

JÁNOS JAGAMAS' FOLK SONG ARRANGEMENTS

ÉVA PÉTER¹

SUMMARY. The aim of the following study is to present János Jagamas' vocal folk song arrangements by analyzing the melodies and the compositional methods used within the works. During his scientific work at the Folklore Institute of Cluj-Napoca, the outstanding folk music researcher uncovered and recorded reliable data by collecting, recording, analyzing, and classifying not only Hungarian but also Romanian and Bulgarian melodies. He processed some of the melodies he gathered using a variety of compositional procedures. The works are recommended for children, youth, and amateur choirs, so it is important to get to make them known among music teachers and conductors.

Keywords: folk song adaptations, homogeneous and mixed choir works, polyphonic and homophonic editing techniques.

Little is known about the folk song arrangements of János Jagamas, a folk music researcher, musicologist, university professor, and composer. The aim of my study is to present, analyze, and recommend these choral works to Hungarian language choirs in Transylvania.

1. János Jagamas' Life and Work

He was born in 1913 in Dés, Cluj County. His music teacher was Endre Csíki, who drew his attention to the richness of Hungarian folk music early on. From 1936 to 1940 he was a student at the Cluj Conservatory of Music. Between 1941 and 1944 he studied at the Liszt Ferenc College of Music in Budapest. There, Albert Siklós, Dénes Bartha, Jenő Ádám and Zoltán Kodály were the ones who instructed him. He graduated as a

¹ PhD Docent, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music, Music Department, Ro-400535, Cluj-Napoca, Horea street 7, email: evapeter65@gmail.com

composer in 1948, in Cluj-Napoca. He composed songs, choral works, piano sonatas, and string quartets.²

His central field of work was folk music research. He made his first collections alongside his work as a teacher, in 1940-1941, in Urişor. In the summer of 1942, following the instructions received from Zoltán Kodály, he carried out a significant collection of folk songs in the villages along the Caşin river, and in Armăşeni, then in 1943 in Căpâlniţa in Udvarhelyszék. Between 1949 and 1960, he managed to explore the musical material of the Crişul Negru valley, along the rivers Someşul Mare, Mureşul Superior, Târnava Mică; the melodies of the folk traditions existing in Călata, the Transylvanian Plain, the folk songs of the Szeklers of Odorheiu Secuiesc, Gheorgheni and Miercurea Ciuc. Especially valuable is the material collected in the villages inhabited by the Csángós, the folk songs of Moldavia, Ghimeş, and Țara Bârsei.³ He also involved his students within these - folk music collecting - trips, educating a new generation of folk music researchers: István Almási, Ilona Szenik, Piroska Demény, Ilona Zsizsmann, Zoltán Kallós, István Pávai. He collected more than 6,000 folk songs during his career. He analyzed and classified nearly twelve thousand melodies,⁴ compiling a catalog of Hungarian folk songs types from Transylvania and Moldavia. This prestigious work "made János Jagamas one of the most outstanding representatives of folk music research in Central and Eastern Europe..."⁵

Little is known about Jagamas' pedagogical activity and role in Hungarian music education in Transylvania. At the beginning of his teaching career, he taught at the kindergarten teacher training program in Cluj, where he later became a teacher and head of the Hungarian Conservatory of Music. In 1948 this institution was abolished, in 1949 Jagamas was appointed to the Folklore Department of the Hungarian Institute of Art. From 1950 until his retirement (1976) he was a lecturer at the Gh. Dima College of Music. Folk

² Source of biographical data: András Benkő, *Jagamas János (1913-1997)*, In: *Művelődés (Culture)*, Cluj, Year LI., No. 2, 1998, 14-15.

³ His volumes of folk songs collections (with his co-authors): *Moldvai csángó népdalok és népbaldák (Moldavian Csango folk songs and folk ballads)* (1954), *Romániai magyar népdalok (Hungarian folk songs from Romania)* (1958/1974), *Magyaró énekes népzeneje (The Folk Music of Magyaró-Aluniş)* (1984) – these were published. Unfortunately, the *103 csiki népdal (103 Folk Songs from Ciuc)*, as well as his monographies of Inucu and Galbeni were left behind in the form of manuscripts.

