SLOVAK INFLUENCES IN 20TH CENTURY MUSIC AS REPRESENTED
IN SELECTED WORKS OF BARTÓK, JANÁČEK
AND NOVÁK

by

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DEDICATION

To my Slovak countrymen who for centuries expressed their difficult lives through song.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES. ................................................................. 8
LIST OF TABLES. ................................................................. 10
ABSTRACT. ................................................................. 11
PREFACE. ................................................................. 13
I)  INTRODUCTION. ......................................................... 16
   A) Characteristic features of Slovak folk music. ................. 16
   B) Slovak folk song as an inspiration for classical music. ....... 21
II) VÍTĚZSLAV NOVÁK. ......................................................... 26
   A) Novák’s “discovery” of Slovakia. ................................. 26
   B) Expressing the spirit of a nation: manifestation of Slovak national spirit
      in the symphonic poem In the Tatras. ......................... 29
III) LEOŠ JANÁČEK. ............................................................. 47
   A) More than a tune: Janáček’s complex examination of folk tradition . 47
   B) 26 Folk Ballads. .......................................................... 50
      a) History of the original audio recordings. .................. 50
      b) Analysis of selected songs. .................................... 52
IV)  BÉLA BARTÓK. ............................................................ 63
   A) The place of Slovak folk music in Bartók’s ethnomusicological
      research. ............................................................... 63
   B) Analysis of Bartók’s Three Village Scenes. ................. 67
V)  SUMMARY. ................................................................. 98
TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

APPENDIX A: MAP OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE IN 1914. ........... 100

APPENDIX B: COPYRIGHT PERMISSION. ................................. 101

REFERENCES ................................................................. 102
LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES

Example 1: Symphony No. 88, 3rd mvt., measures 64-70. ....................... 22
Example 2: In the Tatras, measures 26-33. ................................. 32
Example 3: In the Tatras, measures 5-8. ................................. 34
Example 4: In the Tatras, measures 9-14. ................................. 35
Example 5: In the Tatras, measures 15-19. ................................. 36
Example 6: In the Tatras, measures 34-41. ................................. 37
Example 7: In the Tatras, measures 100-103. ............................... 39
Example 8: In the Tatras, measures 225-228. ............................... 41
Example 9: In the Tatras, measures 316-323. ............................... 43
Example 10: Něumrem ja na zemi. ........................................ 54
Example 11: Štyry kosy nakované. ........................................ 56
Example 12: Už těbe, Anička. ........................................ 58
Example 13: Jede furman dolinú ........................................ 60
Example 14: Ej nebudu ja dobrý ........................................ 62
Example 15: Three Village Scenes, 1st mvt., measures 8-17. ................. 70
Example 16: Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, number 53a. ................. 71
Example 17: Three Village Scenes, 1st mvt., measures 27-37. ................. 71
Example 18: Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, number 53b. ................. 73
Example 19: Three Village Scenes, 1st mvt., measures 51-63. ................. 73
Example 20: Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, number 34a. ................. 79
Example 21: Three Village Scenes, 2nd mvt., measures 5-16. ................. 79
LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES - Continued

Example 22: *Three Village Scenes*, 2\(^{nd}\) mvt., measures 19-21. ............... 81

Example 23: *Three Village Scenes*, 2\(^{nd}\) mvt., measures 29-33. ............... 83

Example 24: *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, number 35f. ..................... 84

Example 25: *Three Village Scenes*, 2\(^{nd}\) mvt., measures 34-40. ............... 84

Example 26: *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, number 217c. ................. 89

Example 27: *Three Village Scenes*, 3\(^{rd}\) mvt., measures 43-50. ............... 89

Example 28: *Three Village Scenes*, 3\(^{rd}\) mvt., measures 1-4. ................. 91
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Formal analysis of Novák’s *In the Tatras* ................. 45
Table 2: Formal analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*, first movement . . .77
Table 3: Formal analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*, second movt. . . .87
Table 4: Formal analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*, third movement . . 95
ABSTRACT

The goal of this document is to demonstrate how Slovak folk music inspired creation of some early 20th century chamber, orchestral, and vocal-instrumental compositions. In examples drawn from works of Vítězslav Novák, Leoš Janáček and Béla Bartók the author analyzes the different ways of translating folk music idioms into the compositional language of these composers.

The first of the introductory chapters presents an outline of distinctive features of Slovak folk music. It talks about the role of folk song in the life of Slovaks and its connection to social events in the villages. It also analyzes the relationship between language and music. The coexistence of modal and tonal music is emphasized and songs are divided into historical periods.

In the second part of the introduction an historic overview of the influence of Slovak folk music in classical music is given. The chapter covers the first known occurrences of this influence in the collections of songs and dances from the Baroque era and the occasional references in the Classical and Romantic music. The impulses behind the wave of interest in Slovak folk music in the 20th century are also examined.

The first chapter documents the influence of Slovak folk music on Vítězslav Novák. It describes his early career and his first encounters with Slovakia. The central part of this chapter consists of analysis of the symphonic
poem *In the Tatras*, a work inspired by Slovakia and containing Slovak music references.

The second chapter of this document is devoted to Leoš Janáček. His multifaceted approach to folk music included an intimate knowledge of people’s lifestyle, traditions, local dialects and speech patterns. The fruit of his research is documented in the song collection *26 Folk Ballads*. The majority of these arrangements for voice and piano are of Slovak origin.

The final chapter examines the personal and artistic ties of Béla Bartók to Slovakia. Bartók employed folk music elements in his compositions with a genius which made him a master of such compositional approach. The variety of ways by which Bartók used Slovak folk music is scrutinized in the analysis of *Three Village Scenes*. 
PREFACE

Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) shared the belief that folk music could bring a fresh vitality to post-Romantic music. Both composers were drawn to the folk traditions of their homelands but they each soon became aware of the distinctive features of music from their surrounding cultures. The ethnic diversity of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire offered them an opportunity to conduct broad-scaled ethnomusicological research. The diversity became an essential resource in Bartók’s and Janáček’s compositional activity, serving them as a rich source of inspiration throughout their lives. Bartók and Janáček were well aware of each other’s research which became the center of discussion during several of their meetings.

Folk music also unlocked the creative powers of Czech composer Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949). After years of rigorous compositional training in an attempt to find an authentic artistic expression, Novák’s study of folksong collections (stimulated in part by meeting Janáček) brought him the fresh inspiration he had been seeking. First merely an exotic addition to his works, folk music idioms soon became an organic part of his compositional thinking. Although Novák’s ethnomusicological activity never reached the scope of Bartók’s or Janáček’s research, it inspired the creation of his most representative music.

Looking for inspiration in the life and art of simple, rural people was not unique to Bartók, Janáček, and Novák. Such inspiration was an important aspect
of the Romantic ideal of the unification of Man with Nature. Folk music was welcomed as a source of pure, unspoiled expression, and many Romantic composers reflected this trend in their work.

Janáček was an especially eager promoter of this idea; Bartók and Novák were also products of these beliefs. However, the approach of all three was different. Novák’s folk arrangements were in the tradition of Romantic composers, such as Dvořák and Smetana, who incorporated folk idioms into the conventions of art music mainly for the sake of flavor or in support of the programmatic plan of the piece. Janáček and Bartók were not interested in these “Westernized” forms of folk music. Instead they pursued their research in distant, isolated rural areas, where the folk idioms seemed to have been isolated from the “modern” trends, such as exclusively major/minor tonalities and regular meters consisting of units of equal length. Janáček studied Moravian folklore but rarely showed an interest in the music of Bohemia since Bohemian folk music idioms were part of the compositional language of Dvořák, Smetana and their followers. Similarly, Bartók examined Hungarian music but in his mature output avoided writing music influenced by Austrian composers, such as the Hungarian Dances of Brahms.

Slovak folk music occasionally sparked the imagination of Baroque, Classical and Romantic composers but never beyond the point of being an exotic curiosity. For early twentieth century composers enthusiastically exploring less traditional musical concepts, Slovakia, then a Northern region of the Austro-
Hungarian Empire, became an area of interest. Mostly a rural country with a hilly terrain, Slovakia preserved isolated peasant communities with a distinctive musical tradition in its valleys. Positioned between Western and Eastern cultures, and comprised of a number of isolated regions, Slovakia offered a unique blend of modern and archaic musical practices.

Significantly, the Slovak region of the Empire was of interest to all three composers.¹ Here the folk song played a central role in everyday life – Bartók noted that he could harvest on his Edison cylinder recorder up to twice as many songs from Slovak peasants compared to those from Hungary.² Outside of a narrow circle of scholars, it remains a mostly unknown fact that all three composers came into close contact with Slovak folk music and that this contact had a significant impact on their own compositions.

The goal of this project is to examine the Slovak influences and demonstrate them in Novák’s *In the Tatras* for orchestra, Janáček’s *26 Folk Ballads* for voice and piano, and Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*³ for female chorus and instrumental ensemble.

