DOI: 10.4312/mz.61.1.11-31
UDK: 793.31(439)"20":316.334.56

Traditional Village Music and Dance in Urban Milieu. Consequences and Aesthetic Aspects

Pál Richter

HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungary

ABSTRACT

The Hungarian revival movement, *táncház* [dance house], transported rural traditional music and dance into urban milieu more than fifty years ago. A thorough comparative survey of aesthetical factors concerning content, performing style and circumstances of existence enables to determine whether cultures governed through oral and communal tradition can survive long term in a foreign environment.

Keywords: folklorism, Hungarian *táncház* [dance house] movement, folk music, folk dance, revival music

IZVLEČEK

Madžarsko preporodno gibanje, *táncház* [plesna hiša], je pred več kot petdesetimi leti preneslo tradicionalno glasbo in ples s podeželja v urbano okolje. S pomočjo temeljite primerjalne raziskave estetskih dejavnikov, ki zadevajo vsebino, izvedbeni slog in okoliščine obstoja, je mogoče ugotoviti, ali lahko kulture, ki jih oblikujeta ustna in skupnostna tradicija, dolgoročno preživijo v tujem okolju.

Ključne besede: folklorizem, madžarsko gibanje *táncház* [plesna hiša], ljudska glasba, ljudski ples, preporodna glasba

* This study was made possible through the support of the Hungarian–Slovenian project "In New Disguise: Changes in Traditional Music and Dance Culture in Hungary, Slovenia, and Around" (NKFIH SNN 139575 and N6-0231).

Preambulum

This study focuses on the changes in music and dance. It regards the traditional village (peasant) music and dance items as the initial, or standard version of these cultural products to which the changes caused by urban usage are compared. Accordingly, it uses adjectives (authentic, original, traditional etc.) to indicate this initial kind of performing style, or repertoire, and not to attribute value-laden differences between them. Concerning the terminology traditional village music, peasant music occurs usually as synonyms, and sometimes traditional music or folk music is also used in this manner turning out from context. However, the value-centered assessment of music, including folk music, can be observed throughout the twentieth century in the works of Hungarian folk music researchers.[1]

Introduction – Background, Antecedents, Problems to Be Solved

In 1972, more than half a century ago, the dance house [*táncház*][2] movement started in Hungary; and in 2007, almost two decades had passed since postsecondary folk music education began at the Liszt Academy Budapest.[3] The dance house movement radically changed the approach to folk music. Its creators, Ferenc Sebő and Béla Halmos,[4] no longer thought that folk music "must be dressed in fitting attire if they are to be brought from the fields to the city".[5] In-

1 During the twentieth century, Hungarian folk music research was mostly conducted by composers and musicians, which explains their primary concern with the essence, characteristics, and interrelationships of music. In addition, they made serious efforts during their fieldwork to observe and describe the function of music in the village community, the musical instruments, the customs, and emic concepts. Without a doubt, it was through systematizations based on musical criteria, comparative historical and ethnic studies that Hungarian research became one of the leading workshops of international ethnomusicology in the late 1950s and the 1960s. However, the same factors partly contributed to the decline in its significance and influence in the discipline's international forum during the last third of the century. As the dominant anthropological approach refused to deal with the content of music, any reference to quality, let alone artistic value, became obsolete, superfluous, and – in some situations – undesirable.

2 The name dance house [in Hungarian: *táncház*] refers both to the occasion of dancing and its location in the Transylvanian tradition.

3 Pál Richter, "New Channels for Renewal of Tradition – Folk Music in the University Education", in *Musical Traditions: Discovery, Inquiry, Interpretation and Application; Proceedings of the XXVI. European Seminar in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Pál Richter (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2012), 351–360.

4 Ferenc Sebő (b. 1947) and Béla Halmos (1946–2013) were the originators of the dance house movement. Both of them graduated from the Technical University Budapest with a MA degree in architecture, and were trained musicians at the same time, having experiences from different musical styles. Besides them two other persons played a decisive role in organizing the first dance house event in 1972: the choreographer of the Bartók Dance Ensemble Sándor Tímár, and the scholar of folk dance, György Martin.

5 "The finest must be selected and adapted to the public taste by some sort of musical arrangement. Folksongs must be dressed in fitting attire if they are to be brought from the fields to the city." Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, *Magyar népdalok: Énekhangra, zongorakísérettel* (Budapest: Rozsnyai Károly, 1906), 3.

stead, they believed that folk music was to be preserved and passed on to future generations in its original form, intrinsically connected to its original function of dance accompaniment. Following their example, enthusiastic young people[6] have been immersing themselves in the study of instrumental folk music and folk dance since the early 1970s. They were able to rely on more than 120 years of research in Hungarian folk music, and the more recent discipline of folk dance, which emerged several decades later. These young people were supervised by legendary folk music researchers, like Lajos Vargyas, Imre Olsvai, and György Martin, or later Bálint Sárosi.[7] Initially, in the 1970s and '80s the study of folk music and folk dance took place outside the formal educational framework, in various organized training courses. Decades later, it became crucial for the participants of the established movement, *táncház* musicians and dancers to also gain access to a wide range of professional educational opportunities within the formal education system.[8] Folk dance and instrumental music, i.e. mainly Hungarian folk music for stringed instruments, emerged from the archives and research workshops, and evolved into contemporary genres, while singing folk songs – instead of the earlier drill which was compulsory in the schools – became a popular choice of genuine entertainment among young people, albeit not in itself, but in connection with dance. It should be emphasized that the musicians of the dance houses that became popular in the cities tried to present the same aesthetics of folk music to society as Bartók and Kodály did in their art: by the restoration and re-learning of village folklore, they primarily aimed to establish the idea (and they based their entire lifework on it) that folk music offers an aesthetic experience to modern audiences. These aesthetic qualities represented by folk music[9] have always been fundamentally different from those inherent in popular art songs, the *magyarnóta*-repertoire

6 E.g. the singer Márta Sebestyén, the Muzsikás ensemble, Zoltán Juhász bagpipe and flute player, Márta Virágvölgyi violinist, Vujicsics ensemble etc. For further details see: Béla Szilárd Jávorszky, *A magyar FOLK története: Népzene, táncház, világzene* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, Hagyományok Háza, 2013); László Siklós, *Táncház* (Budapest: Hagyományok Háza, Timp kiadó, 2006).

7 György Martin (1932–1983) ethnochoreologist, folklorist; Imre Olsvai (1931–2014) ethnomusicologist; Bálint Sárosi (1925–2022) ethnomusicologist; Lajos Vargyas (1914–2007) ethnomusicologist, folklorist.

8 The first educational program in a public music school started in 1975/76. Today, traditional village folk singing or instrumental music performance is taught in many music schools (over 80 institutions) throughout the country and in the last two decades, training courses have also been launched in several secondary music schools. See: Richter, "New Channels for Renewal", 351–360.

