The Incorporation of Hungarian Folk Song in Kodály's Psalmus Hungaricus

It was around the turn of the 20th century that the most important achievements in music would occur in the country of Hungary. The most notable of these would be the pianists Franz Liszt, Annie Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis, András Schiff and conductors Fritz Reiner, George Szell, Eugene Ormandy, Antal Dorati, and Sir Georg Solti. Next to these outstanding musicians we have two composers that have arguably impacted the world in the greatest way, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. Kodály is most famously known for his association with Hungarian Folk music and the incorporation of it into a national and now a world wide education system. Overall, his compositional style was more Romantic and less percussive than his other notable contemporary Bartók, and incorporated and encompassed Hungarian folk elements at their core. Among these compositions, one that stands to have particular attention payed to it is his Psalmus Hungaricus (1923). This was a work that was composed as a commission to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the union of the two cities Buda and Pest. Although it was composed as an oratorio work with a religious text and has no folk material quoted in it (as does Háry János), it is very apparent to me upon listening to it that there are many Hungarian folk elements evident in the piece. But what exactly constitutes as Hungarian folk music? It is logical to me that in order to answer the question of whether or not Hungarian folk elements are in Kodály's Psalmus Hungaricus, a precedent and criteria must be created in order to judge what is, and in fact what isn't, Hungarian folk melody. That is to say, what elements are present universally throughout these Hungarian folk tunes. To establish this, I have taken four of Kodály's folk arrangements and analyzed them by examining pitch-class sets, modal relationships, and text. It must be mentioned that the analysis that I have conducted for these pieces is going to be focused primarily on the vocal line.
The reason for this is that the arrangements Kodály made of these tunes left the melody line completely authentic and unchanged. Kodály and Bartók were so meticulous in their transcriptions that they notated several versions to try and record the exact rhythms, pitches, and decorations that were sung as accurately as possible.

To start off I will be looking at the piece *Zöld erdőben*. This is a short and simple song that displays the most fundamental and characteristic aspects in Hungarian folk song. The original text and the translation are as follows.

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<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>Zöld erdőben, zöld mezőben, Zöld erdőben, zöld mezőben lakik egy madár. Kék a lába, zöld a szárnya, Kék a lába, zöld a szárnya, jaj, be gyöngyen jár. Várj, madár, várj, te csak mindig várj, Míg az Isten megengedi, tied leszek már.</td>
<td>In the green forest, in the green field In the green forest, in the green field lives a bird Blue are its legs, green are its wings Blue are its legs, green are its wings, oh, he walks with a limp Wait, bird, wait, you just always wait Until God lets it, I will be yours finally</td>
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The text is generally about nature and personifies a wounded bird as a medium to express forbidden love. Besides this subject matter, the text is set to the recurring melody at each new stanza. The overall structure of the melody is broken into two distinct sections that amalgamate into one another (Fig.1). This is then repeated three and a half times with a variation in the third occurrence. I have chosen to divide this repeated melody in a {frag frag full} fashion as this seems to be a formal 'structure' of sorts for Hungarian folk melody in general.
By examining the prime form of mm.5-6 we get \([0 \ 1 \ 3]\) (Fig.2) and in mm.9-13 \([0 \ 1 \ 3 \ 4 \ 6 \ 8 \ t]\) (Fig.3) and the third variation in mm.31-32 yielding \([0 \ 2 \ 3 \ 5]\) (Fig.4). The significance of the variation is less important as it is closely tied to the minor scale and can be found relatively frequently.
Another significant point regarding the melody though is the fact that it begins in a mode and ends in a different one. Through mm.5-10 the melody seems to be in the Aeolian mode until it changes mid melody in m.11 into what appears to be the Ionian mode (Fig.5).

The next piece that I will take a look at is Szőlőhegyen keresztül. This song is a quicker paced folk tune that can generally still be found sung in small towns and played by gypsies on the violin. The accompaniment that Kodály has set to the piece is extremely appropriate as it emulates this virtuosic violin feeling. The original text and the translation are as follows.
The text of this song once again references nature but this time instead of the topic of focus being love, it is merely painting a picture of a boy and a girl in this setting. Like the previous song, this one is made up of three melodic fragments. The first two fragments are broken up into a two measure and a three measure group (Fig.6) while the third fragment is one cohesive unit of five measures (Fig.7). The way that each group is broken up correlates to the way that the melody was broken up in the first piece.