¹ See map of Austro-Hungarian Empire in Appendix A (page 24).
³ For the purpose of this document, I will use English translations for the titles of the compositions discussed. Furthermore, the lyrics of Slovak folk songs will be translated. The objective is not to maintain their poetic quality but rather to keep the meaning of the text as close to the original as possible. Also, the names of books and articles in Slovak, Czech, and Hungarian languages are translated. The historical names of villages, cities, and countries will be used throughout the work but the modern name will also be quoted to ensure proper identification.
I) INTRODUCTION

A) Characteristic features of Slovak folk music

The twentieth century saw the transformation of Slovakia from a poor, predominantly rural region of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to a state with a fast-developing economy which fully embraced the amenities and cultural trends of the West. In the process of the rapid modernization of Slovak society many centuries-old features of its everyday lifestyle gave way to the conveniences of the modern age. Music and dance, which played a prominent role in Slovak culture for centuries, have a much smaller role in the society now because of changes in the social structure and also the introduction of radio, television, and more recently, the internet.

Despite its deteriorating position in the present, folk song is undoubtedly one of the most valued contributions of Slovaks to the world’s cultural heritage. Prior to the twentieth century, songs marked all important events in the lives of Slovaks: starting with the celebration of the winter’s end, continuing with Carnival, Easter, the beginning of spring, St. John’s Day, field and harvest festivities and Christmas; the song was omnipresent in the society. Songs were written also to comment on such diverse social events as the birth of a child, adultery and robbery.
By 1995, 26,000 Slovak folk songs had been published. Two subcategories stand out from this list: wedding songs and shepherd songs. Judging from the number of songs and the array of topics, a wedding was arguably the most important event in the life of Slovaks. Every aspect of the wedding ritual is accompanied by song: the bidding farewell to the bride’s mother, the elder women’s advice to the bride prior the wedding, the “hooding” ceremony (the bride enters the ranks of married women by putting on a hood), the contents of the dowry and the process of moving out of the house.

The shepherd songs stand out because of their unique expression. Music at weddings and other festivities in the village was closely associated with dance and often accompanied either by a string band or by a band with a cimbalom. Shepherds, isolated from society for most of the year, created songs unrelated to dance. In these rhythmically free-flowing songs the unaccompanied verses are interspersed with instrumental “intermezzos”. The accompaniment is provided by one or more instruments from the flute family or, less often, the gajdy.

The geography of Slovakia allowed for a remarkable stylistic variety. Being separated by mountains and with a lack of infrastructure, communities developed their own songs within a unique, local interpretational tradition. The sparse contact with the outside world led to the conservation of many old song forms.

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5 The Central European version of the hammered dulcimer.
6 The Slovak version of bagpipes.
These archaic forms provided very attractive research material and inspiration for the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century composers visiting the region.

Despite the local variations, a predominant feature of all Slovak songs is the correlation of language and music. The Slovak language uses two types of accent. The first is a “stress” accent which always falls on the first syllable of the word. The second is the “prolonging” accent which makes certain vowels (in the written form they have an angled dash above them) longer than the rest. One intriguing consequence of the “stress” accent is that a pick-up note is a rare exception in Slovak music.\textsuperscript{7} The accentuation of Slovak text may also cause the musical phrase to end on the unstressed beat.

In general, the text takes precedence over the music in Slovak folk song. This is especially true in its older forms. Due to the changing order of the “prolonging” accents, the internal rhythmic structure of the phrase can vary considerably in each stanza of the song. The syllabic nature of much vocal music causes phrases often to be of different lengths and to utilize metric changes.

Another remarkable feature of Slovak folk music is the coexistence of older, modal songs and newer tonal ones. This was probably caused by the lack of direct exposure to Western trends and a slow pace by which tonal music flowed into the country. In northern Slovakia the habit of imitating flute solos in

\textsuperscript{7} The same characteristics apply to the Czech language and therefore also to Czech music. A notable exception is the music of Bedřich Smetana whose native language was German. The setting of the Czech text in his works has been often deemed problematic and resulted in musical adjustments or textual compromises.
singing helped to propel the perseverance of older tunes because of the modal disposition of the flute instruments in that area.

Slovak folk music can be assigned to three historical periods. The first period contains the preharmonic “old style” songs. The melodies are narrow in range, usually proceed in stepwise motion, and deal predominantly with the mystical forces of nature. Next is the phase of the “nonharmonic” songs which are multi-sectional and more melodically developed. The majority of them are based on Lydian, Mixolydian, Hypoionian, and Dorian modes. This category was of a particular interest to researchers such as Bartók. The subjects are varied; ritual songs, shepherd songs and highwaymen songs are all found in this period.

The most recent development in Slovak folk music is represented by the “new style” songs, emerging toward the end of the 18th century. The common thread of the songs in this category is their tonal (major/minor) foundation. This was the result of the gradual incorporation of modern elements from Western Europe. Some of these songs are based on older rhythmic models and therefore retain their original irregular structure. Other songs emerged in the “new-Hungarian” style. Characteristic for its syncopated rhythm, this style was immensely popular in southern Slovakia in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Belonging to the “new style” category are also the songs showing Western influence.

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Adhering to these non-native trends, songs in the “new style” symbolically mark the beginning of westernization of Slovak people, a process which occupied most of the 20th century and continues to the present day. However, the “new style” songs do not possess the high level of authenticity for which the older vocal forms are valued. Consequently, it was the older songs which served as points of interest for both ethnomusicologists and classical composers of the post-Romantic generation.
B) Slovak folk song as an inspiration for classical music

The first occurrence of incorporating Slovak folk tunes into classical music dates back to the Baroque era. Collections of music based on folk songs and dances, such as the Vietoris Manuscript (c. 1675-9), the Bright Miscellany of Levoča (c. 1675) and Anna Szirmay-Ketzer’s Collection of Songs and Dances (1730), include folk song arrangements for keyboard, string and wind instruments, both in solo and ensemble settings. In addition, Baroque Christmas music in Slovakia included a type of carol called *pastorella* which contained folk music references.

In the Classical era the most unified set of musical idioms and aesthetic principles were introduced into Western music. The universality of musical language allowed for minimal regional distinction. Joseph Haydn, the greatest experimenter of the Classical era, came closest to folk music, especially in his late symphonies and string quartets. Although the folk motifs in his works are commonly dubbed “Austrian”, due to Haydn’s diverse ethical surroundings, “monarchical” could be more fitting. Born in Rohrau, just 30 kilometers from Pressburg (now Bratislava, Slovakia) which he often visited, Haydn certainly came in contact with traditional Slovak music.

One possible example of Slovak influence in Haydn’s music is heard in the Trio of the third movement (Menuetto) of his Symphony No. 88 (c. 1787). Here, the bass instruments provide harmonic foundation by moving in parallel fifths,

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9 Haydn visited Pressburg on several occasions either with Count Esterházy or on the invitation of the Count Grassalkovics.
resembling the sound of bagpipes. At the same time, the descant line systematically emphasizes the raised fourth scale degree, creating an almost “Lydian” feel of the Trio.

Example 1

Harmonic movement based on parallel fifths and the Lydian scale are among the distinctive features of Slovak folk music. The fifths “pedal” in the Trio is sometimes described as “the *Dudelsack* effect,” but its combination with the Lydian pull of the melody speaks of Slovak rather than Austrian or Hungarian influence.
The tightening grip of the Hungarian rulers fighting the Slovak national awakening prevented the Slovak region of the monarchy to evolve properly during the nineteenth century. The delayed arrival of Romanticism in Slovakia was at least partially a consequence of this political and cultural oppression. Music was composed and performed mostly on an amateur basis and the musical activity was centered mainly on releasing printed collections of Slovak folk songs. They started appearing in 1830s and culminated in the collection *Slovak Songs*, a long-term project published from 1880 until 1926.

Slovakia’s first important Romantic compositional figure is Ján Levoslav Bella (1843-1936). The scope and quality of his output secured his place in Slovak music history; his *Konzertstück im ungarischen Stile* from 1893 is probably the first symphonic work by a Slovak composer. However, his works, for the most part, don’t utilize Slovak folk references. Another local composer, the Pressburg-born Franz Schmidt (1874-1939), earned a respectable reputation as a composer in nearby Vienna but it is the Hungarian rather than the Slovak elements which became trademarks of his style.

Traditional music of Slovaks was virtually unknown outside the region but there is a curious instance of Slovak music appearing: the third movement of Jules Massenet’s Piano Concerto in E-flat major, which bears the subtitle *Airs Slovaques*. This stormy finale of the work possesses a certain exotic flair, but it is impossible to determine if, and to what degree, Slovak music served as an

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10 Original title: *Slovenské spevy.*
inspiration. Somewhat surprisingly, Massenet completed the concerto during the height of his opera career when he was already well aware that the operatic medium better suited his compositional disposition. The sketches for the work date back 40 years to Massenet's stay in Rome after he won the Prix de Rome at the Paris Conservatory (1863). At that time, Massenet saw himself as much a piano virtuoso as a composer. While in Rome he came in close contact with Franz Liszt and we can only speculate about the role of Liszt’s Hungarian-infused music in the creation of his *Airs Slovaques*. This was possibly an act of sentimental retrospection by a composer whose music, although popular, was becoming old-fashioned.

The early 20th century saw an energetic injection of Slovak traditional music into the realm of classical compositions with notable entries by Janáček, Bartók and Novák. Since this period is the subject of a detailed discussion in the subsequent chapters, it will not be examined in this overview.

