

Thesis of a Dissertation

Fógel-Veres Anett

The history of the "Singing Youth"

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## I. Antecedents of the Research

Researching the enormous repertoire of choral work, that was created at the ‘Singing Youth’ movement’s beginning was so far an unexplored territory. The most significant work summarizing the *Magyar Kórus, Énekszó, Éneklő Ifjúság* periodicals is the dissertation of Villő Pethő (*Kodály Zoltán és követői zenepedagógiájának életreform elemei*), however this analysis wasn’t expansively focusing on the Hungarian choir music created concurrently with the ‘Singing Youth’ movement.

These 3 periodicals document the movement itself and the ‘Singing Hungary’ idea: the articles, concert reviews, sheet music all showcases how the ‘Singing Youth’ movement was able to materialize in practice.

My main goal as a chorus master was to synthesize the articles and resources focusing on this topic and summarize the repertoire of choral work in my thesis. Using these resources, I aimed to highlight the importance and effect the ‘Singing Youth’ movement and its accomplishments had on the directors of chorus and music educators then.

## II. Sources

My primary sources were the *Magyar Kórus, Énekszó, Éneklő Ifjúság* periodicals, which is by now available for all through the website of the Digital Database of Hungarian Music Periodicals. The musical features focusing on singing education and choir singing; articles on the movement; and the sheet music included in the issues were the corner stones used in writing my dissertation.

The list of most important sources include Zoltán Kodály's writings from the collection *In Retrospect*, the book of János Mátyás documenting the interviews made with Lajos Bárdos and the collection of Aladár Tóth's musical critiques.

### III. Method

Using the articles published in the *Magyar Kórus*, *Énekszó*, *Éneklő Ifjúság* periodicals, Kodály's writings and statements my goal was to showcase the effect the 'Singing Hungary' idea made on choirs. The first chapter of my dissertation examines the content of these 3 periodicals and the historical background of the movement.

The second chapter is about the general repertoire of choral work with the addition of all the sheet music published in these periodicals. In the Appendix, I included the articles and data related to the movement and the published sheet music. Beside listing the choral works, my goal was to also collect the details of their publication and examine them based on the genres of the choir-literature.

In my thesis I was focusing on the 'Singing Youth' movement's most important figures – Zoltán Kodály, Lajos Bárdos and György Kerényi, therefore I considered their work and

achievements as the basis in structuring the chapters.

#### IV. Results

My research clearly highlights, that Zoltán Kodály largely supported the work of the 'Singing Youth' movement's leading figures, moreover he helped the progression of the movement with his choral works, his thoughts shared in his published speeches and with his general presence.

I selected 2 choral works from both György Kerényi and Lajos Bárdos. - the analysis of these compositions clearly demonstrates both the intention of following Kodály's patterns and the intention of creating choral work with distinctive characteristics, that align with the movement.

As a chorus master the assemble of the chorus repertoire is a constant question. In my opinion, among the “old music” published in the period I researched, and the compositions created alongside the movement there are several less known or even unknown work today. Based on the list of choral works included in the Appendix, we can find such valuable choral work that can be included in our own chorus’ repertoire.

## V. Documentation of the Activities Relevant to the Topic of the Dissertation

A chapter of my thesis was published in 2021 (in its then shape) in the academic collection '*Bárdos Szimpóziumok – 16 zenei írás*' (ed. Márta S. Szabó) with the title '*Zoltán Kodály and the 'Singing Youth'*'.<sup>1</sup>

As the chorus master of the MediChoir Student Choir (based in Debrecen), I placed great importance on including the compositions created within the movement (mainly the creations of Kodály and Bárdos) in our repertoire. We regularly perform these compositions in our concerts, and I focused on aligning the programme of the closing concert with the topic of my dissertation.

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<sup>1</sup> Főgel-Veres Anett: „Zoltán Kodály and the ‘Singing Youth’.” In: S. Szabó Márta (ed.): *Bárdos Szimpóziumok. 16 zenei írás.* (Debrecen: Debrecen University Press, 2021.) 129–138.