⁴ The conclusions of the analyzes were recorded in a study: *Beiträge zur Dialektfrage der ungarischen Volksmusik in Romänien*, In: *Studia memoriae Bélae Bartók sacra*, Budapest, 1956, 469-501.

⁵ István Almási, *Jagamas János emlékezete (The Memory of János Jagamas)*, In: István Almási, *A népzene jegyében (In the Name of Folk Music)*, European Studie Foundation Publishing House, Cluj, 2009, 89.

music, musical form, the fugue, musical paleography were the disciplines he taught. His university notes, which remain in the form of manuscripts,⁶ demonstrating his in-depth knowledge. In his articles written on the history of musical styles,⁷ he discusses for his students the analysis of works from the Renaissance and the Baroque. Pertaining to 20th-century music, he chose to research Bartók's works.⁸ In his studies published in *Zenetudományi íráások (Musicological Writings)*, he highlights, among other things, the relationship between the old and new styles of Hungarian folk songs,⁹ and the connections between the arched Hungarian folk song and the fugue.¹⁰ In the volume entitled *A népzene mikrokozmoszában (In the Microcosm of Folk Music)* 1984, he examines the relationship between elements pertaining to folk music, and folk-style music.¹¹

⁶ His university notes in the form of manuscripts: *A bachi formaalkotás problémái (The Issues in Creating Bach's Forms)* (1960); *A szonátaforma Bach műveiben (The Sonata Form in Bach's Works)* (1962); *Barokk zenei formák (Musical Forms of the Baroque Era)* (1962); *Fügaismeret Bach Das Wohltemperierte Klavier című műve alapján (Getting Familiar with the Fugue by way of His Das Wohltemperierte Klavier)* (1963); *A barokk fuga (The Fugue in the Baroque Era)* (1965). His ideas put forward in the article *Javaslat a szolfézs-, összhangzat-, ellenpont- és formatanítására (Suggestions for the Teaching of Solfeggio, Harmony, Counterpoint and Musical Forms)* (1950) were unfortunately not put into practice.

⁷ *A bachi harmonizálás alapjai (Fundamentals of Bach Harmonization)* (1961); *A harmonizálás kérdései Machaut műveiben (Harmonization in Machaut's Works)* (1962); *Palestrina polifóniája (The Polyphony of Palestrina)* (1963); *Palestrina jellegzetes dallamfordulatainak kisszótára (Dictionary of Palestrina's Characteristic Melodic Turns)* (1964); *Negyedméretű átmenőhang Palestrina stílusában (The Quarter Passing Note in Palestrina's Style)* (1964); *A reneszánsz többszólamúsága (The Polyphony of the Renaissance)* (1964); *Néhány stílustörténeti adat H. Isaac Innsbruck és J. S. Bach Nun ruhen alle Wälder című kórusművének összehasonlítása alapján (Some data on the history of style based on a comparison of the choral work of H. Isaac Innsbruck and J. S. Bach Nun ruhen alle Wälder)* (1964); *Unele observații privitoare la geneza și structura cvartsextacordului (Observations on the formation and structure of the 6/4 chord)* (1965).

⁸ János Jagamas, *A Mikrokozmosz I. és II. füzetének hangsorai (The scales of Microcosm Booklets I. and II.)*. In: *Bartók Dolgozatok (Bartók Studies)*, Ferenc László (ed.), Bucharest, Kriterion, 1974, 47-70.

⁹ *A magyar népdal régi és új stílusának kapcsolatairól (On the Relationship between the Old and the New Style of Hungarian Folk Songs)*, In: *Zenetudományi íráások (Musicological Writings)*, Csaba Szabó (ed.), Bucharest, Kriterion, 1977, 52-72.

¹⁰ János Jagamas, *A kupolás kvintszerkezetű magyar népdal és a fuga expozíciója (The Arched Fifth Structured Hungarian Folk Song and the Exposition of the Fugue)*. In: *Zenetudományi íráások (Musicological Writings)*, András Benkő (ed.), Bucharest, Kriterion, 1980, 263-270.

