

This work poses challenges that are unique from the challenges of a solo concerto. Adding to the balance of soloist and ensemble, the two soloists must balance and complement each other. Similarly, this is not a concerto that can be practiced individually

and then rehearsed with the band; the two soloists must spend a significant amount of time together, practicing for style, phrasing, and cues. Making the duo cadenzas part of a convincing drama requires that these elements are matched and coordinated perfectly.

From the start, the most important element of performing this work will be the oboe and bassoon soloists agreeing on tempos, phrasing and breaths. Rhythmic evenness will be crucial to achieving a convincing rendition. In general, the dynamic balance of the two instruments will probably lean toward the oboe being more prominent. This is due to the more piercing quality of the oboe sound. Both instruments frequently play in their high registers, but since they are usually in these registers at the same time, it does not help the balance very much. This piece is less taxing to play for the oboe than the two preceding concertos. This is because there are many more extended periods of rest, while the bassoon plays solo sections.

The main theme of the piece, which begins with the solo entrance in m.12, reoccurs and alternates with other themes until m. 186. This sighing, descending theme, should be played with emphasis on the eighth note portion of the motive (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. Double Concerto, Mm. 12-17

One of the most interesting sections for both soloists together comes at m. 186. This animato call-and-response creates a bridge between the moderato, relaxed opening material and the very active material of the Presto. The dynamics should be carefully observed here to bring out the proper character (see Figure 15).



Figure 15. Double Concerto, Mm. 186-191

The following section at m. 197 has a tempo marking of presto and a character marking of giocoso. Articulations should be light, and dynamics strong but not forceful. The oboist must be careful not to distort the rhythm by clipping the second eighth note under the slur in the slur-two, tongue-two motive. A slight stress should be placed on each half note beat, and the following articulated eighth notes should be light. The tempo should be quite brisk, but the choice of tempo must be sensitive due to the difficult figure that the bassoon is playing (see Figure 16).



Figure 16. Double Concerto, Mm. 197-201

The libero section that starts at m. 307 has a similar character to the passage at m. 186, but gives more flexibility to the soloists. A call-and-response format is maintained, but this time, variation of dynamics, motive and tempo are all required. I recommend a gradual accelerando from mm. 315-318, and then pulling back in mm. 319-320 (see Figure 17).



Figure 17. Double Concerto, Mm. 307-320

Another place where rhythmic accuracy is very important is the 10/8 bars in the same section (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Double Concerto, Mm. 343-344

Conclusion

This document serves as an introduction and guide to a great composer and his concertos for oboe. My aim is that, by contributing to knowledge about Hidas and his compositions, these works will be learned and performed by more oboists. There are, however, even more works composed by Hidas for the oboe. Several others are out of print or unpublished.³⁷ This project is only the beginning of my advocacy for his compositions.

³⁷ His Sonata for Oboe was apparently published in 1954, but is long out of print. His Oclaba-Trio has never been published, due to his death on March 7, 2007, one day before the premier of this work. His Wind Quintet No. 1 (1961) seems to be of a similar situation as the Sonata. See Bálint András Varga, ed., *Contemporary Hungarian Composers*, 5th ed. (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1989), and EastWind

More work can also be done to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of Hidas' biography and list of compositions. The book *Frigyes Hidas*, which I have frequently cited, has been indispensable to this project, yet it still leaves much to be desired. The biography section could be more clearly organized and include more about him as a person. The "Memories" section includes excellent information but has only two contributors. As evidenced by the "Portrait of Composer Frigyes Hidas" videos cited above, which include interviews from several individuals who did not contribute to the book, there is still a lot of information about Hidas yet to appear in print. The main fault of the "Programme Notes" section of the book is that it only includes program notes for his works for winds. Thus, a large portion of his output, such as ballets and concertos with string orchestra, are not dealt with in this section.

I chose to write this study on the oboe concertos of Hidas because of my appreciation for and affinity with his music. Hidas' music is a unique fusion of stylistic elements, including Hungarian, Jazz, and Late Romantic influences. He combined them in a way that was uniquely his. Though not an oboist himself, Hidas composed solo parts that were quite idiomatic to the instrument. They are also appealing to listeners because they are rooted in well-established virtuosic techniques, thereby avoiding the extremes of 20th-century compositional experimentation. It is my hope that my discussion of the forms, styles, and contexts for Hidas' oboe concertos will generate further interest and more performances of these fine pieces.

