



SYDNEY  
CONSERVATORIUM  
OF MUSIC



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

## **Hungarian folksongs from the village to the concert hall**

### **Béla Bartók's folksong arrangements (1904-1929)**

Kornélia Pérchy – Soprano

With associate artist

Phillip Shovk - piano

Doctor of Musical Arts

Final Recital

4th November 2015, Recital Hall West, 6.30pm

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

## Program

Kornélia Pérchy – voice and Phillip Shovk – piano

- Béla Bartók *Elindultam szép hazámbul*, BB 42 (1906)  
(1881-1945) (No. 1, 'Far behind I left my country')
- Béla Bartók *Piros alma* ('Székely Folksong'), BB 34, (1904)
- Béla Bartók – Zoltán Kodály *Hungarian Folksongs*, BB 42, (1906)  
Bartók: *Szánt a babám* (No. 10, 'My sweetheart is ploughing')  
Kodály: *Gerencséri utca* (No. 16, 'Scarlet roses bloom')  
Kodály: *Török már a réteket*  
(No. 18, 'Now that the fields are being ploughed')
- Béla Bartók *Ten Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*, BB 43, volume 2, (1906-1907)  
No. 1, *Tiszán innen...* ('On this side of the river Tisza...')  
No. 4, *Ha bemegyek a csárdába* ('Down at the tavern')  
No. 6, *Megittam a piros bort* ('My glass is empty')  
No. 7, *Ez a kislány gyöngyöt fűz*  
(('This maiden is threading pearls'))  
No. 10, *Kis kece lányom* ('My dear daughter')  
No. 3, *Olvad a hó* ('The snow is melting')
- Béla Bartók *Five Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*, BB 97, (1928)  
No. 1, *Elindultam szép hazámbul*  
(('Far behind I left my country'))  
No. 2, *Által mennék* ('Crossing the river')  
No. 3, *A gyulai kert alatt* ('In the summer fields')  
No. 4, *Nem messze van* ('The Horseman')  
No. 5, *Végigmentem* ('Walking through the town')
- Béla Bartók *Eight Hungarian Folksongs*, BB 47, (1907 and 1917)  
No. 1, *Fekete föld* ('Black is the earth')  
No. 2, *Istenem, istenem* ('My God, my God')  
No. 3, *Asszonyok, asszonyok* ('Women, women')  
No. 5, *Ha kimegyek* ('If I climb the high summit')

László Lajtha  
(1892–1963)

*Feljött már az esthajnali csillag* ('The evening star has risen')

Béla Bartók *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs*, BB 98, volume 2, (1929)

*Székely "Lassú"* ('Slow dance')

*Székely "Friss"* ('Fast dance')

## Introduction

Only two of Béla Bartók's vocal settings have ever been recorded with the accompaniment played by the composer. These recordings were made in 1928 by His Master's Voice recording company. They recorded twenty-six of Kodály's folksong arrangements and two song cycles by Bartók, *Eight Hungarian Folksongs* (BB 47, 1907 and 1917) and *Five Hungarian Folk Songs* (BB 97, 1928). Two opera and one cabaret singer were chosen for these recordings with the accompaniment played by Bartók himself. These are the earliest recordings of Bartók's folksong arrangements that have remained for posterity. The dissertation focuses on these historical recordings in the light of performance practises and addresses how the performance of these songs has evolved over time. The analysis of the songs focuses on the tempi, the composer's metronome markings, the use of portamento and vibrato in the vocal part, appoggiaturas and acciaccaturas, additional and or omitted notes made by the singer, embellishments, vocal tone and colour.

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) began his Hungarian folk song collecting trips in rural villages in 1905 and was soon joined in his enterprise by Béla Bartók. Thus began a collaboration that was to prove very fruitful. The realisation that these authentic folk tunes were in danger of imminent extinction drove them to take steps to search and collect Hungarian peasant melodies in order to avoid this outcome. In 1906 armed with an Edison phonograph the two composers divided the country between them and with great persistence and determination amassed vast quantities of material. Given that the research is based around Bartók's two song cycles and their 1928 recordings, the dissertation also includes an investigation of some of the original phonograph recordings of these songs (1906-1917). These recordings are primary sources. They were the songs performed by the peasants and recorded in situ by Bartók. Permission to use these sound files was granted to the researcher in June 2015 from the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest. Permission for the use of the master sheets was

granted from the Institute of Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

