

# Benjamin Rajeczky the Ethnomusicologist

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*On the 100th anniversary of his birth*

Benjamin Rajeczky's research covers Gregorian chant and folk music.<sup>1</sup> The long list of his books and studies, the publications he edited and the reviews he wrote provide conclusive evidence of the wide range of his interests in both spheres. As an ethnomusicologist he played a prominent part in the research of music connected to folk customs: wedding,<sup>2</sup> Nativity play, Eastern, funeral and other folk hymns (particularly the religious folk songs which evolved from medieval cantiones) and last but not least in the research of laments. For his outstanding achievements in the subject-matter of laments<sup>3</sup> he was awarded the highest distinction by the international community after the publication of the volume, the so-called Pitré-prize.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to his activities, the scholarly research of melodies surviving in the memory of the people from the 16th and 17th centuries<sup>5</sup> (the Middle Ages on the whole)<sup>6</sup> has made considerable progress. Hungarian and international ethnomusicology followed with great attention his examinations revealing the parallels and connections between folk music and Gregorian chant and aimed at finding their

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. 1974. All his works cannot be listed here. Of his works written after his 70th birthday (which could not be included in the bibliography published for his 70th birthday – see 1971 and 1976) only the ones related to our topic can be mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> From the abundance of examples only the group of Lydian-coloured Hungarian wedding melodies in major is cited (“Segélj el Uram Isten”, see *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* III/A 23–26 and 32–43) to which he presented a 15th-century Czech song parallel and a parallel melody sung by brides in the Jura, Switzerland (on the basis of Z. Nejedlý and A. Rossat), as a result of his research examining how far the style spread. See. 1957a.

<sup>3</sup> Kiss–Rajeczky 1966, *CMPH* V. *Laments*. The introductory study was written by Rajeczky.

<sup>4</sup> The fifth volume of *CMPH* is the first bilingual (Hungarian and English) edition of the series. Gaining permission for the bilingual – and not Russian – edition was for the greater part Rajeczky's merit who kept mentioning later how much he had to fight for publishing the volume in a foreign language (particularly in English).

<sup>5</sup> He published the 20th-century form of the 16th–17th-century melodies preserved in the memory of the people together with Szendrei and Dobszay, see 1978 as well as 1958b, 1985a–b, 1988.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Rajeczky 1974b.



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identical stylistic features,<sup>7</sup> his research investigating the relationships between east and west as well as his editing of folk music recordings, to mention only a few topics without a claim to completeness.<sup>8</sup>

The present study attempts to give a comprehensive picture of the major fields of his work as an ethnomusicologist. In this framework the main phases of his activities in the domain of folk music research can only be touched upon, indicating the spheres of his interest. A common trait of his works is that in addition to publishing recent results they remind us of the need for carrying on research in new directions. His studies – available for the most part in foreign languages as well<sup>9</sup> – tell us more than any thorough analysis could do. This explains why in the following only his folk music collecting activity will be discussed in greater detail as it is fairly unknown even in Hungary.

### **Studies, the beginning of his career**

Rajeczky was born in Eger (Heves county, Hungary) on 11 November 1901. At the age of sixteen he went to Zirc to join the Cistercian order and after the period of the noviciate he became its member.<sup>10</sup> In 1921 he continued his studies at the Theological Faculty of the University of Innsbruck, Austria. He acquired his European approach to folk music at the University of Innsbruck.<sup>11</sup> The young Rajeczky, who had already been interested in the practical and theoretical aspects of music during his formative years in Zirc, studied music history with professor Rudolf von Ficker in Innsbruck in addition to theology and attended courses in the history of art. He first sang in the Gregorian choir, then conducted it from his second year at the university and played in the students' orchestra violin, recorder or another instrument (for example harmonium) when necessary. He performed any duties connected with music, including the tuition of less talented and younger students. Rajeczky mentioned in several statements and broadcast interviews that he had asked explicitly to be sent to Innsbruck because he had been aware of the

<sup>7</sup> He had paid attention to the relationship between the two from the beginning, see 1943. One of his last works is particularly many-sided and, with regard to its depth in time, extremely wide-ranging: Rajeczky 1985a, see further: 1957b, 1962, 1969a, 1974b. On the other hand, he examined the Gregorian topic in the narrow sense of the word from a basic folk musical approach, see 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Hungarian research forgot about his study investigating the relationship between the new-style Hungarian folksong and certain medieval songs, see Rajeczky 1962.

<sup>9</sup> Rajeczky attached great importance to the information of the international community. The list of his writings compiled for his 70th birthday reflects this striving. See *Studia Musicologica*, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> He was his parents' second child who gave him the first name Ferenc, his monk's name was Benjamin.

<sup>11</sup> Tari 1991, 95.

bustling musical life there. Germany and Austria assumed a leading position in European musicology during his student years in the 1920s. The ethnomusicological approach, this new branch of science looking back upon a few decades only, affected the entire history of music. The music historical school that treated the high-level notated art music and the orally handed down musical culture of the simple social strata in relationship and not in opposition meant a decisive experience both for Rajeczky and the two other Hungarian musicologists Bence Szabolcsi and Dénes Bartha who studied music in Leipzig and Berlin some years later. It is not by chance that comparison with the folk music basis formed an organic part of all three music historians' research method, whatever period in music history they were dealing with. Of the three musicians only Rajeczky achieved results in examining the earlier almost completely unknown medieval folk music. For that matter, he laid the foundation for Hungarian Gregorian research and established a school for it (with his students). An eloquent testimony of it is, beside Rajeczky's studies in this subject-matter, the volume entitled *Magyarország zenetörténete I. Középkor* [The history of Music in Hungary I. Middle Ages] edited under his professional guidance.<sup>12</sup>

After graduating from Innsbruck University and taking a Ph.D. in theology, Rajeczky started work at the St. Emerich Secondary School in Budapest in 1926 where he soon became a legendary music teacher. To deepen his knowledge of folk music, he enrolled – though he was already a qualified teacher – at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest (now Liszt Ferenc University of Music) as a pupil of Zoltán Kodály. However, learning had started earlier because Kodály “had kept opening his eyes to viewing reality relentlessly and looking boldly into the future”<sup>13</sup> from the late 1920s. In those days, folk music was not a separate field of study in Hungary. Kodály taught composition so his composition classes offered Rajeczky the possibility to widen his knowledge of folk music. Similar to his years of study at Innsbruck University, the many-sided theoretical foundation between 1932 and 1935 turned out to be excellent. Apart from acquiring a thorough knowledge of art music, Rajeczky became proficient in the world of folk music styles, complicated musical forms, scales and tone systems, and grew famil-

<sup>12</sup> Rajeczky 1988. Apart from the introduction, he wrote the following chapters and parts of the book: chapter II. *Középkori zeneéletünk és Európa* [Hungarian medieval musical life and Europe], the description of several genres (such as e.g. hymns, mass, sequences) within chapter VII. *Gregorián műfajok* [Gregorian genres], chapter VIII. *Többszólamúság* [Polyphony], several subsections of chapter X. *Középkori népzene* [Hungarian folk music in the Middle Ages]. For the antecedents of his works of this kind see: Rajeczky, 1948b.

<sup>13</sup> Rajeczky 1971b, 14.



iar with folk music collecting methods. He soon recognised the need for collecting and became one of the most excellent, never sufficiently appreciated transcribers (from records) of folk music unto our days. In this capacity he was frequently visited by professionals of established fame from abroad later who came to him as beginners to learn the skills of folk music notation.

Beside teaching and writing various works on education<sup>14</sup> he soon got involved in musicological work as well.

### Folk music collecting activities

Folk music collecting plays an important part in Rajeczky's life-work as an ethnomusicologist. This field of his ethnomusicological work, so little known in Hungary as well, was demonstrated in two studies by means of his active folk music collecting in and around his birthplace earlier.<sup>15</sup>

His collections covered the region of the so-called northern folk music dialect,<sup>16</sup> the Great Hungarian Plain and Transdanubia. Since he collected in Transdanubia, among the Csángó population living in Moldova, Romania and among the Hungarians resettled from the villages of Bukovina in 1942, his folk music collections affected each Hungarian geographical region and practically the entire Hungarian population, except Transylvania.

Investigations carried out in the northern part of the Hungarian language area made up the greater part of his collections. In the northern folk music dialect region he worked in three larger areas: in the east mostly in Bodrogeköz and in Borsod and Zemplén counties at large, in the west in the region of Zobor-hegy (today Slovakia), and in the centre of the dialect region in his native land, the so-called Palócföld, falling into Heves and Nógrád counties. His collections carried out in Heves and Nógrád counties enriched continuously from the 1930s onwards both the Hungarian folk music collection as a whole and the range of folk music collections of the Palóc ethnic group and the wider northern region.

