

Bartók, Old Hungarian Dances

Beginning in 1908, Hungarian composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály traveled the Hungarian countryside recording and notating the music sung and played there. In so doing, they created the field now called Ethnomusicology, identifying regional and cultural origins of the music. Influences within Hungary included Magyar and Romani (Gypsy), and neighboring countries also include Austria, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Bartók's music is informed by Hungarian folk elements, whether the *Mikrokosmos* (composed for his son's piano lessons, and played by students across the world), his amazing *Serenade for Strings*, the concertos, string quartets, *Music for Strings, Percussion & Celeste* (used to great effect in Kubrick's *The Shining*), or his opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*.

The *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (1914-18) were originally for piano, and Bartók arranged some of them for orchestra in 1933 (a different instrumentation than the one here). The Florida-based conductor, arranger and composer Clark McAlister orchestrated the version at hand more recently, in 2007.

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