Trio d'Anches. Liner notes to Frigyes Hidas, Oclaba-Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon. Performed by the EastWind Trio d'Anches on *EastWind Trio d'Anches Looks East: Reed Trios of Eastern Europe* (Centaur Records, 2009. CD)

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APPENDIX

LECTURE-RECITAL SCRIPT

Slide 1: (Introduction)

Good afternoon and welcome to this lecture-recital featuring the oboe concertos of Frigyes Hidas. Frigyes Hidas contributed greatly to the field of music for winds, and he was the most internationally known and performed Hungarian composer of his day. He was called “the last Hungarian Romantic Composer”, both by himself and by other professionals. His contributions to solo oboe repertoire are distinguished by their skillful combination of the instrument’s registers and timbre, with melodic and virtuosic beauty. They include the Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, the Concerto No. 2 for Oboe and Wind Ensemble and the Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Wind Ensemble. I believe these works have great potential, either as recital pieces or played in their original form with orchestra or band. Much is demanded from the performer of these works; they require significant endurance, excellent control of the high register of the instrument, and strong rhythmic accuracy. But I believe that the resulting music is worth overcoming their inherent difficulties.

Slide 2: (Biography of Frigyes Hidas)

Frigyes Hidas was born May 25, 1927. Not unusually for a composer, he was born into a musical family. His father was the organist and cantor at St. Stephen’s Basilica in Budapest, and he grew up surrounded by music. He did not always want to be a musician, though: he initially wanted to be an engineer. But because of his early talents

for organ and improvisation, he decided to pursue music. At the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, he earned degrees in composition and conducting.

In 1951 Hidas became musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre. During his 15-year tenure in this position, he only completed about 20 compositions- small compared to his final output of over 200 works. But in this period he gained important experience for his compositional career. The interaction of stage action and music gave him a sense of the flow of dramatic elements in a musical composition. Due to budget cuts, he was dismissed from his position as musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre in 1966.

During his first years as a free-lance composer, he tried his hand at many kinds of composition, including film music. The only style of music in which he never had any interest was the avant-garde. He performed as pianist with the Radio Orchestra, and he also conducted the same ensemble. He was seen as a kind of “all-round-musician” at the radio. His work even involved helping other composers finish their compositions. So, this period also helped to hone his skills as a composer.

In 1978, he was commissioned by the Hungarian National Band Association to compose a piece for band. Hidas was chosen because he was already a popular composer, and his music was loved by all his colleagues. The work, entitled *Capriccio*, was a massive success, and it launched his career in the wind band world. He would eventually compose over 50 pieces for wind band.

The composer once again obtained a regular position in 1974, when he became musical director of the Municipal Operetta Theatre in Budapest. He sought out this kind of work because he enjoyed conducting orchestras. Hidas would resign from this position

in 1979 due to poor eyesight, which, even with thick lenses in his glasses, made it difficult for him to read musical scores.

Now working solely as a free-lance composer, his fame continued to spread as a composer of wind music. He wrote a number of works for brass quintet, clarinet ensemble, saxophone quartet, as well as three woodwind quintets. Early in his career, he had a goal to write a concerto for every instrument. He eventually wrote a solo concerto for almost every wind and string instrument, with more than one example each for flute, oboe, bassoon, horn and trombone.

The 1980s saw works such as his Suite for Band, *Circus Suite* and Concertino for Band. In the 1990s, he began composing larger-scale works for band. One example is *Save the Sea*, a symphony for winds written for the Royal Dutch Marine Band; one can hear strong influences of Debussy in this work. His Requiem, written for solo voices, chorus and wind orchestra, is generally considered to be Hidas' magnum opus, and was said by Dr. James Croft (former Director of Bands, Florida State University) to be "the most successful and valuable piece of music ever written for band in the 20th century". Hidas was also successful as a composer of ballets and operas, though in this area, his music is little-known outside of Hungary.