<sup>14</sup> For the list of his works on music education and the publication of a certain part of them see *Rajeczky Írásai* [Rajeczky's writings] 1976, chapter V, as well as the bibliography. For a more detailed bibliography see Rajeczky 1971a, 177–181. It is to be remarked that his work concerning the introduction of Hungarian music education on folk music basis falls mostly into this period. The schoolbook *Énekes Ábécé* [Singing alphabet] which was used in elementary schools for teaching singing is still modern in our days and had ten editions between 1938 and 1943; the first edition was sold within a month. See the preface by Kerényi–Rajeczky in the 1943 edition. His music educational work was significant in the field of the general history of music as well, see e.g. Rajeczky 1947, 1948a.

<sup>15</sup> Tari 1995, 1995–96.

<sup>16</sup> Drawing the boundaries of the Hungarian folk music dialects is associated with Bartók's name, see Bartók 1924, 8. For the boundaries of the northern music dialect see Tari–Vikár (eds.) 1986.

On the evidence of his first collecting note-books<sup>17</sup> Rajeczky started collecting folk music in north-west Transdanubia in the summer of 1935, following the conclusion of his studies in composition. 1935 was also the year of his first collection in the Mátra region, namely in Tar.<sup>18</sup> One would think that his choice of the location was accidental because in his case it would have been natural to visit the villages around Pásztó first. At that time he had been living in Pásztó for years<sup>19</sup> and Tar was at a distance of six kilometres only. As is well known, Zoltán Kodály had started large-scale folk music collections in the Mátra region in 1922–23, followed by additional collecting trips in 1926 and 1935.<sup>20</sup> It seems that Kodály seized gladly the opportunity that he could entrust Rajeczky with the continuation of his collecting work in the Mátra region. Rajeczky had not only a thorough grounding in his profession but sufficient scholarly ambitions as well. He was familiar with the place, moreover, showed due humility towards the village people living in extreme poverty. His person meant a guarantee for Kodály that a competent scholar would take over the folk music collecting work in the Mátra region and he could concentrate his energy on other fields.<sup>21</sup> My assumption that the selection of locations was all but random is supported by the fact that from that time on Rajeczky collected in several villages where Kodály (and before him Béla Vikár) had worked earlier. The choice of collecting locations was probably part of a common co-ordinated folk music collecting programme. The examination and follow up the relation of various villages and recent generations to tradition and the change of knowledge played an important role in research. Rajeczky took part in this work; his task was to deepen the musical examination pursuing the already started work, and to start new investigations in other villages as well.

<sup>17</sup> Tari 1987a, 26. Let me mention that since I moved about in Rajeczky's family almost as one of the family from early childhood on, I rely on personal recollections from time to time, using the method of oral history. At the beginning Rajeczky helped my ethnomusicological work by giving me his own collecting text and notes annotations books and calling my attention to points (persons and subject-matters) where I should continue collection.

<sup>18</sup> A wedding song of his collection is published in: *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* III/A, 20.

<sup>19</sup> The family had already lived in Pásztó for several years. They moved there from Eger because his father, the skilled mechanic Gábor Rajeczky found a better paid job on the estate of the Counts Almásy.

<sup>20</sup> In 1922 Kodály visited Pásztó, too. (In 1968 Rajeczky collected songs from one of the still living singers, asking him for memories of Kodály.) Kodály first went to Tar, the neighboring village in 1923, though he had been working continuously in Nógrád and Heves counties from 1906 onwards. See Borsai 1982, 159.

<sup>21</sup> Kodály had fought consistently for a new Hungarian people from the beginning, particularly for arousing Hungarian spirituality in the alienated town-dwellers by showing them the peasant culture. He had already difficulties in the 1930s to find professionals to realize this aim who were musically trained and, at the same time, had due respect for peasants. In his study on asymmetric rhythms Rajeczky wrote that Kodály made him check in the early 1930s if a certain melody was still sung in Pásztó in the way he had collected it ten years before. See Rajeczky 1977, and 1978a, 153, respectively.

In Rajeczky's folk music collecting activity the exploration of Palóc-föld, the place of his birth, had the greatest significance. Besides, he gathered important material on the Great Hungarian Plain; in it the folk music material collected in Tápé, a village with specific ethnographic features in the vicinity of Szeged as well as in Jászság and among the Csángó people of Moldova was predominating.<sup>22</sup> He had rarely opportunity to work with a phonograph or tape recorder. In most cases he had to rest contented with notating the melodies on the spot. Though it was a responsible task, it proved to be less spectacular with regard to the final results as it provided material for publication only which Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály had regarded as unsatisfactory from the point of view of 20th-century Hungarian ethnomusicology from the beginning. As a matter of fact, Bartók and Kodály were also compelled to chose on-the-spot notation more than once – and not only as a draft – for example as a consequence of the economic recession right after the First World War. The situation after the Second World War was no better, either: phonographs as such were already rare and tape recorders were still very expensive. It is unfortunate that most of Rajeczky's independent collections are on-the-spot notations, the number of his recordings is, in comparison, relatively few.

A change in his life allowed him to perform collecting work on a larger scale. Until then he had collected folk music in addition to his duties as a teacher<sup>23</sup> and his vocation as a monk; he had not even had the entire summer holiday at his disposal for, being a boy scout leader, he regularly went camping and on excursions with his pupils in the summer or winter. Due to the political changes after the Second World War, he was dismissed from his teacher's job in 1945. One of the first measures introduced after the Soviet occupation of Hungary was to abolish church-run schools and suppress the religious orders.<sup>24</sup> With the nationalisation Rajeczky lost his teacher's job.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Place and date of his collections: Tápé 1952 and 1954, Jászság 1968, Egyházaskozár, among the Moldavians resettled from Lábnik there, 1952.

<sup>23</sup> From his narration and the recollections of his one-time pupils we know that from time to time he had to replace his colleagues and teach other subjects as well. On such occasions he taught mathematics and physics in addition to the so-called humanities.

<sup>24</sup> In 1945 Benjamin Rajeczky was the prior of the Cistercian monastery in Pásztó. Hearing the news of the approaching Soviet troops, he sent away his fellow members for the duration of the fights and stayed alone there to take care of the monastery. He remained in his post until the dismissal of the order in 1952.

<sup>25</sup> From 1943 on he taught folk music at the Faculty of Arts of the Pázmány Péter University for a short while (until 1944, when Hungary entered the Second World War). It is much to be regretted that after 1945 he could not continue in his assignment as a university professor, either. In the last years of his life he took part in the training of musicologists: he was teaching as professor emeritus at the Musicological Department of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.

In vain was he a renowned teacher and an acknowledged expert on music history by then; his monastic vocation barred him not only from teaching in another school but also from carrying on his ethnomusicological research officially, in a state-paid job. In a succinct curriculum vitae written in the autumn of 1958 he described this period as follows:

Since 1946 I have served [...] upon the request of VKM [the Ministry of Religion and Public Education] at the folk music department of the Ethnographic Museum, paid by the Academy of Sciences from 1949 on. Since 1950 I have been an appointed member of staff at the Ethnographic Museum.<sup>26</sup>

The modest wording of his curriculum vitae implies that he worked unremunerated, with an attitude of “service” for three years, taking care of the folk music material of the museum and fighting for his own existence at the same time. This is strengthened by Bálint Sárosi’s evidence who met him during the war for the first time:

fate willed it so that I saw him in an inferior position to what would have been his due according to his capacities. But I never found him dissatisfied with fate. He always did with even-tempered modesty what he was supposed and allowed to do at the moment.<sup>27</sup>

In this period, which was particularly difficult for him,

his almost exclusive concern was to fight for the survival, the very existence of our public folk music collection, pushing into the background his own ambitions.<sup>28</sup>

Shortly before his death Rajeczky himself recalled this time as follows:

When I went to work at the Ethnographic Museum after the war, I thought that the phonograph cylinders, records and instruments preserved exclusively the voice of our people.<sup>29</sup>

László Lajtha, the director and man of all work at the Folk Music Collection of the Ethnographic Museum in those days, sent letters to various authorities since the summer of 1946, trying to get approval for Rajeczky’s employment at the Folk Music Collection there. He wrote in a letter to the Minister of Religion and Public Education dated 14 June 1946:

Dr Rajeczky is an extraordinarily qualified musician, an excellent music historian [...] Professor Rajeczky is expected at the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum in a job which is most important for the whole Hungarian public education [...] he will readily accept his assignment which he would consider as his object in life.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Berlász, 1982, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Sárosi 1987, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Berlász, 1982, 10.

<sup>29</sup> Rajeczky 1991, 160–161.

<sup>30</sup> Published in Berlász 1982, 11–12.



