
CD REVIEWS

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Bartók Béla: Szerb népzenei gyűjtése Fonogramok a Bánátból 1912. Szerb zenei hagyományok I. [Collection of Phonographic Recordings of Serbian Folk Music from Banat, 1912. Legacy of Serbian Folk Music I]. Compact disc digital audio + CD extra TM, R – e – DISC 101. Budapest: Vujicsics Association, Eredics Gábor, 2004

Béla Bartók (1881-1945) holds a special place among the most eminent researchers of the traditional music of Southeastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century. According to the data in the Music Lexicon (Szabolcsi, Bence – Tóth,

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Aladár, *Zenei lexikon 1*. Budapest: Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1965, 164), he collected, transcribed and studied around 8,000 songs and melodies of Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian, Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Arabian and African (!) folklore dances. His transcultural interest, initially in the traditional music of the neighbouring nations and later of other nations beyond the territory of Southeastern Europe, stemmed from his cosmopolitan view of the world and also from his desire to get to know more fully and deeply, not only the fundamental characteristics but also the specific qualities of Hungarian musical and folklore legacy. As a happy coincidence, this also reflected on the research of native musical works of the neighbouring nations, including Serbs and Croats, whose traditional music Bartók studied meticulously, based, first of all, on Milman Parry's and Albert Lord's musical and folklore material (collected and recorded in 1934–1935 and 1950–1951) and by analyzing about 2,600 traditional melodies melographed by Franjo Š. Kuhač (*Južno-slovenske narodne popievke [South Slav Folk Chants]*, Zagreb, 1879–1881 [1600 melodies]) and Ludvik Kuba (*Pjesme i napjevi iz Bosne i Hercegovine [Songs and Melodies from Bosnia and Herzegovina]* Sarajevo, 1983?, around 1000 melodies). The results of Bartók's ethnomusicological

research of Serbian and Croatian songs were published (posthumously) and are well-known to the scientific world (such as Milman Parry – Albert Bates Lord, *Srpsko-hrvatske junačke pjesme* [Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs], Vol. I Cambridge and Belgrade, 1954). However, the original phonographic recordings were neither easily accessible to the general cultural public nor to scholars.

The release of a multimedia CD containing the phonographic recordings of the Serbian folk music from Banat, recorded by B. Bartók in 1912, is another fortunate circumstance for Serbian ethnomusicology which was, however, not known to our ethnomusicologists until only recently. This multimedia CD, extremely important for Serbian ethnomusicology, was released by the *Vujičić Association* (Vujicsics Association, Budapest, 2004). The multimedia CD is accompanied by a review in Hungarian, English and Serbian in which the author, Gábor Eredics, says among other things: "...collection on the extra CD... can be played both as an audio CD and in audio-visual form. The audio fund was re-recorded after a careful restoration and can be used in any CD device. If played on a computer, the CD provides access to Bartók's handwritten musical notation, originals, unprocessed recordings and other collections, visual and textual information about the ethnographic aspects of collectors and the subsequent life of the melodies". This is very precious material which takes us back to the time when Serbian composers did not have a phonograph but recorded traditional melodies "by ear", that is directly from narrators in order to use them primarily in their compositions.

In 1912, Bartók also recorded 21 Serbian traditional melodies on a phonograph in two Banat communities belonging to Romania today – in Monostor (Temesmonostor, Temes County, today's *Mănăștiur*) and Sarafalva (Saravola, Torontal County, today's community of *Saravale*). It is worthwhile mentioning that both communities had a multinational ethnic structure at the time with Romanians, Hungarians, Serbs and Germans living together. On 12 March in Monostor, Bartók recorded nine instrumental melodies, two performed on the violin (*Malo kolo, Veliko kolo*) [*Small Round Dance, Big Round Dance*] and seven on the tamboura (*Malo kolo; Veliko kolo; Srbkinja; Seljančica; Zaplet; Oj, djevojko rokoko; Đurđevka*), as well as two songs performed in a more modern style for which Bartók made a note in French in his musical notations – in the place where the title usually goes – that the song could also be sung alternatively, e.g. "Un chant" (joué et chanté alternativement). The lyrics were written under the musical notation in the Serbian Latin alphabet: *Pevaj petle na dudu jalovcu / Devojka se dopala udovcu*, etc. On the other musical notation it says: "Un chant" (joué et chanté alternativement), with the lines: *Idem kući, a već zora / Luče guče sa prozora*, etc. under the notes. This last song is performed as two-part and homophonic, in a more modern "bass singing" style, with the endings of melodic sections in a pure fifth chord.

Interestingly enough, next to the narrator's name and in addition to the phonograph number and place of the recording, Bartók wrote down the narrator's nationality but only for the Romanians. Thus, for example, he notes that the melodies on the violin were performed by Mihaj Skitović

(“M.F. 2026 b, Temešmonoštor (Temeš), Mihaj Skitović, ciganin, III. 1912.” [*M.F. 2026 b, Temesmonostor (Temes), Mihaj Skitović, gipsy, III. 1912*], while other dance melodies were performed by a young tamboura player, Milan Marković, aged 22 (there is no record of his nationality next to his name!).

These eleven melodies on the multimedia CD are followed by another nine phonographic recordings (it is not known why there are not ten melodies as in the published musical notations), taken by Bartók in Saravola in November of the same year: six instrumental melodies performed on the bagpipes (*Malo kolo; Veliko kolo; Banatsko kolo; Seljančica; Srpski mađarik; Népdal*) and three folk songs (*Otvori mi, mile pile; Odbi se, biser grana...; Lepu Smilju...*). The first of the listed songs is performed with a bagpipe accompaniment, while the other two have no musical accompaniment. Again, on some musical notations of instrumental melodies, the titles of which were most probably not known to the narrator, Bartók wrote down only a note (“Melodie d’un chant, cornemuse, M.F. 2061 b, Sarafola /Torontal/, un homme, XI. 1912”), indicating that it was a melody taken from an unknown bagpipe player.

What is particularly impressive is the fact that B. Bartók’s original phonographic recordings were very successfully restored in digital postproduction, making it easier for us today to understand both the text and melody of each recording, regardless of their being dated almost a century ago. These precious and probably the oldest phonographic recordings of the Serbian

folk music from Banat enable every researcher familiar with Serbian musical folklore material from this area to identify the variant development of specific songs and round dances which can be heard even today among people under the same, similar or different names. Thus, a related melodic variant of the song *Pevaj petle na dudu jalovcu*, recorded by Bartók with a tamboura accompaniment, can be heard today as a performance by Maksa Mudrinić from Sivac with a bagpipe accompaniment and titled *Peva pet’o na dudu jalovcu*. The fundamental line is very similar, only with an augmented second as an oriental colouring in B. Bartók’s recording, while the variant performed by M. Mudrinić has a diatonic structure. Except for the first two lines, the lyrics of these songs are completely different. However, a decasyllable with a 4 + 6 structure remained a common and authentic morphological element in both variants. Other sound recordings from B. Bartók’s published musical folklore material (such as *Srbkinja; Seljančica; Zaplet; Oj, djevojko rokoko; Đurđevka; Otvori mi; Mile, pile; Odbi se biser grana; Lepu Smilju dovedoše*) can also be identified in the modern traditional music of the Serbs in Banat, but their ethnomusicological interpretation would be far beyond the scope of this review. This multimedia release, combined with B. Bartók’s musical notations, is a document of remarkable value, as well as a great incentive for studying the history of the traditional music of the Serbs in Banat, its continuity and vitality, and its changes and evolutionary tendencies.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović