

**Folk influences in concert repertoire for the violin:
A Performer's Perspective.**

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Abstract

The submission focuses on the performance of violin works that incorporate elements of folk music. It investigates some of the ways in which traditional folk melodies are utilised in violin repertoire and considers the implications for performance. It recognises that when performing music inspired by folk idioms the classical violinist often needs to adopt a different set of technical and musical objectives relevant to the cultural origin of the work.

The submission takes the form of two CD recordings with a supporting exegesis. The exegesis discusses those aspects of the performances that stem from the cultural traditions to which the repertoire is related.

Due to the broad nature of this topic my investigation was confined to selected works that stemmed from English and Hungarian traditional music. The exegesis examines the relevance of the research and the application of these discoveries in performance. The main focus is the incorporation of traditional Hungarian characteristics in the performance of Bartók's *Rhapsody No 2 for Violin and Piano*, and Kodály's *Duo for Violin and Violoncello, Op 7*. Discussion then moves to Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* and the differences required to recreate the sound of the traditional English fiddler.

Repertoire

CD Recording of Recital 1 – British-influenced music

Henry Purcell - Sonata in G minor for Violin and Continuo

Track 1	I.	Adagio-	
	II.	Allegro	3,56
Track 2	III.	Adagio-	
	IV.	Allegro	3,05

Joseph Gibbs - Sonata No. 5 in E major

Track 3	I.	Adagio	7,30
Track 4	II.	Vivace	2,02
Track 5	III.	Saraband	1,29
Track 6	IV.	Giga	1,50

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Lark Ascending – *Romance for Violin and Orchestra*

Track 7			13,13
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Max Bruch - Scottish Fantasy, Op 46.

Track 8	I.	Introduction: Grave – Adagio Cantabile	7,23
Track 9	II.	Allegro	
	III.	Adagio – Andante sostenuto	12,18
Track 10	IV.	Finale: Allegro guerriero	8,57

Total Time: 61,43

Associate Artists

Harpsichord: Glenys March (Tracks 1-6)

Violoncello: Brendon Pearn (Tracks 1-6)

Piano: Alexander Hanysz (Tracks 7-10)

CD Recording of Recital 2 - Music from Hungary

Ernst von Dohnányi - Violin Sonata in C sharp minor, Op 21.

Track 1	I.	Allegro appassionato	6,17
Track 2	II.	Allegro ma con tenerezza	4,35
Track 3	III.	Vivace assai	6,39

Zoltán Kodály - Duo for Violin and Violoncello, Op 7.

Track 4	I.	Allegro serioso non troppo	8,40
Track 5	II.	Adagio	9,27
Track 6	III.	Maestoso e largamente, ma non troppo lento – Presto	9,08

Béla Bartók - Second Rhapsody (*Folk Dances*) for Violin and Piano

Track 7	I.	Lassú (<i>Moderato</i>)	4,37
Track 8	II.	Friss (<i>Allegro Moderato</i>)	6,39

Total Time: 56,03

Associate Artists

Piano: Alexander Hanysz (Tracks 1-3, 7-8)

Violoncello: David Sharp (Tracks 4-6)

Thesis Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now and hereafter known.

Signed: _____

M. Radke

September 2007

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Special Thanks go to:

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My principal supervisor Dr David Lockett.

My co-supervisors/violin teachers James Cuddeford and Terence Tam.

Brendon Pearn for his assistance with the transfer of musical examples.

1. Area of Research

The aim of my research has been to investigate traditional folk melodies that are utilised in violin repertoire and to consider their implications for performance. While there are many resources that examine the historical and cultural aspects of folk music, little material exists that applies this knowledge to the performance of concert repertoire. As a violinist I have always struggled to capture the true essence of a work that contains obvious folk origins. The purpose of this study was to enable me to achieve a more authentic sense of style in the performance of my chosen repertoire.

Success when performing a folk inspired composition lies in consideration of the traditional idiosyncrasies and sonorities found in the music's original context. The classical violinist often needs to adopt an expanded set of technical and musical objectives relevant to the cultural origin of the work. Despite traditional fiddlers often being virtuosic performers, their technical grounding is often unorthodox due to little or no training. This differs from the classical violinist who has spent many years refining every aspect of their playing. These contrasting backgrounds create some difficulty when performing a folk influenced work, since players accustomed to seeking a highly polished playing style may need to imitate the raw, open sound of the fiddle. Aside from producing a distinctive sonority, the traditional fiddler plays instinctively, taking liberties with the tempi and decoration within a piece. Composers are able to incorporate some of these embellishments and tempo changes in their notation, however there are some aspects that are not possible to describe within the confines of Western notation. Visual notation cannot convey the spontaneity, sound quality and style found in the traditional context, leaving these interpretative issues to the performer's discretion.