For Lajtha it was not irrelevant who the staff member appointed to the department would be. It was namely decisive for the fate of the folk music collection that had survived the devastation of the war in relatively good condition (phonograph cylinders, lacquered records, folk music notations gathered since the heroic age of ethnomusicology through serious work by Béla Vikár, Bartók, Kodály, Lajtha and others). Lajtha had already had serious problems finding staff and particularly professionals before the war; but after the war he was left completely alone. He cannot have had a presentiment that he would soon have to leave the museum, due to political reasons. In those days he was about to leave for abroad to meet his pre-war commissions as a composer; in the autumn of 1947 Lajtha actually went to London for a year.<sup>31</sup> In view of his long absence Rajeczky's engagement was particularly important for Lajtha, for he was a person capable of substituting him in every respect. Although Lajtha could not achieve anything in the matter of Rajeczky's employment, he charged him with the music collection of the museum during his one-year absence. Rajeczky performed his duties excellently. His various petitions and requests addressed to the management of the museum during this time show him as a scholar feeling equally responsible for every detail of his profession and the necessary technical equipments. In his application dated 15 April 1948 he emphasised that the department lacked instruments needed for recording and reproducing the recorded music and unless measures were taken to supply them, it was to be feared that all material would become useless.<sup>32</sup>

His twofold orientation towards recordings was already apparent in those days. He attached great importance to using for the most perfect modern technical devices recording so that they come the closest possible to the living sound (including filtering out the superfluous noises) and facilitate hearing out the finest shades of music on playing back the recordings (and thus increase the efficiency of transcription). On the other hand, he was interested in the various sound recording and reproducing inventions from the aspect of the history of sciences as well, particularly in international context and with relevance to folk music research. He was to write later the history of Hungarian folk music sound recording with extensive international co-operation. He had supported enthusiastically the *Pátria* series of records started in

<sup>31</sup> Berlász 1984, 60–62.

<sup>32</sup> Published in Berlász 1984, 13.

1937 from the beginning; in this work he took actively part from the early 1940s to 1952.<sup>33</sup>

After his return to Hungary, Lajtha urged Rajeczky's appointment again in a petition written on 15 January 1949. In one of his petitions he emphasised:

Mr Rajeczky is a professional of European orientation and a researcher with the widest intellectual horizon. He performed his duties faithfully, with endurance and never-failing competence in the most difficult times. It is characteristic of his self-sacrificing attitude that he commuted from the country to his office to help the Folk Music Department.<sup>34</sup>

Then all of a sudden Lajtha, who had a lot of acquaintances in the western world where he had just returned from (and was therefore rated as unreliable and persona non grata under contemporary political conditions), was dismissed from his job. Though Rajeczky still worked at the Museum without being appointed, he became the acting head of department on the grounds that his "political conduct" had not been objectionable during all the years he spent at the Museum and his professional competence was beyond any shadow of doubt.<sup>35</sup> In the meantime, in 1949 Rajeczky started folk music collection with Lajtha and Pál Péter Domokos among the Csángó people of Moldova resettled in Hungary. In 1950 he was finally appointed and became a staff member of the Ethnographic Museum where he worked until 1960. Nevertheless, he was submitted to political scrutiny disguised as scientific survey in the very first year and he was asked to report on the life and work of the department, including its visitors. Rajeczky took his task seriously and answered the hidden political questions in truly scientific manner in his report "Pro Memoria on the state of the Folk Music Department". Information on his workdays and the serious problems of the department survive in this writing only. He mentioned, among others:

Presently the Folk Music Department has only one staff member who, beside attending to the requests of the public, preparing the budget and writing reports,

<sup>33</sup> See Rajeczky 1972d. Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály had decided to publish a series of folk music discs equally suitable for scholarly studies and popularisation back in 1933. Three years later the series was started by four (shellac) sample records edited by Béla Bartók and published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (see Somfai 1981). The series launched under the name *Pátria* (with records of 78 revolutions per minute) could only be realized in 1937. Since the Academy was no more capable of financing it, the Hungarian Radio enabled resuming its publication it from 1938 onwards. The last recordings were made during the Second World War, immediately before the German occupation of Hungary (1944) and could only be continued after the war. The last recordings of the *Pátria* series were made in 1952. See Tari 1992b, 188–189.

<sup>34</sup> Published in Berlász 1982, 12. "Country" means the above-mentioned Pásztó in Heves county (Now Nógrád). Rajeczky was commuting from Pásztó to his workplace in Budapest to the end of his life which meant a considerable loss of time, taking into consideration the traffic conditions of those days.

<sup>35</sup> Berlász 1982, 13.

has hardly any time left for arranging recordings, on-the-spot collecting and for the particularly time-consuming task of transcribing the melodies (not to speak of preparing the vouchers).<sup>36</sup>

In these difficult times he still carried out or rather continued collecting in several Hungarian-speaking areas (on the Great Hungarian Plain, in Transdanubia, northeast-Hungary), and also in an increasing number of villages of Heves county. In February 1948 he notated on the spot the so-called Nativity play of Pásztó<sup>37</sup> which is mentioned with appreciation in literature on folk music and ethnography. However, he did not carry out extensive collecting work in Heves and Nógrád counties until 1952 and 1954, respectively.<sup>38</sup>

At that time he often worked with colleagues, exceptions are his collections in his immediate Palóc environment (the geographical region in and around Pásztó). When performing the detailed ethnographic exploration of a village, he frequently acted as the musical collaborator. Thus he came to work together with the ethnographers Edit Fél<sup>39</sup> and Tamás Hofer<sup>40</sup> in the village Átány of Heves county in 1954. Fél and Hofer started the large-scale investigation which formed the basis of the village monograph in 1951. In the volume published in 1961 they indicated that “the music material of the monograph on Átány was collected and elaborated by Rajeczky”.<sup>41</sup>

Rajeczky also worked with the ethnographer Iván Balassa<sup>42</sup> in Bodrogköz, northern Hungary in 1952, 1955 and 1959 (in the latter two years also alone) and with the ethnographer Ferenc Bakó<sup>43</sup> and his colleague in Felső-

<sup>36</sup> Published in Berlász 1982, 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* II, No. 368.

<sup>38</sup> Collecting in Átány and Bodony was also carried out in 1954, on 8 December 1955 in Bodony.

<sup>39</sup> 1910–1988. See *Néprajzi Lexikon* (Ethnographic Lexicon) II (1979) 122. For the obituary appreciating the career of the eminent ethnographer researching into the social issues of folk arts as well, see Rajeczky 1991.

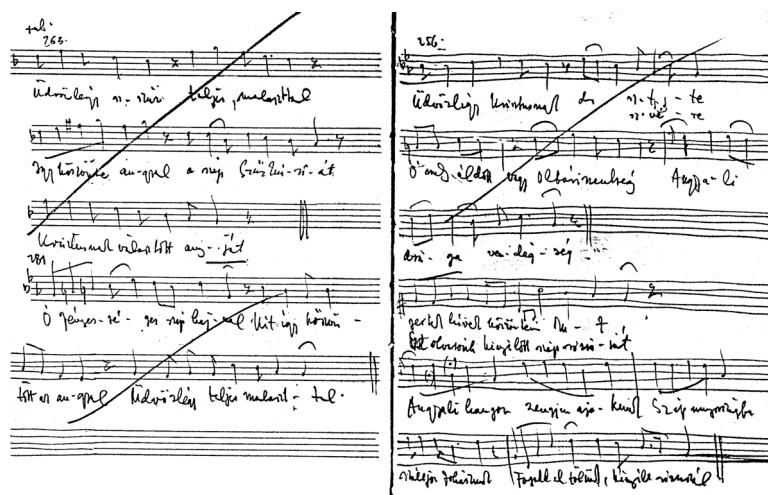
<sup>40</sup> 1929. See *Néprajzi Lexikon* II (1979) 567. He performed research into Hungarian folk arts primarily as a museologist until his retirement. From 1990 to 1995 he was director of the Ethnographic Museum, between 1975 and 1988 the editor of the journal *Ethnographia*.

<sup>41</sup> Fél–Hofer 1961, 88. According to Tamás Hofer’s verbal communication, the monograph was not meant as a separate work; the sections on music would have been added to the relevant subject-matter, similar to the volume published in 1961.

<sup>42</sup> 1919. See *Néprajzi Lexikon* I (1977) 197. The scholar dealing with ethnographic and linguistic issues of the Hungarian agriculture—in folklore with cemeteries and in folk arts with shepherds’ carvings—continued his research even as a civil servant, as president of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society, the director of the Ethnographic Museum for a while, editor of various scholarly journals as well as a staff member at the Ministry of Culture. He started work at the Ethnographic Museum in 1944, then took part in collecting in Zemplén county as the director of the Rákóczi Museum of Sárospatak in the 1950s. Sárospatak has been the intellectual centre of the ethnographically particularly interesting region called Bodrogköz. After the First World War a considerable part of Bodrogköz was attached to Czechoslovakia (now it lies in Slovakia). This is the reason why Balassa describes the territory as one of the Hungarian ethnographic regions outside Hungary’s frontiers. See Balassa 1989, 380–390.

