



# BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL KODÁLY SOCIETY

TWO ISSUES PER YEAR APPEAR IN SPRING AND AUTUMN

Deadlines for Submission of Report and Items of Interest to Our Members are:

for spring issue: 15, February

for autumn issue: 15, August

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR NON-MEMBERS: US Dollars 8.00.

FOR CURRENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS OF THE I.K.S. WITHOUT CHARGE.

ORDER TO · I.K.S. EXECUTIVE OFFICE

**BUDAPEST**

P.O.BOX 8.

H-1502

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES: US Dollars 20.00. *for those persons* taking out membership through their national body.

*Individual membership fees:* US Dollars 25.00. for those persons taking out membership outside of the national body.

Please, note that membership fees cover the CALENDAR YEAR (from January to December). DEADLINE for renewal is 28 FEBRUARY EACH YEAR. BULLETINS ARE SENT TO MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ONLY.

*New members* who join the Society at Symposia, or, in the last quarter of the Year (October-December) are financial for the following calendar year.

METHOD OF PAYMENT as follows: You are kindly requested to send an international money order, or a bank cheque to the Executive Office, ACCOUNT NUMBER: 80.774/87/International Kodály Society.

Personal cheques cannot be accepted, as we are a *non-profit making* Society and wish to avoid all financial losses caused by the discounts banks make when handling personal cheques.

ISSN 0133-8749

Published by the Executive Office of the International Kodály Society.

Editors: László Eöszé and László Vikár.

Printed in Hungary by Editio Musica, Budapest. Manager: Imre Kormány.



# BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL KODÁLY SOCIETY

1983/1



Kodály and Pablo Casals in Budapest, 1964 (Photo by: István Harmath)

*"We must look forward to the time when all people in all lands are brought together through singing, and when there is a universal harmony."*

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

(Preface to *Bicinia Hungarica*. 1937.

In: *The Selected Writings of Zoltán Kodály*. Corvina Press, 1974. p.215)

His dynamic markings are kept to a bare minimum, and these must be realized. However, the "melodic plasticity", "the dramatic eloquence of interpretation" require further sensitive modification.

It is especially important to create a good balance of the voices. The harmonic structure demands a frequent divisi of voices, which is carefully prepared by the composer through logical part-writing, nevertheless an adequate balance is often not a simple task. The tones in an intricate chord are not of equal importance. It is determined by the logic of composition and/or the laws of acoustics. Therefore it is necessary to analyse carefully the structure of the piece. In addition, the volume of the singers' voice is not even either, and on this account we must sometimes change the grouping of the voices. In *Mountain Nights V*, the soprano part first sings in unison, then it is divided into two, and five bars later into three parts, while the alto is undivided. In other choruses the difficulty is caused by high tones having to be sung *pp*, or deep ones *ff*. To create an adequate balance is one of the most important tasks of the conductor, since he is in a situation to be able to control the whole choir from outside, while the singers hear only their neighbours.

With tempo indications Kodály sets no more limits than necessary. The reason is not that he did not consider choice of the correct tempo important, but that his music is structurally less severe, thus it tolerates different interpretations. In the choral works written in the first three decades of his career he usually determined the tempo with the customary tempo words *and* metronome numbers. From the 1930-'s he only used them sometimes and from the forties usually only one of the tempo marks—either tempo-words or metronome numbers. Finally in some choruses written in the last decades of his life we do not find any tempo indications at all. The change was motivated by the continuous modification of his style, moreover his increasing experience at rehearsals and concerts showed him what should be determined by the composer and what can be left to the conductor. But if he fixed the tempo with a metronome number, this does not mean a single possibility which is rigidly valid in all circumstances nor, even in this case, does it mean that only the basic tempo is determined and the smaller tempo modifications must be realized by the performer.

Let us, however, remember Kodály's warning: modification of the tempo not by "arbitrary whim, but for the sake of the best possible clarification of the smaller or larger structural units". It is the conductor, who has to decide on these questions after a careful analysis of the works, with the help of a comprehensive knowledge of style, also including other genres of Kodály's oeuvre.

