Dances de Galánta

Analysis

The structure of the piece

This is probably one of the most challenging aspects of the piece. Several suggestions have been advanced in relation of its form. The score published by Universal Editions describes:

“A slow movement (bars 1-412) is followed without a break by a fast movement with recapitulations of the principal theme and other elements from the slow movement (bars 413-607). The slow movement is a rondo featuring three appearances of the principal theme and three interpolated episodes. The theme of the fast movement is also heard three times, with episodes in this case being variants from the slow movement.”

Some aspects suggested in this structure are open to debate. The question arises about the suggestion that the “fast” part begins at bar 413. One argument against this suggestion is that, admitting the ‘slow and fast’ subdivision (quite acceptable taking into consideration the verbunkos inspired lassú and friss), Kodály’s tempo indication at m. 238 is already quite fast (quarter = 140). Also the claim that “The theme of the fast movement is also heard three times, with episodes in this case being variants from the slow movement” does not seem to take in to consideration that most of the melodies used in the fast section are ‘new’ melodies from the ‘raw material’ rather than “variants from the slow movement” as the analysis in this section will demonstrate.

Several scholars recognize the complicated task to describe a structure in this piece. Some of them show frustration for the lack clear description of structure in existing books:

“If the form of the Dances of Marosszék was an unconventional version of a standard rondo, the Dances of Galánta is even more enigmatic. Both Sárosi and Breuer describe the form as a rondo with a finale (or coda in Breuer’s case) that contains six dance melodies. Both authors comment that the length of the coda is actually longer than the main rondo. Sárosi gives a clear starting point, stating that it begins in measure 236, but he makes little effort to define the sections of the finale, aside from stating that the performers “…go on playing the last dance of the dance cycle at length, stringing various melodies together in a capricious, virtuoso manner, using variations and alterations.”


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The Structure in this Analysis

The present analysis suggests a hybrid form including elements from verbunkos and rondo in the following way:

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Treatment of the ‘Raw Verbunkos Material’ by Kódaly

While the use of the verbunkos raw material is evident in Dances of Galánta, it is necessary to clarify that Kódaly seldom uses these themes in their entirety. He rather presents them in a fragmented way even when they appear for the first time in the piece. As it will be demonstrated in the next section, Kódaly often splits the themes in two or three sections and, in their first appearance, he often presents only the first part of the themes. It is only after several measures or passages that the remaining sections are introduced. This ‘technique’ applies mostly to themes starting in m. 175 (Theme D).
### Detailed Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The piece opens with an exact transcription of Theme A (from the ‘Vienna’ verbunkos) in cellos. The double dotted rhythms are characteristic of the verbunkos.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bar 6</td>
<td>The previous statement is responded with the entrance of higher strings and flute in imitations. Following the lassú style, rubato is present. A fermata at the end of this passage (between mm. 9 and 10) help to distinguish these two sections from the following sections. Some scholars see this passage as in A melodic minor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Similar to m. 1 (French horn transposed a perfect 4(^\text{th}) above).</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Similar to m. 6 (piccolo instead of flute).</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>With an indication of poco piú mosso this section supports the rapid alternation of portions of the two main motives (transposed) from the previous section. Theme A presented by:</td>
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<td>• oboe/flute (m. 19)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• bassoon viola (m. 23)</td>
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<td>• violin I/II (m. 27)</td>
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34 Quasi cadenza in the clarinet (based on arpeggios related to motives in m. 6). The fermatas maintain the rubato aspect of this section.

37 A *poco stringendo* passage based in part of ascending and descending arpeggios reminding figures in mm. 6-9.

45 Cadenza by the clarinet concludes the first section. Some scholars see in the prominent presence of the clarinet (here and in m. 34) an attempt to imitate the *tárogató*, a single reed instrument used in Hungarian folk music.

50 **Lassú**

**Rondo A**

Change of tempo and meter mark the beginning of section 2. Clarinet introduces another theme from the ‘Vienna’ *verbunkos*. **Theme B** is introduced with some changes in rhythm and pitch from the original.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the original *verbunkos* from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 50. In order to compare the melodic contour of both melodies, the ‘original’ *verbunkos* has been transposed to the same key and register than the passage from ‘Dances’. The passage from ‘Dances’ has been transformed into 2/4 (from original 4/4). The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the example does not include articulation or expressive indications.
New entrance of Theme B (flute, clarinets, and higher strings) with small changes and transposed a P4 above.