Following the influx of folkloric elements, Slovak folk music became a main source of inspiration for the first generation of professional Slovak composers, all of them educated in Prague in the 1920s and 1930s. Labeled as *moderna*, this movement took the compositional achievements of Novák, and the compositional styles and ethnomusicological activities of Bartók and Janáček as the basis for the creation of a modern and independent musical language of Slovak composers. The representative figures of the *moderna* movement were Alexander Moyzes (1906-1984), Eugen Suchoň (1908-1993), Ján Cikker (1911-
1989), and Dezider Kardoš (1914-1991). Folk music permeates their compositional language in a variety of ways. The modality of Novák, the implementation of the speech pattern of Janáček, and the absorption of the idiomatic folk music gestures of Bartók are all found in their output.

The embracing of folklore was a prominent part of the official cultural policy of Communist governments in post Second World War Eastern Europe. The composers willing to follow the official path were treated with generous governmental support. Many folklore-based works were produced but the value of these works is questionable. The more progressive composers of the period exploited the trends of the Second Viennese School and the post-war avant-garde but turned away from folk music references. Starting in the 1980s, the number of folklore-based works increased to some extent. The current generation of Slovak composers (Vladimír Godár, Iris Szeghy, Peter Breiner, Martin Burlas, Peter Zagar), writing mostly in postmodern idioms, is well aware of the wealth of Slovak folk music sources and resources, but actual works inspired by folk music are scarce.
II) VÍTĚZSLAV NOVÁK

A) Novák’s “discovery” of Slovakia

Vítězslav Novák achieved his first compositional successes in the mid 1890s, while studying at the Prague Conservatory. Johannes Brahms recommended to his publisher, Simrock, that he publish the young Czech’s piano pieces. As a pupil of Dvořák, Novák was well equipped with an arsenal of Romantic music idioms but his own musical language was not yet fully developed.

In 1896 a friend invited Novák to visit the Moravian countryside. Fascinated by the folk music traditions he found in Moravia, Novák paid many subsequent visits there and soon expanded his areas of interests to Slovakia.

The following year Novák was introduced to Janáček, the most important ethnomusicologist of the region, deepening his interest in folk music. Novák subsequently studied collections of Czech and Moravian folk songs, and began transcribing Moravian and Slovak music on his own. Elements of Moravian and Slovak folk music became an organic part of his compositions. As a consequence, Novák published 6 volumes of Slovak Songs for voice and piano between 1900 and 1930, a separate collection 25 Slovak Folksongs for the same pairing in 1901, and 12 Slovak Folksongs for male chorus in 1921.

Novák’s musical development showed moderate progress after this significant encounter with Moravían and Slovak folk music. Although he was
regarded as a progressive composer at the turn of the century, by 1930, when he was sixty years old, he belonged to the conservative camp.

There is very limited information about Vítězslav Novák and his works in English. Apart from the entries in musical dictionaries, there is only one book about the composer, a translation of the biography Vítězslav Novák by Vladimír Lébl, a prominent Czech Novák scholar of the 1960s. The new generation of Novák scholars is represented by Miloš Schnierer, who completed the thematic and bibliographical catalogue of Novák in 1999 and contributed to the entry about Novák in the second edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. There is only one book by Schnierer in a language other than Czech, Vítězslav Novák: Mitbegründer der tschechischen Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts. Other writings are mainly Festschriften: Alois Hába’s 1940 tribute on the occasion of Novák’s seventieth birthday, Karel Hoffmeister’s 50 Years with Vítězslav Novák and National Artist Vítězslav Novák: Studies and Memoirs for the Centennial of His Birth, a more broad-scoped compendium by Karel Padrta and Bohumír Štědroň. The composer’s own memoirs, About Myself and Others, offer valuable first-hand information about numerous details of Novák’s private life.

To date, no in-depth research has been done on Novák’s connections to Slovakia or the influence of Slovak folk music on his compositions. Despite the central role of Novák’s teaching in Slovak musical life (the first generation of

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professionally trained Slovak composers of the 20th century were all his students), the author was able to locate only one short article by Jozef Kresánek summarizing the legacy of his teaching.
B) Expressing the spirit of a nation: manifestation of Slovak national spirit in the symphonic poem *In the Tatras*

The symphonic poem *In the Tatras*, op. 26, was premiered by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Oskar Nedbal on November 25, 1902. It was the first major success of Vítězslav Novák and it remains his most popular work to this day. This programmatic composition paints a musical canvas of the Tatras mountains which are situated in the northern part of central Slovakia. Novák, who was an avid hiker, visited the area every year to enjoy the wild, natural beauty of the Tatras. This is how he described the content of the symphonic poem:

“A gloomy atmosphere before a threatening storm. Greyish white mist clings to the ominous, precipitate mountain peaks. The sun still just succeeds in penetrating the cloud and illuminating for a moment this majestically sorrowful stoney landscape. But the clouds are gathering, getting thicker and more threatening, and jagged by blinding lightning. The storm bursts. Its anger shatters against the unyielding granite walls of the Tatras . . . After the bitter struggle, peace reigns again. The setting sun gilds the peaks of the mountain giants, and from afar the evening bells are to be heard. Night with its pearl-studded veil falls on the Tatras . . .”¹²

Using the imagery of mountains to represent the mystical forces of nature, Novák preceded Richard Strauss’s *Alpine Symphony* (premiered 1915) by more than 10 years. However, the roles of these compositions in their musical development were different for these composers. Strauss’s compositional language was firmly established by the time of writing *Alpine Symphony*, and he used the subject mostly to unleash his phenomenal mastery of orchestration. For

¹² Vladimír Lébl, Vítězslav Novák, (Prague and Bratislava: Editio Supraphon, 1968), 23. This and the following two quotes are presented here as they appear in the original text.
Novák, *In the Tatras* was a vehicle which moved him beyond the 19th century paradigm toward greater harmonic and melodic freedom.

*In the Tatras* was not the first composition of Novák’s inspired by Slovakia. In 1900 he wrote *Sonata Eroica*, op. 24 for piano, which was described by the Czech scholar and a prominent Novák biographer, Vladimír Lébl, as a “heroic epic on the fame and bondage of the Slovak people.”\(^{13}\) *Sonata Eroica* shares the monothematic concept with *In the Tatras*—a single melody governs here musical processes of all three movements.

Lébl gives also an alternative, naturalistic explanation of the poem’s program. He believes that it is a symbolic representation of “the rebellious . . . strength of the Slovak people . . . . The force of its ideas, its intonational and structural unity . . . raise it high above the usual run of nature pictures of that time.”\(^{14}\)

The compositional style of *In the Tatras* shows the clear influence of Novák’s teacher Antonín Dvořák, particularly in the instrumentation and also in the emphasis on smooth melodic lines. But in comparison to Dvořák’s style, Novák’s is enriched by the elements which he acquired during his study of Moravian and Slovak folk music. The melodies are rhapsodic in character and the harmony often contains modal gestures. The strongest folk reference comes from the extensive use of the so-called “mirror rhythm”—a dotted quarter and an eighth note followed by an eighth note and a dotted quarter. This rhythm,

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 19.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 24.
characteristic of both Slovak and Moravian folk music, is heavily present in that of the region of Tatras.
Example 2

Mirror rhythm highlighted in red

In the Tatras, measures 26-33
Example 2 – Continued
*In the Tatras* begins with the strings’ staggered entrances of the pitch G presented in many octaves. The first section of the melody states twice the motive composing an ascending minor scale fragment and followed by an upward leap of a perfect fourth.

Example 3

*In the Tatras, measures 5-8*

In measure 9, the mirror rhythm is heard for the first time in the flutes and the English horn. It is immediately answered by the clarinets, cellos and basses, creating a rhythmic canon. Until the end of this opening phase in measure 14, this is the only rhythmic motive present. In this way Novák establishes the importance of this cell, which turns out to be the most important rhythmic device of *In the Tatras.*
Example 4

*In the Tatras, measures 9-14*

Vítězslav Novák

- Flutes
- Oboes
- English Horn
- Clarinets in B♭
- Bass Clarinet in B♭
- Horn in F I.II
- Horns in F III.IV
- Trombones I.II
- Trombone III and Tuba
- Timpani
- Harp
- Violin I
- Violin II
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Double Bass

**molto express.**

**con sord.**

**sentz sord.**

**mf** express.

**dim.**

**pp**
The unusual harmonic movement in G minor from the dominant to subdominant (D minor to C minor) in measures 14-15 marks the transition to the second, more lyrical part of the theme. Progressing to the major chord on lowered VII (F major), the section has a modal sense, supported by the entrance of the arpeggiated harp chords. This melodic phrase also recalls folk music. It lacks a clear metrical structure, and its stepwise progression is regularly broken by the leaps of perfect fourths and fifths. Novák avoids using the leading tone F-sharp at the end of the phrase which further emphasizes the modal character of the harmony in this section.

Example 5

_In the Tatras, measures 15-19_
Novák frames the first section of the piece with the return of the opening part of the theme, oscillating now between G minor and G major chords.

