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BARTOK's
RUMANIAN FOLK DANCES
A STUDY

JERRY AMALDEV

Part II of a Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Cornell University
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

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Jerry Amaldev, was Born in Cochin, Kerala, to Mary Moojappilly and Joseph Veleeparambil. A singer from the age of four, Intially he learned Hindustani classical Music from Mr. Madhusoodan Patwardhan, son of Vinayak Rao Patwardan of the Kirana Gharana, in Pune. Further he was groomed in the same by S.C.R. Bhat and K.G.Ginde, disciples of Shri. Ratanjankar of Maharashtra. He got trainning in Hindi film Music as assistant to Naushad Ali. In 1975, he Obtained an MFA degree. In composition from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York and teaching experience there and at Queen's College, Flushing New York, U.S.A before emerging with a unique blend of eastern and Musics in the 1980s He has won the Kerala State Award for excellence in Movie Music three times. He is one of the most distinguished Musicians in South India. He promotes choral singing, his passion, through his chorus, Sing India with Jerry Amaldev.

Robert Palmer

3. Summary

Led by nationalism and scientific curiosity, Bartók collected samples of peasant music of ancient Hungary. He gave some of these modal materials the best possible piano accompaniment, always fitting the harmonies to the melodies.

In Rumanian Folk Dances the collector-scholar and innovative composer that Bartók was, worked in mutual reinforcement.

1. Joc cu Bata in the Dorian mode on A with an oriental melodic peculiarity, has two long periods of unequal length. Each is repeated with a strong sense for the Sam. Avoiding "foreign notes" as far as possible, its harmony is carefully chosen.
2. Braul, in the Dorian mode on D, has 4 phrases of equal length. In the non-traditional harmonic progressions the use of seconds and an evenly paced harmonic rhythm sets this dance in contrast to Joc cu Bata.
3. An adaptation of a high-pitched fluer melody, Pe Loc's tune is hexatonic and has motivic figures imparting to it a characteristic flavor. This dance is made up of two complementary short tunes and a codetta. The accom-

paniment has the peculiar dual quality of being a drone as well as changing harmonies.

4. Buciumeana seems to be in the Phrygian mode on A that uses both the lowered and the raised 3rd degrees. This slow dance consists of two lines of melody lasting 4 bars each. Harmony shows great freedom in using three notes totally "foreign" to the mode. The harmonic rhythm is fittingly slow and fluid.

5. Poarca Romaneasca is in a typical Hungarian scale that has a Lydian feeling plus the lowered 7th degree. The melody on A is marked into groups of 3-3- and 2 beats, another typicality. The harmony strictly follows the melody.

6. Maruntel on A has two sections: the first is an original folk melody, but the second seems to be a composition by Bartók. The melody of the first constantly shifts tone-centers a perfect 5th apart. The accompaniment follows suit. The melody of the second has a quasi Bihar-area-type closing formula.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the composers of Western art music, Bartók with his folk music adaptations appealed to me instantly. He approached East-European folk music with the ideal of expressing "in twentieth century terms, Bach's contrapuntal fullness, Beethoven's art of thematic development, and Debussy's discovery of the sonorous (as distinct from the functional) value of chords."[1] I find myself facing some of Bartók's problems while trying to adapt India's music into my Western works.

East-European folk music and India's music are both modal. Bartók addressed himself -- and evolved solutions -- to the problems of incorporating modal materials into a harmonic context. He did this in three ways. In the first, "the composer uses authentic folk melody, unchanged or only slightly varied, providing it with an accompaniment and possibly with introductory and concluding material. Two subdivisions of this genus are distinguishable, in one of which the added materials -- accompaniment, introductory and concluding phrases -- are secondary, while in the other the melody is secondary, the added materials assuming

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1 Grout, Donald J. History of Western Music. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1973, p. 667.

from Hungary to Rumania, to the whole of Central Europe, to Turkey, and to North Africa.

Bihar, Busitia, and Bartók

While collecting music in Rumania, Bartók's headquarters was Bihar, a territory on the border between Hungary and Transylvania. From 1909 to 1914 his tours through various districts and counties of this area became numerous. In his meticulously written notes and manuscripts names of places such as Koloz, Szolnok-Daboka, Also-Feher, Torda-Aranyos, Maros-Torda, Torontal, Hunyad, Szatmar, and Maramaros appear recurrently. Of these, Maros-Torda, Torontal, Torda-Aranyos, and Bihar are mentioned as source-territories of the individual items in Rumanian Folk Dances. (See Bartók's notes from the score in the Appendix.)

The last two dances, Poarca Romaneasca and Maruntel, are from the district of Belenyes[7] in Bihar. Here, in the summer of 1909, Bartók met a secondary school teacher named Ion Busitia. It was the beginning of a life-long

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[7] In the transcriptions found in Rumanian Folk Music, Vol. I, Bartók uses the Rumanian name of the place, namely, Beius.

22 is mainly to avoid the monotony of the repeated chords. For example: in bar 2, D is used just to avoid a straight series of second inversion C major chords. This is true of the seconds in bar 6, too. The seconds in bar 8, first function as abruptly introduced dissonant notes which become a suspension, and are resolved by retardation, not by a step-wise downward motion. In bar 13, D is used as a second just to bring a change in a series of F major ^{7th} chords. In bars 18 and 22 the seconds are again used to avoid the monotony of an A major chord that otherwise would last for three consecutive bars.

6. The main progressions in bars 1-16 are:

C to F to G major^{7th}.

The progression in bars 17-32 are:

A to D to C; F to C to e^{7th} to A.

The main progression in bars 33-45 are:

e^{o} to e^{7th} to A.

7. The harmonic rhythm of the piece is fairly slow, as shown in the reduction. But an impression of rhythmic and harmonic vitality is engendered by subdividing the duration of each chord into a series of eighth-note fractions.

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