Partial entrance of second part of Theme B (clarinets, bassoon I, viola, cello). This passage is similar to m. 74.

Lassú  

Change of tempo, meter and key signature open a new section. Pizzicato off-beats in higher strings (esztam) prepare new section.

Rondo B  

Theme C is introduced by flute I (m. 97), joined by piccolo (m. 104) and continued by clarinets, violins and violas (m. 110).

The following example shows two staves: 1) on top the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 97. In order to compare the melodic contour of both melodies, the ‘original’ verbunkos has been transposed to the same key and register than the passage from ‘Dances’. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the example does not include articulation or expressive indications.
New presentation of Theme C split as follows:
- m. 124: piccolo, oboe I, clarinet II, bassoon I
- m. 130: flute I, piccolo, oboe II
- m. 136: clarinets, most strings
- m. 140: flute I, piccolo, oboe I

The parallel motion of the different instruments offers an non-Western flavor (m. 124 and 130)

Lassú

Climatic reappearance of Theme B (ff appassionato) and large instrumentation (woodwinds and higher strings).

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 153. In order to compare the melodic contour of both melodies, the 'original' verbunkos has been transposed to the same key and register than the passage from 'Dances'. The passage from 'Dances' has been transformed into 2/4 (from original 4/4). The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the example does not include articulation or expressive indications.
Kodály introduces Theme D (only its 1st part) in a way very close to the original verbunkos in terms of pitch and rhythm.

The following example shows two staves: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 175. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the example does not include articulation or expressive indications.

Repetition of the 1st part of Theme D in flute (transposed 8ve higher)

Second part of Theme D introduced by oboe I.

The following example shows two staves: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 191.
199 Repetition of the 2nd part of Theme D (piccolo).

207 Alternation of different sections extracted from Theme D as follows:
- m. 207: Flute 1, 2nd part of Theme D transposed a perfect 4th above.
- m. 211: Violins, last 4 measures of Theme D not transposed.
- m. 215: Flutes, beginning of 2nd part transposed half a step above.
- m. 215: Oboe I, figures extracted from 2nd part.
- m. 219: Woodwinds and violins, last 4 measures of Theme D (with a different ending at m. 222) not transposed.

These sections ‘interrupt each other in tempo and motivic material.

223 The ascending short motive of m. 222 seems to be the element creating the eight-measure codetta (with stringendo) that concludes this section. The following example presents only the two violin parts. However, this motive appears in several voices.

In the following example the motive is in red.

231 **Lassú**

**Rondo A**

This section concludes with the climatic reappearance of the 1st part of Theme B. The tempo is again andante maestoso, a tempo that has been associated with the appearances of this theme at mm. 50 and 153.

The following example shows two staves: 1) on top the first appearance
of Theme B in the dances and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 231. In order to appreciate the melodic transformation the example does not include articulation or expressive indications, and the part of the clarinet at m. 50 has been transposed to C.

Friss

Section 1

Theme E is presented in the violins.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 238. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions.

Entrance of Theme E in violin I with doubling on violin II a sixth lower. At m. 260 flutes and clarinets have opening of Theme E (imitated by horn).

1st part of Theme F in flute and oboes. This section is repeated with some variation at m. 274 (violin I).
original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 270. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the verbunkos example has been transposed to the key of “Dances”.

278

1st part of Theme E (flute I, oboes, clarinets, and violins). However, from m. 284 the 3rd part of the same theme appears.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 278. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions.

This third part of the theme repeats several times, each time an octave higher, to support the overall crescendo.

305

Theme G in piccolo and violins.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 305.

At the same time, oboe I and clarinet II play sections of Theme F transposed from its original presentation.

313

Sections of Theme F are presented in a ‘stretto’ manner as follows:
• m. 313: violins
• m. 317: clarinets and bassoons
• m. 319: flutes and oboes.
Simultaneously, at m. 317, Theme E reappears in the violins.
At m. 319 oboes and clarinets present theme F with French horn playing theme E on the beat.

324
A twelve-measure closing section begins with p subito / crescendo, syncopation, rising melodic contour, esztam, and an indication of “ritmo di 3 battute” (beat in 3) that means that the macro-measure is a 6/4.

336
A poco meno mosso section prepares the entrance of Theme H (only 1st part: clarinet I, m. 348).

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 348. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity, the verbunkos example has been written in ‘A’, as the clarinet is.