Due to the broad nature of this topic, my investigation was confined to selected works that stemmed from English and Hungarian traditions. This choice incorporated three composers who are closely connected with folk music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. These composers spent lengthy periods within their respective rural communities collecting and notating folksongs in the early 20th Century.

2. Method of Investigation

The early stages of research covered a wide area of cultural music through listening and reading. This initial overview contributed to better informed decisions regarding repertoire and its subsequent performance.

My idea to present works of British origin proved to be a successful choice. The majority of my research in this area focussed on the influence of folksong in the compositions of Vaughan Williams, in particular *The Lark Ascending*. In this work the composer does not use direct folksong quotation. Instead, his melodic and rhythmic designs are based on elements of English folksong.

My rather ambitious intention to present an overview of works influenced by Eastern European traditions was soon quashed due to its extremely broad arena. A short study of Bartók's *Six Romanian Folk Dances* for a seminar presentation sparked an interest to further explore his compositions. From this, I chose to limit my detailed investigation to Hungarian-inspired works. Within this parameter there are many resources – particularly journal articles – and a number of suitable works for analysis and performance. A study of this nature leads one directly to the collaborative efforts of Bartók and Kodály in compiling an authentic Hungarian folksong collection. This innovation impacted upon many of their compositions. For a more detailed examination – and later performance – I chose Bartók's *Rhapsody no 2 for Violin and Piano* and Kodály's *Duo for Violin and Violoncello Op 7*. Despite both works being distinctively Hungarian in character, the composers each approached the task in totally different ways.

Research into the folk influences behind the works of Vaughan Williams, Bartók and Kodály shed a new and interesting perspective on their music. The playing style of a traditional fiddler is often implied through the utilisation of characteristic melodic and rhythmic gestures. The performance approach required for *The Lark Ascending* is vastly different from that needed for the Hungarian repertoire. From my investigations and the subsequent performances, I felt more comfortable recreating the

sonorities of Hungarian folk music than I did the folk elements customary to English culture.

3. The Hungarian Tradition

During my investigation of Hungarian music, it became evident that many factors contributed to its overall development. It evolved from a variety of traditions, with traces of these found in my chosen works. A short discussion of these influences appears below.

Three important components in the development of Hungarian music are:

1. The *verbunkos* tradition, including the *csárdás*
2. Gypsy music
3. Peasant music.

The *verbunkos* period began in 1780 and remained popular until the 1880s. The *verbunkos* were instrumental dances traditionally performed by the men. The defining musical characteristics included:

1. Rhythm characterised by a predominance of syncopation, triplets and dotted patterns
2. Ornamentation and melodic turns, attached to short and long notes alike
3. Widely arched, free melodies without words (*hallgató*)
4. Alternating sections of 'slow' and 'fresh' tempi
5. Binary or ternary form, usually with a Coda
6. Cadence-patterns accompanied by the clicking of heels (*bokázó*).

One of the most popular dances of the *verbunkos* period was the *csárdás*, which made its first appearance in the 1840s. This form of instrumental dance music was based on two distinct sections: *lassú* (slow) and *friss* (fast). Each section of the dance often contained many tunes, resulting in the *csárdás* becoming a medley of tunes progressing from slow to fast. Despite the *verbunkos* losing its popularity during the 1880s, the *csárdás* survived through its adoption in the works of later composers.

Within the gypsy music tradition there are two distinctive styles:

1. The Slow Song (*loki d'ili*): this represented the image of a sad face at the pub with a lone gypsy fiddler in the background.

2. The Dance Song (*khelimaski d'ili*): this was a fast song associated with the wild dancing of an intoxicated man showing the vigour, passion and strength of the Hungarian soul.

Both Bartók and Kodály shared the opinion that the romantic sentimentality that had become associated with Hungarian gypsy music was not an accurate representation of the Hungarian spirit. Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* exemplify this opinion for despite their title, they are closely linked to the qualities found in Hungarian gypsy music. Bartók and Kodály believed that the true Hungarian folk music was void of outside influences (i.e. the gypsies) and was the aurally developed music from Hungary's peasant communities.