Fig.6 (above)
By using pitch-class set analysis I can gather that the prime form of the first fragment in mm.5-6 is \([0 2]\) and mm.7-9 is \([0 1 3 5 6 8]\) (Fig.8), the second one in mm.10-11 is \([0 1 3 5 7]\) (Fig.9) and from mm. 12-14 is \([0 2 3 5 7]\) (Fig.10), and the final fragment from mm.15-19 is \([0 2 3 5 8]\) (Fig.11).
Another feature to be noted is that although the key signature has four sharps in it, there is no discernable tonic pull to the key of E-major or to C#-minor. Upon searching for any particular mode in the piece rather than a key, it is quite obvious that there are two modes that are very clear. From mm.1-9 and mm.26-36 the song is clearly in a Mixolydian mode starting on F#, while the concurrent phrases are all in a Dorian mode start on F# (Fig.12).
Virágos kenderem
Kiázott a tóba,
Ha haragszol babám,
Ne jöjj a fonóba.

Elejtem az orsóm,
Nem lesz, ki feladja,
Bánatos szívemet
Ki megvígasztalja.

My blooming lavender
Soaked in the lake
If you are resentful my love
Don't come to the spinning-mill

I dropped my spool
Nobody will give it to me,
My heart is sorrowful
Nobody will comfort me.

The text of the following folk melody once again focuses on the theme of forbidden romance between two people. Upon analyzing the formal structure of the folk song I decided upon two
segmentations of the melody. The first way that I divided up the melody was to have the vocal line broken up into mm.3-4 and mm.5-6 and to have the latter part of the melody divided up as mm.7-8 and mm.9-10 (Fig. 13). I did this because of my assumption that the same general structure would carry over from the previous folk songs.

Fig. 13 (above)

Although this is partially true, the prime forms of these segments don't match up with the pitch-class material used in the first two examples as mm.3-4 is [0 2 4 7] (Fig. 14), mm.5-6 is [0 2 3 5 7] (Fig. 15), mm.7-8 is [0 2 4 7] (Fig. 16), and mm.9-10 is [0 2 7] (Fig. 17). Even though they are somewhat related, a very interesting thing happens to the prime pitch-class sets if the form is divided up in a larger segment.

Fig. 14 (upper left)  Fig. 15 (above)  Fig. 16 (upper right)
If the first segment is taken from mm.3-6 then the prime is [0 1 3 5 6 8 t] (Fig.18) and if the second segment is taken from mm.7-10 then the prime is [0 2 4 7 9] (Fig.19). These two primes in fact turn out to be two completely symmetrical and opposing pitch-class sets if one were to factor out the [0] in [0 2 4 7] as merely a reference pitch.

This offers a very interesting perspective on the folk song. Not only does it contain the [0 1 3 (5)] pitch-class set, but it also uses every pitch class from 0-12 in the duration of the entire melody. Seeing as these folk tunes were written long before Forte's method of pitch-class set analysis could even be conceived of, this is quite remarkable. The implications for this symmetricity and potential further relationships pertaining to Hungarian Folk music will have to be researched.
more at a later time. As much as I would like to focus on this, my primary focus shall remain on defining what constitutes as Hungarian Folk music and demonstrating how Kodály used these elements to composer Psalmus Hungaricus.

The final tune that I will be looking at is called *A Csitári Hegyek Alatt* and is arguably the most famous Hungarian folk melody. This melancholic and very emotional tune is probably the closest these folk songs will get to being in a traditional "mode structure". This may in fact also be one of the primary reasons that the piece has become so popular. The original text and translation are as follows.

<table>
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<td>A csitári hegyek alatt régen leesett a hó. Azt hallottam, kisangyalom, véled esett el a ló. Kitörted a kezedet, mivel ölelsz engemet? Így hát kedves kisangyalom, nem lehetek a tied.</td>
<td>Under the csitári mountains the snow had already fallen. I've heard my angel, the horse fell on you. You broke your hand, how will you hold me? So my darling angel, I can not be yours.</td>
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<td>Amott látok az ég alatt egy madarat repülni, De szeretnék a rózsámnak egy levelet küldeni, Repülj madár, ha lehet, vidd el ezt a levelet, Mondd meg az én galambomnak, ne sirasson engemet.</td>
<td>There I see under the sky a bird flying, How much I would love to send a letter to my rose. Fly bird if possible, take this letter away, Tell to my pigeon, not to cry for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arra alá van egy erdő, jajj de nagyon messze van, kerek erdő közepében két rozmaring bokor van, egyik hajlik vállamra, másik a babáméra így hát kedves kisangyalom tiéd leszek valaha.</td>
<td>Over there under is a forest, but it is very far away, In the middle of the round forest, there are two rosemary bushes, One leans on my shoulder, the other one on my babe's So my dear little angel I will be yours soon.</td>
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This text is by far the most encompassing when it comes to the thematic material and the imagery used in Hungarian art song. The text uses references to nature and personification of it to embody the distance between two lovers and their eventual unification. The tune is made up of two distinct phrases, which I have labeled A and B *(Fig.20)*, and has three repetitions of this material. The overall form of each section begins with the first verse in AABA and the second and third in AABABA. For my analytical purposes, I have decided to divide each of these
sections (A & B) into equal parts. By looking at the first statements of A and B I will determine the elements that make up this folk melody.