He received many awards throughout his career. His first major award was the Erkel Prize he received in 1959. He was given this award specifically for his Concerto for Oboe. He continued receiving commissions and working up until the last few months of his life, when his health no longer permitted it. He had even been laying plans for composition of an opera accompanied by band, a kind of crowning achievement for his output. The libretto for this work had been completed, but unfortunately he died before

being able to begin work on the music. Hidas died on March 7, 2007, and per his request, his ashes were scattered over Lake Balaton in Hungary.

Hidas was known as a generally friendly and jovial person; he claimed it was in his genes. He was known among all his friends as “Frici Basci”- which translates as “Uncle Freddy”. It is no surprise then that these qualities often find their way into his music.

Slide 3: (Style)

His music was sometimes compared to the music of Debussy. More than anything else, it is because he was a master of texture and orchestration. His idea of using a small group of winds, but with the addition of instruments like harp and celesta, to accompany a concerto was something that no one else in wind band composition was doing. Often, the textures he creates stand alone in making his music appealing.

He composed in a style that was tonal, while not sounding outdated. Other characteristics of his that help his music to stand out are: frequent use of asymmetrical rhythms, use of folk melodies, and harmonies influenced by jazz. Yet, no single one of these characteristics predominates over the others, and so his style cannot be pinned down to narrow parameters.

His music encompassed compositional traditions, while remaining fresh and true to the spirit of the age. His music was sometimes criticized as being too light and easy, though this could also be seen as a strength or trademark of his style. What mattered most to him was not what a critic wrote about him, but the affirmation he received from the audience’s applause. He was only happy if the audience was happy.

Slide 4: (Inspiration)

Hidas found inspiration in many different sources. One of the greatest sources of inspiration, and impetus for him to compose, though, came from great performances of his own music. In Hungary, he was frequently known to attend concerts in which his works were being performed. When a soloist or ensemble would perform one of his works in a way that impressed him, he would spontaneously be inspired to compose a piece for them. This was the case when he composed his Double Concerto for oboe and bassoon.

Hungarian folk songs, and the history of Hungary as a nation, gave him great inspiration. He was also a deeply religious man, and these feelings inspired him when composing pieces such as his Requiem; indeed, his faith was a great source of inspiration for him as a composer.

Slide 5: (Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra)

Beginning in 1951, Hidas was the musical director of the Hungarian National Theatre in Budapest, a position whose duties involved both composing and conducting. He began to develop a relationship with the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, which was one of the ensembles that played for the theatre. His Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra was written specifically with this group and their principal oboist, Péter Pongrácz, in mind. Pongrácz's association with the work "made his career", as he went on to become "*the* oboist" in Hungary, and oboe professor and chair of winds at the Franz Liszt Academy.

Slide 6: (Péter Pongrácz)

This is typically listed as Hidas' first completed work. It was composed as his graduation thesis at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, where he studied composition

with János Viski. This early composition of Hidas' helped to spread recognition for him at the outset of his career, and the maturity of this work is evidence of his natural compositional talents.

Slide 7: (Performance Notes for Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra)

Though all of Hidas' oboe concertos are most suitable for advanced performers, the first movement of the Concerto for Oboe is probably the most accessible for less-advanced players. This is due to more generous periods of rest for the soloist, less time playing in the high register, and somewhat less difficult technical passages. The first four bars of the first movement, Allegro, serve as a brief introduction to the solo entrance. The main theme begins at m. 5.

Slide 8: (Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 1-8)

It requires, above all else, excellent coordination of the fingers and tongue, combined with a clear execution of the slur two-tongue-two articulation. Hidas marked staccatos over almost every untied note in this passage.

Slide 9: (Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 28-37)

The second theme, which begins at m.29, makes a marked contrast with the opening theme. The style of this theme introduces longer note values, and a broadening which changes the feel from four to two beats to a bar.

Slide 10: (Concerto for Oboe, Mvmt. 1, mm. 50-62)

The closing theme of the exposition begins in the orchestra at m. 52. It combines the melodic outline of the second theme with the playful style of the opening theme. The printed performance direction, *Giocoso*, supports this playful style.

The first six bars of the development, which are orchestra alone, cleverly develop material from the orchestra-only introduction. Once the oboe re-enters, the rest of the section develops first and closing theme material. The development is a relatively brief tribulation, and the recapitulation begins with the first theme, which is repeated precisely. The second theme is varied by having the orchestra play the melody while the oboe plays virtuosic flourishes.

