

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music

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THE MELODIES OF MANUSCRIPT SONGBOOKS FROM THE HUNGARIAN REFORM ERA ON STAGE AND IN THE FOLK TRADITION:

MELODIC LAYERS, THEATRICAL, AND FOLK MUSIC CONNECTIONS

Theses of the Doctoral Dissertation

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Background and Research Objectives

The processing of [musical] manuscripts originating from the ages pre-dating the reform period in Hungary – including the volumes of the *Régi magyar dallamok tára* [Collection of old Hungarian songs] series and the works comparing pre-nineteenth-century manuscripts with folk music data – is already at an advanced stage. Mária Domokos and Katalin Paksa processed the eighteenth-century sources (Domokos – Paksa: „*Vígsággal zeng Parnassusnak magas teteje*”: 18. századi kottás források és a magyar zenei néphagyomány / “*The high peak of mount Parnassus resounds with delight*”: 18th-century Musical Sources and the Hungarian Folk Music Tradition, 2016). László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei did the same with the sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Dobszay – Szendrei: *XVI-XVII. századi dallamaink a népi emlékezetben* [Melodies of the 16th and 17th centuries in the living tradition], 1979). In contrast, the nineteenth century [itself] received considerably less attention. Lujza Tari examined the musical memories of the 1848–1849 Revolution and War of Independence (Tari: *A szabadságharc népzenei emlékei / Relics of Folk Music from the War of Independence* CD-ROM, 2000); three manuscript folk song collections from this period were published with annotations and studies by Zoltán Kodály and Ágost Gyulai (1952, János Arany’s collection), Dénes Bartha and József Kiss (1953, Ádám Horváth Pálóczi’s collection), as well as Péter Pogány and Lujza Tari (1988, Mihály Tompa). The remaining publications examining nineteenth-century manuscripts typically focus on a single aspect (e.g. Paksa, Katalin: *Magyar népzene kutatás a 19. században* [Hungarian folk music research in the nineteenth century], (= *Műhelytanulmányok a magyar zenetörténethez* [Studies on the history of Hungarian music] vol. 9, 1988; Molnár, Antal: “Nyugatias magyar dallamok a XVIII. század végén és a XIX. század első felében” [Western-style Hungarian melodies from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries], In: *Zenatudományi tanulmányok* [Studies in musicology] vol. 4, 1955).

Zoltán Kodály already noted that the nineteenth century, particularly the Reform Era (1825–1848), was a time of

unprecedented upheaval in both music and the spirit of the people. This period saw the transformation of musical fashion: Western-oriented melodies – performed as songs or as dance accompaniment – gave way to Hungarian popular art songs, chiefly disseminated through theatrical performances in Hungarian (cf. Tari, Lujza: “A magyar hangvétel változása Weber Magyar rondájától Willmers Fóti daláig” [Changes in the Hungarian tone from Weber’s *Rondo ungarese* to Willmer’s Fót song], In: *Zenatudományi dolgozatok*, 2000). The popular art song, spread by traveling theatrical companies, may also have influenced the emergence of the new-style Hungarian folk song (Bereczky, János: *A magyar népdal új stílusa* [The New Style of Hungarian Folk Music], 2013).

This was also the period of burgeoning early folk music collections, the rise of Hungarian-language theatre, and the consolidation of an independent Hungarian musical repertoire. However, the bulk of the theatrical material from the period remains unexplored, is being processed currently, or must be considered latent. The complex, simultaneously present, and sometimes even contradictory cultural and musical currents of the Reform Era can be better understood through the musically notated manuscripts of the period.

Melodies that appear in theatrical works under the name of different authors, yet clearly represent variants or identical duplicates of one another, have been labeled both as “plagiarism” (Major, Ervin, “A népies magyar műzene és a népzene kapcsolatai” [The relationships between Hungarian popular art music and folk music], 1967) and as “common songs” (cf. Katalin Kim’s 2012 doctoral dissertation on the Erkel workshop). The repertoire of common songs, presumed to exist around the Hungarian-language musical plays, becomes visible in these manuscripts, situated at the border between folk tradition and high culture. At the same time, a new category of sources appears in this period, consisting of manuscripts created with the explicit aim of folk song collection, and illustrating the period’s concept of folk music.

