Selected folksong arrangements of Zoltán Kodály: An analysis and performer’s guide

Sebastian A. Haboczki
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Selected Folksong Arrangements of Zoltán Kodály:

An Analysis and Performer’s Guide

Sebastian Haboczki

A Doctor of Musical Arts Document submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

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DEDICATION

This Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) Document is dedicated to my parents Edit and Csaba Haboczki. Without their support and encouragement, this document would not have been possible. It is because of their rich upbringing and exposure to Hungarian culture and language that I find myself able to contribute to this wonderful body of art.
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ABSTRACT

The history of Hungarian music and the Hungarian nation is a long and complicated one. Conquered by many different empires throughout history, Hungary faced challenges in maintaining its unique music and cultural heritage. Despite Hungary’s tumultuous changes of governance, its folksongs have evolved and flourished. Through the efforts of people such as Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók, and Lászlo Dobszay, these folksongs have been collected, studied, and categorized. Kodály, an accomplished musician whose research and music education philosophy can sometimes overshadow his compositional prowess, also composed folksong arrangements which embody the true nature of Hungarian music. These arrangements can be used as a departure point for Hungarian folk music to be explored and shared in a concert setting.

The purpose of this document is to create a performer’s guide to selected folksong arrangements of Zoltán Kodály. The document is an analysis of five Kodály folksong arrangements through four different lenses; (a) a theoretical analysis of the musical structure of each song with an emphasis on the musical elements which help define the essence of Hungarian music; (b) an historical analysis of the period in which these songs were arranged and its influence on the arrangements; (c) a pronunciation analysis which defines the essential elements of Hungarian lyric diction; and, (d) a musico-poetic analysis of each of the five songs to aid performers in understanding the stories, characters, and traditions which are portrayed by each folksong arrangement. Appendices with poetic translations and IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcriptions, as well as suggestions for further research are provided.
CHAPTER ONE:

NATIONALISM, ZOLTÁN KODÁLY, AND HUNGARIAN FOLKSONG

1.1 Introduction

The history of Hungarian music and the Hungarian nation is a long and complicated one. Conquered by many different empires throughout history, Hungary faced challenges in maintaining its unique music and cultural heritage. Despite Hungary’s tumultuous changes of governance, its folksongs have evolved and flourished. Through the efforts of people such as Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók, and Lászlo Dobszay, these folksongs have been collected, studied, and categorized. Kodály, an accomplished musician whose research and music education philosophy sometimes can overshadow his compositional prowess, also composed folksong arrangements which engender the true nature of Hungarian music. These arrangements can be used as a departure point for Hungarian folk music to be explored and shared in a concert setting.

Singers may be understandably intimidated by both language and musical style when approaching Kodály’s selected folksong arrangements. Beyond superficial introductory information, there currently exists little specific information about Kodály’s folksong arrangements. A guide may be helpful in bridging the gap between learning a song and performing. Whether the guide is a teacher or a written resource, it is a challenge in this context given the dearth of literature and specialists regarding Hungarian song.
Although few performance guides exist, some important references provide points of departure into the realm of Hungarian song. Frank Howes’ article “Kodály in English” summarizes Kodály’s original writings on Hungarian folksong and briefly looks at some prevalent elements of composition.1 András Szöllösy and G. F. Cushing’s journal article “Kodály’s Melody” examines the idea that Hungarian folksong may not be as large of an influence on Kodály’s compositional style and offers other possibilities of influence.2 Cynthia Jolly’s article “The Art Songs of Kodály” examines excerpts of various pieces with special attention paid to the setting of text and identifies relationships between the folk style.3 Benjamin Rajeczky’s “Old and New Singing Styles in Hungarian Folksong” addresses the differences in vocal production (technique and emotion) between the two styles of folksong by examining various excerpts.4

The arrangements Kodály composed are based on original Hungarian folksong melodies. Many detailed studies of these original folk melodies and of the modes which create their unique flavor have been conducted. These studies have been published in a variety of academic journals and other media. Some examples of these studies are: A Magyar Népzene, A Magyar Dal Könyve, “Gypsy Music or Hungarian Music?,” “The Hungarian Folk Song in the 18th Century,” “Ethnomusicological Roots of Béla Bartók’s Musical Language,” “The Theory of Hungarian Music,” and The Hungarian Folk Song.5

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Although there are numerous articles and books which reference various aspects of Hungarian music and melody, there is yet to be a simple guide which provides insight into basic performance practice of Hungarian song. As such, the purpose of this document is to create a performers guide to selected folksong arrangements of Zoltán Kodály. To illustrate the essentials of a Hungarian song performer’s guide, I have chosen five folksong arrangements by Kodály which will be analyzed through four different lenses; (a) a theoretical analysis of the musical structure of each song itself, with an emphasis on the musical elements which help define the essence of Hungarian music; (b) an historical analysis of the period in which these songs were arranged and its influence on the arrangements; (c) a pronunciation analysis which defines the essential elements of Hungarian lyric diction; and, (d) a musico-poetic analysis of each of the five songs which will aid performers in understanding the stories, characters and traditions which are portrayed by each folksong arrangement.

1.2 Nationalism in Europe and its Effect on Hungary

To understand why Kodály would collect and catalog folksongs, it is important to understand how Nationalism in Europe affected Hungary, and in turn Kodály. Richard Taruskin outlines that Volksstümlichkeit or “folksiness,” was present throughout music as early as the 18th century. It was especially prevalent in opera buffa and its other counterparts, such as singspiel and operetta, in various countries. In many instances,
“folksiness” was associated with the lower class and used as a comical element. This folk heritage was not seen as serious or important because class rather than nationality was the driving force of the sense of community in cultivated circles. It was only when these cultivated circles began to view “folksiness” as a medium which embodied “...the essential authentic wisdom of a vertically defined linguistic community or nation, [that] its cultural stock soared.”

“Folksiness” started to become useful when composers realized they could adopt specific traits of certain cultures rather than generalized concepts. For instance, Franz Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsody No.2* evokes Hungarian music by using Gypsy scales and decorative turns. In the aria “Csárdás” from *Die Fledermaus*, Johann Strauss Jr. maintains the formal structure of the Hungarian *csárdás* rather rigidly, which not only overtly signifies the dance, but also lends the piece a certain degree of integrity.

According to Taruskin, this “explosion” of artistic imitations and published folklore enhanced the national consciousness of everyone. It specifically had the most impact on two groups of people. The first group was comprised of minority populations which were localized and whose language remained within geographical borders. The second group included larger communities which were politically divided, such as the German-speaking peoples, whose language was widely spread throughout the continent. Other countries would begin to follow the nationalism trend. For example, the nationalist movement in Russia produced composers such as Glinka, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov, while in Czechoslovakia Smetana and Dvorak became prominent figures.

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7 Ibid.
By the beginning of the 19th century, Hungary had already experienced vast socio-political changes. It had been dominated by the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire for over 200 years. Throughout these 200 years, Hungary strove to maintain its heritage. One of the central forces in retaining the folksongs was the formation of choruses in Calvinist colleges.8

The city of Pest became the musical center of Hungary around the 1830s. During this decade the National Theatre and the Conservatory were built, and the Pest-Buda Society of Musicians was formed. During this period, Franz (Ferenc) Liszt used his international status to promote the Hungarian folk heritage. Most notably during his 1839-40 and 1846 concerts in Pest9 he restricted his melodic sources to the csárdás and other folk-influenced art songs, and he also used the structure of the verbunkos in his Hungarian Rhapsodies. Throughout the rest of his career, Liszt would continue to reference his heritage in such compositions as his Missa solemnis (1856), his symphonic poem Hungaria (1856), and the Hungarian Coronation Mass (1867).10

At the turn of the 20th century, most of the trained musicians were a part of the Western Romantic tradition, while most traditional Hungarian musicians were popular song composers. This was especially apparent during the first decade of the Budapest Academy’s existence as composition classes were taught by German musicians Robert Volkmann and Hans Koessler. These classes produced a healthy generation of Hungarian

8An interesting fact about these Calvinist colleges is that the music they produced would eventually be incorrectly labeled verbunkos or recruiting music. As of 1715, the verbunkos was exclusively associated with recruiting purposes. Before 1715, the verbunkos was simply called Hungarian Dance music and could be used for many different occasions. After 1715 the verbunkos was stigmatized along with the recruiting process. Even the verbunkos had roots which could be traced back to folk music. See: Janka Szendrei, Dezső Legány, János Kárpáti, Melinda Berlász, Péter Halász, Bálint Sárosi, and Irén Kertész Wilkinson. “Hungary.” Grove Music Online. 2 Mar. 2018.

9Before the unification of Budapest, there existed two cities, Buda, and Pest.

composers (Dohnányi, Bartók, Kodály, and Weiner) who each strove to achieve new horizons for Hungarian music.\textsuperscript{11}

Like Dohnányi and Weiner, Bartók also began his career by attempting to combine the German musical style with the \textit{verbunkos}. In his attempts, Bartók quickly realized that Hungarian dance music and popular songs were not at all compatible with the Western Romantic style of composition. Bartók found this especially true for symphonic forms and orchestration of dance tunes. He found a solution to this issue by joining Kodály on one of his collecting tours and discovering ancient peasant melodies in Hungarian villages. These melodies had been practically unaltered over time. It was because of this discovery that Kodály invited Bartók to collect folksongs from all over the country. The more they pursued this endeavor and used these folk tunes in their own compositions, the more they realized they were creating a new Hungarian music. They hoped to achieve this by combining Western idioms and traditional Hungarian melodies. Another motivation to collect these tunes was to preserve the ever-dwindling folk culture.\textsuperscript{12}

As a result of these collecting tours, Kodály published 57 folksongs in 11 books called \textit{Magyar Népzene} (Hungarian folk music) between 1924 and 1932. In 1937 Kodály published his famous book, \textit{A magyar népzene} (The Hungarian Folk Music). The book summarizes his folksong research, including their origins, and it discusses musicological applications. He would continue to demonstrate a new form of Hungarian music

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
composition by publishing works such as his *Háry János* (1926), *Székely fonó* (1924),
*Márosszáki táncok* (1930), and *Psalmus Hungaricus* (1923).\(^{13}\)

### 1.3 The Life of Zoltán Kodály

Kodály grew up in Kecskemét, Hungary, a relatively rural area, where he was introduced to many different musical instruments and Classical works. His father, Frigyes, was a railway station master who played the violin and his mother sang and played the piano. Kodály began to improvise songs at the age of four and continued to compose until the last days of his life. Kodály’s elementary school was in an historic town. There, he heard traditional Hungarian folk tunes sung by local people. Kodály was a good student in literature and languages, and he learned how to play the piano, violin, viola, and cello. He played music at home, in his school orchestra, and sang in his church choir.\(^{14}\)

Surviving manuscripts indicate that Kodály started to compose as early as 1897. His earliest compositions were “youthful attempts conceived in the spirit of Viennese Classicism...or of the German Romantics.”\(^{15}\) In 1900, Kodály received a rigorous education at Budapest University and Eötvös College and attended the Academy of Music where he studied composition with Hans Koessler. Kodály earned a diploma in composition in 1904, a diploma in teaching in 1905, and a Ph.D. in music in 1906.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
“For Kodály, the music of rural Hungary was not only an inspiration but also an object of study in itself.”

He found material for his thesis, entitled *A Magyar népdal strofa szerkezete* (The strophic structure of Hungarian folksong) while on “collecting tours,” as he called them. His “thesis reflects his interest and scholarship in the interdisciplinary aspects of music and language.”

The collecting tours began in August of 1905. At the same time, he had discovered a unique compositional style, based on traditional Hungarian melody and rhythms. Kodály’s “artistic personality was enriched by the absorption of Gregorian chant, Palestrina, and Bach keyboard works.”

While on these “collecting tours” Kodály and Bartók quickly became friends. Together they published *Magyar népdalok* (Hungarian Folksongs) in 1906. In October of the same year, Kodály’s *Nyári este* (Summer Evening) was performed at the Academy of Music in Budapest. This premiere earned him a scholarship to study abroad. He first studied in Berlin and then Paris. While in Paris, he heard the music of Claude Debussy, which left a lasting impression on him.

When he returned from his travels, Kodály embarked on another folksong “collecting tour.” Shortly after that, Kodály accepted a professorship at the Academy of Music in Budapest assuming the position of his former teacher, Hans Koessler. There he taught music theory, composition, counterpoint, form, orchestration, score reading, vocal polyphony, and musical literacy. In 1910, Kodály’s works received their first public performances, and later that year he married Emma Sándor. In 1911, Kodály and Bartók

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
were among the founders of the New Hungarian Music Society. The society aimed to “ensure the careful performance of contemporary works.” However, the organization crumbled due to “public indifference and official resistance.”

In 1913 Kodály and Bartók proposed a new universal collection of folksongs to the Kisfaludy Society. After their proposal was rejected, the two composers continued to work until World War I put an end to collecting tours. Between 1917-1919 he worked as a music critic. Among his contributions, he published an essay on the importance of folk music and also an analysis of Bartók’s music. He would eventually write his first preparatory study in 1917 (The Pentatonic Scale in Hungarian Folk Music), which represented the efforts of his annual collecting tours. This publication culminated in the collection, analysis, and classification of thousands of folksongs that he acquired on his collecting tours.

After the bourgeois revolution in 1919, the Academy of Music in Budapest earned university status. Dohnányi became the director of the Academy and Kodály was appointed as his deputy director. However, after only a few months Kodály was removed from the position for political reasons. He was unable to teach for two years after the incident, and this resulted in him focusing more on his compositions.

Kodály’s career took a turn for the better when he was offered a publishing contract with Universal Edition in 1921. Some of his most famous works emerged as a result of this contract, including his Psalmus hungaricus (1923) and the premiere of the opera Háry János (1926), followed by a suite comprised of music from the opera in 1927.

