

#### 4. FROM THE HARMONIES USED IN FOLK MUSIC TO THE HARMONIZATION OF FOLK SONG ARRANGEMENTS

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*Od použitých harmónií v ľudovej hudbe ku harmonizáciám v  
úpravách ľudových piesni*

**Pál Richter**

##### ***Abstract:***

According to the data, and sources Bartok did not consider the use of harmony essential for the style of this musical culture based on the peasant music first of all of the Hungarians, Romanians, and Slovaks. We must not forget that he became familiar with folk music mostly through unison singing. And due to the small amount of data [concerning harmonizations in folk music] as compared to the totality of the collected material, he simply did not have the chance to assess the gravity of the issue. It was only much later, that issues of folk harmonization were subjected to a comprehensive examination. Some practices of the harmonization notated in historical sources of the 17th–18th centuries similar to that in folk music. All of them should be compared with the harmonization in the folk song arrangements of Bartók and Kodály. The main difference is that the accompaniment created by these composers is always structured according to the individual voices in simpler or more complex ways. In contrast of this kind of complexity, the folk music practice uses an accompaniment where the harmonization tends and like to follow the melody. The harmonies come into being as a result of a relatively simple procedure and actually the melody appears in every part of the accompaniment. This phenomenon is similar to the functional-like harmonizing found in the folk music practice, where each member of the instrumental ensemble seeks to play the sensitive leading tones of the melody.

*Podľa údajov a zdrojov Bartók nepovažoval používanie harmónie za zásadné pre štýl hudobnej kultúry založenej na roľníckej hudbe - v prvom*

*rade Maďarov, Rumunov a Slovákov. V tejto súvislosti nesmieme zabudnúť, že sa s ľudovou hudbou zoznámil vďaka spevom unisono. Vzhľadom na malé množstvo získaných dát [o harmonizácii v ľudovej hudbe] v porovnaní s celkovým zhromaždeným materiálom, jednoducho nemal možnosť posúdiť závažnosť problému. Až oveľa neskôr sa problematika ľudovej harmonizácie podrobila komplexnému preskúmaniu. Niektoré postupy harmonizácie zapísané v historických prameňoch zo 17. a 18. storočia sú podobné ako v ľudovej hudbe. Všetky by mali byť porovnané s harmonizáciou v zbierkach ľudových piesní Bartóka a Kodályho. Hlavným rozdielom je, že sprievod vytvorený uvedenými skladateľmi je vždy štruktúrovaný podľa jednotlivých hlasov. Na rozdiel od tohto druhu zložitosti, ľudová hudba využíva sprievod, kde harmonizácia ma tendenciu sledovať melódiu. Harmónie vznikajú v dôsledku pomerne jednoduchých postupov a vlastne melódie sa objavujú v každej časti sprievodu. Tento jav je podobný funkčnému harmonizovaniu, ktorý sa objavuje v praktikách ľudovej hudby, kde každý člen inštrumentálneho súboru sa snaží hrať citlivo vedúce tóny melódie.*

**Keywords:**

harmonization, Hungarian folk music, instrumental folk music, Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, string band, Kájoni (Kaioni), Transylvania harmonizácia, maďarská ľudová hudba, inštrumentálna ľudová hudba, Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, sláčikový súbor, Kájoni (Kaioni), Transylvania

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The starting point of the topic is an observation Béla Bartók made in 1931 concerning the influence of folk music on art music and the importance of folk music for modern musical composition. According to Bartók, there are three ways in which folk music (or as he calls it: “peasant music”) is taken over and becomes transmuted into art music:

1. *“We may take over a peasant melody unchanged or only slightly varied, write an accompaniment to it and possibly some opening and concluding phrases. [...]”*

*Two main types can be distinguished among works of this character.”*

a) *“In the one case accompaniment, introductory and concluding phrases are of secondary importance, and they only serve as an ornamental setting for the precious stone: the peasant melody.”*

b) *“the melody only serves as a ‘motto’ while that which is built round it is real importance.”*

*“All shades of transition are possible between these two extremes [...] But in every case it is of greatest importance that the musical qualities of the setting should be derived from the musical qualities of the melody, from such characteristics as are contained in it openly or covertly, so that melody and all additions create the impression of complete unity.”*

2. *“the composer does not make use of a real peasant melody but invents his own imitation of such*

*melodies. There is no true difference between this method and the one described above.”*

