ments. If questioned directly would they actually say that selecting band uniforms is more important than familiarity with Mozart's music? Or is it possible that the typical Murray graduate in the field has no notion of influencing public taste but rather looks upon his task as one of conformity to popular standards? Perhaps this is so. Perhaps he values conformity above all else as evidenced by the extremely high importance rating of 2.9 he gives to "the techniques and attitudes necessary for successful work with your administrators." I would hope not, but what is Mr. Darnell's opinion? Unfortunately, we have no way of sharing his thoughts on this and on many other interesting questions raised by his survey.

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Peter Meyer
Béla Bartók's Ady-Lieder, Op. 16

Winterthur: Verlag P. G. Keller, 1965. (95p., price not given; University of Zürich diss.)

Halsey Stevens

In this country dissertations dealing with music of the 20th century are still relatively infrequent, and when they appear at all, are likely to take a life-and-works form or to deal with a substantial segment of a composer's work. Not so with that of Peter Meyer, who chose for examination the Ady songs of Béla Bartók, offering a restricted view of the composer's achievements.

The songs composed by Bartók play a rather minor part in his catalogue. Aside from a number of songs from his student years composed to German texts (Heine, Siebel, Rückert) and a few more in Hungarian (Pósa, Peres, Havas, Stankó), there are only two sets of "composed" songs: Opus 15 (1915-16) on unidentified Hungarian texts and Opus 16 (February-April, 1916) on texts by Endre Ady.[1] By far the greater contribution of Bartók to song literature is the large number of folksong transcriptions, ranging from the relatively literal harmonizations of 1906 to the highly imaginative settings of 1929.

In his preface Dr. Meyer (working under the supervision of Dr. Kurt von Fischer at the University of Zürich) considers the place of the song in Bartók's creative work, dealing first of all with folksong itself and folksong transcription and briefly cataloguing the "original" songs. In this context he points out that one must not confuse the German words *original* and *originell* as often happens, though they are not equivalent.

[1]Dr. Meyer lists the *Liebeslieder* of 1900 "for two-part chorus (with piano accompaniment?)." These *Liebeslieder*, on poems by Rückert, are for solo voice with piano; they have been published in *Der junge Bartók* (1962).

> To stress this in a time like ours, when originality often acquires an exaggerated word-value, is perhaps not entirely superfluous. For that reason it may perhaps be advantageous to speak of "art songs" rather than "original songs;" but this distinction cannot be clearly made in Bartók, since the peasant songs become art songs in his hands (p. 10-11).

Parenthetically, one might observe that Bartók's songs, Opp. 15 and 16, are both *original* and *originell*.

Dr. Meyer provides a fairly detailed study of the latter, comprising both textual and musical analysis. He apparently does not read Hungarian, since he credits Frau Zsuzsa Stamm-Duzár with the translations of the Hungarian texts. These are, however, quite literal, and except for the individual prosody of the language suffice reasonably well, though one should not expect revealing consideration of inflectional subtleties.

The Ady songs were first sung in an all-Bartók concert at the Academy of Music in Budapest, April 21, 1919; Ilona Durigó was the singer, and Bartók himself was at the piano. Dr. Meyer quotes a number of reviews[2] to the effect that song composition is "not the most radiant side of Bartók's great talent," though on the basis of the works performed, Kodály, writing in *Pesti Napló*, predicted that Hungary could now demand a place "in the civilized world."

The more important part of Dr. Meyer's study lies, of course, in his analysis of the music, which he examines from the standpoints of voice and melody, accompaniment and harmony, formal structure, and relationship of text and music. He begins consideration of each song with a discussion of the text itself. These discussions are not especially penetrating, though he does point out discrepancies in the published German translations by R. St. Hoffman, where the words had to be altered occasionally to fit the music. The author finds traces of Debussy's influence in the syllabic word-setting; that influence was already apparent in *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911), which followed a fairly intensive study of the French composer's music. Dr. Meyer acknowledges that the syllabic setting of Hungarian peasant music might lead to a similar result, and in fact it is difficult to separate the two possible "influences," so inextricably are they intermingled with those elements which are purely Bartók's.

The author cites certain symmetrical melodic patterns as characteristic of the melodic lines and stresses the function of rhythm in shaping the melody. In connection with "Egyedül a tengerrel" (Alone with the Sea), he refers to my comment on the melody:

> This remarkable banality of certain phrases Halsey Stevens mentions in his book. . . . He is of the opinion that it is difficult to take the song seriously on the whole. And yet, if we consider the whole song, we can hardly suppose that a parodistic design was intended. It seems more likely that Bartók sought, with these ditty-like *(liedchenhaft)* simple melodic forms to suggest the somewhat cheap, threadbare atmosphere of the little hotel room. (p. 59)

Dr. Meyer may be right in his assumption; the fact of the banality of this setting he does not dispute, and one may only hazard a guess as to the reason

[2]He does not, however, credit them to his source: the third installment of Dr. János Demény's monumental documentation of Bartók, in *Zenetudományi Tanulmányok*, vii:114-16, from which they are translated—even to footnote numbers (though the footnotes themselves are not reprinted). This work does not appear in the bibliography.

therefor. The character of the melodic line in this one song is unquestionably at odds with the other four.

Harmony is discussed at greater length—and with more musical illustrations—than any of the other elements; but the author develops no overall harmonic theory applicable to Bartók's procedures throughout. In his summary he refers to the work of Nüll and Lendvai, but he appears to feel that the latter's application of the "golden section" to the music of Bartók goes too far and is probably not applicable to the Ady songs even if later works do conform to the theory. He considers the *Bagatelles*, Op. 6, as marking the metamorphosis of traditional harmony, a process continued in the Ady songs, in which

> the new conception of harmony goes so far that the framework of all vertical sonorities traditional for centuries in western art music—that is, the octave-fifth framework—is no longer predominant. In its place Bartók puts the two forms of the seventh as framework, with the minor 7th divided symmetrically into two perfect fourths, while the major 7th is erected as perfect fourth and tritone. These harmonic skeletons may be further dissected; the first leads occasionally to out-and-out quartal harmony. . . . In this fundamental significance of 7th, 4th, and tritone lies the main difference from another modern tonal harmony, that of Hindemith, which retains the third as basis. (p. 82)

A brief appendix includes a cursory examination of the Five Songs, Op. 15, which seems in the nature of an afterthought. The bibliography is curiously haphazard, with many entries that can have served no useful purpose to the author if he used them at all. Hans Nathan's article in *A History of Song* (ed. Denis Stevens, 1960) is not mentioned; Oskár Elschek is cited as Elschert; Bartók's own articles mentioned are not located by date or publication.

The total impression of the work is that the author has devoted his attention to a very restricted area of Bartók's output without providing the specific revelation that the limitation of content would lead one to expect.

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