<sup>43</sup> 1917–99. See *Néprajzi Lexikon* I (1977) 190, as well as *Néprajzi Hírek*. At that time the ethnographer who achieved remarkable results in the research of the Palóc people (his editorial work in the four-volume edition entitled *Palócok*, is outstanding in which he wrote several chapters, see Bakó 1989) was already a member of staff (and later, up to 1998, director) of the Dobó István Museum of Eger.

tárkány (1954, see *Facsimile 1*).<sup>44</sup> The same applies to the common collecting work with his ethnomusicologist colleagues: a certain part of his collections among the Csángó people and in Bukovina was performed conjointly with Pál Péter Domokos (1948–52), in the Zoborvidék he was accompanied by László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei (1979).<sup>45</sup> In Zemplén county he expanded the area towards the eastern boundaries of the northern folk music dialect region while on the Great Hungarian Plain towards the southern boundaries. By examining the traditional music of the ethnic groups resettled from Moldova and Bukovina to Hungary during the Second World War, he increased considerably the basic material necessary for extensive historical comparison.



Facsimile 1

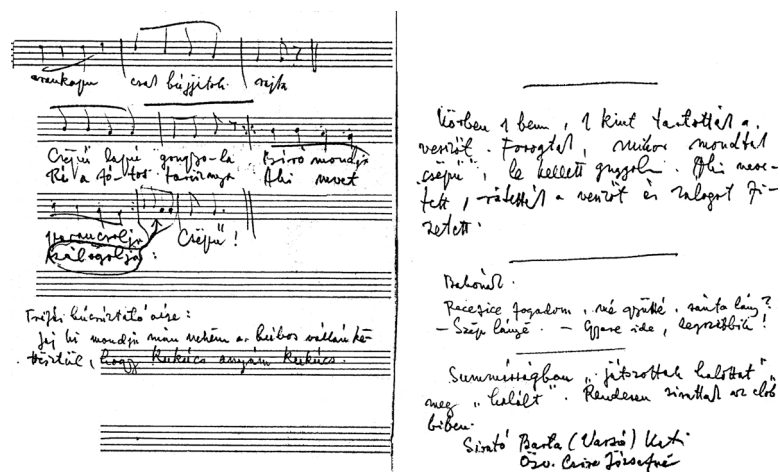
The greatest value of his collections lies, however, in its quality and less in its quantity or geographical extension. Characteristic of his collector's attitude was a keen interest in all kinds of oral musical tradition belonging to the category of Hungarian folk music. The manner of collecting material may serve as a model for present-day collectors. With regard to collecting methodology each of his collections, particularly the material supported by sound recording, stands as a good example of how the collector can arrive within the shortest time at the question he is most interested in. This can be

<sup>44</sup> The remark "Bakonak" in the middle of the recto of the facsimile from the collecting notebook of Felsőtárkány refers to Ferenc Bakó; under it he notated a certain type of children's games. The remark below the line refers to children's games: *Summásságban "játszottak halottat" meg "halált"*. *Rendesen sirattak az előbbiben...* [They "played dead" and "death" when they did seasonal work. In the former they really lamented.]

<sup>45</sup> For the 1979 collections tape recorders were already available.



As regards the stratification of the material, the collections should be emphasised that concentrate on a certain topic or aim at a definite goal, such as the religious songs collected in Tápé, Jászapáti and Zoboralja (*Facsimile 2*),<sup>47</sup> the



*Facsimile 2*

<sup>48</sup> Some of them are published in Tari 1995, music examples 5–9.

tant sign of his scholarly attitude is that he spared no effort several years after 1951 to collect children's game songs (in Terpes, Pásztó and Felsőtárkány). It bears evidence of his conviction that by publishing the volume the exploration of the material did not end and that the examination of the material gathered cannot be done away with. After all this it is not surprising that in the first volume of *Magyarország zenetörténete* [The history of Music in Hungary] he wrote the summary on children's game songs and the section on the adults' games as well. In this work he relied not only on the first volume of *CMPH* but made use of historical and international relationships as well.<sup>49</sup> Apart from his own example, he called attention to the importance of collecting children's games in other ways, too. When enumerating the tasks of recording folk music in 1972, he remarked the following: "And a further extensive field: there is no recording of 'played' children's games [i.e. recording the children's playing in its living function]."<sup>50</sup> (He faced the reality of this problem when he edited the folk music record series consisting of three times four discs. Though research into children's game songs had gathered momentum in the meantime and recordings of children's games were already available by the time the material of the third set of records was compiled, their flaw was that they were played by adults not children who were still familiar with tradition and acted them as a kind of memory of their childhood.)<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, Rajeczky kept on exploring the material after the appearance of the second volume of *CMPH* (1953). Publishing these volumes cannot have left him with the feeling of completed work because he paid the greatest attention to the examination of one- or two-line musical forms representing an earlier stage than the strophic structure. He quoted several examples to prove that pre-strophic forms were available in certain lament formulae and in the formula set of customs' and children's songs. He pointed out the identical stylistic features common to both of them in spite of their different functions and the strongly improvisational character.<sup>52</sup> His interest in folk music preceding the strophic forms (cries and in general texts declaimed by means of intonation,<sup>53</sup> beggar songs) explains why he notated or recorded a great number of additional custom melodies and certain moments of customs in 1952 and 1954, after the volume of folk customs (*CMPH* II) came out, ex-

<sup>49</sup> See Rajeczky 1988, 537–539, as well as 539–542.

<sup>50</sup> See Rajeczky 1972d, 373.

<sup>51</sup> See the following children's games in Rajeczky 1982, Hungarian Folk Music III, IV/B 5 a–d.

<sup>52</sup> Rajeczky 1969b.

<sup>53</sup> A vendor's cry is published in: Tari 1995, music example 2.

panding both the boundaries of geographical distribution and enlarging the number of melody types and certain variants. For example, the matching song beginning with the words *Fonjunk, fonjunk* (Let's spin) he collected in Bodony in 1954 meant a novelty with regard to type as well. The fourth volume of *CMPH* published five years later than the collection itself included both variants as a so far unknown matching song of extraordinary form.<sup>54</sup>

It is symptomatic of Rajeczky's modest scholarly conduct that he never put into the foreground the material he had collected. Although he attached melodies collected by him to some of his studies, but the purpose of publishing a tune was in these instances to shed light on and interpret a musical phenomenon, in one word to solve a scientific problem, and not to demonstrate his own collection.<sup>55</sup> His folk music collection did not appear as a separate edition, either as a monograph or as a selection. He had originally intended to publish his 1952 collection in Szuhahuta (Heves county) as a monograph but, as he told me in conversation later, it would have required a great deal of on-the-spot research for which he did not have the time. In a study which is, for that matter, the only one based on his own collection<sup>56</sup> he investigated lamenting the bride as a scholarly issue making use of examples he had gathered in the village Bodony. His major concern in Bodony was to collect items of lamenting the bride but the knowledge of laments of the various age groups and their memories of the past provided him the possibility to give an overall picture of all types of laments in his report following collection.<sup>57</sup> He described his collecting experiences as follows:

lamenting a bride can certainly be claimed to have once been a general custom [...] lamenting proved to have such an unprecedented number of opportunities which had never been found within a village in the course of our collecting so far.<sup>58</sup>

In the same year he published another study with the title *A gyöngyösi pásztormisék (1767)* [Masses of the Gyöngyös shepherds] based on research in libraries which bears evidence of Rajeczky's interest in church music and the relationship between historical and folk music. In this work the author pointed out that the masses displayed a wealth of folk music elements. Consequently, they provided lessons worth considering for ethnomusicology and reminded us of the need for making inquiries into folk tradition. As we

<sup>54</sup> See Kerényi 1959, Nos. 477–478 as well as the list of types 48, Nos. 467–479.

<sup>55</sup> He also published examples of Gregorian melodies surviving in folk tradition in the form of religious folk songs which he collected among the Csángós from Moldau. See Rajeczky 1984, 382–386.

<sup>56</sup> See Rajeczky 1955a.

<sup>57</sup> See Rajeczky 1955a.

<sup>58</sup> Rajeczky 1955a, 167.

read “the majority of the Nativity plays bear the indication ‘tuba pastorum’ and have bagpipe fifth accompaniment”. The bagpiper’s part is supported by a jest in the first Gloria: upon the sung request the bagpiper makes a blunder twice (hand-written instruction: ‘wrong blowing’) and it is only after the similarly sung protest ‘Oh boy, I beg you’ that the third ‘good blowing’ follows. As we get to know, the melodies of the mass are not purely Hungarian items, “nevertheless, they strengthen the sporadically surviving evidence of the merry music of the one-time midnight masses with valuable data ... The custom does not lie so far back in the past that a more careful folk music collection could not produce results elsewhere, too”. As an example, he cited his own folk music collecting experience in Tápé, county Csongrád where he notated two potpourri that “were still sung at the end of the last century.”<sup>59</sup>

With regard to publication the three volumes of *Csángó népzene* [Csángó folk music] edited jointly with Pál Péter Domokos, which contained their joint collecting work and were transcribed by Rajeczky, meant also exceptions. They came out (the last one after Rajeczky’s death)<sup>60</sup> as representative volumes of the music of the Hungarian ethnic Csángó people living in minority in Romania that shows many archaic musical and linguistic features. Melodies of his folk music collections were naturally published in additional volumes (presenting folk song types) of the series *CMPH* and other scholarly editions.