*3. “Neither peasant melodies nor imitations of peasant melodies can be found in his music, but it is pervaded by the atmosphere of peasant music. In this case we may say, he has completely absorbed the idiom of peasant music which has become his musical mother tongue. He masters it as completely as a poet masters his mother tongue.”<sup>83</sup>*

My question is the following: does the harmonization have a role in the musical mother tongue of the peasants at all? And if it does, what kind of a role is it, given that I would like to focus here on the harmonization within the practice of folk music? In any case, an important characteristic of Hungarian instrumental folk music remains that the Roma performers, who provided their musical services in a professional manner, never played the zither, the peasant flute, the bagpipe, and the hurdy-gurdy (that is the instruments primarily hand-made by peasants or shepherds). They used instead manufactured

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<sup>83</sup> BARTÓK Béla. 1931, 341–342 pp.

instruments such as violin, clarinet, or dulcimer, etc. As regards multipart music, one can say that the so-called *bourdon*-instruments, preserving an archaic harmony and sound, remained in the use of peasants and shepherds, while the chamber ensembles that can be traced back to the Baroque and the Classical era of the European music history, primarily the family of string instruments, became the main area of professional Roma (in this context Gypsy) musicians.

In the very same essay cited above, when discussing the first way folk music can influence art music, Bartók also addresses the issue of harmonization. He refers to the peculiar misbelief, that folk tunes only tolerate the simplest harmonies. As a matter of fact, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these simple harmonies actually meant the mere succession of triads of the tonic, dominant, or possibly sub-dominant (i.e. secondary dominant). According to Bartók, this misbelief was caused by Western melodies that were created within the range of functional harmony.

*“The melody of such songs usually moves along the triad of tonic and dominant; the main melody consists of a breaking up of these chords into single notes, for example, the opening measures of ‘O du lieber*

*Augustin’ and ‘Kutya, kutya tarka’. It is obvious that melodies of this description do not go well with a more complex harmonization. But our musicians wanted to apply the theory derived from this type of song to an entirely different type of Hungarian song built up on pentatonic scales. All this, in spite of the fact that these songs do not even hint at the so-called perfect cadence.”*<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, Bartók insists on the special harmonization of the simple and primitive melodies. The melodic simplicity implies fewer boundaries, whereas the lack of triads in stereotyped succession and [the lack] of functional relations deriving from the melody, all these taken together permit a substantial degree of liberty.

*“These primitive melodies show no trace of the stereotyped joining of triads. That again means greater freedom for us in the treatment of the melody. It allows us to bring out the melody most clearly by building round it harmonies of the widest range varying along different keynotes. [...]*

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<sup>84</sup> BARTÓK Béla. 1931, 342 p.

*Similarly, the strange turnings of melodies in our Eastern European peasant music showed us new ways of harmonization. For instance the new chord of the seventh which we use as a concord may be traced back to the fact that in our folk melodies of a pentatonic character the seventh appears as an interval of equal importance with the third and fifth.”<sup>85</sup>*

*We so often heard these intervals as of equal value in the succession, that nothing was more natural than that we should try to make them sound of equal importance when used simultaneously. We sounded the four notes together in a setting which made us feel it not necessary to break them up. In other words: the four notes were made to form a concord.*

The frequent use of fourth-intervals in our old melodies suggested to us the use of fourth chords. Here again what we heard in succession we tried to build up in a simultaneous chord.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> On the consonant seventh-interval to be found in Zoltán Kodály's choral works see my own study with an abstract in English: RICHTER Pál.2008.

<sup>86</sup> BARTÓK Béla.1931, 342–343 pp.

In Bartók's description we find a fundamental concept of harmonization: i.e. the analogy between the horizontal or melodic qualities *and* the vertical or harmonic layer. But his findings, no matter how relevant for the compositional practice, say nothing about the existence of a possible harmonization in the folk practice.

However, we must take into consideration that while collecting folk music, Bartók actually experienced the phenomenon of folk harmonization. The three-stringed viola, designated as *kontra*, was first described by him. Bartók heard this instrument for the first time in 1912 in the village of Mezőszabad (in Romanian: Voiniceni) in the Great Transylvanian Plain. Two years later, in 1914, he recorded a further occurrence of the *kontra* in the Görgény Valley (in Romanian: Munții Gurghiu). See **Figure 1** showing Bartók's own transcription of a tune from Mezőszabad (Voiniceni) which actually served as the folk music source for the first movement of his *Romanian Folk Dances* (1915, BB 68).<sup>87</sup>

For this reason we must think, that Bartok did not consider the of use harmony essential for the style of this musical culture. We must not forget that he became familiar with folk

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<sup>87</sup> Published in LAMPERT Vera.2008, 113–114 pp.



music mostly through unison singing. And due to the small amount of data [concerning harmonizations in folk music] as compared to the totality of the collected material, he simply did not have the chance to assess the gravity of the issue.