In the first four movements of *Mountain Nights* we find only a single tempo word without any metronome number, and in the fifth movement even this is lacking. However, the passionate dramatic character, fine poetry, sensitive harmonies and romantic shaping of these pieces inevitably require discreet tempo modifications. Let us listen first to an excerpt in unchanged tempo, and then with small tempo alterations.

Let us add two remarks to these. First, Kodály often warned his performers about extreme, especially too fast tempos. Second, on the recordings conducted by himself—true, most of these were made well after he had passed seventy—his tempos are usually slower, sometimes by 30-40 metronome numbers slower, than can be read in the score.

In a short article we could give only a survey of the most important problems of interpretation in Kodály's choruses. However, I should not like to conclude it without mentioning the well known fact, that the high standard of English choral tradition made a great impression on Kodály. In several lectures and articles he set it as an ideal to be followed by Hungarian choirs.

## KODÁLY, THE SCHOLAR

by  
Lajos Vargyas

In Kodály, the musician and the scholar were happily united. He enrolled simultaneously at the Academy of Music and the Philosophical Faculty of the university and at the same time he was also admitted to Eötvös College (where special training was provided for the most outstanding students.) He managed to combine both lines of interest even in his first work: his doctoral thesis, which was "The Strophic Structure of the

Hungarian Folksong". Among the then well-known popular art songs he also included the then generally unknown folksong material. In this work he used the memory of folksongs heard in the country and also the phonograph-cylinders recorded by Béla Vikár. Vikár's cylinders kept in the Museum of Ethnography, hidden completely from the public, were the second authentic recording of folk music in the world and the first in Europe. This valuable folk music material must have been the last straw in inspiring him to start his own collecting, together with Béla Bartók.

Already at the very beginning he was conscious of the importance of fringe areas in conserving traditions. This is why he started with examining the Hungarian-Slovakian language boundary from Bratislava onwards. Here he right away struck on an isolated territory rich in ancient traditions: the Zobor territory, from whence he returned with very valuable material. His later collection from Bucovina was also due to this interest. His joint efforts with Béla Bartók revealed the so far unknown folk music, which as a result of their work as artists and of their scientific "propaganda" gradually became public knowledge. Bartók's book estimates the amount of Kodály's collection to be around 2700; since then together with mostly instrumental pieces found among his papers posthumously this number has risen to roughly 3000.

As, following the example of Vikár, they both used the phonograph, their collection enabled them to study and transcribe the rubato-rhythm with great exactitude as well as the wide variety of embellishments. Notation made on the spot, started at first in sketchy form, and they did not note down what they had already heard — especially in the case of simpler, less varied tunes: their initial aim being that of the musician, to get to know more and more new and interesting tunes. Very soon, however, they became aware of the importance of variants and of the significance of nuances of rhythm. In their transcriptions they soon started to make note of dotted rhythms as it varied along with the (Hungarian) text, and in their minutely faithful notations of the melismas of rubato songs—which they accomplished through arduous work from the phonograph cylinders—they managed to give an extremely accurate picture of the performance. This development soon led to a most superb achievement in collection and transcription: the detailed noting down of 36 stanzas of a single ballad. This publication was of outstanding value in its time, not only because it showed the protean variations of basically the same tune within performance, but it was also a curiosity as a feat of collection. Only 5-6 stanzas could be recorded on the same cylinder, therefore the singer had to be interrupted by cylinder-changes several times. Obviously, not everybody was prepared or capable of giving an enjoyable performance under such circumstances. The fact that the collector attempted it at all shows in itself the extent to which he must have been aware of the importance of such a recording.

