Pál Járdányi (1920–1966) was one of the most distinguished figures in Hungarian music during the years following the Second World War. He was an innovative researcher in the field of folk music, an eminent music critic, and a multifaceted teacher. Throughout a short creative life he pursued his own artistic and political beliefs, founded on the musical ideas of Bartók and Kodály. His most well known works are the Vörösmarty Symphony, the oratorio Előszó and choral works such as Hajnali tánce, Área madár and Gergő nótái. His orchestral, chamber music and vocal compositions are also deserving of the attention of composers, music lovers, and historians of music alike.

A sorozatban eddig megjelent:

Hubay Jenő (1858–1937)  
Kósa György (1897–1984)  
Kurtág György (1926)  
Szöllősy András (1921)  
Istvánffy Benedek (1738–1778)  
Lavotta János (1674–1820)  
Decsényi János (1927)  
Gárdonyi Zoltán (1906–1986)  
Durkó Žsolt (1934–1997)  
Mosonyi Mihály (1815–1870)  
Soproni József (1930)  
Sári József (1935)  
Kocsár Miklós (1933)  
Petrovics Emil (1930)  
Maros Rudolf (1917–1982)  
Lendvay Kamilló (1928)  
Dohmányi Ernő (1877–1960)  
Ránki György (1907–1992)  
Jeney Zoltán (1943)  
Szokolay Sándor (1931)  
Bihari János (1764–1827)  
Sugár Rézső (1919–1988)  
Bozay Attila (1939–1999)  
Szönyi Erzsébet (1924)  
Csiky Boldizsár (1937)  
Horusitzky Zoltán (1903–1985)  
Kadosa Pál (1903–1983)  
Fusz János (1777–1819)  
Pongrácz Zoltán (1912)  
Dubrovay László (1943)  
Farkas Ferenc (1905–2000)
Portrait from the mid-1980s

Portrait taken in 1940
Veronika Kusz

Pál Járdányi
Pál Járddányi was born in Budapest on 30th January 1920. His name was registered as Pál Paulovics, but when he was eighteen he changed his surname to that of a 13th-century ancestor Andreas Temődek de Jardan. Pál’s father, István Paulovics, was an internationally recognised archaeologist and also an excellent amateur singer, who inherited his musical talents first and foremost from his father, a schoolmaster and cantor. Pál’s mother, Mária Eperjessey, was a trained teacher and talented amateur musician, whose expressive piano playing provided a worthy accompaniment to her husband during domestic musical evenings. Pál had just one sister, Márta. He began his formal study of music at the age of eight in Rome when the family accompanied István on a field trip. It was at this time that Pál’s musical talent revealed itself, and he mastered three years of violin playing material in six months. On returning home he studied violin with Ilona Votisky, and from the age of ten had piano lessons with Ella Bonin and then György Kósa. In addition to his instrumental studies he was also composing short pieces.

From the age of ten Pál was a pupil at the Saint Imre Gimnázium, which was run by the Cistercians. The eight years spent there were as equally decisive in his development as his inspirational family background. Two teachers in particular played an important role in his life. Frigyes Brisits, a researcher into the works of Mihály Vörösmarty, created in Pál an interest in the writings of the 19th-century poet, and Bénjámin Rajeczky, who helped in every possible way to encourage Pál’s development as a musician. It was at his suggestion that Pál studied composition with Lajos Bárdos from 1933, and he came to know the works of Bartók and Kodály in the choir conducted by Lajos Bárdos, under whose leadership he sang and later collected folksongs. Rajeczky was also indirectly responsible for enabling Pál to meet Bartók, an occasion which must have been a momentous experience for him. As a talented performer Járddányi played at numerous school functions and summer courses. From 1936 he continued his violin studies at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, with Éde Zathureczky.

The young Járddányi was also prominent among his fellow students in many other areas. Not only was he an outstanding student and successful sportsman, but he displayed intellectual leadership qualities. He had read avidly since his childhood, and as a teenager he made notes about his reading experiences. These writings reveal that he
Kodály, and joined the Hungarian Academy of Science’s Folk Music Research Group, who were involved in the extensive work of folk song classification and publishing.