The latter point is also emphasized by the fact that for example in the *Romanian Folk Dances* he retained most of the original chords played by the *kontra* viola. It was only much later, that issues of folk harmonization were subjected to a comprehensive examination.

128 ROMÁN NÉPI TÁNCOK, 1915 (BB 68),<sup>34</sup> 1

[Jocul cu băta] ♩ = 96

hozzá még egy rész

2 hegedű: két cigány, Voiniceni (Mureş), 1912. IV.; fon.-felv. MH 2040b.  
 Források: (A) *MS első lejegyzés*, Bp. Fasc. fol. 84<sup>v</sup>; (B) MS támlap, R.Instr.  
 IV, 627.l.; (C) nyomtatásban: RFM/I 425. sz., Deutsch J. Bartók által javított  
 tisztázatának hasonmása.

## Figure 1

István Pávai outlined a detailed compendium of folk harmonization and the use of chords as practiced by instrumental folk ensembles (that is: string orchestras).<sup>88</sup> Pávai

<sup>88</sup> First in his doctoral dissertation *A tánczene és interetnikus kapcsolatai az erdélyi magyar néphagyományban* [Dance Music and its Interethnic Connections in the Hungarian Folk Tradition of Transylvania] from 2004,

proposes, in essence, a series of six criteria to be taken into consideration to achieve a proper interpretation of folk harmonization and folk polyphony, respectively. The criteria are as follows:

- 1. The authenticity of the musical material to be examined;*
- 2. The principles of harmonization applied at certain points of the musical process;*
- 3. The technical constraints and possibilities of the instruments providing the harmony;*
- 4. The way the accompanying instrumentalists manage to follow the soloist playing the melody in his or her intentions to repeat the same melody or switching to another;*  
*(With other words: the metacommunication between the first violin [played by the *prímás*] and the accompaniment);*
- 5. The accompanying rhythmic formulas traditionally used in a given genre (that is: type of*

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than in his book *Az erdélyi magyar népi tánczene* [Hungarian Folk Dance Music in Transylvania] published in 2012.

*dance) and the impact the tempo framework related to these rhythmic formulas has on the harmony;*

*6. The style, character, and typological characteristics of the melody.*<sup>89</sup>

A material is considered by Pávai as authentic from a musical point of view, if:

*“the harmonic solutions, when listened subsequently by an experienced and talented village instrumentalist, are qualified as correct. Further, if someone whose knowledge and skills go back to the tradition comments the different variants resulting from improvisation by saying ‘You can do it like this as well.’ On the other hand he/she believes the chordal structures differing from the applied harmonization method to be mistaken. Nevertheless, a claim like ‘Even like this it suits the dancers.’ can justify the ethnographic authenticity of meager musical solutions.”*<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> See chapter *Szemponatok a népi többszólamúság vizsgálatához* [Criteria for the examination of folk polyphony] in PÁVAI István.2012, 334 p. The quotations from Pávai’s book have been translated into English by István G. Németh.

<sup>90</sup> PÁVAI István.2012, 335 p.

When dealing with the topic of authenticity, Pávai examines the authenticity of the informant (including the quality of the ensemble playing), the authenticity of the collector, and that of the collection itself. He emphasizes already at this point that in folk harmonization (especially within the old-style) the accompaniment of the violin is generally performed by two instruments: the *kontra* viola and the double bass. However, it would be wrong to consider the accompaniment played by these two instruments as a single harmonic unit, as it is the case in classical art music. For the two musicians do not intend to provide together the harmony and the bass as an integrated totality.