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Kodály made his conducting debut at Amsterdam in 1927 and continued to conduct his works after that. Despite his continued musical successes, Kodály and his students were criticized in the *Neues Pester Journal* in 1925, for their “characteristic juxtaposition of the traditional with the experimental.”\(^{24}\)

In 1925 Kodály shifted his focus to musical education for young people. He believed this was the way to preserve Hungary’s “artistic traditions in the face of urbanization and technological advancement.”\(^{25}\) The composer wrote singing and sight-reading exercises as well as choruses. These exercises played a partial role in reviving the Hungarian choral movement. Kodály went so far as to wage war on musical illiteracy by way of lectures, articles, and concerts. His former students pitched in, acting as conductors, teachers, and publishers. By the 1930s Kodály jump-started the “Singing Youth movement on a national scale” and in 1933, Kodály’s folk ballad, *Székelyfonó* (The Transylvanian Spinning-Room) received “considerable success at La Scala.”\(^{26}\)

Kodály published volumes of *Magyar népzene* (Hungarian folk music) between 1924 and 1932. He included the voice and piano arrangements of 57 folksongs and ballads in 11 books. In 1927 Kodály started a “forum for the emergent Hungarian musicology,” by publishing *Magyar zenei dolgozatok* (Hungarian Musical Essays). In 1930 Kodály started lecturing on folk music at the University of Budapest. Throughout the 1930s Kodály received several commissions for large-scale orchestral works.\(^{27}\)


\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
Although many Hungarians began immigrating during this decade, including his friend Bartók, Kodály remained in Hungary to ensure that the foundation was laid for the future of Hungarian music. This new Hungarian music would be defined by its own history and traditions rather than the Western and Germanic ones. By the end of the decade, the composer began to publish with Boosey & Hawkes because he “did not wish to retain his contracts with Austria after the Anschluss.”

In 1937 Kodály published “his comprehensive summary *A magyar népzene* (Hungarian Folk Music),” which summarized the achievements of his thirty-two years of research. As a further extension of his efforts, he published *Bicinia hungarica* (1937-42). This was one of his first documents to expand “his work to include the publication of singing and reading exercises. His example inspired many others to the re-evaluation of folksong in detailed terms of melodic interval, rhythm, meter and form to create a sound method of musical instruction.”

In 1940 Kodály began working under the supervision of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and reduced his teaching load at the Academy of Music to one course. Kodály continued to teach at the Academy even after he retired in 1942. That same year, when Kodály turned 60, the Society of Hungarian Choruses declared it the “Kodály Year.” In 1943 Kodály was awarded the Hungarian Order of Merit and a membership to the Academy of Sciences.

During World War II, Kodály continued to compose and even helped save people from persecution. As the war progressed, he and his wife were forced to seek refuge in the cellar of a convent in Budapest. While in hiding, Kodály “completed the *Missa*

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
brevis, [and] a version for solo voices, chorus and orchestra of an earlier mass.” The work was premiered in the cloakroom of the opera house, where he sought shelter during the Battle of Budapest. When peace was declared in 1945, Kodály accepted the prestigious position at the Academy of Music as the chairman of the board of directors. In addition, he became the president of the Hungarian Art Council, the Free Organization of Musicians, the Academy of Sciences (1946-1949), and the International Folk Music Council (1961).

In 1946 Kodály embarked on a year-long concert tour through the UK, the USA, and the USSR to conduct his works. Kodály’s wife passed away in 1958 and he remarried the next year. In the 1960s Kodály lectured all over the world in many different languages. All the while, he “championed ethnomusicological investigation as the source of artistic inspiration.” The principles Kodály outlined in *A magyar népzene tára* were introduced into 120 elementary school curriculums.

After a number of publications on the history of folklore, the culmination of Kodály’s scientific work came with the first issue of the *A magyar népzene tára/Corpus musicae popularis hungaricae* in 1951: the ten-volume project had first been drafted by Kodály and Bartók in 1913. A testament to Kodály’s scholarly achievement, the work is unprecedented in its attempt to cover an entire musical tradition. Folk music research constituted the bulk of Kodály’s scholarly activity including work in ethnomusicology,

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
music history, music aesthetic, music criticism, the history of literature, linguistics, and language education. One of his central topics was the music of Bartók.35

1.4 A Brief History of Hungarian Folksong

Throughout history, there has been confusion as to what comprises Hungarian folksong. Even in Hungary, traditional Hungarian folksongs and peasant tunes were relatively unknown to the greater public until they were disseminated by the Hungarian Radio in the mid-20th century. Bartók’s *Hungarian Folk Music* similarly only reached a small group of experts. Kodály remarked, “Hungarian folk music is still identified with gypsy music, and the folksong is confused with popular art music. Such music has been the basis for many generalizations about “Hungarian music” for nearly a hundred years.”36

Although more awareness has been brought to Hungarian folk music in Hungary through folk festivals and competitions, the stereotype of “Hungarian music” is still abundant in the world. Since Kodály’s collecting tours only began around the 1900s, the body of Hungarian folk music which has been published and distributed is fairly new, even to many Hungarians. This musical literature that Kodály collected stems from the ancient *Magyar* tradition. Kodály duly noted that composers in Western Europe and even composers born and raised in Hungary, portrayed harmonic and melodic characteristics which are not historically Hungarian.

Several composers are falsely associated with Hungarian folk music, including Kálmán Simonffy (1832-1889), Elmér Szentirmay (1836-1908), and Béni Egressy (1814-1851). Kodály noted that there were many unidentified composers who were also a part of this trend. Their portrayal of what was seemingly authentic Hungarian folk music was actually a style of Hungarian popular music in the 19th century. Kodály surmised that these composers “were nearly always experienced amateurs,” whose tunes almost immediately “became common property, and nobody inquired after their origin.”

Hungarian popular music contains rhythmic characteristics based on language and dance. The tunes evolved from Western European influences but contain what Kodály referred to as the Gypsy scale. This scale points to Arabic origin and may have reached Hungary through the gypsies. Kodály also noted that “the augmented intervals of this scale...are rarely used by peasants.”

According to Kodály, the only distinguished gypsy contribution came from Pista Dankó (1858-1886). Although Dankó was a gypsy, he was influenced by indigenous Hungarian peasant music, while Kodály notes that “other gypsy composers confined themselves to [the purely instrumental] csárdás.” Though still under-investigated, the “real” gypsy music comes from Romania and Kodály insisted that it had “virtually nothing in common with Hungarian folksong.”

Hungarian composers including Lóránd Fráter (1872-1923) and Árpad Balázs (1874-1941) revived the gypsy style at the same time that, as Kodály puts it, there was a

38 Ibid., 6-7.
39 Ibid., 6-7.
40 Ibid., 6-7.
“conspicuous absence of gypsy composers.”

He explains that it “is entirely erroneous...to regard the music played by gypsies from about 1850 onwards as ‘gypsy music.’”

Kodály continues to explain that the evidence points towards Hungarian composition but in a style which “belonged to the town tradition of printed art-music.” The style was “spread by word of mouth,” performed by gypsies, “sung by large numbers of musically illiterate people,” and absorbed by town-dwellers.

According to Kodály, certain branches of the Hungarian peasantry have been literate for centuries. This literacy implies that from the 16th century onwards, elements of early written culture had been able to penetrate the original culture preserved in oral tradition. Musically speaking, however, many Hungarians did not know written music, and their musical life was largely an oral culture. Unaccompanied solo songs were often the sole musical tradition, passed from person to person.

Since the tunes have been kept alive through this oral tradition, there are many variants. From the middle of the 19th century onwards, a handful of elite musicians developed a musical life comparable to that of West-European cities. Still, at the end of the century, musical growth in Hungary lagged behind Western Europe until 1900. At this time, Hungary experienced a significant surge of interest in folk music, but most Hungarians incorrectly regarded the widely diffused popular music as the folk tradition.

Hungarian composers of popular song and their public represented a tradition which had outgrown folk culture but had not yet reached a higher cultural level. The

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42 Ibid., 7.
43 Ibid., 7.
44 Ibid., 14.
composers lacked musical knowledge, so it was useless for them to publish their songs. Also, few people could play or sing from written music. The masses learned songs by ear from popular singers or gypsy bands. Kodály concluded that “[the] art music that came to the village[s] had the effect of stimulating [the] folk tradition to creative development, thus leading to the appearance of new and previously unknown forms.”

According to Kodály, “Hungarian peasants still sing thousands of songs that have nothing in common with 19th-century art music.” The songs have been part of organic Hungarian folk culture for thousands of years. The origins of the folk culture are lost, but the songs of the common people can be traced back through the history of folk poetry. In the first known folksong collections published by Erdely and Kriza, the folk poetry was published alongside the folksongs until 1872 when Arany and Gyulai made stricter selections.

According to Kodály, trailblazers of folksong collection, including Adám Pálóczy-Horváth, Istaván Tóth, and Franz Liszt, were not ‘entirely successful,’ because “it was immensely difficult for persons from the cultured classes of the 19th century to approach the peasants.” Because the nobility and educated classes lived among the peasants and knew virtually nothing about the peasants and their songs, “it was as though an impenetrable barrier lay between them.”

At the turn of the 20th century, the act of collecting folksongs gained momentum. However, WWI made regular collection impossible. The war displaced many peasants

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46 Ibid., 15-16.
47 Ibid., 15-16.
48 Ibid., 15-16.
out of their old culture onto more divergent paths. Therefore, the first folksong investigations did not appear until 1924 with Bartók’s *A magyar népdal*.\(^{49}\) Bartók’s and Kodály’s subsequent publications included hundreds of songs of the Szekely region and Transylvania. Kodály explains that the sheer amount of folksongs “[show] that Hungary has been living more deeply steeped in folk culture than had ever been realized and that even in the 20\(^{th}\) century much of the original stratum of the *Magyar* spirit has remained a living reality.”\(^{50}\)

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Radio, and the Ethnographical Museum collected recordings of songs which were performed by peasant singers and instrumentalists. These performances represented the folk music with every nuance of the original performance.\(^{51}\) In the 19\(^{th}\) century, the deeper layers of the folksongs were exposed when collectors concentrated on the peasantry at its least civilized level. Kodály states that during the 19\(^{th}\) century the ancient “*Magyar* spirit had withdrawn into the peasant hovels,” rejected by the civilized part of the nation.\(^{52}\) He continues to elaborate that this occurred because “[Hungary was] striving after a newer, higher, and in part foreign, culture.” The result of this was that the middle class and the aristocrats of ancient Hungarian lineage accepted too many foreign immigrants. These immigrants were unable to assimilate completely, and their successors carried no trace of Hungarian folk tradition or any intuition regarding it.\(^{53}\) After 150 years of “cultural

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 17-18.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 18-19.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 18-19.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 18-19.
evolution, … Hungary’s anonymous masses represented... an enormous hidden reserve of cultural riches.”

Later in this document, I will address the very specific categories of folksongs. Kodály's initial assessment and categorization were defined by age difference and syllabic groupings. Although future Hungarian ethnomusicologists, such as László Dobszay, would continue to use syllabic settings to group Hungarian folksongs, these songs can also be grouped by occasion or subject matter. In Chapter 3 of this document, I will look in detail at what Dobszay says about the genres that are most pertinent to the folk arrangements that I will be discussing.

According to Kodály, it is not only important to know the songs, but also their purpose. Indeed, the songs are classified by social status and purpose, but they are part of a whole series of styles. Archeology has failed to provide any musical documentation, but Hungarian music was passed down, just as the language was: ‘mouth to mouth.’ Without a paper trail, the next best primary resource is to look at the ancient music of related and neighboring peoples and investigate if there are any relationships with Hungarian folksong. Kodály found such a relationship in the Volga region, where the music of the Mari people shows a basic similarity to the pentatonic scale and by the repetition of the first phrase a fifth below the starting pitch.

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CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF KODÁLY’S RESEARCH ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUNGARIAN FOLKSONG

2.1 Introduction

In Ferenc Bónis’ publication *The Selected Writings of Zoltán Kodály*, Kodály concludes that by removing any and all influence of other cultures from the music tradition in Hungary, one is left with Hungarian music in its purest form. In other words, “the ancient, natural music of the Magyars, who once conquered the Hungary of today.”

The Magyar tribe was known for having superior military and political organization. The group was made up of many different tribes with different origins and even different languages.

Kodály theorized that as a single language developed in the tribe, so too a singular musical language developed. Two principles which survived musical evolution are pentatony and parallel structures. Over the thousand years that the Magyars conquered and settled Hungary, the foundation of the Hungarian people did not change. Despite the fact that multiple races and peoples had interacted with the Hungarian people, their original musical system and musical way of thinking remained the same.

Remnants of some cultural interaction between the Turks and the Gypsies still exist in Hungarian music. For 150 years the Turks occupied Hungary, but there is little documentation of what sort of music they brought along with them. Kodály suggests that it may be of the Southern-Turkish style of which only scattered remnants of Arabian/Indian scales remain. The Gypsies also occupied Hungary for over 500 years,

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57 Ibid., 29  
58 Ibid., 29.
but this did not affect the music of the Hungarian people. In fact, the Gypsies cleverly mimicked and re-created Hungarian music to increase their popularity with the country’s people.\(^{59}\)

As Kodály explains, three things are essential for the creation of a national literature of music: “first, traditions; second, individual talent; and third, a spiritual community of many people who accept the manifestation of individual talent as its own.”\(^{60}\) To explain this perspective, Kodály references Elek Petrovics. Petrovics alludes to a painting where the garments, weapons, and faces are all Hungarian, but the pictures themselves that were painted themselves are not.\(^ {61}\) Kodály compares this visual aide to certain pieces of music in which all of the fundamental motives are Hungarian, but the overall composition and structure of the piece are not. He also alludes to the fundamental thought that combining disparate folk motives will not create a higher organic form. Kodály continues by stating that only individual talent “possessing greater concepts and special creative powers” can accomplish this goal.\(^ {62}\)

It is a difficult task to define Hungarian song because it has long incorporated elements of other European styles. Rather than combat this notion, Kodály accepted the fact that Hungarian musical life was flooded with foreign musical influences, specifically from Germany and Italy. Further, he asserted that since Hungary is part of Europe, it must live among various European traditions. Kodály emphasized the careful balance between the cultural surroundings of Hungary and Hungarian tradition by stating that


\(^{60}\) Ibid., 30.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 30.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 30.
“the Hungarian who is not European is worthless; and so is the European quality if it is not Hungarian at the same time.”