A similar demand for completeness must have inspired him when he undertook the assignment of the Hungarian section of FF to take part in a large-scale collection organized by them at Nagyszalonta, where he collected some 450 tunes during the long collection. (In his book, Bartók only mentions 247 pieces from Nagyszalonta, but obviously these were only the pieces considered to be important, and Kodály did not submit most of the new style songs and others to the public material.) Already this collection must have shown him the necessity of monographical works, which he later, in 1937, declared in his introduction to the first edition of "Folk Music of Hungary". Once he handed me a heap of notes for sorting out, in which one could see from the hurriedly jotted down notes written on all kinds of bits and pieces of papers, how the entire circle of questions to be worked out in a village monograph developed out of the concept of more and more detailed collecting. Although he left the execution to his students, the requirements of the method, the aims to be accomplished were first formulated in his mind — well before the modern demands of European ethnography were formed. (Vargyas's work appeared in 1941, that of Járdányi in 1943 and that of Halmos in 1959.)

The wish for a musical systematization appeared at the very beginning of collection, especially as so many tunes had been gathered, among them hundreds of variants, that if they wanted to make sense of it they had to create some kind of rational order in them beyond the systematization according to text types which is as a matter of fact general practice to this day, and which divorces similar tunes from each other, and brings together differing ones. It was Kodály, who, by doing Finno-Ugric studies, came across the musical system of Ilmari Krohn, which they modified in as much as they did not distinguish between tunes in major or minor with different endings. Tunes transposed on a common ending were classed side by side according to two principles—thereby the movement of the tunes and their tonal system became easily comparable—and

these two principles were also characteristic of their interests as composers. Kodály placed the tune in the first place, together with the order of the line-ending capable of expressing it; while Bartók considered the number of syllables first, i.e. the meter and within that the rhythm, and the cadenza came only afterwards. (Kodály considered meter within the system of cadences.) This system facilitated the finding of any one tune — and what is even more important it enabled them to have an overview of the musical qualities of the song material.

An almost full picture of Hungarian folk music emerged from the large and organized material. (The limitation indicated by *almost*, only became necessary because of the new discoveries of the past 20 years made through the collection of new material mostly from Hungarians living in Roumania.) In their transcriptions they reached the farthest limits of noting nuances and thus in getting to know the “outside” of songs. Thus through systematization and a knowledge of the outside their knowledge of the inner characteristics made scientific analysis possible in every respect. This soon followed in scholarly publications.

One of Kodály’s early, significant achievements was to prove the existence of pentatony in Hungarian folksongs. He first noticed it in Bartók’s collection from Seklers in Csik county: there were so many, and so clearly pentatonic tunes in it that Kodály could realize its overwhelming importance in Hungarian folk music. In his paper (Pentatonic scales in Hungarian folk music) he established three phases of pentatony: its absolutely clear appearance, where even the grace notes stay within the system, then when the embellishments and even some of the unaccented notes of the tune tend towards diatony, but the main notes remain within the framework of pentatony; and finally when the tune is already diatonic, but with its characteristic pentatonic turns still shows the peculiarities of the pentatonic system. With this realization he was able to distinguish a substantial ancient layer among Hungarian tunes, which was later altogether identified with the “old style”. A very large number of tunes were entirely different from these, and they constituted the “new style”.

Another discovery—the realization of the significance of quintal shift—was only made much later. This he first stated in his paper entitled “Peculiar tune structure in Cheremiss folk music”, at that time only considering it for Cheremiss music. Already here he often referred to similar phenomena found among Hungarians. At that time he did not yet bring tune parallels, that only happened in his great summarising work “Folk Music of Hungary”. Quintal-shift is also a peculiarity of most of the “old style”.