9 According to the views of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, at the beginning of the twentieth century folk music was mostly the orally transmitted musical tradition of the village communities. Bartók was quite consistent in talking about "peasant music", which differed in many musical features from nineteenth-century Hungarian compositions – Romantic in style and essentially modelled on German patterns – and from urban folk-like songs, or *magyarnóta*-melodies that became known primarily as 'Hungarian Gipsy music' and formed the basis for the *style hongrois*-trend and intonation of Western music.

(i.e. Hungarian *nóta*s), urban Gipsy music,[10] or from today's fashionable world music, or global music products. For Bartók and Kodály, that short, almost epigram-like conciseness and simplicity of folk music provided an aesthetic of the musical expression that starkly contrasted with that of the Romantic era. The absence of the non-essential in folk music is, of course, somewhat contradicted by its embellished nature and rich ornamentation distinctive of the individual region of origin. However, when compared to the expansive musical forms characteristic of Romanticism, the generally four-line melodic stanza structures can indeed be considered as miniatures. In any case, Hungarian folk music was so markedly different from both popular art music – folk-like songs employed as urban entertainment – and Western music that Bartók and Kodály initially, in 1906, believed it should only be performed in concert hall settings if the songs were "dressed in fitting attire",[11] that is, with the addition of piano accompaniment.

65 years later, Sebő and Halmos believed the contrary, maintaining that folk music should be preserved in its original form, serving its function as dance music. They argued that traditional village music repertoire and performing routine should be preserved not only in archives but in everyday musical practice.

The conclusions drawn by the researchers, through their sociological, aesthetic, and expert analyses[12] were entirely consistent with the statements made by the musicians, dancers, and participants of the urban dance houses, whether during the period or in retrospect: they turned towards this particular musical culture because they found its soundscape and rhythmic quality, as well as the dances themselves fascinating, dynamic, powerful, and 'archaic', yet novel, previously unknown to them. Moreover, they were able to find this culture not only among Hungarians in Transylvania, but also, for example, among Romanians, and Southern Slavs living in Hungary.[13] Audiences of the dance houses were

10 *Nóta* meant exclusively "vocal song" in Hungarian, which in most cases was not accompanied by dance: it was sung at the table [in Hungarian: *asztali*]. In other words, it clearly referred to a vocal melody with text.
Magyar nóta [Hungarian nóta] referred to a separate category of popular art songs in nineteenth and twentieth-century, the most dedicated performers of which were the city Gypsy ensembles. For differences between rural and urban Gypsy bands and their performing style, see: Bálint Sárosi, *Gypsy Music* (Budapest: Corvina, 1978); István Pávai, *Hungarian Folk Dance Music of Transylvania* (Budapest: Hagyományok Háza, MMA Kiadó, 2020), 79–80; Pál Richter, "Between Folk and Urban Culture: The Dance Music Traditions of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Hungary", in *The Element of Dance in Music of the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,* ed. Grzegorz Zieziula (Warsaw: The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 2023) 287–301.

11 See footnote 5.

12 László Kósa, "A népi kultúra új hulláma", *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 9 (1974): 38–45; Lajos Vargyas, "A népdal helye a közművelődésünkben", *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 9 (1974): 46–51.

13 The Hungarian dance cycle from the Transylvanian village of Szék (Sic, Romania) and the Romanian dance cycle from Méhkerék (Hungary) were the first two cycles initially played by the Sebő ensemble. In the Danube Bend, where the young people of Pomáz (a village 15 km from

equally open to Hungarian traditions and the cultural heritage of neighboring or more distant peoples. The dance houses emerged not as the nucleus of a national conspiracy directed against the State Party dictatorship of the time, nor were they created out of disrespect against other peoples: Operating in a manner devoid of ideology, the dance houses thrived on the wonder inspired by the cultural heritage of Hungarians and neighboring peoples, and by the desire to take possession of this heritage in a modern, urban environment. As a result, a few years following their inception in Hungary, the dance houses began to emerge first within the Hungarian communities in adjacent countries, subsequently spreading to majority societies, and other European nations. The year 2011 marked a pivotal moment when the *táncház* method was recognized internationally, earning a place on the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices as a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

Actual Issues, Hypothesis, Main Objective

The emergence of dance houses led to a paradigm shift. On the one hand, the academic position that village folk music could only be researched, and that while it was possible to acquire the skills to play it, an authentic performance[14] remained out of reach, had to be abandoned. On the other hand, it became clear that urban audiences that lack socialization in traditional peasant culture, can only engage with village folk music and dance through their adaptations and arrangements, making them the only viable way to convey the values of this culture.[15] At the same time, it is evident that the creative milieu that shaped folk music for many generations and centuries, serving as the authentic

Budapest), lacking a recognizable Hungarian tradition in their region, turned to the music of the Serbs living in the area. This is how the Vujicsics ensemble, which cultivates Hungary's South Slavic folk music traditions and still exists today, was formed.

14 In this context, authentic performance refers both to the authenticity of the musical material performed, and its performing practice showing the instrumental practice of traditional village ways. See: Pávai, *Hungarian Folk Dance Music of Transylvania*, 322–332.

15 "As far as it is possible to know, the educated segments of European societies have always used elements of folk art in their culture, transforming them according to their tastes, and similarly, peasant art borrowed elements of art music. Moreover, since the Romantic era, peasant music was looked upon as the music of the 'folk', that is, the music of the entire nation, and thus was regarded somewhat as a common cultural heritage. However, the Hungarian revival movement belongs to neither of the above categories of musical interchanges. In this case, there is no question of the use or the integration of the peasant tradition into some essentially different cultural product. In the Hungarian revival movement, genres of peasant music have been taken over in their entirety, preserving the traditional framework of forms and performing styles and much of the context as well. Hence a new category of music has been created. This 'folk music of the intelligentsia' is not really peasant music, but it is not art music or popular music either. Nor can it be regarded as a form of national music; it is not the music of the 'folk', at least not in the way the word 'folk' is traditionally used." Judit Frigyesi, "The Aesthetic of the Hungarian Revival Movement", in *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Mark Slobin (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 54–55.

communal workshop for this traditional music and dance culture, has disappeared or is in the process of disappearing in Hungarian-speaking territories. The environment in which it thrived has undergone significant change, bringing its active, vibrant era to an end, or in a handful of places, nearing that end. Thankfully, our rich archival collections provide us with a detailed understanding of how this music sounded, and was performed (unlike many of our other musical treasures!). In other words, as traditional music, this repertoire and performance practice can be effectively taught and learned similarly to other musical phenomena – and the same is true for dances.

Moreover, the early members of the revival movement acquired their knowledge of the music and the dance in the traditional way, through direct engagement with local village people, spending extensive periods on the ground (mainly in Transylvania) where folk music and folk dance were still in use. Thus, in addition to the vast body of recorded material preserved in the collections, and the remaining active traditional village musicians, singers and dancers (the interlocutors or collaborators, to use the technical term of our discipline), it was their expertise that became the driving force behind the movement.

