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NATIONAL DANCES ON THE STAGE
OF THE NATION: DANCES IN OPERAS
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For Hungarians, the first half of the nineteenth century was determined by an awakening of national identity, manifested in the endeavour to advance the national culture. This process intensified over the period called the Reform Era, which started around 1825 and lasted until 1848, the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution, which was followed by the War of Independence of 1848–1849 against the Habsburg Empire, of which Hungary was a part at that time.¹ In the Reform Era, institutions were founded to serve Hungarian culture in the capital, Pest (Budapest since 1873, when Pest merged with neighbouring Buda and Óbuda), a multi-ethnic city where the typical language of cultural life was German. The Hungarian Learned Society, the forerunner of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was established to cultivate the Hungarian language, the National Casino to provide a forum for social debate, and, in 1837, the Hungarian Theatre, which from 1840 was called the National Theatre, to perform dramas and operas in Hungarian and encourage authors to write new Hungarian works.² Furthermore, in connection with the process of embourgeoisement, the national movement relied heavily on different areas of civil life like voluntary associations organised with various aims, the Hungarian-language press, and diverse social events. Using the national language,

¹ Lynn M. Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music from Liszt to Bartók* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19–25.

² Robert Nemes, 'The Politics of the Dance Floor: Culture and Civil Society in Nineteenth-Century Hungary', *Slavic Review*, 6/4 (2001), 803.

wearing Hungarian clothes and, as symbolic practices, performing Hungarian dance also became means of expressing national identity.³

In the 1840s, new ballroom dances appeared in connection with the efforts to create Hungarian cultural products and to realise the idea of national unity. Besides gaining popularity at balls, the new dances were inserted into productions at the Hungarian Theatre and, as integrated parts of operas, became a component of the nascent national art music. In this study, I introduce the Hungarian national dances of the 1840s and analyse, primarily through the operas and folk plays of the most significant nineteenth-century Hungarian opera composer, Ferenc Erkel, and to a lesser extent Franz Doppler, how these dances were used in Hungarian stage music.

HUNGARIAN DANCES IN THE REFORM ERA

As evidenced by a number of written sources, Hungarian dances, which were considered to be a manifestation of national features, were of particular interest to Hungarians and foreigners alike from the 1790s onwards.⁴ In those decades, the virtuoso male dance called the *verbunk* or *verbunkos* was felt to be the representative Hungarian dance. The name of the dance derived from the German word *Werbung*, meaning recruiting, and its origins lay in an eighteenth-century event with music, dancing and the drinking of wine designed to recruit young lads into the army.⁵ The music and dance at these events, with fast couple dances alongside slow solo dances, had its roots in the folk tradition of the social group targeted by the recruitment, but the impact of Viennese classicism, among other things, led to the emergence of a new

³ Ibid., 803–814; Robert Nemes, ‘Associations and Civil Society in Reform-Era Hungary’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 32 (2001), 25–45.

⁴ Géza Papp, ‘Preface’, in *Hungarian Dances 1784–1810*, Musicalia Danubiana, 7, ed. Géza Papp (Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 1986), 23–36, 23; László Felföldi, ‘Reception of Nineteenth-Century Couple Dances in Hungary’, in *Waltzing through Europe: Attitudes towards Couple Dances in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Egil Bakka, Theresa Jill Buckland, Helena Saarikoski and Anne von Bibra Wharton (Cambridge: Open Book, 2020), 190–198 (<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP0174>).

⁵ Lujza Tari, ‘Verbunkos’, in *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, xi: *Genres: Europe*, ed. Paolo Prato and David Horn (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 793–804.

Hungarian music style. That style, which was partly independent of the original dance tradition, and indeed from dance in general, became increasingly popular in Hungary and abroad in the first third of the nineteenth century, and its stylistic elements were defining features of nineteenth-century Hungarian art music.⁶ The characteristic performers of *verbunkos* music and later Hungarian popular music genres were Gypsy musicians, who were associated with Hungarian music in the nineteenth century especially in the eyes of foreigners. It was primarily their peculiar style of performing that made them famous throughout Europe, while the role of Hungarian composers of different ethnicities was decisive in terms of composing works, forming new trends and creating new genres.⁷

In accordance with the upper classes' aim of adapting to European fashions, social and cultural life in Hungary was cosmopolitan until the 1830s. Balls for aristocrats were dominated by German traditions and taste, and waltzes, galops and cotillons were typically danced at them, corresponding to the Viennese model.⁸ However, the Hungarian nobility, consisting of aristocrats and untitled nobles, which represented five per cent of society, played a leading role in the national movement.⁹ As in other fields of social life, the Reform Era brought changes to the dance floor. Dances became symbolic of patriotic feelings, a means of expressing identity and political convictions. They were a regular topic of public discourses, in which they were discussed within the ethnic context separating Hungarian from 'foreign' dances and judged on a political basis. German dances identified with the Habsburg Empire were sharply rejected, while Hungarian dances, as well as Polish and French dances, were welcomed at balls.¹⁰ Hungarian dances were also performed on the stage of the Hungarian Theatre to strengthen or even substitute for the national character of the programme.¹¹

⁶ Ibid.; Csilla Pethő, 'Style Hongrois. Hungarian Elements in the Works of Haydn, Beethoven, Weber and Schubert', *Studia Musicologica*, 41/1–3 (2000), 199–219.

⁷ Hooker, *Redefining*, 37–42.

⁸ Nemes, *The Politics*, 802, 805.

⁹ Ibid., 806.

¹⁰ Ibid., 814–815; Felföldi, *Reception of Nineteenth-Century Couple Dances*, 182–183.

¹¹ Miklós Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bátor Mária I*, ed. Miklós Dolinszky and Katalin Szacsvai Kim (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2002), i: XXIII; Felföldi, *Reception*, 217.

Besides previously learned and practised spectacular Hungarian dances presented at balls as well as on stage,¹² there was an increasing demand for regulated Hungarian ballroom dances which would be consistent with the European dance fashion and at the same time represent national characteristics, and which could be owned by the whole nation. Huge success was enjoyed by the ballroom dance called the *körtánc* ('round dance'), created from Hungarian elements by Lajos Szöllősy-Szabó, a ballet artist of the National Theatre.¹³ It was first performed in 1842 with music entitled *Első magyar társas tánc* [First Hungarian ballroom dance] by Márk Rózsavölgyi, a popular composer of *verbunkos* pieces, who also became famous for his new-fashioned dances (Figure 1). Among several mentions of Hungarian dances including regulated ballroom dances, the pattern of this dance is known from a detailed description published by Lajos Kilányi, a pupil of Szöllősy-Szabó, in 1845.¹⁴

The structure of the six-part *körtánc* corresponds to that of certain types of quadrilles, while in terms of the style of gestures, a relationship with the mazurka was already felt by people at the time, and has since been studied in more detail by ethnochoreologist Ernő Pesovár.¹⁵ In the Reform Era, the Hungarians' affinity with the Poles, due to the similarities between their historical situations, helped favour different Polish dances, which also affected art and folk music and dancing. First of all the mazurka, as a national dance which had been accepted in salons, and which embodied the contemporary Hungarian idea of a noble-national dance, was among the models for the new Hungarian dance.¹⁶ Szöllősy-Szabó's dance, accompanied by Rózsavölgyi's music, rapidly spread among the nobility and the burghers, and it was followed by several other new dances.¹⁷

¹² Olga Szentpál, *A csárdás* [The csárdás] (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1954), 9–10.