What is between the “old” and the “new” style perplexed researchers partly with its great amount, and partly with its variety. Kodály was inspired to write several papers by the many historical-musical-ethnographical problems presented by them. All his earlier writings are of this nature. In the tune of the peripheral ballad, “The incredulous husband” he showed the memory of 16<sup>th</sup> century rhythm: 5 + 5 + 6 and 6 + 6 + 7 syllables and stanzas with 3-4 lines. Already his references in this short paper show how well he knew our 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century tunes which at that time—being in manuscript form or scattered in contemporary publications in different libraries—were hardly accessible. In his “The source of three Beggar songs” he provided correcting remarks to a text published by someone else from an informant who sang rather confusedly, which goes to show how much attention he paid to popular religious songs in the course of his collections, and the extent to which he checked when the basis of the performance was some printed source. From his Transylvanian Sekler collection he immediately provided the explanation and the correct parallel to the incorrect version which had been collected from the periphery of the tradition. In his paper entitled “Old Christmas Carols”, he dealt with the memory of one time herdsman’s Christmas masses and with bagpipe-like organ playing and the practice of celebrating mass in vernacular Hungarian. Kodály’s remark “I continued the search because I suspected a mystery play that has found its way to the church” betrays how varied his interests were and how he managed to widen folklore’s sphere of research at a time when the discovery of its deepest layers was still a great, new achievement. In his “Ethnography and history of music” he called attention for the first time to the fact that the sketchy (at times faulty) notations of our historical sources can only be filled with life with the help of a thorough knowledge of our living traditions: and he points out several parallels between tunes collected by him and 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century religious and secular songs. His paper “The song of Árgirus” is of great significance from the point of view of literary—as well as of music-history and of folk music research. The 16<sup>th</sup> century ‘bella storia’, “Prince Árgirus” or parts of it were still being sung—based on broadside publications—in Bucovina. Its tune,

which was also used for other historical songs and ballads, is a typical folk tune, and it has since been found out that it developed from the lament and beyond that, originated from Ugric times. His most significant comparative musicological results, however, can be found in the respective chapters of “Folk Music of Hungary”. Probably the finest and most significant is that in which he compares three songs collected by himself: the first a song evoking the memory of Rákóczi, the second a drinking song, and the third a ballad, with a 17<sup>th</sup> century religious tune and a secular dance song (chorea) and with a students’ song mocking gypsies and noted down at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This work the “Folk Music of Hungary” which has also been published in foreign languages, is a very compact, but at the same time full summary of what could be known at the time as a result of their joint efforts, but especially of Kodály’s musicological and ethnological comparisons and philological findings. It was Bartók who prepared the first account, the descriptive-systematizing review and in its wake Kodály’s book was the summary of the historical results of comparative research.

We will only be able to really appreciate his capabilities and get to know the “scholarly” side of his character, if, beside his scientific results, we also take into consideration the circumstances under which he had to accomplish them. First of all we have to bear in mind that practically all his life, the documents of Hungarian music history were hardly accessible: they were hidden in original manuscripts or early publications, they could only be found in libraries. That is to say, the scholar who was leafing through them, was left to rely on his memory when comparing tunes. Only such a person was capable of this who could concentrate as intently as he. I observed several times that whenever anybody took anything to him, he looked at it for a long time, studied it intently even if eventually he said that he could not find anything of interest in it. He fixed everything into his memory. Of course he remembered the 3000 tunes that he collected himself—it is well-known that these stay very vividly in one’s mind—, and those other 3-4000 that they copied and systematized from Bartók’s and Vikár’s collections. These were what he “took with him” to the libraries when he looked through the 16<sup>th</sup> century historical songs of Tinódi or the 17<sup>th</sup> century collection of Cantus Catholici. Nevertheless it was still an outstanding achievement that he managed to unveil so many important parallels and could arrive at so many scientific conclusions simply from scattered memories, the material of which he never had at his disposal.

His other characteristic scholarly trait was the “ability to wait”. He never wrote down the first glimpses of possibility, he only committed to writing the ripened final results supported by facts. A typical example of this was that he did not allow his paper on laments—already at proof stage—to be published. Most probably he felt that nothing final could be said about a genre that was only known through 10-20 tunes collected from a limited area. Since then his caution has been justified by the several hundreds of laments brought together in volume V of the Collection of Hungarian Folk Music (CMPH): the picture he could have given from his collection in Zobor territory would not have been full nor typical in every respect. Another instance of his “ability to wait” was equally justified. I showed him an early attempt of mine in which arguing on the basis of certain signs I tried to prove the one-time existence of tunes ending on *sol* in Hungarian old style (as opposed to the almost exclusive minor, *la* endings). He looked at it, he listened to me, made no objections, in the end he only said “May be we should wait until we have more data for it.” Years later turning to me he once said “Well it seems now, that we did have tunes ending on *sol* after all.” Often in eastern parallels those tunes of ours that end on *la* appear with a *sol* ending. In a later edition of “Folk Music of Hungary” he did state that it seemed as if these were the same phenomena in music as the “regular differences” in linguistics. But even at that time there was no question of these surviving in Hungarian tradition until quite recently, although he himself had pointed out some exceptional cases. Unfortunately the multitude of tunes ending on *sol*, which were either of a wide range or of a narrow range or even tetratonic, were only found after his death by the Hungarian collectors in Roumania from Moldavia and the alps of Gyimes and even from Central Transylvania. The main point has been amply proved, but looking at my early manuscript I have found many mistaken facts and ideas in it. It is a good thing that I took his advice and only summarized the results in my newest book, after the publication of the data.

