

INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL

12 CLORANE GARDENS, LONDON, N.W.3

Telephone: HAMpstead 9116

With the Honorary Secretary's Compliments

COUNCIL, Vol.

Scientiarum Hungaricae

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The book under review is a moving tribute to Bartók's concept of folk music and the seriousness with which he treated it. Although its twenty-six essays deal with almost a hundred many subjects, three main themes stand out: the music of the ethnic groups of Hungary and her neighbours; the music of other cultures and continents and their possible inter-relationships—Bartók in his Cairo report spoke of a chain of musical influences linking nations over thousands of miles; and speculations on the nature of scale, tonality, and musical structure.

It is of course impossible to do justice to every one of the twenty-six contributions which incidentally do not include a single one from the United States of America—and the reviewer will no doubt be forgiven if he refers only to some aspects of research in the essays which in his opinion most nearly concern the IFMC.

Zoltán Kodály's short opening essay, "Eine Vorbedingung der Vergleichenden Ethnomusikforschung," takes us at once to the core of all ethnomusicological problems. He visualises a system of supra-national description and classification which will make possible a valid and comparative and valid comparison of music on a world-wide scale. Kodály realises that at present such a vision must appear to be beyond attainment but he wants it nevertheless to serve as an ultimate aim. In the meantime, we are warned that the folk music material of a special culture cannot be appreciated except through a system of understanding which is entirely and exclusively its own. Tovey in dealing with art music felt similarly about music and understanding and claimed that each musical creation was a cosmos in itself. Between these two poles—supra-national comparison and individual assessment of each folk music culture—ethnomusicology follows its wavering course.

Essays dealing with the ethnic groups in Hungary—which before 1918 included not only those of the groups treated in the book—were contributed by Sabin V. Drăgoi ("Musical folk research in Rumania and Béla Bartók's Contribution to it"), Emilia Comişel ("La ballade populaire roumaine"), Jozef Kresánek ("Bartók's Sammlung slowakischer Volkslieder"), Raina Kacarova-Kukudova ("Verbreitung und Varianten eines bulgarischen Volkstanzen"), Božidar Širolo ("Die Volksmusik der Kroaten") and Janos Jagamas ("Beiträge zur Dialektfrage der ungarischen Volksmusik in Rumänien"). Drăgoi reminds us that folk music is a contemporary art and not antiquarian. He adds a list of song types (p. 24) which Bartók himself had not noted. He also publishes a recently invented wedding song but otherwise seems to subscribe to Bartók's view that "for centuries no new melodies have been created." Comişel throws welcome light on the relationship between improvisation and formula in epic art and tells us much about its manner of performance. Kresánek thinks that Bartók's classification of folk song by the number of syllables could not be applied to Slovakian song because it tears apart groups which ought to constitute artistic units. Kacarova-Kukudova follows the fate in a changing environment of dance, tune, and text

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Studia Memoriae Belae Bartók Sacra. (Aedes Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae Budapestini, MCMLVI.) 544 pp.

In Béla Bartók's report on the Congress for Arabic Music in Cairo in 1932 (*Z.S. für vergl. MW.* 1933, p. 46) there is a revealing passage on the nature of his interest in folk music. Discussing the term *Dorfmusik* he finds that it is not always applicable and inadvertently enumerates the elements which to him were its essence; he refers to it as "that folk music which is used traditionally amongst the simplest strata of the people (peasants, herdsmen, nomads) as the spontaneous expression of their musical feeling." It was this kind of musical creation which mattered most to him and which made him hesitate when in 1939 a friend urged him to escape Nazi rule and leave Hungary; his main thought was that leaving Hungary meant the end of his work with folk musicians.

The book under review is a moving tribute to Bartók's concept of folk music and the seriousness with which he treated it. Although its twenty-six essays deal with almost as many subjects, three main themes stand out: the music of the ethnic groups of Hungary and her neighbours; the music of other cultures and continents and their possible inter-relationship—Bartók in his Cairo report spoke of a chain of musical influences linking nations over thousands of miles; and speculations on the nature of scale, tonality, and musical structure.

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in relation to one Bulgarian dance and reaches the conclusion that when it is transplanted the most constant and vital element is dance itself. Sirola claims (p. 102) that the great form of all Croat folk music is strophic song; he agrees with Robert Lach that the term Litany is appropriate. Jagamas discusses Hungarian folk music within the boundaries of Rumania. He hopes that knowledge of the distribution of musical dialects will throw light on the history of the populations and settlements.

The second theme—music from other continents and cultures and their interrelationship—covers a very wide field. There is Paul Collaer's "Musique caraïbe et maya" which tells much more than his modest title suggests. Collaer found primitive Carib music as well as more elaborate Carib music and concludes that the latter sprang originally from a South Asian culture. He arranges his evidence, the structure of scales, in order of complexity and makes out a good case for this procedure. His observations on what is primitive and what is advanced or developed are thoughtful, but comparison of a *Pelag* tuning with Carib intervals raises some doubt whether in the historical and geographical distances of Collaer's material such accurate and minute measurements really carry much weight in scientific argument. Werner Danckert in "Melodiestile der finnisch-ugrischen Hirtenvölker" also bridges vast cultural and spacial distances and uses the terminology of the ethnologist when he states (p. 177) "Die halbtönlose Pentatonik war m.E. ursprünglich die Tonwelt einer entwickelten Pflanserkultur." These are giant strides across time which no doubt also have their place in the study of folk music.