However, the first generation of dance-house musicians has now grown old, quite a few prominent representatives have died,[16] and in most places there is a lack of interlocutors who were born into and grown up in the tradition. Moreover, self-organizing village communities, a key factor in the operation of traditional culture through generations, have also disappeared. Their members were simultaneously creators, users, recipients and shapers of this culture, ensuring that collective preferences, the taste expressing the community's social and cultural organization, prevailed. In other words, they controlled their culture on the basis of internal social and spiritual cultural relations, as part of their self-identity and the image reflected toward the outside world. Once the traditional village music and dance cultures bearing local characteristics were introduced to the cities, this kind of community control and self-regulatory feedback ceased to exist. Although the dance house movement was fundamentally brought to life by the desire to revive both dance and music in their traditional function, over time, stage productions using dance and popular music based on folk music gained more and more ground, resulting in a shift away from their original functions. The emphasis on individualism, driven by the global marketplace and the self-expression of the individual artists and authors have prevailed over the strengthening shared communal spaces for creativity and reception.

Today, researchers are able to utilize scientific methods from fields like traditional comparative ethnomusicology, sociology and cultural anthropology, to examine how traditional music and dance cultures respond when faced with

16 E.g. Béla Halmos (1946–2013), Tamás Kobzos Kiss (1950–2015), Péter Éri (1953–2023), Ferenc Kiss (1954–2024), Csaba Ökrös (1960–2019).

new conditions, functions and usages, and to assess the extent of changes, delineate their direction and, with comparative studies, data, and conclusions, facilitate the active and long-term survival of their spiritual and cultural legacy and centuries-old values.

Based on the results of Hungarian folk music research, Zoltán Kodály coined the concept of 'musical mother tongue' by analogy with the spoken language, the acquisition of which he considered to be as important a pillar of Hungarian identity and expression as the Hungarian language itself.[17] If we accept Kodály's concept as a point of departure, then – based on the results of folk music and folk dance research achieved so far, the experience of the 53-year-old dance house movement, and the curricula of folk music and folk dance university courses – we must assume that traditional music and dance cultures removed from their original environment, but retaining their basic functions can be sustained not only as cultural monuments, but also as living practices over the long term. Some of the key questions to consider in this respect include: What is the degree of changes affecting these traditional cultures? Which elements belonging to these cultures are affected? Do the changes pose a real risk to their integrity? A further inquiry pertains to whether it is possible to counterbalance the loss of community control and self-regulatory feedback in autochthonous village societies, and if so, how?

The overall objective of the research is to better understand the consequences of the introduction of traditional cultures into a foreign medium; to elucidate the effects of the dance house, and other folkloric, and revival movements, as well as the impacts of the stage and the cultural and entertainment market on these cultures in the present-day social context; and to identify the changes that have taken place so far or are expected to occur, by utilizing scientific methodology. A further goal is to deepen our knowledge of the integrity of these traditional cultures, as well as the limits of that integrity in relation to the extent and nature of the changes they undergo. When the changes go beyond those limits, the studied genres lose the defining features of their identity, transforming into commodities of the global marketplace, and often imbued with the political narratives of a specific sphere of power.

The main objective of the three-year research project with Slovenian researchers ("In New Disguise: Changes in the Traditional Music and Dance Culture in Hungary, Slovenia, and Around") was to assess the impact of the divergent, foreign milieu on the two segments of traditional culture (dance and music) in terms of genre changes generated by both social and external factors. The anticipated outcome is that the process of formation and deformation is interpretable and describable in detail, revealing which elements of traditional

17 Among many other places in writings, speeches: Zoltán Kodály, "Gyermekdalaink magyarságáról [1943]", in *Visszatekintés: Összegyűjtött írások, beszédek, nyilatkozatok* vol. I, ed. Ferenc Bónis (Budapest: Argumentum, 2007), 124–126.

music and dance cultures are most sensitive to change. In addition, an international perspective allows us to pinpoint the ways in which the erosion of distinctive traits leads to the transformation of these genres into commodities shaped by market dynamics and political agendas.

Traditional Village Music and Dance Emancipated

At the beginning of the dance house movement, young enthusiasts, in collaboration with ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists, aimed to bring folk music into an urban environment, while retaining its original function, i.e., musical accompaniment for improvised dancing.

> *Young people suddenly realized what attracted them to modern dances: the elemental power of the rhythmic movement, which in this virtuosic form was to be performed alone, releasing and 'showing off" to each other; the very same elemental power of rhythmic movements could be found in folk dance, but in aesthetically superior and refined forms. In other words, it has become obvious that folk music and folk dance is 'modern', and can successfully express the feelings of today's youth.*[18]

Rooted in civic initiative, the movement began as an experiment, as a private event of a group of friends who attempted to evoke and revive the patterns of peasant dance and music culture of local communities, while preserving its aesthetic values.[19] Later it developed into a public cultural program and rapidly spread in Budapest, the province towns, and beyond Hungary's borders. As an urban subculture rooted in traditional peasant culture, the dance house movement expanded independently of the centralized cultural oversight imposed by the communist regime, free from the control of the Communist Party. From an ideological point of view, it seemed dangerous, as it could evoke ideas of nationalism, liberty, and self-organized communities.[20] Since the movement embraced not only the traditional dances of Hungarians but also of other peoples (among them Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croatians, and Romanians), accusations of excessive nationalism became pointless by the second half of the 1970s. So, the authorities sought to steer the initiative into an official channel,

18 Vargyas, "A népdal helye a közművelődésünkben", 46.

19 "Recognition that the movement belongs to the educated classes is important rather for its aesthetic implications: the musical and cultural 'rules' of revival music are determined more by the aesthetic awareness of the educated middle class than by the taste of today's Hungarian peasantry or by any kind of state ideology. This aesthetic consciousness is apparent in decisions directly relevant to musical practice, like the choice of performing style and repertoire. But it signifies also a cultural awareness, a special attention on the part of its creators with regard to its function in a broader social and cultural context. The revival movement brought something new to Hungarian cultural life that was difficult to interpret in terms of existing musical categories." Frigyesi, "The Aesthetic of the Hungarian Revival Movement", 55.