¹¹ János Jagamas, *A népzene mikrokozmoszában (In the Microcosm of Folk Music)*, Bucharest, Kriterion, 1984, 5-56.

Having a realistic view of the situation of higher music education in Romania, he formulated proposals aimed at harmonizing musical subjects according to stylistic periods (1957) and unifying the teaching of harmony and counterpoint (1968). As a teacher, he expected all his students to have a high level of sheet music reading/writing. He also used relative solfeggio in the musical training of amateur choirs.¹²

2. Vocal Folk Song Arrangements

Jagamas wrote his folk song arrangements for children's choirs and adult amateur choirs. Concerning the score, he mostly wrote for 2-3 voices to be sung by either a male or a female choir. Among the eleven compositions analyzed, there is a single mixed choir work, a three-voice arrangement of the folk song entitled *A mérai csorgóvíz* (*The dripping water of Mera*). Most of the works are independent song arrangements, I found a single series-type work, the one entitled *Öt gyermekkar* (*Five Choral Pieces for Children*), composed in 1955.

2.1. Polyphonic Editing Techniques

In terms of his compositional technique, the analyzed works are dominated by a polyphonic approach, strict and free imitation. Homophonic segments occur only sporadically.

From a melodic standpoint, the strict imitations occur using the following intervals: perfect unison, perfect octave, lower fifth, descending minor third, major sixth,¹³ and from a metric point of view, the stretto is common. In several cases, the imitation starts at a distance of two units,¹⁴ but when a faster tempo is set, the vocal entry moves further away to four time units.¹⁵ The distance between entrances can be reduced, even to a single unit of time, however, in those cases, the metric balance of the melody is therefore upset.¹⁶

¹² For the amateur lovers of musicology, we recommend the following articles signed by Jagamas: *Zenei anyanyelvünk elemei* (*The Elements of Our Musical Mother Tongue*), published in the magazine *Művelődés* (*Culture*), 1979, no. 1-4; and also, *Miért nem népdal?* (*Why Not a Folk Song?*) published in the no. 5 edition of same journal, from 1980.

¹³ *Széki nóta* (unison, octave, lower fifth), *Ég a gyertya* (lower fifth), *Három szabólegények* (descending minor third), *Ég a gyertya* (major sixth).

¹⁴ *Széki nóta*, *Három szabólegények* (verses 1 and 2), *A mérai csorgóvíz*, *Szivárvány havasán* (verse 1), *Ha, te csóka, csicsóka, Sárga vagyok, mint a cserfa levele* (rows 1 and 2).

¹⁵ For instance, in the second verse of *Ég a gyertya*.

¹⁶ For example: *Három szabólegények* (3 verses), *Szivárvány havasán* (2 verses), *Sárga vagyok, mint a cserfa levele* (rows 3 and 4).

E. g. 1

Egy fél ko - misz, nagy saj - ka - lé jár a szá - mom - ra,
 Egy fél ko - misz, nagy saj - ka - lé jár a szá - mom - ra,
 Egy fél ko - misz, nagy saj - ka - lé jár a szá - mom - ra,

In some arrangements, we find canon-like parts where a segment of the melody, or in some cases the entire melody, is rendered unchanged in two or three voices.¹⁷ These works are easy to master even for primary school children.

E. g. 2

Mind a há - rom le - gény - nek, hej, mek, mek, mek, mek.
 sze - gény - nek. Mind a há - rom le - gény - nek, hej,
 két kraj - cár - ja sze - gény - nek. Mind a há - rom

Strict imitation can be found in the choral piece entitled *A mérai csorgóvíz* (*The dripping water of Mera*). In the second verse's arrangement, the fourth line of the melody placed in the soprano is imitated by the bass an octave lower, unchanged. We can observe a special version of the strict imitation in the first verse of the folk song arrangement for two voiced male

¹⁷ Ex.: *Három szabó legények, Szivárvány havasán.*

or female choir entitled *Anyám, anyám, édesanyám* (*Mother, mother, dearest mother*). The work is recorded in varying meter, it has an *Andante, poco rubato* tempo, the entrances of the first voice are imitated by the second voice in a decreasing, i. e. 4, 3, 2, 1-time unit distance, thus increasing its tension. With regards to the imitation found in the second voice, the melody suffers only minor rhythmic changes.