### **From the phonograph to electrical recording**

Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931) invented the tin foil phonograph in 1877, although he accidentally created it whilst he was working on the efficiency of the telegraph. His primary thought was that the phonograph would be useful, amongst many other applications, for “dictation and stenography, talking books for the blind, talking dolls and music boxes, the teaching and preservation of language, the recording of lectures and instructions from teachers and professors, capturing the dying words of friends and family.”<sup>1</sup>

The wax cylinders used by the early phonographs were only capable of recording a maximum of two minutes of voice, music, speech or any other sound. By the 1920s, cylinders became obsolete and no longer utilized because of their length limitation and frail durability. They were replaced by a newer technique, the so-called 78-rpm discs.<sup>2</sup> These discs were capable of recording three and four and half-minute long pieces depending on the size of the disc.

However, this still meant that a longer musical piece had to fit on a disc by shortening or leaving out sections of the original music. The 1928 Bartók recordings that are analysed in the dissertation were recorded on these discs.

The age of acoustic recordings had ended by 1925. The ongoing technical development of sound recording technology by the mid 1920s led to other new technical processes such as the introduction of the electrical recording. The introduction of the microphone in 1925 led to a significant improvement in the quality of sound reproduction. This innovation facilitated direct recordings of live performances. Despite all these major advancements, one technical issue had not yet been resolved. There was no means of editing or correcting the recorded

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Steffen, *From Edison to Marconi: The First Thirty Years of Recorded Music* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

music. It was under these “new” technical circumstances that the very first Bartók folk song recordings were made.<sup>3</sup>

### **Béla Vikár and the beginning of folk music research in Hungary**

The Hungarian ethnologist, Béla Vikár (1859–1945) was experimenting with various methods in order to preserve Hungarian peasant folklore. Initially his main objective as a linguist, ethnographer and folklorist, was finding the roots and dialects of the Hungarian language by collecting and writing down folk ballads and folk tales. His stenographic skills assisted him well in this endeavour, as he was able to transcribe dialogue simultaneously. The phonograph was a revolutionary invention in sound recording technology and Vikár soon discovered its vital role in ethnography. The fact that the cylinder recorder was portable and was capable of playing back the recorded material was a remarkable innovation. The apparatus also gave folklorists the opportunity to rescue the remnants of Hungary’s ancient folk culture. Vikár set out in December 1896 to record the folk tunes using an Edison phonograph in rural parts of Hungary.<sup>4</sup> He thus became the first ethnologist in Europe to employ the phonograph for field recording purposes.<sup>5</sup>

### **Bartók’s first encounter with genuine Hungarian folk songs**

Benjamin Suchoff, a leading expert on Bartók, noted that a very significant event in Bartók’s life occurred in 1904.<sup>6</sup> In May of that year, Bartók travelled to the countryside, Gerlicepuszta for a holiday, spending some time at the Fischer’s family house. In order to be able to practice and work on various piano compositions he took a piano with him on a coach to an

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<sup>3</sup> László Somfai, and Zoltán Kocsis, eds., *Centenary Edition of Bartók’s Records (Complete), Volume I, Bartók at the Piano 1920-1945*, Budapest: Hungaroton, 1981, LPX 12326–33, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ferenc Sebő, *Vikár Béla Népzenei Gyűjteménye*, [Béla Vikár’s Folk Music Collection] (Budapest: Hagyományok Háza, Néprajzi Múzeum, 2006), 228.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Saul, "A brief note on archives of sound recordings," *Journal of Documentation* 4, no. 2 (1948): 87-89, accessed 8 February, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb026128>.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Suchoff, *Béla Bartók Life and Work* (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2001), 40-44.

“idyllic summer place,”<sup>7</sup> as Bartók called it in a letter addressed to his mother. While he was there, he overheard a young Székely<sup>8</sup> maid singing a song in the kitchen. The song that the girl was singing had its origins in the remote Transylvanian village of Kibéd, where the Székely people lived. Bartók was captivated with the discovery of an ancient melody. As Suchoff pointed out, Bartók must have noticed that the song was structurally and harmonically completely different from the generally known Hungarian popular art songs.<sup>9</sup> This episode marked the beginning of Bartók’s contact with genuine folk songs. He repeatedly asked the girl to sing the song, ‘Red apple fell in the mud,’ until he had precisely notated it. In 1904, he wrote an arrangement for the song that was published a year later as *Piros alma* or ‘Székely Folksong for voice and piano.’<sup>10</sup> Figure 1 is the musical notation of the melody:

**Figure 1.** *Székely folksong* or *Red apple*, non-architectonic, three-liner tune. Tune system (BR-number): Bartók C-III 1083a.<sup>11</sup>

SZÉKELY FOLKSONG, 1904 (BB 34)

**Tempo giusto**

Pi-ros al-ma le-e-sett a sár-ba, Ki fel - ve-szi, nem ve-szi hi-á - ba,  
 Ki fel - ve-szi, nem ve-szi hi - á - ba.