¹³ For a short summary, see László Felföldi and Géza Papp, 'Hungarian Dances – from Ungaresca to Csárdás', in *Music in Hungary. An Illustrated History*, ed. János Kárpáti (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi & Co., 2011), 138–139; Felföldi, *Reception*, 222–226.

¹⁴ Lajos Kilányi, *A kör-táncz* [The round-dance] (Wien: Jaspersn, 1845).

¹⁵ Ernő Pesovár, 'Lengyel táncok hatása a reformkorban' [The influence of Polish dances in the Reform Era], *Néprajzi Értesítő*, 47 (1965), 173–176.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 173–174.

¹⁷ Felföldi and Papp, *Hungarian Dances*, 138–139.

However, the fashion for regulated national ballroom dances was soon surpassed by that of the non-regulated free couple dances called *csárdás*. This term, which appeared in the 1830s, refers to the traditional word *csárda*, used for an inn, and consequently to the folkish character of the dance. It could have applied equally well to national ballroom dances expressing the demand for closer relations with the people and to non-regulated couple dances. The latter originated in an old tradition which survived at the balls of the rural gentry and the townsfolk, as well as in folk culture.¹⁸ During the first half of the nineteenth century, slow couple dances played an increasingly significant role, and they replaced the solo male dance, taking over its initial role in the dance cycle, while the fast couple dances joining them were preserved with few changes. This process had already taken place in the embourgeoised countries of Europe, and the appearance of new national couple dances with their roots in an older tradition also fitted into a wider European trend including the spread of the waltz, polka and mazurka.¹⁹

Choreographed national ballroom dances may have promoted the acceptance of the non-regulated *csárdás*. The long tradition and unregulated character of the latter might have facilitated its spread throughout the whole of society. A new musical genre arose in the mid-1840s, in which works typically referred to the *csárdás* or its folk character in their titles.²⁰ The structure of pieces in this genre, composed by popular composers of the era like Béni Egri, Márk Rózsavölgyi and József Riszner, is similar to that of *verbunkos* pieces, consisting of a slow part or slow parts called *Lassú* followed by a fast part or fast parts called *Friss*. Used in the slow part, which represents a new type of movement, are song-type melodies, often of a folk character, and typical is a pattern of dotted rhythms (♩♩♩ or ♩ ♩♩), named after the choriamb (– ∪ ∪ –) and considered at that time to be characteristically Hungarian. In 1843 the linguist János Fogarasi published a book on the Hungarian language,

¹⁸ Ibid.; Felföldi, *Reception*, 218–231.

¹⁹ Ernő Pesovár, 'Typen und Entstehung des Csárdás', *Studia Musicologica*, 29/1–4 (1987), 138–150.

²⁰ Kata Riskó, 'Erkel Hymnuszának keletkezése és hagyományozódásának története az első világháborúig' [The genesis of Erkel's 'Hymnusz' and the history of its transmission up to the First World War], in *A Magyar Himnusz képes albuma* [An illustrated album of the Hungarian national anthem], ed. Magdaléna Tóth (Budapest: Argumentum–OSZK, 2017), 110–112.

Figure 1. Márk Rózsavölgyi, *Első magyar társas táncz* [The first Hungarian ballroom dance] (Pest: Wagner József, 1842), cover and first movement. Budapest, Library of Musicology, RCH Institute for Musicology, 601.488.



Kör Táncz.

3

Rozsavelgítól.

Allegretto.

Andalgo.
N. 1.

p

f

p

fz

f

dim.

p

1^{ma}

2^{da}

D
691.488

metres and prosody, in which he analysed the tunes of several Hungarian folk songs and found the choriamb and its reverse, the antispast, to be the most characteristic rhythmic patterns. He suggested to poets and composers that they should learn the spirit of the Hungarian music from simple songs and create new works on that basis, as he illustrated in folk song settings printed as an appendix to his book.²¹

In the new Hungarian dance music pieces, the choriamb often appear in different ornamented forms, e.g. , or in a simple version. Throughout the century, this rhythm had a great impact on Hungarian popular songs, a new and more folkish type of which emerged in the middle of the century along with an intention to turn to the people, and it also influenced folk music in which older tunes often survived with a *csárdás* rhythm. As regards the difficulty with saying what makes a piece of music Hungarian, the choriamb played a great role in Hungarian art music, including national operas in the second half of the century, as a well-defined, characteristic element.²²

FERENC ERKEL'S ROLE IN CREATING HUNGARIAN OPERA

Ferenc Erkel (1810–1893), often referred to as ‘the founder of Hungarian national opera’, began his career in Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca, Romania) in 1827 or 1828 as a music teacher who also gave piano recitals, conducted an amateur orchestra, and composed his first piano works. In the 1820s, Kolozsvár represented the centre of Hungarian theatre activity. It was the location of the first Hungarian stone theatre housing a permanent theatrical company, erected in 1821, where Erkel’s brother József worked as a conductor. The company played mostly international operatic repertoire in Hungarian, but a Hungarian historical opera entitled *Béla futása* [Béla’s flight], an adaption of a play by Kotzebue, with music by József Ruzitska, premiered in 1822 in Kolozsvár, was an explosive success. Later performances of the work

²¹ János Fogarasi, *A magyar nyelv szelleme* [The spirit of Hungarian language] (Pest: Heckenast Gusztáv, 1843), 366–387.

²² Hooker, *Redefining*, 170–175.

made a deep impression on the young Ferenc Erkel.²³ In 1835, because of the uncertain financial situation, the company moved to Buda, together with the Erkel brothers. Ferenc Erkel was briefly a conductor with the Hungarian theatre company at the Buda Burgtheater, and when that went bankrupt, he was contracted to the German Municipal Theatre in Pest. He was employed by the Hungarian Theatre from January 1838, where he worked throughout his active career. Under his firm direction, the orchestra was enlarged and trained singers and musicians were also engaged from abroad, resulting in a significant improvement in the quality of opera performances.²⁴

Erkel played a key role in various areas of the burgeoning Hungarian musical life. In 1853 he helped to found the Philharmonic Society, which had Hungary's first professional symphony orchestra, and he conducted philharmonic concerts and performed at them as a pianist until 1874. From 1868 to 1881 he was principal conductor of the National Hungarian Choral Society. Although in 1874 he gave up his regular appearances at the National Theatre, the following year he accepted the directorship of the newly established Academy of Music, where he also taught piano until 1887.²⁵

Erkel served Hungarian music theatre by composing operas as well. His first opera on a historical subject, entitled *Bátori Mária*, premiered in 1840, represents the birth of fully-fledged Hungarian national opera. Its style relies on the adoption of different models of contemporary Italian and French operatic repertoire, enriched with elements of Hungarian style; the ideal proportion of these components was debated in the discourse on the creation of national opera.²⁶ After the success of *Bátori Mária*, Erkel composed mainly for the stage. His next opera, *Hunyadi László*, which was first performed with even greater success in

²³ Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bátori Mária I*, XXII–XXIII.

²⁴ Ibid., XXIII–XXIV. On Erkel's career and works, see also Tibor Tallián, 'Eine Genie des Ertragens. Zur Zweihundertjahrfeier Ferenc Erkel's', *Studia Musicologica* 52/1–4 (2011), 15–25.

²⁵ Dezső Legány, 'Erkel', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, viii, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 295–300.

²⁶ Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bátori Mária I*, XXIV, XXVII–XXVIII; Gyula Véber, *Ungarische Elemente in der Opernmusik Ferenc Erkel's* (Utrecht: A.B. Creyghton/Bilthoven, 1976), 107–111.

1844, features a similar musical style.²⁷ In the second half of the 1840s, a series of Hungarian operas by Hungarian and foreign composers such as Franz Doppler, Károly Thern and György Császár were presented at the National Theatre. Erkel, however, composed only a few minor works before the premiere of *Bánk bán* (1861), his most significant opera, which is regularly played in Hungary. His later operas – a comic opera titled *Sarolta* (1862), and the historical dramas *Dózsa György* (1867), *Brankovics György* (1874), *Névtelen hősök* [Unknown heroes, 1880], and *István király* [King István, 1885] – did not achieve any real success in the composer's lifetime. In addition to his operas, 'Hymnusz' (1844), which is used as the Hungarian national anthem, inevitably made Erkel an important figure in Hungarian music history.

STAGING FOLK DANCES – ERKEL'S FOLK PLAYS

The newly founded Hungarian theatre needed popular productions that could be successful among a wider audience. In line with the idea of national unity, financial reasons could have encouraged efforts to turn to the people with a new stage genre. During the first half of the century, the population of Pest had been growing rapidly, with Hungarians moving in from the countryside, and the theatre targeted them with popular plays that included simple musical interludes. One great success was the premiere of *A szökött katona* [The escaped soldier], in 1843. The play was written by Ede Szigligeti, while the music was composed by József Szerdahelyi; they worked for the theatre director András Bartay to create spectacular plays which drew their themes from the traditional life of ordinary folk, whom they could attract to the theatre. Although *The Escaped Soldier* retained many elements from earlier genres, it has been cited as the first example of a new type of play which gained nationwide popularity.²⁸

The plot of these plays, also called folk plays, is typically based on characters belonging to the widest social strata, meaning not necessar-

²⁷ Tibor Tallián, 'Music and reception', in *Erkel Ferenc: Hunyadi László*, ed. Katalin Szacsvai-Kim (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2006), i: XLII–XLVI; Véber, *Ungarische Elemente*, 112–125.

²⁸ Katalin Kim-Szacsvai, 'Erkel und das Volksschauspiel in Pest', in *Wien–Budapest–Pressburg. Facetten biedermeierlicher Musikkultur*, ed. Andreas Harrandt and Erich Wolfgang Partsch (Tutzing: Schneider, 2012), 102–105.

ily peasants, but the people in a broader sense, including craftsmen and traders. These characters are treated in a positive way, and their circumstances and actual problems are introduced in the plot. Szigligeti and Szerdahelyi played a great role in sustaining the huge success of the genre over subsequent years. In one of their later works, entitled *A csikós* [The horseman], first performed in 1847, the focus shifted to the peasants, who confront their landlords in a plot representing the deficiencies of feudalism.²⁹ The music in these folk plays included simple settings of folk or folk-like songs, popular melodies, and newly-composed interludes, thereby promoting the development of a national song repertoire.

During this initial period of the genre's popularity, Erkel himself compiled the music of six or seven folk plays, most of them premiered between 1844 and 1846. In later years, this genre, in which the popular songs to be inserted were often defined by the playwright on the basis of their lyrics, which had to suit the given situation, and the musical settings became increasingly simple, might have posed too few challenges for the composer.³⁰ Erkel's folk plays are particularly interesting because of the occurrence of several folk or folk-like tunes or musical elements that the composer did not directly include in his operas. For instance, in his first folk play, entitled *Két pisztoly* [Two pistols], which premiered in March 1844, a dance of swineherds was staged with music based on a folk tune (Example 1).³¹ The plot of the play, written by Ede Szigligeti, focuses on the prohibited love between a young baroness devoted to an older rich man and her tutor of French and singing. The latter was (wrongly) suspected of murder and sought refuge in the Bakony, a mountain with an old tradition of pig herding, where he met swineherds, as well as outlaws called *betyárs*, often idealised at that time. This moment provided an opportunity to insert a rural episode including a folk dance.

²⁹ Ferenc Kerényi, 'Nemzeti színház a polgári forradalom előestéjén (1840–1848)' [The National Theatre on the eve of the Civic Revolution (1840–1848)], in *Magyar Színháztörténet 1790–1873*, ed. Ferenc Kerényi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), 311–317.

³⁰ Kim-Szacsvai, 'Erkel und das Volksschauspiel', 109–111; Katalin Kim-Szacsvai, 'Die Erkel-Werkstatt. Die Anfänge einer Arbeitsteilung in der Komposition', *Studia Musicologica*, 52/1–4 (2012), 31–32.

³¹ The manuscripted score is held in the Széchényi National Library Music Collection, as part of the Folk Theatre Collection.

Example 1. Ferenc Erkel, *Két pisztoly* [Two pistols]. Swineherd dance, bars 13–20.

Edited from the autograph manuscript (Budapest, National Széchényi Library, H-Bn Népsz. 1312/I), 53–54.

13

Oboe I

Oboe II

Clarineti I
in A II

Fagotti I
II

Corni I
in E II

Coro
di uomini

A ka - nász az_ er - dő ben a bőt já val_ ját - szik,
A ka - nász az_ er - dő ben a bőt já val_ ját - szik,

Violini I

Violini II

Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

17

Ob. I

Ob. II

Cl. I
in A II

Fag. I
II

Cor. I
in F II

Coro

úgy for - gat - ja - a bal - tát, csak az é - le - lát - szik

úgy for - gat - ja - a bal - tát, csak az é - le - lát - szik

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vi.

Vc.

Cb.

Erkel's music for the swineherd dance has a simple setting with an ornamented tune in a modal tone which can be classified as old-style Hungarian folk music, and within that, assigned to a layer known as swineherd dance melodies, comprising a broader group of vocal or instrumental folk tunes with similar musical characteristics which discharged a variety of functions, not limited to herdsmen dances. Erkel has the tune played by several instruments in unison, accompanied only by a similarly performed fifth drone. This setting, together with the kind of ornaments, the repeated deflections of the tune to a lower note, the syncopated drone accompaniment and accented beats of the viola, imitates the folk manner of playing the bagpipes, a typical and archaic instrument of herders. The folkish character may have been demanded for the music of such a scene, and Erkel evoked a tune and a performance style which already belonged to the older layers of folk tradition at that time and had survived in the culture of lower social strata, to fit the music to the situation also in an ethnographic sense.

