

Hungarian Folk Music from Moldavia and Bukovina

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Abstract: The sound archives of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences disposes over a large and invaluable audio folk music collection. It means some ten thousand hours of authentic folk music recordings. To afford the wider public an insight into this collection a series of records – title *Hungarian Folk Music Anthology* – started in 1985. The order of sets follows the Hungarian folk music dialect-areas, as Bartók established them, each containing about 4 hours sound material illustrating the area with the characteristic song types. So far 4×5 records and 2 sets of cassettes have appeared: the folk-dance survey, the songs from North Hungary, Transdanubia, the Great Hungarian Plain, and East (i.e. Transylvania) in two parts. The closing part of the *Anthology* is a set of 4 CD-s containing the folk music of Hungarians living in Moldavia and Bukovina. The demonstration will introduce the history and the musical world of those.

Keywords: Hungarian folk music, Moldavia, Bukovina, Csángó

The sound archives of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences disposes over a large and invaluable audio folk music collection. It means some ten thousands hours of authentic folk music recordings. To afford the wider public an insight into this collection a series of records – title *Hungarian Folk Music Anthology* – started in 1985. The selection was made with scientific care but also with a view to aesthetic as well as technical qualities.

The forerunner to the series, a set of three albums – title *Hungarian Folk Music* – was published in Benjamin Rajeczky's edition and with UNESCO support. It was a selection by styles and historical layers.

The editing principle of the *Anthology* is different from this, since it is geographical: it takes the Hungarian folk music-dialects one by one.

Each album presents over four hours of authentic folk music. It introduces the specificities of the relevant area, its characteristic song types and folk customs in the performance of the best singers and players.

Since 1985 the following parts of the *Anthology* have appeared: a selection by dance dialects presenting the dance music of the Hungarians, followed by albums of Transdanubia, Upper Hungary, the Great Plain and Transylvania,

the latter in twice three cassettes. The selection of Hungarian tunes from Moldavia and Bukovina in four CDs is the closing part of the series. I have worked on it with my colleague István Németh.

The Moldavia–Bukovina album differs from the previous ones on several counts, (but not in the basic principles) and there are some questions connected with them which will take some explaining.

1. Neither Moldavia, nor Bukovina is included in Bartók's music geographical system on which the *Anthology* is based. What justifies then that these regions be given equal weight?

2. Why are the two regions united? It is well known that the peasant culture of the former five Hungarian villages in Bukovina¹ belongs to the Transylvanian Székely dialect in its essentials.

As to the first question: Already in 1932, in the first edition of his book *A moldvai magyarság* [The Hungarians of Moldavia], Pál Péter Domokos² proposed that the four music dialects defined by Bartók be extended with a fifth, because the peculiarities as well as wealth and vigour of the Hungarian folk music in Moldavia delineated it as a separate dialect.³

János Jagamas⁴ has a study of primary importance here: *Addenda to the question of Hungarian folk music dialects in Romania*.⁵ Jagamas first recommended that the Transylvanian dialect be further subdivided on the basis of newer collections unknown to Bartók. He then explained why the folk music of the Hungarians of Moldavia should be handled as a separate dialect.

Examining the collected material of the folklore institute in Kolozsvár, Jagamas established that the largest stock of tunes indigeneous to an area was found in Moldavia, and that the largest number of pentatonic tunes were collected in Moldavia and in the Mezőség region. Another startling feature is, he added, that the amount of non-pentatonic old-style material is also the largest in Moldavia. In regard to our album it is a significant finding of his that small-compass (major sixth and smaller) tunes are surprisingly frequent there. It amounts to 23% of the whole old stock (while in Mezőség, for example, it is a mere 6% and even less elsewhere).

¹ Namely Andrásfalva, Hadikfalva, Istensegits, Fogadjisten, Józseffalva.

² 1901–92; folklore and folk music researcher, one of the pioneering collectors of the Csángó folk culture in Moldavia.

³ In his book *A magyar népdal* [The Hungarian Folk Song] (1924) Bartók analyzed the differences in the old stratum of basically homogeneous Hungarian folk music, and determined the four folk music dialects on their basis as Transdanubia, Upper Hungary, the Great Plain and Transylvania. He also noted, that there had been no folk music collection in the Hungarian Csángó villages around the Moldavian town of Bákó.

