FOLK-MUSIC IN ART-MUSIC—A DISCUSSION AND A THEORY

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I.

FOR the last fifty or sixty years the practice of using folk-tunes as thematic bases upon which to erect, or from which to develop, pretentious art-compositions, has become so general and such a well recognized method of procedure that a discussion of it in all its aspects is peculiarly pertinent at this time.

It is in fact no new thing. Folk-tunes have been made use of in one way or another in art-music for several hundred years. But they have not always been used with the same end in view. Sometimes they have been introduced into a composition as a purely suggestive extraneous element; a passing reference, as it were, to a well-known idea, and had little to do with the purely musical organism of the composition. In this category belong the reference to the "Marseillaise" in Schumann's "Faschingsschwank," or the quotation of "O du lieber Augustin" in Rezníček's "Schlemiel,"—mere dashes of local color. Such use of a folk-tune does not concern itself with the tune as music *per se*, but merely uses it as a reminder of a well-known idea or emotion. It goes without saying that it most fittingly occurs in music of a romantic or programmatic character.

But by far the most important method of using folk-tunes as the bases of art-music, (with which this study concerns itself almost entirely) is that in which a composer, taking a certain folk-tune, considers it as a musical kernel from which ultimately to develop a beautiful and significant art-work. If his work is well done, not only does he develop the musical kernel in accordance with all the resources of musical art, but the completed composition presents in an intensified, enlarged and extended manner the *spirit* of the original folk-tune.

There are many cases, however, in which composers have taken folk-tunes as the musical strands from which to weave a composition, but their interest in the mechanical and purely musical side of their task has so absorbed their attention and captured their interest that they have blindly ignored the emotional

or spiritual character of the folk-tune, with the result that, although an intellectually interesting work has been produced—possibly even one of great musical value—it might just as well not have been used, so far as the folk-tune gave it any particular character.

In one way which must be mentioned here, folk-music has a decided and recognizable effect upon art-music. This consists not in using a genuine folk-tune as theme but in composing an imitation folk-tune and using that. This composed imitation folk-tune has the character and spirit of a genuine folk-tune and frequently is built from melodic and rhythmic particles which occur in real folk-tunes. Such themes, therefore, are really inspired and suggested by folk-music and frequently deceive students themselves into the belief that they are genuine folk-tunes. Though they are not, I regard compositions built from such themes to be largely dependent on folk-music, inasmuch as most of them faithfully reproduce the folk-spirit. This is not a method of procedure to be sneezed at by any means, but should excite our admiration, for when it is well done the true folk-spirit has been apprehended by genius, and has been transmuted, with the addition of its own rich individuality, into the domain of high art. The compositions of Carl Maria von Weber are full of such marvellous transmutations and in our day the compositions of Jean Sibelius afford fine examples of this method of procedure.

There are, of course, many objectors, critics, and persons who run down the practice of using folk-tunes as themes in art-music. These persons, for the most part, contend that this is not composition at all; that it is the mere arrangement or harmonization of a melody already composed. Some contend that the folk-tune is used much as a crutch is used; arguing that if a composer were able to stand and walk upon his own melodic feet he would have no need of a "crutch." Nearly all consider that the use of a folk-tune as thematic basis for a composition displays inability in a composer to invent his own melodies and regard it as a sort of "makeshift" or "cutting 'cross lots" in art. But these critics fail to take into consideration the fact that practically all the great composers have at one time or other used folk-tunes as the bases of art-composition. Some have made sparing use of them; as Beethoven, who chose frequently to compose themes of a folk-like character rather than to use actual folk-songs. Others like Grieg and Tchaikovsky have made a very liberal use of actual folk-songs as thematic material, and certainly no one can accuse these composers of lack of inventive ability.

Taken as a whole, however, there is a grain of truth in these objections. They are not without *some* justification. It can safely be assumed that it requires a higher degree of genius to compose a finely expressive and powerful melody than to develop an art-work from an already existent tune. But fine melodies are rare even among those whom we call the "great" composers. Compare, for instance, the large number of composers each of whom has had an influence of undoubted importance upon the development of the art, with the small number of composers whom we instinctively think of as founts of melody. Again: compare the large number of works produced by any given "great composer" with the relatively small number of his compositions which contain really great melodies. The production of a really great melody will thus be seen to be a double rarity. Not only is it rare that a composer appears who is capable of producing a great melody, but it is also somewhat rare that even *he* does so. One's thoughts immediately revert to Schubert at this point, who produced such a large number of truly beautiful melodies. His case at first sight would almost seem to contradict this assertion. But in this connection we should not fail to remember and to take into account the fact that he produced some twelve hundred compositions.

Now if great melodies are somewhat rare even with "great composers" it is undoubtedly true that they are still rarer with mediocre composers. Hence, the fact that a minor composer prides himself upon having built his composition upon original themes (which ten to one have *no* character) rather than upon folk-themes (which ten to one have *some* character) far from being a recommendation of the worth of the composition;—this fact arouses in me just the emotions contrary to admiration or approbation. I am at once suspicious of the musical value of the product. And I must say that in the vast majority of instances, the practical (and frequently painful) test of an actual audition has proved these suspicions to have been but too well founded.

There are many composers in the world at present who occupy an enviable niche in the contemporary hall of fame and who are accorded a degree of respect and admiration far in excess of their true deserts. Their compositions are built upon themes of their own invention, and of this fact they are very proud. They are prone to exaggerate its importance unduly, and to cast aspersions of incompetence or unoriginality on those composers who use folk-themes. They argue that it is better to

produce a composition built from one's own themes, no matter how mediocre, or lacking in character these may be, than to base a composition on a folk-theme regardless of the distinguished musical value and the individual character which such a course of procedure may give to the resultant composition. It would seem, therefore, that these minor composers are actuated by a desire to exploit their own mediocre personalities rather than to produce something which shall be first and foremost of high art-value or great musical beauty. This is human nature, but that does not excuse it, and the musical public, of which I am a member, will eventually sweep all such work into the dust-bin. For the thing which we must and will have is beautiful music. It concerns us not whether the themes are the actual invention of the composer or derived from folk-music; we are interested only to that degree in which the music itself is beautiful or significant to us.

