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## BAGPIPE REVIVAL IN HUNGARY: *TÁNCHÁZ* MODEL AS PRACTICE AND TRANSMISSION OF TRADITION

### ABSTRACT

The essence of the Hungarian folk music and dance revival movement that started in the 1970s was the acquisition of authentic folklore as a “mother tongue.” The discovery of the bagpipe and the popularity of the bagpipe music was part of this movement. This study intends to introduce some typical activities of the Hungarian bagpipe revival including ways of obtaining knowledge, research, and bagpipe manufacture. It is a part of a wider research based primarily on the authors’ personal experiences, on interviews conducted with instrument players and some relevant professional sources.

*Key words:* bagpipe revival, Hungary, *táncház* model, dance house

### INTRODUCTION

The well known special Hungarian *táncház* (dance-house) model<sup>1</sup> of teaching folk dance and music combines traditional forms of acquisition with modern pedagogical and academic methods. Participants acquire knowledge from experienced members or tradition bearers by direct observation and imitation, while using their own individual level of creativity to develop their competence and ability. This is complemented by handicraft activities and ethnographic presentations. Anyone regardless of age, competence or prior exposure can become an active participant. The aim is to establish a value-based, community building, entertaining yet educational form of recreational activity through the practice and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. *Táncház* method is also utilized in art schools and

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1 This model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage was selected for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices by UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in 2011.

all levels of education, and influences folk dance and music performance. The *táncház* movement can be very well-defined in space and in time, bringing along revolutionary changes in the stage performance, as well as generating a specifically complex subculture with its own professional and “social” structure (Juhász 1993), life style and tastes. The emerging folk culture revival movement<sup>2</sup> in the 1970s witnessed a new development in Hungarian bagpipe (*duda*) culture, too. That time, a number of key figures of that movement were intent on resurrecting the instrument. They began studying extant literature and talking to surviving pipers in an attempt to relearn the techniques involved in bagpipe craftsmanship and performance.

Pipers have always been in a special, quite often marginal position within society. They stood out from the others by their special knowledge that is essential for playing the bagpipe and which was often considered as coming from the devil itself. Naturally this “satanic” origin is never mentioned nowadays, but we can say that the new generation of pipers emerging from the dance house movement is also fundamentally different from players of other, more classical instruments. The bagpipe is an instrument that is made using a special handicraft technique and it needs constant maintenance and alterations, which requires the player not only to possess musical talent and playing techniques but also remarkable instrument-building “craftsman’s” skills.

The study investigates the way that the complex knowledge which forms the background of the traditional bagpipe music and manufacturing the instrument gets to the representatives of the folk revival and public nowadays. On the other hand we explore the activities, roles and functions in which the new generations of Hungarian bagpipers are involved.

In our analysis we follow the model of Lundberg, Malm and Ronström to differentiate the large group of bagpipers. We classify the actors of a music culture in three categories (i.e. “doers,” “knowers” and “makers”)

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2 The latest survey in English to date see Balogh and Fülemlile 2008 in a thematic issue of the journal *Hungarian Studies* 22 (2008): 1–2.



according to their roles and their relationship to the given music culture.<sup>3</sup> Our analysis is based primarily on the authors' personal experiences, on interviews<sup>4</sup> conducted with instrument players and some relevant professional sources.

We study the three categories of actors and activities mentioned focusing on the Hungarian bagpipe revival. Different forms of knowledge acquisition such as amateur fieldwork, self-education and institutional education are presented in the paper. We also pay attention to the special methodology and auxiliary materials used in the education. The professionalization of the bagpipers from revival fan to ethnomusicologist will be discussed, too. The emergence and the development of the bagpipe manufacture gets a separate chapter, where we present the influence of the needs of the stage on the innovations.

## OBTAINING KNOWLEDGE

### Discovering Bagpipe – Meeting Traditional Pipers

One of the main characteristics of the dance house movement is that it originates in the city, far from the rural world and the folk tradition. It is urban people who get involved in rural music and folk dances, finding in it a special, "exotic" experience,<sup>5</sup> not unlike meeting the culture of distant peoples. Although in the early 1970s there were shepherd pipers alive in Hungary, it was typical for the future revival pipers to glimpse their first instrument abroad (e.g. Sándor Csoóri Jr. and István Berán in Bulgaria,

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3 Lundberg et al. 2003: 50–52, see also Lundberg 2007. For a more detailed description of this study see Juhász 2010.

4 Most of the interviews were conducted between 1995 and 2004. The collection of data is continuous, as we conduct additional fieldwork.

5 Beside exoticism, there has naturally been in Hungary the motive of national feeling that had successfully broken the silence around the Hungarian minorities living in the neighbouring countries, and meant a symbolic opposition against the existing "socialist" regime. This question has been discussed in detail by many Hungarian analyzers of the dance house movement; see for instance, Balogh and Fülemlé 2008, Kiss 2006.





Fig. 1: Sándor Csoóri and András Seres, beginning of 1980s. Photo: unknown photographer.

Béla Ágoston in Italy). As Ferenc Tobak said: "I first saw a bagpipe at the Windmill Restaurant in Sozopol, Bulgaria in 1979. A piper was playing there, accompanied by a drum. The next year I bought my own first bagpipe, a *gaida*, at a news-stand in Sophia, though it turned out later that the instrument was not really usable. The same summer I made my first Hungarian bagpipe chanter, using the dimensions I had observed on the Bulgarian instrument."<sup>6</sup>

In the 1960s János Manga could find as many as sixteen traditional pipers, but only two of them had their bagpipes bound, in usable condition. The Budapest musicians setting out for the former Upper Hungary in the first years of the dance house movement could still find four or five performers. It was extremely important for them to meet traditional pipers in person, as the chief "methodical" trick of the dance house movement lay in learning directly from the performers. During the mid-1970s, Csoóri tracked down two Palóc pipers, who could not only teach him the basics of

6 Ferenc Tobak, personal communication with Katalin Juhász, August 2002.



the instrument and supply him with parts, but could also provide a considerable amount of specialised knowledge that was not obtainable from sheet music or recordings. As Csoóri tells it, when the Ipolypalást piper János Szikora parted with his instrument, he literally bid it farewell, saying “‘Good-bye pipe! We’ve suffered much together!’ Then he went out from the room, leaving me there with the bagpipe” (Bankó 1994: 179).

Of his own learning process, József Kozák recounted: “I first heard a recording of real Hungarian bagpipe music in the mid-1970s. It was that performance by the head shepherd from Borsosberény, József Kós, that made me want above all else to master this instrument. As it turned out, perusing available folk music and ethnographic sources wasn’t enough. I needed to find living, performing pipers, either at home or in neighbouring countries. I visited corners of the Carpathian Basin where the Hungarian *duda* or some other double-chanter bagpipe could still be found. I learned the nitty-gritty of bagpipe manufacture, a feat no more difficult than learning to play the instrument itself” (Szabó 2004: 58).

In the 1970s and 80s Sándor Csoóri Jr. and his pupils also strived, almost moving from village to village, to find the remaining representatives of the shepherd piper-flutist tradition. They looked around in Nógrád county and its surroundings especially, where the piper tradition could survive the longest. Unfortunately Ernő Kukucska, the last known piper in Nógrád at the time, had not been willing to play the instrument: “Despite all their efforts, the piper generation of the dance houses had to make do with studying his recordings, because whenever they asked him to play the bagpipe, he would tell them the same, ‘I no longer care for making music, I don’t play, I don’t go, don’t ask me’” (Juhász 1994: 3). It was eventually in 1993 that Zoltán Juhász and his collector-friends could make film and tape recordings with Ernő Kukucska. From these, one can learn such peculiarities of technique as would be impossible to catch merely by the ear (Juhász 1994: 3).

In the 1990s, the “rediscovery” of Tereske shepherd István Pál (1919) brought significant change to the world of Hungarian bagpipe music.