However, he did not need to know the swineherd dance directly from a local tradition. When publishing an article on the national dances in 1843, the poet and linguist Gergely Czuczor introduced, among other things, the peculiar dances of herders living mostly on grassy plains and in forests, away from village society. As he described it, these dances, in which sticks or axes were used, were accompanied by archaic folk instruments like the bagpipes or the flute. Czuczor suggested that these virtuoso, spectacular male dances could have been successfully staged in national comedies performed at the National Theatre.³² According to information from before the premiere of *Two Pistols*, the swineherd dance would have been learned in imitation of the performance of real swineherds brought to the theatre.³³ Nonetheless, the performed dance, which was put together by the theatre's ballet master, János Kolosánszky, was criticised for its ballet elements, reminiscences of the French quadrille and, later, its less

³² [Gergely Czuczor], 'A magyar tánczról' [On Hungarian dance], *Athenaeum*, 1/3 (1843), 117–118.

³³ *Honderű*, 2 (2 March 1844, No 9), 290.

Hungarian character,³⁴ until a new choreography was created by Lajos Szöllősy-Szabó in 1847, which was felt to be more Hungarian and achieved greater success.³⁵

NATIONAL DANCES IN ERKEL'S FIRST OPERAS

While real folk dances like the swineherd dance could have been considered by educated people to be a kind of exoticism, Erkel evoked in his operas national dances as Hungarian versions of opera ballet scenes better suited to the style of a grand opera on a historical topic. In *Bátori Mária*, a 'Ballet hongroise' in *verbunkos* style, in the sense of the style of Hungarian music of the preceding decades, represented this type of scene at the end of Act I. In *Hunyadi László*, however, despite expectations, there were originally no dance episodes. The first version of the work was completed probably at the end of 1842, but it was not premiered until 27 January 1844.³⁶ In line with the increasing demand for staged national dances, further Hungarian dances were inserted into *Bátori Mária* in the late 1840s.³⁷ *Hunyadi László* was also supplemented with a Hungarian dance in 1848, and it was performed with a newly choreographed Hungarian dance in 1849. It is not known what kind of musical accompaniment was played to the new dances; nevertheless, a Hungarian dance with a particular piece of music has become a permanent part of the opera (Example 2). Erkel's authorship is not proven, and he often requested the support of assistants to help him with orchestration, for instance, or to compose certain episodes. Over the next decades, including when conducting his own operas, he considered the 'Hungarian dance' to be an integral part of his work.³⁸

³⁴ *Társalkodó*, 13 (20 March 1844, No. 23), 92.; *Honderű*, 2/13 (1844), 435.; *Pesti Divatlap*, [1]/3 (1844), 92.

³⁵ *Pesti Divatlap*, 4/20 (1847), 639.

³⁶ Tibor Tallián, 'Origins of the opera', in *Erkel Ferenc: Hunyadi László*, ed. Katalin Szacsvai-Kim (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2006), i: XXXIII–XXXV.

³⁷ Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bátori Mária I*, XXXII.

³⁸ Katalin Szacsvai-Kim, 'Problems of authorship', in *Erkel Ferenc: Hunyadi László*, ed. Katalin Szacsvai-Kim (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2006), i: XLVII–IL.

Example 2. Ferenc Erkel: *Hunyadi László*. Act III, No. 19 Finale, Hungarian dance, bars 1–11. Erkel Ferenc: *Hunyadi László*, ed. Katalin Szacsvai-Kim (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2006), 629–630.

Andante

The image displays a page of a musical score for a Hungarian dance. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Fl. piccolo, Flauti I and II, Oboi I and II, Clarineti I and II in A, Fagotti I and II, Corni I and II in D, Tromba in D, Tromboni I and II, Trombone III and Tuba, and Timpani. The second system includes parts for Violini I and II, Violo, Violoncelli, and Contrabbassi. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/8. The music is marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano). The Fl. piccolo part is mostly rests. The Flauti I and II parts play a melodic line starting with a first finger fingering. The Oboi I and II parts are mostly rests. The Clarineti I and II in A parts play a melodic line. The Fagotti I and II parts play a bass line. The Corni I and II in D parts play a harmonic accompaniment. The Tromba in D part is mostly rests. The Tromboni I and II parts are mostly rests. The Trombone III and Tuba part is mostly rests. The Timpani part is mostly rests. The Violini I and II parts play a melodic line. The Violo part plays a harmonic accompaniment. The Violoncelli part plays a harmonic accompaniment. The Contrabbassi part plays a bass line.

9

Picc. *f*

Fl. II *f*

Ob. II *f*

Cl. I in A II *f*

Fag. I II *f*

Cor. in D I II *f*

III IV *f*

Tr. in D *f*

Tbn. I II *f*

Tba. *f*

Timp. *f*

Vn. I *f*

Vn. II *f*

VI. *f*

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

In the plot of the opera, two groups of Hungarian nobility, led respectively by King László V and László Hunyadi, fight for the throne. The power struggle ends with the false accusation, imprisonment and execution of the titular hero, representing the positive, patriotic side. As with *Bátori Mária*, the music of *Hunyadi László* is interwoven with Hungarian stylistic elements,³⁹ and within this kind of Hungarian style, different moods portraying the characters, e.g. the lyricism and the elegiac tone of László Hunyadi, often paired with dance motifs, or the heroic melodies of the king.⁴⁰ The ‘Hungarian dance’ appears in Act III, at the wedding of László Hunyadi, embodying in this sense both nobility and patriotism. Since Hunyadi is captured by armed guards during the wedding, the dance scene plays a dramatic role as a peak of happiness and hope for victory contrasting with the imminent tragic turn. A real folk dance which even the burghers did not practise would not have harmonised with such a scene. While the dances later inserted into *Bátori Mária* can be classified as *verbunkos*-style music, suiting the original style of the opera and its first dance episode composed in 1840, the ‘Hungarian dance’ of *Hunyadi László* evokes the musical style of the new national ballroom dances. This episode is also known as ‘Palotás’, a rather general dance name derived from the Hungarian word *palota*, meaning ‘palace’, and it is sometimes referred to in Erkel studies as a *csárdás*,⁴¹ used in a more general sense for new dances of that period. Characteristic inflexions of the melody bring the dance closer to the national ballroom dances; moreover, the melodic line recalls the first section, reprised at the end, of Márk Rózsavölgyi’s music for Szöllősy-Szabó’s dance. According to the ethnochoreologist László Felföldi, the kinetic style of the ‘Hungarian dance’ choreographed by Soma Tóth and performed by him and three other male dancers in 1848 was modelled on that of the First Hungarian Round Dance.⁴² As dances cultivated by diverse social strata, Hungarian ballroom dances and the increasingly popular *csárdás* could both have repre-

³⁹ Véber, *Ungarische Elemente*, 112–125.

