Folk melodies are the embodiment of an artistic perfection of the highest order; in fact, they are models of the way in which a musical idea can be expressed with utmost perfection in terms of brevity of form and simplicity of means.

- Béla Bartók

The fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I resulted in widespread political and social dislocation throughout Hungary, during which the territory of the monarchy was divided and almost two-thirds of Hungary were ceded to Romania and the land formerly known as Czechoslovakia. Through the sociopolitical turmoil of the late 19th and early 20thcenturies, more rural areas of Hungary maintained their identity through folk traditions, namely song, dance, and music. These ancient melodies had survived practically unchanged, and the discovery of this led to a burst of inspiration by Hungarian composers who were looking to define what it meant to be authentically Hungarian. While defining their new Hungarian sound, composers were able to tap into strong folk traditions, resulting in a Hungarian music culture that would support the new surge of nationalism across Hungary.

Hungarian music has a few distinctive features that set it apart from other European art music. In Hungarian melodies, the first syllable of each phrase is often stressed, leading to a dactylic rhythm, where the first syllable is lengthened and followed by two shorter syllables. Take the opening melody of Bartók's Second Violin Sonata, for example (Figure 1). In this melody, the first note of each triplet group is to be emphasized, followed by a weaker second and third notes in the group. The emphasis is caused by bow speed and volume change, in contrast to agogic emphasis where the longer beats are most emphasized.

Figure 1. Bartók Violin Sonata 2, Movement I - Opening theme

This characteristic parallels Hungarian language, which also stresses the first syllable. For example, *köszönöm*, Hungarian for 'thank you', is stressed on the first syllable, *kösz*. The tie between language and music help strengthen Hungarian music as a reflection of its culture.

Two other characteristic features of Hungarian music are its frequent use of pentatonic scales, which are composed exclusively of major seconds and minor thirds, and the practice of multiple transpositions of a single melody over the course of a piece or song. Finally, common to 19th and 20th century Hungarian music are arched melodic lines. This is when the notes of a phrase rise and then fall in pitch to create an arch. This melodic structure signifies a distinct shift in Hungarian music during the 19th century - prior to the 19th century, older styles of Hungarian music always utilized a descending melodic line.

In addition to sonic characteristics, there are also structural characteristics common to Hungarian music. The Hungarian *verbunkos* style, which rose to popularity in the 18th century, is a traditional dance and music style that consists of alternating slow (*lassù*) and fast (*friss*) sections. The contrast between the slower and faster dances has been described as the contrasting aspects of the Hungarian character. The

term *verbunkos* originates from the German work *Werbung*, meaning 'to recruit,' as these dances were often performed as part of military recruiting ceremonies. The *verbunkos*'s characteristic rhythm, called the *dűvő*, is an accompanimental figure where steady beats are grouped in pairs, with the second part of each pair receiving an accent. The *dűvő* is used in both literal and transformed forms throughout 20th-century Hungarian repertoire, with composers stretching its usage while also trying to remain true to tradition. A literal version of this structure can be found at the beginning of Bartók's First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano (Figure 2).

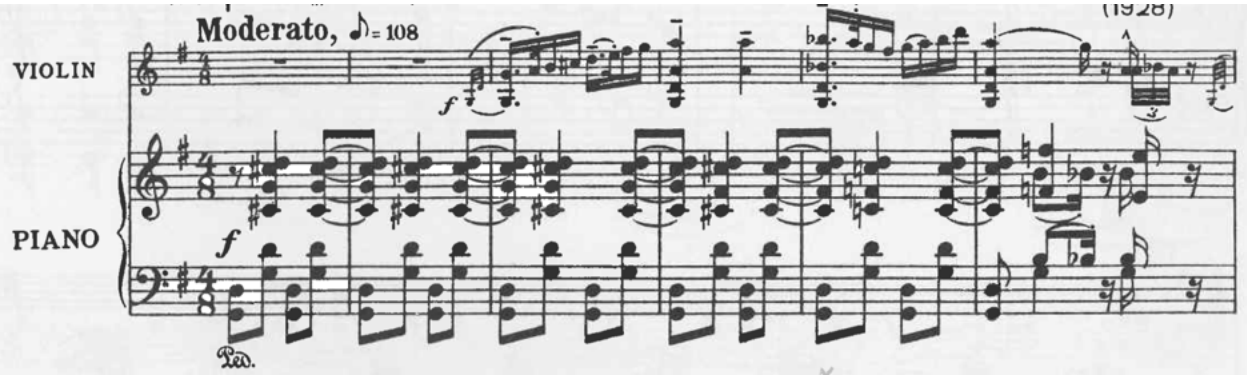

Figure 2. The *dűvő* figure in the first movement of the Bartók Rhapsody No. 1

In this example, the piano plays the *dűvő* figure. As seen in the score, the emphasis is placed on the second and fourth eight notes of each beat. In addition, this figure is normally sustained, as indicated by the pedal marking in the piano.

