

HONORING GÉZA AND CSABA SZILVAY IN FINLAND

A TRIPLE CELEBRATION

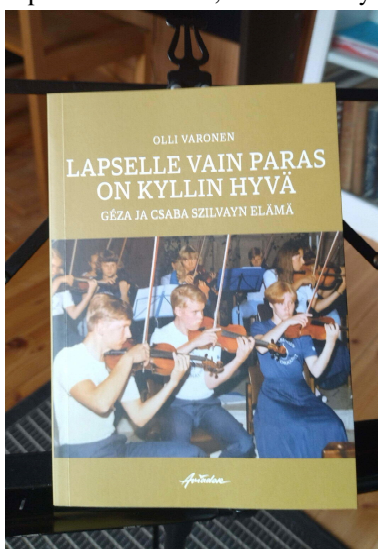
The outstanding string instrument teaching of Hungarian brothers Csaba and Géza Szilvay first became known outside of Finland in 1978 when their Helsinki Strings youth orchestra toured in the United States and Canada, then again in 1980 at the IKS symposium in Japan. (Olli Varonen, current president of the Finnish Kodály Society, was in that orchestra).

From 1980 on, teachers from all over the world came to the East Helsinki Music Institute to learn about the brothers' teaching, so many in fact, that there were about 100 foreign visitors per year between 1990 and 2010.

Members of the IKS were further inspired by their *Colourstrings* teaching curriculum, the Helsinki Strings, and by associated ensembles and soloists at the 2001 International Kodály Society and European String Teachers Association joint symposium. Sessions and concerts took place variously in the Sibelius Academy building, the Tapiola Hall in Espoo, and the Temppeliaukio, Helsinki's famous church built into solid rock.

Fast forward 22 years later to September 2023, when the Finnish Kodály Society joined forces with the Hungarian Cultural Centre and The Helsinki Strings to fête Géza Szilvay's 80th birthday, Géza and Csaba's enormous contribution to Finnish string education, and the publication by Aviador Publishers of Finnish Kodály Society President Olli Varonen's biography of the two brothers and the origins of their *Colourstrings* teaching materials and techniques. An English translation is planned for some time in the future. Roughly translated, the title is *Only the Best Is Good Enough for a Child—The Life of Géza and Csaba Szilvay*.

The two-day celebration began on September 12 at the Hungarian Culture Center in Helsinki to announce the publication of the biography with a book signing, followed by a recital and a panel discussion, all hosted by the Hungarian Embassy.



Olli Varonen's book



Panel Discussion: Csaba answers a question from the audience.

L to R: Vesa Tompuri, publisher; Olli Varonen; Géza Szilvay; Csaba Szilvay

YLE, the Finnish Broadcasting Company, with Aarno Cronvall as moderator, hosted and broadcast the concert. As part of the opening to the concert, IKS President Dr. Jerry L. Jaccard paid tribute to Géza and Csaba Szilvay on behalf of the International Kodály Society:

"Twenty-two years ago in this very place, we heard a miracle when Géza's daughter, Réka, played the Sibelius Violin Concerto. I have never forgotten how musically she played. Réka's playing grew out of Géza's and Csaba's work to fulfill Zoltán Kodály's vision for instrumentalists: That children, youth, and adults would first learn to sing, then through singing learn to hear, then through hearing learn to think musically. All good musicians know that music is in the person, not in the instrument. Because of their deep love for music and humanity, Géza and Csaba planted a great tree of musicality here in Finland whose golden seeds are now found all over the world. They are growing in Australia, Hungary, North America, and South Africa to name just a few. Therefore, I am here to deliver to Géza and Csaba Szilvay our warmest, most heartfelt greetings and gratitude from the worldwide membership of the International Kodály Society. Géza and Csaba, you are making a difference, one that will lift and refine civilization for generations to come. Congratulations!"

The first part of the concert featured chamber music performances by violinist Réka Szilvay, cellist Marko Ylönen, and the Shine and Shadow cello-piano duo with Olli Varonen and Virva Garam. These were followed by celebratory tributes to Géza and Csaba who inspired the audiences with their moving reactions to the event.

A grand concert was held in the Tempeliaukio Church on the following evening, September 13, as prominently advertised by this poster:

Géza Szilvay 80 vuotta
JUHLAKONSERTTI

Tempeliaukion
kirkossa
ke 13.9.2023
klo 19.00

Juontaa:
Aarno
Cronvall

Helsingin Juniorijouset, joht. Kasmir Uusitupa
Helsingin Lapsijouset, joht. Tarja Nyberg

Réka Szilvay, viulu
Marko Ylönen, sello
Olli Varonen, sello
Virva Garam, piano

VAPAA PÄÄSY,
KÄSIOHJELMA 10€

Géza ja Csaba Szilvayn **ELÄMÄKERTA**
saatavilla konsertin yhteydessä
outlet-hintaan 25€

Järjestäjät:
Suomen Kodály-seura, Itä-Helsingin
musiikkiopisto ja Unkarin kulttuurikeskus
yhteistyössä Tähtien seurakunnan sekä
Aviador Kustannuksen kanssa.

lu **SILMO** **Aviador**

Performances of several selections each by two youth orchestras, the Junior Helsinki Strings and Helsinki Strings, brought the concert to its conclusion. The two orchestras combined to play a truly heartfelt interpretation of the Sibelius *Andante Festivo* as the grand finale.

At the end of the concert, the two brothers were surrounded for more than an hour by enthusiastic students and parents wishing to personally greet them.

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Géza and Csaba Szilvay respond to the concert in their honor.



The Helsinki Strings rehearsing prior to the concert.



L to R: Csaba Szilvay; Kasmir Uusitupa - Director of Helsinki Junior Strings; Tarja Nyberg - Director of Helsinki Strings; Virva Garam; Minna-Maria Pesonen - Headmaster of East Helsinki Music Institute; Olli Varonen; Géza Szilvay



Olli Varonen-Finnish Kodály Society President; Inari Tilli-Reporter for Finnish Radio