20 Pál Richter, "Dance House under the Socialist Regime in Hungary", *Studia Musicologica* 56, no. 4 (2015): 407–416.

integrate it into the establishment of the period's cultural life, and exercise control over it. In many places, dance houses were opened in the community cultural centers operated by the communist state. Events took place – especially in the dance houses of Budapest – on a weekly or fortnightly basis, providing opportunity and employment for a large group of teachers who taught this traditional culture and grew out of the movement, so to speak. At the same time, these dance houses offered urban youth alternative entertainment, differing from the musical trends coming from the West (Hard Rock, Punk, and nascent Disco scene).[21]

The movement's influence was also evident in professional artistic circles. Similarly to the so-called State Folk Ensembles, founded during the early 1950s in the countries of the Eastern bloc, the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble was established in 1951. As Hungary's representative and professional artistic ensemble, consisting of choir, band, and dance ensemble, its main task was to nurture Hungarian folk traditions and mold them into modern stage art. Modernity at that time was represented by the philosophy and method of Igor Moiseyev and his ensemble; it primarily consisted of combining folk dance with the elements of classical ballet, and putting a strong emphasis on the action, on a story line in the choreographies. This meant that neither the dance nor the accompanying music was taken and *could not* be taken purely from rural tradition; arrangements were produced instead. This Soviet-type 'folk' stage art provided a living for generations of choreographers and composers.[22] By comparison, the appointment of Sándor Tímár[23] as the new leader of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble in 1981 marked a paradigm shift. An early member of the dance house movement himself and enjoying the full support of folk dance researcher György Martin, Tímár, was convinced that the mastery of peasant dances and illuminating their diversity, beauty, and uniqueness constituted an essential criteria of expertise.[24] This, of course, required a musical accompaniment with traditional village music that was already widely known thanks to the dance house movement. Such was situation in which the

21 "Some considered it a kind of light popular music, a type of dance-cafe music which in Hungary is called diszkó (from the word disc, referring to the fact that the music for dancing came from records in these cafes). Others saw in the revival movement the great opportunity to reestablish a Hungarian popular music and expel from the market foreign popular musics like rock'n'roll. This hope was the more naive because several of the revival groups experimented at some point with the inclusion of rock and various other foreign popular styles." Frigyesi, "The Aesthetic of the Hungarian Revival Movement", 55–56.

22 One of the first productions of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble was the *Wedding from Ecser* (1952), (accessed on August 30, 2024) https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/cdoSct2nBY5NHbS.

23 Sándor Tímár (b. 1930) dancer, master of folk dance, leader of dance ensembles, collector of folk dances, 1981–1998 leader of the Hungarian Folk State Ensemble.

24 One of the productions of the Hungarian Folk State Ensemble from Tímár's period: *Dance with bottle from Tolna region* (1987), (accessed on August 30, 2024), https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/jTbQ8ZS4N8qoPTy.

official, folk dance stage art found itself as the major political changes swept through Hungary in 1989–90 and the country abandoned Soviet-type dictatorship and joined the community of the Western democracies.

Democratic transformations also led to radical changes in Hungarian-speaking village communities, which affected their traditional cultural life.[25] However, the first members of the dance house movement learned the music and dance in the traditional way. In parallel, they cultivated an active professional dialogue with the research community; that is, they worked under scientific management and control.

As the movement's first generations gave way to younger members, its reliance on the results of folk music and dance research diminished. The rapidly declining number of those with knowledge of the peasant village tradition no longer ensured firsthand learning, while community control of these traditional cultures was no longer in practice. The key issue at hand now is whether cultures that depend on oral communication and communal use of traditional practices in village societies can survive long term in a foreign environment where they risk losing, partially or entirely, their essentially oral ways of transmission and community control. If so, to what extent have the various elements changed, shaped, or deformed? Is it possible to model the process of change, or the expected transformations?

If we consider village community control one of the basic conditions for the existence of folk music, folk music will, in fact, cease to exist the moment this control ceases to exist. More precisely, folk music will cease to exist as a living tradition in the sense that it will no longer evolve, form new periods, or undergo transformations in its repertoire. It will become a set of songs and instrumental pieces, similar to any other composed musical works, which can be learned and performed with the appropriate professional preparation and qualifications. At the same time, oral tradition will also come to an end; only the previously collected and recorded repertoire will survive in the long term. The same applies to folk dances, with one key difference, however: given the crucial role of rhythm and meter in the musical accompaniment of the dances, once the living phase of the tradition comes to an end, alternative musical accompaniments with the same rhythm and meter may be paired with any given dance.

Conflicts of Interest

The dance house movement appeared not only as a new entertainment option for urban public spaces but also had an impact on dance stages, and, in turn, on

25 Borders strictly closed earlier suddenly opened, and the Hungarians of the neighboring countries, first of all in Romania, could travel to Hungary and other parts of Europe as well. As they (mainly males) also began to work in Hungary and other countries, the former symbiosis of village communities fragmented.

the use and performance practices of traditional village music. As dance houses multiplied, so did stage performances conceived in the new spirit, and soon, this genre of revival folk music became part of the world music market. Market laws placed an ever-increasing importance on the individual, showcasing the performer's personality. Popular music, under which traditional village music labelled as world music has also been classified, focuses on the performer's individuality, at the same time stimulating a continuous renewal of genre and style to align with current trends. The requirements imposed by both the market and the stage are mostly in contrast – or at least incompatible – with the basic laws and operating conditions of traditional dance and music. Of course, individuality did play a role within traditional village communities, but only within certain limits. In the village tradition, dance and music were not performed as stage productions aimed at an audience; transformations occurred more gradually, requiring an extended period of time for new elements to be integrated.

It is interesting to observe how the programs of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble evolved in the wake of the political changes of 1989. During the 1980s, thanks to the work of Sándor Tímár, stage performances of folklore underwent a renewal oriented towards village tradition, underpinned by the thorough knowledge of the peasant dances. Then, in 1998, revival musician and performer Ferenc Sebő, one of the initiators and leading figures of the dance house movement, became the artistic director of the ensemble. He engaged Gábor Mihályi, a former student of Tímár, as choirmaster. In their program, they announced the creation of a new image and the development of new perspectives in the artistic undertakings of the State Folk Ensemble. In the beginning, they presented Hungarian folk dances in genre scenes and according to regions. Subsequently, the programs were enriched with dances of Western origin from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries. In the end, however, they created productions that placed the traditional rural dance, the dance 'mother tongue' in what they called 'a new context', usually by highlighting and combining mosaics drawn from the traditions of different peoples. Dances were occasionally accompanied by popular music composed using elements from traditional village music, in the manner of the genre previously known as world music but more recently called global music. This music was supplemented with increasingly spectacular stage imagery, striving for modernity and up-to-dateness.[26] Albeit undoubtedly in a different way, as was characteristic of the time, dance productions that for a short period aimed to remain faithful to village traditions, soon began to once again obey the laws of the stage, and reverted to adaptions and individual choreographies using only elements of peasant dances.

26 Folk dance and folk music in 'a new context', in the stage production of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble: *Naplegenda* [*Sunlegend*] by Nikola Parov (2000), https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/CSkpWbdgJbTXbZT (accessed on August 30, 2024).

Meanwhile, the performance and execution of the dances also changed, which also affected their aesthetic: the steps and motifs remained, but the dancers' traditional posture, dignity, restrained use of space, and the economy of movements[27] became less prominent or disappeared almost entirely. Instead, productions were distinguished by sweeping motions of the hands and feet, which exhibited far greater dynamics and demanded much more space. In addition, the original tempi became quicker, leading to a predominance of acrobatic and virtuosic elements, especially in male dances.[28] The character and aesthetic of the dances changed, and the integrity of the dance processes collapsed. The components of the dances were now used in entirely different contexts, combining elements with different origins, and the dancers' mental and spiritual approach to dances seem to have also changed radically.

