

SCORES OF A FOLKSONG: FROM COLLECTION TO MUSIC TEXTBOOKS

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SUMMARY. In my study, I follow the notational journey of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba besütött a holdvilág*, collected by Béla Bartók. While attending music lessons I experienced that several versions of this folksong were being taught in the lessons. The most striking difference appears in the melody of the third line of the folk song, which may have several reasons. In addition to presumed problems with musical memory and intonation, there are also errors in notation. This paper aims to explore these failures and their causes, with a view to using the research findings to benefit public education. For this reason, I considered it necessary to investigate the circumstances of folk song collection in terms of folk music recordings, sheet music and text published by the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Starting from the collection, the arrangement by Bartók is studied first. Then the scores found in music textbooks are interpreted in chronological order, from the version published in the book entitled *Iskolai énekgyűjtemény*² to the textbook version found in *Ének-zene 12*.³ I will also try to explain the melodic and metrical differences in the textbooks, as well as the second and further verses.

Keywords: folksong, collection, music, score, textbook

Collecting folk songs

This folk song was collected by Béla Bartók in Tura, in August 1906. I first listened to the recording, and was most interested in the third line of the folk song, especially from a melodic point of view. As a starting point for

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² Kodály, Zoltán & Kerényi, György. *Iskolai énekgyűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulóknek (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils)*, Országos Közoktatási Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

³ Tapodi, Attila. *Ének-zene 12 (Music 12th)*, Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest, 2020.



my analysis, I took the folk song 1392c (1), numbered according to the Bartók order. For the sake of simplicity, I will use relative solmization in the following. Accordingly, in the third line of the folk song, the solmization of the third bar: lah-fah-ray-fah. This is the melodic turn which appears in some places as a different melodic motive, lah-me-ray-fah, in some textbooks and in teaching. However, the subject of my research has broadened, thanks to further melodic, rhythmic and textual differences.

Bartók's arrangement of the folk song

Bartók's arrangement of the folk song can be found in Hungarian Folk Songs for Voice with Piano Accompaniment, No. 6. The volume was published in 1906 and contains arrangements of ten folk songs by Bartók and Kodály. The following musical notation (E.g. 1) shows the arrangement of the third line of the folk song. The music sample in this study is based on the digitally available version of the publication published by the Károly Rozsnyai Book and Music Publishing Office in 1906, using a music editing software.

E.g. 1

Magyar népdalok
6. Bartók Béla

Lám én csak e - gyet sze - re - tek,
még - is de so - kat szen - ve - dek,

**Bartók – Kodály: 10 Hungarian Folk Songs
for voice and piano, 6., bars 7-14.**

The first noticeable and audible difference is the metre of the folk song with piano accompaniment, which is emphasized in several places because of the 2/4. This fact is particularly noteworthy, because in Jenő Ádám's book it is the observation of the change of metre that has a methodological role.⁴ Two excerpts from the foreword of the publication are as follows:

"Whether [the folk song is], arranged for choir or piano, the accompaniment should always seek only to replace the lost field and village. And the popular edition should not fall short of the full edition in terms of the authenticity of the melodies."

"We did it with a view to the local conditions, that the melody is also present in the accompaniment. We will not always insist on this in future booklets. When they are published depends on the outcome of the collection. After all, we are giving you something to sing, not to play the piano."⁵

The sentence concerning the authenticity of the melodies implies that the folk songs are accurately conveyed, thus excluding the possibility of altering the melodic tone. Perhaps the reference to "local conditions" refers to the fact that it is easier for a singer to perform a folk song if he hears it at the same pitch. If this is what the composers had in mind, then the piano part partly acts as an intonation aid.

Taking all this into account, the harmonisation of the third line of the folk song raises the question of why the second syllable of the word "mégis" is a me solfa note (g - in g - brackets I indicate the absolute pitch). Based on the principles described in the preface to the publication, it would have been reasonable for Bartók to preserve the lah-fah major third turn (C'-A flat') heard in the folk song collection, since the bass note (A flat) is reinforced even in octave. However, in the upper part of the piano, the note me (g') is observed as a melody note. As a result, in bar 5 of the example, the chord of E-flat major IV7 is heard, followed by II2 and VII7 in bar 6. So in contrast to the lah-fah-ray-fah turn described by the folk song, which could be exhausted either by the use of II2 or VII7 harmony, Bartók adds and gives meaning to the me sound by using IV7.

⁴ Ádám, Jenő. *Módszeres énektanítás a relatív szolmizáció alapján (Methodical teaching of music based on relative solmization)*, Turul, Budapest, 1944, p. 196.