A further field of Rajeczky’s collections worth mentioning is instrumental music which is not so surprising after all in the knowledge of his many-sided interests. In his collections the notation of instrumental melodies played by Gypsy musicians or imitated vocally by singers or descriptions relating to instrumental musical life occur repeatedly.<sup>61</sup>

### Folk music transcription

Apart from the three volumes of the folk music of the Moldovan Csángó people the transcription of the complete material or of critical sections of several folk music editions is associated with his name.

For volume III/A of *CMPH* (Wedding) he notated the songs of Zoborvidék (in the one-time Nyitra county, today Slovakia), once so rich in

<sup>59</sup> See Rajeczky 1955b, 224.

<sup>60</sup> Domokos–Rajeczky: 1956, 1961, 1991. Rajeczky was looking forward to the appearance of the third volume but the publication got delayed.

<sup>61</sup> The only melody included in the village monograph of Átány was the imitation of a swineherd’s pipe (a texted driving out melody), notated on the spot by Rajeczky. See Fél–Hofer 1961, 174.



wedding songs, from phonograph recordings made in 1938. This collection was particularly important in those days because Kodály had already started work in 1906 and continued it up to the First World War but after the change of borders following the First World War (1920) it could be continued in 1938 only. Based on pre-collections carried out in 1937, the folk music traditions of the region were presented by means of a series of *Pátria* records in those days. The collecting work was carried out by János Manga, who was, for that matter, an ethnographer of excellent background but without adequate skills in transcribing melodies, particularly from phonograph cylinders. The performing manner recorded with phonograph was, however, more ancient and authentic than those collected by Hungarian ethnomusicologists in the region in the early 1950s, almost simultaneously with preparing the wedding tunes for publication. It was therefore important that the earlier collection should be included among the tunes to be published and the transcription be done competently. Rajeczky transcribed the richly ornamented melodies sung with archaic singing technique onto these phonograph cylinders thoroughly and with the meticulous care so characteristic of him, but this precision was not to the detriment of intelligibility.<sup>62</sup> The bride's farewell song recorded by the ethnographer Ferenc Bakó in Ipolyvarbó (northern Hungary, populated by the Palóc ethnic group) was also transcribed for the volume by Rajeczky.<sup>63</sup>

Rajeczky carried out the transcription of László Lajtha's instrumental music collection from Kőrispatak but he had already taken part in the transcription of the Szék volume (and probably also in that of Szépkenyerű-szentmárton).<sup>64</sup> It is incomprehensible why his name and contribution were left unmentioned in the Kőrispatak edition. The fact that he did the transcription is confirmed unanimously by the young researchers of the 1950s who frequently visited the Music Department of the Ethnographic Museum as beginners and watched attentively how their senior colleagues worked. One of them, the folk music researcher Bálint Sárosi gave account of it in writing:

<sup>62</sup> In volume III/A of *CMPH* the following melodies collected by Manga in 1938 and written down by Rajeczky can be found: 7, 11, 17, 18, 34, 36, 59, 152, 153, 154, 167, 176, 177, 192, 218, 222, 262, 274.

<sup>63</sup> *CMPH* III/A, music example 276. In the same place bride's farewell songs can be found that he collected among the Csángó people in Moldova and in Bodony: music examples 277, 278 as well as 289, 290.

<sup>64</sup> Rajeczky often told the writer of this article how he drudged with transcribing the orchestral material. He referred particularly to the material of the Kőrispatak volume as his chief work. Lajtha 1955, Szék 1954, Szépkenyerű-szentmárton 1954.

The first time I saw someone transcribing instrumental folk music in the most accomplished way was when he made the so-called rough transcription of Lajtha's famous Transylvanian collection at the Ethnographic Museum.<sup>65</sup>

It cannot be established whether there were any conflicts between Lajtha and Rajeczky in this matter. At any rate, Rajeczky never made any disparaging remarks about Lajtha; on the other hand, he did not conceal his contribution to the instrumental volumes, either. In his summary of the history of Hungarian research he writes:

The seven-year-long transcriptional work of the Szék and Kőröspatak material performed by Lajtha and Rajeczky raised the issue of instrumental music once again.<sup>66</sup>

In his paper read at the conference organised for celebrating Rajeczky's 85th birthday Sárosi remembered the professor of transcription as follows:

Once he managed to drive home the complicated art of transcribing folk music to a colleague from abroad spending some weeks in Hungary on a study tour. The smart pupil knew how to turn to good use his newly acquired knowledge: he wrote a lengthy study of obscure contents about his recent attainments. By doing so, he raised transcription to the level of a much appreciated but little understood scientific issue. But anyone who wanted to get acquainted with the trade went, as usual, to Rajeczky who was always willing to be at everybody's disposal, as experience shows, in at least four foreign languages.<sup>67</sup>

Rajeczky's transcriptions are many-sided and to the point. He tried to grasp the pitch and time relationships of the sounding music the most precisely possible and to express in the written music within the confines of legibility the performing characteristics of the musical style of the various dialect regions and, within them, the performer's individual traits. He united in himself ideally Kodály's so-called descriptive and Bartók's prescriptive transcription techniques, their precision necessary for sciences and, last but not least, the respect, moreover, reverence towards the subject-matter of research: the folk music and its performers. In the volumes of *CMPH* several melodies provide evidence of his activity in this respect; the wedding-song serves as a demonstration (*Examples 1/1–5*).<sup>68</sup>

He tried to lay the theoretical foundations of transcription.<sup>69</sup> More than once he examined the issues from all angles in connection with some other topic. In his study discussing the strict rhythm of Gregorian chant he demon-

<sup>65</sup> Sárosi 1987, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Rajeczky 1965, 127.

<sup>67</sup> Sárosi 1987, 38–39.

<sup>68</sup> *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* III/A, 274.

<sup>69</sup> For the first time: 1948c.

Example 1/1

Example 1/2

am Bã - - nãt ã szi - vë - mã - nëk.

2. - Æ - jã, révészã, révészã, mã - gyãr if - jũ ré - vész,

Vigy ãt ã nãgy há - juõn!

U - rá - mã - ruõl mã - rádt ëggyã lá - dà kin - csëm,

Æzt i - sã në - këd ã - dom.

- Nëm kell këd - vëm - nëk, szép szë - rë - lã - mëm - nëk,

am Bã - nãt ã szi - vëm - nëk.

3 - Hãj, révész, révész, mã gyãr if - jũ ré - vész,

Vigy ãt ã nãgy há - juõn!

Example 1/3

U-ra-ma ruql má-rádt há-já - don lyá - nyom,  
 Ázt í - sz né - kéd á - dom.  
 - Áz kell kéd - vémnek, szíp szé - rül-mém-nék,  
 0 röm á szí - vém - ré.  
 1. - Gyűj bē, anyám, gyűj bē, fond bē á há - lyá-mát  
 Ó - tő - sz - bē, há - to - sz - bá,  
 Ó-tő-sz-bē, há - tos-bá, á - rany-há-j-fo-guq-bá!  
 Há most bē nēm fo-nod, töb-biē bē nēm fo-nod

## Example 1/4

Ó - tős - bē, há - tos - bá,  
 Ó-tő-sz-bē, há - tos - bá, á - rany-há-j-fo-guq-bá.

*Menyhe* (Nyitra), Potuska Jánosné Fülöp Ilona (60). 1938. VII., lej. Rajeczky.

## Example 1/5



strated by way of analysing Bartók's manner of transcription how strong an individual's inclination towards rubato performance was.<sup>70</sup> Bartók's method of transcription occupied him relatively early and intensively. He devoted a separate study to the question back in 1948 in which he raised questions about Bartók's transcription and his remarks on the voucher sheets and tried to find adequate answers.<sup>71</sup>

Rajeczky transcribed the manner of performance of the richly ornamented old-style songs in a densely written music layout, putting down a lot of minor details precisely. Like his predecessors Bartók and Kodály, he took care that his music layout should not serve the aim of virtuoso transcription technique for its own sake. Each music layout he notated is characterised by a completely understandable manner of writing, expressing the given style, musical phenomenon and performing manner in the best way possible. A good example of this lucidity is the on-the-spot folksong transcription from his 1958 collection in Zemplén county<sup>72</sup> (*Facsimile 3*).

One thing remains certain: he did not consider folksong transcription as a drudgery, although he admitted it was a tiresome and time-consuming job. This is borne out by the text with which Rajeczky dedicated to the present author his study of Bartók's transcription written conjointly with György Kerényi:<sup>73</sup> "A népdallejegyzés örömeinek növelésére Béni b.[ácsi]" [For increasing the joy of folksong transcription, uncle Béni] (*Facsimile 4*).