The mirror rhythm permeates the musical texture of *In the Tatras* on all levels. In the transition at measures 34-41, the rhythmic cell is presented in diminution, the dotted eighth note and the sixteenth note followed by its “mirror”. It is introduced in the first and second violins and oboes, continues in the clarinet, and is followed by the horn.

Example 6

*In the Tatras, measures 34-41*
The developmental section of *In the Tatras* begins at measure 42. To depict the storm in the mountains, Novák composes a series of variations on the initial motive of the theme. The dramatic density increases with every variation by gradually applying more dissonant harmonies, more complex instrumentation and expanding the dynamic range. Novák uses both the original theme and also the theme in inversion. The culmination of the “storm” section is created by the simultaneous presentation of both forms of the theme. For the greatest intensity Novák saves the mirror rhythm for the climaxes. The first of the series of highpoints occurs at measure 100:
Example 7

In the Tatras, measures 100-103

Vitezslav Novák
The unquestioned climax of the piece is created by the canonic development of the mirror rhythm in augmentation. First, the English horn, clarinets, horns and trumpets enter at measure 225; the piccolo, flutes, oboes and upper strings respond at measure 226.
Example 8

*In the Tatras, measures 225-228*
The remainder of the developmental section depicts the mountains after the storm. Here, Novák works prevalently with the second part of the theme. Reflecting the resolution of the drama, the melody loses its tonal ambiguity, and is accompanied with a straightforward, tonal harmonic progression. *In the Tatras* concludes with a short recapitulation, starting at measure 316, where the themes are restated again simply, in their entirety.
Example 9

In the Tatras, measures 316-323

Vittasko Novák
*In the Tatras* ends in a sparse yet dramatic way. The violas play a single G pianissimo. The work ends exactly where it began, symbolically demonstrating the unchanging order of Nature’s cycles.

The form of *In the Tatras* is summarized in Table 1:
Table 1: Formal analysis of Novák’s *In the Tatras*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Before the storm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section (bar numbers)</td>
<td>A (1-14)</td>
<td>B (15-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>G minor</td>
<td>G minor/G major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Before the storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section (bar numbers)</td>
<td>B (42-59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Ab major/Modul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Storm</td>
<td>Storm calms down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>C# minor</td>
<td>C minor/Modul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>After the storm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section (bar numbers)</td>
<td>B (277-294)</td>
<td>B + A (295-315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>E major</td>
<td>F major/Modul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Novák's musical rendering of nature and the national spirit of the Slovaks had a profound influence on how Slovak composers expressed these topics in the following decades. The first generation of Slovak composers in the 20th century, namely Eugen Suchoň, Ján Cikker, Alexander Moyzes and Dezider Kardoš, were all students of Novák at the Prague Conservatory. It was therefore Novák's vision that enabled Slovak folk traditions to be reflected in Slovak art music.
III) LEOŠ JANÁČEK

A) More than a tune: Janáček’s complex examination of folk tradition

Disappointed by the lack of interest in his first opera Šárka written in 1887, Leoš Janáček devoted the next two years of his time almost entirely to ethnomusicological research. The product was his first collection of Moravian folk songs, *A Bouquet of Moravian Folksongs*,\(^{15}\) assembled in collaboration with the philologist and folklorist František Bartoš in 1890. At this time, Janáček focused his interest on eastern Moravian folk music. Czech folk music with its metrical and rhythmic regularity and tonal predictability is similar to German and Austrian music. However, eastern Moravian songs share the melodic and rhythmic irregularities of Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian music which are primarily governed by the natural inflection of their languages. While Bartók (and to some extent also Zoltán Kodály) examined the geographic areas home to a mixed Slovak-Hungarian population, Janáček was conducting a similar research in the border area between Moravia and Slovakia.

Viewing folk music as a cultural as well as social phenomenon, Janáček examined every aspect of its complex structure. He closely observed the role of folk songs and dances in the life of the community. Unique among his contemporaries, he saw a direct correlation between folk tunes and speech patterns. He tirelessly noted the idiomatic melodic cells in the speech of Moravian and Slovak people. In his notebooks we often find a number of variants

\(^{15}\) Original title: *Kytice z národních písní moravských.*
of the same sentence or a phrase where the intonation of the text depended on
the context in which it was stated. These notes served Janáček as a basis for
vocal lines in his operas and became a distinctive and highly valued feature of
his compositional style.

Janáček’s activity as a collector of folk songs is documented in the article
“Leoš Janáček and the Folk Song” by Czech scholar Jiří Vysloužil in the journal
Slovak Music.16 The theoretical foundations of Janáček’s harmony are examined
by Markéta Štefková in the article “On Janáček’s Inspiration by ‘Modality’ of Folk
Song” in which she explains the “hypotonal” character of Moravian-Slovak songs
and its relation to Janáček’s musical thinking. In a subsequent article “The
Importance of Moravian-Slovak Folk Song for the Speech-Melody Principle of
Leoš Janáček,” Štefková demonstrates her findings in a series of examples
drawn from Janáček’s compositions.

Janáček spent considerable time analyzing Slovak music and cultural
traditions. His relation to Slovak folk music is addressed in Milan Adamčiak’s
“Leoš Janáček and His Influence on Slovak Music.” It describes not only the
importance of Slovak folklore for Janáček but also the invaluable contribution of
Janáček to the development of Slovak music. The composer’s correspondence
with Slovak artists is revealed in “Leoš Janáček and Slovakia” by Jozef Tvrdoň.

On one of his ethnomusicological trips, Janáček discovered a cimbalom
band in the Myjava region of Slovakia, and became its eager promoter.

16 Original title: Slovenská hudba.
Janáček’s correspondence with the band leader, Samko Dudík, as well as writings between the composer and ethnologists Hyněk Bím and Jiří Horák regarding the band, is documented in the essay “Samko Dudík's Band from Myjava in Leoš Janáček's Correspondence” by Alžbeta Lukáčová.
B) 26 Folk Ballads

a) History of the original audio recordings

Janáček spent several vacations in Slovakia and loved to visit Bratislava, the Slovak capital. He considered the Moravian mentality closer to the Slovaks than to the Czechs, and heard many similarities in their musics.

His growing interest in Slovak folk music led Janáček in 1909 to start recording the music of Slovak peasants which were hired as seasonal workers in Moravia. Janáček’s friends in Slovakia regularly informed him about villages with especially rich musical traditions that he should visit. As he became increasingly busy with compositional activities he sent his closest collaborators, Františka Kyselková and Hyněk Bím, to conduct the research in selected locations. Janáček then reviewed the acquired recordings upon their return. Kyselková and Bím kept recording Slovak songs until 1912. The history of these audio recordings was reviewed by Hana Urbancová in the article “Historical Recordings of Musical Folklore and the Performance Style.”

Some of these recordings found their way into Janáček’s song collection 26 Folk Ballads. The collection was compiled from 1906-1916 as an auxiliary project to his more substantial compositional work. The arrangements of these songs do not follow any particular order. They were all products of moments of inspiration of the composer. The title is somewhat misleading – not all the songs

have the character of a ballad. The collection consists of four distinct sets: *Six National Songs, Folk Nocturnes, Songs of Detva* and *Five National Songs*. The first three sets are based on Slovak folk music, the fourth on Moravian folk tunes.

In 1998 a Moravian music publisher GNOSIS Brno undertook an ambitious project of transferring the wax recordings from 1909-1912 recorded by Janáček, Kyselková and Bím to CD format. The CD was released as a part of publication called *The Oldest Recordings of Moravian and Slovak Singing 1909-1912.*\(^\text{18}\) This recording contains several songs which Janáček used in *Six National Songs*. The author had an opportunity to compare the historical recordings of some of these songs, recorded by Františka Kyselková in November 1909, with Janáček’s imaginative rendering as they appear in *Six National Songs*.

For the purpose of this document three songs from *Six National Songs*, one song from *Folk Nocturnes* and one song from *Songs of Detva* will serve as representatives of the Slovak influence in Janáček’s compositions.

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b) Analysis of selected songs

On the aforementioned recording, the first song in *Six National Songs* was sung by Eva Gabelová, a seasonal worker originally from the Slovak village Slatina nad Bebravou. Janáček often listened to his recordings of Gabelová as she was his favorite folk singer. As a consequence, the audio reproduction of Gabelová’s song on the CD is of very poor quality since wax cylinder recordings deteriorate with multiple use.

The song is titled *I shall not die on the ground*. It is a military song about a young man who was recruited to the army. The text reads:

```
I shall not die on the ground,
But I shall die on the horse;
When I fall down from the horse,
My sword is going to ring.

My sword is going to ring,
And my musket will clink;
No one from my family,
Will come to my funeral.
```

Janáček provided the song with a rather simple and harmonically straightforward accompaniment firmly rooted in the tonal language of the 19th century. As documented in Example 10, the song itself was transposed up a major third from the recorded key of C-sharp minor. The glissandos were omitted, and the rhythm was regularized so that it fits within the confines of 2/4 meter. The mirror rhythm manifests itself in two forms: in measures 4-5 and 8-9 in dotted quarters and eighth notes and in measures 11-12, 13-14 and 16-17 in...
double-dotted quarters and sixteenth notes. The mirror rhythm helps to emphasize the first, accented syllable of the word “zemī” in measure five and “coni” in measure nine. These words would normally have their place at the beginning of the measure where the accented syllable would align with the musical stress.
Example 10

Mirror rhythm highlighted in red

Neumrem ja na zemi

Leoš Janáček
The third and the sixth song on the CD are performed by a group of women from the same Slovak village. The third one is called *Four scythes sharpened*:

*Four scythes sharpened,*  
*And the fifth one looks like new,*  
*Annie, George’s girlfriend,*  
*Would like to get married.*

*Oh Annie, oh Annie,*  
*You will not get married,*  
*George was taken away from you,*  
*And you are left to weep.*

The line “George was taken away from you” refers to George’s recruitment to the army.