*Fig. 2: István Pál, the last Hungarian traditional bagpiper and Zoltán Juhász. Budapest, 2007. Photo: Béla Kása.*

János Manga had photographed the young shepherd/piper in 1936,<sup>7</sup> after which he had played less and less frequently, until finally, in the 1970s, his wife had sold his bagpipe. It was to the credit of Gergely Agócs and Zoltán Juhász that after they had found the elderly Pál in 1992, he picked up an instrument again in 1993, and since then, an entire series of scientific publications and audio recordings on the legacy of “the last piper” have been produced.<sup>8</sup>

István Pál performs regularly with his young followers, but he also makes instruments (bagpipes, flutes) and, with the assistance of professional folk music teachers, he imparts his vocal and instrumental skills to those wishing to learn at folk music courses and camps.

<sup>7</sup> The photo may be found in the Palóc Museum in Balassagyarmat: F.680.

<sup>8</sup> See f.e.: Juhász Z. 1998.



Despite Pál's fame as the "last piper," Hungary boasts a second surviving piper/instrument maker from the tiny Croatian Dráva River community of Tótújfalu in Baranya County. The elderly Croatian piper Pál Gadányi (1932) owes his "discovery" to the Baranya Dance Ensemble, Vujicsics, and Vizin bands (their repertoire is based on the traditional music and dance of South Slavic minorities living in Hungary), who began inviting him to play at their performances.<sup>9</sup> Gadányi also performs with two village singers in shows organised as part of the amateur folk music movement. In his own village he plays only in pubs and at church processions, while neighbouring villages invite him to play at local fairs, as the elderly still enjoy hearing the bagpipe.

### **Archive Recordings as the Main Instruments of Learning**

However much some would have it, neither traditional peasant culture, nor its component, music culture, can be sustained forever. It can only be fixed in the freeze-frame of its momentary state, as collectors' sound and film recordings literally "preserve" the music of the one-time bagpipe players. These recordings may now be the chief instruments of acquiring stylish and traditional bagpipe playing. If they cannot substitute for the experience of personal contacts, the recordings and their meticulously exact transcription into musical notation<sup>10</sup> can help the learner to reproduce the original sounding as accurately as possible. This scrupulous imitation is the first step in the process of learning. After acquiring the right amount of tunes with this method, the player, already possessing the style pertaining to the given region, becomes able after a while to perform tunes appropriately even from vocal recordings or sheet music.

The recordings made by professional ethnomusicologists and stored in archives (Juhász and Szabó 2010: 203–205) were not easily accessible for

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9 Together with director János Tari, in 2004 Zoltán Szabó made a documentary about Pál Gadányi's activity as a bagpipe maker, called *The Gift of Fairies*.

10 The technique of transcribing folk music recordings had been brought to perfection by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. Their pupils and present-day followers employ the same method, listening several times to the slowed down recording, putting down the tiniest ornaments in musical notation.



the young pioneer pipers of the 1970s. If through an “insider” they could get hold of a recording from the Institute for Musicology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, or from the Museum of Ethnography, they passed it around as some gem and copied it to tape among friends. Pipers also tried to record the music of as many living pipers as possible, and these tapes were swapped and copied alike. With the folk music revival becoming widespread and institutionalized, with new digital devices and the internet, there are now several opportunities to access archive recordings. It is the former Institute of Education that deserves the credit for starting the publication of essential educational reference materials provided with sheet music and audio supplement (Juhász 1994, 1998). In 1981, within the frame of the Institute of Education, the “Professional House” was established and for two decades it served almost uniquely in Europe as an archive for video and audio recordings that could be visited freely by anyone, and where you could buy a cheap copy of any material. Nor could visitors be dissuaded by the poor conditions and out-of-date equipment owing to lack of funds; everyone took pleasure in browsing, and even amateur collectors placed their material, knowing that it would be in proper hands.

After 1990, similar workshops were established in the country, and pipers learnt about recordings preserved in country museums (Kaposvár, Pécs, Mohács, Győr). Another important step in this process was when some of them obtained a degree in ethnography since as museologists, they had “official” access to the often forgotten or neglected audio recordings and, through ever widening channels, could make them available for the public (Tanai 1995, Szabó 1991, 2001a, 2001b). Naturally they used these recordings for widening their own repertoires, as well as using them as educational materials.