Now, in my opinion, the great majority of so-called art-music cannot for a moment be compared to the great body of folk-music either for its sincerity of expression, beauty, or significance. Whenever I read through a book of folk-songs after having for a long time lived exclusively on art-music, I immediately feel a great sense of power, sweetness and beauty stealing over my spirit. The great majority of art-compositions seem so artificial, so stilted and even trivial in comparison: they seem to be concerning themselves with something quite beside the main issue, while the folk-songs, on the other hand, illumine and express to me the very soul of humanity as with a flash of light. I do not mean to say that a simple folk-song is necessarily a greater work of art than a symphony, but I do say that the spirit which is shadowed forth by the collected folk-songs of a race is far more sincere, deep, and elemental than that which is expressed by the larger part of so-called Art-music. The collective folk-songs of the world's Peoples, I consider to be the musical Bible of mankind. It is only when the spirit of the folk is apprehended, added to, expressed and expanded by the magic power of genius that we get a piece of art-music of real worth and significance. When this happens, humanity receives as a gift melodies which transcend in beauty the existing folk-melodies. But how rarely does this happen!

Criticisms impatient of those who use folk-melody as a basis for art work come mostly from composers of the second rank. These composers have striven hard to create something entirely from themselves, and having been disappointed at the insignificance of

the result, naturally exhibit a certain petulance toward the practice of basing an art-work upon a folk-melodic germ, and regard the creative artist who does this as one who is trying to obtain credit under false pretences. Generally speaking, however, these criticisms, and objections, as they do not proceed from any very profound or thoughtful sources, but are of a rather carping nature, may be considered to be somewhat negligible.

The object of the creative artist should be to produce beautiful and significant works of art rather than to exploit a mediocre or insignificant personality. Of course, if the composer has a mind touched with greatness his works will give the impression of greatness whether they are based upon folk-themes, or themes of his own invention. But for the mediocre composer to urge the superiority of his work because it is built upon themes of his own invention, over much greater work which has folk-music for a thematic basis, seems to me scarcely to deserve serious consideration.

In our examination of the practice of composers to use folk-tunes as themes in art-compositions it is but natural to compare it with a similar practice in the sister art of literature. This is the quite general use of folk-material, traditions, or folk-tales as bases for literary art works. Many a novel, or shorter work of fiction, is based upon a folk-tale, or devoted to detailing the exploits of a popular legendary hero. Such are the novels of Walter Scott and the Wonder Stories of Hans Christian Andersen. Many a poem is but an artistic presentation of some folk-theme or tradition. Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Milton, Byron; is there a great poet who has not based great poems upon popular traditions? And the plots of many dramas, are they not, even as Goethe's "Faust" and many of Shakespeare's plays, based upon either legendary or historic happenings? In fact, as it is quite a recognized function of literature to embalm popular tradition, legendary happenings, and heroic exploits in beautiful and artistic literary forms, the question naturally arises: why is it not equally legitimate to base a work of musical art upon a popular or traditional melody?—a folk-song, a tune which in its rhythm and melodic flow truly expresses the musical ideal and distinctive character of a Folk.

In the art of painting the artist does one of two things. He either takes the subject of his picture directly from nature (which in musical composition would be equivalent to the use of a folk-tune, verbatim, as theme) or he composes it, creating his picture from remembered or modified fragments of nature

(which is equivalent to the composition of an original theme which nevertheless reflects the Folk-spirit). And it would be difficult to say which is the finer method. In many of Corot's pictures we must greatly admire and we are thrilled by the mystic and fanciful quality of the composition. In others again it is as if we not only felt the presence, but saw the very movement of Nature herself. In which of these styles is Corot the finer artist?

The theme of a musical composition may be compared to the subject of an essay or a poem. It is the thing talked about; that which is treated of; or, if a folk-theme, the point of departure for the artist's individual inspiration. This subject may be of an insignificant character and yet it may be talked of so wonderfully; it may be presented from so many new viewpoints; it may give rise to so many delicately related conceptions, that the result may charm us with the magic charm of true art. Or the subject may be great in itself, but, from being treated by an inferior artist, it may lose much of its legitimate significance and the result may give the impression of a very broken-winged affair. Or, it may be a great subject, treated by a great artist in a great manner. This last is the great desideratum, and the result of such happy occurrence is a great piece of art; a masterpiece. Whether the subject be of literal folk-derivation, or be original with the creative artist is really a minor consideration; the vital point is that the masterpiece will be in its spiritual essence related to the folk-songs of the race which gave birth to the master. As we listen, the considerations discussed here will fade into insignificance. We shall recognize in the master work the complete flowering, the art-expression of that spirit of which the folk-songs tell: for the significant masterwork is the apotheosis of the Folk-spirit. We shall be conscious of the interpretation and glorification of that deep spirit, and be swept by the onrush of an all-compelling emotion.

II.

A brief survey of the field of modern musical art will show what folk-tunes have been used as themes by various masters: how they have used them, and to what extent. It will also help to determine the proportion of value which the folk-element has in the work of the individual artist. To facilitate this analysis, I recapitulate the three methods of using folk-tunes mentioned above: 1. verbatim, as a musical germ from which to develop a composition; 2. verbatim, but having no particular relation to the musical structure; 3. as suggestion—toward the composition

of folk-tune like themes expressive of the folk-spirit. This third method is perhaps the most legitimate of all, as it preserves and builds upon the folk-spirit without necessitating a slavish adherence to the letter. It leaves the creative artist free as regards his individuality, but preserves—what is to him of infinite value—his relation to the spirit of his Folk.