It is a careful balance between ancient traditions and the surrounding modern culture which defined and continues to define, the evolution of Hungarian music.

So, what exactly constitutes Hungarian music? Kodály describes Hungarian music generally as being more active than other kinds of music. It encompasses “an expression of will rather than emotion” but at the same time, “aimless grieving and tears of merriment do not appear in our music.”

He also explains that Hungarian rhythm is definite with an emphasis on sharpness and variety.

Kodály further elaborates by describing the melodies of Hungarian folksongs as buoyant and that they maintain freedom of movement. Rather than unfolding timidly on a harmonic basis which is premeditated, the melody soars in an independent direction. The form of the music is loosely strophic, “concise, proportionate, lucid and transparent.”

When Kodály says “lucid,” he means that if a portion of a song were taken out of context and analyzed, anyone would still be able to tell from which formal section the excerpt came. Kodály affirms that this is true in all instances of Hungarian folksong.

For Hungarian music to be truly inspired by folk music or folk elements, all of the above characteristics must be present. Kodály does admit though, that varying degrees of Hungarian inspiration should be allowed: “As when wine is mixed with water: a strong wine even if diluted with double the quantity of water will still retain its wine flavor; on

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64 Ibid., 31.
65 Ibid., 32.
66 Ibid., 32.
67 Ibid., 32.
the other hand, a chemical analysis can prove the presence of even a few drops of wine in
water which does not taste of wine at all."\(^{68}\)

It is my hope that by understanding these fundamentals of Hungarian song that
performers will benefit and be able to give a convincing performance. The folk
arrangements that which the subject of this document maintain their roots in the ancient
and pure folksongs of Hungary. Each piece which Kodály has arranged maintains the
original folk melody. The designation of the number of verses, the spacing between
verses, the rhythmic modification, and the piano realization are all an after product of
Kodály.

Despite the composer’s additions, there are a few constants in these folk tunes
which can be used as the identifiers of the typical Hungarian sound. Rhythm,
ornamentation, and structure (melodic and formal) all play an integral part in what
distinguishes Hungarian music from other types. If any of these were separated, there
would still be characteristics remaining, but it would not truly be Hungarian music. By
analogy, a cook can use a Hungarian spice such as paprika in a non-Hungarian dish.\(^{69}\)

**2.2 The Eastern Origins of Hungarian Pentatony (The Old-Style)**

By collecting and cataloging folksongs, Kodály discovered that there were two
distinct styles. He defined these as Old-style and New-style songs. In the Old-style
Hungarian songs, similarities and even counterparts can be found in Eastern systems of
music. In particular, the native music of the Volga region, called the Mari or the
Cheremis, as well as some Oriental communities, have many similarities to Hungarian

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\(^{68}\) Zoltán Kodály. *The selected writings of Zoltán Kodály*, translated by Lili Halápy and

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 11-12.
folk music.\textsuperscript{70} Kodály has classified the structural relationship between Hungarian folksong and its Eastern roots into three categories.

1. **Construction involving fifths in two lines.** The primary indicator of this group is that the first two lines of music begin a fifth transposition higher than the last two lines. Kodály labels the transposition as $A^5A^5AA$ or $A^5B^5AB$ where the $A$ represents exact repetition of a line and $B$ represents a new line. These wide-ranging tunes contain various rhythms and can include anywhere from six to fifteen syllables. A simple identifier for distinguishing a Hungarian melody from its Eastern Mari counterpart is that Hungarian tunes can only contain a maximum of eleven syllables to a line.\textsuperscript{71}

2. **Construction involving fifths in one line.** The primary difference between this group and the first one is the use of eight bars instead of four and a more extensive melodic range. This formal group is represented as $A^5BAB$. Another main difference between the first group is that after the first $A$ the tune immediately descends to the level of the fourth line, $B$. There is also a more specific construction when it comes to syllables per line: In most cases, the $A$ lines will have eight syllables, and the $B$ lines will have seven syllables, or alternately the lines will all have seven syllables.\textsuperscript{72}

3. **Freeform construction.** This group of songs has the smallest range, and they usually do not reach the upper octave in which other songs reside. The most extensive range these songs span is between the tonic and the seventh, but the

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 60.
most common type ranges only from the tonic to the third. Outside of the Hungarian tradition, these songs all have an irregular construction of periods, prose texts, and a syllable count. The Hungarian versions of these tunes have a fixed syllable count of six, eight, and twelve.\textsuperscript{73}

Kodály’s research suggests that these remaining Eastern influences in the Old Hungarian style are remnants of “[the] Old Bulgar influence, to which Hungarian owes some two hundred words.”\textsuperscript{74} In the Hungarian repertory, there are approximately two hundred of these simple tunes written in the Old Style. The assumption that Kodály makes according to these apparent influences is that the fundamentals of Hungarian life and music must have seen radical changes between the fifth and seventh centuries. Although this Old-Style folk form is in danger of dying out, the New-Style folk form which has arisen is abundant as ever.\textsuperscript{75}

2.3 The Modern Elements of Hungarian Folksong (New-Style)

The most common forms one can find in the New-Style of Hungarian folk music are AA\textsuperscript{5}A\textsuperscript{5}A, ABBA, AA\textsuperscript{5}BA, and AABA. Although there are other forms, out of the majority of the 3000 songs which have been documented in the New-Style, these are the most often recurring, thus the most important. Out of these four forms, the most common is ABBA. Kodály indicates that the form AA\textsuperscript{5}A\textsuperscript{5}A is connected to the ABBA form as the B section acts the same way as A\textsuperscript{5}. In these instances, A\textsuperscript{5} is usually a fifth higher than A and B is simply material which is different from A.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{73} Zoltán Kodály, \textit{A Magyar Népzene}, translated by Laurence Picken, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat (1952), 61.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 62.
The characteristics inherent in the AA^5A^5 and ABBA forms indicate that these forms are most likely the closest to the Old-Style Eastern influence. As these two forms make up about sixty percent of all the 3000 songs collected, this connection also offers more compelling evidence of their common origins. Another interesting connection made by Kodály is that the AA^5BA form most likely evolved from European influence. He believes this because the oldest example he found linked to this form dates back to the fifteenth century in the French chanson. 77 Ultimately since AABA is also closely related to AA^5BA, one can postulate that both of these forms come from some Western-European influence. 78

2.4 The Influence of Popular Art-Song on the New-Style

Between 1850-1900, art songs of the middle-class and bourgeois flooded the countryside of Hungary. Peasants began adapting these songs, and they very quickly polluted the pure form of the New-Style. Kodály remarks that popular art songs embodied “a weakening life-force...endless, aimless grief and longing for death.” 79 A further evolution of the New-Style folk form emerged as a reaction against the influence of these popular art songs.

In contrast to the melancholic melodies in minor and the more positive major tunes, Kodály concluded that “the vigorous, monumental voice of the grandfathers [rang] out again.” 80 As a result, middle-class songs began to re-incorporate more of the Old-Style Hungarian folk elements. Kodály also observed that as the influence of this

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78 Ibid., 63, 65.
79 Ibid., 73.
80 Ibid., 73.
modified New-Style picked up, “new art-music resembled folk-tradition, [and] the more its influence spread amongst the peasants.”  

The influence of the modified New-Style can be identified directly in the syllabic construction of the songs. Folksongs recorded before 1880 are shorter and contain between six and twelve syllables. Afterward, folksongs recorded could have up to twenty-five syllables. Another consequence which the modified version of the New-Style brought forth was an overall change in the tonality of the songs. Rather than the pentatonic mode (which post-1900s rarely may occur), it is more common for songs to be in the Dorian, Aeolian, or Mixolydian modes. With these changes, Kodály states that the so-called Hungarian scale (e.g., G-Ab-B-C-D-Eb-F#-G) emerged. Although unused in folk music, this scale is prevalent in Hungarian song even today.

Another change which came with the modification of the New-Style was the omission of published melismas. As Hungarian art songs became progressively more syllabic, ornamentation slowly began to disappear from publications. The taste of the period embodied simplification, which meant that during a performance, ornamentation, vocal color, and expression were omitted. This decline resulted in the near extinction of beautifully ornamented and expressive songs one would have heard in the 1800s by 1910.

2.5 Rhythmic Considerations

Two primary kinds of rhythm associated with art song are melodic rhythm and textual rhythm. Typically, composers set a text’s rhythm such that the music aligns with

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82 Ibid., 73-74.
83 Ibid., 74.
or enhances it, a tactic which is prevalent in Hungarian song. In some folk arrangements, Kodály alters the straight eighth note rhythms from his collecting tour transcriptions. Presumably, he did this to reflect the nuance of the folk performers accurately and to properly embody the music with the stresses of the Hungarian language. For folk performers, these things would come naturally but may often complicate the exact rhythms and meter.

One can presume that Kodály recorded simplified versions of these folk tunes because he encountered many different variations and versions of the tunes. As I mentioned earlier in this document, Kodály shows that music illiteracy was very common in Hungary. Therefore, these first attempts at transcribing songs that were passed from mouth to mouth would be a daunting task if all of the variations were not presented in a simplified manner. Out of the folk arrangements which are the focus of this paper, the typical rhythmic configurations one encounters consist of various arrangements of a dotted eighth, sixteenth, and eighth notes. The most common orderings of these durations are the dotted eighth and sixteenth followed by a sixteenth and a dotted eighth (Figure 2.5.1a), or vice versa (Figure 2.5.1b).

![Figure 2.5.1. The two most common rhythms in Kodály’s folksong arrangements.](image)
In most cases, the tunes consist of lines of text with equal length or isometric rhythm. The lines of the songs range between 6, 7, 8, 11, or 12 syllables with dance songs usually maintaining 11 syllables and the more plaintive “woe-is-me” songs usually maintaining eight syllables. Each piece usually has four-line stanzas, although two-line fragments are very common especially in the 8 or 12 syllable lines. There are also specific regions in Hungary which incorporate two lines of text with four lines of melody, where each line is repeated.\footnote{Zoltán Kodály. The selected writings of Zoltán Kodály, translated by Lili Halápy and Fred Macnicol, London: Boosey & Hawkes (1974), 12.}

### 2.6 Ornamentation

The most critical identifier in the slow “woe-is-me” type songs is a rich style of ornamentation. These ornaments were often considered by the Hungarian people as effects which a cantor would add in liturgical settings or a feature of Rumanian\footnote{Commonly referred to as “Romanian” now.} songs.\footnote{Zoltán Kodály. The selected writings of Zoltán Kodály, translated by Lili Halápy and Fred Macnicol, London: Boosey & Hawkes (1974), 12.} It is unknown to what extent old Hungarian ornamentation is related to similar phenomena in music from the Orient and the Middle-east. Even though the origin of this ornamentation is not yet identifiable, one can still identify it as a relic which maintains itself in the Hungarian folk music tradition. The ornamental notes are always performed with “a soft, glissando-like portamento.”\footnote{Ibid., 12.} Another distinct feature of this ornamentation is that the second and sixth scale degrees of the song will be added as passing notes (even if they are not included in the pentatonic scale of the piece).
2.7 Melodic Structure

The archaic and straightforward nature of the tonal and the formal structure of the Old-Style is quite functional and thrives in New-Style songs. Most of the New-Style songs appear to be heptatonic, but if one identifies and removes all passing notes and decorations, the fundamental pentatonic structure of the Old-Style emerges.\(^{88}\) In Figure 2.7.1. I have transcribed the melody of a folk tune called *Kit kéne elvenni*? without the text or the accompaniment which Kodály provides.\(^{89}\)

![Figure 2.7.1. The melody of *Kit kéne elvenni*? with the passing note identified.](image)

The melody is centered around D, and the set class which defines the melody is [02357] in prime form. By looking at the overall structure of the melody, there is a note which appears only one time towards the end of the melody. By removing the passing tone E, the final set class which is left is [0247] in prime form, which is the basis of this folk tune (Figure 2.7.2).

![Figure 2.7.2. The melody of *Kit kéne elvenni*? with the passing note removed.](image)

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Other similarities pertaining to the Old-Style can also be found in the New-Style’s **construction involving fifths** (see §2.2). Thus, the New-Style songs maintain a formal structure which includes “the symmetrical interchange of two higher and two lower lines.”

All Hungarian folk melodies somehow derive from the “Hungarian pentatonic scale,” as Kodály put it. According to Kodály, the Hungarian pentatonic scale can also be heard as a descending melodic minor scale which has the second and sixth degrees omitted. Kodály’s example of the scale begins with a tonic of G: G-Bb-C-D-F (which I will refer to as HP, for “Hungarian pentatonic”). Western musicians might simply refer to this scale as a minor pentatonic scale.

The melodies of the folk tunes themselves can be as concise as G-Bb-C-D (which I will refer to as HS, for “Hungarian simple pentatonic”), but this is rare. The most common melodies usually extend down to an F, and they may extend as high as the upper third, the Bb above the tonic, G. The most expansive form of this scale, then, would be F-G-Bb-C-D-F-G-Bb. This form of the scale allows for tetratony, or two four-note collections, but since there are no semitones in the scale, it belongs to a **pentatony** called “anhemitonic.” By considering the addition of the second and sixth degrees used commonly in ornamentation, the final most complex result would be G-A-Bb-C-D-E-F (which I will refer to as HC, for “Hungarian complex pentatonic”).

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92 Ibid, 11.
I have given the prime forms in integer notation of each of these collections below to highlight the immediate and tangible relationships between the various melodies and accompaniments that Kodály has written. The resulting prime forms and the inversions of these three melodic cases are laid out in Table 2.8.1. An interesting point to note is that $H^p$ and $H^c$ are inversionally symmetrical.