My experiences show that his observations and views on transcription and, in connection with it, on the manner of performance, have not become sufficiently known.

### **The editor of folk music recordings**

In spite of the limited financial means available, Hungarian ethnomusicology had been in the vanguard of recording live music and of its scholarly publication from the beginning (1895). At the outset Bartók and Kodály had set the aim of publishing the greatest possible number of authentic folk music items recorded with the best technical facilities so that both scholarly research and public education may use and profit from them. They initiated the production of folk music records back in 1933 and, as a consequence,

<sup>70</sup> Rajeczky 1967a, 1976, 85–87.

<sup>71</sup> Rajeczky 1948c.

<sup>72</sup> Performers of "wedding-songs" who sang the old-styled folksongs not linked to any genre or function at weddings as songs of entertainment.

<sup>73</sup> Kerényi–Rajeczky 1963.

41, 44, 44, 44,  
1-8

MIA NÉPZENKUTATÓ  
CSOPORT  
Lehár szám: 36-318

5 (b3) 1  
Cigánd (Zemplén m.)  
Lakodalmások  
Részletek 1958. II.

lassan

1) Bu-za-vi-ra-g la le-sa-kaj-ta-ná-lak,  
Mit mondana ez a vi-lág anyád-mek?  
Nem mondana, édesanyám, semmit se.  
A legénynek nem parancsol senki se.

2) Soha! Lementem a Tiszán a nyá-tor,  
De soa kislány kiáltott, hogy: "megálljón!"  
Hideg a víz, nem lehet azt kiállni,  
De soh' betyár veszt el keze viselni.

Facsimile 3

A népzenekutató csoportnál készült  
Bécsi.

Facsimile 4

four sample records were edited by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1936.<sup>74</sup> This was followed by a series of folk music discs entitled *Pátria* started on shellac records at 78 revolutions per minute in 1937. As the Academy was unable to subsidise the continued production of records, it was undertaken by the Hungarian Radio from 1938 on which was directed by the ethnographer Gyula Ortutay at that time and that also provided the studio. In addition to Bartók and Kodály, Dénes Bartha played an active role in launching this enterprise while László Lajtha from the Ethnographic Museum had a

<sup>74</sup> See Somfai 1981.

major share in its implementation. Young researchers joined them in the work of pre-collection (e.g. János Manga who was mentioned in connection with the collection in Zobor-vidék in the matter of transcription above or the ethnomusicologist Oszkár Dincsér, a research fellow to Lajtha at the Ethnographic Museum). Rajeczky soon realised how important it was to publish sound material from authentic sources and, as a young scholar, he also joined the work. The series which got off with a good start and became popular within short, was brought to a standstill by the events of the Second World War; the last recordings were made by Lajtha in December 1944.<sup>75</sup> Lajtha and Rajeczky rendered great services by continuing the recordings after the war. Until 1952 they prepared for publication an additional one hundred items of so-called normal records of 78 revolutions per minute,<sup>76</sup> of which only some smaller selections have been released since then.<sup>77</sup>

1964 means a turning-point in the history of Hungarian folk music record publishing, which is associated with the name of Rajeczky. In 1965 the conference of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC, presently known under the name ICTM) was organised in Budapest. For this event members of the Folk Music Research Group headed by Kodály released a record under the guidance and edition of Rajeczky which provided a comprehensive picture of Hungarian folk music.<sup>78</sup> The authentic folk music record presented Hungarian folk music on black lacquered micro-groove records of 33 revolutions per minute, in agreement with the technical standard of those days. Rajeczky started or rather re-started publishing the recorded material of peasant performers, demonstrating authentically the oral tradition at a time after the Second World War when there was no folk music movement yet but the new, micro-groove records were already available.<sup>79</sup> This disc of 1964, nicknamed “conference-record” by Hungarian ethnomusicologists served as a model for publishing authentic folk music editions in modern form abroad as well. At this conference it was decided to launch a series of authentic folk music editions comprising four times four records.<sup>80</sup> Rajeczky was the editor of the series; the first four records came out in 1969.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Lajtha 1955, 10–11, Berlász 1992.

<sup>76</sup> Rajeczky 1972a and *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* [Hungarian Ethnographic Lexicon], 4, 1981, 33.

<sup>77</sup> For the list of the recorded discs see Tari 1992a, 156–157. For the centenary of Lajtha’s birth (1992) the selection from Lajtha’s orchestral recordings appeared from these one hundred discs.

<sup>78</sup> *Hungarian Folk Music*, Qualiton, 1964.

<sup>79</sup> Tari 1991, 97.

<sup>80</sup> See Tari 1987b, 25–26.

<sup>81</sup> *Hungarian Folk Music* I–III, I 1969, II 1972, III 1982, Vikár 1999, 245.

As time went by, only three of the projected four sets of records were realised.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the series *Magyar Népzene* [Hungarian Folk Music] is complete as it is. In 1969 it represented a novelty in the respect that even one item of a set of three units showed comprehensively each essential area and genre of Hungarian folk music on four records from all over the Hungarian speaking area. The first record introduced old-style folk songs from various stylistic layers, the second presented material belonging to the European layer and to the new style, the third contained instruments and instrumental music and the fourth included the melodies of folk customs. This arrangement was characteristic of the other two units of the series as well. The music material of the records meant a genuine artistic experience for many, while Rajeczky's succinct explanations were aimed at the narrow circle of professionals and the wider public alike.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, foreigners were informed about Hungarian folk music in English, German, French and Russian.<sup>84</sup> The initiative met with recognition: the second item of the series won the Grand Prix of the international record competition.<sup>85</sup> When selecting the material he edited Rajeczky attached great importance to the most perfect sound quality technically as well. He never gave preference to his own recordings over those of others. So much so that he did not choose an example for presentation from the most impeccable sound recordings of his but tried to find the musically most typical example in the collection of others.

From the late 1970s on Rajeczky did not participate in editing folk music editions directly but regarded the publication of authentic folk music records as an important, common task.<sup>86</sup> He was always willing to give advice to un-

<sup>82</sup> It was partly due to organisational changes which took place in the life of the Folk Music Research Group (it merged with the Institute for Musicology in 1974) and partly to other external reasons. See Tari 1987b, 26.

<sup>83</sup> The result of the edition was not what Rajeczky had most expected, that it would be available at each school and play an important role in the musical education of the youth. The record fulfilled its educational function outside school in the first place and has remained a much-sought-for article on the record market to this day.

<sup>84</sup> The manner of publication has only one deficiency for which the political conditions of those days are accountable. The editor did not indicate the performers' name or the villages, but made reference to the geographical region only it derived from. Writing out the name of Hungarian performers living outside Hungary would have had serious consequences for them. In Romania and Slovakia people meeting and speaking to Hungarians from Hungary entailed serious punishment more than once, particularly from the 1960s on and even more so after the 1970s. (No Hungarian folk music collector could set foot on and meet Hungarians living on the area of Ukraine until the late 1980s.) Collecting folk music was not without any danger for collectors from Hungary, either, even if they disguised their work as tourism. It occurred that the authorities confiscated the entire sound and film material of a collecting trip, which was the consequence of their denying the existence of Hungarian minority living in their country. People providing accommodation for collectors in their home in the villages were imprisoned or punished with a fine. Under these circumstances overall scholarly authenticity could not be an aim to pursue. See Vikár 1999, 245.

<sup>85</sup> When asked in a Hungarian interview how he felt about the award, Rajeczky answered that as a music teacher he would be satisfied if these records could reach young people and be available at schools and used in elementary education. Unfortunately, his desire has not come true.

<sup>86</sup> By 1974 he completed the third unit of the series but its edition was delayed. In 1972 a series of Hungarian Gregorian records was launched; he contributed to its preparation actively (e.g. by writing the accompanying text).

dertakings of this kind and was looking forward to the outcome of the work, the ready product. Rajeczky looked upon the edition of folk music records as one of the foundations of scholarly investigation. He worded this view, among others, in his study on asymmetric rhythms where he emphasised that in order to be able to answer additional questions a lot of records have to be studied yet (that is at least the “live” music recorded on discs should be examined).<sup>87</sup> He took into account the tasks to be carried out in connection with folk music records, stating where it was late once for all to undertake anything and where not, and where work should be continued immediately.<sup>88</sup>

### A polymath of ethnomusicology

Questions of term frequently emerge in Rajeczky’s ethnomusicological studies.<sup>89</sup> In this respect his writing entitled *Regélni* is very instructive. He pointed out by means of the word much-researched by linguists and the Christmas folk custom (regölés) closely examined by ethnographers that in the 1950s the custom survived in Transdanubia and Transylvania only while the word itself existed in other regions as well. He cited three Palóc examples, one for its use at weddings, one during the carnival period. He urged scholars to collect the word in every Hungarian region before it dies out so that could give a clue to the custom.<sup>90</sup>

Rajeczky played an outstanding role in studying the performing manner of folk music. Its reason lies in the fact that the subject is not sufficiently researched on the one hand and that he did not publish his relevant research results as separate subjects but as details of some other topics, on the other.<sup>91</sup> He studied the old and new singing manner, the relationship between ornamentation, rhythm and performance, respectively.<sup>92</sup> His view that all elements of a performance must be scrutinised so as to be able to form an opinion of the peasant tone emerges even from details.<sup>93</sup> In this range of subjects two of Rajeczky’s works stand out as models of his characteristic, concise writing. One of them is the study on Hungarian asymmetrical rhythms which

<sup>87</sup> Rajeczky 1978a, 153, see also 1978b. As a member of the editorial board he took actively part in preparing the series of discs *Anthology of Hungarian Folk Music* started by the Institute for Musicology in 1981.

