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**We wish all our kind Readers a very blessed and Merry Christmas!
Minden kedves Olvasónknak áldásos és boldog karácsonyi ünnepeket kívánunk!**

Karácsony pásztorének

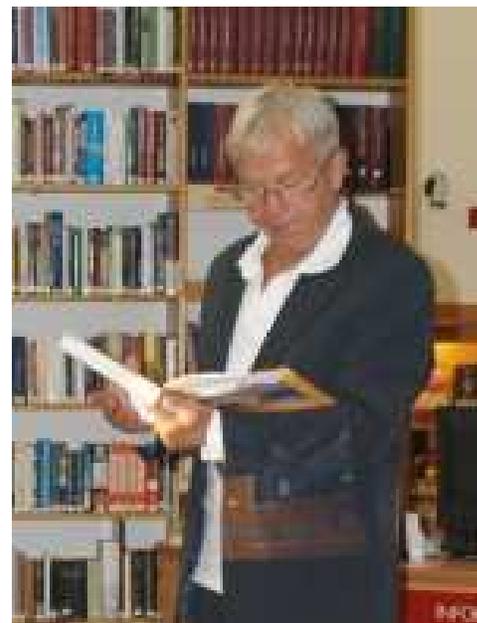
Medriczky Andor

Betlehemi kis jászolban
Isten fia jött közénk,
Megváltani minden embert
Gazdagot és szegényt.
Szeretetet áraszt máris:
Kis kezét nyújtja felénk.

Betlehemi kis jászolhoz
Jöttek szegény pásztorok,
Angyalszózat hívta őket
Az istálló ragyogott.
S hoztak ami tellett tőlük:
Báránykát, juhászbótot.

Később jöttek a királyok
Ajándékkal gazdagon,
Tömjén, mirha és aranykincs
Csillog-villog a napon.
Mert király Ő, a kis Jézus,
Övé minden hatalom.

Most mi jöttünk, hazátlanok,
Legszegényebb hívei,
Vándorúton, kincsek nélkül
Szívünket kiönteni.
Kicsi Jézus segíts minket
Hinni, túrni, küzdeni...



Sziki Károly

Medricky Andor worked for a short time for Radio Free Europe in the München office at the beginning of its Hungarian broadcasts. That is all the biographical information we have been able to find. This poem was written in 1951, and reflects the feeling of desolation felt by many Hungarian refugees at the time.

Our Christmas/ A mi karácsonyunk

Sziki Károly

The famous actor remembers Christmases during his childhood which were not rich in material gifts, but which his Mother nevertheless transformed into something magical. And he recalls his disillusionment when he learned the truth about who brought the tree and the presents.

I remember happy times. Very happy times. My childhood was spent in poverty, but only in the material sense, because there was under the Christmas tree only a volume of Petőfi's poems or a book by Jules Verne. The Christmas tree came always in the morning, decorated and in splendor.

If I asked Mom how it came to be on the table, she would reply: "The Christ Child flew in at night."

"But how, Mom, through closed doors and windows?"

Mom had the answer ready:

"Son, don't you see that crack in the corner of the windowpane? That's where the Angel brought in the tree and that's where the Christ Child came to bring you that book."

The taste of old candies is in my mouth. They wrapped some hard homemade stuff. But there will never be a taste like there was then. The silver-wrapped walnut was on the pine tree, as was the sparkler* and the candles. You can't forget and it wouldn't be worthwhile forgetting.

Despite the fact that my Christmases have become more ornate.

There's something else I must recall. How long the Christ Child brought the tree. I believed it for a long time. It wasn't unusual that the neighboring couple came over every Christmas Eve. They were older people, they liked to spend time with us. So we went to bed, unsuspecting, at seven. But the illusion of the Christ Child's arrival was unveiled on that last belief-wrecking night. My brother, who was only a year and a half older than I, but was also that much more mature, called me over to the sofa from where even I could see what our mother was doing in the kitchen with the neighbors. They were winding the hanging wire on the *szaloncukor* and were putting the walnuts in the silver paper. The starry illusion broke inside me. Crying, I fled under the comforter.

Next day I had to tell what we had seen and had to confront my mother with the fact that she had deceived us. My mother looked at me for a long time and then asked:

"Were you happy or were you not, whether the Christ Child was here or not?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Then let this day be happy too, and every day to come in your lives.

Because he is within us, with us, and now had your parents do what you too will do for your children."

And so it happened. The holiday of Christmas passed from parent to parent. This is what I too continued and I hope I gave as much to my children, that the Christmas carols will ring out with reverence for their children in awaiting the coming of Jesus. Because Hungari-

ans are a religious people. They carry the codes in their genes, they do not have to be taught the sublime essence of the feast.