⁵ *Magyar Népdalok Énekhangra zongorakísérettel*. Közlik Bartók Béla 1-10, Kodály Zoltán 11-20. Rozsnyai Károly könyv- és zeneműkiadóhivatala, Budapest, 1906, p. 5.

Folk song in music textbooks

In this study I present the folk song using the textbooks that are available to me. I have dealt with the textbooks in chronological order in terms of tracing the path of the publication of the musical notations. In the case of some publications, it was necessary to provide detailed comments on what was seen in the book, which can be found below. Other publications are presented in a summary table at the end of the study, giving an overview of the aspects analysed.

Zoltán Kodály - György Kerényi: *School Song Collection I-II* (1944)

The background to the compilation of the collection can be read, among other things, in Lilla Gábor's *In the Footsteps of Kodály's Pedagogy: the Reminiscences of Lajos Bárdos, Jenő Ádám, György Kerényi and Irma Bors* (Gábor, 1981).

Extract from the study:

“What was the role of Professor in the birth of the School Songbook published in 1943-44?

– In 1940, a state committee chaired by teacher Bruno Balassa met to discuss the publication of an official school textbook. Kodály also attended the meeting. Even though I had just finished the manuscript of the textbook for the eighth grades, I spoke up out of respect for Kodály and suggested that we ask Kodály first of all if he would be willing to edit the textbook. Kodály said yes, and I then took my above-mentioned eight-grade arrangement to him.

We used it to edit the School Songbook. The five appendices were added by Kodály. These are entitled: Religious Songs, Canon Songs, Historical Songs, Songs of the 19th Century, Songs of Other Nations [a) Our Neighbours, b) Our Linguistic Relatives].”

We can assume from the source that György Kerényi had already completed the selection of folk songs and that Kodály had a role in editing the textbook. This is indicated by the note on the inside cover: ‘This collection was prepared with the collaboration of György Kerényi’.⁶ It is difficult to determine

⁶ Kodály, Zoltán & Kerényi, György. *Iskolai énekgyűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulónak (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils)*, Országos Köznevelési Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

which of them suggested including the folk song *Ablakomba*, *ablakomba* in the second volume of the *School Songbook* and whether it was intentionally changed. It is also not known whether the folk song collected by Bartók or the one already arranged was included in the publication. It can be seen that, compared to the melody first recorded by Bartók, there is a melodic difference in the third bar of the third line: the turn is no longer lah-fah-ray-fah, but lah-me-ray-fah.

Due to the condition of the publication available to me, I have created the inserted musical notation myself using a computer music editing program, faithfully retaining all musical notation (E.g. 2).

E.g. 2

341.

Lépést = 80



Ab-la-kom-ba, ab-la-kom-ba be-sü-tött a hold-vi-lág,
A-ki ket-tőt, hár-mat sze-ret, so' sincs ar-ra jó vi-lág.

Lám én csakegy-gyet sze-re-tek, még-is de so-kat szen-ve-dek.

Ez az ál-nok bé-res-le-gény csal-ta meg a szí-ve-met.

**The first picture of the musical notation in the textbook
Based on Kodály – Kerényi, 1944**

e and ë

In Volume II of the *School Songbook*, both vowels occur in the text of the folk song. However, modern music notation does not make it possible to display the *ë* vowel, so I have listed the text of the folk song independently of the music (Table 1).

Table 1

School Songbook II. (Kodály – Kerényi)	Bartók's collection (Bartók)
Ablakomba, ablakomba besütött a holdvilág, Aki kettőt, hármat szeret, so'sincs arra jó világ. Lám én csak egyet szeretek, mégis de sokat szenvedek. Ez az álnok béréslegény csalta még a szívemet.	Ablakimba, ablakimba besütött a holdvilág, Aki kettőt-hármat szeret, sosincs arra jóvilág. Ládd, én csak egyet szeretek, mégis de sokat szenvedek; Ez az álnok béréslegény csalta még a szívemét.

The appearance of e and ě in the text

There are some differences between the Bartók and the School Songbook texts, probably due to the spelling rules of the time (so'sincs; egyet; szívemet), whereas the use of the words "ablakimba" and "ládd" is the result of the transcriber. Bartók added the word "nincsen" under the word "sosincs" to the score he wrote during the collection.

