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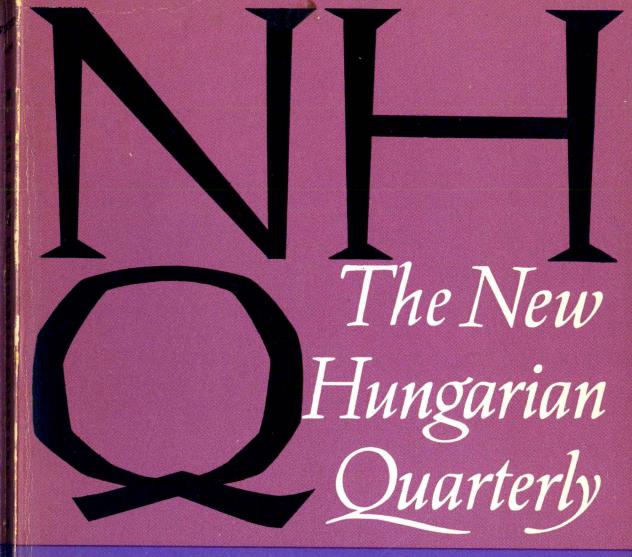
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MUSICAL LIFE

FOLK-SONGS OF HUNGARIANS IN RUMANIA

JÁNOS JAGAMAS and JÓZSEF FA-RAGÓ: Romániai magyar népdalok (Folk-Songs of Hungarians in Rumania), (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1974). 475 pp. In Hungarian.

The Hungarian reading public has just been presented with a book that has been anxiously awaited since work began on it in 1954 by the then Kolozsvár (Cluj) division of the Bucharest Folklore Institute. Today the institute is an independent body of high academic standing, known as the Ethnographic and Folklore Division, and the book presents part of a project that will eventually provide a complete collection of the folksongs of Hungarians living in Rumania. Those who know the work of Bartók and Kodály will understand what such an undertaking means to folk music research, especially since the present work covers the music of the wealthiest but most backward regions of all Hungarian-speaking peoples.

Besides the Székely regions explored by Bartók and Kodály, the collection includes songs from the middle section of Transylvania, known as Mezőség, and from Moldavia which is here explored in more depth and detail than at any time since the 30s. The publication includes over 10,000 pieces and brings together material that was relatively inaccessible to Hungarian research. No wonder we have been waiting impatiently for the work, and without appearing to be unappreciative, we must say that, since col-

lecting stopped in 1955 (when the Institute's doors were closed to the public) the book would have had that much more of an impact had it been published by the end of the 50s. Nevertheless, individual initiative, official exchanges and joint collecting projects did make it possible over the years to remain in touch with the folk-songs and dances of the Hungarians in Rumania. Even more important, this same period produced the extremely important book of Zoltán Kallós.*

Thus, song material which in the 50s would have been quite sensational is today for the most part already known and accepted as an integral part of Hungarian culture—this is especially true of the songs of the Hungarians living in the high valleys of the Gyimes region in the Transylvanian Carpathian mountains. Individual research is always quicker, and this project suffered from particular institutional hazards including the musical editor János Jagamas's decision to leave the institute during the time of preparation, while the institute itself was reorganized—and renamed—three times.

Still, 20 years' delay has not made the collection superfluous. Though late, the volume is meticulously done and provides important information about the traditions of folk music and folk poetry of the Hungarians in Rumania. It contains 350 songs all carefully recorded, which was not an easy

* See the same author's "Zoltán Kallós, Ballad Collector," No. 59. undertaking with the songs from Transylvania and Moldavia where the characteristic free, rubato style has a richly ornamented effect that requires work of great skill and immense patience to provide detailed and accurate recording. This work can hardly be appreciated by any but the Hungarian experts in the field, for (since Bartók) work of such detail is rarely done by anyone but Hungarian folklorists.

The volume is of great significance, not only for the choice of songs, but also for the attempt to indicate the complete material from which it was chosen. The most important types of songs were selected—those that are either variations on a very rare song or, on the basis of new research, are considered relatively well-known in a region but were not part of the earlier collections of Bartók, Kodály and Lajtha. For the most part the volume is comprised of these types of songs, not the widely known "Székely songs."

Perhaps even more important are the footnotes detailing the range covered by each type of song, as well as such detailed information as the number of versions in the archives, the range, and the differences that can be described without reference to the musical scores. The footnotes also provide information as to the specific "function" of a melody: whether it is sung at a wedding or used for ballads, or perhaps for only a single ballad.

There are also separate notes about the texts, for which József Faragó, the director of research in Hungarian balladry in Transylvania, was responsible. In this area, since folk poetry cannot claim any outstanding researchers of the likes of Bartók and Kodály, the editors were forced to find their own way. Whereas musical notes can be condensed almost to a formula for clear and precise information for musicians, Faragó was forced to give only general information. He was able to rely, though, upon some previous ballad studies, which proved to be very important, since the Transylvanian and Moldavian treasure house of contemporary

BÖG A BÄRÄNY A NAGY HEGYEN Lakodalmas



Magyarlapád, Mg 113c, E.z.: B. Sípos Márton 31 éves.

"The lamb cries on the mountain"—
wedding song

Hungarian ballads includes numerous, important versions of classical ballads. The descriptions of the range and variations of such works are essential information on the history of the ballads.

The main advantage of this publication compared to other collections of folk music is that it elaborates melody and text together and with the same emphasis. Another advantage is that there are various kinds of musical signs (according to form and meter, cadenza, scale) with the help of which the musically inclined folklorist can find and identify any type of song within minutes. It is indeed a volume of the old and new folk music of the Hungarians in Rumania that is both comprehensive and convenient.