I have seen the Christmases of many families, and have also shared in many of them. But in essence they never varied, one from another. At this time, the human soul walks in sweet simplicity and at wonderful heights. It is said one must not fast at this time, because that is without weight and superfluous at Christmastime. I observe fasting not only before Easter but also during the waiting for Jesus' coming. No meat, no alcohol, I only yearn for deepest silence. And when my darling places the *fishpaprikás* with *túrós csusza* on the table, and then we open champagne after having exchanged personalized presents, I say: This is the highest level of human existence. It is worth living in this way. Waiting and arriving.

A Christmas carol is always playing, we always demand silence of each other before the coming of Jesus. For a week or two Christmas carols fill the house as well as the car in which we travel. We would like to experience fullness in the silence. By now only one of our children lives at home, as do two cats. Should no one have understood the message of the silence, they, the kitties at least already know: something is in the air. They live this feeling by climbing the Christmas tree, by taking down the Christmas decorations. Animals are great friends and a great complement, a completion of man. They are never unfaithful, never live just for themselves; they were born for you, they celebrate with you, if you understand them.

The family gets together and at this time we visit even those living the farthest away. At this time, my mother, who decorated the pine

tree with the long departed neighbors may perhaps feel that her struggle, her doing without were not in vain. And if she could conjure up Christmas for us only in the way of poor people, she finds its meaning in today's plenty. But most especially the meaning of her life. This rounds out our story and makes it complete.

*Sparklers were an essential part of the Christmas tree in Hungary. Since most houses were not built of wood, this was not as much of a fire hazard as they would be in the States.

Sziki Károly, actor, has been awarded the Hungarian Gold Cross of the Order of Merit, and is the recipient of some other State awards. His ancestors came from Szék, Transylvania. He studied at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Debrecen, and then played leading roles in Eger. Between 1998 and 2003, he was Director of the Harlekin Színház (Theater). In 2003, he founded a private theater named Varga László Polgári Teátrum. For the last 30 years, he has performed among the emigrés in the US, and has made films and written books about these trips.

Translated by Erika Papp Faber



A Mi Karácsonyunk

Sziki Károly

Emlékszem boldog időkre. Nagyon boldog időkre. Gyermekkorom szegényen, de csak anyagi értelemben szegényen telt el, hiszen volt a fenyő alatt egy Petőfi kötet vagy egy Verne könyv. Mindig reggel jött el a karácsonyfa díszben, pompában.

– Éjjel berepült Jézuska - mondta anyánk, ha megkérdeztem, hogyan került az asztalra.

– Édesanyám, de hogyan? Csukott ajtón, ablakon?

Anyánknál készen állt a válasz:

— Fiam! Nem látod az ablaküveg sarkában azt a repedést? Na, azon hozta be az anyalka a fát és jött Jézus is, hogy a könyvet elhozza neked.

Régi cukrok íze a számban. Valami házi készítésű kemény anyagot csomagoltak be. De sohasem lesz olyan íz már, mint akkor volt. A fenyőről nem hiányzott az ezüst papírba csomagolt dió, meg a csillagszóró, meg a gertya. Feledni nem lehet és nem is lenne érdemes.

Pedig azóta megdíszesültek a Karácsonyaim.

Még valamire kell emlékezzek. Arra, hogy meddig hozta Jézuska a fát. Sokáig hittem. Fel sem tűnt, hogy szentestén minden alkalommal átjött a szomszéd házaspár. Idős emberek voltak, szerettek nálunk időzni, így minden gyanú nélkül feküdtünk le este hétkor.

Az utolsó „hitfosztó” éjszaka előtt azonban lelepleződött a Jézuska érkezésének illúziója. A bátyám, aki csak másfél évvel volt idősebb nálam, de annyival érettebb is, odahívott a heverőjére, ahonnan pontosan láthattam én is, mit csinált a szomszédokkal a mi édesanyánk a konyhában. Ők bizony a szaloncukrokra tekergették az akasztó drótot és ezüstpapírba helyezték a diót. Összetört bennem a csillagkép. Sírva menekültem a dunyha alá.

Másnap meg kellett mondanom, mit láttunk az éjjel és anyámat szóra kellett bírni azért, hogy becsapott. Édesanyám hosszan nézett rám és azt kérdezte:

– Boldogok voltatok vagy nem, ha itt volt, ha nem a Jézuska?

– Igen – válaszoltam.

– Akkor legyen boldog ez a nap is, meg mindegyik, ami eljön az életetekben. Mert ő bennünk van, velünk van, s most a szüleiddel végeztette el azt, amit te is el fogsz végezni a gyerekeidért.