⁴ 1913–97, Hungarian ethnomusicologist in Transylvania.

⁵ "Beiträge zur Dialektfrage der ungarischen Volksmusik in Rumänien." In: *Studia memoriae Belae Bartók sacra*. Eds Lajos Vargyas, Benjamin Rajeczky. Budapest, 1956.

Having analyzed each of the musical characteristics in detail, Jagamas declared that Moldavia represents a separate dialect within the Hungarian folk music. Its main determinants included preservation of the oldest traditions, a large number of tunes unknown in other areas, a startling wealth of ornamentation, as well as a rarity of new-style songs, and a powerful Romanian influence mainly in instrumental music and dances. The latter is a natural consequence of their being wedged in another nation.

The findings of Pál Péter Domokos and János Jagamas have become generally accepted, so it is logical to close the *Anthology* series with a presentation of Moldavia.

As for the second question: The folk music of the former five Hungarian villages in Bukovina (and that of the resettled villages from there) could indeed rightly be included in the Transylvanian album, with the music of the Székelys, but its presentation with Moldavian music also has its justification.

a) A common feature is that both provinces were beyond the borders of one-time Hungary. The Hungarian population of both provinces were separated from the mother-land and lived among and with a foreign majority. This separation endowed the five villages in Bukovina with a peculiar coherence and unity. Their adherence to tradition became stronger than among the Székelys whom they had left behind. They have constantly been exposed to influences (German, Polish, Ruthenian, Romanian influences from neighbouring villages in Bukovina) that hardly, if at all, reached the Székely people.

b) Another thread tying them is that the majority of the Csángós in Moldavia are Székely origin also, that is, they are Székelys who were forced to flight in the 1760s and to find a new place to live.

c) A kind of seasonal labour called *móduvázás* undertaken by Bukovinians needs also mentioning. During the six to nine months they spent working on the large estates of boyars in Moldavia, the Bukovinan Székely labourers came in touch with Csángós as well.

The richly documented two regions had to share the four CDs, the four and half hours proportionately. Two CDs were devoted to Moldavian, one to Bukovinan secular music, and the fourth includes church hymns of both regions.

Concerning the order of the tunes: in the previous albums it was self-evident to subdivide a major region into subregions and present them one by one. This method did not suit either Moldavia or Bukovina.⁶

⁶ It is unlikely that further research and collecting work will result in new findings in this regard, even though linguistic and ethnographical investigations have raised the possibility of a novel approach; e.g. Mózes Gálffy: Gyula Márton and Attila Szabó T.: *A moldvai csángó nyelvjárás atlasza* [A linguistic map of the Csángó dialect in Moldavia]. Budapest, 1991.

Not even the simplest subdivision was unambiguous in the Csángó music material. For one thing, out of the three groups (northern, southern and Székely Csángós) the northern group was always regarded as the most archaic. It has special peculiarities in the language and the greatest weight in historical sources, their music however could only be found in sporadic fragments already by the earliest collectors. The few secular and religious songs, archaic folk prayers that have been recorded there in the 1930s and later (by the researchers and collectors Péter Balla, Zoltán Kallós, Lajos Ujváry, and more recently by Gergely Csoma and Imre Harangozó) no longer reflect their folk culture that has unretrievably sunken with the gradual loss of the mother tongue.

This is in spite of the fact that in the early 1900s the Finnish linguist Yrjö Wichmann, who stayed at Szabófalva for months could collect a rich material for a northern Csángó dictionary, while his Hungarian wife Júlia Herrmann could report about several interesting ethnographic phenomena in the periodical *Ethnographia*.⁷

Not to exclude the music of this group perfectly, we included some phonograph recordings by Péter Balla from 1934.⁸ Technically, these recordings are the poorest in the whole anthology series; however, in view of the abovesaid, their significance is increased, we listen to them in another way. The persuasive inner power that emanates from the richly ornamented performance of the old woman over eighty overshadows the ground noise (*Example 1*).

Because of the delay and irregularity in field work, no subdialects could be determined, so we were forced to choose another method of arrangement. We decided to present the areas with the musically typical melody groups.