The most striking feature of the song is its changing meter. To accommodate the singers’ breathing, all pauses between verses are the length of three eight notes creating 7/8 measures in alternation with 2/4 measures. Janáček noticed that the singers are consistent with this rhythm and his arrangement keeps the irregular patterns intact. The song was again transposed up a major third from F minor of the original recording.
Example 11

7/8 measures highlighted in red

Štyry kory nakuvačné

Leoš Janáček

Sůry, kory, nakuvačné,
a tá pátá jak nová,

ráda by sa vydávala Důrri-

nova Anuš.
The last song from the *Six National Songs* is a slow ballad titled *For you, Annie*:

\[
\text{For you, Annie,}  \\
\text{A wedding is being prepared,}  \\
\text{And it is your parents,}  \\
\text{Who are in charge of it.}  \\
\text{They raised you,}  \\
\text{They educated you,}  \\
\text{And to the hands of your beloved,}  \\
\text{They bestowed you.}
\]

Janáček transposed the song up a minor third from D minor of the recording. The pauses for breath between the verses were shortened to fit the 2/4 meter and the repetition of the second verse was omitted in Janáček’s arrangement. The piano accompaniment starts as a free imitation on the singer’s tune but then continues independently. It is created using almost entirely the mirror rhythm which is the basic rhythmic device of the song.

Janáček chose the key signature that suggests F minor. However, the melody is modal, consisting of a major tetrachord on the bottom and a Phrygian tetrachord on the top. Tetrachordal structures are characteristic of the “nonharmonic” Slovak folk songs. The resulting scale could be labeled as a Mixolydian flat sixth mode but in the historical context of Slovak folk song that is not suitable. The correct analysis of the “nonharmonic” songs must take into account that they were conceived as tetrachordal structures.
Example 12

The second set of "26 Folk Ballads" makes use of the so-called "evening songs" which Janáček heard in the Slovak village of Rovné. In the evening, the girls from the village would gather in the countryside, the best singer would sing the tune and then the rest would answer with a new musical phrase, repeating the text of the first phrase and elaborating on it. The songs are generally in a medium to slow tempo with long, chant-like melodies. We can assume that the reverberant acoustics of the hilly terrain also played a role in their creation and enjoyment.
Janáček was very excited about this discovery and claimed that he was the first ethnomusicologist to have visited the region. In 1906 he arranged seven songs from Rovné for two voices and piano and named them *Folk Nocturnes*.

The fourth song of the collection bears the name *A teamster goes down the valley*. The text is:

_A teamster goes down the valley,_  
_And a highwayman goes down the hills._

_Hold on, teamster, do not use the whip,_  
_But unleash your beautiful horses for me._

The song is a dialogue between the teamster and the highwayman. The call of the solo singer is answered by the group, here represented by two singers, singing a long arched melody in parallel thirds. The piano accompaniment recalls the sonority of the cimbalom, a typical folk music instrument of Central and Eastern Europe.
Example 13

Jede furman dolinů

Con moto
Solo

Meno mosso
Tutti

Cimbalom-like accompaniment

Leoš Janáček
The *Songs of Detva* is a set of eight songs which Janáček arranged in a span of only three days in January 1916. He found the songs in the ethnographic monograph “Detva” assembled by Karol Medvecký. Medvecký was a catholic priest and a chaplain in Detva. His phonographic records, made in the summer of 1901, are the very first audio recordings of Slovak folk songs.

The region of Detva in central Slovakia is best known for its rich and colorful folk traditions. The songs from the region are typically performed in a rhythmically free, *rubato* style. For that purpose the cimbalom-like accompaniment is particularly well suited. Janáček used this approach in the first song of the set called “Hey, I will not be good.” The text of the song is as follows:

*Hey, I will not be good,*  
*It does not fit me,*  
*My father was a rascal,*  
*And I will be an even bigger one.*

*Hey, I will not be good,*  
*It does not fit me,*  
*Nor does anything good*  
*Show in my eyes.*

The song is in D Mixolydian mode which is marked in measure five by the lowered-seventh degree.
However, Janáček set the song in a straightforward G major. In this instance he clearly chose to follow the traditional approach of Dvořák and Novák rather than the progressive approach of Bartók. It is only by taking a closer look that the score reveals its nontraditional voice leading— one of the hallmarks of Janáček’s style.
IV) BÉLA BARTÓK

A) The place of Slovak folk music in Bartók’s ethnomusicological research

Béla Bartók was introduced to Slovakia in 1892 when, at the age of eleven, he settled in Pressburg, now Bratislava, Slovak Republic with his mother and sister, Elza. The family soon moved again, this time to Beszterce (now Bistriţa, Romania), but by 1894 they had returned to Pressburg, this time for a much longer period of time.

Pressburg was one of the most important cities of the Hungarian part of the Empire. From 1536-1784, when most of the middle Danube basin was dominated by the Turks, Bratislava was the capital of the Hungarian Kingdom. Consequently, as Bartók stated in his autobiography, “Pozsony\(^{19}\) had . . . the richest musical life at that time of all the province towns of Hungary.”\(^{20}\) Pressburg was truly a thriving multicultural city. It offered to the young Bartók a solid classical musical education but there he was likely not exposed to folk music which was mostly restricted to the countryside. However, he established valuable contacts with important leaders of Pressburg’s musical life. Those contacts were helpful when, in 1906, Bartók started ethnomusicological research in Slovakia. He also corresponded by letter frequently with his Pressburg acquaintances from

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\(^{19}\) Bartók here uses the Hungarian name of the city. Historical maps call the city Pressburg in a large font and Pozsony in a small font. Also, the vast majority of its inhabitants in Bartók’s time called it by the German name.

1921 until his departure for the United States while he was negotiating the publication of his collection of Slovak folk songs with Matica slovenská.²¹

In 1905 Bartók met Zoltán Kodály who had already begun to archive Hungarian folk songs. Kodály’s ethnomusicological activity was based on a solid theoretical knowledge of the subject. To Bartók, who lacked this knowledge, Kodály was a great inspiration. Equipped with new information, Bartók, too, began recording and transcribing the traditional music. He began in Hungary’s Békés County but soon broadened his interest to the folk music of all ethnic minorities living in the Hungarian Kingdom. In 1906, he began his collecting in the area of south Slovakia where the population is a mix of Slovaks and Hungarians. In 1908 Bartók turned his activity to research in Transylvania, now a part of Romania with a mixed Romanian-Hungarian population. Next the focus of his research returned to the northern parts of Slovakia. Bartók became such a zealous admirer of Slovak folk music that he developed a special system of musical notation specifically for Slovak songs and faithfully transcribed the Slovak text using the special signs of Slovak alphabet.

The scope of the research about Slovak folk music influences on Bartók is narrow when compared with the amount of investigation into the Hungarian and Romanian influences. Denijs Dille, the outstanding Bartók scholar, explored Bartók’s connection to folk music in his essay “Bartók und die Volksmusik.”²² He

²¹ Translated as Slovak Matica or Slovak Foundation/Association, it is Slovakia’s public cultural and scientific institution focusing on topics concerning the Slovak nation and responsible for preserving the Slovak national heritage.

also collected a series of Bartók’s autobiographies in which Bartók often mentions the circumstances of and motivation for his folk music research.\footnote{Bartók wrote autobiographical sketches in 1918, 1921 and 1923.}

Gábor Kiss analyzes the genesis of the Second Rondo (from the cycle Three Rondos on [Slovak] Folktunes, BB 92) in his article “. . . I Suffered a Lot with the Second Rondo: Thoughts about Genesis of Work of B. Bartók.”\footnote{Gábor Kiss, “. . . Veľa som sa trápil s druhým rondom: Úvahy o genéze diela B. Bartóka,” Slovenská hudba 19 (1993): 481-491.} Kiss’s analysis offers intriguing insight to Bartók’s compositional method showing the conversion of three songs from his collection of Slovak folk songs to themes in the sophisticated structure of the piece.

A few ethnomusicologists have made contributions to this topic. Stefan Wagner in his analysis of the first volume of Bartók’s \textit{Slovak Folk Songs}\footnote{Alica Elscheková, Oskár Elschek, and Jozef Kresánek, eds., Slovenské ľudové piesne, vol. 1 (Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied, 1959).} examines the contribution of this collection to the emerging discipline of ethnomusicology, international and multicultural education, social studies, and music in general. Among Slovak scholars, Oskár Elschek concentrated on the ethnomusical activities of Bartók, and Vladimír Čížik collected Bartók’s correspondence with his Slovak friends and the Slovak authorities. Alexander Móži made a fascinating experiment in the 1970s–he visited the Slovak village of Dražovce where Bartók had collected a number of folk songs\footnote{The famous photo of Bartók with the group of peasants surrounding the phonograph was made in Dražovce.} and tried to
recreate the process showing the evolution of the melodies.\textsuperscript{27} Nearly 70 years after Bartók’s visit Móži heard the same songs and noted the differences.