As this section closes, the oboe rests while the orchestra plays new material as a lead-in to the cadenza. This long written-out cadenza comprises about 50 measures of material, which is derived freely from all the previous themes of the movement. A typical interpretation lasts a little over two minutes. It is written quite well for the oboe, and gives the soloist plenty of opportunities to display all of their capabilities. The closing theme is finally heard again as the orchestra finishes the movement.

Slide 11: (Concerto No. 2)

This work was composed in 2000- nearly fifty years after the first concerto. In the intervening years, Hidas had become a free-lance composer, and had become known around the world for his compositions for winds. The end of communism made travel easier, and Hidas would eventually visit every continent. The Concerto No. 2 was commissioned by Dr. Susan Eischeid, Professor of Oboe at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. She chose Hidas for this commission because of her fondness for the first concerto. She first heard a recording of the piece on the radio one day, while she was still a student. She was able to make out that the composer of the work she had just heard was Hidas, ordered a copy of the Hidas Concerto for Oboe, and found that it was that piece she had heard. She was actually surprised to hear that the composer of this tonal

work was still living. Years later, after she had begun her current position at Valdosta State, she was discussing her appreciation for Hidas' music with a colleague, and discovered that this colleague had a personal connection with Laszlo Marosi, then a doctoral student at Florida State University. Marosi was a close friend of Hidas, and had premiered many of his works for wind band.

Because of this surprise connection with Hidas, Eischeid was able to open up communications with the composer about commissioning a new concerto for oboe. Hidas expressed his interest in such a project and accepted the commission. Initially, the composer wrote two different scorings- one for band and one for orchestra. For the premier, it turned out that the version for winds was going to be the most expeditious for the situation, and this is the version which was published. Besides the solo oboe, it is scored for two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, string bass, vibraphone, glockenspiel, celeste and harp, for a total of 16 players in the ensemble.

It was premiered by Eischeid on March 5, 2000 in Valdosta, Georgia, and it was conducted by Laszlo Marosi. The composer himself was flown over for the premier. The concert was an all-Hungarian program, with the premier of the concerto on the second half. The performance was a general success, and the second movement was received particularly well on this occasion. After the concert, Hidas was "the life of the party", despite speaking very little English. Overall, Eischeid remembers him as a "very gracious and lovely man" in her experiences with him during his stay.

The following series of slides contain photographs relating to the premier, sent to me by Susan Eischeid.

(Slide 12)

This picture shows Lazslo Marosi and Hidas at the Premier.

(Slide 13)

This picture shows Hidas and Susan Eischeid after the premier.

(Slide 14)

This picture shows Marosi and Hidas before heading back to the airport. Hidas is waving miniature Hungarian flags from the festivities of the weekend.

(Slide 15)

This picture shows Eischeid's copy of the piano score to the Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra. Hidas signed it and wrote a dedication. The dedication reads:

“For the memory of the delayed lovely time together,

For the premier of the Oboe Concerto No. 2

March 5, 2000, Valdosta

Frigyes Hidas”

Slide 16: (Performance Notes for Concerto No. 2)

Endurance is probably the first challenge in performing the Concerto No. 2. It is about 15 minutes of playing, with limited rests and a tessitura that leans heavily on the high register. Choice of reed will be important to counter these challenges- it must be light in resistance for endurance, relatively high in pitch for stability and pitch accuracy in the high register, and have a relatively small tip opening for endurance and pitch. If necessary, low register response can be sacrificed somewhat to facilitate the high register. Careful planning of breaths, especially in the first movement, will also help with endurance.

Breathing is very challenging in the first movement. Frequently, the performer has only the occasional eighth or dotted-eighth rest to take a breath. For this reason, it may be necessary to plan out in and out breaths. There are several places in this movement where the composer has written dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythms next to triplets. One example of this can be found in m. 16.

Slide 17: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 1, mm. 15-16)

The performer must be careful not to assimilate these rhythms; there must be an audible difference between them. This frequent juxtaposition of duple and triple is one of the hallmarks of his style and should therefore be brought out.

