

Design - for the Cover Page of the Sheet Music for Lajos Bartók's Poem "Nem Szeretlek" (I Don't Love You)

Archive / Collection of Printed Design Sheets

Accession Nr.:	MLT 970 
Artist/Maker:	Vaszary, János (1867 - 1939)
Date of production:	1898
Place of production:	Budapest
Inscription:	fent jobbra: Vaszary J .98
Materials:	paper
Dimensions:	height: 33,5 cm width: 26,5 cm

At the end of the 1890s, János Vaszary was one of the most sought-after applied graphics artists, and in addition to posters, he also designed invitations, sheet music covers, and title pages. The poet and playwright Lajos Bartók (1851–1902), who is not as well known today, was a founding member of the Műbarátok Köre (Art Lovers Association). Perhaps this is why Vaszary knew him and agreed to design the cover of the sheet music for Bartók's love song that had been set to music by Elemér Farnady. The composition of the page is both opulent and elegant, and there is no feeling of overcrowding despite the relative abundance of text. Pale violet irises can be seen in the background, over which the text is printed in Hungarian and in French. The illustration in the narrow upper band shows a gentleman raising his walking stick towards his lips (perhaps as a sign of love) looking thoughtfully at a dismissively rigid female figure with her back turned to him. Between them, a cupid with butterfly wings cries, and there are peacock feathers in the background as well as roses at either end. Peacock feathers appear many times in Vaszary's works. In the present case, they could represent motifs of either a masculine or a feminine melody due to his complex system of symbolism. The pale violet, gold, and green colors provide a backdrop for the unique style of the lettering and create a distinct rhythm on the title page, maintaining the elegance of the entire composition. The craftsmanship of the printers of the time is shown by the fact that they were successfully able to produce this design, which represented a rather complex overall task.