**Table 2.8.1.** All variations of the Hungarian Pentatonic scale represented as set classes in prime form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Prime Form</th>
<th>Prime Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$H^s$ = “Hungarian simple pentatonic”</td>
<td>[0247]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H^p$ = “Hungarian pentatonic”</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H^c$ = “Hungarian complex pentatonic”</td>
<td>[013568t]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE:
REVIEW OF DOBSZAY'S GENRES OF HUNGARIAN FOLKSONG

3.1 Introduction

When Kodály first collected and wrote about Hungarian folk music, he grouped the pieces by formal structure only (see §2.2). In addition to these groupings, Kodály mentions specific characteristics for certain song types, such as children’s music, laments, folk hymns, secular art songs, and flower songs. László Dobszay takes a different approach in his book *A Magyar Dal Könyve*. Rather than grouping the songs by formal structure, Dobszay arranges them into 17 different genres (Table 3.0.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Népi gyermekjátékok, mondókák</th>
<th>(popular children’s toys, rhymes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Párosítók</td>
<td>(matching...as in an arranged marriage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tréfás és gúnyos dalok</td>
<td>(funny and jealous songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Táncnóták</td>
<td>(dance songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivónóták</td>
<td>(drinking songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Életképek</td>
<td>(life pictures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balladák</td>
<td>(ballades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szerelmi dalok</td>
<td>(love songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Búcsúzó és bújdosó dalok</td>
<td>(farewell and hiding songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keservesek</td>
<td>(bitter ones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaj-nóták</td>
<td>(woe-is-me songs as in a lament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pásztorok, betyárók, rabok</td>
<td>(shepherds, soldiers, prisoners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katonaság</td>
<td>(military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A kalendárium</td>
<td>(the calendar...associated with church calendar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Névnapkőszöntők</td>
<td>(name day thanks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakodalom</td>
<td>(marriage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halál</td>
<td>(death)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this document, I will only discuss the underlined genres in detail. Since Dobszay’s work provides a thorough and detailed explanation, and since it has not been

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translated into English, I will simply summarize from his original Hungarian publication. By offering a basic breakdown of the most critical aspects of this Hungarian text, it is my hope that the reader will be able to comprehend the fundamental basics of each of these genres.

3.2 Táncnóták (dance songs)

Hungarian folk dances are intimately connected with their associated texted music, especially in the domain of rhythm. The syllable construction of a given line of text is unique to a dance. Basic eight-syllable line structures are associated with Kanász dances, seven syllable line structures are typical in Duda dances, and asymmetrical syllable line structures (3, 5, 7, 9, etc.) are typical of original compositions and New-Style folksongs from the last 150 years.94

The text of a song is usually linked to a specific dance mode. Although several types of melodies can be connected to the same text and several texts for the same melody, not every text can be used just because it happens to fit the tune. Usually, a particular group of melodies is associated with a restricted number of texts. It is only within these groups that the text and melody can be freely exchanged. Seven-syllable dance texts occur quite often in various combinations, especially in marriage dances. Hungarians traditionally get married on Sundays surrounding Christmas, New Years and Lent. In the Middle Ages, these Sundays were called menyegzős vasárnapok (wedding Sundays).95

95 Ibid., 160,163.
Although scholars have used contemporary Western notation to record these folk tunes, note durations do not necessarily indicate any rigid character. Dotted notes may only be indicative of stretching or shortening a bar or phrase rather than signifying, for example, a dotted quarter note. It is especially evident in performances by folk musicians that the proportions of the notation are not necessarily exact. Misinterpretations of the durations of notes may even lead to errors in notation. For example, Dobszay indicates that the relationship between two notes may prompt the recording of a tune in a 6/8 time signature rather than a dotted rhythm in a 4/4 time signature.\textsuperscript{96}

Melodies formed by \textbf{construction involving fifths} are typical in four-lined songs and are isorhythmic. Some songs also incorporate repetition of motives, especially on ending phrases which would be exaggerated and accented. These repetitions, which may come from instrumental music of the time, sometimes add a fifth or even a sixth line to the songs.\textsuperscript{97}

The first note of a song is usually sung out of time without any impetus to rush into the song. At the second note of the piece, the singer usually begins keeping more strict time. If the singer has enough breath support, the entire verse is sung quietly in one continuous phrase with a syncopated line ending—a feature which is characteristic of these songs—incorporated seamlessly. If the singer must breathe, they may take a breath at the end of the second line and should pause shortly before continuing to the third line.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 181.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 183.
Duda songs primarily consist of seven-syllable lines. There are also two fundamental characteristics which determine if the song is a Duda song. Dobszay explains that the first characteristic is free movement between the eighth degree and the fifth degree, and the second characteristic is a similar free movement between the fifth degree and the first degree. These transitions can be accomplished in three distinct ways. The first way is through the use of a minor third, a major sixth, and a minor seventh (giving a Dorian quality) (Figure 3.1.1). The second way is through the use of a major seventh and major third (giving a Major quality) (Figure 3.1.2). The third way is through the use of a minor third, minor sixth, and minor seventh (giving an Aeolian quality) (Figure 3.1.3).

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99 Dobszay did not physically illustrate these examples but I have provided figures in an attempt to demonstrate his explanation.

An interesting feature of the *Duda* songs is that the third scale degree is usually omitted on purpose so that minor and major versions of the song can be played. The reason this can occur is because, in these songs, the eighth, fifth, fourth, and first degrees are the backbone of the melody. Although the second and the seventh degrees appear quite often in these pieces, they are considered passing notes. In this melodic construction, the third degree is the weakest and thus can be used interchangeably to provide variation.$^{101}$

**3.3 Ivónóták (drinking songs)**

Drinking can sometimes become a worthy and dignified event if it has a cultural background. The ritual of drinking in the Middle-Ages involved passing a goblet around and sharing it with the group; drinking songs became a perfect occasion to discuss subjects of interest. When the cup arrived at a person, they would take a drink and sing or address whatever issue they desired, then pass the cup along.$^{102}$

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$^{102}$ Ibid., 201.
In the Middle Ages, to be the King’s “conhibator” was to be the drinking partner of the King. This position was a most honorable one. It was important because drinking was not an activity of leisure, but an activity of purpose. The gathering of male groups invited gossip, reporting news, discussing events, listening to tales of heroes, or other instructive sung stories.\textsuperscript{103}

The popular trend in 16\textsuperscript{th}- and 17\textsuperscript{th}-century drinking songs was to keep the music to three lines. The form AAB is usually characterized by the A section being an interlocking motive which is interrupted by a slightly longer or shorter B line. It is also important to note that the A and B sections have different syllable counts. The most common is 6-6-7, although other arrangements are possible. There are also a significant number of songs which utilize the construction involving fifths structure. In these cases, the whole song is repeated and transposed by a fifth with the B section text substituted for “ejeha” (an expressive word such as “jaj”) through to the end.\textsuperscript{104}

The most common 17\textsuperscript{th}-century drinking song is usually divided into three parts. The first line is long and is repeated, which is followed by a short second line which is also repeated. The form closes with a return to the first line, but it is shorter and overly accentuated. The rhythm of the repeated sections changes according to the text. The form may seem insignificant and straightforward, but it is unique in a repertoire which is filled with construction involving fifths forms (see §2.2).\textsuperscript{105}

There is one group of drinking songs which have a distinctive structure and mode of performance. It encapsulates a rich, melodic opening line which should be sung by a

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 202.
strong voice in a broad tempo. This line is repeated, and followed by a new and sparse motive in a quicker tempo, sung by a softer voice. It is repeated at least once. More repetitions than two are acceptable, and the number was often dictated ad libitum by the singer. The song ends with a final line sung slower than the rest. The form might best be represented as AABB [...] C.\textsuperscript{106}

### 3.4 Katonaság (military)

This genre of folksongs tells of soldiers, their farewells, the dangers and virtues of their lives, and the glory of patriotism. Although involvement in the army may have at one point been a matter of choice, for a century or so, military participation was obligatory. The complication of conscription gives a new meaning to some of the glorious songs which were sung in the 16th and 17th centuries. As young men finished serving their time in the military and returned home to their villages, their experiences would give them ample subject matter for songs. These songs were being shared with their villages to tell their stories.\textsuperscript{107}

Although many of these songs contain complaining and pining over family and lovers, there are also songs which boast of the uniform and the glories of service. Even though these songs never encouraged or glorified war and conflict, the boastful tunes spoke about finding one’s place in the world. Communicating the sense of accomplishment of being a contributing member of society to one’s village had its perks. Having a purpose greater than oneself was appealing to the village folk.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{106} László Dobszay, \textit{A Magyar Dal Könyve}, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, Editio Musica (1984), 204.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 358.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 371.
In principle, enlistment was a free application into the Hungarian military. Leaders decided ahead of time how many soldiers were needed and aggressive action was sometimes taken to fulfill the quota. The term for this sort of forceful enlistment is kötéllel (“with rope”). Conscript was not only a mental shock to those who were dragged into the military but the village from where the future soldiers came also suffered emotionally and economically. By contrast, wealthy families most often avoided conscription.109

There are two distinct styles of Hungarian soldier songs. The first group of soldier songs is connected to the Old-Style folk form. The subject matter of these songs includes complaints about the years of loneliness during military service. Sometimes homesickness and patriotism are also topics of the songs. The tunes of this group only differ from the Old-Style folk form in that they are performed with a lot more rubato.

The second group includes more New-Style folk forms, but it is more rigid regarding tempo. Although the tempo is more restricted, it does not quite resemble the lively tempo of military marches. The New-Style also uses full quarter notes whose rhythm is often modified or even divided.110 There are a remarkable number of soldier songs in the Old-Style and the New-Style which feature eleven-syllable phrases. Although this is most common in the New-Style version of the soldier songs, there are some cases in which it occurs in the Old-Style as well. The most characteristic feature between these two styles are the rich motives, phrases, and the line types. These three aspects are the most important connections

110 Ibid., 358.
between the Old-Style and the New-Style soldier songs. An interesting point to consider is that the relationship between the eleven-syllable songs in both styles is so close that often the two are indiscernible from each other.\footnote{László Dobszay, \textit{A Magyar Dal Könyve}, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, Editio Musica (1984), 374.}

### 3.5 Jaj-nóták (woe-is-me songs)

Variations of the most common four-line old style exist in certain parts of Transylvania, especially in the West Transylvanian fields. A rhythmic stretching of the stable meter of 4/4 into 6/8 is prevalent. This stretching and the extension of the musical material leads to a frequent disintegration of the stable four-line symmetry.\footnote{Ibid., 334.}

The most iconic identifier in \textit{Jaj-nóta} songs is that the last line is usually expanded with the singer substituting “\textit{jaj jaj jaj}” instead of the written text. This substitution can sometimes occur in the second and fourth lines with just a simple expansion or a duplication of the whole line. In addition, the standard eight-syllable structure expands to eleven, twelve, or even sixteen syllables. This expansion usually does not affect the text because the singer adds filler words like “\textit{jaj}” or “\textit{ejaj},” which ultimately heighten the sense of drama in the song.\footnote{Ibid., 334.}

In addition to the inclusion of extra syllables and words, the vocal lines tend to be stiff and straight, with tempos changing rather rapidly and liberally. Another effect which is quite frequently used is the contrast of two different voices. Sometimes a violent and powerful voice is used to begin the songs, and it is contrasted by a softer more beautiful voice. This contrast in voices is especially well suited to sections with many repeated
notes and sections which ascend. All of these elements must be present together to create what is called a “Jaj-nóta.”

CHAPTER FOUR: LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Lyric Diction in Hungarian

Hungarian is a phonetic language. Once one learns the different consonants and vowels of the language, one must merely pronounce them in the correct order. It exhibits a few fundamental differences from Romance languages: the most important are in consonants, consonant combinations, and the use of various accents over vowels.

4.2 Vowels

For the most part, the pronunciation of pure vowels is quite similar to other languages. However, the function of an accent over a vowel differs. Accents over vowels in Hungarian indicate whether the vowel should be pronounced more elongated, whether the vowel should be more closed, or a combination of both (Table 4.2.1).

Table 4.2.1. All of the vowels in the Hungarian language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOWEL</th>
<th>IPA</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, a</td>
<td>ɒ</td>
<td>Almost</td>
<td>The [ɒ] is typically pronounced further back than the English [u]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Á, á</td>
<td>aː</td>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Although not as bright as the Italian [a], it is significantly brighter than the dark version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E, e</td>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>End</td>
<td>No difference in length, just an open E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>É, é</td>
<td>eː</td>
<td>Chaos</td>
<td>No difference in length, just a closed E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ė, Ė</td>
<td>œ</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Only used as slang in certain parts of the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>A short version of the vowel [i]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Í, í</td>
<td>iː</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>A long version of the vowel [i], no change in vowel position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O, o</strong></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>As in the in German <em>Tot</em></td>
<td>The length of the vowel here does not change the quality. It is still a closed [o] sound but not held for very long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ó, ó</strong></td>
<td>o:</td>
<td>As in the German <em>Boot</em></td>
<td>Similar to [o] but it is elongated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ö, ö</strong></td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language) A close approximation would be a more closed [ə]</td>
<td>A short version of the more open [a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ó, ō</strong></td>
<td>o:</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language) [ø] but longer and more closed</td>
<td>A long version of the more open [a], no change in vowel position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U, u</strong></td>
<td>u</td>
<td>Rude</td>
<td>It is crucial that the vowel not be held for a long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ú, ű</strong></td>
<td>u:</td>
<td>School Tool</td>
<td>Held longer than [u] and closed a little bit more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ü, ü</strong></td>
<td>y</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language) A close approximation is German <em>Frühling</em></td>
<td>Pronounced as a pure [y], this should be held for a short duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ű, ű</strong></td>
<td>y:</td>
<td>(not used in English) A close approximation is the French <em>sûr</em></td>
<td>A longer version of [y], no change in vowel position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Consonants

Most of the consonants in Hungarian are the same as in English. The primary difference in production of consonants are the individual cases which are listed in the table below. Some of them are just a simple rule which can be memorized such as an Sz produces the “S” sound, and the S produces the “Sh” sound. Others are a little more difficult to master. The most complicated consonant combinations are Ty, Gy, and Ny.