Furthermore, comparing it with similar

KASZARNYA, KASZARNYA the van: Rubalo 2=118 2-94 1-118 1-118 1-86 2 to I are Thyti The stár- lálnya ka- stáriánya sű-rű ab-laklálvan raj-la son já- ba' rhyti



 Zöld erdőben jártam(ã), gyöngyvirágot láttam, de sorjába, (sã) Barna kislány gyomlálgatja magába.
 Gyomláld, kislány, áldjon meg a Téremtő, Téremtő, Téétted halok meg, némsokára jelzár a témető.

Bálványosváralja, Mg 70d. E.z.: gisz. Jancsó Sándorné Orbán Róza 30 éves. 1954. VIII. JJ.

Soldier's love song

collections from 50 or 60 years ago, we can see certain important cultural processes at work, like the gradual spreading of "betyár" songs from Hungary to Transylvania and Moldavia. This process can be precisely dated to the second half of the last century. At the time of the first collections such songs could hardly be found at all in Transylvania, and in Moldavia they were absolutely unknown even in the 30s. Today they are commonly found throughout Transylvania and in parts of Moldavia.

There has also been a wider dispersal of a few tunes characteristic of the Hungarian Great Plain. Thus, the songs and the newer genres originating in the central portion of Hungarian-speaking areas—the Great Plain and Transdanubia—continually flow through

the river valleys into mountainous Transylvania and, further, beyond the Carpathians to Moldavia. In Transylvania the new songs are usually set to either a marching or dance rhythm and sung in the ornamented, slightly rubato manner of the older songs, thus preserving their own traditions.

"Archaicized" in this way, the new songs often have a special beauty in the old style of singing, although it comes at the expense of their original nature. The "new" music of the day always develops from the center and gradually reaches more distant lands where it mixes with the native traditions that will probably adapt forever. This volume shows the process at work with "old pastoral songs" from Székely villages, places where Bartók and Kodály found the most beautiful pieces of the old Székely folk music, but never any of these songs because they are originally from the Great Plain.

At the same time, the authors can only speculate about similar processes that might have taken place in the past, and are by now fully assimilated. Ballads of the Great Plain might have spread to outlying regions in the 14th and 15th centuries, and then began to die out in their place of origin, in the face of new tastes and new genres, while the more durable Transylvanian traditions then preserved this "old" music as its own. Luckily there are also newer, clearer processes that reveal kinetic laws of popular folk traditions, and these too can be traced in the new collection.

In sum, it is a book that follows the best traditions of Hungarian scholarship—well-selected, excellently edited and thoroughly researched. It is an indispensable aid to research and a priceless treasure for culture in general—especially that of the Transylvanian Hungarians. For this we can be extremely grateful to the editors, their colleagues, Kriterion Press in Bucharest and to all who had a hand in its preparation and publication.

LAJOS VARGYAS

ZSOLT DURKÓ ON THE CONTINUITY OF MUSIC

Zsolt Durkó was born at Szeged, southern Hungary, in 1934. He started to study musical composition in his native town, and is now one of the most distinguished and best known of the group of Hungarian composers called the "Thirties". The group takes its name from the fact that the composers were all born in the 1930s, they pursue common goals and appeared before the public virtually simultaneously.

They succeeded a generation of composers that were muzzled by the dogmatic cultural policy of the years following the Second World War. These older composers came rather late to the new European musical forms and objectives, to which some could adapt more easily than others. In any case, the generation of the "Thirties" embarked on careers under more fortunate circumstances. With fewer restrictions, they orientated themselves more freely to the traditions of both their own country and the whole world.

At the Budapest Academy of Music where he is now professor of musical composition, Durkó was first a pupil of the excellent teacher and composer Ferenc Farkas. From 1961 to 1963 Durkó studied at the masters' school of Goffredo Petrassi in Rome. In Italy he became familiar with the most important musical currents of the time. With this exposure and a thoroughly professional training he found a form of expression, an individual approach, which very ably combines Hungarian national traditions with European influences.

Durkó's music is rooted in the Bartók tradition, without being heavily overshadowed by the great predecessor. His compositions are always suggestive; his construction bespeaks the work of a skilled professional. His attachment to traditions, however, is not simply a continuation of the Bartókian heritage: Durkó strives to re-create the art of old Hungary. This tendency makes itself

felt not in some archaic tone, for it is a conscious creative process: it is developed as a Hungarian tradition, modern in tone and European in idiom.

The tradition is not even always genuine: the poetic world born of Durkó's imagination comes to life so vividly and with such persuasiveness that it seems as though it really existed. The clue to such tradition-creating is that the composer relies upon authentic fragments of Hungarian history and old Hungarian literature to build and shape his own world, thus practically reconstructing an imaginary primitive musical tradition. He works hard to resuscitate the voice of the very first experiments in such a way that his dreamt-up forms sometimes become virtual continuations of the roots he has also imagined and brought to the surface.

Durkó is a prolific composer whose works indicate a uniform conception executed in different ways. His technique ensures the realization of his ideas through a synthesis of orthodox materialism and an aversion to puritanical expression. His artistic, one might as well say, chiselled music is technically perfect; yethis work is not overwhelmed by technique to the detriment of poetic equalities of thought. Characteristic of his method is to integrate a proliferation of microorganisms into larger musical units. Once having found his own technique, he ever more freely and consciously builds on Hungarian ideas in his music. To use a definition by the critic György Kroó, his banner bears the motto "musicien hongrois", and he gradually renders his own international idiom into Hungarian. This Magyarisation appears not only in such concrete titles as, Una Rapsodia Ungherese; it is evident not just in his emphasis on instruments like the clarinet and the cymbalom, but, most important it is embodied in the compositions and in the heart of the musical tradition.

In Hungary Durkó is counted among the