At the turn of the decade Járđányi was busy composing. His first real success came with a performance of the First String Quartet under the auspices of the composers’ competition at the 1948 Bartók Festival. For political reasons he was awarded equal Second Prize (First Prize was not awarded). In 1951 at a meeting organised by the Association of Hungarian Musicians he came into open conflict with the communist powers. At one of the open sessions of the Association’s first full meetings, held during the first Hungarian Music Week (19th–26th November), Ferenc Szabó delivered a harsh criticism of Járđányi in connection with the politicised interpretation of a professional discussion with Bence Szabolcsi.7 Szabolcsi in his lecture spoke of the national characteristics of musical discourse, and emphasised the importance of 19th-century Hungarian traditions. In his reply, Járđányi stated that the adoption of the compositional ideals of Bartók and Kodály was a valid aspiration and, in his opinion, the fundamental role of the pentatonic scale. Consequently, during a discussion about the works Szabó, using the Divertimento Concertante as a pretext, accused Járđányi:

“While he, as a matter of principle, makes the idea of musical Hungarianess dependent solely upon the characteristics of the pentatonic scale [...] above everything. Hungarian járđányi regards the mastery of the masterpieces of Bartók and Kodály is called into question, then on a theoretical and artistic level Járđányi becomes a mouthpiece for a reactionary, anti-progressive musical racial theory.”

In addition Szabó expressly criticised Járđányi’s Divertimento, calling it superficial, non-party and apolitical.8 Because of Szabó’s grave and unjust charges Járđányi handed in his resignation from presidential membership of the Association, but this was not accepted. In spite of the politically-driven attacks on him Járđányi continued to compose, and his works met with increasing recognition.

Hajnali tanc [Dawn Dance] was awarded the Erkel Prize (1952), whilst his Vörösmarty-szimfonía [Vörösmarty Symphony] resulted not only in great audience acclaim and foreign interest, but also in a second Erkel Prize (1953) followed by a Kossuth Prize (1954).

In several respects 1956 proved to be a turning point in Járđányi’s life. It could be taken as symbolic that on the very day that a recording of his Vörösmarty Symphony had been scheduled, 23rd October 1956, was also the day that marked the outbreak of the Revolution against Soviet domination. Járđányi had from an early age closely followed...
of Sciences. It was enthusiastically received by all present, including Kodály himself, and was welcomed as a solution to the pressing problem of the compilation and publishing of folksong. The essence of Járdañyi’s system is based on the melodic contour of the strophe, and practically acts as a summation of Bartók’s metric-rhythmic principles, and Kodály’s method based on the closing notes of the phrase. Járdañyi’s new classification system reached a wider audience in 1961 with the publication of the two volumes entitled Magyar népdaltípusok [Hungarian Folksong Types].

Work had already begun, in Magyar Népzene Tára [Collection of Hungarian Folkmusic], on the classification of melodies that were not associated with any occasion, using Járdañyi’s system, although he would ... in print. His work in ethnomusicology can be considered a landmark in other respects. In 1953–54 he wrote the so-called Törvénykönyv [Rule Book], which laid down guiding principles for the uniform notation of folksongs. He also laid down musical guidelines in Magyar Népzene Tára for classifying functional melodies (children’s songs, pairing songs and laments). In 1964 Járdañyi was invited by UNESCO to become director of a proposed International Ethnomusicology Research Centre to be established in Budapest, but for political reasons the plan did not materialise.

In 1963 Járdañyi’s mother died, and her death, like that of his father in 1952, was a source of much sorrow for him. The orchestral work Vivente e moriente is dedicated to her memory. Járdañyi became seriously ill in March 1966 and was admitted to hospital where, although becoming steadily weaker, he worked on the oratorio Elésszö [Prologue], a setting of the poem by Vörösmarty. He died on 29th July 1966.