Ny may be the easiest among the three because it resembles the Italian equivalent in such words as “gnocchi” and “signore.” The only difference in the Hungarian
production of Ny is that one should use more of the middle of the tongue and slide it further across the hard palate towards the opening of the mouth.

The most basic way to approach the other two consonant clusters is to emulate the same production for the Ny cluster (in the middle of the tongue), only replace the “N” with a “T” or a “G.” The Ty is relatively easy to reproduce in this fashion, but the Gy may be more difficult to master. Rather than thinking of a soft “G” as in “George,” it is better to approach the Gy as if the “G” were pronounced as a “D” as in Dy (Table 4.3.1).

Table 4.3.1. All of the complex consonants in the Hungarian language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSONANT</th>
<th>IPA</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C, c</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>Spots</td>
<td>No difference from English equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cs, cs</td>
<td>tj</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>No difference from English equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dz, dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>Lids</td>
<td>This typically occurs very rarely in the Hungarian language and never occurs at the beginning of a word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzs, dzs</td>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td>Giant</td>
<td>This appears most commonly in words which are borrowed from other languages such as “refrigerator” = fridzsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gy, gy</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language)</td>
<td>The most accurate explanation of this would be to pronounce the Italian name Giovanni but by using the middle of your tongue for the [dʒ] sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J, j</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>Yahtzee, Yamaha</td>
<td>No difference from English equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ly, ly</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>Young, Kayak</td>
<td>Is the same as the consonant “J.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ny, ny</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language)</td>
<td>The most accurate comparison would be to the Italian Gnocchi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R, r</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>(Does not occur in the English language)</td>
<td>An apical trill; such as is used in the Italian language (using the tip of your tongue).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Additional Considerations

Stress in the Hungarian language always lands on the first syllable of each word. This word stress can become a bit confusing as there are many compound words in Hungarian. In the case of a compound word such as “Magyarország,” which is made up of the words “Magyar” and “ország,” the stress of the word would remain on the first syllable. Even though the word “ország” has its stress on the first syllable, as soon as it becomes a part of the new word it loses the weight of that accent.

Another interesting fact about the Hungarian language is the vocal direction of a sentence. Hungarian speech moves towards the last word in a sentence with the pitch of the voice slowly falling as well. This same rule does not change for questions! It is an interesting fact to take into consideration as most folk tunes will have a melody which follows this downward melodic arc.
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

Since Hungarian song is most likely a new endeavor for most individuals reading this document, I have analyzed my selections of Kodály’s songs in a play-by-play format. For each, a musico-poetic analysis will highlight essential features to illuminate the relationship between the text and Kodály’s accompaniment.

In some cases, references are made in the accompaniment to the original Hungarian pentatonic scale. It is essential to have an awareness of all the elements textually and theoretically to understand the fundamental construction of Hungarian song. I hope that these beautiful art songs will be more accessible for any non-native Hungarian speakers.
5.1 *Hej, a mohi hegy borának*\(^{115}\)

**Name of the work:** *Magyar Népzene* (Hungarian Folk Music)  
**Volume:** IX  
**Name of song:** *Hej, a mohi hegy borának* (Hey, the Mohi mountain’s wine)  
**Date of composition:** 1931  
**Genre:** *Ivónóta* (dance song)  
**Ensemble:** Piano/Voice  
**Publisher:** Universal Edition  
**Meter:** 4/8  
**Tempo:** *Rubato*, eighth-note = 80-84  
**Length:** 3:00  
**Vocal Range:** D₄-F₅  
**Tessitura:** G₄ - E₅  
**Area tune was collected:** Mohi  
**Date tune was collected:** 1913  
**Level of Difficulty:** Medium

*Hej a mohi hegy borának* is an *Ivónóta* (drinking song) as categorized by Dobszay. The song follows one of the rarer **AABB** forms as indicated in the *Ivónóta* section (see §3.2). This piece offers an insight into the genuine financial crisis which arose after the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849. The Independence movement lasted approximately one year, after which the Austrian Empire reclaimed Hungary. A consequence of the re-acquisition of Hungary was that the banknotes issued by Kossuth (Minister of Finance and later President) were declared useless. After the devaluation of the currency, everything became expensive and unaffordable for the Hungarian people. The text of this song takes us on a journey through the hardships that an average citizen would have experienced in the Mohi region during this period.

\(^{115}\) For IPA and translation see Appendix A.
The song begins with an eruption of sound in the piano. A unison ascending A minor scale from and to the fifth degree sets the tone for the exclamatory and frustration-filled A sections. The ascending scale culminates in an A minor chord (marked in red) which strikes like lightning followed by a thunderous response with a descending arpeggio in the bass line (marked in blue). This downward arpeggio motive continues to occur after every chordal iteration at the beginning of each bar. The 32nd notes in octaves at the end of m.2 also outline the incoming vocal melody two measures later (marked in pink). This dark and dramatic accompaniment continues to repeat itself with an added octave voicing of As in eighth notes in the right-hand (marked in orange) as the vocal line begins (Figure 5.1.1).

Figure 5.1.1. A minor chord (red), descending arpeggio (blue), imitating vocal melody (pink), repeated A’s (orange).
With the mood which is set by the accompaniment, the translation of the first line of text “Hej, a mohi hegy borának húsz forint az ára,” (“Hey, the wine of the Mohi mountain costs 20 forint”) seems almost trivial. The accompaniment continues with its thunderous chords, repeating the tonic throughout this statement. It is essential to take the *fermata* which Kodály has included in the first verse quite conservatively. Although the notes in mm. 4, 7, and 11 should be elongated, they should not halt the stormy machine which is the accompaniment. The two opening statements of the text in the A section should also be sung in one breath if the singer is capable. If breath control is an issue, a breath may be taken every two bars, but it should not disrupt the four-bar phrases (Figure 5.1.2).

![Figure 5.1.2](image)

*Figure 5.1.2.* Elongated phrases which should be sung in one breath.
There is quite a lot of emphasis placed on the fifth relationship between the A and the E in the A section. Perhaps Kodály emphasized this interval as a reference to the **construction of fifths** forms of the Old-Style. As soon as the following line of text mentions the topic of the piece as the Hungarian banknote, the accompaniment changes. In mm. 8-10 a triplet figure is added in the right-hand (Figure 5.1.3). These figures, [027], [027], and [05], allude to the Hp and the **construction of fifths**. As the prime form [027] contains three of the pitches in the [02479] Hp prime form, one can begin to hear the beginnings of the Hungarian scale embedded into the accompaniment. The **construction of fifths** relationship is illustrated by the [05] prime form as the first section of the piece closes. It would usually be at the closing of this first section in the Old-Style that a transposition of a fifth would be used to commence the following lines of music.

![Figure 5.1.3. Triplet figures in the accompaniment.](image-url)
The B section shifts not only in measure duration but mood. The overall atmosphere is slower and more melancholic, and the melody is scalar and seldom has any leaps. The poverty-stricken lament is a slow ascending and descending line in the voice, and it is coupled with a slow “oom-pah” accompaniment in the piano (Figure 5.1.4). The text in this section reads “Ha én megválthatnám, a Kossuth bankóját” (“If I could exchange the Kossuth bank note”). With an air of hopeless despair, the accompaniment shifts into a more even rhythm colored by dissonant chords in this B section. The harmonies of the “oom-pah” accompaniment, which move in chromatic and contrary motion, are especially indicative of this feeling.

![Figure 5.1.4. Entire B section of the song.](image-url)
In mm. 12-13 the piano begins with a diminished seventh and an added ninth of a V chord resolving to a dominant 7th chord. In mm. 14-15 the chords become even more dissonant moving from a French sixth chord to a dominant seventh chord with an added ninth (but no third) which eventually resolves to a major triad (Figure 5.1.5). This change in harmony in mm. 14-15 illustrates the reference in the text to the Kossuth banknotes. As these banknotes are completely useless, it is appropriate that Kodály embodies the accompaniment in dissonant harmonies far from the home key. This dissonance gives the impression of the grief and frustration which would have been experienced during the financial crisis. Another interesting connection can be made to the construction of fifths through examining the range of the melody and the bass line. Both the ranges span a fifth and may be Kodály’s way of implying once again that the Old-Style would have had this section of the song transposed by a fifth.

![Dissonant “oom-pah” harmonies.](image)

**Figure 5.1.5.** Dissonant “oom-pah” harmonies.

By using these dissonant chords which are far from the home key, Kodály enhances the text in ways that a single voice of a folksong could never achieve alone. To
adequately express this emotion without being too lugubrious, the singer must make sure not to hold the *fermati* too long. Preferably, the *fermati* should be held about double the value of the eighth notes with a quick breath leading into the next phrase. Also, the marking *poco piú mosso* is included to remove the steady nature of the ‘oom-pah’ rhythm. The accompaniment must tumble forward just as the text does.

In the following section where the text reads “*Mindjárt megölelném galambom derekát*” (“I would hug my dove’s waist right away”) the accompaniment shifts yet again. The cascading and descending lines of the melody and the accompaniment in mm. 16-19 are reaching for the E major resolution which Kodály provides in m. 19 (Figure 5.1.6). The quick shift from E minor in m. 18 to E major in m. 19 is indicative of the brief glimmer of solace which is provided in the text.

![Figure 5.1.6. Descending accompaniment to E major resolution.](image)

The following passage (mm. 20-27) is a repetition of mm. 12-19, a play on the *Ivónóta* form. Instead of following the typical *AAB* or *AABB...C* form, Kodály has
created an AA(\textit{bbc})(\textit{bbc}), which can be simplified to an AABB form. By repeating the shorter b and c sections, he is offering more balance and symmetry to the song (\textbf{Figure 5.1.7}). Balance is vital, as the genre of the \textit{Ivónóta} had strict rules dictating when singers were allowed to join and comment on the text being sung.

\textbf{Figure 5.1.7.} Formal structure of B section.

The repeat of the music for the latter half of the piece embellishes the original material with a few alterations but is otherwise the same. According to custom, it would be appropriate at the repeat of the A section (mm. 28-35) to have a different voice join
the song. The first change in the reprise of the two A sections (mm. 28-31) is that the lightning strike unison chords are delayed to the second beat instead of arriving on the first (Figure 5.1.8).

![Delayed chordal iterations in repeat of A section.](image)

Figure 5.1.8. Delayed chordal iterations in repeat of A section.

Concurrent with the shifting of the chords, the rumbling thunder motive is also shifted to appear on the second half of the second beat. Another change which Kodály makes to the accompaniment is the octave in which he places the right-hand of the accompaniment in the repeating B sections (Figure 5.1.9).
In this piece, there are discrepancies between the rhythms in the final version and the original folk transcriptions by Kodály and Dobszay. Not only is the final version which Kodály composed different than the transcriptions, but also the original versions are different from each other. This discrepancy in transcription is very common as most of these folk tunes would be altered depending on the region of Hungary they would be collected from.\footnote{László Dobszay, 	extit{A Magyar Dal Könyve}, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, Editio Musica (1984), 203-204.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure519.png}
\caption{Accompaniment voiced an octave higher in repeat of B section.}
\end{figure}
The first discrepancy in notation can be found in mm. 4-6 (Figure 5.1.10).

Figure 5.1.10. Opening vocal melody with rhythmical changes by Kodály.

When looking at Kodály’s original transcription (Figure 5.1.11), instead of the held quarter note and rushing descending sixteenth notes, the melody is quite evenly metered. The even meter is only interrupted, in both Kodály and Dobszay’s transcriptions, by the use of fermati. The fermati are located in the exact same places in both transcriptions except for in m. 7.

In Dobszay’s transcription, there is a fermata indicated on the final note of m. 7 (Figure 5.1.12). In Kodály’s transcription, there is no fermata in this measure, but the rhythm of the notes are changed from eighth notes to a sixteenth and a dotted eighth note (Figure 5.1.11). It can be assumed that Kodály did hear a sort of fermata in this bar but decided that it was more accurately represented by a change in rhythm. These fermati are one of the only constants which Kodály keeps in his final version of the song.
Figure 5.1.11. Kodály’s original transcription of the melody (changes between final version marked in red).

Another change which was made in the final art song is in m. 6 where a dotted eighth rhythm is added to the original version. Perhaps it was recorded in this way to maintain the purity of the musical line. Whatever the reason, the rhythmic changes made by Kodály in the final version help to maintain the rhythm of the Hungarian language in the song. It must also be noted that Dobszay’s transcription is concurrent to Kodály’s first line of the folk tune (Figure 5.1.12).

Figure 5.1.12. Dobszay’s original transcription of the melody (changes between final version marked in red).
Immediately after this section in mm. 8-10, there is also a change in rhythm from the original transcriptions (Figure 5.1.13). In these measures, Kodály’s transcription has the first beat rhythm reversed on the words “Ha a…” (Figure 5.1.11). This reversed rhythm contrasts with Dobszay’s transcription, which has evenly metered eighth notes for the duration of the verse except on the word “annyit” (Figure 5.1.12).

![Figure 5.1.13. Second vocal phrase with rhythmical changes by Kodály.](image)

There are also significant meter changes in the final published version. The overall time signature of the song is 4/8 instead of 2/4. A very curious change occurs from mm. 16-17 where the 4/8 time signature changes into 3/8 (Figure 5.1.14).
Figure 5.1.14. Time signature change.