Since the 1980s, the Folk Music Archive of the Institute for Musicology at the Academy of Sciences has published its series of archive recordings (Sárosi 1980, 1998; and the *Magyar Népzenei Antológia I–VII*), first on LPs, then on cassettes and finally on CDs, all of which the musicians were glad to receive. In recent decades an increasing number of archive materials have been brought out by (often private) publishers specializing in folk music, a great amount being bagpipe music (Lányi 2001, Stuber 2002). Besides the recordings listed above we must definitely mention the home-copied cassette



and CD material used in the annual camps of "Egyszólam" band, comprising several hours' of recordings by bagpiper István Pál over 18 years.

For its 2004 exhibition, the Museum of Ethnography published a CD offering a taste of the Folk Music Collections' archive material. The editors intended to give a sample of each collector's compilation as well as of each great pipers' playing, considering it important to represent all types of the bagpipe used in the Carpathian Basin (Szabó and Pálóczy 2004).

Digitization has meant a new phase in the distribution of recordings, through which the archive material preserved in the Hungarian Heritage House (established in 2001 and comprising the former Professional House)<sup>11</sup>, in the Institute for Musicology<sup>12</sup> and the Museum of Ethnography<sup>13</sup> has become accessible on the internet and, in part, is freely downloadable. What is more, the internet has helped to widen the scope, as digitalized Hungarian databases are accessible from abroad just as easily as Hungarian pipers can access foreign pipers' homepages and internet archives, leading to communication, data exchange, as well as institutional cooperation between them.

### **Bagpipe Education: Beginnings and Institutionalization**

The beginning of teaching might well have been the moment when the first revival pipers started to pass on in an institutional form what they had learnt from first-hand performers, from audio recordings and through

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- 11 In the online database of the fieldwork recordings *Folklore Database* there are 3016 bagpipe recordings as a result of fieldwork 1988–2011. <http://www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/main/mediatar/adatbazisok/folklordokumentumok> (accessed 23 May 2012). In the online database of all archive and revival published recordings *Published audio recordings* there are 374 bagpiper's ones. <http://www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/main/mediatar/adatbazisok/hangzokiadvanyok> (accessed 23 May 2012).
  - 12 From 297 music transcriptions of the archive bagpipe recordings of the Ethnographical Museum. 28 recordings can be downloaded in mp3. <http://www.neprajz.hu/emir/ari/talalatok.php?> (accessed 23 May 2012).
  - 13 From 6000 recordings in the internet database of the Institute for Musicology; 85 are of bagpipe music which can be downloaded in mp3. <http://db.zti.hu/24ora/dalok.asp> (accessed 23 May 2012).



their own experimenting. It has been characteristic of Hungarian folk music education from the outset that it has mingled exact, scholarly methods quite fruitfully with the living, imitational (or instinctive) methods of learning that is well-known in folk tradition. Naturally, we will find similar methods in the practice of folk music education in other countries, with obviously differences due to the different circumstances. Bagpipe teaching in Bulgaria or in Scotland for instance has long been institutionalized and has used classical music school methods: the bagpipe is available in the same quality as are classical instruments, and pupils learn playing from sheet music, from professional teachers and play at an equally high level both on classical and folk instruments. Bagpipe culture in these countries, we have to admit, has long existed and on the soil of this thriving tradition the forms of institutional education could be established much sooner and more self-evidently. The Hungarian teachers of folk music education, however, still have to work with their own method shaped alongside personal experience and cannot rely on proper literature. In most places, teachers otherwise active as performers prepare their own schedule, using a first-grade art education document called *Basics of Folk Music* (Gelenesér 1994) or other experimental reference books and, through their own experiences and whatever audio recordings of folk music they find, they focus on the skills of the student in front of them. From the beginners' level to the academy, a common feature of these methods is that they are centred on the audio recordings, but make use of the performers' video recordings as well, and urge pupils to study folk music in its original environment (Kiss 2006: 76). The basis of the whole training therefore is that the student should acquire the musical mother tongue as perfectly as possible and, on these grounds, with the aid of studying musical theory and history of music, should develop the knowledge of the instrument—technique, virtuosity and personality—into a level of artistry.