Ladislav Burlas’s article “The Influence of Slovak Folk Music on Bartók’s Musical Idiom”\textsuperscript{28} offers an overview of Bartók’s compositions with Slovak influence but does not provide musical analyses of these works.

Bartók's relation with Slovak folk music would certainly be better known if more Slovak scholars were to contribute research on the subject. In his article “Béla Bartók and Slovakia,” Michal Zeliar poses the question whether Slovak reluctance to accept Bartók was caused by the modernity of Bartók’s music or by national prejudices.\textsuperscript{29}

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B) Analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*

Bartók overcame a brief nationalistic period in his youth and soon he was much more interested in universal human values than in the common agenda of national chauvinism. His ethnomusicological research was not burdened by prejudices or ideology. The political events in Central Europe did have an impact on him, however, and eventually led to the termination of his song collecting activities.

The end of the World War I meant the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the emergence of new national states surrounding the crippled Hungary. Partially due to the Hungarian tendency to suppress the Slovaks’ national awakening, the newly formed Czechoslovakia had reserved feelings toward Hungarians and put severe restrictions on border crossing. Bartók was very upset by the new political situation. The Czechoslovak authorities would not allow him to carry the phonograph or even his notebooks across the border. More so, his mother still lived in Bratislava but the city now belonged to Czechoslovakia. Bartók was suddenly a foreigner in the town in which he spent his high school years. Similarly, due to the Treaty of Versailles, the territories where Bartók was born and where he conducted his research of Romanian folk music belonged again to Romania.

From 1906 to 1918 Bartók collected a total of 3,409 Slovak folk songs paired with almost 4,000 texts. When he was forced to cease his
ethnomusicological activities he already accumulated a remarkable collection of Slovak folk music. He used it as an inspiration for composition for many years.

We find numerous Slovak tunes throughout his solo and chamber literature. There are also several collections of Slovak folk songs by Bartók arranged for voices, solo and chorus. Slovak melodies were first introduced in the piano collection *For Children* of 1908-9 and concluded with *Forty-Four Duos for Two Violins* of 1931. In his later years Bartók internalized the folk music elements to a degree where they became inseparable from the texture of his compositions and as a consequence he refrained from using direct folk music quotations.

In 1924 Bartók created a composition for female voice and piano based on old Slovak ceremonial melodies. The composition is in five movements and bears the title *Falun* with a subtitle *Village Scenes*. The piece was meant as a present for Bartók’s second wife, Ditta Pásztory, whom he married in 1923. Love and marriage are the prevalent themes in this set of songs.

A commission from the American League of Composers led Bartók to arrange the third, fourth and fifth movement for four or eight female voices and chamber orchestra. The composition, titled *Three Village Scenes*, was premiered by Serge Koussevitzky on November 27, 1926 in New York.

*Three Village Scenes* were written right after the *Dance Suite* (1923) in which Bartók originally intended to insert a “Slovak” episode but then abandoned the plan. Apart from writing the *Village Scenes*, his only other significant
compositional work in 1924 was the orchestration of *The Miraculous Mandarin*. *Three Village Scenes*, especially the first movement, shares the highly expressive language of that large-scale ballet. In the *Three Village Scenes* irregular meters and dissonant, cluster-based harmonies of instrumental sections are set in opposition to sections with vocal forces where the dissonance only embellishes the otherwise mostly straightforward modal harmony. The metric diversity also shows the influence of Igor Stravinsky. Bartók acknowledged on several occasions that Stravinsky, whom he met in 1922, was influential in his stylistic development. It is possible that at the time of writing the piano version of *Village Scenes* Bartók already knew the score of Stravinsky’s newest composition, the cantata/ballet *Les Noces (The Wedding)*, which was premiered and published in 1923. *Les Noces* was inspired by Russian folk songs and poetry. The outer movements of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes* share the rustic, earthy characteristics and subject matter of *Les Noces*, especially its Scene Four: *The Wedding Feast*.

The first movement of *Three Village Scenes* is called *Wedding* and is in the form of a rondo. The piece incorporates two different folk song melodies. The tempo is extremely fast, marked *Vivacissimo*, and the meter is irregular with unpredictable downbeats. The movement starts with the orchestral introduction which is entirely governed by the pitch cell [0,1,3,7] based on C-sharp. The melody is unveiled in parallel seconds in the woodwinds with a top line alternating between piccolo and Eb clarinet doubled by the piano.
Example 15

*Three Village Scenes, First mvt., measures 8-17*

With the arrival of a new tempo, marked *Grave*, at measure 27 the voices enter in unison with the first folk song melody. In Bartók’s book, *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, we find this melody (here with a different text) as Number 53a with a note: “wedding song.”
Example 16

*Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, Number 53a

Svadobná

T.F. 1528aj; Balog, Zvolenská, 27. XII. 1915; zeny.

Parlando

Example 17

*Three Village Scenes*, First mvt., measures 27-37

Béla Bartók

Example 16 shows the original melody and Example 17 the version used in *Three Village Scenes*. The song has a Phrygian opening—an ascending minor second followed by a major second. It is this melodic cell which, in its vertical form, serves as a basis for the initial orchestral cell [0,1,3,7].

The singers represent village girls singing a wedding song to their soon-to-be-married friend. But instead of praising the virtues of marriage they do quite the opposite—they point out the loss of her friends and family. In the context of Slovak culture this is an innocent mocking rather than the wishing of bad luck. The meaning of the first stanza could easily be confusing for an uninformed listener.
The line “You have been paid off” is a teasing reference to the bride’s dowry—in this case it is the bedding and things in the box:

And you, pretty Annie,
Your box is carried on the wagon,
There is fine bedding on the box:
You have been paid off.

The opening music returns at measure 33 after the first vocal stanza but this time it is accompanied by the high-pitched screams of the vocalists (Bartók’s directions ask for a shrill cry of indefinite pitch). We can assume that the fast, irregular sections of this piece depict the laughter and screaming of young village girls. Although the musical material is undoubtedly that of the beginning, the metric design has been completely changed. The section is also shorter—18 measures compared to 26 in its initial presentation.

At measure 51 the tempo changes to Allegretto and the voices enter with a new folk tune. In the “Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs” this melody was labeled Number 53b and it is again noted as a “wedding song.”
Example 18

*Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, Number 53b*

*Example 19*

*Three Village Scenes, First mvt., measures 51-63*

A comparison of the original song and the form used in the *Village Scenes* shows that Bartók did not make any changes to the melody other than transposing it to a different key. This was also the case with the first song. In this instance, the text of both versions is identical:
We are going from this village,
To another village,
To meet,
The Novotný family.

Both songs used in this movement come from the region of Zvolen in central Slovakia. However, they are very different in character. By using these two songs Bartók achieved stylistic unity while portraying a variety of moods. The first song is marked *parlando* which Bartók describes as “a mode of performance, difficult to notate, where the melodies are not performed in strict rhythm as notated but with many, hardly perceptible abbreviations and elongations.” The second song is marked *Tempo giusto*, with Bartók’s note saying “in a dancelike strict rhythm.”

The *Allegretto* section is only 14 measures long. It accelerates throughout until it reaches the initial *Tempo I* in measure 65. The vocal screams are omitted this time and the metrical layout is again completely changed. Furthermore, the initial cluster [0,1,3,7] has been transposed up a perfect fourth and thus the whole section is based on F-sharp. The *Tempo I* section spans over 21 measures.

The reprise of the first folk melody follows. The voices sing in the three-part harmony in parallel major 6/4 chords. The text reads:

---

31 Ibid.
And you, pretty Annie,
Your box is carried on the wagon,
There is fine bedding on the box:
You have been paid off.

Hey, Annie,
Boxes are from maple,
Pillow is stuffed with feathers,
And that pretty maiden,
Has no lover anymore.

Another Vivacissimo episode follows; this time the high-pitched screams of singers are included. Once again the metrical layout is altered as is the number of measures which amount to only 20. The transposed cluster $[0,1,3,7]$ based on F-sharp is used. A slight rallentando brings back the tempo of the second song, Allegretto. For the first time we hear four-part harmony, every voice has been assigned an independent line. The text of this section is:

Now she has no lover,
But she has a husband,
She will no more blossom,
As a rose in the fields.

Toward the end of this fourteen-measure section the tempo slows down and a solo voice representing the bride enters with yet another verse based on music of the first song:

I'm a rose, a rose, but
Only when I'm single,
When I have a husband,
Petals drop and shrivel.
The bride’s friends respond again with the *Allegretto* music. The tempo constantly accelerates and metric irregularities begin to recur as the final *Tempo I* approaches. The text of this section states:

*Now you, Annie,*
*Fooled yourself:*
*We are going home,*
*And you will remain here.*

In the last episode of the movement voices join instruments in the *Vivacissimo* adopting the dissonant harmonies and irregular meter of the section. They repeat the last stanza singing mostly in parallel seconds. The strings and piano provide the accompaniment based on the original form of the cluster $[0,1,3,7]$. While the initial presentation of this musical section was 26 measures, and the subsequent repetitions 18, 21, and 20 measures long respectively, the final reprise with 31 measures is the longest of the piece.