It is because of its significance as a turning point in Bartók’s professional life that this song is also included in the recital.

<sup>7</sup> Béla Bartók, Jr., and Adrienne Gombocz-Konkoly, eds., *Bartók Béla Családi Levelei*, [Family letters of Béla Bartók] (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1981), 121.

<sup>8</sup> Székely people are Hungarians who live in the Eastern part of Transylvania. Five counties are included in this territory.

<sup>9</sup> Suchoff, *Béla Bartók Life and Work*, 42-43.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Vera Lampert, and László Vikárius, eds., *Folk Music in Bartók’s Compositions. A Source Catalog: Arab, Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, and Slovak Melodies*, (Budapest: Hungarian Heritage House, Helikon Kiadó, 2008), 55.

## **Hungarian Folksongs (BB 42, 1906)**

At the end of 1906, Bartók and Kodály published their first folksong arrangements including ten songs by both composers, *Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*.<sup>12</sup> Their aim was to bring these folksong arrangements to the same level as European Art songs. This notion was totally foreign to Hungary's musical elite at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

Disregarding the general negative attitude towards Hungarian peasant music, Bartók and Kodály printed 1500 copies at their own expense.<sup>14</sup> They were hopeful that if the publication was successful, they would be able to use the profits to fund both the following year's field trips and the publication of a whole new series of songs. Disappointingly, it took thirty-two years to sell those initial prints.<sup>15</sup> This outcome did not shatter the two enthusiastic composers' dream but it stymie the possibilities of printing any further publications. Despite this setback, they carried on with their mission, and although the original publication had received unfavourable reviews, the 1906 folk song arrangements truly marked the start of a new era in Hungarian music.

For the 1928 HMV recordings, Bartók selected five out of the ten folk songs that he had first arranged in 1906. For these recordings, he composed new piano accompaniments for all of the songs. The piano parts in these re-arranged scores did not double the melody line and were clearly more complex in comparison to the 1906 publication.

From this book I have selected four songs for the recital: two songs by Bartók, no. 1, *Elindultam szép hazámbul* ('Far behind I left my country'), and no. 10, *Szánt a babám* ('My sweetheart is ploughing'), and two songs by Kodály, no. 16, *Gerencséri utca* ('Scarlet roses

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<sup>12</sup> Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, *Hungarian Folksongs for Voice and Piano* (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Preface to *Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*, trans. Lili Halápy.

<sup>14</sup> Vera Lampert, "Works for Solo Voice with Piano," in *The Bartók Companion*, ed. Malcolm Gillies (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1993), 391.

<sup>15</sup> Vera Lampert, "A Bartók–Kodály Magyar népdalok második kiadása," in *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok 2003 II.*, eds. Pál Richter and Márta Bajcsay Rudasné (Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Zenetudományi Intézete, 2003), 375.

bloom’) and no. 18, *Török már a réteket* (‘Now that the fields are being ploughed’). The piano accompaniment is relatively simple and it doubles the melody (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2.** Transcription of the tune, *Far behind I left my country* (1906). Tune system (BR-number): Bartók A-I 0580a (01787).<sup>16</sup>



Permission for the master sheet was obtained from the Institute of Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in June 2015.

**Figure 3.** Bartók, *Far behind I left my country*, bars 1-4 (EMB edition, 1953).<sup>17</sup> It is the current version of the 1906 publication.

**Lassan** BARTÓK Béla

<sup>16</sup> Béla Bartók, *Complete Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs*, Online Publication, eds., Istvan Pávai and Pál Richter, MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, [Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Musicology], Budapest, 2006-2007. [http://db.zti.hu/nza/br\\_en.asp](http://db.zti.hu/nza/br_en.asp).

<sup>17</sup> Bartók–Kodály, *Magyar Népdalok énekhangra, zongorakísérettel* [Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano] (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1953).