⁴⁰ Tallián, ‘Music and reception’, XXXIV–XXXVI.

⁴¹ e.g. Véber, *Ungarische Elemente*, 123–124; Krisztina Lajosi, *Staging the Nation. Opera and Nationalism in 19th-Century Hungary* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 103.

⁴² Felföldi, *Reception*, 206; Szacsvai–Kim, *Problems of authorship*, XLVIII.

sented patriotism as well as national unity, but Erkel perhaps felt the salon character of the former to be more appropriate for the dancing of the noble company. Furthermore, the fashion for the national ballroom dance was at its height just at the time of the premiere of *Hunyadi László*, and, as in the case of *Bátori Mária*, Erkel seems to have adapted the later inserted dance episode to the style of the whole opera.

HUNGARIAN OPERA AND POPULAR TUNES – FRANZ DOPPLER’S *ILKA*

Given the folk character of the *csárdás*, it is not surprising that it soon appeared in a comic opera on a rural theme, namely in Franz Doppler’s *Ilka és a huszártoborzó* [Ilka and the Hussar recruitment], premiered in 1849. Franz Albert Doppler (1821–1883) was a flautist and composer from a family of musicians of Austrian origins who was born in Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine) and grew up in Warsaw, but his mother tongue was German. He gave his first concert for the benefit of Polish freedom fighters at the age of ten, but the family soon had to leave the city and eventually settled in Pest. Franz was first flautist at the German Theatre from 1838 and at the National Theatre from 1841, and he took part in philharmonic concerts under the baton of Ferenc Erkel, with whom he had a friendly relationship. With his brother Karl (1825–1900), also a flautist, he made concert tours of Europe. In 1858 Franz moved to Vienna, where he worked for the Hofoper and taught flute at the Vienna Conservatory.

Doppler composed flute pieces and operas, gaining recognition for *Benyovszky vagy A kamcsatkai száműzött* [Benyovszky, or the changeling from Kamchatka], also performed under the title *Afanázia*, in 1847, before the explosive success of *Ilka and the Hussar Recruitment* in 1849.⁴³ The latter was performed 110 times in Pest, and it was also played in other Hungarian towns and, unusually for an Hungarian opera at that

⁴³ Zoltán Gárdonyi, ‘Doppler’, in *The New Grove*, vii: 502–503. See also Andrij Karpiak, ‘Die Lemberger Flötisten Franz und Karl Doppler, zwei herausragende europäischer Musiker’, in *Musikgeschichte in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Mitteilungen der internationalen Arbeitsgemeinschaft an der Technischen Universität Chemnitz*, Heft 6 (Chemnitz: Gudrun Schröder, 2000), 64–71.

time, outside Hungary.⁴⁴ Its popularity is also evidenced by the editions of excerpts, like the overture, some songs and a *csárdás*, published over the following years.

Perhaps relating to his cosmopolitan career, Doppler used various stylistic elements and musical topoi of different origins in his operas. In *Benyovszky*, Russian musical allusions as well as Hungarian-style parts can be discerned in connection with the adventurous life of the titular hero Móric [Maurice] Benyovszky (Pol. Maurycy Beniowski), a Hungarian–Polish aristocrat, while in *Wanda* (1850), the plot of which concerns the Poles' victory in the Battle of Vienna in 1683, the composer employed Polish and oriental stylisations.⁴⁵

The role of Hungarian popular melodies and the *csárdás* increased in the music of *Ilka and the Hussar Recruitment*.⁴⁶ In this comic opera, the *csárdás* appears in a series of scenes realising different musical topoi from European operas, like the Gypsy song, romanza and mazurka, through which Doppler elevated the Hungarian dance to the rank of common types of opera scene (Example 3). In the opening scene, it appears as the dance of the peasants, accompanied by a small band playing on the stage, consisting of clarinet, two violins and bass, which were the typical instruments of a Gypsy band in that era.

⁴⁴ Pál Horváth, 'Doppler Ferenc vígoperája: Ilka és a huszártoborzó (1849). Források, előadások' [Ferenc Doppler's comic opera *Ilka and the Hussar Recruitment*: sources and performances] (Budapest: BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, Magyar Zenetörténeti Osztály, 2020). Online publication: <https://doi.org/10.23714/mzo.003>, 1.

⁴⁵ Ryszard Daniel Goliańek, 'The Poles and the Turks in Franz Doppler's Opera *Wanda* (1850)', in *The Orient in Music – Music of the Orient*, ed. Małgorzata Grajter (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 109–121.

⁴⁶ The manuscript score of the opera is held in the National Széchényi Library Music Collection. For further information, see Kata Riskó, 'A magyar népies zene Erkel operáiban' [Folk-like musical elements in Ferenc Erkel's operas], *Magyar zene*, 57/2 (2019), 143–147.

Example 3. Franz Doppler: *Ilka, Act I, Csárdás*. Edited from Doppler's arrangement for piano (Pest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, [n.d.]), 13. Budapest, Library of Musicology, RCH Institute for Musicology, 210.000.

Csárdás

The image displays a piano arrangement of the Csárdás from Act I of the opera Ilka by Franz Doppler. The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). It begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The piece features a lively melody in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The score is divided into six systems, with measure numbers 9, 15, 23, 30, and 37 indicated at the start of their respective systems. The final system includes first and second endings, with the instruction *poco più* appearing at the end.

The four-line strophe form of the tune is similar to the most characteristic structure of Hungarian folk songs, the rhythm is marked by simple choriamb, and the band imitates the so-called *dűvő*, a common accompaniment type for urban or village bands which survived into the twentieth century; for these, the accompanying instruments play harmonies or notes typically twice, on a single bow, accentuating the second one which sounds on the weak beat, thereby creating a kind of syncopation. This results in a continuous sound that perhaps preserves the memory of the sound of drone instruments. Choriamb and the *dűvő* are briefly evoked in some arias from Doppler's operas expressing homesickness or patriotic emotions. *Ilka*, completed in November 1848, was soon reworked. The original No. 8 Aria was replaced by a new recruiting scene in Act I, including a folk song-type chorus and another *csárdás*, also played by a small band, but which makes less use of the typical choriamb rhythm. In the 1850s the originally two-act opera was performed in a three-act version, in which the recruiting scene served as the finale of Act I.⁴⁷ According to the bills, at least one of the dance scenes was usually played by real Gypsy bands.⁴⁸

THE ROLE OF CSÁRDÁS DANCES IN ERKEL'S OPERAS

Doppler's successful efforts to integrate Hungarian folk or folk-like dances and tunes in an opera probably encouraged Erkel in this regard. Folk music reminiscences, as well as a *csárdás*, occur in his comic opera *Sarolta*,⁴⁹ first performed in 1862, which can be related to *Ilka* in many ways. A *csárdás* appeared in a more stylised manner in the tragic grand opera *Bánk bán*, which premiered in 1861. After the great success of *Hunyadi László*, Erkel began to work on another Hungarian opera, and among different titles mentioned by the press over subsequent years, the plan for an opera based on József Katona's national drama *Bánk bán* appeared in 1844.⁵⁰ The compositional work was delayed by the out-

⁴⁷ Horváth, *Doppler Ferenc vígoperája*, 1–5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 8–19.