During 1905-6 Bartók and Kodály travelled through many Hungarian regions, recording and notating a variety of uniquely Hungarian folksongs. It was the music uncovered in these ventures that directly impacted upon many of their compositions. From these discoveries Bartók concluded that there were two distinctive styles of Hungarian peasant music:

1. 'Old-Style' *Folksong* with the following characteristics:
 1. Recitative style by way of *parlando* rhythm (played as if spoken)
 2. Expression of a lament through the *parlando* and slow tempi
 3. Anhemitonic pentatonic scale (pentatonic scale without semitones)
 4. A descending melodic structure where the second half of a melody is transposed a fifth lower than the first
 5. A steady tempo despite changing rhythmic subdivisions
 6. Frequent use of melodic ornamentation.
2. 'New-Style' *Folksong* represented by:
 1. Repetitive, arched melodic structures
 2. Metronomic dance-like rhythm
 3. Tonal variation with use of the pentatonic scale, ancient Greek modes and the common major scale.

Bartók's Rhapsody No 2 for Violin and Piano

The inclusion of Bartók in a study of folk inspired compositions is almost mandatory as he was a key figure in the revival of traditional Hungarian music. Together with Zoltán Kodály, Bartók strove to preserve Hungarian folk music in its original, aurally developed form. He spent the most part of his career collecting and collating Hungarian folksongs and the folk music from his neighbouring countries. Bartók's extensive research into Hungarian folk music consequently influenced his compositions. The characteristic sonorities and idioms integrated with his own personal style, resulting in a series of works that explored the musical language of the peasants. The *Rhapsody no 2 for Violin and Piano* is a concise example of Hungarian-influenced music and embodies many elements that directly relate to my investigation. Bartók admitted to violinist and colleague Zoltán Székely that there are traces of nine direct folksong quotations in the *Rhapsody*. They are however, disguised amongst his own melodies and harmonies.

Bartók composed the *Rhapsody no 2* in 1929 for Székely and together they gave its première performance. Bartók revised the *Rhapsody* in 1945 to reduce the difficulty of some passages in the violin part. It was this version that Székely recorded with pianist Isobel Moore. Some of my musical ideas were drawn from this recording since it can reasonably be assumed that the interpretation was informed by Bartók's own approach. Bartók's wealth of detailed performance instructions is useful for the performer; however notation does not always sufficiently reflect the idiosyncrasies and sonorities that provide the Hungarian 'essence.' The archival recording articulated and solved some of these interpretative issues. These will be discussed below.

Bartók adopted the *csárdás* structure for his *Rhapsody no 2*. Within the *lassú* and *friss* sections he has incorporated many elements as previously described. The following discussion addresses some of the approaches to performance that assist in giving Bartók's *Rhapsody no 2* its presumed character. It focuses on ornamentation, timbre and rhythmic devices.

Ornamentation

The *lassú* section (*CD 2, Track 7*) requires a lament-like expression throughout. To reflect the customary recitative and *parlando* qualities associated with a lament, Bartók uses appoggiatura ornamentation combined with difficult rhythmic subdivisions. A traditional Hungarian fiddler instinctively adds ornamentation when performing a lament, hence Bartók's inclusion of it throughout the *lassú*. Examples 1-3 articulate some of the ideas behind my interpretation of these passages.

In Example 1, Bartók's placement of the appoggiaturas is not always consistent. This notation suggests that a spontaneous and improvisatory approach is required for its performance.

**Example 1: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
First movement, from bar 3.**

Moderato



The musical score consists of two staves of music in 4/8 time. The top staff is marked 'mp' and features a series of notes with appoggiaturas. The bottom staff continues the melody with similar ornamentation. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/8.

Example 2 further demonstrates the improvisatory qualities that formulate a lament. In this instance Bartók achieves a recitative-like passage by combining appoggiaturas with fully notated ornamentation. These rhythmical intricacies need to be performed effortlessly as a series of musical gestures to maintain the implied spontaneous character.

**Example 2: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
First movement, from upbeat to figure 3.**

II. 3 **quasi a tempo**

ritard. *p*

3 3 3 3

The ornamentation in Example 3 is unlike the previous examples for it is metrically notated using complex hemi-demi-semiquavers, triplet patterns and accented downbeats. A lament can encompass a variety of emotions and this passage demonstrates its passionate and insistent qualities. The accented demi-semiquavers in the first bar emphasise its distressed character and are best achieved on a fast down bow. The traditional fiddler chose bowings that best reflected the emotional attributes of a melody, a consideration that contributes to a more effective interpretation of this passage.

**Example 3: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
First movement, from figure 1.**

1 *f*

3 3

2

The passages shown in Examples 1 and 3 recur during the *lassú*, demonstrating the repetitive melodic structure typical of Hungarian music. Bartók slightly changes the embellishment of these melodies in each repetition. These changes inspire the player

to further explore the spontaneous elements of Hungarian folk music in keeping with the character of a peasant fiddler.