These characteristics have remained distinct hallmarks of Hungarian music up to the present day, largely due to the fact that Hungarian folk tradition has only been recently exported westward. As a result, this music is often seen as complex, inaccessible, and difficult to understand. The three pieces comprising this recital reflect the development of a true Hungarian sound over time, as well as using composition as a form of reflecting nationalism and what it means to be authentically Hungarian.

Sonata for Piano and Violin in C Sharp Minor, Op. 21 **Ernő Dohnányi (1877-1960)**

I. Allegro appassionato

II. Allegro ma con tenerezza

III. Vivace assai

Ernő Dohnányi's Sonata for Piano and Violin, Op. 21, was composed in Berlin in 1912. Widely regarded as his most important work for violin and piano, Dohnányi's sonata reflects a mature representation of his compositional style, which combines the musical characteristics of Brahms and Liszt. Brahms and Dohnányi had a strong personal and musical relationship, with Brahms even helping to arrange the Vienna premiere of Dohnányi's Piano Quintet, Op.1, which helped make a name for himself as a composer. In fact, Dohnányi was primarily a pianist, and, after Liszt, is regarded as one of the most influential and skilled Hungarian pianists. He attended the Budapest Academy (now known as the Liszt Academy) to study music performance, which inspired his grade-school friend Béla Bartók to also attend. His dedication to chamber music was seen both in his compositional output and his performance history, as he was one of the first world-famous pianists to perform chamber music on a regular basis in addition to more standard concertos. This sonata is dedicated to professor and Hungarian violinist Victor von Herzfeld. Herzfeld was also an accomplished composer, winning first prize at the Music Academy of Vienna while he was still a student, and later joining the Liszt Academy as a professor.

The three-movement structure of the sonata is reflective of the influence of Romanticism and Central European sonata style, of which Brahms was one of the masters. In fact, this sonata has been previously compared to the Brahms D Minor Sonata, Op. 108, because of similarities in the composition of the passionate and sweeping melodic line along with the rich harmonic structure. Dohnányi's compositional style was strongly rooted in romantic heritage, so the parallels between his and Brahms's Sonata-from compositions is unsurprising. The three movements are closely intertwined, each leading *attacca*, or without pause, into the next. Motivic themes return in each movement, giving the sonata the feel of being one extended movement rather than the more traditional three-movement structure. This style is closely associated with Liszt's compositional trademarks, where he utilized this concept of "motivic strands binding together a large-scale work" to make his music more understandable and cohesive. The underlying Hungarian influence can also be observed harmonically throughout the piece, with Romantic melodies being paired with unexpected chords and harmonic progressions.

The first movement, *Allegro appassionato*, begins with a somewhat unsettled theme in C sharp minor, soon expanding into a lush Romantic melody passed between the violin and piano in traditional Romantic sonata fashion. As the initial excitement fades away, the piano introduces a sweeter, less intense secondary melody that combines Romantic chord structure with the chromaticism found in Hungarian folk melodies. The more energized and excited first melody and the sweeter, calmer second melody find themselves in an alternating pattern through the rest of the movement. Echoing Brahms's 4th symphony, the melody returns as an augmented version of itself at the end of the movement. Breaking from sonata tradition, the second movement, *Allegro ma con tenerezza,* is surprisingly playful, rather than slow and serene. This movement begins with a simple melodic line in the violin, played 'with tenderness' as the movement subtitle indicates. The movement never stays settled for long, having a six-part structure with clearly defined beginnings and endings to each section. Yet Dohnányi's penchant for returning to themes is still apparent in this movement, where the last section of the piece returns to the initial melody, this time splitting it more evenly between the violin and piano in a call-and-response fashion. The third movement begins with an energetic and dramatic echo of the D# - E- C# motif that was introduced in the

first movement. It then quickly dives into a 3/8 theme that takes the first melody from the first movement and transforms it into a less legato and lyrical version of itself. The very end of the movement returns to complete the truncated end of the first movement. The theme is reworked into a more subdued version of itself, and ends quietly and expressively.

