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HUNGARIAN FOLK MUSIC RESEARCH IN THE 19TH CENTURY - SOME UP-TO-DATE ASPECTS

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Studying the work of our predecessors is useful for scholars of the present. The most significant Hungarian collections deriving from the 19th century are indicated on the table enclosed. This paper discusses some problems on the basis of analysis of the collections mentioned and some other sources: 1) The concept of the folk song; 2) Handling of scientific theories; 3) Traps set by aesthetic and ideological expectations; and, 4) Information implied in the collections.

Along the Danube, in Central and Eastern Europe, interest in folk music began in the 19th century. Since then, this interest has grown into scholarship in every country, though at different times and in different ways. An eminent representative of this discipline was Vinko Žganec, in honour of whom the international conference of Čakovce was held. Hungarian ethnomusicology was founded by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály at the beginning of the 20th century. Both of them used the 19th century folksong collections, but handled them with cautious criticism.¹ Though this criticism is still justified, the immense folk musical material - over 100.000 musically classified tunes - accumulated since then, together with the relevant theoretical analyses, suggest more up-to-date conclusions to be drawn from the work of our 19th century forerunners.

The prominent 19th century collectors and collections are summarized in the attached table. I think even a compact list like this suffices to indicate the

¹ Z. Kodály: *Folk Music of Hungary*. 1971. Budapest, pp. 15-16.
B. Bartók: *The Hungarian Folk Song*. 1981. Albany, p. 5.

dimensions of the works at issue.² However, the recorded material is most heterogeneous: the old and more recent Hungarian and foreign art songs in rococo, *verbunkos* and, later, popular styles, out-number the genuine folksongs. Some collections, e.g. nos. 2, 4, and 6 of the attached table differentiated the folksongs, but their qualification was not always correct. The rate of folksongs is highest in collections 5 and 6. With the acceleration of the process of modernization, an increasing number of collections appeared in print in the second half of the last century. Their titles declared them to be collections of folksongs, e.g. nos. 7-11, but they mostly contained popular art songs which were composed around that time, gaining unprecedented popularity among the strata midway between peasant culture and the culture of the upper middle layers. Finally, the most authentic collection is no. 12 whose editors really published tunes of genuine folk games, omitting the songs composed for nursery school children.

Conclusion 1 concerning the concept of folksong

As a matter of course, the concept of folksong has long been clarified. The folksong is created and maintained by the popular community (the peasantry in these regions of Europe). It is passed on and modified orally. It is also, known, however, that there are tunes received from outside the community: from neighbouring peoples, art music sources, church music, urban entertainment music, etc. Though the musical style of these tunes often differs from peasant music, they are used, moulded, and passed on by the community. Also, popular tunes, chansons, and urban dance tunes are sung in the villages for some years as part of temporary fashion, but they are then forgotten, leaving no mark on tradition. I wonder whether contemporary researchers treat these phenomena duly differentiated, or whether they casually wash away the differences with reference to recently fashionable sociological or anthropological arguments. There are namely certain songs whose folksong character and type can only be exposed by careful examination.

Conclusion 2 concerning scientific theories

The editors of several last century collections, especially those of nos. 9 and 11, also conducted theoretical research and wrote studies on the folksong. In the studied period the choriamb



was believed to be the typical Hungarian poetic metre, so they packed the scores with them, in support of the theory, for example in a song from collection 7 which

² See K. Paksa: *Magyar népzene kutatás a 19. században. Hungarian folk Music research in the 19th Century. Műhelytanulmányok a magyar zenetörténehez* 9. 1988. Budapest.

comprises only choriambes, except for the lineending rhythm (see attached Ex. 1 A). As more authentic transcriptions reveal, this tune must have been sung differently, in more pliant and diverse rhythm, which the collector subsequently transformed. For the sake of comparison, let us see the same tune recorded by Béla Bartók on the phonograph in 1907 from a peasant performer. (Ex. 1 B).

The scientific efforts of the last-century scholars, yielding erroneous results however well-intentioned they might have been, warn us that we have to keep confronting the seemingly safe theories with reality.

Conclusion 3 concerning esthetic-ideological questions

In Hungary in the 19th century the folksong was more than its mere self: it was a symbol expressing the glorious past, the awakening national consciousness, the enthusiasm of the mid-century fight for independence, and later, after the fall, the inner opposition to despotism. This means that the collectors recorded those songs which they thought to comply with these sublime national meanings. Now, the popular art songs satisfied these criteria better than the folksong did, while among the folksongs, those carried such meanings which were of art music origin or borrowed from the surface layers of neighbouring - Bohemian, Moravian, Slovakian, and German - music. With its strange tonalities and rhythm not always fitting the regular measures, the autochthonous Hungarian folksong appeared too rustic and uncultured for the musical taste of the times. This explains why the most genuinely Hungarian tunes of Oriental origin are least represented in the collections. When, on rare occasions, a tune like that happened to be recorded, it was always refined, as in collection no. 11 (Ex. 2 A). Quite unwarrantedly, its editor inserted a new line with an ending alien to the tonality between the 3rd and 4th lines of a pentatonic tune with quintal shift structure. What's more, he composed an ill-matching *verbunkos* accompaniment and an addition in a major key to the song, to make the piece rounder. Both ideas are completely alien to the style of the old Hungarian song, as can be seen in comparison to a genuine peasant performance collected by Bálint Sárosi in 1958 (Ex. 2 B).