E. g. 3

Andante, poco rubato

The musical score consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system starts in 2/4 time, changes to 4/4, and then to 3/4. The second system starts in 3/4, changes to 5/4, and then to 3/4. The third system starts in 3/4, changes to 2/4, and then to 4/4. The lyrics are in Hungarian and describe a mother's love and the child's response.

mp
A - nyám, a - nyám, é - des - a - nyám, É - des fel-ne -
A - nyám, a - nyám, — É -

mf
ve - lő daj - kám, Ha vé - tet - tem, meg - bo - csás - son,
- des fel-ne - ve - lő daj - kám, Ha vé - tet - tem, meg - bo - csás - son,

pp
Ér - tem köny - nyet ne hul - las - son. Nem me - gyek én
Ér - tem köny - nyet — ne hul - las - son.

In the same work, we observe a melodic inversion kind of imitation. In the piece entitled *Anyám, anyám édesanyám* (*Mother, mother, dearest mother*), written for two voices, in the arrangement of the second verse (see starting with the third-fourth bars of E. g. 4) the second voice presents an inversion of the entire melody previously sung by the first voice. All the intervals are strictly followed according to the original version, there being a slight difference merely in the last bars of the piece, in the design of the cadence.

E. g. 4

7 *p* É - tem köny - nyet ne hul - las - son. *f* Nem me - gyek én

É - tem köny - nyet _____ ne hul - las - son.

10 *mf* in - nen mesz - sze, Fész - ket - ra - kok mint a fecs - ke.

Nem me - gyek én in - nen mesz - sze, _____ Fész - ket - ra - kok mint a fecs -

13 Meg - ta - pasz - tom csók - ja - im - mal, Ki - bé - le - lem

ke. Meg - ta - pasz - tom _____ csók - ja - im - mal, Ki - bé -

16 két ka - rom - mal.

le - lem Ki - bé - le - lem két ka - rom - mal.

An exception to the strict imitation of the intervals can be seen in the choral work *A mérai csorgóvíz* (*The dripping water of Mera*): a **tonal response** is included between the soprano - alto and soprano - bass voice entrances. In the arrangement of the third verse, the tonal response of the alto to the V-I degree (A-D) initial segment of the soprano is a I-V degree step (D-A); while the bass responds to the perfect fourth ascending V-I-degree melodic beginning (A-D) at the soprano with a descending perfect fifth-degree step V-I (A-D).

E. g. 5

♩ = 120

Én is it - tam be - lő - le, Sze - rel - mes let - tem tő - le.
 re. Én is it - tam be - lő - le, Sze - rel - mes let - tem tő -
 re. Én is, én is it - tam be - lő - le, be - lő

Another type of polyphonic arrangement is free imitation. This is based on the motives and melodic turns of the arranged folk song. In the piece for mixed choir entitled *A mérai csorgóvíz (The dripping water of Mera)*, the melody in the soprano is not followed note by note by the imitating voices, only the line of the melodic arc remaining unchanged.¹⁸

E. g. 6

A - ki az - tat meg - isz - sza, Vá - gyik a szí - ve visz - sza.
 méz. A - ki meg - isz - sza, Vá - gyik az visz - sza.
 A - ki az - tat meg - isz - sza, Vá - gyik az visz - sza.

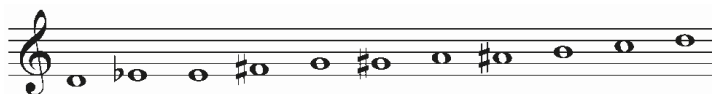
2.2. Homophonic Editing Techniques

Homophonic editing techniques can be found in certain short fragments within the works. The one entitled *Széki nóta (Song from Sic)*, for instance, begins with a two-bar section in unison, followed by a polyphonic

¹⁸ *A mérai csorgóvíz*, bars 5-8.

musical expression; in the *Sárga vagyok, mint a cserfa levele* (*I am yellow as the leaf of the teal*) strophic arranged choral work, the arrangement of the first two melodic lines implements the homophonic technique, while the third and fourth rows use the polyphonic one. In this latter work, we find the voices of the opposite extreme to move in an opposing direction, while at the same time chord progressions are formed: mostly triads in a root position and a 1st inversion. The altered notes in the two lower voices of the 3-voice choral piece written for a male choir enrich the sound set to such an extent that we get an almost complete twelve-tone scale.