Furthermore, the dancing habits of urban youth participating in dance houses have undergone transformations as well. At the beginning of the dance house movement, there were weekly opportunities, for a modest entrance fee, designed to attract a wider, non-professional audience to learn the dances of each region. In addition to learning the dances, during the breaks, they learned folk songs from the given region.[29] The percentage of stage productions was much smaller at that time; however, dance house courses were held in a large number of urban cultural centers. Nowadays, despite the far greater government funding, the majority of courses are no longer held on a regular basis, and even these are mostly attended by the middle generation and older people, while youth participation is uncommon. Young people, instead, are either involved in the revival movement, or frequent what are known as 'folk pubs', where the focus is less on learning the dances and more on enjoying free, informal entertainment. There is no organized, 'institutionalized' dance learning; everyone can dance or move to music as they like.[30] Those young people who know folk dances typically learned them in official or semi-official folk dance ensembles. Generally, in the Hungarian folk genre, it is slowly becoming rare to find a program based solely on traditional village music sources. Various musical bands (using different kinds of instrument combinations that often diverge from traditional ones) play, usually starting with a concert, followed by

27 Traditional dance (man dance *legényes*) from Transylvania: https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/hu/dances?ItemId=%22Ft.637.2%22 (accessed on June 30, 2024).

28 Example of folk dance performance in a virtuosic manner: https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/YdWCW7tje7kM4ya (02:45–03:50), https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/e2qtqPMXis966BW (accessed on August 30, 2024).

29 Recordings in dance houses: documentary film about the Sebő–Halmos dance house (1974) https://owncloud.abtk.hu/index.php/s/HwzccPxTgkS87DN (accessed on August 30, 2024); Táncház-panorama Budapest (2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeEcPj9_OpA (accessed on August 30, 2024).

30 Folk pub in Budapest https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cdzitFszmI (00:30–01:30) (accessed on August 30, 2024).

the free program. Musicians perform different kinds of pieces freely, usually not adhering to traditional dance cycles. Moreover, ensembles are not *táncház* bands mimicking traditional village instrumental ensembles; rather, they are formations that create very dynamic and loud popular world music flavored by Balkan rhythms. The meaning of traditional village music changed for these bands, and their approach to this genre also differs from that of earlier generations of revival musicians. Generally, they trained on the revived traditional village music performed in the dance house movement; however, they are open to the musical heritage of a wide range of ethnic groups, and play an amalgam of these musical worlds filled with many improvisations. As they explain, they are not bound by the 'caste system rules' of the dance house movement; they use traditional village music as raw material and source of inspiration, embellishing it according to their imagination and musical taste.[31] This contradicts the fact that at the dawn of the dance house movement, the basic idea and primary aim was to present the effect that peasant music would have on us as an aesthetic experience, as it had on Béla Bartók's and Zoltán Kodály's art earlier. Nevertheless, the recent mainstream ideological approach concerning traditional village music advocates for modernization, including the adoption of new instruments, rhythm patterns, and harmonization etc., to create one's own image in the relentless pursuit of identity. The latest efforts are geared towards individual fulfilment under the guise of catchy and fashionable slogans. They do not take into account that traditional village music is similar to the phenomenon of biodiversity and that, in this sense, any kind of uniform music making based on identical templates and clichéd stylistic features (often amateurish solutions), trying to catch up with rapidly changing fashions and corresponding requirements of the pop music market, will necessarily result in a monoculture.[32] The same applies partly to what is called world/global music, which, in some cases, does not even attempt to combine the various musical aesthetics in order to create a style, but simply throws them on top of each other and places them in a stereotyped musical environment.[33]

31 Promotional film (2016) of a Hungarian *nufolk* ensemble established in 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1ahErAVjhQ (accessed on June 30, 2024); promotional film (2024) of a quite new ensemble established in 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvwKPntS-IY (accessed on June 30, 2024).

32 The market's pop-folk music products display stereotypical characteristics that are closely linked to the fashion trends of their respective time periods. The Balkan rhythms, saxophone, drum, and accordion as almost obligatory elements can be mentioned from the last two decades as an example. The influential power and impact of these elements are so vigorous, that they overwhelm the peculiarities of music with different origins.

33 "In conclusion, let me add that internationalism is not only unthinkable, but also detrimental to music and all other arts. Music and its sister arts must always reflect the character of their respective regions and environments. This is the source of diversity, both in art and in life." (Béla Bartók, "Magyar népzene és új magyar zene [1928]", in *Bartók Béla Írásai* vol. 1, ed. Tibor Tallián (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1989), English transl. by István Csaba Németh, based on the critical notes of the volume, 137.)

In addition to the accurate description of the social and sociological transformations, including the exact data connected to these processes, the changes taking place in traditional village music and dance culture can also be demonstrated by the exploration of aesthetic values, the quality of productions, which in music fundamentally requires the consideration of three factors:

1. the musical content, including comparative analyses of musical characteristics and styles that make differentiation possible,
2. the manner of the performance, including the role of the performer's individuality, and
3. the nature, quality, relational framework, essential connections defining the existence, and the social context of the musical product itself.

Musicians and composers who conducted folk music research, along with ethnographers and sociologists working in the rising *táncház* movement, evaluated these three factors that also formed the intellectual foundation for the dance house movement. Regarding musical content (1.), they discussed the rural-urban dichotomy, the relationship between music and society, and, as the most important issue, the aesthetic peculiarities and values of folk (i.e. village, peasant) music.[34] One typical example reflecting the discussion on this topic comes from Béla Bartók:

> *According to the way I feel, a genuine peasant melody of our land is a musical example of a perfected art. I consider it quite as much a masterpiece, for instance, in miniature, as a Bach fugue or a Mozart sonata movement is a masterpiece in larger form. A melody of this kind is a classic example of the expression of a musical thought in its most conceivably concise form, with the avoidance of all that is superfluous* […].[35]

Melodies originating in Western art music also found their way and took root in village tradition. Some appear in the repertoire of both urban Romani orchestras and village bands. The musical content of these melodies fundamentally differs from that of traditional village music; consequently, their aesthetic evaluation should be informed by the specific period of art music from which they originated. Of course, we must bear in mind that these tunes were 'folklorized'; they had been transmitted orally within a given community for a sufficiently long

34 Pál Richter, "Gondolatok a népzene esztétikumáról", *Magyar Zene* 61, no. 4 (2023): 365; Pál Richter, "Scholarly and Artistic Discourse on the Values and Aesthetics of Folk Music in 20th-century Hungary", in *Táncház 50: Half a Century of the Hungarian Táncház Movement*, eds. Pál Richter, Dániel Lipták (Budapest: HUN-REN BTK Zenetudományi Intézet), in print.