In addition to being a strong composer, as this Sonata reflects, Dohnányi was a successful pianist and conductor, held a variety of prestigious professorships, and served as the director of the Liszt Academy and the Hungarian Radio. But his considerable legacy has been largely ignored by the Hungarian musical community for two reasons. The first was a trend in music during Dohnányi's time as a composer. Classical musicians began to value more avant-garde and experimental compositional styles, but Dohnányi continued to compose in a more 'traditional' Romantic-style, Germanic output. This created a rift between him and other Hungarian composers, who were altering their compositional style to reflect the changing compositional trends. The second more political and social reason was a degradation of his reputation by Hungarian politicians during World War II. Dohnányi was rumored to have collaborated with the Nazis during the war, and further allegations against his character caused irreparable damage to his reputation within Hungarian history and culture. After the death of Bartók, who was Dohnányi's last powerful Hungarian supporter, in 1945, the Hungarian establishment actively discouraged any recognition of Dohnányi's musical legacy. Dohnányi's decision to emigrate to Florida in the 1940s was seen as an abandonment of Hungary and Hungarian culture, and solidified his isolation from Hungary as well as his removal from Hungarian music history.

Only recently have Dohnányi's name and reputation been restored, both in Hungary and abroad. In 1968, a former student of Dohnányi's in Florida, named Balint Vászonyi, traveled to Hungary in an effort to restore his name in Hungarian history. Vászonyi subsequently published a biography of Dohnányi in 1971 that forced the Hungarian government to slowly increase recognition of his contributions to Hungarian musical culture and history. In 1990, Dohnányi was posthumously awarded the Kossuth Prize, which is the highest award a Hungarian citizen can receive. And in 2002, the Hungarian Ministry of Culture established the Ernő Dohnányi Archives within the Institute of Musicology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. These events all signify a recent increased focus and respect on Dohnányi's output.

Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7 **Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)**

I. Allegro serioso, non troppo
II. Adagio – Andante
III. Maestoso e largamente, ma non troppo lento – Presto

Zoltán Kodály was a rare individualswho excelled in all things he did. Throughout his lifetime, he held positions as a musician, composer, musicologist, journalist and more. Kodály grew up in a musical family, his father being a violinist and his mother a pianist and singer. Outside of his family, his elementary school education exposed him to music in the form of Hungarian folk tunes sung by his schoolmates. As a result, he quickly became familiar with music and musical instruments. Kodály was at the forefront of the effort to define a new Hungarian sound during the late 19th century, and his early exposure to a combination of classical and folk music resulted in a unique and distinctive compositional language that friend and fellow student Béla Bartók described as "rich melodic invention, a perfect sense of form, a certain predilection for melancholy and uncertainty [that] proves [Kodály's] faith in the Hungarian spirit." His ties to folk music grew stronger through an ethnomusicological folksong collection project, where he worked with Bartók to document and archive melodies from the Carpathian Basin. He later ventured into the European countryside to record peasant songs from the Székely people of Bucovina (a historical term for Central or Eastern Europe). Of the over 10,000 recordings collected, many would become direct melodic inspirations for Bartók's and Kodály's later compositions. Although Bartók and Kodály both used their ethnomusicological work within their compositions, Bartók's approach was more holistic and used recordings from Romania, Slovakia, and North Africa as influence for his compositions. On the other hand, Kodály's compositional goal was to create a national musical style that appealed to the Hungarian public and reflected the 'true' or 'authentic' Hungarian spirit. He focused specifically on recordings from Hungary, and used them to better understand the idiomatic musical language.

The Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7, was composed in Budapest in 1914. At this point in his life, Kodály was still a relatively young composer, and focused mostly on instrumental solo and chamber compositions, with string chamber works comprising most of his non-vocal works before 1920. Even after this period, chamber music remained one of his passions, and he never appeared to be attracted to the orchestra as a composition subject. The Duo's instrumentation played to Kodály's knowledge of cello and violin, two of the first instruments he learned to play. The difficulty for scoring works for two instruments with a wide variation in registers lies in the ability to maintain balance while still creating well-rounded harmony. Kodály uses the full range of each instrument, along with multi-stopped chords, polyrhythms, and complex accompaniment parts, to give the illusion of the work being more expansive and complex than it is. Violinist Imre Waldbauer and cellist Jenő Kerpely gave the first performance of the piece in Budapest on May 7, 1918. These musicians were part of the Waldbauer Quartet, who worked with Kodály to promote many of his chamber works, both in Hungary and abroad.

