



## Balázs Kecskés D.: Biography

The music of Balázs Kecskés D. can be characterized by both emotional depth and intellectual richness. His compositions are “pieces of art created with gentle colours, and carefully composed over time” (as per the laudation by Máté Hollós). He draws from the historical traditions of the past centuries, while creating his own, unique world by placing elements with a long history – forms and harmonies – into a new context. As Jeanette Fang described his piano quartet titled *Accusativus*: “Balázs creates mesmerizing moments of suspended beauty, with an ear for stillness and reverie that makes one think of Debussy”.

As a lecturer at the Composition Department of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Kecskés D. considers teaching and musical history research his vocation, besides composing being his primary activity.

His repertoire includes a wide range of works such as solo and chamber music, orchestral compositions, concertos, in addition to vocal works. He composes for chamber ensembles with a long tradition (piano quartet, piano trio), and for choirs. His compositions containing lyrics often cover sacral topics, and draw on philosophical writings. His oratorio for string quartet and four voices titled *Komm* is based on the texts of Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, Paul Thymich, and T. S. Eliot. This work evokes the chorales of Bach while also highlights current, burning questions of our times.

His works are performed on both national and international stages. In 2021, he is mentored by the Peter Eötvös Foundation during which he will work with leading Hungarian and international ensembles. The U.S.-based Garth Newel Piano Quartet regularly plays his piano quartet *Accusativus*. His prelude for pianist Martin Tchiba has been on the artist’s repertoire since its 2018 premiere in Saarbrücken. At the ISCM music festival in 2019, the Estonian Collegium Musicale Chamber Choir performed his choral composition titled *Alleluja*. Kecskés D. is also an active figure of the Hungarian concert life, his pieces have been played by ensembles such as the Hungarian Radio Orchestra and Choir, the Dohnányi Orchestra Budafok, the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, the Budapest String Orchestra, the Danubia Orchestra Óbuda, the New Liszt Ferenc Chamber Choir, the Kodály Choir, the Vass Lajos Chamber Choir, and the Budapest Concerto Symphony Orchestra.

Among the numerous national and international awards and competition prizes the most outstanding are the 1st prize he won at the Generace composer competition in Ostrava in 2020 for his composition *Komm*, and the Garth Newel Award he received in 2018 for his piano quartet *Accusativus*, selected by a jury from 90 entries.

In recognition for his compositional activity, he received the Junior Prima Award and the Junior Artisjus Award in 2020. In 2020 and 2019, he won the Istvánffy Benedek Award of the Hungarian Composers’ Union for his pieces titled *Komm* (2020) and *Trois*

*romances* (2019), a recognition awarded annually to an outstanding composer under 40.

In 2019, he was presented with the three-year-long artistic grant of the Hungarian Academy of Arts. He won the scholarship of the New National Excellence Program on two occasions in 2018 and 2019. He also received the composition award of the Aurora Músics Amica Foundation in 2016 for his diploma composition titled *Psalm Fragment*.

He fulfilled his secondary music studies at the Béla Bartók Conservatory of Music, where he was a student of István Fekete Győr (composition) and Balázs Kecskés (piano) between 2007 and 2011. He continued his education at the Composition Department of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music from where he graduated with high honours in the class of János Vajda in 2016. In 2015 and 2016 he studied at the Luigi Cherubini Music Conservatory in Firenze as a student of Paolo Furlani. Since 2017 he has been a doctoral student in composition at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music and a lecturer at the Composition Department of the university.

Balázs Kecskés D. is a regular attendee of festivals and masterclasses, enabling him to work with some of the most prominent classical musicians of the world. He participated at the masterclasses of Heinz Holliger, Louis Andriessen, Fabio Nieder, David Lang, Christopher Austin, Paolo Furlini, and Hugi Gundundsson. He also attended the Dark Music Days Festival of Iceland in 2017. In 2016, he was the recipient of the Livorno Music Festival scholarship for composition.

Besides his activities as a composer and a lecturer, he is a dedicated music scholar. His main research areas are the music of British composer Thomas Adès and the post-minimalist trends of contemporary music in the U.S. In his writings he also studies the connections between pop music and classical western traditions, as well as the dynamic nature of classical music.