35 Béla Bartók, "Magyar Népzene és új magyar zene [1928]", in *Bartók Béla Írásai* vol. 1, ed. Tibor Tallián (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1989), 129–137; Eng. transl. quoted from Béla Bartók, "The Folk Songs of Hungary [1928]", in *Béla Bartók: Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 333.

period of time (at least two or three generations) and had thus adapted to the musical tradition of the peasant community. In the process of organic integration into folk music tradition, the melodies inevitably undergo some changes as compared to their original form. In most cases, the outcome, the folklorized version will exhibit a level of enrichment that can be described using aesthetic criteria.[36]

The performance style (2.) plays a crucial role in the aesthetic perception of folk music. This aspect was also emphasized by Hungarian researchers of folk music tradition. By the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, in addition to the musically based systematization of stylistic layers and types of Hungarian folk music, a comprehensive overview of the performance styles had also been finalized. The latter was significantly facilitated and inspired by the dance house movement.[37]

Kodály emphasizes the richness of timbre, the specificity of the vocal technique, and the use of ornaments preserved in the traditional Transylvanian singing manner. Subsequent research has localized similar phenomena in all parts of the Hungarian language area.[38] Concerning instrumental village band music, Bartók and Kodály were familiar with the performance styles of both urban and rural Romani bands. The direct experience of these performance styles proved decisive for the composition of their works based on folk songs and popular art songs. The performance style of traditional village music is a fundamental component of the aesthetic of traditional music because of its gestures, accents, breaths, and moods, which has also been confirmed by research on the performance of folk songs and instrumental village music. It was no coincidence that, at the beginning of the dance house movement, it was precisely the performance style that sparked skepticism among renowned folk music researchers: Are performers who were not born into this tradition and who do not live in it able to perform village music in an authentic manner?

Regarding the essential connections defining the existence and the social context of village music (3.),[39] researchers, including Bartók and Kodály, repeatedly emphasized that they considered the personal experience in the country to be equally indispensable for assessing the artistic values of the folk songs, composing folk song arrangements, and conducting scholarship.

---

36 For further details see: Pál Richter, "Style hongrois és magyar zenei hagyomány: A népies zene és a népzene kölcsönhatásai", *Zenetudományi dolgozatok 2017–2018, Tallián Tibor tiszteletére* (Budapest: MTA BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, 2020) 43–56; Pál Richter, "Értelmezések és félreértelmezések a népzenekutatásban", *Magyar Zene* 56, no. 4 (2018): 373–384.

37 Richter, "Gondolatok a népzene esztétikumáról", 373–376; Richter, "Scholarly and Artistic Discourse on the Values and Aesthetics of Folk Music in 20th-century Hungary", in print.

38 Katalin Paksa, *"Énekeltem én…": Kiváló népi énekesek antológiája* (Gödöllő: Premontrei Szent Norbert Gimnázium, Egyházzenei Szakközépiskola és Diákotthon, 2014).

39 For further details see: Richter, "Gondolatok a népzene esztétikumáról", 376–380; Richter, "Scholarly and Artistic Discourse on the Values and Aesthetics of Folk Music in 20th-century Hungary", in print.

> […] *the effects of peasant music cannot be deep and permanent unless this music is studied in the country as part of a life shared with the peasants.*[40]
>
> *It is not enough to 'folk get to know' the material by collecting it in a way a scholar would do.* [...] *One must be personally involved with the tradition and thus with the spiritual life of a group of people. It is only in this way that we can gain access to what cannot be transmitted in any other way than the face-to-face encounter of living beings.* [...] *the Hungarian music historian must first be a folklorist. He cannot examine our written sources, if he does not know the folk music tradition from personal experience. One cannot acquire such knowledge without living in a village for a shorter or longer period.*[41]

Living in the country for a shorter or longer period gave researchers the spiritual and artistic experience that revealed the spontaneous and instinctive expression of the individuals in the local community creation process. Representatives of the dance house movement in the first period trained in the same practice: They learned village music and dance in the traditional way from local musicians, singers and dancers while living in their communities for an extended time. Already in 1974, cultural historian László Kósa accurately observed the innovative approach and fresh energy of revival musicians and singers associated with the dance house movement, which highlighted the essence of folk art and the aesthetic values of peasant music and dance.

> [The dance house movement] *has undoubtedly revitalized our folk singing with its fashion for the archaic dialects of Hungarian folk music from Transdanubia, the Transylvanian Plain, and the Csángó region, which were hitherto little known to wider audiences. With its young performers, the movement promises the emergence of a new performing style. In contrast to the traditional endeavors, it adheres more to folkloric patterns, though not in a rigid manner. It strives for a naturalistic performance, but without the inclination to conserve, and views folklore not as museological but as living material that can be made to blossom according to its own laws. The movement seeks to focus on the important original characteristic of oral tradition, which is that it lives in variants; it is not a closed entity but an open one, capable of further development. For example, the peasant dance is not staged with strict choreography and precisely determined steps but more loosely, leaving room for variation and improvisation.* [...] *These avant-garde initiatives mark a radical departure not only from past efforts in the 1930s or 1950s to preserve folk culture by adhering to traditional frameworks and forms but also from the present-day* [1970s!] *interpretation of folklore we might describe as traditional, which presents folk art as a* [stage] *production for a passive audience. They aim to develop a new, interactive form of public culture in music, dance, song, and crafts, encouraging people to participate. Having been established as a form of entertainment for young people, the dance house movement has already successfully achieved its goal.*[42]

40 Béla Bartók, "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music [1931]", in *Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 341.

41 Zoltán Kodály, "Néprajz és zenetörténet [1933]", in Zoltán Kodály, *Visszatekintés: Összegyűjtött írások, beszédek, nyilatkozatok* 1–3, ed. Ferenc Bónis (Budapest: Argumentum, 2007) vol. 2, 231.

42 László Kósa, "A népi kultúra új hulláma", *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 9 (1974): 41–42.

Notwithstanding, a few years after the movement began, no data or knowledge was yet available about the long-term application and use of traditional village culture in a context other than its own.

Conclusion

In summary, we must acknowledge that following the dance house movement's heroic age and its first generations' efforts, the newer members of the movement have relied less and less on the results of folk music and dance research and their enthusiasm – sometimes combined with a lack of professional training, or even of elementary skills – was less and less able to assimilate reliable data and traditional performance manners of village music, let alone recognize and evaluate the processes characteristic of a tradition disappearing at an increasingly fast pace.