The first movement of the Duo, *Allegro serioso, non troppo*, begins with a powerful cello melody, commented on by the violin with equally powerful chords. The assertive first theme dies away and is replaced with a more lyrical and flowing melody, accompanied by steady rhythmic pizzicati that are passed seamlessly between the two instruments. The assertive and lyrical melodies both appear multiple times throughout the movement, disguised within different rhythms and paired with varying accompanimental figures. The movement's melodies are based on the Hungarian pentatonic scale, which is a natural melodic minor scale from which the second and sixth scale degrees are missing. It has been

suggested by Kodály's biographer, László Eösze, that the expansiveness of the movement may have been inspired by the beauty of the Swiss Alps, as Switzerland was a common holiday destination for Kodály. Furthermore, the movement as a whole is filled with bursts of energy followed by sections of tranquility. Listen for how the peaks and valleys of the Alps parallel the dichotomy of the energy and serenity found throughout the movement, as well as the ability of the violin and cello to act almost as one instrument when the accompanimental figure is passed back and forth.

The second movement, *Adagio*, is filled with a sense of anguish and tension that can be attributed to the composer's mood concerning the imminent beginning of World War I. It begins with a calm and serene passage in the cello, introducing a new color created by the solo being performed *sul G*. The first melody is then passed to the violin, and the cello takes on an accompanimental role. As the movement progresses, the range between the two instruments widens and the tone becomes more unsettled and agitated. In the most intense parts of the movement, the range of the violin part spans four octaves. Double stops and octaves in both instruments add additional power to the sound and are fundamental to the arrival of the movement's climax. The movement is filled with new textural elements: mutes on both instruments are used, as well as extensive harmonic arpeggios and a *flautato* marking in the last melody of the movement, wherein the cello mimics the timbre of a flute. Additionally, sustained notes and pizzicato being played on the same instrument in the middle of the movement give the illusion of a third musician adding to the texture. A subtle nod to Hungarian music culture is the implementation of pizzicato arpeggios in the cello towards the end of the movement. This effect is intended to imitate an instrument called a *cimbalom*, which is a type of chordophone that was designed and created in Budapest.

The third movement begins with the *Maestoso e largamente*, with the violin performing a cadenza-like introduction. This rhapsodic section soon gives way to the *Presto*, a lively peasant dance, during which folk influence from the *verbunkos* style mentioned earlier comes to the foreground of the piece. The *Presto* has a near-constant eight-note presence that gives it energy and rhythm. The two instruments pass this motor-like figure back and forth as they oscillate between melodic and accompanimental roles. Two slower sections in the middle of the movement are the only chances for the music to rest, as more flowing melodic statements full of rich ornamentation and changing meters are brought to the foreground. But each time, the more improvisatory section gives way to the *friis* section of the movement, and the piece ends with a flurry of chords followed by a satisfying arrival on the tonic, D.

Although the piece has obvious Hungarian influence, no exact quotes of Hungarian folk tunes have been identified. This reflects Kodály's mastery and understanding of Hungarian folk idioms. Bartók wrote that Kodály's works were the "most perfect embodiment of the Hungarian spirit" because all of his composing is rooted "only in Hungarian soil [and that he has an] unshakable faith and trust in the constructive power and future of his people."

Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano, Sz. 76 **Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**

I. Molto moderato

II. Allegretto

Hungarian composer, ethnomusicologist, teacher, and pianist Béla Bartók is widely regarded as one of the most influential Hungarian musicians. Bartók's parents were both avid amateur musicians and encouraged Bartók to study music from a young age, introducing him to drumming and piano. Although Bartók's early years were filled with health issues and family challenges, his musical abilities developed quickly, and he began to compose and perform increasingly frequently. After settling with his family in Pozsony in 1894, he became more involved in composition and performance of chamber works. His skill as a pianist in particular flourished, and he made a name for himself while studying at the Liszt Academy under the same professors who had taught Ernő Dohnányi, four years his senior. His development as a composer centered around a newfound interest in Hungarian folk music. An accomplished ethnomusicologist, Bartók traveled across Europe with Zoltan Kodály collecting folk songs that would later serve as inspiration for the melodies of many of his compositions. This folk influence is what shaped Bartók's most well-known compositional style, and had a significant impact on his two Sonatas for Violin and Piano.