Apart from appoggiatura ornamentation, Bartók also utilises the mordent for melodic decoration, exploiting this idea at the beginning of the *friss* section (CD 2, Track 8). Bartók provides an array of directions in this passage (Example 4) which can be subject to various interpretations. The accents appearing above the beat suggest that the lower mordent is to begin on the beat rather than before – unlike most of the appoggiaturas previously discussed. The tenuto markings and *marcato, pesante* directives suggest a heavy on-the-string approach similar to that of a fiddler. The many articulation indications are sometimes interpreted as requiring a rough sound. However I chose to play this passage – as did Székely – well articulated but without forcing the tone.

Example 4: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, four bars before figure 1.

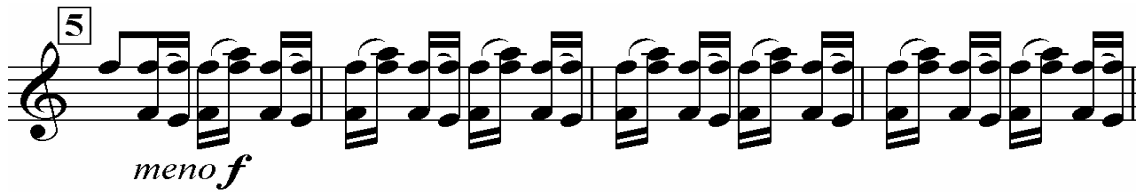
The image shows a musical score for two staves in 2/4 time. The top staff is marked 'Allegro moderato' and 'sempre simile'. The bottom staff is marked 'f marcato, pesante'. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations including accents, tenuto marks, and mordents. A box containing the number '1' is placed above the final note of the first staff.

Timbre

The rough, scratchy timbre that I avoided in Example 4 is, however, well suited to the drone figures that appear frequently in the *friss*. The bagpipe was integral to the Hungarian folk scene until the mid-19th century, when it was realised that the violin could also effectively produce a drone. Examples 5 to 7 demonstrate Bartók's use of the drone in three different guises in the *Rhapsody's friss* section.

Example 5 is not a typical representation of the drone since it alternates from above to below the melody. Consequently this creates a passage of awkward double-stops that require a relaxed and unlaboured execution.

**Example 5: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from figure 5.**



In the following violin figure (Example 6), Bartók has doubled the bottom note of the drone. To highlight this triple-stopped drone, special emphasis on the doubling of the open D string is necessary.

**Example 6: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from the bar before figure 10.**



The passage seen in Example 7 displays the most common use of the drone, for it remains as a single repeated note below a melodic line. The drone and low register suggest a *quasi* violent approach to display the rough qualities often associated with Hungarian fiddlers. To achieve this implied coarse sonority, the melody and drone should be treated with equal importance.

**Example 7: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from figure 22.**



Pizzicato is often used in the performance of traditional folksongs or dances as both a visual and musical effect. It remains strictly a string instrument technique, providing a short, abrupt colour unattainable in a bowed melody. Bartók utilises this facet toward the end of the *friss* in two forms.

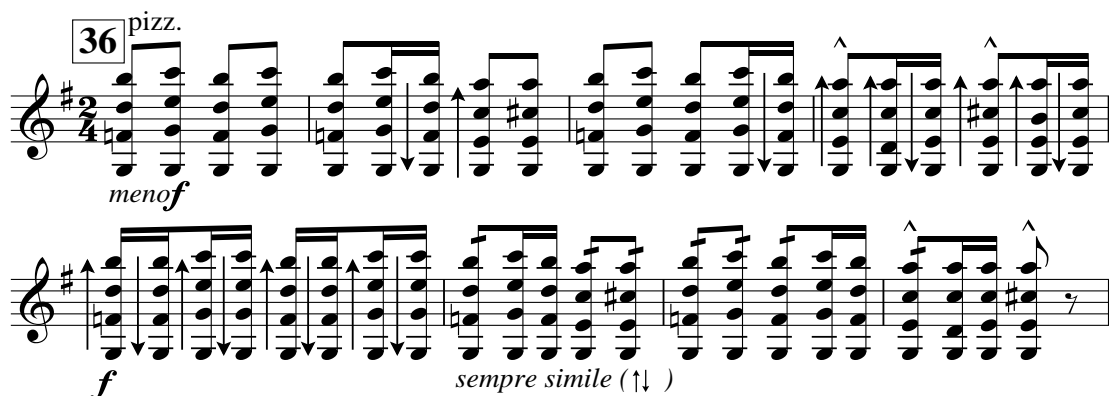
Example 8 demonstrates a combination of left hand *pizzicato* with bowed notes. The alternation of bowed and plucked notes is often used in folk influenced compositions for its virtuosic association. An effortless undertaking of this passage is necessary in imitation of its cultural counterpart.