### **Ten Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano (Vol. 2, BB 43, 1906-1907)**

In December 1906, Bartók composed another ten folksong settings that he was eager to include in the second volume of Bartók-Kodály *Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*.<sup>18</sup> The first series appeared in the bookshops in 1906, but the second volume, *Hungarian Folksongs* (BB 43, 1906-1907), was only published eighteen years after the composer's death, in 1963.<sup>19</sup> In 1917, Bartók composed another arrangement to one of the songs, no. 3 'The snow is melting.' This arrangement then became part of the *Eight Hungarian Folksongs* (BB 47). In the second series of the *Hungarian Folksongs* Bartók mistakenly included a song, 'My glass is empty' which was later found to be an urban popular song not an authentic folk melody.<sup>20</sup> Possibly this mistake occurred because at the beginning of the collecting trips sometimes it was a difficult task to identify which tune belonged to which style as they were fairly similar.

The recital includes six songs from the second volume of Bartók's early folksong settings, *Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano*.

### **Five Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano (BB 97, 1928)**

In February 1927, a selection of Bartók and Kodály's songs were performed at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music. On the day of the concert, 3 February 1927, both composers were present at the Academy of Music.<sup>21</sup> György Kósa<sup>22</sup> accompanied Vilma Medgyaszay

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<sup>18</sup> Béla Bartók, preface to the *Ten Hungarian Songs for voice and piano*, ed. Peter Bartók, (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Four songs, nos. 4, 6, 7, and 8 appeared in Denijs Dille's *Der Junge Bartók 1*, Editio Musica Budapest, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> Béla Bartók, *Bartók Hungarian Folksongs, Vol. 2 First recording Terézia Csajbók (soprano) and Loránt Szűcs (piano)* ed. Ferenc Bónis, 1981 by Hungaroton recording, LP 3043, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ferenc Bónis, *Így láttuk Kodályt* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Budapest, 1982), 136.

<sup>22</sup> György Kósa (1897-1984) was a Hungarian composer and pianist. From 1912, he learned piano from Bartók at the Academy of Music – Budapest.

In 1930, Bartók in a verbal conversation with one of his piano students, Irma Molnár, revealed that he considered Kósa as his most talented apprentice. The book that contains this information is: Ferenc László, *Bartók-könyv 1970/71* (Bukarest: Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1971), 111-112.

(1887–1972) at the piano.<sup>23</sup> Medgyaszay was a popular and celebrated Budapest cabaret singer, who at the peak of her fame decided to turn to Hungarian folksong. Her interpretation of the songs captured Kodály and Bartók's attention.<sup>24</sup> In the following year and with the composer at the piano, she recorded the *Five Hungarian Folksongs*.

The date of recording of the *Five Hungarian Folksongs* with HMV took place on 5 December 1928 in Budapest.<sup>25</sup> The performers, Bartók and Medgyaszay, used the revised version of five songs of the *Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano* (BB 42, 1906).<sup>26</sup> The songs that Bartók revised from the 1906 publication were nos. 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9. However, the sequence of the songs deviated for the HMV session. Almost certainly, the reason for this discrepancy was the time limits of the 78-rpm discs. This meant that in order to fit the songs on one side, they had to split them. Three songs were recorded on one disc (nos. 1, 2 and 4), and two songs on another disc (nos. 9 and 8). The best take was then selected and used for the 'master' record.

Denijs Dille affirmed in 1973, that Bartók used his drafts "as the basis for a gramophone recording in 1928."<sup>27</sup> In the 1970 edition, Dille also stated that in song no. 4, 'The Horseman,' "the pencil drafts provide a general harmonic outline. [. . .] The recording more or less follows this outline; otherwise it is almost purely improvisation [. . .]."<sup>28</sup> Figure 4 illustrates the vocal part of bars 2-3 in the 1970 edition. This is followed by Medgyaszay's interpretation

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<sup>23</sup> The detailed program of the recital can be found at the concert's database of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Musicology, [http://db.zti.hu/koncert/koncert\\_Adatlap.asp?kID=3366](http://db.zti.hu/koncert/koncert_Adatlap.asp?kID=3366).

<sup>24</sup> Somfai, and Kocsis, *Centenary Edition of Bartók's Records (Complete)*, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Kelly: *The Gramophone Company Catalogue. 1898-1954*. [s. 1.]: Sheffield: Private Publication on CD-ROM, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> His Master's Voice 273070 and 273073, matrix number: BW2052-II and BW2053-I.

<sup>27</sup> Denijs Dille, "Five Hungarian Folk Songs by Béla Bartók," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 54, no. 2 (April, 1973): 251-252. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/734401>.

<sup>28</sup> Béla Bartók, *Five Hungarian Folk Songs for voice and piano*, ed. Denijs Dille, (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1970).