Bartók's Sonatas for Violin and Piano were composed as a pair, the first being completed in 1921 and the second in 1922. The sonatas were both dedicated to Jelly d'Aranyi, an acclaimed violinist who happened to be the great-niece of prominent violinist Joseph Joachim. d'Aranyi, a British violinist born in Hungary, attended the Hungarian National Royal Academy in Budapest to study violin when she was just 10 years old. Her career launched five years later, when she performed a series of joint recitals with her sister and fellow violinist Adila. Bartók's relationship to d'Aranyi dates back to 1902, when he first began joining the d'Aranyi family for chamber music readings while he was at the Liszt Academy. The d'Aranyis soon moved to England, but Adila and Jelly returned to Hungary in 1921. In the intervening years, Jelly had become a formidable violin virtuoso, so upon her return to Hungary Bartók reached out to rekindle their musical relationship. Before leaving Hungary for London, Jelly requested that Bartók compose a work for her, and thus the first Sonata was composed. Their partnership continued through to the Second Sonata, where Jelly d'Aranyi's rhapsodic and virtuosic playing style inspired the phrasing and technical difficulty of this work.

Breaking from tradition is a theme in this recital program, and Bartók's Second Sonata is no exception. Like the Dohnányi Sonata, this Sonata refrains from utilizing the traditional structures and hallmarks of the traditional Romantic Sonata. For one, the structure of this work is in two movements, rather than the more traditional three-movement structure most common to sonatas. This structure can be attributed to the Hungarian *verbunkos* tradition, which Bartók used in many of his chamber music pieces. The first movement, more lyrical and rhapsodic, is the *lassù* section, and the second movement is the faster and more lively *friss* section. Secondly, the piano and violin have limited sharing and imitation of thematic material. Each instrument is almost its own separate entity, and the two only happen to be playing together. The violin and piano are given different roles, with the violin taking a legato and lyrical role, while the piano is treated more as an angular and rhythmic tool, at times sounding more like a percussion instrument than a piano.

This Sonata marked the end of Bartók's expressionist compositional phase and is considered to be one of his most atonal works, coming the closest to the chromaticism and serialization utilized by Schönberg and others in that school of theory. During Bartók's expressionist period from 1918-1922,

much of his output was strongly atonal. He wrote that he "recognized the need for the 'equality of rights of the individual 12 tones,'" which is evident in the overarching lack of clear tonal center in the piece. Bartók identified the Second Sonata as being in C Major, but the overall tonality is challenging to discern. Instead, the most consistent harmonic feature in the piece is the F#-C tritone, prominent in both movements, and it is not until the final chord of the piece that the key signature is realized.
A single low F# in the piano begins the first movement and introduces a rhapsodic passage in the violin played in the style of a *hora lunga*, which translates to 'long song'. This is an instrumental idiom from Romania that Bartók studied and recorded during one of his ethnomusicological research expeditions in 1913. The idiom is improvisatory in nature and gives the movement's opening a feeling of wandering. The nearly bar-to-bar changes in tempo and meter add to the open-ended feeling. The rest of the first movement is structured in Sonatina form, which is similar to the more traditional Sonata form but lacks a complete development section. In lieu of a development, the main theme is instead varied extensively, returning a total of five times but slightly altered during each iteration.

The first movement then moves *attacca* into the second movement, with little time for either musician to catch their breath. Listen for the connection between the two movements, where an unsuspecting descending line (A-G#-F#-E-D-C) in the violin at the end of the first movement is replicated as an ascending line (C-D-E-F#-G#-A), played pizzicato, in the opening of the second movement. Subtle musical connections such as this can be found scattered throughout the Sonata. Also listen for ways in which the violin begins to be treated more as a percussive element. The performer is instructed to play *battuto* (literally translated as 'beaten,' using a very percussive and short bow stroke), *col legno* (hitting the strings with the wood of the bow instead of the hair), and *ponticello* (playing close to the bridge of the violin, which produces a glassy sound) at various points in the movement, all of which are able to alter the timbre of the instrument. All of these are used to alter the two subjects in their subsequent appearances.

The second movement's rhythmically steady introduction, with strong piano chords and pizzicato in the violin, soon gives way to a nearly out-of-control dance, with the violin playing a flurry of notes while the piano provides a steadier and more staccato rhythmic motor. The first two subjects introduced at the beginning of the movement find themselves repeated over and over in a variety of time signatures, tempi, and textures. It is only a quirky trio in the middle of the movement, with the piano playing cluster chords and the violin delivering an off-kilter, humorous melody that breaks from the cyclic nature of the rest of the movement. The recapitulation at the end of the movement uses the two initial themes but accelerates the tempo and complicates the texture. All of a sudden, the acceleration gives way to a short violin cadenza that results in a final, resounding iteration of the very first *hora lunga* theme from the first movement. After this final statement in the violin, the piece as a whole begins to wind down. The dissipation of energy continues through to the last chord, a widely spaced C Major triad that resolves the piece harmonically, and the movement evaporates quietly. The serene ending leaves room for contemplation and reflection following twenty minutes of organized chaos.