Another proof of his philological interests was that he undertook to publish the manuscript folksong collection of János Arany (great 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian poet), where again he had ample opportunity for making literary and musicological observations. “Hungarian Music Folklore a 110 Years Ago” was a simi-



lar project based on his discovery of a manuscript which he bought at an auction: this was a collection of folksongs and an attempt to systematize it which was gathered as an answer to the demand of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1831 and was believed to have been lost.

The oeuvre of a scholar can be measured on what he found on the scene when he first appeared and what he left behind. When Kodály started his career, folksongs were unknown—even to him and Bartók—, after him not only did a hitherto unknown world of music become known but there was also an enormous collection at our disposal and it was also systematized and ready to be used by further researchers. Its most important stylistic layers were distinguished as a result of careful descriptive-comparative work. Since then the number of those increasing this material either by profession or voluntarily, is above a hundred. The publication of the material has also been started. Besides this, the different regional and other folk song publications would also make up a small library. Adding their propaganda as composers: the general public has also come to know and love folk songs. As a result of Kodály's incentive and his influence on his pupils Hungarian music history was born: exhaustive publications of the entire music material of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries have appeared as well as of the song material of 18<sup>th</sup> century student-melodiaria, of the 450 songs of Pálóczi Horváth from the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, of certain genres of Hungarian Gregorianum or of 18<sup>th</sup> century instrumental dance tunes which have been discovered since then among the hidden manuscripts of libraries in the countryside or in the neighbouring countries. The history of Hungarian folk songs was able to be written and the history of Hungarian music is still being written continuously.

The task to which the two of them applied themselves, was so big that it could only be accomplished through careful planning. They divided the task according to their different interests and characters. Kodály could speak Slovakian and had started collecting among them, but seeing Bartók's joy and enthusiasm in this work, he gave it up. Bartók completed the comparison with neighbouring peoples. Similarly Kodály abandoned the transcription of Vikár's cylinders when Bartók undertook this task even though he himself had already transcribed quite a lot of them, as we have recently learnt from his papers. He never even mentioned that he also had some transcriptions from this material.

The two of them have done the labour of generations and set a whole generation to work. Not only in art, but also in science they *left a different world behind*.

## KODÁLY, THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST

by  
Kazuyuki Tanimoto

One autumn morning in 1963, I was sitting face to face with Kodály in a room of the HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, near the approach to Chain-Bridge over the River Danube. I don't mean by "face to face" that we were the only people in the room. With Kodály were the members of Népzene Kutató Csoport, Folk Music Research Group under Kodály's tutelage.

I had been at the Institute conducted by Kodály to study Hungarian folk music a month by then and my turn to deliver a discourse in Kodály's presence had finally come around. I talked about the music of Ainu, a minority race inhabiting now only in Hokkaido island, northern part of Japan.

At the first onset of question and answer session after the discourse, Kodály asked me if the Ainu has any means to record in written forms. I answered his question that the Ainu does not own any letters or other means to record things, and everything is handed down generation by generation as oral tradition. Kodály's prompt remark to my answer was, "That's very good. That is the way it should be."