Kornélia Pércsy made the English translation. The original text in Hungarian: "A ceruzavázlat egy általános harmoniavázlat ad. [. . .] A hanglemezfelvétel ezt a vázat követi, különben pedig csaknem improvizáció [. . .]."

of the same passage (Figure 5). Figure 5 clearly shows the differences she makes to the score (Figure 4) with her ‘rubato’ style singing.

**Figure 4.** Bartók, *The Horseman*, bars 2-3 (EMB edition, 1970).<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 5.** Bartók, *The Horseman*, bars 2-3. László Somfai made the transcription for the first print of the *Five Hungarian Folk Songs* (EMB, 1970).<sup>30</sup>



I have chosen to sing this song cycle for the recital because it is one of the rare vocal settings that were recorded with Bartók at the piano.

### **Eight Hungarian Folksongs (BB 47, 1907-1917)**

Out of the eight folksongs, the first tune was collected in 1906, followed by four (nos. 2-5) in 1907. Bartók completed the arrangements of these first five songs in 1907 (they were also known as ‘5 Székely songs’ or ‘Five Old Hungarian Folk Songs from Csík County’). Their premiere was in Budapest on 27 November 1911 with the opera singer, Dezső Róna, and Bartók at the piano.<sup>31</sup> The last three songs (nos. 6-8) of the song cycle were collected in 1916 and 1917, which Bartók had also arranged in 1917 (they are also known as ‘Székely Soldiers Songs’). The first performance of these second set of songs (nos. 6-8) was in Vienna on 12

<sup>29</sup> Bartók, *Five Hungarian Folk Songs for voice and piano*, ed. D. Dille, 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Béla Bartók, *Bartók Complete Edition/Vocal Works*, 2000 by Hungaroton Classic, HCD 31906-08, Compact disc, 8-9.

László Somfai wrote the CD’s notes for the Eight Hungarian Folksongs.

January 1918 with Ferenc Székelyhidy (1885–1954) and Bartók.<sup>32</sup> Five melodies were written in ‘old’ (nos. 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7), two in ‘miscellaneous’ (nos. 1 and 3), and the last one (no. 8) in ‘new’ style.<sup>33</sup>

HMV recorded only seven songs out of the eight settings. They recorded all the songs on the same day, 7 December 1928.<sup>34</sup> Mária Basilides (1886–1946), the renowned contralto of her era, sang nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5. Ferenc Székelyhidy (tenor), who, like Basilides, was a principal artist at the Royal Opera House in Budapest, performed the remaining three songs. Songs nos. 1 and 3 were recorded together on one side of the disc, songs nos. 2 and 5 on another disc, and HMV recorded the last three songs on a third disc (nos. 6-8). It is not known why HMV chose not to record song no. 4 ‘So much sorrow’ in 1928. I have included in the recital the same four settings (nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5) of the *Eight Hungarian Folksongs* as the female performer, Mária Basilides recorded it with Bartók.

### **László Lajtha: *Feljött már az esthajnali csillag* (‘The evening star has risen’)**

In 1929, the Ministry of Religion and Public Education of Hungary under Count Kuno Klebelsberg’s (1875–1932) direction secured an agreement with HMV Company to record a wide selection of Hungarian folk music.<sup>35</sup> The objective of the project was to protect, preserve, and popularise Hungarian folk music by making it available to schools in every corner of the country.<sup>36</sup> Apart from Bartók and Kodály’s work, thirteen folksong arrangements by László Lajtha<sup>37</sup> (1892–1963) were also chosen to be part of the series.<sup>38</sup> According to Simon, the ministry ordered 500 copies of the entire collection of thirty-four different discs of

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Vera Lampert, *Folk Music in Bartók’s Compositions, A Source Catalog*, 132-136.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Kelly: The Gramophone Company Catalogue. 1898-1954.

<sup>35</sup> Zoltán Kodály, "Népzeneánk, [Our Folk Music]," in *Visszatekintés III*, ed. Ferenc Bónis (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1989), 387.

<sup>36</sup> László Lajtha, "A Kultuszminisztérium Gramofonakciója, [Gramophone Recordings by the Ministry of Culture]," *Muzsika Zeneművészeti Zenetudományi és Zenekritikai folyóirat*, no. 5 (1929): 26-29.

<sup>37</sup> László Lajtha was a Hungarian composer and musicologist. In 1910, following Bartók and Kodály’s paths, he also began folksong collecting trips.