From the year 1981 an employee of the Centre for Culture and Education of Somogy County, József Csíkvár began organising what he called “bagpipe schools,” a series of regular courses in piping for young people, taught during summer and winter holidays at various cultural centres throughout the county. The program promoted the formation of study partnerships,



whereby a more experienced piper took a newly arrived student under his or her wing. The pair would then practice together for days until the novice had learned not only the traditional tunes, but also the techniques of tuning and reed-making.

The bagpipe schools started a series of passing on and receiving, as many of Sándor Csoóri Jr.'s pupils—e.g. István Adorján, Zoltán Juhász, György Lányi and Kálmán Sáringer—themselves became teachers in turn. It was Sándor Csoóri Jr. who first produced a pipers' tune collection, shaping the teaching method along practical experience (Csoóri Jr. 1986).

The other form of institutional teaching was the "C category" folk music teacher's training organized in the early 1980s by the Folk Music Department at the Institute of Education where, besides practical training, participants received knowledge of folk music theory and ethnography and those passing the examinations successfully at the end of the course received an official certificate. This was important as folk musicians had to own such an official paper proving their qualification to be able to receive payment for their performances. Before this, the only such document available for the first generation of folk musicians rising to be "professionals" by the mid-1980s was a certificate issued by the National Light Music Centre (Országos Szórakoztatózenei Központ, "OSZK") or the National Stage Office (Országos Rendezőiroda "ORI"), where performers and music teachers with no understanding of peasant music were in charge of deciding the quality of dance hall musicians and ensembles, even determining the wages they could be paid.

### **The Special Institutions of Bagpipe Education – Folk Music Schools**

After the change of the regime, there were dedicated folk music schools formed in many places. Out of these, besides the 3<sup>rd</sup> District State Music Schools' above mentioned department, which became a separate institute in 1991 under the name of Hungarian Folk Music School in Óbuda, we have to mention the Folk Music Department formed at the Kálmán Nádasdy Art School in 1988. Since their establishment, out of the 3 or 4 thou-





*Fig. 3: Participants of a bagpipe camp. The third man from the right is Sándor Csoóri. Kaposvár, 1982. Photo: unknown photographer.*

sand pupils studying in the two schools, about a hundred have learned to play the bagpipe.

As for teaching, a new phase began with the opening of the music and folk music department at Nyíregyháza's György Bessenyei Teacher Training College in 1990. This has been the first school where the teachers of folk music could obtain the higher degree necessary under current laws for teaching. In the beginning, many performers and folk music teachers enrolled at the college, lacking the necessary knowledge in music theory (solmisation), or simply in need of a document for their career. Although it is still possible to evade the law prescribing proper qualification, those for instance entitled "the Young Master of Folk Art" and having a teacher's or ethnographer's university degree can teach at a primary level of folk music education, yet musicians with an excellent mastery of the instrument and even skills in teaching but lacking the necessary degree are being forced out of the education. Many pipers, like István Berán, Tibor Okos, Lajos



Bergics or Zoltán Papp, have obtained a degree at the college. But the “father master” of the Hungarian bagpipe revival, Sándor Csoóri, does not have any official qualification, and the other excellent teacher of music, György Lányi, many of whose pupils have themselves become teachers, left the college after two terms.

With the folk music teachers’ training at the college, the nationwide network of primary level education could be enlarged and, what is just as important, the institutions for a secondary level of folk music education could also be established. The profession of the “folk musician,” with the classification of the instrument and the branch, was included in the “official national list of vocations” (Országos Képzési Jegyzék, “OKJ”) in 1993. This document prescribes in detail what general theoretical requirements and, according to



*Fig. 4: Group of Hungarian bagpipers in the bagpipe festival. The last Hungarian traditional bagpiper and bagpipers of different ages played together. Eger, 2000. Photo: István Berán.*



the individual instrument, what practical requirements someone qualified as a secondary level folk musician should meet, as well as naming the spheres of activity that can be fulfilled with such a qualification.

Ferenc Kiss assumes that folk music is taught in two thirds of the 800 primary level art schools that exist in Hungary (Kiss 2006: 76). We have no data concerning the number of bagpipe departments in these schools, but would estimate it to be between 20 and 30, which shows a great leap in progress since the beginnings. In 2006, folk music was taught in four secondary music schools, and “folksong” or “folk music” became an accepted subject in general secondary music schools, which has helped to bridge the old gap between classical and folk musicians.