E. g. 7



We also find homophone editing techniques employed in the children's choir piece entitled *Egy kis malac* (*A Little Pig*). During the arrangement of the first verse, the melody is present in the first voice, but with the second and third voices entering during the playful, sound-imitating words of the text (*röf-röf, töf-töf*), chords in root position and 2nd inversion are thus created. In the arrangement of the second verse the melody is placed in the third voice, while the upper two voices appear to be independent, however, chords are outlined on a vertical plane. In the augmented section of a few bars that lie between the verses, during the playful repetition of the words that mimic the sound, chord progressions are present: a series of triads and incomplete seventh chords.¹⁹

A similar compositional approach can be observed in the work entitled *Három szabó legények* (*Three Tailors*). Within the piece written for either male or female choir in three voices, in the arrangement of the first two verses the melody is placed in the soprano voice. The two accompanying voices enter only at the sound mimicking text "mek, mek, mek", first with repeating sounds moving in an anapest rhythm, dissolving from second to a third interval, and then forming triads.

¹⁹ Bars 9-11 and 20-23.

E. g. 8

— El - in - dul - tak Mics - ké - re, hej, mek, mek, mek, mek

Mek, mek, mek, mek. Mek, mek, mek, mek.

Mek, mek, mek, mek. Mek, mek, mek, mek.

In the case of an accompanying monody, we are talking about a type of homophony in which the melodic line of the voices accompanying the central melody (successive descending passages, rotating motif structures, repetitive melodic and interval approaches) reflects a sort of relative linear independence. In terms of rhythm, most often, the basic pulsation of slow-moving melodies (a quarter-note movement) is conveyed, corresponding to the rhythmic nature of slow, dance melodies. One such example is the choral work beginning with *Szeress rózsám* (*Love Me, My Rose*), in whose first few bars the two accompanying voices outline a wavy, repetitive, descending major second or perfect fourth interval.

E. g. 9

Andante ♩ = 84

Sze - ress, ró - zsa - m de nézd meg kit, mer a sze - re - lem meg - va - kit

Sze - ress, ró - zsa - m de nézd meg kit, mer a sze - re - lem meg -

Sze - ress, ró - zsa - m de nézd meg kit, mer a sze - re - lem meg -

In the arrangement of the second verse, the melody is presented in the third, i.e., the lowest voice, while the upper voices carry on with rotating motifs in an eighth note movement, evoking instrumental segments, moving in parallel thirds in a different direction.

E. g. 10

Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is

Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is

p Gon-dolj ba - bám én - re - ám is Mer még szc - re -

In the choral work entitled *Ég a gyertya (The Candle's Burning)*, when firstly presenting the melody, it is accompanied by only a single counterpoint voice. In addition to the main melody presented in the Soprano voice, the counterpoint voice in the Alto has a secondary role, counterpointed by an independent melody moving in augmented note values.

E. g. 11

Allegro ♩ = 120

p Ég a gyer - tya, ha meg - gyújt - ják, Ezt a lá - nyok szé - pen fűj - ják, —

p Ég a gyer - tya, ha meg - gyújt - ják,

In the second part of the work, after the tempo change, in the piece entitled *Elszaladt a kemence (The Furnace Had Run Off)*, a long, pedal-like, dominant note can be observed above the melody that is presented in the Alto. After a couple of bars of accompanied monody, a polyphonic segment follows.

The Hungarian folk song entitled *Hopp Juliska* (*Hop up Juliska*) was collected by Béla Bartók in Izvorul Crişului, Cluj County, in 1908. The melodic function of the C-hexachord scale is a pairing or wedding song related to children's play. In Jagamas' arrangement, the melody is found in the Soprano, and the two lower voices of the male/female choir are accompanied by a repetitive, bagpipe-like, perfect fifth, followed by a long-lasting major second interval.