Example 8: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from the fifth bar of figure 30.



Bartók reveals the versatility of *pizzicato* by its appearance as a strumming effect suggesting the sound of a guitar (see Example 9). The strumming from the violin provides the accompanying figure to the piano’s melodic line. The harmonic changes within the *pizzicato* chords are essential to the success of this passage in performance.

Example 9: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from figure 36.



Rhythmic Devices

The rhythmic foundation of most folksongs is influenced by a vocal line, or by the accompanying dance steps. Hungarian folksongs and dances often comprise rhythmically uneven passages, creating a limping effect. In the *lassú*, Bartók uses this design to develop the *parlando* and recitative elements of its lament character. This rhythmic progression is often notated by a semiquaver followed by a dotted quaver as shown in Example 10. Fast down bows are necessary for the preceding semiquavers to emphasise the uneven rhythmic pattern.

Example 10: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
First movement, from two bars before figure 8.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/8 time. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'Più mosso' and the Roman numeral 'IV'. A box containing the number '8' is placed above the final measure of the first staff. The second staff continues the melodic line. The performance instruction 'sempre f, sonoro' is written below the first staff.

In the *friss* section, Bartók creates a rhythmically uneven character by placing accents on the half beats of the bar as seen in Example 11 (below). This probably stems from the influence that dance steps had on the rhythmic structure. The performance of this tune requires the violinist to alter their usual bowing choices to stress the accents. Beginning the passage in Example 11 on an up bow facilitates the placement of accents on the weak beats. However, my downfall – despite the bowing change – was avoiding accents on the main beats, particularly in the following passage:

Example 11: Bartók – Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano.
Second movement, from figure 11.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff is marked 'Più mosso' and 'mp, leggero'. A box containing the number '11' is placed above the first measure. The second staff continues the melodic line, with a box containing the number '12' placed above the final measure. The notation includes various accents and bowing marks.

My investigation into the development of Hungarian music provided many insights that informed my approach to Bartók's *Rhapsody no 2 for violin and piano*. The abandonment and improvisatory character of the *lassú* was realised by maintaining a steady tempo throughout with respect to the indicated tempo changes. I tried to achieve the relaxed sound Székely attains in the decorated sections to reflect its recitative qualities. I addressed the changes of intensity during the *lassú* as variations in emotion that form part of its improvisatory character. The creation of too much excitement detracts from the vitality that the ensuing *friss* section employs. The unconventional approach of peasant fiddlers in their performance – in comparison to the standard expected from a classical violinist – often requires some discomfort and departure from the norm. Bowing, fingering and tempo decisions were made in this light to best reflect the traditional Hungarian spirit. Where possible in the *friss* section, I used open strings for they best imitate the raw sound produced by an untrained, traditional fiddler. The traditional Hungarian *friss* comprises a collection of short dances that grow progressively faster. The knowledge of this cultural attribute influenced my choice of a reserved opening tempo, leaving room for the movement's characteristic propulsion.

Kodály Duo for Violin and Violoncello, Op 7

Zoltán Kodály, like Bartók, sought to preserve traditional Hungarian music in his compositions. They each explored similar elements of the Hungarian style, yet the outcomes were vastly different. Bartók in his essay *Zoltán Kodály* provides this comparison between his own work and that of his colleague:

His art, like mine, has twin roots: it has sprung from Hungarian peasant music and modern French music. But though our art has grown from this common soil, our works from the very beginning have been completely different.

(Bartók 1962: 22)

Kodály employed many Hungarian characteristics throughout the *Duo for Violin and Violoncello, Op 7*. He utilised a different recurring rhythmic pattern in each of the three movements, reflecting the repetitive qualities of Hungarian music. He recognised the significance of the lament to peasant culture and used it as a basis of

the second movement. To demonstrate Kodály's incorporation of Hungarian folk elements in further detail, I have chosen to focus on the third movement (*CD 2, Track 6*).

The third movement adopts a structure similar to that of the *csárdás*. The *lassú-friss* formation is implied by the composer's tempo indications *Maestoso e largamente, ma non troppo lento – Presto*. The solo violin introduces the movement with the customary opening lament of the *csárdás*. Kodály utilises the recitative qualities through *parlando* rhythm and varied rhythmic patterns. The *forte* opening suggests that the lament is far from subdued; rather implying that an impassioned character is needed. Kodály indicates to play this passage on the G string (as seen in Example 12) which provides the raw sonority often associated with Hungarian music. Other than this, the notation provides only limited instructions for the performer.