⁴⁹ The autograph score of the opera is held in the National Széchényi Library Music Collection.

⁵⁰ Miklós Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bánk bán*, ed. Miklós Dolinszky (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2011), i: XXVII.

break of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849 and the retaliations that followed, the fact that the performance of Katona's play was forbidden, and the death of Béni Egressy, the librettist of Erkel's early operas, in 1851.⁵¹ Between the premieres of *Hunyadi László* and *Bánk bán*, Erkel composed some folk plays and small pieces, and only one act of an occasional opera entitled *Erzsébet* for the visit of the Habsburg emperor and his wife to the Hungarian capital in 1857, the further acts of which were written by Franz and Karl Doppler. It is not clear exactly why no complete Erkel opera was finished for more than a decade and how quickly he worked on his next operas, first performed in 1861 and 1862. Nevertheless, at the very end of the 1850s, several reports were published about the ongoing work on *Bánk bán*, and based on the indications which survived in the autograph manuscript, the acts of the opera were completed in August, September and October 1860, respectively.⁵² *Bánk bán* was presented on 9 March 1861 and proved to be the representation of Hungarian national opera par excellence, while *Sarolta*, a comic opera from the following year, was a failure partly because of its poor libretto. This pair of operas are particularly interesting in respect to the way Erkel used particular Hungarian dance types in different sorts of operas composed at almost the same time.

The plot of *Bánk bán* is based on the conflict between the queen consort and her court, on the one hand, and Bánk, the *bán* (a Hungarian potentate who deputised for the king in his absence), and other Hungarian leaders, on the other. Their struggle is set against ethnic conflict, as the queen, of foreign origins, was accused of putting her own people in power, while Bánk's motivation was strengthened by a personal impulse, an emotional dimension to the conflict, as the queen's brother kept trying to seduce Bánk's wife, Melinda. The opera ends tragically: Bánk murders the queen, and Melinda, after the queen's brother abuses her, goes mad and throws herself into the River Tisza with her son.

Similarly to contemporary grand operas, the first version of *Bánk bán* included a ballet consisting of diverse European dances, ending with a fast Hungarian dance in Act I (Example 4).⁵³ We can only presume

⁵¹ Ibid., XXVIII–XIX.

⁵² Ibid., XXIX.

⁵³ Ibid., XLIII.

that the international dances may have been intended to represent the foreign character of the court where Act I takes places. However, the critics considered the scene to be too long. Immediately after the premiere, Erkel replaced the foreign dances with a Hungarian slow dance section, as a result of which a typical Hungarian dance cycle came into being, with slow, then quick dancing.⁵⁴

The accentuated choriamb rhythms and the folkish *dűvő*-type accompaniment, present in folk music and also in the performances of Gypsy bands, relates the opening part to the *csárdás*, while the ornaments of the choriambes and particularly the great compass and leaps of the melody distinguish it from the mundaneness of the popular dance and from the folk character, in accordance with the courtly setting.

In the first scene of Act III, the highly stylised elements of the *csárdás* play an especially important role in characterising Bánk's wife Melinda and in depicting the process which led to her tragic death. Erkel integrated choriambes into a soprano aria as early as 1850, when he inserted a brilliant aria in *Hunyadi László* for the famous singer Anne de La Grange, who visited Pest and performed the role of Erzsébet, the mother of the titular hero.⁵⁵ In *Bánk bán*, *csárdás* elements are given dramatic significance. The figure of Melinda can be interpreted as symbolising Hungary, the homeland, which must be protected from foreign power.⁵⁶ In terms of musical style, her part features Hungarian musical elements which grow increasingly characteristic over the course of the opera. They are quite close to the art music *verbunkos* style,⁵⁷ with regard to both the grand opera genre on the one hand and Melinda's nobility and tragic fate on the other. However, folkish elements are present in greater proportions throughout this work, including in Melinda's part, than in Erkel's earlier operas.⁵⁸ This may be due to a variety of factors, such as Doppler's impact, the folk plays composed by Erkel in the 1840s, and the plan of *Sarolta*, a comic opera with a rural plot.

⁵⁴ Ibid., XLIII.

⁵⁵ Tallián, 'Music and reception', XLIII–XLIV.

⁵⁶ David E. Schneider, 'Mad for Her Country: Melinda's Insanity, the Puszta, and Nationalist Dramaturgy in Ferenc Erkel's *Bánk bán* Act 3', *Studia Musicologica*, 52/1–4 (2011), 51–52.

⁵⁷ Véber, *Ungarische Elemente*, 135–141.

⁵⁸ Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bánk bán*, XXXVIII–XXXIX; Riskó, *A magyar népies zene*, 150–155.

Example 4. Ferenc Erkel: *Bánk bán*. Act I, No. 4 'Hungarian dance', bars 1–8. Erkel Ferenc: *Bánk bán*, ed. Miklós Dolinszky (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2011), 83–84.

Andalgósan

Flauto piccolo

Flauti I II

Oboi I II

Clarinetti I II in A

Fagotti I II

Corni I II in F

Trombe I II in F

Timpani

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

National Dances on the Stage of the Nation: Dances in Operas by Franz Doppler and Ferenc Erkel

5

Picc.

Fl. I
II

Ob. I
II

Cl. I
in A II

Fag. I
II

Cor.
in F
III
IV

Tr. I
in F II

Timp.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

Cb.

The musical score is for a full orchestra. It begins with a Piccolo part on a high staff, followed by Flute I and II, Oboe I and II, Clarinet I in A and II, Bassoon I and II, Cor Anglais I, II, III, and IV, Trumpet I in F and II, and Timpani. The string section includes Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, and *ff* are indicated throughout. Performance markings include accents, slurs, and breath marks. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four measures per system.

The Hungarian musical characteristics unfold in Melinda's mad scene in Act III. Based on the model of similar scenes in European operas, it is set in natural surroundings, namely, on the banks of the River Tisza, so the heroine is taken out of her ordinary environment, and virtuoso coloraturas and dance elements serve to illustrate her unusual state of mind.⁵⁹ The rural landscape, also emphasising national sentiment, is represented by an instrumental introduction in Hungarian style.⁶⁰ When the curtain rises, a pastoral episode ensues, displaying the figures of two flautists playing folk-like tunes on piccolos, while the final fast section anticipates the fast part of the aria (Example 5).⁶¹ The structure of the aria recalls that of the *verbunkos* and the *csárdás*, as well as the three-part scheme of an Italian aria.⁶² In the slow section, *verbunkos*-style elements belonging to Melinda's part are combined with ornamented choriamb rhythms and *dúvő* accompaniment, evoking stylised *csárdás* pieces.