Orchestral Works

Járdañyi’s prolific and continual succession of orchestral works proves that the orchestra can be regarded as his most natural medium, and also enables us to make a close study of his stylistic development. From childhood Hungarian folkmusic had been a decisive and inspirational source for him, both in his life and in his works, as also were the works of Bartók and Kodály. “Namely, he almost ostentatiously professed and promoted the cause of this great artistic inheritance” declares István Kesekeméth. He never diverted from his chosen path, with which at the same time he expressed political opposition. This ensured that his life’s work was not divided by significant stylistic changes. However, this does not mean that, during a limited creative life—barely 26 years—stylistic periods are not
so Járdányi was ‘raising a flag’ for his unjustly criticised work. Tánzcene [Dance Music] (1950), scored for small orchestra, is written on a more modest scale than Divertimento, not only in its resources, but also in its technical and musical demands. Its seven movements of varying length each interpolate a folksong-like, unpretentious theme into different character portraits, and the sequence of movements forms a logical, symmetrical large-scale form. A simplified version of the theme of the opening movement forms the fleeting, intermezzo-like 3rd and 5th movements (16 and 11 bars respectively). In the finale a distant relation of the 1st movement theme is transformed into a spirited dance melody. These related, odd-numbered movements are interspersed with a scherzo-like piece, a longer dance with trio, and a meditative Oriental-sounding movement using augmented 2nds. The return of the theme as a ritornello, the sequence of dance movements and the title Tánzcene are all reminiscent of Bartók’s Tánzcsvit [Dance Suite]. The impetus behind the composition of the symphonic poem A Tisza mentén [By the River Tisza] (1951, 1956) is, according to Járdányi, a remark by Kodály referring to the importance of writing variations on a folksong. The composer’s use of folksongs from the Tisza region—one of which Járdányi arranged many times, Bajdóstik az árva madár [The Orphan Bird is Migrating] as the theme for his symphonic poem reflects the title of the work, as does its similarity in certain programmatic details to Sándor Petőfi’s poem A Tisza [The Tisza]. Moreover, the composer creates a semblance of the river by the uninterrupted flow of the music and the use of non-proportioned form: “Variations on two [...] melodies flow through the work. They flow—as does the water in a river. The individual variations do not form independent movements, but sections flowing from, and into, each other. Just as the river is at every moment different but nevertheless the same, perpetual change and perfect immutability [...] the melody also adorns itself in clothes of [...] different hue and a different size. However, the contours of its body, its essentials, are still recognisable.”

In 1952 Járdányi began the composition of what was to become his most well-known work—the Vörösmarty Symphony. This five-movement work, which was completed in 1953, was performed to critical acclaim in Hungary and later in London. Its sheer size makes it stand out from the other, shorter works in his oeuvre. Each movement is prefaced by either the title or opening line of a poem by Vörösmarty in order to indicate the programme: Hátsádbak rendületlenül [Oh Magyars, stand beside your land], Vírág és pillangó [Flower and Butterfly], Hová merült el szép szeméde világa [Where has
the Beautiful Lustre in your Eyes Descended?], Harci dal [Battle Song], A vén cigány [The Ancient Gypsy]. The order of the five movements accords with the year of the relevant poem (1836, 1841, 1843, 1848, 1854), which on the one hand paints a many sided portrait of the poet’s personality, and on the other hand provides an outline of his life and fate. The programme is not only expressed through the depiction of the musical character. In the case of A vén cigány the entire dramaturgy of the poem is mapped out, and because of this the movement and the whole work ends on a note of optimism. The speech-like rhythms in the first bars of the odd-numbered movements—Hazádnak rendületlenül; Hová merült el szép szemed világa; A vén cigány—reflect exactly the rhythm of the poem’s first line(s). Furthermore the 1st movement quotes the character initial 4th interval from Egressy’s setting of Szózat [Appeal]. This creates the musical unity of the whole symphony, and is recalled many times. In the deepest despair of the last movement it becomes distorted into a tritone, and reappears in its original form as a focus of the coda. Járdányi’s critics, who had made such devastating remarks about the Diverimento Concertante and other works influenced by Bartók and Kodály, were this time unanimous in their praise: "he has turned to the problems of life with a more human interest, [...]. in his creative work he has turned to the listening public with increasing intensity." Their verdict was by no means substantiated, because although Járdányi had drawn his programme from a 19th-century poet, had not used folksong themes, had turned to symphonic form, he did not deny his models. This is indicated by the use of a suite-like form instead of a genuine symphonic dramaturgy, the quasi-Kodály parlando themes, the use of sforzatura à la Bartók, the use of the scale containing an augmented 4th and minor 7th, and the more explicit motivic relationships to, amongst others, Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra. In this way Járdányi had, as a composer, given a tendentious reply to the political accusation of 1951. József Ujfalussy wrote about the events: "I have a picture before me of Járdányi at the Association playing through his Symphony and of Ferenc Szabó as he greets the excellent new work. Would he not have noticed that Járdányi had done the same as Michelangelo when he wanted to be just a sculptor? Instead he had to daub the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He therefore filled it with paintings of statues." The bleak and moving sound of the initial unison theme of the Largo 1st movement precedes the work’s momentous message like a motto. The Mendelssohnian Virág és pillangó opens up before us the poetic world of Vörösmarty’s Csongor és Tünde. The fluttering flute part, resonant trills and lithé, melody in 3/4 time characterise this ternary form, scherzo-like movement. The intimate middle movement, with its memories of the poet’s love lyrics, excels itself with its speech rhythms. It is not only in the flute solos of the opening bars that the words of the poem pulsate strongly; they also make themselves felt later on. The dotted rhythm pattern of the closing bars is, for example, undoubtedly a reiteration of the short word “Hová?” [Where?]. The folk dance inspired, sweeping momentum of Harci dal stands apart from the other movements. The climax of the symphony is without doubt the funereal music and triumph of the last movement, A vén cigány, whose substance and broad emotional span is not really equalled in the other movements. Járdányi’s account of the circumstances surrounding its composition invests the programme of the symphony with a fresh motive: “I completed it [the Vörösmarty Symphony] sitting by my father’s deathbed. I was thus able to portray the Ancient Gypsy not only from the visions of a sick poet. There was also another face bidding farewell to life, and struggling with death.” Without disputing the seminal importance of the final movement, other interpretations consider the dramaturgically-placed central movement (Hová merült el szép szemed világa) to express the work’s momentous message: “Perhaps we are not overestimating the composer’s intentions if we assume that he is here conveying a poetic warning to the whole nation: »You should not sell possessions for dazzling money, which you then clutch in your hands for no purpose: the price of repentance for the treasure of your expected salvation will be when you open your arms to flattering illusions.«” During the last months of 1959 Járdányi composed his one-movement Concerto for Harp and Small Orchestra, which has more in common stylistically with the orchestral works of the ’60s. It is dedicated to his wife, the harpist Erzsébet Devecsei. Analysts justly compare the work with Bartók’s Third Piano Concerto because of both its dedication and its gentle, but dignified tone. The main feature of the Harp Concerto is that the solo part does not stand out against the orchestral part, but quietly merges into it. With the deliberate suppression of the role of the orchestra the serene tone of the work deploys a wide range of expression, but in its tone colours and interplay of motifs it is never
part, in sharp contrast to the Concerto for Harp, contrasts strongly with the tutti part, both in the meditative first movement and in the dance-like fast movement (which hides its folk inspiration with augmented thematic forms and uses imaginative dynamic effects). This distinction, which sometimes resembles a solitary, forsaken struggle, and at other times an evasive-like gesture, only rarely dissolves into forgotten moments. According to Anna Dalos’s *Concertino*, along with Járdaynýi’s other late works, is evidence of his inner creative conflict vis-à-vis opposition towards new musical experiments that were also taking place in Hungary: “in these works he is already coming face to face with another musical language, and is concerning himself which of the two – old or new – he should choose.”