In imitation of the traditional fiddler, I used rubato in the opening melody to clearly express its lament character. Rather than leaving this passage as a 'cadenza-like' bar, Kodály has used a variety of time signatures to show that some metric structure is necessary (see Example 12). The third and fourth bars of this passage advocate a gathering of speed with the ascending note-pair pattern. This is heightened in the fifth bar by the repeated motif leading to the top of the phrase.

**Example 12: Kodály – Duo for violin and violoncello, Op7.
Third movement, bars 1-5.**

Maestoso e largamente, ma non troppo lento. (♩ = 100)



Although most of the *lassú* section retains a strong dynamic, the concluding *lento* provides an emotional contrast. This melody is reminiscent of the lyrical and mournful second movement.

I performed the passage in Example 13 *senza vibrato* to emphasise the change in character. This static interpretation is implied by Kodály's indication for a harmonic on the first note since vibrato is not possible on a natural harmonic. I returned to *poco vibrato* at *Tempo I* to add colour to the repeated patterns. Character change is an important component of Hungarian music and shows the earlier influence of gypsy music. The change in emotion also creates a more successful lament.

**Example 13: Kodály – Duo for violin and violoncello, Op7.
Third movement, 18 bars after figure 1.**

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It is marked 'Lento.' and starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody features a triplet of eighth notes. The time signature changes to 4/4, then 6/4, and finally back to 3/4. The bottom staff also begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It is marked 'Tempo I.' and starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction 'sempre dim.'. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a 'morendo' section, and ends with a '(secco)' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Kodály portrays many peasant qualities in the *Presto* through the use of drones, repetitive rhythmic figures, rapid quaver passages and ornamentation. In comparison to the *friss* section in Bartók's *Rhapsody* – where the melodic material changes frequently – Kodály keeps these deviations to a minimum. He has structured the *Presto* in the model of a Rondo wherein the main theme is interspersed with new melodies.

The first of these diversions (shown in Example 14) is playful and light in character. The violoncello imitates the bagpipe by accompanying the violin with a single drone. I chose to play this melody entirely on the E string for a bright and relaxed sound. To achieve *sul E* in this passage an octave shift from bar 4 to bar 5 is both necessary and appropriate within the folk context.

The melodic structure of this melody is interesting for it is based on two three-bar ideas separated by a fifth (bars 4-6 and bars 7-9 of Example 14). Melodic transposition by a fifth is often found in traditional Hungarian folksongs and dances (refer to page 5).

Kodály has provided specific notation regarding the length of notes through his placement of a *tenuto* on the second beats of bars 7 and 13. I played the unmarked quavers short to provide greater contrast to the *tenuto* notes. All the appoggiaturas are played slightly before the beat with an implied vibrant spirit.

**Example 14: Kodály – Duo for violin and violoncello, Op7.
Third movement, 19 bars after figure 6.**

The musical score for Example 14 consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the violin and cello parts. The tempo is marked 'Poco meno mosso. (♩ = 108)'. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 2/4. The violin part begins with a rest, followed by notes with tenuto marks and appoggiaturas. The cello part plays a drone accompaniment of half notes. The second system continues the violin melody with more appoggiaturas and tenuto marks, and the cello part continues the drone accompaniment.

Kodály uses some appoggiatura ornamentation in each movement of the *Duo*. In Example 15 from the *Presto* he exploits appoggiaturas by decorating nearly every note. This is an embellishment of the melody found in Example 14.

The *quasi rubato* marking in Example 15 (with the assistance of this extensive ornamentation) is in the spirit of the improvisatory character of Hungarian music. Throughout this passage it is necessary to maintain an unlaboured sound to attain a *quasi* spontaneous effect. This proves rhythmically difficult in bar 8 due to the ornamented and accented quintuplet figure, and also in bar 12 with the inclusion of an extra appoggiatura on the second beat. The violoncello accompaniment again replicates a drone, only this time it takes the form of a repeated *pizzicato* chord.

A *mysterioso* character is needed for the performance of this passage to provide variation from its earlier cheerful appearance. Adherence to the fluctuating dynamics is imperative to the expressive qualities of this melody.

**Example 15: Kodály – Duo for violin and violoncello, Op7.
Third movement, 14 bars after figure 11.**

Meno mosso. (♩ = 76-80)

pizz. *mf* molto capriccioso, quasi rubato *p*

sempre pp ugualmente, senza cresc.