The fast section is dominated by simple unornamented choriambes and a drone-type bass imitating bagpipes.⁶³ The folk-like sound is strengthened by the use of the cimbalom, or dulcimer, which was used by Gypsy bands in Hungary. The essentially monotonic repetition of a two-bar motif over a long section between bars 13 and 100, including a short reminiscence of Melinda's *csárdás*-type melody from her duet with Bánk in Act II in bars 69–76, reminds us of an old type of folk dance music, representing Melinda's altered state of mind, while the cimbalom may depict the light of the opening heavens, which she mentions (Example 6).

⁵⁹ Schneider, 'Mad for Her Country', 49–50, 57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 50, 53.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 53–57.

⁶² Dolinszky, 'Introduction', in *Erkel Ferenc: Bánk bán*, XXXIX.

⁶³ The opera, because of its dramaturgical and prosodic deficiencies, was substantially reworked in 1940. The adaptation was made by Kálmán Nádasdy, a stage director of the Hungarian Opera House, and Nándor Rékai, a composer and conductor who worked as a dramaturge and music consultant in the same institution. Their revisions may have been inspired by the idea of producing a national opera based partly on late nineteenth-century historical operas, as well as by the aim of bringing the opera closer to József Katona's play. Perhaps because of the contemporary ideals of national art music relying on peasant music as opposed to nineteenth-century folk-like music types, including the popular *csárdás*, a large part of Melinda's aria was deleted. While the original opera was published only in excerpts for piano, the revised version has been perpetuated through performance practice and recordings for decades. A critical edition of Ferenc Erkel's *Bánk bán* was published in 2011, see *ibid.*, XLVI–XLVII.

Example 5. Ferenc Erkel: *Bánk bán*. Act III, No. 15 Aria, bars 58–66. Erkel Ferenc: *Bánk bán*, ed. Miklós Dolinszky (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2011), 591.

58

Corni I
in D II

Corni I
in C II

Melinda

Violini I

Violini II

Violeni

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

61

Cor. I
in D II

Cor. I
in C II

M.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

Cb.

Ál - modj_ sze - lí - den, é - des - de - den,

an - gya - lom, te an - gya - lom, te, ál - modj_ sze - lí - den,

arco

pp

pp

pp

ppp

ppp

tr

tr

tr

pizz.

arco

Kata Riskó

64

Cor. I
in D II

Cor. I
in C II

M.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

Cb.

pp

tr

an - gya - lom, ah!

é - des - de - den, an - gya - lom, ah, an - gya - lom, ah!

Example 6. Ferenc Erkel, *Bánk bán*. Act III, No. 15 Aria, *Allegro. Concertato*, bars 5–30.

Erkel Ferenc: *Bánk bán*, ed. Miklós Dolinszky (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi és Társa, 2011), 602–603.

5

Flauti piccoli

Melinda

Tiborc

T

Coro

B

oly csal-fa a vi-har, mi ként a nő-ke-bel.

har, mi ként a nő-ke-bel.

A

A saj-ka ké-szen vár, nagy-asz-szo-nyom!

Allegro. Contertato

Clarineti I
in Bb II

Fagotti I
II

Cimbalo ungherese

Picc.

M.

saj-ka, a saj-ka!

Á-rad a fény

Allegro. Contertato

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

pp

pp

pp

15

Cl. I
in Bb II

Fag. I
II

Cim. u.

Picc.

M.

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

pp

su - gá - ra, lá - tom, az ég

19

Cl. I
in Bb II

Fag. I
II

Cim. u.

Picc.

M.

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

meg - nyílt már, an - gya - li kar.

23

Cl. I
in B \flat II

Fag. I

Cim. u.

Picc.

M.

hang - - ja lel - kem az Úr - hoz

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

27

Cl. I
in B \flat II

Fag. I

Cim. u.

Picc.

M.

hív - - ja, an - gya - li kar -

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

A combination of these elements was not present in either traditional or popular Hungarian music. The bagpipe sound and motif repetition can be classified as a rather archaic layer of folk music, which survived mostly in lower social strata, whereas the *csárdás* and the cimbalom were fashionable cultural elements in that period. The latter connects the scene to the *verbunkos* style, which generally characterises Melinda's role in the opera, while the more archaic elements lend folk characteristics to the figure of the heroine here, expressing her mood at this particular point in the plot.

In addition to European mad scenes in general, a link can be detected between Melinda's aria and a particular contemporary opera. In depicting the insanity of a female hero with folk-like elements, Erkel could have been directly influenced by Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*, also known as *Le pardon de Ploërmel*, which premiered in Paris in 1859, and was first performed at the National Theatre in Pest in November 1860.⁶⁴ Meyerbeer's operas were staged in Pest with great success, and Erkel may have been impressed by these works, as suggested by his use of peculiar *obbligato* instruments like the cimbalom and viola d'amore in *Bánk bán*.⁶⁵ In the case of *Dinorah*, a three-act *opéra comique*, the rural plot could have inspired the use of folk-style elements in Meyerbeer's music. It takes place in Brittany, and the main characters are the peasant girl Dinorah, her bridegroom Hoël, who is a goatherd, and Corentin, a bagpiper. Dinorah appears in Act I wandering in the forest and across the fields, having gone mad thinking Hoël was unfaithful. Her clouded mind is illustrated by the scene in which she meets Corentin and, fascinated by his bagpipe playing, follows him, imitating the instrument with her singing. The novelty of Meyerbeer's characterisation of his heroine by evoking the folk music of his own country was also highlighted by the Hungarian opera critics.⁶⁶ From Erkel's point

⁶⁴ Tibor Tallián, "Opern dieses größten Meisters des Jetztzeit". Meyerbeer's Reception on the 19th-Century Hungarian Opera Stage', in *The Opera Orchestra in 18th- and 19th-Century Europe II: The Orchestra in the Theatre – Composers, Works, and Performance*, ed. Niels Martin Jensen and Franco Piperno (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts, 2008), 265.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 282–284.

⁶⁶ Tibor Tallián, "Opern dieses größten Meisters des Jetztzeit". Meyerbeer fogadtatása a korabeli magyar operaszínpadon' [Meyerbeer's reception on the contemporary Hungarian opera stage], in *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok 2004–2005*, ed. Márta Sz. Farkas (Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézete, 2005), 26.

of view, a new and really popular opera by one of the most successful contemporary European composers satisfied the aims of the Hungarian national movement in using local folk music in an opera. Moreover, it might have influenced him to process folk-like music to characterise an opera heroine in a tragic situation. Although the genre and the subject are both far from those of *Bánk bán*, Erkel may have been impressed by *Dinorah* when composing a mad scene with the help of Hungarian folk-like musical elements, which he transformed and stylised according to his own needs.

In contrast to *Bánk bán*, *Sarolta*, which premiered the following year, is set in the Middle Ages in a rural location. The characters are mainly from a Hungarian village, and the crowd of peasants plays an important role. The plot focuses on the love and the planned marriage of Sarolta, the daughter of the local church cantor, with the knight Gyula. The conflict derives from the fact that the king, arriving in disguise, also falls in love with the girl. Although *Sarolta* flopped, it may be regarded as a significant milestone in the process of elevating folk music and dance to the Hungarian opera stage. In the music of this comic opera, Erkel used folk-like tunes and folkish topoi, as for pastoral music, with a solo clarinet imitating a folk flute. There is also a *csárdás* dance, which is rendered in a more direct form than in *Bánk bán*, as a dance of village folk at the end of Act I.⁶⁷ The chorus, embodying the people, calls for a song-type dance in a strophic form with simple choriamb rhythms, which is followed by a dance accompanied by instrumental music (Figure 2).