The other structural pillar of Járdaynýi’s oeuvre is chamber music, a genre that occupied him throughout his life. Characteristically Járdaynýi, the composer of chamber music, also wrote from time to time as a teacher. Since more than half of his chamber music output has an educational purpose it is written as not to confront performers with daunting technical demands. In addition to the works mentioned here Járdaynýi composed numerous shorter pieces for educational anthologies. His two earliest chamber music works, *Violin Duos* (1934–37) and *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1942) are unique as they are both written for identical instruments. The *Violin Duos* date from his student days at the gimnázium, and the *Sonata for Two Pianos* from the year of his graduation from the Academy of Music. There is a distinct difference between the two as far as intent and technical abilities are concerned. The 11 violin duos were written by the teenage composer expressly for children, whereas the sonata is a veritable concert showpiece. As one critic wrote: “muscles bulge and strength increases.” In spite of this difference they are bound together by their style and frankly acknowledged compositional model, Bartók. Járdaynýi’s violin duos are so closely related to Bartók’s 44 Violin Duos of 1931 that they can almost be seen as a logical continuation. Like Bartók, Járdaynýi uses a folk-song melody in each one (many of which also appear in the Bartók series) accompanied by powerful chords or free melodic figures, and occasionally within a more complex, invention-like contrapuntal setting. The interest of the series is that the young composer, in his capacity as a folk-music researcher, strives to equal his masters, since he also takes melodies from his own collection as well as from those of Bartók, Lajtha and Vikár.
The Sonata, which started life as a string quartet but then, on Kodály’s advice, was rearranged for two pianos, is heavily indebted to the music of Bartók, whose influence is palpable in the melodic line of the 2nd subject of the opening movement, in the rhythm of the closing theme, in the terse initial motif and bitonal middle section of the slow movement, and in the swirling dance of the finale. At the same time one can see features of Járdaányi’s style emerging in his use of loose, transparent textures, his dramatically vigorous but not tragic mood, and above all in the refined lyricism of the middle movement. The work met with a favourable reception, and György Ligeti wrote: “In its clarity, breadth, and profundity of message it is a worthy companion to similar works by Bartók, Hindemith and Kadosa.”