The most prevalent Moldavian tune types have small tonal range, major and minor pentachord or hexachord scale and low syllable number (mostly six). Research has found that this realm of European tunes roots in medieval times. The types are also represented elsewhere in the Hungarian language area, but nowhere do they have so many and so diverse tunes, combined with so varied archaic texts and performed in such a diversity as in the Moldavian variants.

Let us see a few variants of the match-making, wedding song sung to the words *Jere ki szivem* [Come out, sweetheart] recorded in some Csángó villages. Songs of short lines and major hexachordal scale often mix with twin-bar sections. The text usually includes names of those temporarily present, which gives the performance some intimate liveliness and gaiety (*Examples 2a–b*).

⁷ Yrjö Wichmann: *Wörterbuch des ungarischen Moldauer Nordcsángó- und Hétfaluer Csángódialektes nebst grammatikalischen Aufzeichnungen und Texten aus dem Nordcsángódialekt*. Eds Artturi Kannyisto and Bálint Csűry. Helsinki, 1936.

⁸ When Gábor Lükő was expelled from Romania, his phonograph cylinders were lost or destroyed. That is also why Péter Balla visited the same places in 1934 to replace them.

- *Rubato* Jugán (Moldava), 1934.

1. Má - ri - ja ex Iszottennek eszent Anyja hogy
 1-mádd Isz - tent é - ra - tünk

Bü - nö - szépket, Mári - ja ha drágálatosz szép ruza.

2. Má - ri - ja a menyei országna - ka ki - rál - ja hogy
 1-mádd 1 - isztent é - ra - tünk

Bü - nö - szépket ó Má - ri - ja drágálatosz szép ruza.

1. Mary, holy mother of God,
 Adore God for us sinners, Mary,
 Precious beautiful rose!

2. Mary, the queen of the celestial country?
 Adore God for us sinners, Mary
 Precious beautiful rose!

Example 1

The next tune family group has a lot of types among the Csángós. While in the Székely country it has variants with an octave range and with Phrygian scale, in Moldavia it lives in small-compass minor or major pentachordal form, rarely with a wavering third and an attractive rhythm. Adopting Brăiloiu's term, we call this type of asymmetrical rhythm *giusto syllabique*: it signifies the irregular alternation of units of two and three quavers. It is probably another vestige of old European tradition. The examples recorded in Moldavia have special importance because they illustrate the various ways of performing this type of rhythm (Examples 3a–b).

Diószén (Moldva) –
Szárász (Baranya), 1950.

1. Jere ki: Jü-vem

A szőlő-hea-re,

Onnét mezzünk vé

A nagy Gyoszenbe.

1. Come on, dearest
To the vineyard,

Let's go from there
To big Gyoszen.

Example 2a

The year 2001 and the town Pásztó call for the commemoration of Pál Péter Domokos and Benjamin Rajeczky, (both were born one hundred years ago) who were brought together by the research of Moldavian Csángó folk music. Their joint undertaking, the three volumes of *Csángó népzene* [Csángó Folk Music], marked an important station in the lives of both. Domokos could realize his long-cherished plan of synthesizing the materials and information he had collected and the comparison of Csángó folklore texts recorded in the 19th century with the materials of recent collections. Rajeczky transcribed the luxuriously ornamented many-strophe songs and ballads in an exemplary manner, providing the possibility for an examination of individual variation. The Csángó songs also afforded significant conclusions as to the Gregorian researches of Rajeczky and to historical comparative investigations.

The most typical tune type of Bukovina proved to be the octosyllabic descending plaintive songs and the twelve-syllabic epic songs, both types performed in a *parlando* manner. We noticed that in Moldavia there were a lot of good women performers but rarely any good men singers. In Bukovina, by contrast, there were more men singers, some of excellent artistic merit. What might underlie this phenomenon is perhaps the fact that the use of the mother tongue is restricted to a very narrow circle, practically to the family and the neighbours in Moldavia. In public places such as school, church, it is forbidden to speak Hungarian. Those who have to leave this narrow circle – and men often go to town to work – are no longer full participants of the tradition, either