Joseph Haydn was the first important composer of modern times to make use in his compositions of the songs and dances of the people with a true regard for, and an understanding of, their spiritual significance. Haydn was himself essentially one of the people. Coming not from the cultured class, but being of lowly origin, he grew up in a small Austrian town and unconsciously absorbed the folk-music with which he was surrounded. And we find that many of these folk-melodies subsequently appear in his symphonies and other compositions. He made use of them in all three of the different manners specified above.

Variant of the Croatian folk-song "Stal se jiscem" as sung in Čembe

Haydn's "Austrian Hymn"

W. H. Hadow in "A Croatian Composer: Joseph Haydn" (which is largely a translation of a pamphlet by Dr. Kuhač) has made an exhaustive and very suggestive study of the influence of the Croatian folk-songs in Haydn's compositions. He says:

Haydn's music is saturated with Croatian melody . . . Some of his tunes are folk-songs in their simplest form, some are folk-songs altered and improved, the vast majority are original, but display the same general characteristics . . . The common employment of folk-songs dates from the Symphony in D major (1762) to the Salomon Symphonies of 1795; they

find their way into everything—hymns, quartets, divertimenti; not, of course, because Haydn had any need to take them, but because he loved them too well to leave them out.

This last sentence touches upon a belief dear to my heart. Not unless the soul of the creative artist understands and loves the spirit of the people, can he be truly great.

The short composition known as the Austrian Hymn affords a fine example of Haydn's methods. The first fourteen notes of the hymn are taken verbatim from a Croatian folk-song. Then follows an elaboration, an extension, of the fundamental folk-thought. The noble elements in the original tune are seized upon and wonderfully set forth by the genius of Haydn, while the trivial elements are left to sink of their own weight into oblivion. In fact this composition, short as it is, sets forth the relation of the great creative artist to the Folk very clearly. The Folk contribute the inspiration, the artist, the genius; and the result lights, cheers and elevates the heart of the million.

The case of Haydn is certainly curious and unique when we consider that by his methods with relation to folk-melody and the spirit of the Folk he anticipated the procedure of the national schools by some 75 or 100 years.

After Haydn came Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, no one of whom habitually made use of folk-melody as thematic material, as did Haydn, yet the compositions of all these composers evince a marked progress in folk-spirit expression. Many of their melodies are so rich in human feeling and are so nearly in the folk-idiom that they have been taken to the heart of the people as their own and in our day have practically become folk-songs. Beethoven certainly did not make use of German folk-songs as thematic material, but on the other hand he is regarded as the great one who flung wide the doors, giving expression to fundamental human emotion, and making of music an art for the people rather than an art of the schools.

In Weber the spirit of the people again found pure and spontaneous expression. Not that he actually used folk-melodies, but he expressed the naïve aspect of the folk-spirit with so much unaffected charm that much of his music seems to come directly from the people's own heart. Think of the lovely "volkstümliche" melodies in "Der Freischütz," in "Euryanthe," and many another of Weber's compositions. Weber's son in the biography of his father says: "Weber did not *compose* 'Der Freischütz'; he allowed it to grow out of the rich soil of his brave German heart, and to expand leaf by leaf, blossom by blossom, trained, tendered

and fostered by the hand of his talent." Beethoven may be said to express the mighty and heroic aspects of the great Folk-spirit; Weber, its tender and charming qualities. After Beethoven and Weber never again was it possible for music to be written which completely ignored the "People." They had at length unlocked the treasure-house—the great spirit of the Folk—and thrown the key away.

Instances among the German composers of the verbatim use of a folk-tune as thematic material are indeed somewhat rare; especially when considered in relation to the great extent of German art-music produced during the nineteenth century. Of course there are numerous well-known instances such as the use of the "Grossvaterlied" by Bach, Spohr, and Schumann; the latter's overture on the "Rheinweinlied," Brahms' "Akademische Festoverture," etc., but they are sporadic rather than usual. The art-music of Germany as a whole does not present the spectacle of a developed art woven from the actual melodic strands of folk-music (as is the case in many other countries) but on the other hand no thoughtful person can fail to perceive the immense influence which the folk-music has had upon it during its last hundred years of development. It has been the spirit of the Folk rather than the letter of the folk-music which has had a happy strengthening and broadening effect upon the art-music of Germany.

The first distinctly national poet-in-music of the 19th century, who made both literal and germinative use of the folk-music of his country, was Frédéric Chopin. He himself tells us how early and how powerfully he was affected by the songs and folk-dances of his native Poland. He soon realized that he was born to be the musical voice of his native land. The national melodies, rhythms, and stately dance forms of Poland find a natural and spontaneous expression in his marvellous compositions. The heart of this great artist may be truly said to be an Aeolian harp breathed upon by the soul of a People.

Mr. Hadow tells us that as a boy Chopin was fond of "collecting and studying the folk-songs which he heard at harvest field or market or village festival; they supplied him with his first models, and in some cases with his first themes as well." After some interesting comment upon the fact as stated above he calls attention to the simple, direct, and folk-like quality of most of Chopin's themes, thus showing that even when Chopin was not indebted to the letter of folk-music he caught and expressed its spirit.

Franz Liszt, in his *Life of Chopin*, (which is a rhapsody on the genius of Chopin rather than a biography) says concerning the Polish folk-melodies and their influence upon Chopin's art:

Such inspirations were used by Chopin in the most happy manner, and greatly enriched with the treasures of his handling and style. Cutting these diamonds so as to present a thousand facets, he brought all their latent fire to light, and re-uniting even their glittering dust, he mounted them in gorgeous caskets. Indeed, what settings could he have chosen better adapted to enhance the value of his early recollections, or which would have given him more efficient aid in creating poems, in arranging scenes, in depicting episodes, in producing romances? Such associations and national memories are indebted to him for a reign far more extensive than the land which gave them birth. Placing them among those idealized types which art has touched and consecrated with her resplendent lustre, he has gifted them with immortality.

It was largely Chopin's example which turned the conscious attention of the composers of the latter half of the 19th century to the serious study and contemplation of the folk-music of their native countries. The result was the discovery on all sides of the rich mines of inspiration in the folk-melodies of the different peoples, and the consequent rise and rapid development of the various national schools.

The story of Grieg, who after his schooling in Germany turned his back upon the academies and set his face to the north with the determination in his heart that the folk-spirit of his Norwegian people should receive adequate artistic expression—all this is well known; it has been told many times. And it is also easily seen how wonderfully the inspiration of the folk-spirit has rewarded the devotion of the artist. Grieg has used Norwegian melodies (verbatim) as themes in the second *Humoreske*, Op. 6; in the first number of "*Aus dem Volksleben*," Op. 19; in the *Ballade*, Op. 24; in the *Improvisata*, Op. 29, in all four of the *Norwegian Dances*, Op. 35, and in other compositions. But more important than an exact list of the compositions in which Grieg has used folk-themes, and more illuminating to our present inquiry is a comparison of Grieg's original melodies *in toto* with the great mass of recorded Norwegian folk-music. It is impossible not to perceive the strong family resemblance. We immediately feel that Grieg's work as it stands could not possibly have come into existence without the background of Norwegian folk-music. The very turn and idiom of his melodic utterance is dictated by these peasant tunes. Grieg, as artist, is indeed a

true son of his mother, i. e., the piercingly sweet, wild and wintry folk-spirit of Norway.

In the other countries the national awakening in music has been of a similar nature, but has attained to much broader proportions. The rise of the modern Russian school, for instance, is one of the most brilliant examples. The folk-spirit in Russia was practically discovered in music by Glinka. He it was who (probably) first introduced melodies of the people into art-music in his opera "Life to the Czar" (1836). And after him came a brilliant list of names—Dargomizsky, Moussourgsky, Borodine, Balakirev, Tchaikovski, Rimsky-Korsakov, and others, all national composers: all devoted to the expression of the Slavic folk-spirit in music.

It is a significant fact that Tchaikovski, the greatest of the modern Russian composers, has used Russian folk-tunes verbatim, to a large extent, and even when he has not done so, has usually been influenced in the originating of his themes by certain melodic and rhythmic hints which the folk-songs have given him. For instance, Kashkin remarks of the Second Symphony, "It may be called the 'Little Russian' symphony because its chief themes are little Russian folk-songs." In the introduction of this symphony the well-known song "Down by Mother Volga" is used as thematic material, and the finale is largely developed from the folk-song "The Crane." Tchaikovski's Opus 1, in fact, (a Russian Scherzo) was built upon a Little Russian folk-song. We are all familiar with the touching and eloquent Andante in the string quartet, Op. 11. This was developed from a folk-song which Tchaikovski himself collected at Kamenka in the summer of 1869. In the pianoforte concerto in B $\flat$ minor, Op. 23, the principal subject of the first movement is also based upon folk-material collected at Kamenka. According to Modeste Tchaikovski it is based on a phrase sung by the "blind beggars." Then there is the fourth symphony, the finale of which has for second theme a most characteristic folk-tune; and the andante of which is said to be based on a Volga boatman's song. Finally I must mention the Marche Slav, as the first theme is a splendid example of the development by a great artist, from a folk-song germ, a theme of true power and significance. The original tune is a Serbian melody and is to be found in "Songs of the Southern Slavs" by Fr. von Kuhač. While it contains the melodic elements from which Tchaikovski constructed his theme, it is interesting to note how the great artist has amplified and extended the melodic particles and finally produced a noble melody without

losing touch with the folk-spirit which inspired it. The original tune, and the first section of the theme of the *Marche Slav*, are here given.

Brodine's works are simply saturated with the folk-melody spirit. In "Prince Igor," in the symphonies, and in the "Stepenskizze" we find folk-tunes used in all three manners, and the folk-spirit expressed unerringly. According to a certain French admirer his spontaneous nationalism "exuded from every pore."

Moussorgsky—brought up in the country—derived his first musical impressions from the folk-songs of the peasants, which so deeply entered his youthful soul as to influence the whole of his subsequent musical life. M. Montagu-Nathan in his *History of Russian music* says:

Moussorgsky's devotion to the people is clearly exemplified in his two operas, in which, as has often been remarked, the people are the protagonists as far as the actual dramatic content is concerned, and their importance is musically signified by the abundant employment of folk-song and folk-lore.

So dependent, in fact, did Moussorgsky become on folk-melody and folk-rhythm for his thematic bases that Calvocoressi feels it necessary to justify the practice by saying in effect: this is not to be considered "a defect"—but the "choice of a folk-theme peculiarly adapted to that which he would express is in itself equal to creation."

Then there is Rimsky-Korsakov, perhaps the greatest nationalist that Russia has known. He firmly upheld the proposition of Glinka "that the nation must be considered as 'creator'

and the composer rather as 'arranger' of the popular contribution." Folk-themes are to be found in his "Fantasie, Op. 6," in "La Pskovitaine," "Antar," "Sinfonietta, Op. 31," "La Grande Paque Russe" and in many others of his compositions. Practically all of his work is simply instinct with the spirit of raciality.

Stravinsky—Russia's last word—is a fine example of the third manner of using the folk-song in musical composition, i. e., not of letting the actual notes appear, but permitting the spirit to be apparent. Such works as "The Firebird" simply breathe the spirit and fantasy of the Russian Folk. In "Petrouchka" also, the vigorous use of primitive rhythms and the charming and folk-like quality of some of the melodies leave no doubt as to the source of his inspiration. I do not know whether these tunes are folk-melodies or not, they sound as if they were; and surely some of these dance pieces in "Petrouchka" express the merry and light-hearted aspect of the folk-spirit most convincingly and artistically.

Turning now to Bohemia, another Slavic country of world-musical importance, we find an equally clear case of the direct development of a strong and virile musical art from the songs of the people. Bohemia is the country of Smetana and Dvořák, certainly world figures in music. Both are distinctively national composers and the record is clear that the minds of both were fed and nourished from the deep springs of native folk-music. Em. Chwala in his "Ein Vierteljahrhundert Böhmischer Musik" has eloquently, and with much sympathy, described the process by which the modern school of Bohemian Art-Music has been developed from the racy spirit of the Bohemian folk-music.

Smetana said: "Bohemia should cut her corner-stone from her own quarries, and build her art on the peasant tunes," and certainly his works are living witnesses that he conscientiously practiced what he preached. He both used the unadulterated peasant tunes, and original tunes composed in the same style, as themes. In his first opera "Die Brandenburger in Böhmen" a liberal use is made of the actual native folk-tunes, and it owed its great success largely to this fact. In his opera "Das Geheimumniss" occur many instances of the third manner in which folk-music may affect art-music without the verbatim quotation of the actual folk-song. The melodies in this work are to such a large degree of folk-line quality that there can exist no doubt in the mind of the hearer as to the source of the composer's inspiration.

One of Smetana's early desires was to idealize the Polka (a dance of Bohemian origin) and to do for it artistically what Chopin had done for the Mazurka. He made many experiments toward this end, the best of which is undoubtedly the "polka" movement in "Aus meinem Leben." In "Tabor," in "Aus Böhmens Flur und Hain" (the finale of which is described by Wellek as "an apotheosis of Bohemian folk-song) and in many others of his purely instrumental works the same blood flows, the same heart beats, as in the songs of the Bohemian people. In fact Smetana was distinctively national almost to the point of self-limitation.

Dvořák, to my mind a greater composer, was a pupil of Smetana, and an inheritor of his ideals. Possessed of a genius by turns rugged, fiery, and delicate, he is a well-nigh perfect example of a national composer. Who does not know and value the "Slavonic Dances," the "Rhapsodies," the "Symphonies," the detached concert pieces, largely founded on, or developed from, folk-rhythms, folk-dances, folk-melodic particles and filled with the characteristics of the Bohemian folk-spirit. In particular the "Hussitska" overture must be mentioned. This is founded on a genuine folk-song—a battle song of the Hussite wars—and from this germ Dvořák has created a masterpiece. In an attempt at a just appreciation of Smetana and Dvořák Mr. Hadow pertinently remarks: "Smetana came first into the field; it was his work to gather the stones and to lay the foundation. Dvořák followed him, and began, with the same materials, to raise a superstructure."

It is not a very long journey from Bohemia to Hungary, and when one thinks of the latter country one's thoughts immediately turn to Franz Liszt and his Hungarian Rhapsodies. In spite of Liszt's cosmopolitan life, in spite of his de-Hungarianization of himself in favor of the German, the Magyar nobility, the Gipsy wildness were still in him calling for expression, and must out in spite of himself. Witness his essay of 350 pages or more on "The Gipsies and their music in Hungary." Witness his 15 Hungarian Rhapsodies. Liszt well knew the potency and value of folk-music, of folk-rhythms, songs, dances, melodies. He uses folk-material in "Tasso," in "Mazeppa," in "The Battle of the Huns," in the "Hungarian Coronation Mass," even in the oratorio of "St. Elizabeth;" but it is in the Hungarian Rhapsodies (built upon genuine Hungarian-Gipsy dance tunes) that the folk-soul receives its most complete, irresistible and convincing expression. And let it be said in passing that the "Rhapsodies" bid fair to be the compositions upon which Liszt's fame as a composer may

ultimately rest. At any rate there is no doubt that they will live longer than many of Liszt's far more pretentious and ambitious works, and this I believe will be so on account of the ever youthful and vigorous folk-spirit with which they are filled.

In the 18th century, in Spain, there lived a thinker, by name Antonio Eximeneo. He was a philosophical and revolutionary writer on music. Not only did he urge certain reforms of opera, certain theories of Music Drama which were later realized by Gluck and Wagner, but he declared that "every country should base its music on the melodies of the people." Eximeneo died in 1798 and it was not until the latter part of the 19th century (nearly a hundred years later) that the Spanish composers began to take his words seriously and to aim definitely at the creation of a truly national school.

Felipe Pedrell is the "grand old man" of this movement. Not only has he written a pamphlet outlining his ideals ("Por Nuestra Musica") but he has given abundant expression to his principles in numerous musical works. Chief among these is the trilogy "Los Pirineos," based upon the poem by Victor Balaguer. It is partly a historical, partly a mystical celebration of the glories of ancient Spain; an invocation to the slumbering spirit of *Patria*. Pedrell derives his fundamental musical inspiration for this work from two distinct sources. The first is the austere and elevated character of the liturgical chants of the old school of Spanish church composers. This side of his work may be termed musical archæology. For instance, the motive of the "power of Rome" in "Los Pirineos" is built upon a harmonic progression much in use among the contemporaries of Thomas Luis de Victoria. The other source is the popular song, the song of the people, the folk-song. Now in Spain there are two principal species of folk-song. The Catalanian, and the Mauresque. Pedrell has used both of these species in the music of "Los Pirineos" and has used them both with a due appreciation of their historical significance. In "Por Nuestra Musica" he says in effect:

Before the composer of to-day lie a wealth of forms which the admirable development of the musical art, during the last centuries, has furnished to him. It is now for him to make himself master of the folk-melodies as themes to assimilate them, to amplify them magnificently. The national lyrical drama shall then ultimately be an apotheosis of folk-melody.

With Pedrell should be mentioned Millet, Olmeda (equally renowned as folk-lorist and composer) and Albeniz, the only one of this school who has been thus far honored with a world-wide

celebrity. The compositions of Albeniz are to the musical folklore of Spain as fruit to flower. They are the artistic fulfillment of the very spirit of these folk-melodies.

In Italy the distinction between folk-music and art-music is by no means so apparent as it is in other countries. The graceful character of the people's melody is imitated by the composers of opera, and the operatic melodies in turn become the songs of the people.