It is obvious from the chamber works that Járdaányi’s instrument was the violin, as the majority of pieces written for two different instruments are scored for violin and piano. Moreover, these stand out not only by reason of their numerical superiority, but also because of the style of three other works that are not scored for violin and piano is closely linked with one or other of the violin and piano compositions. It is as if they are a variant of their partner, and not necessarily written later. The Concertino for Violin and Piano (1952), and the Sonatina for Flute and Piano (1982) form a pair, not only in their year of composition, but also in their educational function and musical attributes. The one-movement Concertino, which can be played in 1st position, is based upon two different elements, firstly a folk-inspired energetic theme making prominent use of the 4th interval, and a contrasting, more classically contoured cantabile episode in the Phrygian mode. The Hungarian folk-song motif system is similarly perceivable in the melodic patterns of the dynamic themes, tonal system and rhythm of the three-movement Sonatina for Flute and Piano. This work reveals its decidedly folk-music inspiration as early as the opening bars, when the incipit of the folk song Felzsállott a párva [The Peacock took Flight] occurs in the introductory bars of the piano part. Although it subsequently has no musical function, it anticipates the spirit of the piece, like a motto. The intermezzo-like central Alegro speaks in Járdaányi’s distinctive, refined and inspired cantabile voice. Like its pair it is in the Phrygian mode but with less folk-song inspiration than both the opening movement and the dance-like syncopation of the last movement. Melody for cello and piano (1952) and Arietta (1988) for violin and piano are linked by an unusual romantic idiom. The difference between the two works lies in their tonality. In the former the surging cello part, in spite of every emotion, does not deviate from its basic D minor tonality, whereas
Járdányi wrote four works for string quartet—the two string quartets (1947 and 1953–54), Quarsettino (1956) and Suite (1962). The latter two works are scored for three violins and cello instead of the normal quartet. (Suite can also be played by string orchestra). “The writer of these lines was with Járdányi at the Writers’ Retreat in Sárospatak in 1953 when the two quartets were nearing completion” writes István Barna in a review, “and I well remember that the miniature scores of the complete Bartók quartets and Beethoven’s late quartets were lying on his desk.” Later, in tune with István Barna’s recollections, Járdányi also declared in the dedication of the Second String Quartet the exceptional role played by his model (“In memoriam Belae Bartók”). It seems strange that the earlier quartet shows Bartók’s influence much more than this Second Quartet. György Króó regarded it as a sign of the times that at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the ’50s other composers’ chamber works, especially quartets, showed this tendency for “unnatural simplification.” Járdányi’s First String Quartet—the work that brought him his first taste of success and which critics praised for its masterful technique and feeling for balanced form—is characterised by its bold use of dissonance and complex textures. The most obvious influence is that of Bartók’s First String Quartet, with which it shares certain similar features, especially in the 1st movement. For instance, in its ternary structure, in the rhythm and dynamism of the middle section, and the spacing in the closing bars. There is no trace of harmonic or textural excess in Járdányi’s Second String Quartet either. Its first movement adopts a light, divertimento-style tone, and the melancholy tone of the typically lyrical variations in the middle movement never resorts to tragedy. The finale is remarkable for its unfailing melodic invention. The style of Quarsettino differs markedly from that of the quartets. Its 3 movements are constructed using a minimum of motifs, and it features many successions of identical and parallel chords. Consequently, there is a wild, passionate character about this short piece. The experimental 6-movement Suite is distinguished by its use of simple but unusual compositional devices, such as the continual changes in the accompaniment of Ugrótánc [Jumping Dance], the parallel 7ths in Éléjű [Bunch of Flowers], and the repetitive 4ths in Botladozó valčer [Stumbling Waltz].

Járdányi’s largest chamber work, and one of his most individual, is Fantasia and Variations on a Hungarian Folksong (1954–55), which uses as its theme the folksong beginning Én vagyok az, én vagyok a
Piano Sonata, which are based on austere percussive blocks of sound and a sketchy theme outlining a folksong, serve to enclose a mysterious-sounding slow movement and a light-hearted scherzo. The fundamental motif of the work is the interval of the 4th, which plays a central role in both the choral pillars of 4ths in the outer movements and in the curious anti-melody in the slow movement. The interval is also hidden in many other sections. It is, for example, subtly hinted at in the delicate 2/3 and 2/4 construction of the 3rd movement, which, moreover, anticipates the finale of the Second String Quartet.

The two Sonatinas (1982 and 1988) are related to each other in their youthful sound and sequence of folk inspired motifs (e.g. the constant use of 4th and 5th intervals in their melodies, their almost pentatonic tonality and the use of the mxolydian scale and drone accompaniment). They are also related to the chamber music works, and especially to the Sonatina for Flute and Piano. Moreover, the 2-movement form of the Second Piano Sonatina, its predominant use of pentatony in melodies and accompaniment figures alike, as well as the contemplative, slightly pastoral character of the opening movement, exhibit the same clarity of sound as the chamber music sonatas of 1965.