The crown of this process was when in 2007, folk music teacher training began with 20 students at Ferenc Liszt University of Music (Music Academy). Receiving a university level has restored folk music’s reputation previously gained by the Folk Music Researcher Department, hallmarked by the names of Zoltán Kodály and László Lajtha, and established within the Musicology Department in 1951. In a discussion organized by long-established foreign high-level folk music schools in 2008, the “Hungarian model” turned out to be unique for several reasons. While in Northern and Western-European countries it was the university teaching of folk music that generated the market, in Hungary it happened the other way round. We have an already existing and very serious market which has called for its qualified experts. We do not have to present and look for folk music with all our might. It is a living and enlivening medium, if only for a few. At the moment there are two pipers studying at the Music Academy under Zoltán Juhász. They represent very well the two ways of entering high level education.

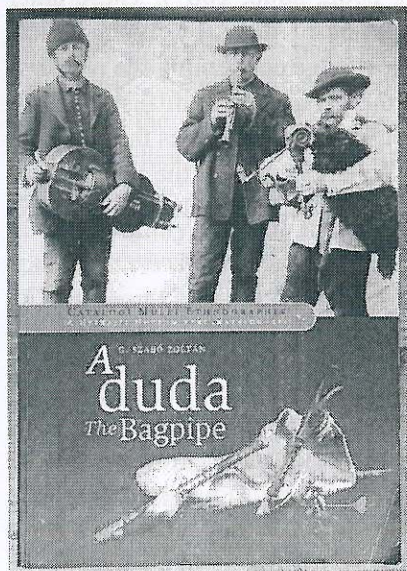
## BAGPIPE RESEARCH

Music history and ethnomusicology research in Hungary have paid relatively little attention to bagpipe playing. For the revival pipers it was a couple of important studies dealing with the Hungarian bagpipe and pi-



pers that offered crucial theoretical guidance and practical help. Besides Bartók's, Madarassy's, and Manga's writings, it was for instance Lajos Vargyas's study in music history, the bagpipe chapter in Bálint Sárosi's handbook (Sárosi 1967), Füzés's and Békefi's studies rich in details about the instrument technique that were useful to pupils wishing to learn.<sup>14</sup>

After a couple of years, the young pipers followed in the great researchers' footsteps and endeavoured to increase the scholarly results concerning the bagpipe. They started investigating in every part of the Hungarian language area to search for data about the instrument or actual instruments or old pipers still around. Expanding the research in time and space, many of them examined the morphology of bagpipe types, the role of bagpipe music, the beliefs concerning the bagpipe; and beside the practical experiments, many valuable works of ethnography and history were penned by the members of the young piper generation. The first important issue was Sándor Csoóri Jr.'s collection of bagpipe music aimed as a methodology



*Fig. 5: One of the books published by Zoltán Szabó. ("A duda. The Bagpipe," Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum, 2004). Photo: Katalin Juhász.*

14 For the detailed bagpipe research history with the complete bibliography see Szabó 2006a.



handbook (1986), to be followed by Zoltán Juhász's monograph written on two traditional pipers, published with an audio supplement (1994, 1998). József Kozák published short comparative historic-geographical writings (e.g. 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005c), Gyula Hankóczi (1998a, 1998b, 2007), Gábor Nagy (1999) and Aurél Szakál (1991–92, 1992, 1931) wrote about bagpipes and pipers in the Great Hungarian Plain, Péter Tanai (1995) and Iván Nagy (2002) about those in the Csallóköz, Zoltán Szabó about Serbo-Croatian bagpipes (e.g. 1991, 2001b) and pipers in Hungary (2004, Hála and Szabó 2010). Gergely Agócs edited a book (2001) including his own studies as well as Péter Éri's study on the historical naming of the bagpipe, József Kozák's on the prevalence of the Carpathian Basin bagpipe type, Ferenc Tobak's on pipers in Moldavia, and Zoltán Szabó's on Southern Slav bagpipe types. We have to emphasize Zoltán Juhász's multidisciplinary researches, in which for instance he dealt with the possible improvement of phonograph recordings (1995), and the ethnomusicological adaptation of artificial intelligences (2000, 2002, 2006, 2007). These latter examinations, through the structural analysis of tunes by mathematical methods, helped to place our previous knowledge concerning the regularities in the origin of tune-variations and the geographical diffusion of the variants into a new dimension. Another significant result was the Museum of Ethnography's exhibition arranged by Zoltán Szabó and the accompanying bi-lingual catalogue (Szabó 2004), which was acknowledged by international scholarship (Cheape 2007).