The second criterion (referring to the principles of harmonization) is applied to the examination of sound recordings which seem to be polyphonic. It must be established “whether there are elements of actual harmonic intent, or we only have the so-called uncoordinated polyphony.” An example of uncoordinated polyphony from the Hungarian-speaking area is the “hejgetés” from Moldavia. Pávai classifies the coordinated or intentional folk polyphony according to the style of the harmonization. In the Transylvanian practice,

examined by him, basically two types of harmonizations are used:

1. *Tune-oriented [i.e. the harmonization follows the tune],*

2. *Governed by the functional attractions known from classical art music.*<sup>91</sup>

In the practice, of course, these two styles of harmonization appear together, mixed to various degrees. In the case of tune-oriented harmonizations, the accompanying instruments will also seek to play the melody in their own manner: with double stops [*Doppelgriffe*, or: *doppia corda*] and longer notes according to the dance rhythm (**Figure 2**). The most common form of this principle of accompaniment, as it is practiced by bands consisting of violin, three-stringed viola and double bass, is the harmonization moving in mixtures of parallel major chords. This kind of ensemble playing can be described as follows:

*“Of course, the pivotal notes are not always identical: they might differ even if the same instrumentalist harmonizes a tune several times consecutively, or if we compare the parts of the*

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<sup>91</sup> PÁVAI István.2012, 344–345 pp.

*viola and that of the double bass. This is partly explained by the fact that the players consider different tones of the melody as pivotal notes; on the other hand by the different technical possibilities of the two instruments. Other amendments may be caused by the nature of the rhythmic pattern, the pace, and variety of [...] non-musical factors [...]. Sometimes the instrument players simply go wrong: instead of the proper tone (or chord) they pick up randomly a different one. At other times they arrive a little late at the pivotal note of the violin, or, on the contrary, they play it before the violin does.”<sup>92</sup>*

In this type of harmonization, minor chords are only rarely used, or not at all. If it's not the major triad that they use, they prefer an incomplete seventh chord, the so-called “consonant” (i.e. not functional) seventh chord.

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<sup>92</sup> PÁVAI István. 2012, 354–355 pp.

## Asztali nóta

2.strophe Magyarpéterlaka

Figure 2

Tune oriented harmonization, mixed with functional one in the closure

(So called *table song* – not for dancing, only for singing)

Magyarpéterlaka (Transylvania – Petrila de Mureș,  
Romania)<sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Recording of Figure 2 made by Tibor Rostás (after the collections of Antal Fekete) in Budapest, 26–28. 03. 1989, transcribed by Pál Richter. Recordings are published: FEKETE Antal.2009.



The so-called functional harmonization is used in a different manner as compared to its practice in art music. All accompanying instruments, and sometimes also the melodic instrument, will play the main melodic step of the Dominant followed by the Tonic, i.e. the move from the leading note to the fundamental note, thus amplifying the functional attractions. Most harmonic successions involve authentic steps, where the main melodic notes are preceded by some kind of a dominant chord, usually the incomplete seventh chord (with the leading tone in the bass!) or, in the urbanized practice, the chord with the diminished seventh. (**Figure 3, 4**)

*“not only is not forbidden to double the leading tone, or the seventh tone, but it is almost obligatory, as the musicians can signal each other this way that they can hear what is to be played to create a chord leading to the next harmony. For this reason, double bass players often will intone the fundamental tone of the dominant chord followed by its third which leads to fundamental of the next chord; meanwhile in the chord of the viola, but also in the melody, the same tone can be heard. Thus the leading tone is doubled. The examples show that as far as the viola*

*is concerned, these leading notes or the seventh notes are not resolved stepwise unto the neighboring tone, but rather to their octave transposition.*”<sup>94</sup>

### Hajnali

2. strophe Bogártelke

**Figure 3**

Functional harmonization with leading tones in the closure  
 (So called *morning song* – not for dancing, only for singing)  
 Bogártelke (Transylvania – Băgara, Romania)

<sup>94</sup> PÁVAI István.2012, 357 p.



**Figure 4**

Functional harmonization with leading tones

(*Legényes*: male dance)<sup>95</sup> *Bogártelke* (Transylvania –  
Romania)<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Advanced male dance type known by regionally different names among the non-Székely Hungarian groups of Transylvania. Other names: *csúrdöngölő*, *fogásolás*, *magyar tánc*, *pontozás*, *sűrű tempó*. The fast (crotchet = 120–132) *legényes* of quaver dance rhythm is danced to instrumental *kanásztánc* (kolomejka, *ardeleana*) tunes with fast *dűvő* accompaniment. Going towards the Great Plain and Székelyföld more and more sporadic and less and less developed variants of the type can be found. Until World War I the men danced a *legényes* before the couple dances to begin a cycle, solo or in groups in front of the band (similarly to the *verbunk* to which the type is not related), while the waiting girls shouted rhymes (dance-words) in small revolving circles. The *legényes* is increasingly more a demonstration dance ordered by some dancers occasionally, in the intervals of the collective dancing. It is extremely rich in moves; good dancers have some 20–30 different intricate motifs of complex rhythm and virtuoso dancers may have as many as 50–70. The consummation of the *legényes* dance is the old-style *legényes* of Kalotaszeg no longer danced by all but by a few outstanding dancers who dance their

Parts progressing in parallel intervals, banned in art music, are completely natural in folk music.