8 *f* 5 *p*

12 *f* *mp* 3

From the outset of his career, Kodály was determined to compose only Hungarian-influenced music. This is particularly evident in his early string chamber works, the period of his *Duo for Violin and Violoncello*. Kodály's incorporation of Hungarian musical elements in his compositions may be more reserved than in the case of Bartók, however, the nationalistic origin of each is unmistakable.

Vaughan Williams - *The Lark Ascending*

Ralph Vaughan Williams¹ collected over 800 English folksongs in the ten years following 1903, the same period in which Bartók and Kodály were collecting Hungarian folksongs. His intentions were quite different from those of Bartók and Kodály, for in comparison, Vaughan Williams took a more subtle approach incorporating his discoveries into his compositions. Hence, the performance of his

¹ Notes on Names:

Ralph's grandfather, Sir Edward Vaughan Williams, seems to have been the first member of the family to use the double-barrelled but unhyphenated name. All his sons were so named and though occasionally – at school or in the army – Ralph was called Williams it is not correct. Ralph's name was pronounced Rafe, any other pronunciation used to infuriate him. (Ursula Vaughan Williams 1964:xv)

works requires a different set of stylistic qualities from those needed for the Hungarian works.

Many English folksongs contain distinct pastoral themes, and Vaughan Williams drew on these in many of his works. He often used a combination of direct folksong quotation with original tunes modelled on English folk melodies. The performer needs to achieve a clean, refined sound to represent the idyllic character often associated with pastoral music.

The Lark Ascending (CD 1, Track 7) expresses the spirit of English folk music yet has no direct quotations from the folksongs that Vaughan Williams collected. Similarly to Bartók and Kodály, Vaughan Williams' research strongly influenced his own compositional style with the result that many of his works replicated the musical idiom of rural England. This is evident not only in his short works, but also in large-scale compositions including his opera *Hugh the Drover*, and early symphonies, in particular his third – *A Pastoral Symphony*.

Vaughan Williams was an accomplished choral and vocal composer often using English texts and poems as the foundation for his work. *The Lark Ascending* was his first instrumental work that was based on a poetic text. In the absence of a vocalist, Vaughan Williams chose the solo violin to convey the essence of George Meredith's words:

THE LARK ASCENDING

*He rises and begins to round,
He drops the sliver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.*

*For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.*

*Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.*

GEORGE MEREDITH

The correlation of music to text is significant, emphasised by the composer's inclusion of the poem as a prelude to the score. This strong connection implies that *The Lark Ascending* is largely a programmatic work, following the flight of a lark over the English countryside.

The lark's song is represented by a recurring pentatonic theme shown in Example 16. It is embellished with each appearance. I performed this theme using open strings wherever possible to create a natural sound in imitation of both the lark and the traditional fiddler (see Example 16). Vaughan Williams indicates that this cadenza section is to be played *sur la touche* (on the fingerboard) and *senza misura* (without measure). The latter suggests that rubato is an essential ingredient of the performance. The combination of this freedom with a soft dynamic allows the organic character of the melody to unfold naturally.

**Example 16: Vaughan Williams – The Lark Ascending
From bar 3**

Cadenza
sur la touche
pp
senza misura

The theme from Example 16 appears throughout the piece in various guises. Each time it is revisited, the improvisatory approach is needed to maintain its folk-like character.

Apart from melodic repetition in *The Lark Ascending*, Vaughan Williams also utilises folk concepts such as the drone and consecutive fifths. Unlike the role of these devices in Hungarian music, their application here is subtle. The drone often acts as an accompanying figure to the embellished solo violin melodies. The violin does not simultaneously produce both the drone and melodic line; rather the drone is provided by the accompanying instruments. Both Examples 16 and 17 have a drone accompaniment from the strings.

Vaughan Williams uses rising and falling consecutive fifth patterns recalling their significance in English folk music. His extensive groundwork revealed that the inclusion of fifths must be subtle and inconspicuous to remain within cultural context. This differs from the use of fifths in Hungarian music for there they are represented as harsh and deliberate. The inclusion of consecutive fifths impacts upon the performer for – aside from open strings - fifths are often uncomfortable to execute gently.

Example 17 demonstrates the composer's use of alternating fifths within a *pianissimo* dynamic. The indicated *allargando* assists with the shifts and evokes an improvisatory character. I found the fifths particularly challenging in Example 17, leading to an inefficient use of the *allargando* in my performance. Consequently, this motif was not as relaxed as I intended. Example 17 is accompanied by a quiet string drone.

**Example 17: Vaughan Williams – The Lark Ascending
Third bar of figure S.**



An interesting discovery was the extra verse to George Meredith's poem that Vaughan Williams included on his manuscripts but not on the published score:

*He is the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose banks
And eyes of violet while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreath....*

Perhaps this explains the appearance of a robust folk dance in the middle section of the piece, which is not reflected in the originally presented text.