• M. 339 Trombone I and II with theme I (second part) in canon.
• M. 352 theme H is in the flute.

356
A new presentation of Theme H (in bassoon I and cello). This section is accompanied by arpeggio figures that seem to emanate from the last measure of Theme H in m. 355.

364
The 2nd part of Theme H is introduced by violin I.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 364. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions.

This section of Theme H is repeated an 8ve higher at m. 372 (violin and
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<td>379</td>
<td>The last measure of Theme H is repeated homophonically by several instruments and used as codetta for this section (diminuendo to poco sostenuto at m. 387).</td>
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<tr>
<td>393</td>
<td>This a tempo section functions as a bridge to the next section. The transition begins with the first motive of Theme H in m. 396 (piccolo). This figure is imitated by several instruments (bassoon I, m. 397; piccolo, m. 402; bassoon, m. 403).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>407</td>
<td>Finally, the 1st part of Theme I appears in m. 407 (horn I).</td>
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<tr>
<td>423</td>
<td>The change of tempo (Allegro vivace) brings the 2nd part of Theme I in canonic entrance between viola and violin II. However, only violin II plays the 2nd part of Theme I in its entirety.</td>
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**Section 3**

Finally, the 1st part of Theme I appears in m. 407 (horn I).

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 393. For clarity, the verbunkos example has been written in ‘F’, as French horn.

This 1st part of the theme is repeated by:
- piccolo and bassoon I at m. 409
- flute I, oboe I, and bassoon I at m. 417

The change of tempo (Allegro vivace) brings the 2nd part of Theme I in canonic entrance between viola and violin II. However, only violin II plays the 2nd part of Theme I in its entirety.

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 423.

This presentation is followed by partial presentations or variations of Theme I (either 1st or 2nd part) such as:
- m. 432: flutes, violin II
- m. 435: violas
- m. 436: clarinets
- etc.

Concurrent with the presentation of 2nd part of Theme I (mm. 424-431) Kodály introduces the 1st part of Theme J (flute and violin I, m. 427).

The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the
fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 427. For clarity, the verbunkos example has been transposed a major 2\textsuperscript{nd} above.

This is followed by transported imitations or variations of this fragment such as:
- m. 431: clarinets
- m. 435: violin I
- m. 436: violin II

At m. 442 flute/oboe present fragments of Theme H (1\textsuperscript{st} part).

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<td>The 2\textsuperscript{nd} part of Theme J is presented at m. 445 by violin I</td>
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<tr>
<td>The following example shows two staffs: 1) on top the first part of the original verbunkos from the Vienna book and, 2) on the bottom, the fragment of Dances of Galánta starting at m. 445. The notes in red indicate existing differences between the two versions. For clarity of the example the original verbunkos has been transposed a major second above.</td>
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This is followed by transported imitations or variations of this fragment such as:
- m. 449: clarinet joins violin
- m. 453: flute, oboe, and 2\textsuperscript{nd} violin join
- m. 477: violins
- m. 491: flutes, violin I

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<td>A variation of the 1\textsuperscript{st} part of Theme E is presented by most of the instruments. During this passage (mm. 492-526) parts of Theme E will alternate with 1\textsuperscript{st} part of Theme F:</td>
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- m. 492: Theme E |

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| 508 | This passage offers the following similarities to the passage at m. 324:  
|     | • \textit{p subito / crescendo}  
|     | • syncopation  
|     | • rising melodic contour  
|     | • Presence of syncopated figures  
|     | • “ritmo di 3 battute”  
|     | The differences are the scale passages found on higher instruments such as flute I, oboe I, clarinet I, and violins. These passages could be traced to Themes E and/or F. |
| 545 | While in this passage violins clearly present the 2\textsuperscript{nd} part of Theme J, other voices (woodwinds) present motives that could emanate from Theme J or other themes. |
| 567 | **Coda**  
|     | A ‘general pause’ brings a change of tempo to \textit{Andante maestoso}. This is the tempo that has been associated to Theme B (mm. 50, 153, 231). This is also the case at m. 569 where motives of Theme B reappear in flute, oboe and clarinet.  
|     | The last of these presentations (m. 573) in clarinet evolves into a cadenza similar to that in m. 45 (where clarinet imitates the \textit{tárógató}). |
| 581 | The melodic material could be associated to previous themes but mostly to Theme J. |