<sup>88</sup> See Rajeczky 1972d, 373.

<sup>89</sup> Rajeczky 1959b, 1975–76, 30–31, 1978b. For that matter, he also dealt with questions of term in connection with Gregorian chant, see e.g. 1977.

<sup>90</sup> Rajeczky 1959b. His appeal had effect among ethnomusicologists. This subject-matter is expounded in detail with reference to him in Bakó (ed.) 1989, IV, 241.

<sup>91</sup> Rajeczky 1956, 1960.

<sup>92</sup> Rajeczky 1956, 1960, 1967a.

<sup>93</sup> Rajeczky 1974.



had not been researched in detail earlier; it presents the outcome of his research of historical depth, using international examples to corroborate them.<sup>94</sup> The other is his study written about the intonational cries of the Székely mountain shepherds in Gyimesvölgy (Transylvania, now Romania) applied in the function of signals. In this work he demonstrated the shepherds' musical communication by means of peculiar intonation technique in Eurasian context.<sup>95</sup>

He was not concerned about political pressure. If his chosen topic required it, he had the courage of assuming responsibility for carrying on research into the folk music of all Hungarians. He indicated in the title of his work which ethnic group or geographical area he was writing about even in the most critical times. He used the term wedding from the *Felvidék* (Upper Hungary, since the Trianon Treaty Slovakia) and *Székely* Nativity play (Hungarians living in eastern Transylvania, Romania since the Trianon Treaty) in a period<sup>96</sup> when it was forbidden to speak about Hungarians living on the area detached from Hungary, thus naturally of Hungarians resident in Slovakia and Romania.<sup>97</sup>

He designated tasks that Hungarian and foreign research should solve by joining forces in most cases. Let me mention one example, his writing on the common tasks of Austro-Hungarian research.<sup>98</sup> Unfortunately his idea of common Austro-Hungarian folksong collection in the border region did not come true within the framework of the otherwise very fruitful Austro-Hungarian common research projects. (By the time it could have been carried out, there were neither people to collect from nor any material to collect.)

His works exploring the parallels and relationships between folk music and Gregorian chant and examining their identical stylistic features were received with marked attention by the community of ethnomusicologists in Hungary and abroad.<sup>99</sup> He based his investigations of the relationships between east and west on historical and international comparisons.<sup>100</sup> He achieved many results in exploring medieval sources as well as in the re-

<sup>94</sup> Rajeczky 1978a–b. The Hungarian and the foreign-language versions differ to a certain extent.

<sup>95</sup> Rajeczky 1980.

<sup>96</sup> Rajeczky 1957a, 1959a.

<sup>97</sup> Analysing the style of the recitatives of Székely Nativity plays he showed the relationship between the structure and the closing formulae of the Székely and Palóc (and northern Hungarian in the wider sense) bride's farewell. As a proof of the older "long reciting series concluded at the end" he quoted different dictations (memorised texts) from the group of formulae surviving in school tradition. Rajeczky 1959a, see Rajeczky 1976, 233.

<sup>98</sup> E.g. Rajeczky 1965b.

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Rajeczky 1943, 1953, 1956, 1974a.

<sup>100</sup> Rajeczky 1948b, 1957, 1958, 1964, 1967.

search of the relationships between the sources and folk music. For his examinations of the relationship between European folk music and history he met with well-deserved recognition on international forums as well.<sup>101</sup>

His uniquely broad-minded ethnomusicological approach, research historical and general ethnomusicological activity carried out mainly in Hungarian and foreign lexicons and encyclopedia received less attention.<sup>102</sup> His extremely wide knowledge of the special literature of his chosen field enabled him to write several, to this day valid articles on European and extra-European folk music. He did this work even in those days when adequate literature on the given topic or country was almost impossible to come by in a foreign language.<sup>103</sup> The editors of lexicons and encyclopaedia (such as *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* and the *Brockhaus–Riemann Lexicon*<sup>104</sup>) charged him with writing definitions of general ethnomusicological terms and summaries of the history of research.

Whatever subject he dealt with, he showed an extraordinary familiarity with literature. His up-to-date knowledge of the music and literature of other peoples was proverbial in which his mastery of many languages (Greek, Latin, German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, but also his understanding to a certain degree of written Polish and Czech texts) was a great help.<sup>105</sup> Rajeczky counted continuous orientation in literature and the follow-up of the latest results among his daily tasks. To achieve it, he spent one day each week in libraries and urged his younger colleagues to do the same.

His criticism, book and record reviews served the purpose of research both in Hungary and abroad. In the 1950s, the politically hardest time when he worked at the Musical Department of the Ethnographic Museum and even later, he reviewed and wrote criticism on Norwegian, Italian, German and

<sup>101</sup> At the opening of the 1970 conference of the IFMC Study Group on Historical Sources held in Brno he read a paper with the title *Europäische Volksmusik und Musik des Mittelalters*, see Rajeczky, 1973 and Braun 1994, 16. See also: 1955b, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1974a, 1974b.

<sup>102</sup> In addition to entries in foreign dictionaries such as *MGG* and the *New Grove*, he also wrote entries to *Zenei lexikon* (Music lexicon) by Bartha–Tóth, the *Brockhaus–Riemann Lexicon* as well as to the *Hungarian Ethnographic Lexicon*. See also Rajeczky 1986a.

<sup>103</sup> It is worth looking into volume I of the *Music Lexicon* by Bartha–Tóth (1965) in which he wrote the entry on the folk music of Australia and Oceania, 107, Bali 142, South-American folk music 462–463, the folk music of the United States 535, Eskimo folk music 584, the folk music of the Flores-Indonesian island, 639, French folk music 656–657, on the Catalan orchestra *cobla* 390, on African and Indian drum signals 492, on the folk music of Cuba as well as on several instruments.

<sup>104</sup> For the fourth volume of *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* [Hungarian Ethnographic Lexicon] (1981) he wrote the following entries: *folk music* (27–30), *folk music collection* (30–33), *folk music dialects* (33), *folk music records* (33), *tonal systems in folk music* (33–34), *folk music research* (34–36). For the second volume of the *Brockhaus–Riemann Music Lexicon* (1984) he wrote the entries on *népének* (616–617), *ethnomusicology* and *folk music research* (612–622). The entries in the lexikon *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* are not enumerated here.

<sup>105</sup> See Vikár 1999, 245.

English folk music and German and English works on medieval music, respectively.<sup>106</sup> His reviews were never formal but, similar to his studies, aimed both at Hungarian and foreign readers in the east and west alike.<sup>107</sup>

He was frequently asked to write introductory chapters to scholarly works by others.<sup>108</sup> He was a scholar specialised in the Middle Ages and folk music in the first place but was interested and proficient in folk instruments and instrumental folk music as well. This is borne out by his excellent summary of the history of Hungarian research into instrumental folk music written to Sárosi's book on Hungarian folk instruments (in Hungarian).<sup>109</sup> In his above-mentioned disc editions he summed up the characteristics of the Hungarian instruments and instrumental music in a concise, easily understandable and in many details original manner.<sup>110</sup> A sign of his familiarity with instruments is that generations learned from his flute tutor<sup>111</sup> and as a teacher he dealt seriously with teaching instrumental music at school.<sup>112</sup>

It is due to his open-minded attitude and proficiency that he was entrusted with writing the summary of Hungarian folk music research.<sup>113</sup>

He often expressed his respect for others (and not only for the great and famous people). His greetings and words of appreciation were directed, in addition to renowned scholars,<sup>114</sup> to persons working almost anonymously in the background (exploring frequently some backward regions far from town civilisation).<sup>115</sup>

### Organisation of research

After Kodály's death (6 March 1967)<sup>116</sup> Rajeczky became the acting director of the Folk Music Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

<sup>106</sup> For the list of his most important reviews see: 1971, 180–181. His review published since then: Dobszay 1984, see Rajeczky, 1986b.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. *Polska Piesn I Muzyka Ludowa I.* (Kraków 1975) in which he compared Polish songs of volta-rhythm with Hungarian ones. 1977, 460; see also Vikár–Berecky: *Cheremis Folksongs* (Budapest 1971), Rajeczky 1971a.