*Lészed (Moldva) –
Szárász (Baranya), 1961.*

Szól a kukukkk, szól Ki kapuján szól Belső léjén
Kinn a bária

ö-tö-zöldük Szól a kukukkk, szól. Kit adsz nekem, királybőr,
forga-tó-dik

Kivel bécsbe menjek, Szőlő fának árnyékjába kivel beszél-

gessek? János öcsém-vel Szép ő maga, szép gunnyája,

gyíngyös gyöle-mántja. Szól a kukukkk, szól, Ki kapuján

szól, János öcsém zöld erdőbe Szól a kukukkk, szól.
Fémlik a kard az övben

The cockoo is calling, Whose gate is it calling at? Inside the girl's getting dressed, Outside the scarf's being turned, The cockoo is calling.	With my brother János, With my brother János. He is handsome, his dress is nice, His dolman is beaded.
Lord Justice, who will you give me To go to Vienna with? In the shade of the green tree To talk away with?	The cockoo is calling, Whose gate is it calling at? My brother János is in the green woods, His sword's glittering in his belt, The cockoo is calling.

Example 2b

in costumes or in songs. The Bukovinan communities, on the other side, have Hungarian priests, had Hungarian schools and teachers for a long time, so they could experience their national identity in language and customs self-consciously. The next example is an excerpt from a plaintive song sung by an old man from Andrásfalva (*Example 4*).

Poco rubato ♩ = 176-168 Klészse (Moldva), 1963.

1. 2. Rózsám, é-des rá-zsám Mon' még nekém nyil-ván,
 Mon' még ne-kém nyil-ván, Mikorra vár-ja-lak?

My rose, my dearest rose, Tel me with honest words,
 Tell me with honest words, When can I wait for you?

Example 3a

Tempo giusto ♩ = 76 Lészped (Moldva), 1972.

1. Ludasim, pajtá-sim, Hol az én lúdja-im?
 Tizénketten ró-tak, Min' fejé-rek ró-tak.

Goose-girls, my friends, where are my geese?
 There were twenty of them, all of them white coloured,
 There were twenty of them, all of them white coloured.

Example 3b

Andrásfalva (Bukovina) –
Kakassol (Tolna), 1958.

Parlando ♩ = 88–90

1. Ki-indultam az hazámból,
Kezves szép Andrásfalváról.
Visszanéztem félhatárról,
Könnyem kicsordult arcámra.

7. 2-4. 7. 6. 8. 10. 9. 10.
4. 4. 2. 3. 3. 4. 5. 8. 10.

I set out to leave my homeland,
My dear Andrásfalva.
I looked back from midfield
My tears flowed down my cheeks.

Example 4

Several archaic elements of Bukovinan Hungarian folk music are also reckoned with. One is the custom of singing to the unmarried girls at the time of Advent. After the starting song of the custom it is named *serkenjelés*. Single young men walk with musicians from house to house where girls live and sing and play three advent songs alternately verse by verse outside the house.⁹

The advent songs are the first pieces on the CD that contains the religious songs. Adapting to the annual cycle of church holidays, Christmas songs, then Lenten pieces, Easter songs come in succession, followed by some songs to the Virgin. The next group contains several funeral songs with 16–17th centuries

⁹ The three songs are: *Serkenj lelkem mély álmodból* [Wake, my soul, from your deep sleep], *Ófényesség szép hajnal* [Oh, radiant lovely dawn] and *Mikor Máriához az Isten angyala* [When the angel of God addressed Mary].

tunes and texts. In Bukovina it was the custom to have men sing in groups in the death-watch.¹⁰ In Moldavia, usually women sang vigil songs, with dictation, that is, after a foresinger. This kind of group singing can also be heard on the CD.

Luckily, several tunes could be presented on the Bukovinan CD in its temporal variants, thanks to Kodály's good-quality phonograph recordings from 1914.¹¹ In addition, recordings of little-known outstanding Bukovinan instrumentalists¹² are also included in the selection.

¹⁰ Women only sang with children when keeping vigil by the dead in Bukovina.

¹¹ In 1914, Zoltán Kodály spent three weeks in the Hungarian villages of Bukovina collecting music with the phonograph.

¹² Pál Flekszon, who played the flute to Kodály, János Gáspár, a violonist of extraordinary skills, and the clarinetist Pál Albert.