<sup>38</sup> Katalin Fittler, "Lajtha László: Magyar népdalok – nyomtatásban, [László Lajtha: Hungarian Folksongs in Print]," *Parlando*, no. 3, 2004, <http://www.parlando.hu/Fittler6-Lajtha.htm>.

the HMV recordings.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, the 1929 Great Depression and the consequent downturn in the economy led to a change in the original plan. Due to the budgetary restrictions placed upon the ministry, the final allocated funds were only able to cover the purchase of one hundred copies.<sup>40</sup>

One of Lajtha's nineteen folksong arrangements, *Feljött már az esthajnali csillag* ('The evening star has risen) is also included in the recital. Lajtha collected the tune in 1914 in Diószád, Szilágy County.<sup>41</sup>

### **Twenty Hungarian Folksongs for voice and piano (BB 98, 1929) Vol. 2**

Between 1924 and 1932, Kodály wrote a number of new solo vocal compositions: the series of *Hungarian Folk Music* (Magyar Népzene) which in the end contained sixty-two songs in eleven volumes. In contrast, Bartók had not composed any solo vocal works between 1918 and 1928, with the exception of one song cycle, *Five Village Scenes* (Falun) in 1924. It was only after the HMV recordings of December 1928, when Bartók began to compose the *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs* (Húsz Magyar Népdal), which he completed in four volumes in 1929. The book of *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs*<sup>42</sup> is Bartók's last major solo vocal composition, a collection of songs which is divided into four groups: Songs of Sadness, Dance Songs, Miscellaneous Songs, and New Songs.<sup>43</sup> At the end of the recital, two songs ('Slow dance' and 'Fast dance') from the second group of this publication will be performed.

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<sup>39</sup> Géza Gábor Simon, *Magyar hanglemeztörténet*, [History of Recording in Hungary], (Jazz Oktatási és Kutatási Alapítvány Budapest, 2008) 46-47.

<sup>40</sup> Fittler, "Lajtha László: Magyar népdalok – nyomtatásban."

<sup>41</sup> Emőke Solymosi Tari, "Olyanok voltak, mint Castor és Pollux: Lajtha László és Tamási Áron", *Magyar Szemle*, Új folyam XXII. 7-8. szám, September 6, 2013.  
[http://www.magjarszemle.hu/cikk/olyanok\\_voltak\\_mint\\_castor\\_es\\_pollux\\_lajtha\\_laszlo\\_es\\_tamasi\\_aron](http://www.magjarszemle.hu/cikk/olyanok_voltak_mint_castor_es_pollux_lajtha_laszlo_es_tamasi_aron).

<sup>42</sup> The premiere of the *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs* was in Budapest at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music on 30 January 1930 with Mária Basilides and Béla Bartók. According to Vera Lampert, songs nos. 16-20, 2, 3, 11, 12, 8 and songs nos. 5, 6, 9, 1, 10, 7 were performed. This information by Lampert appears in the notes for Bartók Béla Complete Edition, Vocal Music, Hungaroton - SLPX 11610, ca. 1960s, LP.

The detailed program of the recital can be found at the concert's database of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Musicology,

[http://db.zti.hu/koncert/koncert\\_Talalatok.asp](http://db.zti.hu/koncert/koncert_Talalatok.asp).

<sup>43</sup> Halsey Stevens, *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 152-153.

The piano accompaniments of these songs are complex and technically they are more demanding than his previous songs.

According to Lampert,<sup>44</sup> there is a possibility that the 1928 HMV recordings prompted Bartók to compose a new set of solo vocal works when he realised that he had a limited number of songs to choose from.<sup>45</sup> In contrast, Kodály had a large number of songs. For the 1928 recordings, Kodály selected twenty-six songs from the first seven volumes of the *Hungarian Folk Music* (Magyar Népzene).

### **Conclusion**

This presentation has been a brief overview of Bartók and Kodály's endeavours to change the perception of village folk songs. Their efforts achieved a mind shift from the generalised belief of folksongs as a marginal component of Hungarian culture to an acknowledgement of their central role in defining Hungarian musical identity.

It was as a result of these folksong collecting trips that Bartók and Kodály found not only authentic folk tunes but a new and unique music idiom that derived from these songs. This discovery also acted as a new musical inspiration, something that they had always looked for in their own compositions.

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<sup>44</sup> Béla Bartók, *Bartók Complete Edition/Vocal Works*, 9-13.

Vera Lampert wrote the notes to the *Twenty Hungarian Folksongs* (1929).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

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