Maud Karpeles in "Cecil Sharp, Collector of English Folk Music" chooses a very different approach: she relies on her musical material to speak for itself and her nine melodies of hitherto unpublished variants from Cecil Sharp's note-books, are as eloquent on the nature of English folk song as is Danckert's scholarship on Finnish-Ugrish music. Maud Karpeles is at an advantage over Danckert in that she deals with the music of her own folk. Margaret Fay Shaw's "Gaelic Folk-songs from South Uist" deal with the music of a very small community. Her seventeen musical illustrations are published here for the first time. Laurence Picken transcribes "Twelve Ritual Melodies of the T'ang Dynasty." As the author observes, they are not folk music, but he believes that they embody a much older tradition which he assumes is close to folk music. Another fascinating study of ritual music and its historical background is Vinko Žganec "Die Elemente der jugoslawischen Folklore—Tonleitern im serbischen liturgischen Gesange" in which he investigates the patterns of the Serbian "*oktoechos*" and decides that they had been influenced by the folk music environment in which they were used. Samuel Baud-Bovy ("La strophe de distiques rimés dans la chanson grecque") thinks that the Greek form described by him could have been inspired by the *chansons françaises* and if that is correct he suggests that the former could in its turn throw light on the modal and rhythmic qualities of the latter as they prevailed towards the end of the Middle Ages. Benjamin Rajeczky ("Parallelen spät-gregorianischer Verzierungen im ungarischen Volkslied") remarks that grace-notes in folk music affect time and rhythm and wonders whether comparison might not lead to a better understanding of time-values in Gregorian chant.

As to the third group of papers which deal with problems of scales, tonality, and structure there is first of all the very practical short essay by Pál Járdányi ("The Determining of Scales and Solmisation in Hungarian Musical Folklore") in which the author says of the method of relative solmisation that "the present results already prove that its use in place of the generally used categories of scales (Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, etc.) is more precise and authentic. It determines scales not from a series of tones abstracted from the notes of the melody, but on the basis of the main tones of the melody. It illuminates the hidden scale characteristics of a melody more clearly . . ." (p. 305).

Turning to Walter Wiora ("Älter als die Pentatonik"), Lajos Bárdos ("Natürliche Tonsysteme") and Béla Avasi ("Tonsysteme aus Intervall-Permutationen") we find ourselves involved in a different kind of academic adventure. Wiora's judgment is mature and his "prehistory" of music and musical theory (p. 204) provides much food for thought. As his title indicates he deals with phenomena which are outside the horizon of Pentatonic,

Minor and Major and modal patterns. Wiora sees in the earliest phenomena the evidence which can inform us of the "Natur des tonalen Logos." Bárdos' thesis is based on the assumption that intervals are of a twofold parentage: "sprachgemässe Engstufigkeit" and "akustische Quintenverwandtschaft" (p. 231). In your reviewer's opinion both his diagrams and mathematical formulae or abbreviations tend to live a life of their own divorced from the musical reality which they are to represent. Avasi gives us thirty-five pages of tables in which all possible scale permutations are worked out.

Viktor Beljaev's paper, "Early Russian Polyphony," is of very great interest. Not only does his essay give an example of how contrapuntal texture may give rise to the interval of a second by the simultaneous execution of a fourth and fifth above a common bass, but it also shows how the amalgamation of two different two-part settings leads to a new style of three-part song, in which the third part is the logical outcome of the integration of the two component settings and yet conveys the impression of an independent third artistic part.

Constantin Brailoiu in "Pentatonismes chez Debussy" touches upon an issue which ranked high with Bartók: how a composer was to identify himself with folk music in order that in his composition of art music this identification should emerge as creative force. Brailoiu sets out to show with the help of 182 musical illustrations from Debussy's works how pentatonism influenced the composer's feeling of tonality and affected his melodic invention.

It is obvious that the papers did not limit themselves to the themes under which it was found convenient to marshal them here. Sociological considerations entered frequently. Jaap Kunst (Fragment of an essay on "Music and Sociology") devoted his contribution entirely to this aspect of music and focussed attention on that stage in evolution where the sociology of music and magical beliefs are difficult to distinguish. There are also references in many of the papers to musical instruments. Three writers dealt with the discussion of a specific folk music instrument. Tiberiu Alexandru ("Tilince. Ein uraltes rumänisches Volksinstrument") provides a useful classification of Rumanian wind-instruments of which he says that they were prominent in Rumanian folk music, and publishes three transcriptions of music on one of them, the *Tilince*. As far as design is concerned, the *Tilince* is the simplest of the flutes. It has no stops. It was formerly the most widely used instrument but is rarely met today. The three transcriptions are of music unknown to Bartók. Lajos Vargyas ("Die Wirkung des Dudelsacks auf die Ungarische Volkstanzmusik") shows how contrary to common belief vocal music can in fact grow from instrumental roots. His musical illustrations are fascinating. Luis-Heitor Corrêa De Azevedo ("La guitare archaïque au Brésil") describes the tuning of two folk music instruments which were both of Spanish origin.

Finally there is György Kerényi's "System of Publishing the Collection of Hungarian Folksongs: Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae." It is essentially a history of arranging musical collections (p. 453); the chief data of the essay were contributed by Kodály.

And this brings us back to Kodály's visionary aim of a supra-national system of classification at the beginning of the *Studiae Memoriae Belae Bartók Sacra*, and to his wise *caveat* about respect for the uniqueness of all musical creation. The scholarship and devotion which this volume contains is setting ethnomusicology well on its path to achieve these ends.

K. P. W.