One possibility of this alteration is that Kodály changed the time signature to suit the mood of the song and the language which defines it. The word “megőlelném” has the same rhythmic stress as the profile of the rhythm denoted by Kodály in this bar. The only uncharacteristic lengthening in the word “megőlelném” is on the last syllable. The original transcriptions do not have these disjunct time signatures and changes in note values. Kodály’s transcription (Figure 5.1.11) is identical to Dobszay’s (Figure 5.1.12) in this respect.
5.2 Körtéfa

Name of the work: Magyar Népzene (Hungarian Folk Music)
Volume: VII
Name of song: Körtéfa (Pear tree)
Date of composition: 1931
Genre: Katonaság (Military)
Ensemble: Piano/Voice
Publisher: Universal Edition
Meter: 2/4
Tempo: Adagio, eighth-note = 69
Length: 1:50
Vocal Range: E₄-E₅
Tessitura: B₄ - D₅
Area tune was collected: Ghymes
Date tune was collected: 1906
Level of Difficulty: Easy

Körtéfa is classified as a Katonaság (military) by Dobszay. Körtéfa (Pear Tree) is about a tree which aids in providing shade for soldiers passing by. In Hungarian tradition, it is rumored that during the War for Independence from 1703-1711 the Rákóczi had a military hospital in a garden at Gyöngyös. The folksong presents the pear tree in its garden telling its tales of passersby.

During the atrocities of war, one must be reminded that those who fight are humans as well as soldiers. Körtefa is a snapshot of men with their war-hardened masks off. To enjoy a peaceful rest under the shade of a tree in a serene garden is just as revitalizing and calming for soldiers as it is for anyone else. It is only in this small haven that the weight of battle, murder, and loss can be forgotten, if only for an instant.

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117 For IPA and translation see Appendix B.
The song is strophic, comprised of two verses and a postlude in the form ABABC. Each A section is made up of a repeating two-bar phrase (aa), and each B section is made up of two individual two-bar phrases (bc). The C represents the postlude. The verse structure aabc is prevalent in the New-Style structure.

The accompaniment is written in the key of B minor, but this may not be immediately apparent to the listener. The piano introduces us to this piece with three octaves of tied quarter notes on F# (Figure 5.2.1). As the melody enters on the dominant, which is typical of Hungarian folksongs, the accompaniment slowly adds more notes in two-bar increments.

![Figure 5.2.1. Tied quarter notes to begin song.](image)

The slow and consistent change in the accompaniment gives the impression of a regiment of soldiers marching in time, and it cunningly introduces members of \( H^p \) one note at a time: [02] resolves to [04], which moves to [0247] resolving to [037] (Figure 5.2.2). Invoking \( H^p \) may be a way of painting the scene, which the text describes as a Hungarian region with Hungarian soldiers.
Interpretation of the written grace notes forms an important element of this folksong. Kodály’s original transcriptions are recorded with grace notes as even eighths. These grace notes should be sung almost as the original eighth notes but with a bit of a *diminuendo*. One possible reason Kodály changed his original notation could be to reflect the emphasis of the word “körtéfa” accurately. As the primary syllable always carries the most stress in Hungarian, it is most probable this grace note was added to help the singer avoid an extra accent on the final syllable of the word.

Another aspect the performers should be aware of are the eighth rests Kodály places above the line between mm. 4-5 and mm. 6-7 (*Figure 5.2.3*). These rests should not be equal to a full beat; instead, I encourage singers to simply take time to breathe before continuing. The pauses should not be so long that they disturb the rhythmic lilt of the accompaniment.
Not only does Kodály slowly build chords as a representation of the soldiers, but he also builds the textual sentence. The text first begins with a single word “Körtéfa” (“Pear tree”) and then is repeated with more description as “Gyöngyösi körtéfa” (“Gyöngyös’ pear tree”). These two words take up the first four measures of the song and leave the listener with little idea of what the song will be about. The text then expands to a full sentence describing what happened by the pear tree. It is in mm. 8-10 that the first interaction between the accompaniment and the melody can be seen in the form of imitation (Figure 5.2.4).

Figure 5.2.3. Grace notes added by Kodály and rests between bars.

Figure 5.2.4. Accompaniment imitation of vocal melody.
The fact that the accompaniment is foreshadowing the melody is also indicative of the many layers Kodály has built until this point. It is important that the performer sings the vocal line from mm. 7-10 with one breath to make the relationship between accompaniment and vocal line clear.

The following verse begins in the same way it did in the previous verse, with the piano, this time an octave higher (Figure 5.2.5).

**Figure 5.2.5.** Similar piano introduction into second verse only an octave higher.

As the melody begins, the chords in the accompaniment become thicker, with added 9ths. The offbeat tied quarter notes continue their steady march, but the rolled chords and the text indicate a different meaning than the trudge of the soldiers (Figure 5.2.6).
Figure 5.2.6. Rolled chords which imply swaying of tree in the breeze.

As the text talks about the wind blowing from below, the rolled chords take on the ambiance of the leaves of branches rustling in the breeze.

In the following section where the text talks about laughter and love, the accompaniment takes a drastic turn. Instead of tied quarter notes there are now rushing figures of 64th notes moving contrary to each other (Figure 5.2.7). These motives continue in m. 19, but instead of contrary motion, they sound an arpeggiation. The contrast between the accompaniment and the text at this moment contains an air of irony. Although the text talks about laughing, the tumbling 64th notes remind us of the anguish and conflict beneath the smiles and laughter of the soldiers. The notes of these figures are from the [02469] collection, alluding to the HP which Kodály will employ at the end of m. 20.
Figure 5.2.7. Prime forms of rushing 64\textsuperscript{th} notes.

In the postlude to the song, the accompaniment resumes the tied quarter notes with three final arpeggations using [0247], indicative of $H^S$ (Figure 5.2.9).

Figure 5.2.8. Indications of $H^S$ in the final arpeggios of the song and a return of tied quarter notes.
The main melody makes a return but with a modified D# in m. 23, incorporating the HP and also indicating that the soldiers’ rest is over. The tied quarter chords then resume on the dominant F# and gradually begin to thin out as the soldiers march into the distance.

Finally, the accompaniment is left with only a unison F# to end the piece (Figure 5.2.9).

![Figure 5.2.9](image-url) Tied quarter notes signifying the soldiers marching into the distance.

There are a few additional interesting things to note in this piece. First, mm. 3-4, 5-6, and 9-10 feature a palindrome (Figure 5.2.10).

![Figure 5.2.10](image-url) Palindrome in rhythm.
The same palindrome recurs in the second verse, except in mm. 19-20. In m. 19 instead of the eighth and quarter rhythms of the original transcription (Figure 5.2.11), Kodály uses a triplet (Figure 5.2.12). This change in rhythm comes as an expressive element of the text. By changing the rhythm to a triplet, consisting of an eighth note and quarter note, this puts an excessive stress on the beginning of the word “EGymást.” As the first syllable of each word is already accented in Hungarian, this extra emphasis on the word is very important. The word “egymást” translates to “each other” and this rhythmic change in the melody places the emphasis on “each.” As this song is about soldiers taking a break during a war, Kodály’s changes may have been alluding to the importance of the theme of universal love and happiness as illustrated in the final line of text.

![Figure 5.2.11. Original rhythm in Kodály transcription.](image1)

![Figure 5.2.12. Modified rhythm in Kodály’s song.](image2)
Another discrepancy with the melody from the transcription occurs in mm. 3, 5, 13, and 15 (Figure 5.2.13). In the original transcription, these measures are written with even eighth notes (Figure 5.2.14). As I mentioned towards the beginning of this section, the changes which were made by Kodály could possibly have been made to emphasize proper syllabic stress of the Hungarian word. Since the Hungarian language stresses the first syllable of each word, it would be easy for a performer to unintentionally add a secondary word stress if Kodály had not altered the notation.

![Figure 5.2.13. Change in rhythm from the original transcription.](image)
Figure 5.2.14. Even metered eighth notes in Kodály’s original transcription.
5.3 Virágos kenderem

Name of the work: *Magyar Népzene* (Hungarian Folk Music)
Volume: III
Name of song: *Virágos kenderem* (My flowery hemp)
Date of composition: 1928
Genre: *Táncnóta* (dance song)
Ensemble: Piano/Voice
Publisher: Universal Edition
Meter: 2/4
Tempo: \textit{Allegretto grazioso, melanconico}, quarter-note = 96
Length: 1:50
Vocal Range: D\textsubscript{4}–F\textsubscript{5}
Tessitura: E\textsubscript{4}–B\textsubscript{4}
Area tune was collected: Gyergyóujfalud/Kászonujfalud
Date tune was collected: 1907/1912
Level of Difficulty: Easy

*Virágos kenderem* is classified by Dobszay as a *táncnóta* (dance song). This piece is a light-hearted song which deals with a woman who headed off to weave with her spindle. Despite warnings she received, she drops her hemp into the river and laments at the fact that there is no one around to help her retrieve it. She also pines that there is no one in her life to ease her aching heart.

This tune is primarily used as a work song, but it can also be used as an occasion for a to singer attach a personal message to the text. The song is in binary AB form where the B section is made up of two smaller sections (bb\textsuperscript{5}). These two smaller sections are related to each other in the typical \textit{construction of fifths} which is common in the *táncnóta* genre (Figure 5.3.1).

\footnote{119 For IPA and translation see Appendix C.}
Figure 5.3.1. The formal structure of the first verse with the use of construction of fifths.

Since the tune is a dance song, Kodály uses fast-paced and steady “oom-pah” chords in the right-hand. The song begins with only the right-hand playing thirds with a chromatic grace note (Figure 5.3.2).

Figure 5.3.2. Rhythmic introduction imitative of a drum.
This right-hand is indicative of a rhythm instrument such as a drum setting the beat for the dancers. The vocal melody enters with the text “Virágos kenderem elázott a tóba, lám megsondtam rózsám ne menj a fonóba” (“I soaked my flowery hemp in the lake, You will see, I warned you my rose, don’t go to the spinning mill”) and the rest of the accompaniment enters as well.

The left-hand of the accompaniment plays a melody which is similar to the vocal line and is imitative more in its contour rather than its rhythm (Figure 5.3.3).

Figure 5.3.3. Imitative melody in the accompaniment.

Performers should note that the left-hand imitative melody has long phrase markings over it. These offer a contrast with the vocal melody, which has no phrase markings. Since this is a dance tune, it is appropriate for the vocalist to emphasize the syncopated rhythms.
These syncopations align with the accents of the Hungarian language in mm. 6, 8, and 10 (Figure 5.3.4).

Figure 5.3.4. Syncopated rhythms which line up with word stress and accents.

The accents in these words indicate they should be elongated. To exaggerate this elongation, a slight dynamic accent can be placed on these notes. This added accent creates a separate swing to the song which enhances its playful nature. At the conclusion of the first verse, the driving rhythm in the right-hand winds down in a *pianissimo* and a *fermata* (Figure 5.3.5).
As the second verse begins, Kodály extends the accompaniment introduction by two bars and omits the right-hand “oom-pah” rhythm. These changes foreshadow the text in the second verse, which is more dramatic. As the accompaniment gets back up to speed, the following text reads “Elejtettem orsóm, nincs aki feladja, bánatos szivemet ki megvigasztalja” (“I dropped my spindle, no one can get it back for me, who will comfort my sorrowful heart”). As the verse unfolds, the rhythmic chords in the right-hand become more filled in, becoming triads, and then sevenths (Figure 5.3.6). The chords become more complex in an effort to foreshadow the upcoming text which takes a turn from the mundane topic of spindling hemp, to the singer’s heartache.
As an added mode of expression, Kodály sets the rhythmic motive to move slower and to move lower in register. In m. 21 it moves into the bass clef and continues descending until the end of the verse. The left-hand has also changed during the second verse. Instead of imitating the vocal line, it is now fragmented with many leaps of a fifth.

Singers should note the tenuto marking in m. 24 (Figure 5.3.8).
Figure 5.3.8. Tenuto marking.

Since it is the only marking Kodály writes for the vocal line, it is vital it is brought out. The tenuto falls on an unaccented syllable of the Hungarian word “meg\textit{VIgasztalja},” but it is perfectly normal to accentuate this part of the word. This is partially because “meg” is a prefix added to the word “\textit{vigasztalja}” to change its meaning.

The postlude in the piano takes on a quicker and more aggressive nature from mm. 26 until the end (Figure 5.3.9).

Figure 5.3.9. Quickening and tumbling piano postlude.
Not only does the music accelerate and the dynamics become much louder, but the rhythmic motives also extend through six octaves of the piano. The repeated falling rhythmic motive is a representation of the “aching heart” which is described in the final verse of text. The aching heart of the character culminates in the accompaniment in mm. 38-43 on a tonic major seventh chord with the added dissonance of the previous F# (Figure 5.3.10).

Figure 5.3.10. Aching heart represented by major seventh chords.

The song closes with a final reminiscence of the happy dance tune in the bass as a staccato figure on E. Since the topic of this dance song has been revealed heartbreak, it is appropriate to return to this rhythmic figure so timidly towards the end.
5.4 Siralmas volt nékem\textsuperscript{120}

Name of the work: Magyar Népzene (Hungarian Folk Music)  
Volume: VII  
Name of song: Siralmas volt nékem (It was mournful for me)  
Date of composition: 1931  
Genre: Jaj-nóta  
Ensemble: Piano/Voice  
Publisher: Universal Edition  
Meter: none  
Tempo: Rubato, quasi adagio, quarter-note = 40-48  
Length: 3:00  
Vocal Range: F\textsubscript{4}-G\textsubscript{5}  
Tessitura: B\textsubscript{4} – F\textsubscript{5}  
Area tune was collected: Szencsey  
Date tune was collected: the 17\textsuperscript{th} century  
Level of Difficulty: Difficult

\textit{Siralmas volt nékem} is a Jaj-nóta although it does not maintain the traditional form as discussed in the genres section of this document. This long and elaborate virtuosic song is a piece about finding the meaning of life through all of the hardships into which one is born. The resolution of the song concludes that by putting one’s faith in God solves all of life’s problems.

The song is structured uniquely. Although there are three verses, each has a very free and improvised feeling to it. The piece is set in C minor, but there are many modal changes to chords throughout the songs. The first verse begins with a statement in the piano on the tonic. The G chord without the third, followed by a rushing flurry of 32nd notes give a unique improvisatory feeling to the song (Figure 5.4.1).