<sup>108</sup> The preface to Júlia Szegő's collection is an important work. In it he summed up the history of research into the folk music of the Csángó people living in Moldova and appreciated, among other things, the still unpublished collection from Trunk by the Transylvanian scholar János Jagamas. See Szegő 1988.

<sup>109</sup> Sárosi 1973 – a simplified Hungarian version of the book published in German in 1967.

<sup>110</sup> Rajeczky 1969, 1972, 1982.

<sup>111</sup> Rajeczky 1939, see also 1937.

<sup>112</sup> He urged that youth brass bands be formed. See Rajeczky 1933, 1934, 1938 and also that he was leading personally the choir and orchestra of the St. Emerich Secondary School.

<sup>113</sup> In two parts: see Rajeczky 1961, 1965a.

<sup>114</sup> See e.g. his greeting of the seventy-five-year old music historian of Brno Jan Racek in Rajeczky 1975b and the obituary of the eminent Hungarian ethnomusicologist Lajos Kiss (1983b).

<sup>115</sup> He spoke at the funeral of sister Gregoria Forrai collecting folk music at the farthest eastern regions in Transylvania, see 1983c.

<sup>116</sup> His commemoration of Kodály, the head of the study group: 1967.

(1968–70).<sup>117</sup> His assignment to this post was, however, thwarted because the leadership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was warned that a member of a monastic order could not be nominated director in the Communists-led Hungary.<sup>118</sup> So it came that after two years he was not appointed but discharged with a pension. Rajeczky was by no means dispirited; he set to work to accomplish the tasks facing him.

In 1971 he organised a conference of the so-called historical study group (with its present denomination: Study Group on Historical Sources of Traditional Music)<sup>119</sup> of the International Folk Music Council in Hungary which took place in Sárospatak.<sup>120</sup> In his report about the conference he looked back upon the events leading up to the establishment of the study group and described that for the 1964 Budapest conference of the IFMC he suggested a topic to Kodály “who agreed immediately” that its subject matter should be “the relationship between folk music and the history of music”.<sup>121</sup> This was the turning-point, as he wrote, when the scholarly investigation of folk music was included among IFMC’s activities in principle as well. Rajeczky had already been the leader of the study group for five years. He had directed it with Wolfgang Suppan (A) from its establishment in 1967,<sup>122</sup> which Pál Járdányi described in 1964 as follows: “For performing certain professional tasks of limited scope groups were formed and it was decided that its members would meet more frequently in the future so that they become steady international workshops of ethnomusicology.”<sup>123</sup> Hartmut Braun outlined the history of the study group, particularly the initial period, appreciating Rajeczky’s role and the research topics included at Rajeczky’s suggestion in the research programme of the study group.<sup>124</sup> Rajeczky remained president until 1988 (the two new elected presidents became H. Braun and Doris Stockmann). Rajeczky asked the author of the present study to take his request to be relieved of his post as president to the forthcoming conference of the study group (1988 Kungälv, Sweden). He was 87 and cited

<sup>117</sup> For his thoughts worded in 1967 with the title *Kodály Zoltán nyomában* [In the footsteps of Zoltán Kodály] see 1976, 341–342.

<sup>118</sup> The official reason was his age, so he was made to retire. However, he continued working regularly at the Institute, commuting from the country to Budapest as before.

<sup>119</sup> The designation of the group has changed several times in the meantime. In those days it was called: Study Group for Research and Editing of Historic Folk Musical Sources of the IFMC.

<sup>120</sup> A retrospective account of the conference can be found in Braun 1994, 17.

<sup>121</sup> Rajeczky 1972a, 332. On the relationship between ICTM and Hungarian research see Rajeczky 1961.

<sup>122</sup> See Rajeczky 1971a, 178.

<sup>123</sup> See Berlász 2000, 149.

<sup>124</sup> Braun, 1994.

ill health as his personal reason for resignation<sup>125</sup> and his professional argument was that a younger leader was needed since he (and Suppan) had led the group for twenty years. The Study Group on Historical Sources of Folk Music, which consists by no means of steady members only, regretted Rajeczky's resignation. This is why D. Stockmann emphasised on considering the further perspectives of the study group that the former presidents had been relieved of leading the group at their own request.<sup>126</sup>

Rajeczky had already been highly respected internationally before the 1964 conference, and even more so after the event. In the early 1970s and 1980s he was almost more recognised abroad than in Hungary but from the 1980s on his appreciation grew steadily in his country as well. The community of musicians celebrated his eightieth and eighty-fifth birthdays with conferences and concerts and he became professor emeritus of the Academy of Music. Pásztó, his town of residence awarded him honorary citizenship and after his death he was given the highest state distinction (posthumous Kossuth Prize). In the International Folk Music Council and the International Council for Traditional Music he played an active role in harmonising international research not only as the president of the Study Group on Historical Sources of Folk Music but also as one of the board members of the whole organisation. He warned us, however, that participation in an international body took up much of one's time and energy and that "our domestic topics cannot suffer loss due to our commitments elsewhere".<sup>127</sup>

In Hungary he was member of various professional committees, editorial boards and learned societies: the Musicological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the editorial board of the periodical *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (1963–89), the editorial board of the *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* [Hungarian ethnographic lexicon] (1977–82). He edited together with Lajos Vargyas the volumes of essays and studies entitled *Studia Memoriae Bélae Bartók Sacra*.<sup>128</sup> He was member of the editorial board, then after Szabolcsi's death the head of the preparatory committee (and the editor of the first volume) of the series *Magyarország zene-története* [The history of music in Hungary].<sup>129</sup> He did not regard his

<sup>125</sup> He was aged 87 then, just past a cardiac infarction.

<sup>126</sup> Independently from him, Suppan also renounced his post with reference to the twenty years he spent in the position. See D. Stockmann 1994, 9.

<sup>127</sup> Rajeczky 1967c, 1976, 342.

<sup>128</sup> Rajeczky 1956, 1957, 1959, see 1976, 349.

<sup>129</sup> Rajeczky 1988.



membership in various learned societies as a formality. As a member of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society he wrote a study on the connections between Kodály and the Society at the Society's request.<sup>130</sup> In 1978 he became a founding member of the Hungarian Kodály Society which elected him to its honorary member later.

He supported his younger colleagues generously, not only by giving professional advice but translating their contributions into foreign languages as well. In the 1950s he taught German and English at the Ethnographic Museum and in the early 1970s he conducted further education courses in ethnomusicology in the Folk Music Research Group – both after his official working hours, as an unselfish gesture of help, for the edification of his younger colleagues.<sup>131</sup>

In his popular education activities – radio and television programmes, other lectures (and reports) – he appeared as a teacher with comprehensive erudition educating a wide range of non-professionals.<sup>132</sup> The distinguishing features of his radio and television programmes and lectures were his unbiased attitude based on a wide range of knowledge and his highly polished taste. In 1974 he prepared, was editor and gave the introductory lecture of the series *Az európai népdalgyűjtés nagyjai* [Outstanding representatives of European folksong collection] in the Hungarian Radio. As a preparation for this series he published for the general public his writing *Az európai népdalgyűjtés útja* [The path of European folksong collection] in the programme booklet.<sup>133</sup> In 1982 the Hungarian Television launched a ten-item-series entitled *Élő népdal* [Living folksong], in which he was the protagonist.<sup>134</sup> While on the level of everyday practice he made scientifically well-founded, yet easily intelligible radio programmes, he tried to examine the issue of the folk music education of the general public on theoretical basis as well. Departing from Kodály's 1955 writing, he investigated in 1970 the changes that may have taken place in the relationship between folksong and the radio during the one decade and a half.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Rajeczky 1983a.

<sup>131</sup> As a young researcher, I also attended his further education course in ethnomusicology. He taught me gratuitously Italian in Pásztó. He also gave instruction almost illegally in Gregorian musical palaeography.

<sup>132</sup> Rajeczky 1985c.

<sup>133</sup> Rajeczky 1976, 351.

<sup>134</sup> It should be mentioned that in the Hungarian Television he had a series on the history of medieval music. Its material is used as the musical illustration of the medieval part of the steady exhibition entitled *The history of Hungary* still on display at the National Museum, Budapest.

<sup>135</sup> Rajeczky 1976, 331.

The present article that has evoked the figure of Rajeczky, the European music historian and ethnomusicologist and appreciated his role and significance has perhaps proved that Rajeczky's professional interest was many-sided in the field of ethnomusicology (as well). His talent combined with self-discipline, zeal, consistency and the capacity to see the essence of things enabled him to be susceptible towards various topics even in old age. He was fond of his research topics; he approached folk music, Gregorian chant and art music belonging to the general history of music with an artist's sensibility and empathy and a scholar's empirical, analytical and theoretical attitude at the same time. His scholarly way of looking at things was directed by a mixture of the two; his succinct conclusions of frequently one sentence were always founded on the overall knowledge of an immense material. And for his arrangements he collected material indefatigably both from oral tradition and the depth of libraries (including the libraries abroad).

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