## BAGPIPE MANUFACTURE

### **Bagpipe Manufacture in the First Period**

In the beginning, it was extremely difficult to get hold of an instrument necessary for piping, as the old shepherd pipers' instruments were not really kept in good repair, in usable condition, nor did they meet the stricter demands of the stage at all. So someone wishing to play in a dance house or on stage had to acquire a proper instrument first. This could be done in several ways: either he tried to manually repair the instrument or its com-



ponents he had received from elderly pipers or bought abroad or, copying the old instrument, he tried to manufacture a new one. For this, however, no-one had the necessary knowledge or experience at the time; neither did they have any specific tools.

After the initial experimenting, it soon turned out that only a few of the pipers were able to make a complete bagpipe, and all the others tried to get their instruments from them. Yet even these successful bagpipe manufacturers had to experiment a lot before they managed to prepare acceptable and reliable instruments. The best instrument measurements of this initial era were worked out by József Kozák and at the same time by the team of Sándor Csoóri Jr. and Ferenc Tobak. "Starting in the 1980s, Sándor Csoóri and I made several dozen bagpipes together in my shop in Veszprém. These were mostly straight-horned, Palóc types decorated with brass ferrules and inlay, though we also made a few lead-inlay instruments. Most of these latter pieces ended up in Western Europe, where people could pay for the time-consuming work involved. Later, I found myself walking my own path in instrument making. I based chanter dimensions on museum pieces, and later experiments and developments worked to refine the forms I used. By the second half of the 1980s, I was making instruments on my own, pipes that looked like the ones from the Palóc community of Kishartyán. I adopted elements from the experiences of French bagpipe makers in planning my drones, and elements of Bulgarian and Scottish bagpipe making in carving my reeds. I have a large collection of technical drawings of European bagpipes. It's gratifying to see how followers use the design practices and chanter forms I developed in making new bagpipes."<sup>15</sup>

The process of relearning bagpipe craftsmanship was accompanied almost from the start by a process of modernisation. Major innovations primarily involved the various bores, reeds (elder, cane, clarinet reeds lashed to metal inserts, and lately plastic blades made of an audio cassette box

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15 Ferenc Tobak, personal communication with Katalin Juhász, September 2009. Ferenc Tobak's list of awards includes first prize at the National Folk Art Exposition in Nyíregyháza in 1985, the title of "Folk Applied Artist" as an instrument maker in 1992, and the "Pomegranate Award" at the *Twelfth National Folk Art Exposition* in Budapest in 1996.



or a piece of decorator cane fixed to a cane staple etc.), and leather curing process. Later, improvements were made to facilitate tuning. Every single alteration and innovation resulted in better quality bagpipe playing.<sup>16</sup>

### **Bagpipe Manufacture as it is Today**

While in the early 1990s bagpipe makers strived to lift all the elements of bagpipe manufacture from the mystical to the rational, often relying on the results of their own haphazard experimenting, today we have exact technology complete in all its details. Following the time-honoured practice of old guild masters, Hungarian craftsmen have been inclined to study professional foreign instrument makers' methods so as to be able to make the best instruments themselves. The exchange of information is mutual,



*Fig. 6: Pál Gadányi, the last Croatian traditional bagpiper and bagpipe maker living in Hungary. Tótiújfalú, 2002. Photo: Zoltán Szabó.*

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16 For a much more detailed description of bagpipe making innovations see Juhász and Szabó 2010: 209–213.