The second movement's tempo indication is *Comodo*, which means an easy and leisurely pace. It features a simple, yet beautiful melody which frequently ascends into the high register of the instrument. The great difficulty of this lies in making sure that the high register notes retain a gentle and unforced quality, which is smoothly integrated into the rest of the musical line. As mentioned earlier, a stable and up-to-pitch reed will be essential for a good performance of this movement, as well as excellent embouchure and air support. When everything is in place, the effect of this movement should be effortlessly lyrical.

Slide 18: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 2, mm. 1-11)

One of the central points of interest of this movement is the juxtaposition of duple and triple groupings, but at a slow quarter note speed. This contrast, inherent to the music, is more subtle than the duple-triple contrasts in his fast movements. It is integrated into the melody in such a way that one might not recognize it upon first hearing. The

rhythm which divides the bar into half note subdivisions is absent from the contrasting section.

Slide 19: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 2, mm.44-54)

After 6 measures of the opening material, several bars of 5/4 begin to ease the tension. The last six bars are entirely triple groupings in 6/4.

In the end, triple groupings win out, and the conflict is resolved. The brilliance of this movement lies in the perfect matching of melodic and rhythmic contour.

The rondo-like third movement, Moderato Giocoso, wraps up the concerto in a mood that is light and playful, yet full of contrasts. A main theme alternates with several others.

Slide 20: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 1-24)

The main theme and several of the subsequent themes are also varied by changing the mode or tempo, or by inversion. The main theme is played by the ensemble in one instance, creating a variation in texture while also giving the soloist a brief break.

Slide 21: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 104-111)

Beginning at m. 104, the main theme is varied by mode, inversion and tempo.

Slide 22: (Concerto No. 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 83-89)

One of the contrasting themes is first heard beginning in m. 83.

Slide 23: (Concerto 2, Mvmt. 3, mm. 176-182)

This theme returns with the same general character but inverted in m. 176.

Slide 24: (Double Concerto)

The Double Concerto for oboe, bassoon and wind ensemble came as a result of the recording of the CD *Frigyes Hidas: 5 Concertos*. Both the Concerto No. 2 for Oboe

and the Concerto No. 2 for Bassoon were recorded for this project. The soloists were the Dutch oboist Pauline Oostenrijk, and the Dutch bassoonist Dorian Cooke- who was also the dedicatee of the Bassoon Concerto No. 2. Inspired by their beautiful playing, Hidas completed this work in one month. The work is in one movement, with many contrasting sections.

This work poses challenges that are unique from the challenges of a solo concerto. Adding to the balance of soloist and ensemble, the two soloists must balance and complement each other. Similarly, this is not a concerto that can be practiced individually and then rehearsed with the band; the two soloists must spend a significant amount of time together, practicing for style, phrasing, and cues. Making the duo cadenzas part of a convincing drama requires that these elements are matched and coordinated perfectly.

From the start, the most important element of performing this work will be the oboe and bassoon soloists agreeing on tempos, phrasing and breaths. Rhythmic evenness will be crucial to achieving a convincing rendition. In general, the dynamic balance of the two instruments will probably lean toward the oboe being more prominent. This is due to the more piercing quality of the oboe sound. Both instruments frequently play in their high registers, but since they are usually in these registers at the same time, it does not help the balance very much. This piece is less taxing to play for the oboe than the two preceding concertos. This is because there are many more extended periods of rest, while the bassoon plays solo sections.

Slide 25: (Conclusion)

This lecture-recital serves as an introduction and guide to a great composer and his concertos for oboe. I chose to write this study on the oboe concertos of Hidas because

of my appreciation for and affinity with his music. Hidas' music is a unique fusion of stylistic elements, including Hungarian, Jazz, and Late Romantic influences.

He combined them in a way that was uniquely his. Though not an oboist himself, Hidas composed solo parts that were quite idiomatic to the instrument. They are also appealing to listeners because they are rooted in well-established virtuosic techniques, thereby avoiding the extremes of 20th-century compositional experimentation. It is my hope that my discussion of the forms, styles, and contexts for Hidas' oboe concertos will generate further interest and more performances of these fine pieces.

Thank you for joining me today. I will now perform the first movement of the Concerto for Oboe, followed by a complete performance of the Concerto No. 2.

Performance of Allegro from Concerto for Oboe, and Concerto No. 2