Zoltán Kodály - Lajos Vargyas: *Hungarian Folk Music*⁷

Although the publication is not a music textbook, its widespread use in education makes it indispensable. The notation of the folk song in this book is extremely interesting. In the melody of the third line, we find the lah-me-ray-fah turn, but the question of the written metre is much more exciting. I have already pointed out that it is the metrical changes in Jenő Ádám that are of methodological importance in this folk song. In the 1952 edition of the book, the written metre is 4/4, but the time signature differs from this, since there are four beats per line, not three. The vertical lines represent the bar lines shown in the score:

Ablakomba, / ablakomba / besütött a / holdvilág. /
Aki kettőt, / hármat szeret, / nincsen arra / jó világ. /
Lám én csak e- / gyet szeretek, / mégis de so- / kat szenvedek, /
Ez az álnok / bérés legény / csalta meg a / szívemet. //⁸

⁷ Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. *A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952.

⁸ Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. *A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952, p. 268.

The second verse

There are different ways to encounter the second verse of the folk song. In Bartók's collection, the second stanza appears in the following form:

Bicske felül /: tornyosodik :/ a felhő,
 /: Szaladj kis lány :/ mer megmos a nagy eső!
 – /: Nem szaladok :/, maj szaladok, ha megázok, –
 Kishangácson, Nagyhangácson szeretőre talállok.

In Bartók's arrangement and in the School Songbook there is no second verse. This fact may suggest that Kerényi and Kodály based the compilation of the School Songbook on Bartók's arrangement, not on the collection. This is also indicated by the identity of the tempo marking, which reads "Step".

The appearance of the second verse in music textbooks

The textbook *Singing-Music 6* (MS-2456, 8th edition) of the series *Muzsikáló nagyvilág* [*The World of Music*] is based on the 2007 National Curriculum, written by Katalin Király. The second verse of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba...* in this book differs from the one collected by Bartók, despite the fact that the author of the textbook refers to the folk song collected in Tura. The inserted text most probably originates from the choral work *Szeged felől*, published in 1960 by Lajos Bárdos, who adapted a folk song for mixed choir from a collection by Sándor Bálint. It was the second verse that the author added to the folk song that made me start researching the origin of the second verse of the folk song.

The folk song collected by Sándor Bálint can be found in Katalin Paksa's monograph entitled *A szögedi nemzet zenéje*. The folk song, collected in Szeged in 1931, is a single verse, and has several melodic similarities with Bartók's collection. The strophic structure of the two folk songs (AABA), the notated metrical changes and the cadence are identical. The end of the A line of the two folk songs is identical except for the first note of the second bar, and the two notes are reversed. The first half of the B folk song is the same, but after that there is considerable change. It is therefore probable that the song is a variant of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba...* (E.g. 3).

253.

♩ = 104

Szöged, Balogh Anna

Bálint, 1931.

The folk song collected by Sándor Bálint

Source: Paksa, 1980, p. 284.

In the table below, I have listed the texts of the folk songs side by side, based on the collection of Sándor Bálint, the choral work of Lajos Bárdos and the textbook of Katalin Király (Table 2).

Table 2

Collection of Sándor Bálint	Choral work by Lajos Bárdos	Textbook of Katalin Király
Szöged felől, Szöged felől gyün egy fekete felhő,	Szeged felől, Szeged felől jön egy fekete felhő.	Szeged felől, Szeged felől jön egy fekete felhő,
Siess kislány, siess kislány, mer mögver egy nagy eső.	Siess kislány, siess kislány, mer megver egy nagy eső.	<i>Szaladj</i> kislány, <i>szaladj</i> kislány, mert megver a nagy eső.
Nem sietők olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajog nagyon,	Nem sietek olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajog nagyon	Nem <i>szaladok</i> olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajog nagyon,
Most tudom mán, miér sajog: a szeretőm elhagyott.	Most tudom már, miért sajog, a <i>galambom</i> elhagyott.	Most tudom már, miért sajog: <i>elhagyott a galambom</i> .

Changes in the lyrics of the folk song

Of the textbooks I have studied, only the first stanza is mentioned in (Bartók, 1906)⁹, (Kodály & Kerényi, 1944)¹⁰, (Kodály & Vargyas, 1952)¹¹.

The second stanza can be found in the following music textbooks: (Némethné, 1997¹² and 2002), (Pécsi and Uzsálné, 2001)¹³, (Sóvágó, 2002)¹⁴, (Riznerné and Ördög, 2003, 2014)¹⁵, Kéry and Kéryné (2007)¹⁶, Király (2014)¹⁷, Tapodi (2020)¹⁸. It should be noted, however, that the Kéry-Kéryné textbook also contains further verses.