This dissertation investigates the manuscript songbooks of the Reform Era according to multiple criteria in an effort to grasp the

cultural processes of the time. In addition to the cataloging of the song collections, the dissertation distinguishes the melodic layers of the collections and explores their connections to both the theatrical repertoire and the collection of the Archives and Department for Folk Music and Folk Dance Research. The novelty of the research lies precisely in the multi-faceted and comprehensive approach to the sources: it examines previously unaddressed aspects of the material belonging to different groups of manuscripts, allowing a comparison of the results as well.

Sources, Research Methods, and the Structure of the Dissertation

The research focused exclusively on sources known to have originated during the Reform Era, so for instance, manuscripts dated from “the first half of the nineteenth century” were excluded. The investigation of the common song repertoire and its theatrical connections further narrowed our research subject to the secular songs recorded in the manuscripts with both text and melody. Due to the frequent mismatch of lyrics and melodies (a text having multiple melodies and vice versa), only sources with both text and were included. A total of 1,518 melodies were examined, many of which proved to be variants of one another. Following the elimination of the variants, 1,288 distinct melodies were subjected to comparative analysis and stylistic classification. For comparison purposes, the melodies were transcribed on the g^1 fundamental note, with their original pitch indicated.

Apart from the introduction and acknowledgments, the dissertation consists of four major chapters. The first offers a detailed presentation of the examined manuscripts, grouped by the purpose of their compilation. A total of 29 manuscripts met our research criteria; six of these are absent from Béla Stoll’s bibliography due to their later dating. The descriptions of the sources are more detailed than in any previous account and focus on the notations of melodies. The source descriptions also offer a brief overview of the content, especially in cases where new information becomes available as compared to the previously known data.

The second chapter examines the melodic layers of the manuscripts. It outlines the main musical trends, co-existing during the Reform Era, and provides music examples, consisting of the melodies associated with the individual currents. Then, the proportion of these styles within the manuscripts is examined, in order to determine whether any stylistic shifts occurred during that period, or other factors of influence were at play.

The third chapter explores the connections between the manuscripts and contemporary musical theatre, including how elements of various theatrical genres appear in the manuscripts. In addition to overviewing theater history and research history, the third chapter categorizes songs by genre and presents their variants. It also revisits the percentage shifts in melodic styles within the individual theatrical genres that followed each other over the time. Songs that, according to research, only appeared in theatre after their inclusion in the examined manuscripts are listed in *Appendix 1*.

The final chapter compares the melodic material in these manuscripts with the collection of the Archives and Department for Folk Music and Folk Dance Research at the HUN-REN RCH Institute for Musicology. It addresses three questions: (1) What is the proportion of each manuscript type within the collection of the Archives for Folk Music? (2) How many melodies are also present in 20th-century folk music collections?, and (3) What is the stylistic proportion of these melodies, in view of both the musical trends discussed in Chapter 2 and the Folk Music Archives' typology of styles. Finally, it examines the role of theatre in folklorization, by looking at the presence of songs from specific theatrical genres in the Archives' collection.

Appendix 2 lists the melodic incipits (in original pitch) of the melodies that were recorded independently by several compilers, so that we can presume their popularity and widespread use during the Reform Era. The appendix contains the songs grouped by melodic layers and also indicates their correspondences with the collection of the Folk Music Archives.

Research Findings

In addition to the most detailed descriptions yet of the 29 examined manuscripts, the melodic layers within these sources were distinguished. The relative proportion of the individual layers was found to reflect the compiler's personal taste, rather than chronology. The group consisting of popular art songs and *Czárdás* melodies emerged as a new layer.

The situation differs in the case of melodies that belong to the theatrical repertoire, where a clear trend emerged: the presence of verbunkos melodies, tunes of Western origin, and the further foreign melodies gradually decreased in the theatrical genres. Songs associated with certain theatrical types were isolated within the manuscripts. Altogether, 105 melodies used in the theatre were identified; another 72 appeared in theatres only after their inclusion in manuscripts. On the other hand, the manuscripts reflect the challenges of conducting research on nineteenth-century theatrical life: different translations and differences in titles may appear as impediments; moreover, the Hungarian translation of certain songs could spread from the repertoire of the German companies even without a full performance in Hungarian. The dissertation confirmed the 'public song theory': the variants of many songs appear in manuscripts before their documented theatrical use; however, theatrical performances usually facilitated their spreading.