The stylistic approach to performing *The Lark Ascending* requires attention to the subtleties of English folk music. Vaughan Williams incorporated many of its stereotypical qualities without directly quoting folksongs from his collection. Recognition of his clever use of consecutive fifths and the drone, together with a clear sound quality all contribute to a culturally aware performance of *The Lark Ascending*.

Relevance of other performed works

For the purpose of a musically balanced program, I included a number of other works that contain some relevance to the folk influenced theme. However, the folk elements are not as strong as those in the previously discussed pieces.

The *Scottish Fantasy Op 46* by Max Bruch (*CD 1, Tracks 8-10*) contains distinct transcriptions of traditional Scottish folksongs even though the composer never visited Scotland to experience its musical traditions firsthand. Rather, his love for Scottish music grew from studying the six volume collection of folksongs *The Scots Musical Museum* (collected and edited by Robert Burns, compiled by James Johnson). Each movement of the *Scottish Fantasy* is based on a different Scottish folksong that Bruch explores in his own personal way. The movements and their corresponding folksongs are as follows:

- I – *Auld Rob Morris*
- II – *The Dusty Miller*
- III – *I'm a down for lack of Johnnie*
- IV – *Scots Wha Hae*

(Fifield 1988: 166-7)

I preceded *The Lark Ascending* with two little known English works: *Sonata in G minor for Violin and Continuo* by Henry Purcell (CD 1, Tracks 1-2) and *Sonata no 5 in E major* by Joseph Gibbs (CD 1, Tracks 3-6). The intention was to provide examples of the development of English music from the early Baroque period to the beginning of the 20th Century. It is worth noting that there is a gap of more than 150 years between Gibbs' and Vaughan Williams' works, largely due to the absence of any widely recognised English composers during this period. These two works are loosely connected to the overall research area since the typical style and structure of the Baroque period often drew upon popular tunes and dance forms as a foundation.

As a prelude to the works by Kodály and Bartók I performed the *Violin Sonata in C sharp minor, Op 21* by their compatriot Ernst von Dohnányi (CD 2, Tracks 1-3). Like most of Dohnányi's compositions, the *Violin Sonata* reflects the late Romantic period both structurally and stylistically, containing no obvious links to his Hungarian heritage. Despite the absence of Hungarian characteristics in his compositions, Dohnányi contributed to the rekindling of Hungarian music in other ways. As the conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and musical director for the Hungarian National Radio, Dohnányi programmed many of Bartók's and Kodály's works for performance and broadcast. He also conducted the orchestral première of Bartók's *Rhapsody no 2*. This contribution was equally important in assisting the recognition and appreciation of Hungarian music in Hungary and abroad.

4. Conclusion

From my investigation into the use of traditional folk elements in violin repertoire, I became better equipped for the performances of my chosen repertoire. Through detailed research into each respective culture it can be established that while many of the musical characteristics in both traditional Hungarian and English music are similar, their interpretation is significantly different. I became aware that the music often utilises passages of consecutive fifths, drone accompaniments and repeated rhythmic motifs. My research revealed that these elements require vivid projection in the Hungarian works whereas a restrained approach is more suitable for the Vaughan Williams.

The strong influence of the traditional fiddler within rural communities impacts on the classical violinist when performing the discussed works. Often a spontaneous and improvisatory approach – particularly in decorated passages – is necessary to recreate the character and sonority typical of folk traditions.

The research that I have undertaken has assisted me in the preparation of my recital repertoire in a number of different ways. Some of the significant discoveries can be summarised as follows:

1. The printed score is limited in its ability to convey the spontaneity and individuality associated with the music's traditional context. Rubato is often essential to interpretation
2. Ornamentation is utilised frequently in folk music and appears either as musical shorthand (for example trills or appoggiaturas) or as full notation. Its execution requires a relaxed, spontaneous approach
3. Many passages reflect the raw, open sound of the fiddle. The effect can often be achieved by slightly altered fingering and bowing choices
4. Rhythm is influenced by the music's accompanying dance steps which often appear as uneven, with irregular placement of accents. Slight changes in bowing choices can often enhance this effect.

The variation in approach to the performance of folk-inspired compositions is not only relevant to the Hungarian and English works discussed in the present context. Conducting a similar investigation into the influences of traditional Spanish music in Sarasate's violin works or the Jewish influences in Bloch's *Nuit Exotique*, would reveal another set of attributes necessary for a culturally aware performance. Exploring the origins of a folk-influenced work helps to define its cultural identity and contributes to an authentic sense of style in its performance.

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