Ha bemegyek, ha bemegyek a baracsi csárdába,
cifranyelű kis bicskámát vágoma gerendába.
Aki legény, az vegye ki, aki bátor, az teheti,
még az éjjel zsandárvérrel írom én a nevem ki!

Szalontai kertek alatt nyergelik a lovamat,
szalontai kertek alatt ölelik a babámat.
A lovamat más nyergeli, szép a babám, más öleli,
az én kedves kisangyalom ne ölelgesse senki!¹⁹

⁹ *Magyar Népdalok Énekhangra zongorakísérettel*. Közlök Bartók Béla 1-10, Kodály Zoltán 11-20. Rozsnyai Károly könyv- és zeneműkiadóhivatala, Budapest, 1906. Magyar népdalok, Sz.33 (Bartók, Béla) - IMSLP [accessed on 01. 26. 2023]

¹⁰ Kodály, Zoltán and Kerényi, György. *Iskolai énekgűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulóknak (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils)*, Országos Közoktatási Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

¹¹ Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. *A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952.

¹² Németh, Endréné. *Hatodik daloskönyvem (My music 6th grade)*, Apáczai Kiadó, Budapest, 1997.

¹³ Pécsi, Géza and Uzsálné Pécsi, Rita. *Énektár 2. A Kulcs a muzsikához c. tankönyv melléklete (Song collection 2. Appendix for textbook Key for music)*, Kulcs a muzsikához Kiadó, Pécs, 2001.

¹⁴ Sóvágó, Edit. *Ének-zene 9-10. osztály munkáltató tankönyv (Music 9th and 10th grade textbook)*, Pedellus Novitas Kft., Debrecen, 2002.

¹⁵ Riznerné Kékesi, Mária and Ördög, László. *Ének-zene az általános iskola 6. évfolyama számára (Music for primary school grade 6)*, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 2003.

¹⁶ Kéry, Mihály and Kéryné Mészáros, Mária. *Ének-zene 10. osztály (Music 10th grade)*, Pedellus Tankönyvkiadó Kft., Debrecen, 2007.

¹⁷ Király, Katalin. *Ének-zene 6. osztály (Music 6th grade)*, Mozaik Kiadó, Szeged, 2014. kodalyhub.hu/kodaly-kovetoi [accessed on 01. 28. 2023]

¹⁸ Tapodi, Attila. *Ének-zene 12 (Music 12th)*, Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest, 2020.

¹⁹ Kéry, Mihály and Kéryné Mészáros, Mária. *Ének-zene 10. osztály (Music 10th grade)*, Pedellus Tankönyvkiadó Kft., Debrecen, 2007, p. 150.

The stanza beginning *Ha bemegyek...* can also be found in Bartók's collection - marked c) - but the authors of the textbook have altered the end of the last line, presumably to make up for the rhyme they felt was missing. The last line Bartók recorded: "*még az éjjel zsandárvérrel írom ki a nevemet.*"

Metres written out

The marking of the alternating meter does not appear in the same way in the publications studied. In addition to the Kodály-Vargyas book, the two books by Mrs. Németh can be considered as errors, in which the editor lists the meter numbers at the beginning of the first line in the order 4/4 2/4, i.e. musically just the other way round. In the Kéry-Kéryné textbook, no meter is indicated, but the division of the bars follows the division shown in the collection.

As in the collection, the Kodály-Kerényi book and the Tapodi book show the change of meter written out bar by bar. The other textbooks (Pécsi and Uzsalyné, Sóvágó, Rizsneré and Ördög, Király) uniformly list the meter numbers in the first line in the order 2/4 4/4.

References in music textbooks

The name of the collector (Béla Bartók) and the place of collection (Tura, or Pest County) are mentioned by the authors of the textbooks, only the name of Béla Bartók is omitted from the Tapodi book. The Pécsi & Uzsalyné and Sóvágó textbooks refer to Pál Járdányi's publication entitled *Hungarian Folk Song Types*, while the Kéry & Kéryné book refers to the 6th grade. The obvious explanation for this might be that the folk song was included in the *Repetitive Singing* section of the textbook for 10th graders.

However, the authors who refer to the Járdányi book did not publish the folk song contained in that book. I have notated the folk song as shown in the book, missing the meter number, the clef and the key signature from the second stave onwards. In addition to the difference in melody, the second verse of the folk song also differs from the folk songs included in the textbooks (E.g. 4).

