

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL

LÁSZLÓ LAJTHA†

1892-1963

As we go to press, the grievous news has reached us of the death in Budapest of László Lajtha. Through his many musical works Lajtha has won international fame and in his own country his reputation as a teacher and conductor stands high. It is however with his work as a collector and scholar of folk music that we are chiefly concerned.

He was collecting folk music as long ago as 1910 when he undertook field-work in association with Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. He has been an active collector ever since except for periods of interruption due to the World Wars and absences abroad. His principal collections are published in the series *Népzenei Monográfiák*, of which five large volumes have so far appeared and the sixth and seventh are in preparation. Until shortly before his death he was engaged in collecting instrumental gypsy music.

His folk music studies embraced a wide field of interests and covered such aspects as notation, classification, analysis and styles of performance. He had also made a close study of the folk dance. Lajtha was widely known and esteemed as a musical folklorist outside his own country. He was associated since its inception in 1928 with the Commission International des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP) which operated within the framework of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, a department of the League of Nations. In 1930 he became president of the music department of CIAP and under his editorship were published the two volumes of folk music bibliography, *Musique et Chansons populaires* (1934) and *Folklore Musical* (1939), which may be regarded as pioneer work of capital importance.

László Lajtha was interested in the formation of the International Folk Music Council and had been a member of its executive board since its inception in 1947. He participated in the annual conference held in Czechoslovakia in July 1962 where he enriched the discussions with his trenchant comments.

There was in Lajtha an honesty of purpose which made him at times uncompromising and dogmatic. Yet even in his most argumentative moods he endeared himself to his fellows by his warm humanity. Through his tendency to over-theorize he might create the illusion that his was a complicated personality, but the very reverse was true. He had an almost childlike simplicity and a sense of humour which never failed to rise to the occasion. As a musician, as a scholar and, above all, as a man of rare nobility of character he will be sadly missed.

MAUD KARPELES

CARLOS LAVÍN†

Carlos Lavín Acevedo was born in Santiago, Chile, on August 10th, 1883. From an early age, he followed two roads with equal enthusiasm: those of composition and of musical research, the latter especially in the fields of folk music and ethnography.

In the first of these occupations he is justly regarded as the forerunner of the modernist movement in his country, as a composer much concerned with indigenous themes, as expressed in *Tehuelche Cadences*, *Huilliche Lamentations*, *Araucanian Myths*, which are among his more notable compositions.

Concerning his musicological activities, the stimulus must not be forgotten that he received during adolescence from the German expert Rudolf Lenz, who initiated the scientific study of folklore in our country. Afterwards, he worked in Berlin as a pupil of Erich M. von Hornbostel, and continued to extend his studies in various European centres.

He returned to Chile in 1942 and collaborated in the Institute of Folk Music Studies in the old Faculty of Fine Arts; he also created the Folklore Archives of the Governmental Department of Information and Culture. In 1947, he founded the Institute of Musical Studies of the University of Chile, which incorporated these two organizations. In its folk-music section, Don Carlos worked both as investigator and as the indefatigable organiser of collecting expeditions; he corresponded with numerous international publications.

Among his many books special mention must be made of: *Musical Panorama of Chile, A Country with Four Musical Nationalities*, *Nuestra Señora de Peñas* (a Chilean ritual festival) and *The Sacred Music of Chile*.

Perseverance and love for his special subject, and generosity as Master in youthful undertakings (among which we may name the Chilean Folk Group)—these were the principal and most fertile qualities of his work. His death in Barcelona in August of this year terminated an imperishable life's work, of which the Institute of Musical Studies of the University offers this brief sketch in loving memory and gratitude.

MANUEL DANNEMANN R.
(translated)

ŠTEFAN TÓTH†

On October 10th, 1962, news reached us of the tragic death of Štefan Tóth, the Slovak folk-dance expert. He was born in Dolná Strehová on April 30th, 1923, completed his course in dance-study at the Prague Conservatoire in 1949, and after three years as a solo-dancer became director of and choreographer to the professional Slovak folk-art ensemble, SĽUK. In 1951 he was appointed Lecturer at the College of Music in Bratislava where he continued to teach until his death; in 1955 he entered the Musicological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He devoted himself to problems of systematics and of method in the field of dance-theory. In 1952 he devised an extremely precise graphical dance-notation (*Tanzschrift*, Bratislava, SAV, 1952), and to this problem two further studies were dedicated: "Kinetographie" (*Ludová tvorist*, Vol. 10, 1960, Bratislava) and a comparative study ("Zwei Tanzschriften," *Musikwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen*, V, 1961, S. 92-130). To the subject of Slovak folk dance he contributed the study: "Bewegungsgruppen der slowakischen Volkstänze" (*Musikwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen*, III, 1959, S.43-118). Under his leadership a dance-archive was established at the Slovak Academy of Sciences and now contains some 30,000 m. of sound-film. In recent years he had been working on a regional dance-monograph and on the development of a system of kinetic structural analysis. His death leaves vacant a place among Czechoslovak workers in the dance-field which will not readily be filled. His loss will be keenly felt.

OSKÁR ELSCHÉK
(translated)