*“Entirely parallel chords also occur, although not as frequently as in the harmonization with mixtures of major chords. We find parallel chords especially at the succession of the 6th and 5th degrees of minor melodies, or in the case of passing references to the supertonic key of major tunes, the latter actually also means the succession of the 6th and 5th degrees in the new tonality (D minor in the next example [Figure 5]).”*

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compact, perfectly polished dance of closed structure with a rich stock of motifs, to separately ordered music, with a demonstrative purpose. A more recent branch contains Central Transylvanian *lassú legényes* (*ritka legényes*) dances consisting partly of the forms and musical traits of the new dance style. The related types of the two stylistic layers are sometimes connected in pairs in Mezőség (Szék, Szamos Valley: *sűrű* and *ritka tempó*, *ritka* and *sűrű magyar*). in MNA.2012, Dance Music/Explanation of Dance Names.

<sup>96</sup> Recordings of Figure 3, and 4 made by István Pávai in Bogártelke (Băgara, Romania), 28.07. 1993, transcribed by Pál Richter. Rerecordings are published: PÁVAI István.2005.



similar phenomena might also appear within the process of music learning as a certain degree of the acquired musical knowledge. Historical sources presenting similar harmonizations can be regarded as traces of a once widespread harmonization method; on the other hand they deliver an anthropological explanation of the whole phenomenon.

First, let us take a look at the historical analogies of this special kind of tune-oriented harmonization. Polyphonic writing, the direction of European polyphony assuming the highest level of professional knowledge, definitely avoids and bans parallel fifths and octaves. For this reason there was for a long time a widespread belief that those who wrote down such parallel motions had to be uneducated musicians with an insufficient expertise. However, this opinion is contradicted by a part of the historical sources, especially those from the Central and Eastern Europe from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. These sources consist of songbooks with organ accompaniment.<sup>98</sup> The manuscripts of musical notation by the Franciscan monk János Kájoni, who lived in Transylvania, are

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<sup>98</sup> RICHTER Pál.1999.

of particular interest in this regard.<sup>99</sup> Kájoni's manuscripts contain bass accompaniments subsequently matched to the tunes. The excessive simplicity of these notated accompaniments is paired with the presence of parallel fifth and octaves. At first glance, we might automatically trace back the phenomenon to the deficient training, the lack of musical education. However, the bulk of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Franciscan and other manuscripts show us that Kájoni's musical literacy was well above the average of his contemporary environment. The *Organo Missale* and other similar sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (such as the *Codex Kájoni*, the *Vietoris Tablature Book*,<sup>100</sup> and the contemporary manuscripts of the Franciscans, etc.) all these sources reveal after a thorough examination a

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<sup>99</sup> The works of the Franciscan monk are a fine example of the musical culture practiced in the peripheries of Europe. The main background and source material of his church music collections designed for every-day use (*Organo-Missale* 1667, *Sacri Conventus* 1669, *Cantionale Catholicum* 1676) can be found in the so-called *Codex Kájoni* [CODEX KÁJONI]. The *Cantionale Catholicum*, Kájoni's large song book that appeared in print in 1676, does not have musical notation. In his two other manuscript collections Kájoni wrote down a single melodic part above the bass. This writing that enabled even the beginner organ players to accompany the singing probably meant the elementary level of musical performance practice. The *Organo-Missale* is the earliest manuscript preserving the particular musical style of the Franciscan order, in the same time it is also the first Franciscan organ book known to us [ORGANO MISSALE].

<sup>100</sup> VIETORIS CODEX. In this source we find a series of examples for parallel fifths and octaves.

particular harmonization practice that does not acknowledge (or ignores) the logic of horizontal voice leading and focuses solely on vertical relations, on the chords.