Though no one in his right mind would commit such falsification today, taste and ideology are still presented in our relationship to folksongs. As for taste, the selection of folk ensembles and adaptations often means counter-selection today, too, while the manner of arrangements is often stereotypic, or contradicts the inner laws of folk music. Far greater damage is caused by using the folksong as an ideological tool. In Hungary, for example, the Stalinist culture policy wished to use folk music in support of its goals, wielding it like a weapon against Western artistic trends. In reaction to that, a wide group of educated people became averse to all forms of folk music. Later, in the 1960s and 70s when Western culture could flow into the country unhindered, the contrary took place: folk music research became regarded - though covertly - as outdated, nostalgic, even nationalistic.

especially when it came to the music of Hungarian outside the border. This disguised qualification became overt in such measures as the incorporation of the formerly independent Folk Music Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences into a larger institution, which does not hint at folk music, even in its official name. This is the Institute for Musicology where I work. Such mistakes will occur as long as folk music is not considered an organic, fully acknowledged part of the national culture.

Conclusion 4 concerning folk music processes

It is of paramount importance that the 19th century Hungarian collections put to paper folksongs existing solely in oral tradition for centuries before. At the beginning of my researches, I could hardly believe that nearly 40% of the old Hungarian folksong types known today³ would be found and identified in them. It's even more intriguing that by juxtaposing or chronologically arranging certain data from these collections, we may be able to retrace the changes in traditional musical life, the process of folklorization.

As regards popular folksongs frequently featuring in the publications, there might have been a trend of revival underlying them, which contributed to the relatively wide spread of certain old folksongs from above, and to the stabilization of a single variant of tune and words. This phenomenon can be illustrated with a song with quintal shift structure from collection no. 9 (Ex. 3), which also features in nos. 5 and 11, in several other collections not mentioned here and in popular plays from the middle of the last century onward. 350 variants of this Hungarian song were later collected from areas bordering on Austria to Romanian regions beyond the Carpathian Mountains, and there is hardly any difference between the songs.⁴ It is highly likely that the manner and extent of the dissemination of this song was facilitated by its inclusion in the collections, and more importantly, by its urban popularity from stage performances. It even had an impact on neighbouring folk music, as we know of 12 Slovakian, 2 Moravian, 1 Polish and 1 Croatian variants.⁵

For us now, it is even more significant that we can track down and date the genesis of the new style Hungarian folksong. Bartók called it a musical revolution⁶ by the strengthening peasantry liberated from bondage, which stopped the flood of creating a typically Hungarian but more modern and European set of tunes than that of the old-style songs. In the early 19th century this style was missing from the collections. Instead, we can find a variety of art songs which constituted one of the sources of the new style. Later we begin to come across few-syllable, narrow-ambit

³ P. Járdányi: *Magyar népdalpusok (Hungarian Folk Songs Types)* vol. 1. 1961. Budapest

⁴ All the songs will be published or mentioned in *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae (Collection of Hungarian Folk Music)* vol. 8. Ed. by L. Vargyas (in print), type 54.

⁵ The letter also included in Žganec's collection of 1924 as no. 351.

⁶ *The Hungarian Folk Song*, p.51.

songs as the first specimens of the new style still resembling the old style, with their number greatly increasing in collection no. 11, for instance the well-known soldiers' song (Ex. 4).

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

(Ex. 1 A)

M.Füredi: 100 magyar népdal (100 Hungarian Folk Songs), no. 10.

(Ex. 1 B)

B.Bartók: The Hungarian Folk Song no. 280.

(Ex. 2 A)

I.Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 6 no. 145.

(Ex. 2 B)

1) Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae (Collection of Hungarian Folk Music) vol. 6. Ed. by P. Járdányi, I.Olsvai 1973. Budapest, no. 484.

2) I.Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 6. no. 145 - singing part in g minor.

(Ex. 3)

G.Mátray: Magyar Népdalok Egyetemes Gyűjteménye (Universal Collection of Hungarian folk Songs), vol. 1. no. 17.