⁶⁷ Véber, *Ungarische Elemente*, 148–156.

Figure 2. Ferenc Erkel: *Sarolta*. Act I, Finale, Táncz. Autograph. Budapest, National Széchényi Library, H-Bn Ms. mus. 360, 249–250.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a dance piece titled "Táncz" (Dance). The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The notation is in a historical style, featuring various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The word "Táncz" is written in a large, decorative script at the top center. In the upper right corner, there are handwritten numbers: "249.", "143", and "142". The score is divided into two systems, with the first system starting with a "Lento" marking. The piano part consists of several staves with complex rhythmic patterns and chordal structures. The vocal lines are interspersed with the piano accompaniment.

256.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation, numbered 256 in the top left corner. The score is written on multiple staves, likely for a piano and voice. The notation is dense and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Two distinct sections are marked with '1^{ma}' and '2^{da}' above the staves, indicating first and second endings. The handwriting is in black ink on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The overall layout is typical of a composer's manuscript for a stage production.

With the simple choriambic and *dűvő* accompaniment of both the chorus and the dance, and the song-type form of the chorus, the scene evokes a *csárdás* in a more folkish manner than the Hungarian dance in *Bánk bán*; these features ensure it is related to the dance that appears in Doppler's *Ilka*. Furthermore, the choriambic return in some of the other chorus numbers in the opera representing the common folk, thanks to which the dance scene in Act I becomes a more organic part of the work.

To sum up, dance was considered to be a means of expressing patriotic emotions during the Hungarian national movement of the 1830s and 1840s, referred to as the Reform Era. In this period, regulated national ballroom dances and the *csárdás* became emblematic dances of the Hungarians. Besides their popularity on the dance floor, they influenced the birth of national art music, including national stage music. As a place where wider social groups could be reached with Hungarian cultural products, the National Theatre was seemingly a centre of patriotic endeavour. The insertion of different Hungarian dances into stage works to popularise them and to strengthen the Hungarianness of the works can be studied in the output of Ferenc Erkel and Franz Doppler. Erkel composed settings with folk tunes and folk dances recalling a folk-type performance manner for several folk plays in the 1840s. However, folk elements were inserted into his operas much more gradually and in a more indirect manner, partly due to the inspiration from different Hungarian and foreign models. While in the ballet scene of his first opera, *Bátori Mária*, he used *verbunkos*, which had a tradition stretching back for decades, in *Hunyadi László*, he inserted a newly-fashioned national ballroom dance. Franz Doppler's highly successful *Ilka* was a milestone in integrating the more folkish *csárdás* and, in general, folk-like tunes into Hungarian operas. The *csárdás* played a role in Erkel's tragic grand opera *Bánk bán*, in a rather stylised form as a dance episode, and, more importantly in terms of compositional style, as a means of portraying the unstable mental state of the heroine. In using a popular dance and local folk-like elements for dramatic purposes in a tragic scene, Erkel might have been encouraged by a contemporary Western European opera, namely Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*. A *csárdás* also occurs in Erkel's comic

opera *Sarolta*, in a really folkish version, in a rural scene displaying a folk dance of village people, but on the basis of his earlier works, the direct insertion of a folk-like dance in an opera was for him the result of a longer process.



ABSTRAKT

W pierwszej połowie XIX w., która przyniosła Węgrom przebudzenie tożsamości narodowej, taniec uznawano za sposób wyrażania uczuć patriotycznych. Emblematyczne stały się narodowe tańce salonowe tworzone na wzór europejski oraz czardasz (*csárdás*) posiadający rzeczywiste korzenie ludowe. Poza popularnością, jaką zyskały na parkiecie, tańce te były także włączane do widowisk scenicznych, oraz, jako integralne ustępy oper, współtworzyły powstającą muzykę narodową. W niniejszej pracy prezentuję węgierskie tańce narodowe rozpowszechnione w latach czterdziestych XIX w., analizując – na przykładzie oper i wodewilów najwybitniejszego węgierskiego kompozytora operowego XIX w., Ferenc Erkela i, w mniejszym stopniu, Franza Dopplera – w jaki sposób posługiwano się tymi tańcami w węgierskiej muzyce scenicznej. Mimo że Erkel opracowywał ludowe melodie, komponując muzykę do wielu popularnych widowisk, to do swoich oper elementy ludowe i popularne tańce wprowadzał stopniowo. Wystawiana z dużym sukcesem opera komiczna Franza Dopplera *Ilka* stała się kamieniem milowym na drodze adaptacji czardasza i – szerzej rzecz ujmując – quasi-ludowych motywów muzycznych w węgierskiej twórczości operowej. Oprócz oper Dopplera, to współczesne europejskie dzieła operowe mogły ośmielić Erkela do posługiwania się popularnymi tańcami oraz quasi-ludowymi motywami w celach dramaturgicznych. Podczas gdy w jego operze komicznej *Sarolta* czardasz pojawia się rzeczywiście w wersji quasi-ludowej i ilustruje scenę wiejską, to w jego tragicznej, wielkiej operze *Bánk bán* pełni on nie tylko funkcję epizodu tanecznego, ale jest także środkiem ilustrującym niestabilny stan umysłowy bohaterki.

Słowa kluczowe: Węgry, opera narodowa, Ferenc Erkel, Franz Doppler, czardasz

ABSTRACT

For Hungarians, the first half of the nineteenth century was characterised by awakening national identity, and dance was considered to be a means of expressing patriotic emotions. The national ballroom dance which was constructed on the basis of European models and the *csárdás* of real folk origins became emblematic dances of the Hungarians. Besides their popularity on the dance floor, they were inserted into stage productions, and, as integrated parts of operas, they became a component of the nascent national art music. In this study, I introduce the Hungarian national dances which were widespread in the 1840s and analyse, through the operas and folk plays of the most significant nineteenth-century Hungarian opera composer, Ferenc Erkel, and to a lesser extent Franz Doppler, how these dances were used in Hungarian stage music. Although Erkel composed settings with folk tunes for several popular plays, folk elements and popular dances were inserted into his operas much more gradually. Franz Doppler's highly successful comic opera *Ilka* was a milestone in integrating the *csárdás* and, in general, folk-like tunes into Hungarian operas. In addition to Doppler's works, contemporary European operas may have encouraged Erkel to use popular dance and local folk-like elements for dramatic purposes. While the *csárdás* occurs in his comic opera *Sarolta* in a really folkish version, in a rural scene displaying a folk dance of village people, it plays a role in his tragic grand opera *Bánk bán* not only as a dance episode but as a means of portraying the unstable mental state of the heroine.

Keywords: Hungary, national opera, Ferenc Erkel, Franz Doppler, *csárdás*