The earliest surviving monuments containing harmonizations of the Ordinary that are comparable to Kájoni's *Organo Missale* were composed by Lodovico Viadana. The *Missa Dominicalis*, a monophonic piece with organ accompaniment, was published in 1607 within the second volume of his *Cento concerti ecclesiastici*, then – in 1619 – Viadana published 24 monophonic *Credo*-settings in a separate volume entitled *Venti Quattro Credo a canto fermo*.<sup>101</sup> It is true that, unlike Kájoni's manuscripts, the compositions of Viadana do not contain direct parallel fifths. On the other hand, the presence of barely concealed consecutive fifths is quite common between the vocal parts and the accompaniment.<sup>102</sup> In

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<sup>101</sup> Presumably due to their excessive simplicity and the small size of the ensemble they employed, Viadana's monophonic ordinaries with bass accompaniment were of low influence on the development of Mass-settings. See: FLOTZINGER, Rudolf.1976, 79 p, MASSENKEIL, Günther.1976, 101 p; on the contemporary Masses with organ accompaniment see: SZIGETI Kilián.1977, 305–309 pp.

<sup>102</sup> See Viadana's remark on the use of parallel fifths and octaves in his preface to *Cento concerti ecclesiastici* (RICHTER Pál.1999, 248 p. (in German version 23 p.) Traces of harmonizations using parallel fifths and octaves can be found up to our days: in the Transylvanian instrumental folk dance music (see above) and especially in the folk polyphony of the



connection with the parallel movements it has to be said, that if a community of men, women, and children sings, parallel octaves come into being automatically. The same sound becomes more homogeneous in the case of organ accompaniment.<sup>103</sup> The shorter sections with consecutive fifths and octaves found in these historical sources reinforce our hypothesis that the tune-oriented harmonization must have been widely used earlier in Europe. In it the polyphonic writing only enriched the sound, but there is no trace of voice leading, or at least some kind of structured polyphonic thinking.

As a matter of fact, the accompaniment of non-functional melodies caused problems even in the German-speaking countries. The organ accompaniment of Gregorian melodies was first recorded and the whole issue was first discussed on a

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Transylvanian village Szászcsávás [Romanian: Ceuaș], (cf. SZABÓ Csaba.1977, PÁVAI István.1993).

<sup>103</sup> Contraalto singer Antimo Liberati, who served until 1661 at the Vienna court then at the papal chapel, wrote in his memories: "Parallel octaves heard in the monophonic singing of men and children can make a good impression, also if created by the organ accompaniment. The octave and fifths registries of the organ themselves do not disturb the homogeneity of the sound. The desired effect is created not by strict rules, but by the liberties in the treatment of perfect and imperfect intervals as defined by their sound." (FELLELER, Karl Gustav.1982, 80 p.)

theoretical level at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Contemporary records show mostly the use of triads in root position, but harmonizations applying inverted chords throughout occurred as well. However, in these harmonizations the accompaniment did not seek to follow the tune – unlike the folk music practice of the Hungarian-speaking area. The simultaneous presence of chords of the same types *and* of the tune-oriented harmonization inevitably leads to parallel movement and mixture.

In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts of the “St. Peter” Benedictine monastery in Salzburg we find interesting examples for accompaniment (**Figure 6**), which now seems overly simple, as if notated by an unskilled organ player, and can be described as follows:

1. The *cantus firmus* is placed in the upper voice being played by the organ, too.
2. The accompaniment itself is a simple counterpoint of the “note against note”-type (*contrapunctus simplex*).

3. The chords are in root position (there are only very few inversions, especially 6th chords).<sup>104</sup>



**Figure 6**<sup>105</sup>

As for Hungary, the publication of György Maróthi and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century practice of homophonic singing recorded in the Calvinist *melodiaria* (i.e. song collections) should also be

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<sup>104</sup> The original description in German reads as follows: “An diesem an Kunstlosigkeit kaum zu übertreffenden Stück lassen sich die Merkmale der Choralbegleitung ablesen: 1. Der cantus firmus (hier der Hymnus zu Christi Himmelfahrt) liegt in der Oberstimme. Sie wird von Organisten mitgespielt. 2. Die Begleitung erfolgt im contrapunctus simplex. 3. Die Akkorde stehen in Grundstellung.” in: EDER, Petrus OSB.2004, 83 p.