(Ex. 4)

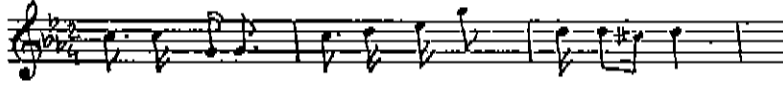
I.Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 5. no. 9.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT HUNGARIAN FOLK SONGS COLLECTIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

AUTHOR	PROFESSION	TITLE OF THE COLLECTIONS	THE NUMBER OF THE SONGS
MANUSCRIPTS			
1) Adám Pálóczi Horváth (1760-1820)	Landowner engineer	Old and New Some 450 Songs	(1813) 450
2) Sámuel Almásy (1807-1875)	clergyman	Hungarian Singer	(1823-70) 400
3) István Tóth ?	cantor	Tunes and Songs with their Texts	(1823-43) 462
4) Daniel Hindszently ?	song-writer, writer	National Song Collection	(1832) 88
5) Dénes Kiss ?	law-student		(1844) 236
6) János Arany (1817-1882)	poet		(1874) 150
7) Mihály Fülöpdy (1816-1869)	opera singer	100 Hungarian Folk Songs	(1851) 100
8) Ignác Bogndr (1811-1869)	opera singer	50 Original Folk- and Hungarian Songs	856) 50
9) Bébor Mátyay (1797-1875)	musicologist librarian academician	Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs I-II.	(1852-58) 94
10) Károly Szűri (1829-1896)	cantor pedagogue writer	Songs and Tunes of the Hungarian People	(1865) 200
11) István Bartalus (1821-1899)	musicologist pedagogue academician	Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs I-VII.	(1873-96) 1270
12) Áron Kiss (1845-1908)	pedagogue writer ethnographer	Collection of Hungarian Children's Games	(1891) 240
PRINTS			

Ex. 1A

Andante



Bús az i-dő, bús vagyok én ma-gam is,



Va-la-meny-nyi szép asszon van, mind hamis.



Szere-te-tők nem ál-lan-dó,



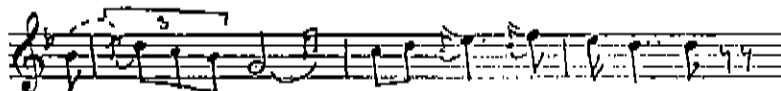
Mint az i-dő, vál-to-zan-dó a lány is.

Ex. 1B

Parlando $\text{♩} = \text{cc} = 166$



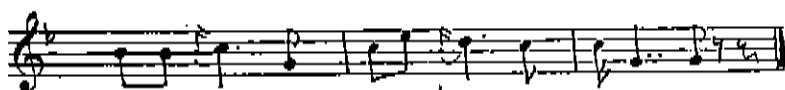
n Pej pa-ri-pám réz-pat-kó-ja de fé-nyés,



m-Ma-da-ra-si csárdás lá-nya de ké-nyés!



n Ké-nyés ci-pő - je, kap-cá - ja



De sok pénz-ző - met kős-tál-ja, hi-á - ba.

Ex. 2 A

Jól kimérve. [Moderato]

Zongora.
[piano]



En e-lőttem ne som - por -

Ex. 2 A

dálj, En - vegyok a császár ma - dár,



Ad - a császár nekém gu - nyát Ko - mi az in - gút,



komisz gu - tyát Pe - ke - te kur - esu pa - ri -



1. 2. Éljenekben. [Allegretto]
pát. pát.



Andante, rubato $\text{♩} = 61$ Ex. 2 B

1) *Jól kimérve [Moderato]*
Fe - renc csá - szár asz mondot - ta,
2) Én e - löt - tem ne som - por - dáj,

1) El kell men - ni há - bo - ru - ba.
2) Én va - gyok a csá - szár ma - dár.

1) Nem fo - gad - ta ké - ré - sün - köt,
2) Ad a csá - szár ne - kőm gu - nyát,

2) Ko - misz in - gőt, ko - misz ga - tyát,

1) Ab - ből ki - ad - ni ré - sün - köt.
2) Fe - ke - te kar - csu pa - ri - pát.

Ex. 3

Allegretto, Metron. $\text{♩} = 92$.

Ének.
[singing]

Zongora.
[piano]

É - rik a' szó - ló, baj - lik a' vess - zék, ho - dot a' le - ve - le.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system has three staves: a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), and two piano accompaniment staves in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The second system also has three staves: a vocal line in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, and two piano accompaniment staves in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.



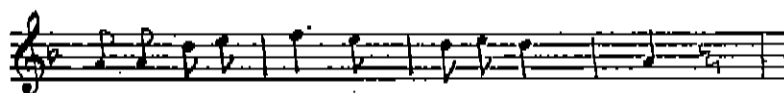
Két-sze-gény le-gény vón-dor!'-ni ké-szül, de nin-csen ke-nye-re.

Ex. 4


Mérsékelve [Moderata]



Füty-tyentett már e-gyet a ma-si - na,



Visznek engem vi-zi - tá-ci - ó - ra.



Mig a fercsel en-gem meg-vi-zi-tál,



Kis-an-gya-lom o - da - künn sir-do - gál.