Choral Works

Járddányi's series of some 80 a cappella choral works deserve a special place in his output. The earliest (1973) and the last (1989) almost encompass his entire creative career. They can be divided into five groups, based on year of composition and their more important musical features. The first group comprises those works dating from 1983–88, followed by the sacred works of the 1940s. A third group consists of the numerous folksong arrangements of 1950–83. Works influenced by the traumatic events of 1956 form a fourth group, which is followed by the final group containing works written after 1980. It was undoubtedly the experience he gained as a member of Benjamin Ráczczy's choir at the Szent István Gimnázium that inspired the 17/18-year-old student to include choral works among his other first compositional experiments. It is above all Bartók’s influence that pervades these early works. **Hervadni kezdettem** [I was beginning to languish] (1937) for 3-part female choir was, like Bartók’s children’s choruses, set to a folk text and used folk-like idioms but his own music. Beyond this basic relationship the Bartókian model makes itself felt in numerous places in Járddányi's piece, primarily in its memories of the most sorrowful pieces in Bartók’s series **Ne lát talak volna!**. **Keserves, Boldongás** [Had I not seen you!, Lamenting Song, Wandering], but also in Járddányi’s canonic structure in the 2-part section, in the treatment of dissonance and in the texture of the 4th verse, where the contralto part carries the melody against the sustained sounds of the upper parts. The influence of the poet Endre Ady is also conspicuous in these early choral works, and a further five choruses dating from 1937 were settings solely of his verses. **Három körúsmű Ady Endre versekre** [Three Choral Works on poems by Endre Ady], **Kis karácsonyi önének** [A Short Christmas Song], and **Sóhajtás a hajnalban** [A Sigh at Dawn] (all 1987), are all notable for their intensely dramatic character, pronounced changes of mood, almost speech-like articulation, use of word rhythms and a high degree of dissonance. Járddányi’s harmonisation of the poem **Adja meg az Isten** [God will grant it] is worthy of attention. In the sections of the poem influenced by folk custom, Járddányi discards the otherwise dominating chromatic harmonies, and thus anticipates ... and its passionate but at the same time extremely sad emotional climax makes it the most successful of his youthful works.

The 1940s saw the composition of just two choral works, which can be regarded as unique in that they are the sole examples of sacred works in Járddányi’s oeuvre. The dedications explain the choice of a sacred, more elevated style. They are, in the case of Psalm 30 for mixed choir (30. zsoltár) (1942), **"Patri optimo, die natali quinquagesimo"** [To the best father, on his 50th birthday] and, in the case of the **Missa brevis** (1940, 1947) **"Károly nagyapám emlékének"** [In memory of my grandfather, Károly]. The common feature of these two works lies in their simplicity and in their use of canonic and imitative textures as constructional devices, and in the extensive use of word-painting. Nearly half the choral works date from the years 1950–1953 and they are almost all folksong arrangements on the Kodály model. Járddányi never succumbed to political pressure and was not associated with those composers who wrote songs for the masses. On the contrary, by writing arrangements of folksongs he was consciously protesting against external demands. In the field of folksong arrangement many different approaches are possible. The accompanying texture can originate from the particular melodic or rhythmic motifs innate in each folksong. **Hej Varga** [Hey Mrs Varga] (1981) exemplifies the latter, where the basic repeated rhythms of the folksong determine the accompanying parts and indirectly, the vigorous pulsation of the whole piece. Folksong motifs can be found in almost any piece in the form of simpler, echo-like repetitions and, in more particular cases in...
of Árpád Tóth’s poem Mára vége [It is already finished] (1957) he reacts directly to national and personal tragedy in two entirely differing ways. The setting for mixed choir of Sándor Petőfi’s ‘The Sea Rose’ is given its raw strength by the agonising simplicity of its unisons, octaves and even parallel 5ths, the intensive use of word-painting allied to almost every single impression in the text, and the use of the strong, diverse and succinctly used rhythms of the poem. The more lyrical, chromatic style of Mára vége contrasts with its despairing drama which, in its outer sections speaks of endless suffering and disillusionment, and in its middle section is laden with suppressed emotions.