E.g. 4

Moderato

f

Ab - la - kom - ba, ab - la - kom - ba be - sü - tött a hold - vi - lág,

A - ki ket - tőt - hár - mat sze - ret, so - sines ar - ra jó vi - lág,

Lám, én csak egy - gyet sze - re - tek, még - is de so - kat szen - ve - dek,

Ez az ál - nok bé - res - le - gény csal - ta meg a szí - ve - met.

**The folk song in Járdányi's book
Based on Járdányi 1961**

In the table below, the various recordings of the folk song are summarised according to the aspects covered in the study. Following the list of publications, the melodic pattern in the third line of the folk song is indicated, followed by the beginning of the second verse, then the written metre number and finally the reference (Table 3).

Table 3

Publication	Melody of line 3	Stanza 2	Indicated metric number	Reference
Bartók's collection	lah-fah-ray-fah	Bicske felül...	bar by bar	-
Bartók, 1906	lah-me-ray-fah	-	2/4	-
Kodály – Kerényi, 1944	lah-me-ray-fah	-	bar by bar	Tura (Pest) B. B. Song and piano: Bartók and Kodály, Hungarian folksongs, 6.
Kodály – Vargyas, 1952	lah-me-ray-fah	-	4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Némethné, 1997	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 4/4 and 2/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Némethné, 2002	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 4/4 and 2/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Pécsi – Uzsálné, 2001	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Járdányi Pál: Types of hungarian folksongs I-III.
Sóvágó, 2002	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Járdányi Pál: Types of hungarian folksongs
Riznerné – Ördög, 2003, 2014	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Kéry – Kéryné, 2007	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől... further two stanzas	-	- refers to the 6th grade

Publication	Melody of line 3	Stanza 2	Indicated metric number	Reference
Király, 2014	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Tapodi, 2020	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	bar by bar	Tura (Pest)

A summary of the publications examined

Looking at the table, it can be seen that the melodic turn of the third line has been established as a lah-me-ray-fah melody for a long time after Bartók's arrangement. From these two conclusions can be drawn: 1. the Kodály-Kerényi publication served as the basis for the textbook, whose authors mentioned Bartók's work in addition to the collection among the references; 2. the authors of several publications relied on Bartók's arrangements instead of the collection. The turn found in the collection occurs later only in the books by Kéry and Kéryné, Király and Tapodi. It is then necessary to compare the melodic turns and the references, from which it can be seen that there is no clear correlation between them. The majority of textbook authors refer to the collection, but do not present the melody accordingly. The comments on the number of metrics prescribed were made in an earlier section of the study.

As for the second stanza, it should be noted that it was not included in Bartók's arrangement. It is likely that this is the reason for the missing second stanza in two works (Kodály & Kerényi, 1944, and Kodály & Vargyas, 1952). Subsequently, in 1960, Bárdos composed his work for mixed choir - as mentioned earlier - which may have had an influence on the second stanzas in the vocal music textbooks.

Conclusions

The study of the folk song "Ablakomba, ablakomba..." started by the experience of attending singing and music lessons. Originally, I planned to approach it from a methodological point of view, but the increasingly diversified research drew my attention to the diversity of the folk song recordings, so I felt that before I could address the methodological aspects and approach, I needed

to trace the development of the folk song musical score. In this way, the collection of Bartók, Bartók's arrangement, as well as the various melodies, second verse, meter and reference appearing in the vocal music textbooks were examined. Regarding the different notations of the folk song, the issue of tempo markings and rhythmic variations could be further researched. Especially surprising and thought-provoking to me is the fact that the folk song is not included in any of the upper-level vocal music textbooks, so it is up to the vocal music teacher to make sure that his or her students are introduced to it at all.

I tried to find out the reason for the different versions and recordings, but at the same time I was astonished to find that Bartók himself had changed the third melody line. I do not think that teachers of vocal music can be expected to explore the evolution of a folk song in such depth. I hope that they will have the opportunity and the motivation to read studies that will draw their attention to a critical approach to the content of textbooks. If these are not available, they teach their pupils according to the singing and music textbooks available to them. That raises the question of the responsibility of textbook authors. If the name of the folksong collector and the place of collection are mentioned, they should indeed be "only from pure sources". In this respect, the two extremes are represented by Katalin Király's book, which on the one hand faithfully follows Bartók's collection of melodic sounds, but on the other hand misleads with its second stanza and the photograph of the sunlit window.

Towards the end of my work, I came up with the idea of writing another paper, which will focus on the methodological relevance of this research and the practical use of the analysis in public education.

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