E. g. 12

Gyorsan ♩ = 192 *f*

f Hopp Ju - lis - ka, hopp Ma - ris - ka Hej, gye - re vé - lem

mf Hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, Hej...

mf Hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, Hej...

The three voices become independent only at the repetition of the melody's second part. When the second verse is uttered, the two lower accompanying voices are as follows: the lowest accompanies with a repetitive and then long-lasting, organ pedal-like sound; while the middle voice sings a wavy melody formed of second intervals. In the third verse, the melody is placed in the Alto, a perfect fifth below its original utterance, and the voices change places: the organ pedal appears in the Soprano voice, while the Mezzo voice outlines the counterpoint with a rotating-undulating melodic arc.

E. g. 13

Hej... Haj...

For - dulj bol - ha, csosz - szan - tó - ra, Járd a tán - cot Ré - gi mód - ra

For - dulj bol - ha, csosz - szan - tó - ra, Járd meg a tán - cot Ré - gi mód - ra

Before the beginning of the fourth verse, there is a nine-bar passage in which the repetitive line of text “járd a táncot” (“do the dance steps”) is connected to a rotating arced melodic motif that is repetitive in all three voices, debuting with delayed entrances, with a parallel third motion. The passage is ended by a chord mixture.

E. g. 14

The musical score shows three staves in G major (one sharp). The Soprano staff has lyrics: "tán - cot, járd meg a tán - cot Járd meg a tán - cot, Ré - gi mód - ra". The Alto staff has lyrics: "tán - cot, járd meg a tán - cot Járd meg a tán - cot, Ré - gi mód". The Tenor staff has lyrics: "járd meg a tán - cot a tán - cot Járd meg a tán - cot, járd meg a tán - cot". The melody is a repetitive arced motif in parallel thirds.

During the arrangement of the last verse, the music expands to four distinct voices. The melody is presented in the Soprano, but the Mezzo also strictly imitates it, at two-time units. The Alto voices, now separated into two distinct voices, increases the tension of the work until the cutoff point of the piece, with a long-lasting organ point, a rotating motif, a melodic part moving in parallel thirds.

Summarizing the results of my research, it can be stated that János Jagamas, as a musicologist following the principles of Kodály, placed great emphasis on the presentation and dissemination of our musical mother tongue. This is evidenced by his studies, series of articles, and volumes of collections regarding folk music, but also by the musical material analyzed above, the folk song arrangements, which are recommended for children's, youth, and amateur choirs alike. These pieces of music bring the world of folk music closer to the singer, while the diverse arrangement technique represented a model for new generations of composers.

The Széchenyi Prize-winning scholar was a member of the Romanian Composers' Association, the Hungarian Ethnographic Society, and honorary president of the Hungarian Music Society of Romania. He passed away in 1997. He was buried in the Armenian Catholic cemetery in Gherla.

Translated from Hungarian by Juliánna Köpeczi

REFERENCES

- Almási, István. *A népzene jegyében (In the Name of Folk Music)*. European Studie Foundation Publishing House, Cluj, 2009.
- Benkő, András. *Jagamas János (1913-1997)*. In: *Művelődés (Culture)*, Year LI., No. 2, Cluj, 1998, 14-15.
- Jagamas, János. *A Mikrokosmos I. és II. füzetének hangsorai (The scales of Microcosm Booklets I. and II.)*. In: *Bartók Dolgozatok (Bartók Studies)*, Ferenc László (ed.), Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, 47-70.
- Jagamas, János. *A magyar népdal régi és új stílusának kapcsolatairól (On the Relationship between the Old and the New Style of Hungarian Folk Songs)*. In: *Zenatudományi írások (Musicological Writings)*, Csaba Szabó (ed.), Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, 52–72.
- Jagamas, János. *A kupolás kvintszerkezetű magyar népdal és a fuga expozíciója (The Arced Fifth Structured Hungarian Folk Song and the Exposition of the Fugue)*. In: *Zenatudományi írások (Musicological Writings)*, András Benkő (ed.), Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1980, 263-270.
- Jagamas, János. *A népzene mikrokozmoszában (In the Microcosm of Folk Music)*. Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984.