The music of France, however, offers a curious blending of styles, inasmuch as two separate and distinct kinds have developed within the last hundred years. The French are pre-eminently a theatrical people. Their natural avenue of expression is the drama, the opera, the pantomime, the musical comedy, etc. For the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century this music of the theatre faithfully expressed the French folk-spirit, even to the point sometimes of introducing an actual folk-song note for note, as in Bizet's "*L'Arlesienne*." But in the last thirty years or so, there has arisen a new school of French composers—individual-erotic-eccentric-somewhat artificial—and having little to do with, or concern for, the folk-spirit. But inasmuch as these modern French composers have ignored the sustaining inspiration of the folk-spirit, inasmuch as they have in the pursuit of their fascinating individualities, somewhat lost sight of their fundamental relation to the race, do I believe that a large proportion of their music is destined to but a short life. M. Vincent d'Indy, indeed, the most thoughtful of the modern group, realizes the danger of artificiality and himself declares that he listens ardently to the "cry of the earth," as he eloquently calls it. Such a work as his *Symphony on a mountain air*, which consists of various treatments of a most beautiful folk-song, attests to the sincerity of his protestations. But M. d'Indy, in his "*Cours de Composition musicale*" states his belief that folk-songs are derived from liturgical chants, in support of which he declares that during the middle ages the music of the church was the only music which the "people" heard and that it was most natural that they should strive to imitate it and to adapt it to their own purposes. He, in fact, makes the statement: "The 'People' are in no sense creator; they are on the contrary a marvellous adapter." This utterance contrasts strangely with the dictum of Glinka, already quoted, to the effect that "the nation must be considered as 'creator' and the composer rather as 'arranger.'" Personally I believe that Glinka in his utterance has struck more nearly to the heart of truth than has M. d'Indy.

Taking a bird's-eye view of the art of music as it has developed and blossomed forth within the last two centuries, it seems to have gradually awakened from a long, scholastic and somewhat artificial sleep. Composers seem to sing more from their hearts—to express more fundamental human emotions. Hence their music seems to have a broader and more powerful appeal than of yore. This I believe to be due to the gradual introduction and expression of the ever vital folk-spirit. Thus saith the seer, Richard Wagner: "The folk-element has forever been the fructifying source of all Art—as long as (free from all intellectualism) it can raise itself in spontaneous ascending growth to the height of an Art-work."

III.

To express his emotion by means of "song" or vocal utterance of some kind is a most primitive trait of the human being. Almost without exception the testimony of discoverers and explorers establishes the fact that there is no race of savages, however primitive, which does not possess some rudimentary form of musical expression. Now it is a universally accepted theory that the study of primitive man as he exists in various parts of the earth at present will afford us a more or less truthful picture of the actual condition and status of development of our own remote ancestors. The primitive cries of joy, wails of sorrow, or shouts of triumph which have been heard, noted, or told about by the early explorers should therefore possess a unique interest for us as being the very ancestors of our own folk-songs. (Darwin, indeed, tells of one of the man-like apes—the gibbon—which possesses a musical voice an octave in compass and which may fairly be said to sing).

In consideration of the foregoing we are safe in concluding that at no period of his development has man been altogether songless. His primitive vocal utterances have undoubtedly expressed or reflected his fundamental emotions, have been of a piece with his rough life and have been limited in their musical structure by the co-existent development of his intellect. And they have undoubtedly been expressive of "group" emotions or emotions shared by a large number of persons rather than the emotional expressions of single individuals. The individual as creative artist had not yet arisen. The first song-germs—archæologically considered—were therefore, in effect, real folk-songs—songs of the folk—and inasmuch as they arose among a particular tribe or race-group, were they expressive of the emotional

characteristics and general quality of intellectual development of that particular group.

Externally these primitive songs probably bore very little resemblance to what we at the present day term folk-songs. As the race has progressed by very gradual steps from the condition of absolute barbarism, its style of musical expression has naturally changed in conformity with its advancement. But the principle of "group" musical expression—the folk-song principle—is as old as the hills and has been operative, I believe, just as long as there have been human beings. To put the matter in a nutshell: humanity has always had folk-song, or something equivalent to it; the songs of the different groups of humanity have faithfully reflected the differences in character of these different groups.

I also believe that when through accident or otherwise a song originating with one group was appropriated by another group, this very song, by a process of unconscious adaptation, came in time to reflect the character of the group which had adopted it. A striking instance of the occurrence of this thing in modern times is the treatment given to the Hungarian melodies by the Gipsies. The Gipsies have practically adopted the Hungarian melodies as their own, but with what a wealth of ornament, with what langorous and Oriental grace have they clothed them!

The primitive musical utterances of a primitive people began to assume by very slow degrees more and more definite and organic forms, more power of expression, more subtle distinctions of musical character from the musical utterances of other primitive peoples. At length that which was worthy to be called "song" was born. In the evolutionary process this effect of "song" was naturally arrived at by the continuous interaction of the superior musical individual and the conservative spirit of the tribe. This superior musical individual was the germinal prototype of the musical genius—the composer—and the "song" was folk-song.

* * *

The "genius" is born of the people. The people in turn are led by the "genius." These two are mutually dependent. The one is body, the other brain. The brain directs the body, but in turn is dependent on the body for its very life. In plain language, the people must have leaders. Individuals who see ahead and by the flashing of their intelligence light up the path of progress for the mass. This kind of individual is a seer or "genius"

and is a specialized organ of the "people," even as the eye is a specialized organ of the body. It follows that as the "people" cannot get along without the "genius," so the "genius" cannot get along without the "people." That is to say, the people cannot progress or go forward without a captain, but this captain in his turn must speak a language not too difficult for the people to understand. He must not only tell of the new things which he sees, but must so tell it that the people may get the message. Otherwise he is not a success as a captain.