\textsuperscript{120} For IPA and translation see Appendix D.
Since there is no third in this first iteration of the accompaniment, one expects to receive some resolution as the melody enters. The melody starts on the 5th degree and essentially repeats the accompaniment statement with ornamentations.

The melody is surprising for its large number of decorations (Figure 5.4.2).

Figure 5.4.1. Opening fifths with 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes.

Figure 5.4.2. Call and response motives and the set classes they are made of.
The first instance of these ornaments are found in m. 3, and they represent the sadness which is felt in the poetry in an extended version of a sigh motive (marked in blue). The whole first verse continues in this call and response manner using the set classes [01235], [01346], and [024579] in the vocal line, and [0235], [0135], [024579], and [013568] in the accompaniment. The sound and the set classes Kodály uses differ from the “typical” Hungarian tonal language.

The density of the ornamentation increases in m. 6 where the text reads “Hogy ezéket köll szenvedném” (“To have to suffer all of these things”) (Figure 5.4.3).

Figure 5.4.3. Increased density of ornamentation.

The ornaments here draw attention to the text which indicates all of the sufferable things the singer has endured. There is also more wonderful text painting in m. 7 on the word “suffer” where Kodály uses a triplet figure (Figure 5.4.4).

Figure 5.4.4. Triplet figure used to enhance the text.
The ornamentation density increases yet again in mm. 8-9 where they begin to decorate every note. This excessive use of ornaments once again draws attention to the text, which reads “Melyeket nem érdemlőttet” (“I didn’t deserve these things”) (Figure 5.4.5).

Figure 5.4.5. Ornaments accentuating the text.

Singers should avoid treating these ornaments with a Western stylistic interpretation. Kodály employs the grace-note notation as a matter of convenience, or even as a limitation of the Western notation system. In Magyar Népzene, he mentions that the notes should slide towards each other.

As this verse ends, we are left with long, pensive perfect 5ths on the raised 6th and 3rd degrees of G minor (E natural and B natural), which leads us to the flurried accompaniment of the second verse (Figure 5.4.6).

Figure 5.4.6. Perfect fifths with fermata.
It is in the second verse that the improvisatory character begins. With more rushing 32nd notes forming set class [01346] and a tremolo half-diminished seventh chord with an added ninth, the singing starts to become more energized (Figure 5.4.7).

Figure 5.4.7. Improvisatory character insinuated by 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes accompanied by dissonant chords.

This energy not only comes from louder dynamics but is also characterized by an excessive use of ornaments. The increased agitation appropriately fits the text, which reads “Tigristéjén talán tartott vót fël anyám?” (“Perhaps I was raised on Tiger’s milk by my mother”). The implication of the text here is that instead of using her own milk she raised her child on the milk of a violent animal. This text is emphasized by the rushing
32\textsuperscript{nd} notes repeated at the accompanist’s liberty. To further enhance the text, the rushing 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes are also paired with a tremolo French sixth chord.

This dissonant and rushing culmination of sound is enhanced by a bitter afterthought of the following lines which read “Jaj, ki volt az én mostohám?” (“Woe-is-me, who was my step-mother?”), which implies she was unlike a biological mother. The accompaniment aptly resonates with this statement with the somber return of pianissimo tremolo G minor chords (Figure 5.4.8).

![Figure 5.4.8. Tremolo G minor chords in accompaniment.](image)

The persona’s anger over realizing their mother did not care for them is characterized by more 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes from set class [01246], again repeated at the performer’s liberty. These 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes culminate in a violent torrent of sound in m. 18: Kodály sets “Banatját ruházta rēám” (“She made me wear her sorrow”) with crashing fortissimo lines of sixteenth notes and double-dotted quarter notes. The anguish and torment here are depicted by the tremolo accompaniment moving through half-diminished and diminished harmonies while the right-hand continues its racing 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes from set class [0235] (Figure 5.4.9).
Figure 5.4.9. Tension builds with diminished harmonies and flurried 32\textsuperscript{nd}.

The storm of emotion slowly calms as the piece gets quieter, but the rage has not fully subsided. In m. 20, the pianist’s right hand decorates the tonic G by flurrying over a Bb while the left hand plays a tremolo on Db and F dyad with Bb and shifts to a D and F
dyad with a B natural. Cries of self-pity and long-lost days in mm. 21-22 can only be accompanied by silence.

The accompaniment takes a turn at m. 25 and now plays major triads under the text, which reads “Bízom Istenre dolgomat,” (“I trust my affairs to God”). Moving in stepwise motion, the chords move from subtonic to tonic back to subtonic down to the submediant. The final line of text “Eligazitja bajomat” (“He will fix all of my problems”) is represented by a chord using the set class [0236]. This set class gives the impression of a major and minor vii being played simultaneously. The significance of this chord under the text perchance signifies doubt in God resolving all of life’s problems (Figure 5.4.10).

The postlude is comprised of a series of dominant seventh chords in parallel motion which connect V7 to V7/V. Kodály decorates the V7/V with a 16th note flourish using set class [0235], which I believe is added to remind one that the painful memories of childhood will remain until the end.

The Eastern influence in this song is unmistakable and is evident by examining the set classes which are most prominent in this song. In contrast to the typical $H^p$ [02479] and the altered versions Kodály uses of set class [0235], this song predominantly uses set classes [01235] and [01346]. Although the former set class does appear in the song, it only appears at the ends of the verses and without ornaments. Since the origins of this song can be traced the 1600s, and since the Ottoman Empire occupied Hungary from 1541-1699, it should come as no surprise that remnants of Eastern influence are apparent.

The rhythms in this song break the typical pattern we have seen so far in Hungarian folk music. Besides the familiar dotted-eighth rhythm and the sixteenth-eighth rhythm, Kodály also employs quintuplets and septuplets. As these are rhythms which are
very uncharacteristic to Hungarian folksong, I assumed these figures must be ornaments which have been recorded as canon. Kodály’s and László’s transcriptions and supporting text confirmed my suspicion.

Figure 5.4.10. Submediant prolongation, set class [0236], and stepwise dominant 7th movement.
Although Kodály’s transcription is a direct copy of the final art song version, there is a plainchant-like version notated immediately beneath it (Figure 5.4.11). Kodály explains that this plainchant is a version which was recorded by István Dobai. Dobai reproduced this version from the first recorded source of Siralmas volt nékem by Thaly in the written work Szencsey in the 17th century. In addition, Kodály also mentions that Ádám P. Horváth found a version of this tune which predates the 17th-century version by fifty years where the words are identical, and the melody lines up in many places, but all the ornaments are missing. Dobszay’s transcription is altogether an entirely different melody (Figure 5.4.12).

Figure 5.4.11. Kodály’s transcription (above) and Dobai’s plainchant version (below).

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122 Ibid., 71.
Although some of the melodic shapes are similar, the rhythms are simplified to quarter and eighth notes. As this original folk tune is hundreds of years old, there are many versions of this song retaining influence from the surrounding countries in the various regions of Hungary. Since the song does not originate in a specific region, it may be known throughout the whole country in various states.

**Figure 5.4.12.** Dobszay’s transcription.
5.5 *Katona vagyok én*\(^{123}\)

**Name of the work:** *Magyar Népzene* (Hungarian Folk Music)  
**Volume:** VI  
**Name of song:** *Katona vagyok én* (Soldier Am I)  
**Date of composition:** 1931  
**Genre:** Katonaság/Katonanőta  
**Ensemble:** Piano/Voice  
**Publisher:** Universal Edition  
**Meter:** 6/4 3/4  
**Tempo:** *Parlando, poco rubato*, quarter-note = 112-116  
**Length:** 2:10  
**Vocal Range:** G\(_4\)-F\(_5\)  
**Tessitura:** B\(_4\) – E\(_5\)  
**Area tune was collected:** Istensegíts, Bukovina  
**Date tune was collected:** 1914  
**Level of Difficulty:** Medium

*Katona vagyok én* is a Katonaság (military) song. This three-stanza song offers a snapshot of the difficulties, obligations, and sacrifices involved in a soldier’s life. The subject matter involves leaving a lover behind in the village, blessing friends to live and enjoy life but not to steal away the love left behind, and embracing the obligation to not die in a bed but to die for the country.  

Although most of the folksongs Kodály has set can be sung by either gender, the prominent masculine references in this text could prove challenging for a female performer. Some of the language expressly implies a man is singing. Calling one’s love “*Rozsám*” (“my rose”) and referring to your friends as “*Kenyerés pajtásim*” (“sworn brothers”) are expressions which women would not use in Hungarian.

\(^{123}\) For IPA and translation see Appendix E.
The song begins with a forte statement in the piano indicating G minor as the tonic key. The opening statement also contains descending sixteenth notes as a part of the vocal melody which is to come (Figure 5.5.1). As the song continues, this descending motive is used as a unifying element throughout the rest of the piece.

![Figure 5.5.1. Piano introduction foreshadowing the vocal line.](image)

As the first line of text “Katona vagyok én, ország övezője,” (“I am a soldier, my country’s guardian”) is sung, the accompaniment slowly imitates the vocal line in quarters and eighth notes (Figure 5.5.2). This imitation is especially important because of the 6/4 3/4 time signature. At the end of each 6/4 measure, there are two beats of vocal silence during which Kodály imitates the original melody. The imitation of the folk melody with varied durations and slight intervallic modifications is a symbol of the idea of the “soldier” and his “duties”: as the song progresses and certain realities of the life of a soldier become realized in the poetry, the more twisted and further from the original the piano imitations become.
In the following lines of text, accompaniment imitation continues until the text mentions “Sír az éldes anyám, hogy elviszek tőle, fekete gyászvirág búsul ablakába” ("My dear mother is weeping, my rose is mourning, from her window, she grieves as a black bereaved flower"). It is under this text that the first alterations occur in the accompaniment (Figure 5.5.3). Instead of following the regular pattern of imitation, the accompaniment’s durations are elongated and contain many more leaps. This closing section of the first verse is the initial sign of the real internal struggle of the soldier.

The end of the 6/4 measure shifts from the stepwise descending motion to a leap of a perfect fourth creating a iii chord. This change in color accurately reflects the text and goes even further in m. 8 by underlining the text which reads “black bereaved flower” with a flat vi chord. The same leaping descending imitative line which Kodály has used in most of the 6/4 measures thus far ends the following measure’s text “grieves in her window.”

The next stanza begins the same way as the first with the piano imitating the vocal line in both hands accompanied by thundering half notes in the bass. Although the format
is the same, the imitative melody is written enharmonically with an E# instead of an F (Figure 5.5.4).

Figure 5.5.3. Elongated accompaniment durations, falling motive repeated every 6/4 measure (blue).

Figure 5.5.4. Accompaniment repeats for second verse but with changes in bass and enharmonically.
Still another change in this second stanza opening is that the half notes in the bass are on a #IV (C#) instead of the tonic, G. This enharmonic writing and the change in the bass are both ways of insinuating a slow emotional change in the foundations of the character. Just as the enharmonic notes sound the same and appear slightly different, the emotions of the character are only changing very subtly as the text unfolds.

The text also asks for God’s blessing on the “pajtásim” from the town to live in happiness while the burden of the soldier’s duty is worn by the singer. This burden is not only reflected in the opening piano motive of the second stanza but also in mm. 13-16 (Figure 5.5.5).

![Figure 5.5.5. Dominant ninth chord coloring the text calling for a blessing.](image_url)

In mm. 13-14 the soldier sings “Az Isten áldása szálljon le reátok,” (“May God’s blessing descend upon all of you”). With the knowledge that it is the soldier who will need the blessings, Kodály uses a dominant ninth of a distant key of B major. This dominant chord in a distant key is in a way a bit of musical irony and foreshadowing of the battle to come. The soldier’s next line “Éljetek örömmel mert én búval élek,” (“May you all live in happiness, because I live with a burden”) is characterized by a slowing of the imitation motive and a quieting of the main melody (Figure 5.5.6).
It is in m. 15 that the first occurrence of the descending figure which Kodály uses at the end of his 6/4 bars appears in quarter notes for the entire duration of one of the 3/4 bars. This figure then appears two times in m. 17, once in eighth notes followed immediately by quarter notes under the closing text of the stanza “De az én rózsam” (“But my rose”). The final phrase of this text which reads “el ne szeressétek” (“do not love her away from me”) is colored by the descending motive again but with a repetition an octave lower this time (Figure 5.5.7). The repetition an octave lower is an indication of how far away the soldier’s brothers and lover are from him and how powerless he is to do anything.
The third stanza begins in the same way as the first two verses, only the starting note of the imitative piano section begins on C and the thundering bass line half notes begin on E. Although the vocal melody continues its stanzatic repetition beginning on F, the piano has clearly moved into the key of A minor from mm. 20-22. This shift in key and the addition of a third octave of voice in the accompaniment in mm. 21-22 (Figure 5.5.8) give the appropriate dramatic effect as the text describes the soldier’s weapons of war.

Figure 5.5.7. Descending motive repeated (red), accompaniment varies by starting on C with bass on E (blue).

Figure 5.5.8. Accompaniment in three octaves decorating the text.
The following text reveals the sad truth that a soldier is not allowed to die peacefully in his bed. This text is emphasized by the accompaniment modulating to D minor and playing the introductory imitative material in mm. 23-24 and with an added measure of a descending scale in three octaves to depict the soldier’s eventual death in m. 25. During the second half of the third stanza, beginning at m. 26, there is a distinct shift not only in the text but also in the accompaniment (Figure 5.5.9).

![Figure 5.5.9. Modulation to D minor and three-octave descent depicting demise of soldier.](image)

In mm. 26-27 the text reads as “Forgatom fegyverem vitézek módjára” (“I swivel my weapon the way that Heroes do”) and for a moment the feeling of a major key is emphasized by one of the two sixteenth-dotted eighth note chords (Figure 5.5.10).
The first offbeat chord in m. 26 is C major, which depicts the positive connotations usually attached to heroes. The following offbeat Bm chord in m. 27 offers a contrasting perspective. The combination of the stepwise and parallel motion of these two chords coupled with the color change is a clear expression of the idea that although heroes are glorious, they often die tragically.