The first movement of the *Three Village Scenes* thus is in a hybrid rondo-like form as summarized in Table 2:
Table 2: Formal analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*, first movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>A (1-26)</th>
<th>B (27-32)</th>
<th>A’ (33-50)</th>
<th>C (51-64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Vivacissimo</td>
<td>Grave</td>
<td>Tempo I.</td>
<td>Allegretto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Instrumental episode</td>
<td>First song</td>
<td>Instrumental episode with screams</td>
<td>Second song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>[0,1,3,7] on C#</td>
<td>G# Phrygian</td>
<td>[0,1,3,7] on C#</td>
<td>D Mixolydian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>A” (65-85)</th>
<th>B (86-99)</th>
<th>A”” (100-119)</th>
<th>C (120-133)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Tempo I.</td>
<td>Grave</td>
<td>Tempo I.</td>
<td>Allegretto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Instrumental episode</td>
<td>First song</td>
<td>Instrumental episode with screams</td>
<td>Second song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>[0,1,3,7] on F#</td>
<td>A# Phrygian</td>
<td>[0,1,3,7] on F#</td>
<td>D Mixolydian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>B (134-139)</th>
<th>C (140-160)</th>
<th>A””” (161-191)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Sostenuto</td>
<td>Allegretto</td>
<td>Tempo I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>First song</td>
<td>Second Song</td>
<td>Instrumental episode, shrills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>G# Phrygian</td>
<td>D Mixolydian</td>
<td>[0,1,3,7] on C#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second movement of *Three Village Scenes* bears the title *Lullaby* but it lacks some of the defining characteristics of this song type. First, it is set as a dialogue between the newborn and his mother. Also, the text is somber rather than comforting and the musical atmosphere is accordingly grave, sometimes even eerie.

Akin to *Wedding*, the second movement also unites two songs from the region of Zvolen. The movement is in a ternary form with the second song serving as the middle section followed by the recapitulation of the first song.

The first theme begins after four measures of harmonically unstable orchestral introduction. It resolves into a chord built of perfect fifths, F-C-G-D, alluding to the open strings of a fiddle. The melody is in the Lydian mode and sung by only one woman, representing the mother. She sings:

```
Darling, slumber, slumber,
    Darling, little baby!
When I grow old,
Will you then take care of me?
```

This melody is an exact quotation from Bartók’s *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, number 34a.
Example 20

*Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, Number 34a*

5/8 measures highlighted in red

Parlando $\frac{4}{4}$ = 102

Bú-vaj že mi, bú-vaj, len ma ne-u-nú-vaj. čo ma viac u-

nú-vaš, ej, me-nej sa na-bú-ú-vaš.

Example 21

*Three Village Scenes, Second mvt., measures 5-16*

Più tranquillo $\frac{3}{4}$ = 70
parlando (poco rubato), semplice

Be-li že mi, be-li moj syn pre-mi-le-ný! Čí ma bu-deš

cho-vať, ej, na mo-je sta-rie-e dni?

The original version as notated by the composer already includes two 5/8 measures (measures 4 and 6). Bartók utilizes these metric irregularities and also keeps the marking *parlando* in *Lullaby* but moderates the tempo from M.M. 102 to 70 per quarter note, more in the slow character of a typical lullaby.

At measure 19 the melody repeats but the harmony provided by the woodwinds, harp, piano and strings is now based on clusters: [0,3,4] on B and
[0,2,3,5] on C. In the first five measures of this section the first violins play only three pitches: D-E-flat-F, a possible reference to the Phrygian opening of the first movement. The second solo voice, representing the newborn, replies to his mother’s call:

I will take care of you, mother,
Until I get married;
But when I am married,
I’ll go off and leave you.
Example 22

*Three Village Scenes*, Second mvt., measures 19-21

Béla Bartók

Bu - dem, mam - ko, bu - dem, kým sa ne - o - že - ním;
In measure 29 the middle section of *Lullaby* starts. The sparse instrumentation and *pianissimo* dynamic create a ghostly atmosphere. This section is governed by the pitch cell \([0,5,6]\) on E; with the entrance of voices it changes to \([0,1,5,6]\) on E.
Example 23

Three Village Scenes, Second mvt., measures 29-33

Béla Bartók
In measure 34 three voices enter with the second song. We find the corresponding tune in the *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs* Number 35f.

**Example 24**

*Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs, Number 35f*

7/8 measures highlighted in red

**Example 25**

*Three Village Scenes, Second mvt., measures 34-40*

4/4 measures highlighted in red
The composer transposed the song and altered some rhythmic values stretching the 7/8 measures to 4/4. Most interestingly, Bartók switches texts of the songs: in *Lullaby* the text of song 34a from the *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs* is set to the melody of 35f. Likewise the text of song 35f is transferred to the melody of 34a. Taking into account the proximity of the melodic and rhythmic content of both songs, it is quite possible that Bartók made the change for dramatic reasons. The music of 35f is more developmental than that of 34a but the text of 35f serves as an introductory stanza better than that of 34a. The text of 34a is more static and functions well as the elaboration on the mood of the previous stanza:

*Slumber, darling, slumber,*
*Do not give me more trouble!*
*The more trouble you give me,*
*The less sleep you will get.*

The second verse of the song is heard at measure 42, finally sung by all four women. The harmony stays the same as in the previous section (measures 29-41). The text does not develop the story any further; it seems to just play with the sound of words. The colorful imagery provides an easy opportunity to rhyme the lines of Slovak text.

*Let your white shirt twinkle,*
*On the green hill,*
*On the green hill,*
*In the white shirt.*
The third verse of the song begins at measure 50 and is sung by a solo voice. It follows the free-flowing train of thought of the mother:

Mmm, the shirt is white,
It was sewn by Mary,
She embroidered it with silk,
Mmm, in the green fields.

Toward the end of the third verse the mood becomes more somber with the cadenza-like passages of woodwind instruments and harp. The tempo slows and the sound decays until only a single G-flat is heard played pianissimo by the horn. The reprise of the first song starts in measure 61. The music is a variation of the orchestral introduction and, like in the beginning, it resolves into the chord of perfect fifths, F-C-G-D. The mood is calm again and without the eerie elements. The solo voice sings the last verse of the song:

Darling, slumber, slumber,
My little white angel!
Just do not fly away,
To the dark soil.

The mother understands that one day her son will leave her but she prays that it will be for a better life, not for death.

Lullaby is over five minutes in length, the longest movement of Three Village Scenes. Its character is in sharp contrast to the surrounding movements. The form of the second movement is summarized in Table 3:
Table 3: Formal analysis of Bartók's *Three Village Scenes*, second movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>A (First song)</th>
<th>B (Second song)</th>
<th>A’ (First song)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>Più tranquillo</td>
<td>Andante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tempo I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Più tranquillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section (bar numbers)</td>
<td>Instrumental introduction (1-4)</td>
<td>a1 (5-16)</td>
<td>a2 (17-28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Harmonically unstable</td>
<td>F Lydian</td>
<td>F Lydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b1 (34-41)</td>
<td>b2 (42-49)</td>
<td>b3 (50-56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental cadenzas (57-60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>[0,5,6] on E</td>
<td>[0,3,4,6,7,8,9]</td>
<td>[0,2,5,6,10,11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0,1,5,6] on E in accompaniment</td>
<td>[0,2,3,5] on C in accompaniment</td>
<td>[0,5,6,11] on B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a3 (61-68)</td>
<td>Instrumental interlude (69-73)</td>
<td>a4–Codetta (74-77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>F Lydian</td>
<td>Harmonically unstable</td>
<td>F Lydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harmonically unstable in accompaniment</td>
<td>Perfect fifths in accompaniment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third movement bears the title *Lads’ Dance*. It uses the melodic material of song 217c which Bartók marked “*Vo hajduce*” *Dance* in the *Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*. The term *hajduk* has a Balkan origin and refers to highwaymen and outlaws whose moral code forbids them to steal from the poor.
Example 26

*Introduction to Slovak Folk Songs*, Number 217c

It belongs to Bartók’s category of *Tempo giusto* songs – songs with a strict dance-like rhythm. As with each previous song, this one also comes from the region of Zvolen. In this setting in *Three Village Scenes* Bartók transposed the song down a minor third and indicated a faster tempo. Another distinct feature is
the use of ornaments – while in the original we find only two grace notes, the 
*Lads’ Dance* version is embellished by six. In the fast tempo these ornaments 
sound like small glissandos. They enliven the melody and prevent it from 
sounding too rigid.