From an aesthetic point of view, traditional music – its mode of existence and role in the village community – represents an extremely complex issue; so much so that even today we cannot accurately and responsibly formulate a model for it. What we can confidently state is that both the creation and practice of this culture occurred under the 'supervision' of the village community concerned. It is true that the existence of variations and constant changes were the essence of this culture; however, the approval and constant confirmation of the socio-cultural community, of traditional peasant society is equally important. In urban settings, changes in the elements of this culture, innovations, and often even variants, come from particular individuals, and the validation of a traditional village community is naturally absent. The reason for this is that the kind of homogenous community, the symbiosis that existed in the autochthonous village environment, cannot develop in urban contexts characterized by diversity in the shadow of the fluctuating trends of modern culture. In other words, we know and possess a culture of peasant origin; however, without the existence of oral tradition and symbiosis, the kind of village communal quality that is a necessary condition for its functioning, we are unable to carry it forward or ensure its organic survival at its previous level. Likely, the only means to keep it alive is akin to the manner in which we look after the composed art music of previous eras, which is also a difficult creative task. As Sárosi put it:

> […] *it is only through a creative approach that one can properly reproduce – perform – the sounds of music, the words of a poem or a dramatic work. The performer must have a talent similar to that of the composer in order to make the work sound as the composer intended.*[43]

43 Bálint Sárosi, *A cigányzenekar múltja az egykorú sajtó tükrében* vol. II: *1904–1944* (Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2012), 8.

After five decades, the effect of the foreign medium (distinct from the original village, peasant environment) and its influences on the elements, repertoire, and performance of traditional village music and dance culture are increasing and significant. A conflict is already apparent between the conscious preservation of traditions and commercially driven urban entertainment, between true functions and stage productions. There are also contradictions between the desire for self-realization of young musicians and dancers and the need to preserve traditional practices. In general, two branches of the revival practice originated in the dance house movement have emerged in a distinct form recently. Following the path set by predecessors, the first seeks to preserve and restore village music and dance culture in its traditional form, according to its own laws, while allowing for individuality of execution within this framework. The second takes inspiration from the musical and dance content of traditional village culture creating new, composed musical and cultural products that fulfill the demand for self-realization, align with ever-changing trends, and cater to pop-folk markets. In light of contemporary trends we can anticipate that in 20–25 years, the Hungarian *táncház* as a method will remain a vital means of preserving traditional peasant culture with its distinct elements, rather than merely offering arranged versions, in sometimes distorted, monotonous, and stereotypical performing styles that arise from urban use and business conditions. Regarding the musical aspect of the movement, it is clear that one cannot raise objections to dispute the value of individual musical creation and composition, but there are valid concerns about the underlying confused ideology and the lack of the professional knowledge and skills. The final product in the second approach, like all compositions in general, is, of course, highly dependent on musical talent. The traditional village music material provides only a possibility for performance and composition. It is not a registered trademark, whether the piece is labeled as world/global music, fusion music, Balkan magic, and so forth. Here, again, we must rely on Bartók's wisdom:

> *In the hands of incompetent composers neither folk music nor any other musical material will ever attain significance. If a composer has no talent, it will be of no use to him to base his music on folk music or any other music. The result will in every case be nothing.*[44]

In other words, musicians, whether they play serious or light music, must remain within the prevailing boundaries of musical good taste, bearing in mind the aesthetics of traditional village music. Understanding and appreciating what constitutes good musical taste in a given context depends in part on education, but more on innate talent.

44 Béla Bartók, "A népi zene hatása a mai műzenére [1931]", in *Bartók Béla Írásai* vol. 1, ed. Tibor Tallián (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1989), 138–147; Eng. transl. quoted from Béla Bartók, "On the Significance of Folk Music [1931]", in *Béla Bartók: Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 347.

References

Bartók, Béla. "A népi zene hatása a mai műzenére [1931]." In *Bartók Béla Írásai* vol. 1, edited by Tibor Tallián, 138–147. Budapest: Editio Musica, 1989. English translation: Bartók, Béla. "On the Significance of Folk Music [1931]." In *Béla Bartók: Essays*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff, 345–347. London: Faber & Faber, 1976.

Bartók, Béla. "Magyar népzene és új magyar zene [1928]." In *Bartók Béla Írásai* vol. 1, edited by Tibor Tallián, 129–137. Budapest: Editio Musica, 1989. English translation: Bartók, Béla. "The Folk Songs of Hungary [1928]." In *Béla Bartók: Essays*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff, 331–339. London: Faber & Faber, 1976.

Bartók, Béla. "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music [1931]." In *Béla Bartók: Essays*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff, 340–344. London: Faber & Faber, 1976.

Bartók, Béla, and Zoltán Kodály. *Magyar népdalok: Énekhangra, zongorakísérettel* [*Hungarian Folksongs, for Voice and Piano*]. Budapest: Rozsnyai Károly, 1906.

Frigyesi, Judit. "The Aesthetic of the Hungarian Revival Movement." In *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Mark Slobin, 54–75. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Jávorszky, Béla Szilárd. *A magyar FOLK története: Népzene, táncház, világzene* [*The History of Hungarian FOLK: Folk Music, Dance House, World Music*]. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, Hagyományok Háza, 2013.

Kodály, Zoltán. "Néprajz és zenetörténet [1933] [Ethnography and Music History]." In *Visszatekintés: Összegyűjtött írások, beszédek, nyilatkozatok [Retrospection: Collection of Writings, Speeches, Statements]* vol. II, edited by Ferenc Bónis, 225–234. Budapest: Argumentum, 2007.

Kodály, Zoltán. "Gyermekdalaink magyarságáról [1943] [About the Hungarianness of Our Children Songs]." In *Visszatekintés: Összegyűjtött írások, beszédek, nyilatkozatok [Retrospection: Collection of Writings, Speeches, Statements]* vol. I, edited by Ferenc Bónis, 124–126. Budapest: Argumentum, 2007.

Kósa, László. "A népi kultúra új hulláma [The New Wave of Folk Culture]." *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 9 (1974): 38–45.

Paksa, Katalin. *"Énekeltem én…": Kiváló népi énekesek antológiája* [*I sang... An Anthology of Outstanding Folk Singers*]. Gödöllő: Premontrei Szent Norbert Gimnázium, Egyházzenei Szakközépiskola és Diákotthon, 2014.

Pávai, István. *Hungarian Folk Dance Music of Transylvania*. Budapest: Hagyományok Háza, MMA Kiadó, 2020.

Richter, Pál. "Between Folk and Urban Culture: The Dance Music Traditions of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Hungary." In *The Element of Dance in Music of the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Grzegorz Zieziula, 287–301. Warsaw: The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 2023.

Richter, Pál. "Dance House under the Socialist Regime in Hungary." *Studia Musicologica* 56, no. 4 (2015): 407–416.

Richter, Pál. "Értelmezések és félreértelmezések a népzenekutatásban [Interpretations and Misinterpretations in Folk Music Research]." *Magyar Zene* 56, no. 4 (2018): 373–384.

Richter, Pál. "Gondolatok a népzene esztétikumáról [Some Thoughts Concerning the Aesthetic of Folk Music]." *Magyar Zene* 61, no. 4 (2023): 365–382.

Richter, Pál. "New Channels for Renewal of Tradition – Folk Music in the University Education." In *Musical Traditions: Discovery, Inquiry, Interpretation and Application; Proceedings of the XXVI. European Seminar in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Pál Richter, 351–360. Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2012.