On the most obvious plane these leaders are discoverers, explorers, or generals; those who discover new lands, as Columbus; those who explore virgin territory, as La Salle; or those who by force of conquest acquire new domains, as Washington. Or these leaders may be captains of industry, industrial or railroad organizers, financiers, or any one in our every-day life who has brought forward a new and valuable idea making for the betterment of our lives. Closely related to these are the inventors, those who by their inventions contribute to the comfort, the economy and the efficiency of our lives. Lastly there are those discoverers, inventors, revealers of unknown beauties of thought, of idea, of sound, color, and form: the authors, poets, sculptors, painters, and composers. These are the highest incarnation of the principle of "genius" and their greatest works are indeed as beacon lights to humanity. Their true type is "Prometheus," who stole fire from the gods and brought it to men. These ideal heaven-stormers do indeed bring sparks of the divine fire in answer to the needs of humanity, and, alas but too frequently, like Prometheus, call down upon them the wrath of the gods for so doing.

So we see that the individual, even though he be that individual who leads the people, is himself sprung from the people, and if his works are to contain the quality of greatness, or enduring significance, he must not separate himself entirely from the people. The individual even tho' he be a genius has his roots, both physical and spiritual, in the soil of the Folk. He is like a tree which springs from the soil of the earth, which spreads its branches and leaves in ever new and individual forms; yet draws its elements of strength, its possibilities of life, from the earth from which it springs. So with the creative artist. His work may be ever so individual, original and interesting, but unless it also has in it some of the spirit of the folk from which he himself came, it is insignificant and destined to a short and shadowy existence. For a creative artist to separate himself entirely from the spirit of the Folk, to produce works having absolutely no folk-elements

in them, would be like chopping a tree down, severing its connection with the earth, and then expect it to go on living. In a word, no artist can attain to greatness who loses all connection with his people. It is the spirit of the "People" that furnishes him with the very fundamentals of his greatness.

* * *

The art of music is a child of the Church. For the first thousand years of its history the Church drew to itself and employed in its service practically all of the greatest intellects and talents in Western Europe. So great and all-powerful was the influence of the Church that secular thought and expression were practically non-existent. The arts, particularly architecture, painting and music, were the most powerful organs of Religion. Architecture found its flowering in the cathedral; Painting, in religious pictures, and Biblical scenes, while the Art of Music was naturally devoted to the service of its mother. Its very forms and methods of expression were prescribed by sacred ritual and as an art it had no recorded existence apart from the Church.

Where all this time was the spirit of the Folk? It was doubtless alive, but disregarded. For the generations of creative artists brought up and trained in the service of a remote and magic mysticism had not as yet dreamed of the larger and more fundamental service that awaited them: the service of the Folk-spirit. It was thus the spirit of the Church and not that of the People which found expression in early art-music.

Although the Church itself was largely a creation of the folk-spirit, it had gradually through a thousand years withdrawn itself farther and farther from that spirit; it had detached itself by imperceptible degrees from the life of the Folk, until it finally stood by itself upon an almost inaccessible height of awe-inspiring mysticism and authority. All in regard to the church was considered *sacred*. All that expressed the folk-spirit was considered *profane*.

At length, however, there arose great protests on the part of the Folk-spirit. Struggles to be free of the mystic dominion of the church. That culminating in the 15th century was definitely artistic (the Renaissance); that occurring in the 16th century was definitely moral (the Reformation). Both of these movements had a great subsequent effect upon the secularization, the liberation, of the arts, and particularly Music. The subsequent centuries down to the present show a gradual loss of the *sacred*

character of music and a gradual increase of its humanly expressive character. For some time after the Renaissance music continued to reflect medieval *sacred* influences. Secular music did not get a fair start as an art *different from that of the Church* until after the definite rise of purely instrumental art-music about the close of the 16th century.

Many instances could be cited in which old church composers have used folk-melodies in their compositions. But their manner of using them has been with no regard for their essential "folk"-quality. They have been used rather as a "cantus firmus" around which to build a structure of counterpoint in the old church style. The inherent quality of the theme has in most instances been entirely ignored by them, the rhythm frequently altered; and the melody thereby drawn all out of its original form; and well-nigh indistinguishable by the listener, unless pointed out to him by a scholar in music.

In the fifteenth century indeed we find that many Masses were composed by Dufay, Josquin and others with certain alleged folk-melodies as a basis. The most celebrated melodies of this nature which were so used were "L'Homme armé," "Se la face ay pale," "Adieu mes amours," "Des rouges nez" and others. These melodies are hardly to be classed as true folk-melodies, inasmuch as they more strongly reflect the influence of the church modes, than express the spirit of the folk. It is interesting to note, however, that this budding tendency in the art of music to identify itself more nearly with the spirit of the Folk was at that time regarded simply as profanation. However, the introduction of these melodies did not seriously affect the liturgical character of the music, as in most instances it would certainly take the alleged acumen of the traditional Philadelphia attorney to discover that they were there at all.

Even as early as the thirteenth century it was somewhat the custom among composers to introduce folk-melodies into their compositions in contrapuntal combination with church hymns or Gregorian Chants. In the Codex of Montpellier (circa 1250) there is an example of this by an anonymous composer, the folk-song "He mi enfant" being made use of in the above-mentioned manner. It is almost needless to say, however, that the resulting composition has most successfully neutralized the folk-quality of the original folk-song.

About this time (1250), however, there occurred what has since become one of the "historical mysteries" of music. This was the composition of "Sumer is icumen in," a three part canon,

by the English monk John of Fornsete. The melody of this little piece is quite charming, full of folk-character and simple human feeling. Even at this distance of time, it sounds pleasant to us, and is as it were a breath of the folk-spirit which never really dies. But this is almost a solitary instance. The compositions of Adam de la Hale, the most distinguished contemporary of John of Fornsete, are to my mind somewhat intellectually ugly in comparison.

But the introduction of the folk-element into art music, the folk-melodies and peoples dance rhythms, with a true appreciation of their racy and suggestive character, did not take place until the 16th and 17th centuries. Even then these folk-strains were introduced by composers more as interesting exotics, as curiosities, rather than with a desire to develop them for their own sake. They were introduced as bits of color, as bases of contrast, as piquant elements of variety. Their spiritual and suggestive aspect as a basis of inspiration was completely overlooked. It was really not until the 19th century that the People came into their own as regards the art of music.