*Fig. 7: Andor Vég and Balázs Szokolay are making a bagpipe together (Bóly, 2007). Photo: Mátyás Bolya.*

and the distinguished bagpipe manufacturers all over Europe are aware of one another's achievements.<sup>17</sup>

Bagpipe makers experiment with new materials all over the world; especially plastics have grabbed the imagination of the extremely creative, often playful constructors. Besides utopian ideas, there are many that can be applied in everyday life, for instance József Kozák's invention of children's bagpipe with a rubber bag, or the cheap practice instruments functioning with a membrane.<sup>18</sup> The electronic bagpipe, another great idea of bagpipe

17 We have quite a few examples for this as to a certain extent we also participate in this international circulation of information and personal networking. See e.g. Lundberg 2007.

18 We have come across many versions of plastic bagpipes. Some examples can be seen: [www.hermandewit.be](http://www.hermandewit.be) (Belgian Flemish bagpipe maker Herman Dewit), accessed 4 March 2009; [www.dennishavlena.com](http://www.dennishavlena.com) (crazy plastic bagpipes of Dennis Havlena, Michigan, USA), accessed 4 March 2009.



manufacturers, has also been accomplished worldwide.<sup>19</sup> In Hungary, the electronic bagpipe is István Adorján's invention (Adorján's Hungarian Electronic Bagpipe), which is the best instrument for absolute beginners wishing to learn tunes. "Its nickname is electronic goat, and indeed, it has the sound of a bagpipe. On the chanter there are copper tubes in the place of the finger holes, and the sound is made by touch, and in the box replacing the bag there are the loudspeaker, the modulator and the tuner" (Ditzendy 2005). Its great advantage is that the pitch can be changed in a wider range, and more kinds of chanters can be fitted to the basic device.

## CONCLUSION

The in-depth study of the activity of the Hungarian bagpipe-revival movement representatives clearly reveals that most of those dealing with the bagpipe are active in at least two of these roles (doer-maker or doer-knower), and many of them in all the three (doer-knower-maker). This complexity of diverse skills is what is revealed from this review of the revival of the bagpipe in Hungary. This complexity of skills needs to be emphasised.

The topic of this book, *Trapped in Folklore?* presumes a certain closeness. The Hungarian dance house movement including the bagpipe revival is not characterized by closeness as its essence is the opposite. We are not trapped in a "fossilized" tradition which has lost its function a long time ago, but we are open for novelties and we provide free passage between the authentic (old, traditional, nowadays hardly live) folklore and the men of today (modern culture). We study and document the folklore thoroughly and systematically. On the other hand we teach the traditional music as a "mother tongue" using the archives that are open for the public and transforming the data into auxiliary material. Once learning this "language" anyone can express themselves freely, moreover he/she may mix it with other "langua-

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19 For example the Swedish Fagerstrom Technochanter, the Fagerstrom Technopipe, the Canadian electronic bagpipe by Ross Technologies, the hand-made MacPipe, made by William McGregor, and the German Deger Pipes ([www.hotpipes.com/epipe.html](http://www.hotpipes.com/epipe.html); accessed 4 March 2009).



ges,” too. Thus, the combination of tradition and creativity results in a large spectrum in instrument manufacturing and in the music, too.<sup>20</sup>

It is remarkable that it was the bagpipe’s revival and further improvement that ran a similar course in many European countries. Another characteristic is that while in the beginning everybody stayed within their own scope (within their national borders), soon an international network was developed, in which the most distinguished bagpipe players, researchers and manufacturers of each country (often one person in several roles) came to be aware of one another, and beside learning about one another’s achievements, they have applied them, and have often formed personal (friendly) relationships. This network of information and relations have brought together a “company” that can be seen as a peculiar subculture. Beyond the thorough analysis of the bagpipe revival in each country, a comprehensive research investigating this international “subculture” could also be illuminating.

Although the folk music revival has been studied in every country of the former East European block, and some of the musicians attending festivals (especially pipers) got to know one another well, we still know little of the actual process of how folk music was re-explored in these countries. A comprehensive and comparative international research (Juhász 1999), pointing far beyond the culture of folk revival, could certainly be highly informative.

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20 We present more detailed interpretation and the styles of the bagpipe music in the article: Juhász and Szabó 2010.



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