Richter, Pál. "Scholarly and Artistic Discourse on the Values and Aesthetics of Folk Music in 20th-century Hungary." In *Táncház 50: Half a Century of the Hungarian Táncház Movement*, edited by Pál Richter, Dániel Lipták. Budapest: HUN-REN BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, Zenetudományi Intézet. In print.

Richter, Pál. "Style hongrois és magyar zenei hagyomány: A népies zene és a népzene kölcsönhatásai [*Style hongrois* and Hungarian Musical Traditions: Interrelations Between Popular Art Music and Folk Music]." In *Zenetudományi dolgozatok 2017–2018, Tallián Tibor tiszteletére*, 43–56. Budapest: MTA BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, 2020.

Sárosi, Bálint. *A cigányzenekar múltja az egykorú sajtó tükrében* [*The Past of the Gypsy Band in the Light of the Period Press*]. Vol. II: *1904–1944*. Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2012.

Sárosi, Bálint. *Gypsy Music*. Budapest: Corvina, 1978.

Siklós, László. *Táncház* [1977]. Budapest: Hagyományok Háza – Timp Kiadó, 2006.

Vargyas, Lajos. "A népdal helye a közművelődésünkben [The Position of the Folk Song in Our Public Education]." *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 9 (1974): 46–51.

SUMMARY

Exploring the aesthetic qualities and values represented inherent in traditional music requires examining three basic factors: (1) the musical content, including musical characteristics, styles, etc.; (2) the performance style; (3) the fundamental nature of folk music, its interconnectedness, community character, its role and essential relationships. There is no doubt that earlier comments and assessments on these factors by musicians and composers who conducted folk music research and later by ethnographers and sociologists formed the intellectual backdrop for the development of the *táncház* [dance house] movement in urban milieu. This also explains why, at the beginning of the movement young advocates sought to present the very same aesthetic ideals of traditional village music to society as Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály did in their own art by reviving and re-learning rural folklore. A thorough comparative survey of autochthon, traditional folk music and its reflection in urban revivalism on aesthetical factors, including content, performing style and context of cultural and social existence, enables us to answer the key issue of the research: whether cultures maintained through oral communication and communal use can survive long term in a foreign environment when losing, partly or entirely, the essentially oral way of their transmission and the village community control that had been so vibrant for many generations. If so, to what extent have the various elements changed, shaped or deformed? The process of change reveals the differences, new tendencies, as well as distortions, which lead to trends that validate or invalidate the aesthetics and artistic value of folk (village) music and dance as traditional cultures.

POVZETEK

Tradicionalna vaška glasba in ples v urbanem okolju. Posledice in estetski vidiki

Raziskovanje estetskih lastnosti in vrednosti, ki so neločljivo povezane s tradicionalno glasbo, zahteva preučitev treh osnovnih dejavnikov: (1) glasbena vsebina, vključno z glasbenimi značilnostmi, slogi itn.; (2) izvedbeni slog; (3) temeljna narava ljudske glasbe, njena medsebojna povezanost, skupnostni značaj, vloga in bistveni odnosi. Ni dvoma, da so zgodnejše pripombe

in ocene teh dejavnikov, ki so jih najprej ustvarili glasbeniki in skladatelji, raziskovalci ljudske glasbe, kasneje pa etnografi in sociologi, tvorile intelektualno ozadje za razvoj gibanja *táncház* [plesna hiša] v urbanem okolju. To pojasnjuje tudi, zakaj so mladi zagovorniki na začetku gibanja želeli družbi predstaviti iste estetske ideale tradicionalne vaške glasbe, kot sta jih Béla Bartók in Zoltán Kodály v svoji umetnosti, z oživljanjem in ponovnim učenjem podeželske folklore. Temeljita primerjalna raziskava avtohtone, tradicionalne ljudske glasbe in njenega odseva v mestnem oživljanju z vidika estetskih dejavnikov, vključno z vsebino, izvedbenim slogom in kontekstom kulturne in družbene eksistence, nam omogoča odgovoriti na ključno vprašanje raziskave: ali lahko kulture, ki se ohranjajo z ustnim prenašanjem in skupnostno rabo, dolgoročno preživijo v tujem okolju, ko delno ali v celoti izgubijo svoj nepogrešljiv ustni način prenašanja in nadzor vaške skupnosti, ki je bil toliko generacij izjemno živ. Če je tako, v kakšnem obsegu so se različni elementi spremenili, izoblikovali ali deformirali? Proces sprememb razkriva razlike, nove tendence, pa tudi izkrivljanja, ki vodijo do trendov, ki potrjujejo ali ovržejo estetiko in umetniško vrednost ljudske (vaške) glasbe in plesa kot tradicionalnih kultur.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PÁL RICHTER (richter.pal@abtk.hu) was born in Budapest, graduated from the Liszt Ferenc University of Music as a musicologist in 1995, and obtained a PhD degree in 2004. His special field of research is seventeenth century music of Hungary, and he conducted his PhD research in the same subject. His other main fields of interest are Hungarian folk music, classical and 19th century music theory and multimedia in music education. Since 1990 he has been involved in the computerized cataloguing of the folk music collection of the Institute for Musicology and has also participated in ethnographic field research. From 2005 he was the head of Folk Music Archives, and recently has become the director of the Institute of Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities HAS. He regularly delivers papers at conferences abroad, publishes articles and studies and teaches music theory and the study of musical forms at the Liszt Ferenc University of Music in Budapest. From 2007 till 2021 he directed the new folk music training, and is the founding head of the Folk Music Department.

O AVTORJU

PÁL RICHTER (richter.pal@abtk.hu) je bil rojen v Budimpešti, leta 1995 je diplomiral iz muzikologije na Univerzi za glasbo Liszt Ferenc, leta 2004 pa je pridobil doktorat. Njegovo posebno področje raziskovanja je madžarska glasba 17. stoletja, na tem področju je tudi opravil doktorski študij. Druga področja, ki ga zanimajo, so madžarska ljudska glasba, klasična glasba in glasbena teorija 19. stoletja ter uporaba multimedije v glasbenem izobraževanju. Od leta 1990 sodeluje pri računalniškem katalogiziranju zbirke ljudske glasbe Inštituta za muzikologijo in sodeluje tudi pri etnografskih terenskih raziskavah. Od leta 2005 je bil vodja Arhiva ljudske glasbe, nedavno pa je postal direktor Inštituta za muzikologijo, Raziskovalnega centra za humanistične vede HAS. Redno predava na konferencah v tujini, objavlja članke in študije ter poučuje glasbeno teorijo in študij glasbenih oblik na Univerzi za glasbo Liszt Ferenc v Budimpešti. Od leta 2007 do 2021 je vodil novo izobraževanje na področju ljudske glasbe in je ustanovni vodja Oddelka za ljudsko glasbo.