<sup>105</sup> “Widmann bringt ausschließlich Akkorde in Grundstellung. Diese Eigenart läßt sich in allen älteren Choralbegleitungen nachweisen. Honorat Reich verwendet in seinem Orgelbuch von 1701 für den Hymnus „Quidcunque vinclis“ 69 Terzquintenakkorde, hingegen nur 8 Sextenakkorde. Ein extremes Beispiel findet sich in P. Marianus Welschers *Liber choralis* (1719).” [see Figure 6] in: EDER, Petrus OSB.2004, 85 p.

mentioned here.<sup>106</sup> This special singing practice based on vocal harmony survived within the folk tradition, as demonstrated by a collection from Szászcsávás (Ceuaş, Romania).<sup>107</sup>

D. El - vé-geztem im-már Pá-llya-fu - tá - so-mat, E vi - lá-gon va - ló Sza-rándok-sá-gomat.

A. El - vé-geztem im-már Pá-llya-fu - tá - so-mat, E vi - lá-gon va - ló Sza-rándok-sá-gomat.

T. El - vé-geztem im-már Pá-llya-fu - tá - so-mat, E vi - lá-gon va - ló Sza-rándok-sá-gomat.

B. El - vé-geztem im-már Pá-llya-fu - tá - so-mat, E vi - lá-gon va - ló Sza-rándok-sá-gomat.

5. Megtar-tot-tam hi-tem, I - gaz val - lá - so-mat, Jő-vel, Jé-sus Kristus, Addmeg ko-ro - ná-mat.

Megtar-tot-tam hi-tem, I - gaz val - lá - so-mat, Jő-vel, Jé-sus Kristus, Addmeg ko-ro - ná-mat.

Megtar-tot-tam hi-tem, I - gaz val - lá - so-mat, Jő-vel, Jé-sus Kristus, Addmeg ko-ro - ná-mat.

Megtar-tot-tam hi-tem, I - gaz val - lá - so-mat, Jő-vel, Jé-sus Kristus, Addmeg ko-ro - ná-mat.

<sup>106</sup> “A Soltároknak Négyes Nótáik” [Four-part psalm melodies], Debrecen, 1743. An example of manuscript *melodiarium* is the “Szkárosi-melodiárium” from 1787–1792. Pieces from this source were published in SZABOLCSI Bence.1955, 69\*–70\*.

<sup>107</sup> The historical data and the folk singing practice was compared by SZABÓ Csaba.2001. cf. SZABÓ Csaba.1977.

**Figure 7**<sup>108</sup>

Knowing all this, it seems hardly surprising that peasant cantors living in the Carpathian Basin employ a very simple manner of accompaniment even nowadays. When I made my collection amongst them, I thoroughly interviewed the peasant cantors on where and from whom they learned to play the organ, on their theoretical knowledge, if they were familiar with the names of the keys, if they knew what the major and the minor meant, if they could read music and play other instruments, etc. On the recordings one can only hear the pitches produced by the keys the cantors actually hit, as the use of registration (which could have caused octave coupling and automatically generated harmonies) was not permitted. Only few of the interviewed cantors studied in cantors' school, usually the priest (or pastor), or an older cantor taught them how to play.

Considering their manner of performance from the simplest to the more complex, so to speak, the following levels are to be distinguished:

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<sup>108</sup> Funeral song from choral book *Orbán Sigmond* [45v–47r], published in: SZABÓ Csaba.2001, III-195.

1. Both hands play the melody in octaves, and it is only sometimes (in most of the cases: at the cadences) that pitches enriching the harmony appear. According to what the cantors said, this manner of playing was usually picked up in a self-taught way. They can't read the score: even if – occasionally – a song book with organ accompaniment is used, they only follow the text in it.

2. The cantors accompany the song with the so-called *Schusterbass* (in Hungarian: *susztərbasszus*). Some of them fill the octave with a third, others with a fourth. The movement of the accompaniment is completely parallel to the melody. The cantors employing this practice are usually familiar with the score, but they can read music only in the violin clef. Nevertheless, more often than not they played by heart. Typically, at the end of the strophes short interludes are played.

3. The *Schusterbass* type of accompaniment is present at this level, too. The ability to read music is completely general, some of the cantors even studied at music schools. The accompaniment typically uses

mixtures of major chords (e.g. 6th chords in the right hand, octaves enriched with fifths in the left hand).

4. The performers are not only cantors; they also the village community with secular music. They play at rural dance entertainments. In the Transylvanian Plain, and the area of the Maros and Küküllő Rivers the harmonization in the accompaniment – usually learnt from Roma musicians living in the same locality or nearby – is not based on functional attractions: its brighter sound is the result of major chords placed at every note of the melody. The congregational hymns are accompanied either with *Schusterbass*, or with the harmonization based on major chords (minor chords are typically absent). They can read the music, usually both in the violin and in the bass key. Many of them went to cantors' school, where they learned to play four-part chorale arrangements. In spite of all these factors, their accompaniment obviously aims for a rich and bright sound. And in order to achieve this goal they play sometimes five or six parts (the four-part setting is ignored, as its drier sound is rejected by the church-

goers). These cantors are also able to transpose and they are aware of the basic theoretical terms.