The comparison with the Folk Music Typology of the Archives for Folk Music revealed that roughly one-third of the melodies deemed noteworthy to be recorded in writing by Reform Era compilers later entered the folk tradition through folklorization. These melodies predominantly have a small range of a novel type, and include early examples of the emerging new-style Hungarian folk song. Thus, as time goes by, we arrive at a stylistic turning point.

The study of these collections confirms previous assumptions about the role of Hungarian-language theatre in disseminating songs. Melodies originating from or later appearing in theatres are present much more frequently in both the Folk Music Typology and the folk music collections from the twentieth century. Similarly, the

dissertation confirms the role of theatre in promoting the new-style folk song.

Publications Related to the Dissertation

“A ‘Béla futása’ dalai közkézen, közszájon, köztudatban” [The Songs of *Béla’s Flucht* in common use, in the common knowledge, and popular memory], In: *Doromb. Közköltészeti tanulmányok* [Mouth harp. Studies in public poetry] vol. 9. (ed.): Csörsz Rumen, István, (Budapest: Reciti, 2021).

“Magánhasználatú kéziratos kottás énekeskönyvek a reformkorban: Az énekeskönyvek dallami rétegei és népzenei vonatkozásai” [Musically notated manuscript hymnbooks of private use from the Reform Era: Melodic layers and folk musical aspects] In (ed. Lipták, Dániel – Richter, Pál – Salamon, Soma): *Amerre én járok. Tanulmányok a 70 éves Pávai István tiszteletére* [Studies in honor of István Pávai on his seventieth anniversary] (Budapest: ELKH BTK, 2021), 170–192.

„A sárospataki kollégium zenei élete a reformkorban a melodiáriumok tükrében” [The musical life of Sárospatak during the Reform Era in the light of the melodiariums] In: *Zenetudományi dolgozatok 2019–2020. Ferenczi Ilona tiszteletére* [Studies in Musicology 2019–2020. In honor of Ilona Ferenczi] (Budapest: BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, 2021), 87–98.

“id. Ábrányi Kornél népzene felfogása: A népzene jelentősége id. Ábrányi Kornél *A magyar zene a XIX. században* c. művében” [The folk music concept of Kornél Ábrányi Sr. – The significance of folk music in Kornél Ábrányi’s volume on nineteenth-century Hungarian music] (Budapest: Zenetudományi Intézet, Magyar Zenetörténeti Osztály, 2022) Published online: 2. Dec. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.23714/mzo.0235>

“A Kártigám kéziratos dallami emlékei” [The Melodic Manuscript Memories of *Kartigam*], In: *Doromb. Közköltészeti tanulmányok*

[Mouth harp. Studies in public poetry] vol. 9. (ed.): Csörsz Rumen, István, (Budapest: Reciti, 2023), 161–173.

Selected Other Publications

“‘Ének őrzi az időt’: Újra a Bartók-egyneműkarok szövegforrásainak nyomában” [“Singing preserves time”: Once More on the Trail of the Textual Sources of Bartók’s Choruses for Male or Female Voices] *Magyar Zene* 52/2 (May 2014): 205–223.

“Régi és új Gyergyóalfalu kántorkönyveiben” [Old and new stylistic layers in the cantor books of Gyergyóalfalu], In: *Székegy népzene és néptánc* [Szekler folk music and folk dance] (ed.) Pávai, István; Sófalvi, Emese (Budapest, Pécs, Énlaka: Hagyományok Háza, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Pro Énlaka Alapítvány [Hungarian Heritage House, University of Pécs, Pro Inlăceni Foundation] 2018), 191–216.

“‘Új magyar énekbeszéd’ (1936): egy elfelejtett magyar operafelvétel” [“New Hungarian recitative” (1936): A Forgotten Hungarian Opera Recording, In: *Zenetudományi dolgozatok. 2017–2018. Tallián Tibor tiszteletére* [Studies in Musicology. 2017–2018. Honoring Tibor Tallián] (Budapest: BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, [RCH Institute for Musicology], 2019), 313–324.