It was a long and gradual journey from the remote heights of religious mysticism to the spirit of the Folk. But our day sees it accomplished. The art of music becoming through the centuries even more humanly expressive, has finally lost its recondite and artificial character and has received in its stead the inspiration of the Folk-spirit. So to-day we see national schools on every hand. There is German music, French music, Russian music, Italian music, etc., each having its distinctive race character, and being a triumphant expression of a certain Folk-spirit.

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We have now examined somewhat the natural history of folk-song; have in fancy been present at its birth; have realized its true relation to the Folk. We have also seen the necessary relation existing between a great man and his People. How the "genius" must lead the people and yet draw his inspiration from them. We have briefly traced the gradual emancipation of the art of music from the service of the Church to the service of the various Folk-spirits. Finally I would speak of America and of what we may expect when it comes to pass that we have a musical art of our own which shall express us in distinction to any other people.

The immediate future of American music and native culture generally certainly looks pretty dark. The majority of the

various peoples who have in part migrated from Europe have for the moment largely forgotten their culture, their poetry, their art, and their popular ideals generally. All this they have left behind and in coming to a place where there exists no native cultural life; in which the very idea of culture (at least among the people) is a laughing stock, they have soon degenerated, have been swept along by the irresistible power of their new surroundings and have enthusiastically embraced the life and pleasures of the new land. This much vaunted American liberty is very largely mere license, and the life of the people one of conceited and sophisticated ignorance. Their pleasures and occupations (when not making money) are of the most unrefined sort; a perfect merry-go-round of vulgarity.

But I am convinced that this condition will not always endure. It is highly improbable that all the immigrants coming to our shores shall forget forever all of their folk-poetry, their traditional virtues, their naïve and expressive folk-songs. Indeed, the better class of these transplanted peoples have brought much of their refinement and traditional folk-culture with them, as witness the German choral societies with every now and then a great "Saengerfest." These fragments of different folk-consciousnesses, with their different folk-poetic and folk-musical contributions, will eventually coalesce and form a folk-consciousness in this country; from which soil, and nourished by these elements, the real American music shall eventually arise. But this is no imminent thing. I am looking now far into the future—say one or two hundred years.

There is much music being written to-day in America. But by far the larger part of it is imitative. And it is imitative of the developed musical art of Europe. The "Musics" of the different races in Europe have, especially in the 19th century, been developed, fed, and invigorated by the Folk-spirits of those races. Even with the great background of these Folk-spirits certain schools of art-music have become needlessly artificial, lifeless, and suffused with an aggressive and impudent intellectualism. This is bad enough, but when now in America our composers imitate those already moribund compositions it is still worse. It is like an imitation of an imitation twice removed from the source of life.

This condition arises, I conceive, from the fact that we have not as yet a fundamental, strong, and definite folk-spirit here in America. What folk-spirit there is, is at present nearly all commercial and I regret to say jingoistic. A far different spirit from that on which the National schools of Europe are founded. But until we do have a fundamental folk-consciousness of a

quasi aesthetic character in America, our composers will naturally turn to Europe for models, and inasmuch as they do this will their work be non-significant in the founding of an American school of music.

It seems not only just but extremely probable that the future edifice of American art-music will rest upon the substratum of European folk-music. Not that it will be developed from any particular racial style, but like our population will draw elements of strength and vitality from many sources. The melodies, the themes, the magnificent curves of musical beauty which shall yet appear in American music when it comes to pass that our music really expresses the spirit of America;—these melodies will, I believe, contain many an echo of the folk-music of the different European races. The rugged character of the northern strains; the graceful beauty of southern songs; the piquancy and delicacy of French folk-music; weird and seductive Russian dances; the comfortable and home-loving songs of the Germans; all these and more shall form the compost from which broad, sweeping and torrential American melodies shall be composed.

And this thing will naturally happen; for art, and culture generally, is a growth, a mysterious becoming, something which eventually arises one knows not how, and whose sources are of a secret, hidden and mystic nature.

The Art of a race arises and speaks of that particular race consciousness quite independently of the will to make it do so. We cannot compose a piece of German music by consciously making use of German folk-songs, or a piece of Spanish music by consciously using Spanish folk-tunes. But inasmuch as the individual composer is guided and ruled by the spirit which made the folk-songs does he compose Spanish or German music. Therefore we should not hope to create American music by consciously using as thematic material the folk-songs of the different races, but I claim that echoes, and reflections of the racial spirits shadowed forth by all the various folk-songs will be present in the future American music when it actually comes to be written.

The folk-songs of a race, often born in sorrow, and cherished with love through hundreds of years, become at length an integral part of the race consciousness and are well-nigh inseparable from it. America is not merely an association of persons, but also a mixture of race consciousnesses. These latter are, however, ever tending toward an amalgam, a union, which shall ultimately be dominated, it is true, by American ideals, but which shall yet retain in its complete flowering, elements of strength, beauty and

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culture derived from each of the race consciousnesses which have entered into its formation. The future complete America will, I believe, have seized from each of the older races its particular and essential contribution of character to the commonwealth of the world, and the combination resulting therefrom will form the rich soil from which new and glorious art shall spring.

Now in the realm of the tone-art what music is it that most faithfully and sincerely reflects the spirit of a people? Surely the Folk-songs of that people. Also their Art-music, inasmuch as it is in accord with, and an extension of, the spirit of their Folk-songs. If this is accepted as true, then it seems perfectly obvious that our coming American music will—perhaps not be built upon—but will contain and reflect elements derived from all the folk-songs of the various races—fused together by the new and all-powerful element denominated American spirit: a mood of fundamental optimism and heroic valor; a will of accomplishment, laughing at death. For America is surely the largest adventure of Humanity in recent times. Humanity, Antæus-like, has here again touched the mother-earth of primal conditions, from which she is ultimately destined to arise filled with new strength and virility.