5. In the accompaniment we find both the functional harmonizing and bass progressions following the melody in a parallel movement. See **Figure 8** recorded in Moldavia. The informant studied at a cantors' school in the 1930s. The only written material he used was an old sheet of paper with the text of the song. He has kept the sheet for a long time, as the singing in Hungarian was forbidden, and is unfortunately banned to this day.



# Od použitých harmónií v Ľudovej hudbe ku harmonizáciám v úpravách Ľudových piesní

Kantor Ferenc Benke (Külsőrekecsin – Moldva)

Gesang

Orgel

$\text{♩} = 63-60$

Ar - ra a nép, jó ba - rá - tim, ró - lunk em - lé - kez - ze - tek

mind-nyá - jan, jó a - ka - ró - im el ne fe - led - kez - ze - tek.

$\text{♩} = 58$

Ké - rünk Krisz - tus mi [...] egy szép - sé - ges fej - fá - ért,

$\text{♩} = 63$   $\text{♩} = 60$   $\text{♩} = 43$

Ej néz - ze - tek gyöt - rel - mün - ket, se - gít - se - tek ben - nün - köt.

## Figure 8<sup>109</sup>

Finally, let us return to our departure point: all of the above should be compared with the harmonization in the folk song arrangements of Bartók and Kodály. The main difference is that the accompaniment created by these composers is always structured according to the individual voices in simpler or more complex ways. Only one emblematic example is enough to illustrate the very sophisticated procedure of harmonization of a pentatonic melody by Bartók. In **Figure 9** there is a section of the *Seven pieces from Mikrokosmos* for two pianos. The melody itself is a so-called new-style song in pentatonic scale (B-D-E-F#-A). Bartók put an upper pedal note (B') in the accompanying harmonies (except two ones) in the measures 15– 21 (piano secondo), which is the basic note of pentatonic scale of the melody (piano primo). Under this pedal point (B') Bartók created a very strong functional coherence in the bass part by the authentic fifth steps of them (from the second half of measure 18 to the end of measure 21: A-D-G-C-F-A# [B flat]). Above the bass part the harmonies form

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<sup>109</sup> Recording made by István Pávai and Pál Richter in 1996 (Fundu Râcâciuni [Külsőrekecsin] Moldavia – Romania), transcribed by Pál Richter.

dominant seventh (and ninth) chords during the first two steps (measures 18–19), and later two times a kind of German sixth chords (C-E-F#-A# and F-A-B-D#), which can be interpreted enharmonically as dominant seventh chords with diminished fifth (C-E-G flat-B flat, and F-A-C flat-E flat). Bartók chose a genuine way to express the duality, or ambiguity of these harmonies: he composed both solutions of the chords. We find the solutions of the dominant seventh chords in the bass (F and A# [B flat]), and of the German sixth chords in the melody (piano primo: B and E). As a last moment of this process we can hear the dominant ninth chord (A#-Cx-G#-B [B flat-D-A flat-C flat]), which solution would be the note D# [E flat], but we do not listen to it: there is a pause in the whole measure 22 for the piano secondo. Meanwhile the piano primo plays an A note, which is in distance a poles apart from the note D# [E flat]. So Bartók continued the duality of solutions in a distance of tritone.

15 *rallent.* *a tempo*

*f*

20

*mf*

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains measures 15 through 19, and the second system contains measures 20 through 24. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The time signature is 2/4. The tempo marking 'rallent.' is present above measure 15, and 'a tempo' is present above measure 16. The dynamic marking 'f' (forte) is present below measure 15. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is present below measure 20. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

### Figure 9

Section from Bartók's Seven pieces from Mikrokosmos (No.  
127)

In contrast of this kind of complexity, the folk music practice uses an accompaniment where the harmonization tends and like to follow the melody. The harmonies come into being as a result of a relatively simple procedure and actually the melody appears in every part of the accompaniment. This phenomenon is similar to the functional-like harmonizing found in the folk music practice, where each member of the instrumental ensemble seeks to play the sensitive leading tones of the melody.

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