In section A, the prime form of the first division from mm.3-4 is [0 2 3 5 7] (Fig.21) and the prime for the second division from mm.5-6 is [0 1 3 5 8] (Fig.22). This material is repeated identically every time the A theme returns. In section B, the prime form of the first division from mm.11-12 is [0 2 3 5 7] (Fig.23) and the prime for the second division from mm.13-14 is [0 1 3 5 7 8] (Fig.24).
Although the [0 1 3 (5)] appears in these two divisions, the set [0 2 3 5 7] is a very common set found in the traditional minor scale and is not very significant. That being said, my dissatisfaction with the division led me to calculate the prime form for the entirety of section A and section B to see what sort of relationships, if any, can be found. When examining all of section A from mm.3-6, the prime form is determined as [0 2 4 5 7 9] (Fig.25) and when examining all of section B from mm.11-14, the prime form is determined as [0 1 3 5 6 8 t] (Fig.26). It is with this division that I have once again found the familiar [0 2 4 (7)] and [0 1 3 (5)] sets.
By looking at the themes individually, it becomes evident that there is a various shifting of modes in this tune as well. The A theme can be in either of two modes. As the Gb or G are omitted from the A theme, it is impossible to determine whether it is in the Phrygian or the Aeolian mode. Kodály actually seems to acknowledge this by writing both a Gb and G into the same bar in m.4 (Fig.27). The B section on the other hand is clearly in the Phrygian mode. This so far adheres to the general pattern that I have found of a duality of modes in Hungarian folk music.

Upon review of the four Hungarian folk tunes that I have analyzed I come to the following conclusions. There is an obvious presence of the pitch-class sets [0 1 3], [0 1 3 5], [0 2 4] and [0 2 4 7] throughout all of the songs as well as a semblance of symmetry between these two. Also it seems that often times, there is an inclusion of almost all pitch-classes in the various segmentations of the melody. Another important aspect is the use of modes and it is safe to say
that the use of various modes is also an iconic aspect of these folks tunes. This primarily occurs in the format of the first melodic statement appearing in one mode or in a combination of two, and the second melodic statement appearing in another mode. It is also important to mention that the subject matter of the text usually has to do with forbidden love and a reference or personification of nature and animals (mainly birds) to express this theme. Although the textual nature of Psalmus Hungaricus cannot be compared to this pattern as it is a religious text, I still bring it up because it is still noteworthy to identify all of the elements that create the fundamental structure of Hungarian Folk song.

In regards to *Psalmus Hungaricus*, I will be looking at primarily the vocal entrance of the choir and the vocal line of the Tenor solo in two different sections. My decision to specifically look at this line in depth is for a number of reasons. The first justification is that all of the other Hungarian folk songs that I have investigated have been limited to the vocal line. In this way, my analysis of the opening solo vocal line of *Psalmus Hungaricus* will remain isolated in the same condition in which I have analyzed the rest of the folk melodies. The justification for only looking at the first few bars of the piece are merely a fact of the size of this document. A greater analysis and more detailed look should be taken at this piece in the future with the inclusion of the orchestral parts. For the time being though, I am only attempting to show that there indeed is a pronounced influence of Hungarian folk music in Kodály's work regardless if he was trying to fuse those melodies and themes into his composition or not.

To start I look at the entrance of the choral singers, which is also the first time that we hear any voice in the piece so far. The text of this choral section is as follows.
When David was in a big sadness,
Because of his friends he would be in sorrow
Complaining in his great anger
Such pleading he started with himself