Of the three choral works written after 1960 one, Kit mi illet [What Concerns Who] (1961) has links with the folksong arrangements. Of the two other works, both surviving in manuscript form, Savaria (1963) is constructed as a 4-part canon which is stylistically related to Kodály’s A magyarokhoz [To the Magyars] in its structure, the broad sweep of its opening melody, and in its harmony and intervallic steps. Karácsonyi fény [Christmas Light] (1963) is an unusual work. Because of its complex harmonies it does not stand comparison with the folksong arrangements. Its clarity and maturity distinguish it from the earlier, similarly chromatic Ady settings. The main feature of this uplifting music on a poem describing the birth of the Saviour is the remarkable number of consecutive intervals and parallel chords, which almost make the pivotal symbol of the work—light—palpable to the audience.

**Vocal Works**

The number of instrumentally accompanied vocal works does not constitute a large proportion of Járdaányi’s output, as apart from a few songs and the unfinished oratorio Előszó [Prologue] (1966) we can only list Gyapotszedő lányok [Cotton-picking Girls] (1953), written for unison female choir and string orchestra, and a few folksong arrangements with piano accompaniment. At the same time one can hardly deny the importance of these vocal works, which contain some of the composer’s most inspired and intimate statements. Előszó is invested with a tragic solemnity, as the completed portion of the work became Járdaányi’s own funeral music.

In the cycle Szerelmi dalok [Love Songs] (1957–58) the composer pays homage to discovered love. Notwithstanding the variety of poems from different nationalities, Járdaányi moulds them into a cogent musical and dramaturgical order. The order of poems used in the song cycle is as follows: József Bajza: Hívó [Summons], Theodor Strom: Íme [Evening], Permente du Guillet: Ha azt mondják [If that is said],
works. It is closely related to the choral works in its prosody and word-painting. In particular the depiction of the final catastrophe and its inspiration links it to a particular choral work, Föltömadott a tenger [The Sea Rose], which was written following the trauma of 1956. This also supports Tallián’s hypothesis that on the 10th anniversary of the revolution the composer was mourning its defeat. We can never know how Járdañyi would have finished the work, and whether it would have ended on an optimistic note, as in the finale of the Vörösmarty-szimfonía.

The last harrowing lines that Járdañyi set to music became, at the same time, a tragic epitaph to his own passing: Lélegzetül meghervadt az élet, / A szellemek világa kialudt” [Life was fading in its breath / The world of the spirit died away].

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Mihály Vörösmarty: Laurának [For Laura],³⁶ Lőrinc Szabó: Szeretlek [I Love You]. The central focus of this symmetrically organised sequence of five songs is the scherzo that is set to Vörösmarty’s poem. It is surrounded on both sides by an intimate slow song and a more powerful dynamic song. The solemnity and devout piety of the first song is expressed by a mixture of bell sounds, and the rhythm of the song gives the music its other characteristic feature. Este paints a picture of passion becoming unrestrained, and highlights key words such as szell [fly], lándol [aflame], and végycsőrzés [yearning] with melismatic decoration. The playful scherzo of the third song evolves into an angry passion, then at the end of the last verse, reacting to the now positive tone of the text, it leads into heartfelt confessions of love. The emotional core of the cycle is the Adagio setting of Vörösmarty’s poem Laurának. Its profundity and intimacy comes through, even in this exceptionally subjective piece. Járdañyi, through the words of his favourite poet, depicts the cycle’s most moving and most personal confession: “Nagy feladás vár rád: fiatal szívédnek érveiért / Tenni napul megtört érnya föl” [A great sacrifice awaits you: turn your innocent virtue into the sun to erase shades of ruin over my life]. The cycle closes with an emotionally laden setting of Lőrinc Szabó’s poem Szeretlek. This song cycle is an extraordinary piece in Járdañyi’s oeuvre in its choice of genre, its musical language (e.g. the influence of Debussy, effects, the folk influence latent in its melodic writing and harmonies), and in its intellectual-emotional background (individuality, intimacy and tender passion). On this occasion the composer is speaking in deeply personal terms.

In the final year of his life Járdañyi began work on the composition of his second large-scale work to the poetry of Vörösmarty—the stylistically unique setting of Előszó [Prologue]. He was suffering from a progressive illness at the time, and was able to complete only half of the work. The descriptive units of the poem are expressed in discrete tableaux and musical blocks. The first tableau is the introduction relating to the mystery and inexorability of the creation, and is built from leaps of a 4th (“Midőn ezt írtam, tiszta volt az ég”) [I wrote this when the sky was still serene]. The second tableau is the sprightly fugue developed from the main theme (“Munkában élte az ember mint a hangya” [When mankind laboured like the ants]). This is followed by the festive music of the 3rd tableau, full of repressed excitement, (“Öröm- s remenyűt részesített a lég”) [Delight and hope were quivering in the air]. The final tableau depicts the calm before the storm and finally the apocalypse (“A vész kitört” [The tempest broke]). The endlessly clear sound of Előszó constitutes the crowning point of Járdañyi’s final creative period and is one of his most distinctive
Notes


2. On May 7th 1937 the choir and orchestra of the Szent István Gimnázium performed Bartók’s Children’s Choruses with string accompaniment. Bartók discussed appropriate bowings with the conductor, Járda ŋyi.