In this movement, more so than in the previous two, Bartók imbues static 
harmonies with rhythmic variety. Although the meter stays the same throughout 
the piece, the tempo is constantly changing: the long periods of acceleration are 
followed by a sudden restraining of the tempo – a process which repeats several 
times. The melodic material in the orchestral parts is continued by the wind 
instruments and occasionally piano while the strings provide the harmonic and 
rhythmic backbone of the piece. The homogenous texture of the *Lads’ Dance* is 
intermittently penetrated by trumpet and trombone calls – single notes or 
extremely short motives in various, often contrasting dynamic levels.

The *Lads’ Dance* is built of sonic blocks which are governed by a single 
pitch class set or a combination of two closely related pitch class sets. This 
creates a sense of rhythmic ostinato. It begins with an extended orchestral 
introduction based on two pitch cells: [0,3,6,7] on C-sharp and [0,2,4,5] on D-
sharp. The rhythm is unmistakably that of a dance–bass instruments play on 
main beats while the higher sounding instruments play offbeats.
Example 28

*Three Village Scenes*, Third mvt., measures 1-4

Béla Bartók

English Horn

Clarinet in E

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in C

Bass Trombone

Snare Drum with strings

Snare Drum without strings

Bass Drum

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass
Wind instruments play short melodic fragments which grow longer with every subsequent repetition. The tempo accelerates from the initial *Comodo* to *Allegro* at measure 12. In measure 20 a sudden halt indicates the start of the second part of the introduction. The music begins slowly again and accelerates to *Allegro*. Likewise the melodic motives follow the same course as in the first part. The only significant change is harmonic, the pitch cells are now [0,6,7] on E-flat and [0,6,7] on D.

Another restraining of the tempo in measure 38 serves as the transition to the first stanza of the song. The main motive is heard in the piano and winds. In measure 44 the voices enter with the following text:

> Behind the oak trees, behind the stump,  
> Come on, brother, come on here!  
> Behind the oak trees and the logs,  
> Dance, young fellow, while you’re young!

The song is in E Lydian mode, one of the most commonly used modes in Slovak folk music. Bartók emphasizes the folk roots of the tune in the accompaniment by employing a harmony based on perfect fifths with the bass note E.

The tempo accelerates in measure 51 and the orchestral texture gets thicker as the women sing the second verse:
There are four goats; the fifth is a billy goat,
He who can jump is a real man!
I would try to jump if I could,
But instead I spun around.

The lyrics of this song do not follow any particular plotline. It is a play on words set in rhymes. It could be explained as the mocking of two shepherds where one sets the task and the other gives him a nonsense reason for why he cannot do it.

Tempo I. in measure 60 marks the start of a lengthy orchestral interlude which is a variation of the music from the beginning of the piece. Bartók uses pitch sets [0,4,6,7] on A and [0,3,4,5] on B as the harmonic foundation. The tempo slows down abruptly in measure 92 and in measure 95 the voices enter with the third verse. Although the melody is still in E Lydian mode, the harmony is now based on the note C-sharp, alternating between the perfect fifth C-sharp–G-sharp and a pitch cell [0,6,7]. The last stanza of the song reads:

Hey-a-ho, from the ground!
Who will drive my goats home?
I would gladly drive them if,
The wolf hadn’t scared me stiff.

Again, the second shepherd finds an excuse for not doing the work.

Toward the end of this section the orchestral accompaniment shifts to C major, a distant shift from the previous C-sharp. In measure 113 the voices and the orchestra switch roles. The woodwinds and violins take over the melody and
play the tune in C Lydian while singers add a vocal timbre to the texture with *Hey-a-ho*. A *ritardando* brings us to the final section of the piece. It is another variation of the introductory music with the clusters \([0, 3, 6, 7]\) on E and \([0, 3, 5, 6]\) on F. Singers join with the joyful shouts. The music seems to be headed toward the final climax when yet another abrupt *ritardando* occurs. A solo voice starts singing the first stanza of the song again, this time in D Lydian, but the tutti orchestra interrupts her with two final *fortissimo* chords on D and E.

Table 4 summarizes the form of the last movement of the *Three Village Scenes*:
Table 4: Formal analysis of Bartók’s *Three Village Scenes*, third movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>Intro 1 (1-19)</th>
<th>Intro 2 (20-42)</th>
<th>A (43-50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Comodo. Allegro</td>
<td>Meno mosso. Allegro. Meno mosso</td>
<td>Pesante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Orchestra only</td>
<td>Orchestra only</td>
<td>Voices + orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Clusters [0,3,6,7] on C# and [0,2,4,5] on D#</td>
<td>Clusters [0,6,7] on Eb and [0,6,7] on D</td>
<td>E Lydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perfect fifths on E in accompaniment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>A’ (51-59)</th>
<th>Interlude (60-94)</th>
<th>A” (95-112)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Più vivo</td>
<td>Tempo I. Allegro. Meno mosso</td>
<td>Pesante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Voices + orchestra</td>
<td>Music based on orchestral intro</td>
<td>Voices + orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>E Lydian</td>
<td>Clusters [0,4,6,7] on A and [0,3,4,5] on B</td>
<td>E Lydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perfect fifths on E in accompaniment</td>
<td>Perfect fifths and [0,6,7] on C# in accompaniment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bar numbers)</th>
<th>A”’—instrumental (113-120)</th>
<th>Coda 1(121-147)</th>
<th>Coda 2 (148-154)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Più vivo</td>
<td>Tempo I. Allegro</td>
<td>Sostenuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Orchestral variation + vocal accompaniment</td>
<td>Music based on orchestral intro + vocal shouts</td>
<td>First stanza fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>C Lydian</td>
<td>Clusters [0,3,6,7] on E and [0,3,5,6] on F</td>
<td>D Lydian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three Village Scenes contains many intricate details but the overall design of the movements is relatively simple: a modified rondo form for the first movement, an ABA form for the slow movement and a variation form for the finale. In all three cases Bartók built the music from distinct blocks of clearly separated musical statements, avoiding lengthy preparations and transitions. The result of this efficient approach to the compositional form is music which with its straightforwardness recalls the purity and earthiness of folk music.

Folk elements permeate the musical texture of Bartók’s compositions with the utmost delicacy and refinement. The choice of the pitch cells used in Three Village Scenes is often determined by the modality of songs which are being harmonized. The beginning of the first movement is a good example of this practice. Here Bartók creates a cluster of the vertically positioned fragment of the Phrygian scale. Later in the piece the Phrygian scale is revealed to be the mode of the first song.

Bartók carefully observed and notated rhythmic irregularities in the folk songs he collected. However, when he quotes folk tunes in his own compositions he often lets the inspiration take him beyond a mere replication of those irregularities. He treats them as creative elements to be developed and altered. Such rhythmic clauses often recur in other sections of the piece and become important elements in the overall structure of the composition.

There are also more obvious folk music hints in Three Village Scenes, such as the accentuated offbeats in the third movement and the accompaniment
based on perfect fifths and chords built of fifths in the second and third movements. The stylized vocal screams from the first movement also belong to this category. The ingenuity and variety of ways by which Bartók integrated folk music elements into his compositions made him the incomparable master of such praxis and secured his place as one of the most remarkable composers of the 20th century classical music.
V) SUMMARY

Since late Middle Ages the stream of information and cultural exchange between the more developed countries of Western Europe caused their cultures to be constantly updated by the absorption of foreign influences. Western art grew in sophistication which, among other things, caused the unprecedented rise of Western classical music. This art music benefits our civilization through the unlimited source of the spiritual, intellectual, and sensual fulfillment.

In contrast, the peasant cultures of the Central and Eastern Europe lived in relative obscurity for centuries. Although art, especially music and dance, were an organic part of everyday life in rural areas, the lack of new impulses due to their isolation resulted in the preservation of old art forms, harmonic and melodic idiosyncrasies, and a very slow absorption of new influences. But what seemed to be unprogressive and simplistic in the era of tonality became original and potently pregnant when the tonal system collapsed. Composers of the early 20th century found themselves suddenly with endless possibilities and an abundance of choices yet without preset aesthetic criteria to follow or reject. The search for inspiration led some, including Novák, Janáček and Bartók, to the exploration of less-known cultures. They were part of a larger movement which, among other things, gave birth to the discipline of ethnomusicology.

In this sense Slovakia undoubtedly profited from its location on the border of the Orient and Occident. It was distant enough to preserve the centuries old culture virtually unchanged but also close enough to be accessed and
“discovered” by Westerners. Slovakia was easily reached from important musical centers such as Vienna, Prague and Budapest. The remarkable diversity of the musical styles of the Slovaks was another element which sparked the interest of classically trained composers.

The goal of this project was to show how exposure to Slovak folk music influenced the composition of three early twentieth century composers. Vítězslav Novák, Leoš Janáček, and Béla Bartók, each in their unique way, incorporated the characteristic features of Slovak folk music into their compositions. They used rhythmic devices such as mirror rhythms and free-flowing parlando patterns, employed melodies and harmonic progressions based on modal and tetrachordal systems, and built into their compositions the vocal and instrumental idioms of Slovak folk music. In this creative process they were also able to explore original musical forms. The results of their inspiration, *In the Tatras*, 26 *Folk Ballads*, and *Three Village Scenes* contribute much to the great canon of Western art. At the same time, these works successfully translate authentic Slovak folk music traditions into the modern language of our times.
APPENDIX A: MAP OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE IN 1914

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