The tone of his remark was very significant to me. I was strongly moved by his ideal of folk music to be simple, straightforward and unsophisticated, and his idea of Humanism to be rooted on this simplicity of people. I felt these ideas to be Kodály's personality itself. In other words, Kodály was the personification of these ideals. Among his contemporary composers, Kodály towers above his colleagues on the account of

naturality, directness and great simplicity of his music. His music is his stern criticism to the complexity and heartlessness of modern civilization which stood aloof from life of ordinary people.

When the session was over, Kodály mentioned his desire to obtain the transcription of Ainu music if any, and he left the room. Two years later, in 1965, NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation published a book titled, "Traditional Ainu Music" of my authorship which contained 437 Ainu folk melodies. I sent a copy of this publication to him to carry out my promise.

Kodály selected 47 Ainu melodies out of this publication, with other Hungarian materials and composed exercises for two-voices. The outcome was "77 Two-Part Exercises" (77 Kétszólamú énekgyakorlat), the last of a series of educational works which started with 15 Two-Part Exercises (15 Kétszólamú énekgyakorlat) in 1941.

The only preceding example where Kodály used somewhat foreign folk materials is seen in "Pentatonic Music" (Ötfokú zene) and "Bicinia", Volume IV in which he used melodic materials belonging to the Mari and the Chuvash, which are very close to Hungarian melodies. Thus this 77 Exercises stood out as practically the only example of totally foreign sources.

Through today's discourse, I want to examine how Kodály treated Ainu materials and by this examination, I want to contribute to the appreciation of Kodály, as a composer and an ethnomusicologist.

In the preface to the first edition of "77 Exercises" published by Boosey and Hawkes, Kodály made the following statement: "Sight-reading must at all times offer fresh material, including some unusual turn of melody and rhythm, but remaining always sound and attractive music."

Kodály, as a Hungarian, must have heard Ainu melodies as an unusual turn. There are, however, some common features between Ainu and Hungarian folk music.

First of all, their scales. Ainu melodies predominantly consist of three or four notes and their basic scale is the anhemitonic scale. It goes without saying that even though Hungarian folk melodies usually have 7 notes, their basic frame is built on the pentatonic scale, and also, both Kodály and Bartók discovered pure pentatonic melodies of only five notes existed in Transylvania among people who maintained a traditional life style.

Many leaps of perfect 4th can be observed among Hungarian old style folk melodies. The leap of perfect 4th is also a fundamental basis of Ainu melodies. Also arpeggio melodies can be cited as their common feature.

I don't intend to jump to a hasty conclusion that there is unquestionable affinity between them because of some similarity in their scales and melodic figures. There is no denying the fact that the function of constituent notes differs in a striking way, even though they belong to a pentatonic scale. Basic form of a changing fifth of old Hungarian melodies, proves their definite affinity with the Mari race, cannot be traced in Ainu melodies.

I indicate their similarity in spite of basic differences for no other reason than that Ainu melodies are adapted in a similar way to Hungarian materials in Kodály's Exercises, even though it is obvious that he perceived them as unusual turns of melody and rhythm as mentioned in the preface to the Exercises.

Little alteration is given to Ainu melodies adapted here. Exceptional alterations bound to changing of notation to facilitate reading or slight rhythmic adjustment due to the 2-part writing. This means Kodály didn't find any incompatibility in Ainu melodies as a whole to constitute a body of instructional works for Hungarian children, side by side with thirty-some Hungarian melodies.

Adapted Ainu melodies here are naturally of pentatonic scale. Very few exercises are limited to 5 notes constituent if you give due consideration to counter melodies.

Most of the exercises show certain modalities such as Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian and so forth, common modalities of Hungarian folk melodies of the 7 note-scale due to the adaptation of sequential shift of original materials or filling up 5-note-scale with other notes in counter melodies.

Characteristic manners of motivic repetition, terrace-like shift, changing fifth can be found. The way Kodály adapted Ainu materials seems to show his effort to assimilate Ainu melodies into Hungarian interest.

Kodály's Hungarianism, as we might put it, embodied in the exercise, defines his position as a musician and an ethnomusicologist. It is often said that Kodály integrated all the musical styles which took place in the history of Hungary, church music of Middle Ages, Verse Chronicles in 16<sup>th</sup> century, student songs of