7. For reports on the 1st Hungarian Music Week see Új Zenei Szemle 2/12 (December 1951).


18. Sec biographical chapter and footnote 7.

19. Sec. Járda ŋyi’s lines about the work on inner title page of Ms.


34. Pál Járda ŋyi’s lines on the Ms.


Catalogue of Works

The list is based the expanded and updated version of István Kecskeméti’s 1967 catalogue1. Works are grouped according to genre, and in chronological order. Names of poets are given where appropriate. Details then follow of orchestration, date of composition, name and place of publication, and finally the year of premiere, dedication and details of recordings. Manuscripts of Járdaányi’s works are held in the family archives.

Abbreviations

ch choir = children’s choir; D = dedication; f choir = female choir; fk orch = folk orchestra; fl = flute; m choir = male voice choir; HR = Hungarian Radio; Ms = manuscript; mx choir = mixed choir; P = premiere; pf = piano; pt = part; Ed = Edition; Rec = recording; rev = revised; sol = solo; s orch = small orchestra; str orch = string orchestra; sym orch = symphony orchestra; trans = translation; unfin = unfinished; v = voice; va = viola; vc = cello; vn = violin; w orch = wind orchestra; 4h = for 4 hands.

Publishers: Ákk: Ákkord Kiadó; BH: Boosey and Hawkes; Cser: Cscérpfalvi; DLC: Debreccen County Library; EMB: Editio Musica Budapest; Hof: Hofmeister, Leipzig; Mg: Magyar Körüs; Mt: Művészeti Tanács; Nejm Int: Népművelési Intézet; Qna: Qualiton; Sch: Schott; Tank: Tankönyvkiadó Vállalat; Ty: Typopress Nyomdai; Zny: Zenemügy Nyomda.

Orchestral Works


Chamber Music Works


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Abbreviations used:

- ch choir = children’s choir
- D = dedication
- f choir = female choir
- fk orch = folk orchestra
- fl = flute
- m choir = male voice choir
- HR = Hungarian Radio
- Ms = manuscript
- mx choir = mixed choir
- P = premiere
- pf = piano
- pt = part
- Ed = Edition
- Rec = recording
- rev = revised
- sol = solo
- s orch = small orchestra
- str orch = string orchestra
- sym orch = symphony orchestra
- trans = translation
- unfin = unfinished
- v = voice
- va = viola
- vc = cello
- vn = violin
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- Zny: Zenemügy Nyomda

Editions:

- Work lost
- Honvédi díszindító [Hungarian Soldier’s Festive March] (w orch), Summer 1949
- Divertimento concertante (sym orch), 1942, 1948–49; Ms (prepared for Publication)
- Tánczene [Dance Music] (s orch), March 1950
- Tisza mentén [By the Tisza]. Symphonic Poem, Variations on Folksongs (sym orch), August–December 1951, rev. 1956
- Concerto hárfa és kiszenekarra [Concerto for Harp and Small Orchestra]
Vocal Works


Choral Works

Hervadni kezdettetem [I was beginning to languish] (3-pt f choir), 23rd March 1987, Ms. P. 1982.

Kis karácsonyi ének [A Short Christmas Song] (poem by Endre Ady), (4-pt f choir / ch choir), 1987; Ms. P. 1992.


Szegény Zsuzsa a taborozásukor [Susie's Lament for Johnny] (poem by Csokonai) (3-9, f choir), Ms. P. 1982.


Hajnalni tánc [Dance at Daybreak], 1951, Ms. P. 1951. D: To my Dear Father, on his 60th birthday.


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Jeden, őva, tri [Kodály Greeting] (4-pt m choir), December 1962, Ms. P. 1962.

Szécs a Duna [Kodály Greeting] (2-pt m choir), December 1957, Ms. P. 1957.

Savaria (poem by Zoltán Szányi) (4-pt mx choir), March 1968, Ms. P. 1968.

Karicsinyi ény [Christmas Light] (poem by Zoltán Szányi) (4-pt mx choir), 1963, Ms.

Transcription


A Selection of Anthologies containing works by Pál Járdsányi


2 The editor/compiler's name is shown as Composer.
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**Selected Bibliography**