The modular descent and ascent at the end of m. 27 not only acts as a transition of musical material but also as a conduit for the singer to access the cascading thoughts of the soldier and the eventual acceptance of his fate (Figure 5.5.11).
Figure 5.5.11. Ascent in three octaves (red), sixteenth and dotted eighth chords (blue), rapid ascent and major chords signifying soldier’s death (yellow).

As the final text reads “Áldozom éltemet az ország javára” (“I sacrifice my life for the benefit of the country”) in mm. 28-29, the offbeat sixteenth and dotted-eighth chords return. Emerging from the despair of the hero’s eventual demise, the first chord is an Eb major chord, and it shifts to a Db major chord in m. 29. These two major chords represent the acceptance of the soldier’s fate and the glorification which accompanies a soldier’s death.

The glorious death of the soldier is further accentuated by a powerful ascent over three octaves on the piano. This ascent culminates in fortissimo perfect fifths on D and A, which finally result in the “glorious soldier’s death” and which resolve to a G major chord with an added dissonance of an A. This added dissonance on the final chord is a
reminder that although the soldier fights and defends the people of his country, his loss and death are still genuine and tragic.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this DMA document is to create a performer’s guide for selected folksong arrangements of Kodály. To illustrate the essentials of a Hungarian song performer’s guide, I chose five folksong arrangements by Kodály which were analyzed through four different lenses; (a) a theoretical analysis of the musical structure of each song itself, with an emphasis on the musical elements which help define the essence of Hungarian music; (b) an historical analysis of the period in which these songs were arranged and its influence on the arrangements; (c) a pronunciation analysis which defines the essential elements of Hungarian lyric diction; and, (d) a musico-poetic analysis of each of the five songs which will aid performers in understanding the stories, characters and traditions which are portrayed by each folksong arrangement. This document has outlined the basic principles of Hungarian folk music history, has outlined the theory behind the melodies, and has outlined a basic guide to pronunciation, as well as providing an IPA translation and poetic translation for each of the folksong settings.

The topic of Hungarian song requires much more work to be done. Future research stemming from this investigation into five Kodály folksong settings would be to create a pronunciation guide using IPA. This guide would not only enable the performer to approach the music without having to know how to speak Hungarian, but it would also make the task of interpreting the music less daunting. The logical next step would be to expand this DMA document to treat all of Kodály’s folksong arrangements in the same manner.

Another exciting avenue of further research stemming from this investigation would be to integrate this research into the work of organizations associated with Kodály
worldwide, including the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, the IKS (International Kodály Society), and the OAKE (Organization of American Kodály Educators). Sharing this research with these organizations could be an exciting way to deepen the understanding of the function of folk music on a concert level, “to promote the musical, educational and cultural concepts associated with Zoltán Kodály for the benefit of music generally and in particular for the educational advancement of youth.”

As books with more complete and thorough analyses are compiled, the accessibility of this beautiful literature will hopefully increase. Improved accessibility brings with it expanded performance opportunities, leading to an ever-deepening embrace of these amazing works. The more people hear how worthwhile and unique this repertoire is, the more mainstream and valued it will become. It is my hope that this preliminary introduction and performers guide to Kodály’s folksong settings will spark new interest in singers, scholars, and audiences alike for this beautiful source of unique and timeless music.

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APPENDIX A: IPA & TRANSLATION FOR 5.1

Hej, a mohi hegy borának

Hej, hej, a mohi hegy borának húsz forint az ára,
[ˈhɛj ˈɒ mohi ˈhɛɟ boraːnɒk ˈhuːs ˈfɒrɪnt ˈɒz ˈɒːrɒ]
Hey the mohi mountain’s wine twenty forint the price.
(Hey, the wine of the Mohi mountain costs 20 forint)

Ha a magyar bankó folyna, anyit adnék rája.
[ˈhɒ ˈɒ ˈmɒɟɒr ˈbɒnkoː ˈfojnɒ ˈɒɲɪt ˈɒdnɛːk ˈrɒːjɒ]
If the Hungarian banknote would flow as much I would give for it
(If the Hungarian bank note would flow, then I would pay that much for it)

Ha én megváltatnám a Kossuth bankóját,
[ˈhɒ ˈeːn ˈmɛgvaːltɒtnɒːm ˈɒ ˈkosːut ˈbɒnkoːjaːt]
If I could exchange the Kossuth bank note
(If I could exchange the Kossuth banknote)

Mindjárt megölelném galambom derekát.
[ˈminɟaːrt ˈmegølɛlneːm ˈɡɒlɒmbom ˈdɛrɛkaːt]
At once I would hug my dove’s waist
(I would hug my dove’s waist right away)

Hej, eladtam magyar pénzér virág szarvú ökröm,
[ˈhɛj ˈɛlɒdtɒ m ˈmɒɟɒr ˈpeːnzeːr ˈviraːg ˈsɒrvuː ˈøkrøm]
Hey I sold my flower horned cattle mine
(Hey, I sold my flower horned cattle for Hungarian money)

Szántani kellene: nincs min, szép telkem, örököm.
[ˈsaːntɒni ˈkɛlːɛnɛ ˈnɪntʃ ˈmin ˈseːp ˈtɛlkɛm ˈɒrøkkɒm]
To plough I ought to none with beautiful my land my inheritance
(I ought to plow: nothing with, my beautiful land, my inheritance)

Sem ökör, sem bankó, halldó te, Jankó
[ˈʃɛm ˈɒkør ˈʃɛm ˈbɒnkoː ˈhɒlːɒdeː ˈte ˈʃɒŋkɒ]
Neither cattle neither bank note do you hear me you Johnny?
(Neither cattle, or bank note, you listening Johnny?)

Igen sok pénz nem jó, pallag a rozstalló.
[ˈɪɡɛn ˈʃok ˈpeːnz ˈnɛm ˈjoː ˈpɒlːɒg ˈɒ ˈroʊstɒlːoː]
Truly much money not good wasted is the rye-field.
(Truly, too much money is not good, the rye-field is wasted)
APPENDIX B: IPA & TRANSLATION FOR 5.2

Körtéfa

Körtéfa, körtéfa,
['kɔɾtɛːfo 'kɔɾtɛːfo
Pear tree pear tree
(Pear tree, pear tree)

Gyöngyösi körtéfa,
'jɔnɟoʃi 'kɔɾtɛːfo
Gyöngyös' pear tree
(Gyöngyös pear tree)

Sok gyalog katona
‘ʃok ‘ɟɒlog ‘kɒtonɒ
Many on foot soldiers
(Many foot soldiers)

Megpihent alatta.
‘mɛɡpihɛnt ‘ɒlɒtːɒ
Rested under it
(Rested under it)

Alúró szél fúja,
‘ɒluːroː ‘sɛːl ‘fuːjɒ
From under wind blows it
(The wind blows it from underneath)

Felűrő nap süti,
‘fɛlyːrøː ‘nɒp ‘ʃyti
From above sun shines on it
(The sun shines from above it)

Jó annak nevetni,
‘joː ‘ɒnːɒk ‘nɛvɛtni
Good for one to laugh
(It’s good for those to laugh)

Ki egymást szereti.
‘ki ‘ɛɡmaːʃt ‘sɛrɛti
Who each other love them
(Who love each other)
APPENDIX C: IPA & TRANSLATION FOR 5.3

Virágos kenderem

Virágos kenderem elázott a tóba,
[ˈviraːɡoʃ ˈkɛndɛrɛm ˈɛlaːzot: ˈɒ ˈtoːbɒ]
Flowery my hemp soaked in the lake
(I soaked my flowery hemp in the lake)

Lám megmondtam rózsám ne menj a fonóba.
ˈlaːm ˈmegmondtɒm ˈroːʒaːm ˈne ˈmɛɲː ˈɒ ˈfonoːbɒ
You will see I told my rose do not go to the in the spinner
(You will see, I warned you my rose, don’t go to the spinning mill)

Elejtettem orsóm, nincs aki feladja,
ˈɛlɛjtɛtːem ˈorʃoː ˈnintʃ ˈɒki ˈfɛlɒɟːɒ
I dropped my spindle there isn’t who gives it up
(I dropped my spindle, no one can get it back for me)

Bánatos szivemet ki megvigasztalja.
ˈbaːnɒtoʃ ˈsiːvɛmɛt ˈki ˈmegvigɒstɒjːɒ
Sorrowful my heart who can comfort it
(Who will comfort my sorrowful heart)
APPENDIX D: IPA & TRANSLATION FOR 5.4

**Siralmas volt nékém**

Siralmas  volt  nékém,
[ˈʃiːrɒlmɒʃ ˈvolt ˈneːkɛm

*Mournful*  it was  *for me*

(It was mournful for me)

**Világra születném,**

ˈvilaːɡrɒ ˈsylɛtnɛm

*To the world*  *to be born*

(To be born to this world)

**Hogy ezéket kellt szenvedném,**

ˈhoɟ ˈezekɛt ˈkɛlː ˈsenyvednɛm

*That these things*  *I have to*  *suffer myself*

(To have to suffer all of these things)

**Melyeket nem erdëmlëttem.**

ˈmɛjɛkɛt ˈnɛm ˈeːdɛmlɛtːɛm

*Which things*  *not*  *did I deserve*

(I didn’t deserve these things)

**Tigristéjén talán,**

ˈtiɡriʃteːjɛn ˈtɒlaːn

*Tiger-milk*  *perhaps*

(Perhaps on Tiger’s milk)

**Tartott vót fél anyám?**

ˈtɔrtotː ˈvoːt ˈfɛl ˈɒɲaːm

*Raised me*  *was*  *up*  *mother mine,*

(I was raised on by my mother)

(Perhaps I was raised on Tiger’s milk by my mother)

**Jaj, ki volt az én mostohám?**

ˈjɒj ˈki ˈvolt ˈɒz ˈeːn ˈmoʃtohaːm

*Woe, who was the my*  *step-mother?*

(Woe-is-me, who was my step-mother?)

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125 The ű vowel is only pronounced as a [ɔ] as a true countryside dialect. Since this vowel doesn’t technically exist in the Hungarian dictionary ű should be pronounced as [ɛ].
Bánatját ruházta réeám.
With her sorrow she clothed onto me
(She made me wear her sorrow)

Siratom magamat,
ʃirɒtom ˈmɒgɒmɒt
I am weeping myself
(I weep for myself)

Elmúlt napjaimat.
ˈɛlmuːlt ˈnɒpjɒimɒt
The past days of mine
(All of my days of the past)
(I weep for all of my days of the past)

Bízom Istenre dolgomat,
ˈbiːzom ˈiʃtɛnrɛ ˈdolgomɒt
I trust on God my affairs
(I trust my affairs to God)

Eligazítja bajomat.
ˈɛlɪɡɒziːtʃɒ ˈbɒjomɒt
He fixes my troubles.
(He will fix all of my problems)
APPENDIX E: IPA & TRANSLATION FOR 5.5

Katona vagyok én

Katona vagyok én, ország örezoje,
['kɒtønɒ 'vɒjok 'e:n 'orsa:ɡ 'ɔ:rezo:jə
Soldier am I, country its guardian

(I am a soldier, my country’s guardian)

Sír az éldes anyám, hogy elvisznek tőle,
[ˈʃiːr ˈɒz ˈeːldɛʃ ˈɒɲaːm ˈhoj ˈɛlviʃnek ˈtøːlɛ
Weeps the dear my mother that they take me from her

(My dear mother is weeping that they are taking me from her)

Sír az éldes anyám, a rózsám meg gyászol,
[ˈʃiːr ˈɒz ˈeːldɛʃ ˈɒɲaːm ɒ ˈroːʒaːm meɡ ˈjaːsol
Weeps the dear my mother the my rose is mourning

(My dear mother is weeping, my rose is mourning)

Fekete gyászvirág búslal ablakába.
ˈfɛkeːtɛ ˈjaːsviraːɡ ˈbuːʃul ˈɒblɒkaːbɒ
Black bereaved flower grieves in her window

(From her window, she grieves as a black bereaved flower)

Falu legényei, kenyeres pajtásim,
ˈfɒlu ˈleɡeːɲɛi ˈkɛɲɛrɛʃ ˈpɒjtaːʃim
Village lads sworn brothers

(My friends from the village, my sworn brothers)

Az Isten áldása szálljon le reátok,
ˈɒz ˈiʃtɛn ˈaːldaːʃɒ ˈsaːjːon ˈlɛ ˈrɛaːtok
The God blessing fly on down all of you

(May God’s blessing descend upon all of you)

Éljetek örömmel mert én búval élek,
'ɛːjːɛtɛk 'ɔroːmːel ˈmɛrt 'eːn 'buːvɒl 'ɛːlek
Live you all with gladness because I burden live with

(May you all live in happiness, because I live with a burden)

De az én rózsámát el ne szeressétek.
'de ˈɒz ˈeːn ˈroːʒaːmæt ˈel ˈne ˈsɛrɛʃːeːtɛk
But the I my rose do not love her from me

(But do not steal my rose away from me)
Megpendült harangom, pallérozott kardom,
'It rang my bell sharpened sword mine
(My alarm bell rang, my sword is sharpened)

Nem szabad énnékem az ágyban meghálnom!
'Nem 'sóbód 'ènːéːkem 'óz 'aːjbyːn 'meɡhoːlnom
(Not allowed for me the in bed for me to die)

Forgatom fegyverem vitézek módjára,
'fɔrgɒtom 'fɛɟvɛrɛm 'viteːzek 'moːdʒɔːrə
(I swivel my weapon the way that Heroes do)

Áldozom éltemet az ország javára.
'aːldozom 'eːłtemet 'óz 'ɔrɔːɡ 'jɔvaːrə]
(Sacrificing my life the country benefit for)
(I sacrifice my life for the benefit of the country)
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