This first statement of the choral line is very important as it is the first glimpse of the types of material Kodály is using to compose his tremendous work. I have decided to divide this section into three separate segments in which I have found concurrency with the typical division of Hungarian folk songs, namely \{frag frag full\} or in this case I will call them \{A A' B\} (Fig.28). My decision to divide them in the following way is partially influenced by the composers own addition, or overlay, of the \{B\} section (I am assuming this was a correction) (Fig.29).
When using pitch-class set analysis I have determined the prime form of segment \{A\} (two measures after Rehearsal 2) to be \([0 \ 2 \ 5]\) (Fig.30), the prime form of segment \{A’\} (the two following measures) to be \([0 \ 2 \ 5 \ 7]\) (Fig.31), and the prime form for the final section \(B\) (which continues for the next five measures) to be \([0 \ 2 \ 4 \ 5 \ 7 \ 9]\) (Fig.32). To further investigate the edit of segment \(B\) that Kodály added, I have divided this section in a similar way of \textbf{frag frag full} or for further reference \(B = \{a \ a' \ b\}\) (Fig.33). When looking at the last segment in this way I got the prime form for segment \(\{a\}\) to be \([0 \ 1 \ 3 \ 5]\) (Fig.34), the prime form for segment \(\{a'\}\) to be \([0 \ 2 \ 4 \ 7]\) (Fig.35), and the prime form for segment \(\{b\}\) to be \([0 \ 2 \ 4 \ 7 \ 9]\) (Fig.36).
When looking at the large form of this opening phrase \(\{A \ A' \ B\}\) we can see that Kodály gradually builds up the final set he intends this phrase to be made up of. First by adding the (7) to the \(\{0 \ 2 \ 5\}\) then by finally adding the (4) and (9) to complete the set. I do not think that it is coincidence that the first line of vocal music that appears in this work has the set \(\{0 \ 2 \ 4 \ 7\}\) playing an integral role in the melody's shape and form. It is also especially exciting and interesting to note that when the \(\{B\}\) section is subdivided, the two prominent prime forms are \(\{0 \ 1 \ 3 \ 5\}\) and \(\{0 \ 2 \ 4 \ 7 \ (9)\}\). As I have pointed out, these two sets occur very frequently in Hungarian folk music so it is no surprise that it should be found here.
The next obvious place to look for this relationship is when the Tenor solo first makes his entrance in the work. This occurs after a brief orchestral interlude once the choir has cut off and the text and translation is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Istenem, Uram. Kérlek tégedet, Fordítsad reám szent szemeidet Nagy szükségemben ne hagy engemet, Mert megemészti nagy bánat szívemet</th>
<th>My God, my Lord I am asking you, Turn your sacred eyesight on me, In my big need do not leave me Because this large sadness will consume my heart.</th>
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I have divided up the following tenor solo in the same fashion of \{frag frag full\} and shall refer to these segments as \{E E' F\} where \(F = \{e e' f\}\) (Fig.37). Using pitch-class set analysis I have determined that the prime form of segment \(E\) is \([0 2 7]\) (Fig.38), segment \(E'\) is \([0 1 3 5 6 8]\) (Fig.39), and segment \(F\) is \([0 2 4 5 7 9]\) (Fig.40). Upon examining the lesser form that makes up \(F\) I have found the prime form of segment \(e\) to be \([0 2 5 7]\) (Fig.41), segment \(e'\) to be \([0 2 4 7]\) (Fig.42), and segment \(f\) to be \([0 2 4 5 7 9]\) (Fig.43).
By analyzing the formal structure and dividing up these sections in this way, we can begin to see a pattern of common pitch-class set primes that occur in what we can now define as distinctly Hungarian folk music. These elements are not only apparent in the folk songs themselves but have clearly been integrated by Kodály in his compositional style. To be able to note the patterns that are visible, I have included a chart of all of the prime forms that I have found in all of the works that I have analyzed in this paper.
What becomes extremely evident when viewing all of the prime forms in this chart is the relationships that I have pointed out between the [0 1 3], [0 1 3 5], [0 2 4], and [0 2 4 7] prime sets. As one can see, throughout all of the Hungarian folk tunes these sets are somehow and in someway present. Because of Kodály's long journey of collecting, recording, and setting these folk tunes, these foundational elements have became a part of his compositional practice. The formal structure that I have identified is also something very inherently "Hungarian". The segmentation of melody into a \textit{frag frag full} structure, with the \textit{full} section being a longer number of uneven bars and in a different mode than the \textit{frag} sections, is also extremely characteristic. In this way, although Kodály was composing a new work to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest, he maintained a true sense of Hungarianness by utilizing these pitch-class set prime forms, and specific phrasing structure. Of course the amount of analysis I have conducted on his Psalmus Hungaricus is extremely minimal and must be subject to further in depth analysis, at least now there is a precedent for what "Hungarian folk music" consists of and in addition, there is a brief analysis of the first few opening vocal lines to support my point. I can say though, that from listening to the music and analyzing what I have so far, I expect that a similar relationship is apparent in the orchestral parts throughout the entire work.