És így történt. A Karácsony ünnepe szülőről szülőre szállt. Ezt folytattam magam is és remélem adtam annyit a gyermekeimnek, hogy a karácsonyi dalok áhítattal szólalnak meg majd az ő gyermekeiknek Jézus várásában is. Mert a magyar szakrális nemzet. Génjeiben hordozza a kódokat, nem kell tanítani az ünnep fenéségére.

Sok család karácsonyát láttam már, sokban részt is vettem. De sosem különbözött lényegesen a másiktól. Édes egyszerűségben és csodálatos magasságban jár az

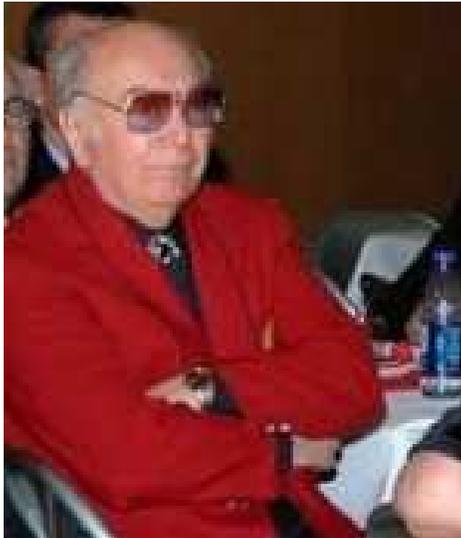
emberi lélek ilyenkor. Azt mondják, nem kell böjtölni ilyenkor, mert az Karácsony előtt súlytalan és felesleges. Én nem csak Húsvét előtt, de Jézus várása közben is adózom a böjtnek. Semmi hús, semmi szesz, csak mélységesen nagy csendet óhajtok. És amikor kedvesem az asztalra teszi a harcsapaprikást túrós csuszával, majd a személyre szabott ajándékok után pezsgőt bontunk, azt mondom: ez az emberi létezés legmagasabb szintje. Élni így érdemes. Várakozni és megérkezni. Mindig karácsonyi ének szól, mindenkor megköveteljük egymástól a csendet és Jézus eljövetele előtt egy-két héttel karácsonyi énekek töltik be a lakást, de a kocsit is, amiben közlekedünk. A teljességet szeretnénk a várakozásban megélni. Már csak egy gyerekünk él otthon és két macskánk. Ha senki nem értette volna meg a csend üzenetét, ők, a cicusok legalább tudják már: valami készülődik. Ezt az érzést a fenyőfa megmászásával, majd a karácsonyi díszek leszedésével élik meg. Az állat nagy barát és nagy kiegészítője az embernek. Sosem hűtlen, sosem magának való, érted született és veled ünnepel, ha megérted.

A család összejön és a legtávolibb élőket is meglátogatjuk ilyenkor. Édesanyám, aki a fenyőfát díszítette a rég elhalt szomszédokkal, ilyenkor talán megérzi: nem volt hiába való a küzdelme, nélkülözése és ha ő csak szegény ember módján tudott Karácsonyt varázsolni nekünk, ebben a mai jólétben megtalálja annak értelmét. De legfőképpen élete értelmét. Így teljes és kerek a mi történetünk.

Good-bye to Frank Valu

The actor Sziki Károly has called him "irreplaceable for Hungarian culture."

By: Olivér Valu



My Dad, Frank Valu fell in love with Hungarian show business after he saw legendary comedy star Latabár Kálmán at the City Operetta Theater in Budapest. At 16, he wrote his first piece entitled "Toward Marriage" (*Irány a házasság*) which was introduced at the Kisvárdai Theater. In 1956, he was the most famous new song-lyric composer/comedy writer in Budapest, with works being performed in 15 different theaters by various famous artists. But the Freedom Fight came and he emigrated to Austria and the USA.

In New York, he produced 14 shows in Broadway theaters and founded the Hungarian Broadway Association. Many talented Hungarian artists performed his works.

He and my Mom Kati managed a Hungarian bar-restaurant club in Hillside, NJ and bought a bar and catering in Yonkers, NY where they founded a Hungarian club. In 1971, his first album came out entitled "Romantic Wild West", featuring many talented musicians. During the next 19 years, Frank and my family were in good friendship with Karády Katalin, a most famous star from Hungary.

In 1985, with famous performers, he produced shows in the Pesti Vigadó and Oper-

etta House in Hungary and also on Broadway in New York, Bridgeport CT, and Woodbridge NJ. In 1993, he produced a show in the Pesti Fészek Club in Hungary and in 1999, a Christmas show in the MOM Theater, all with well-known names. In 1999, he issued a Christmas video, music CD, and a book of comedy. Between 2002 and 2004, he produced some eight shows in the Fészek Club, Budapest with his work featured alongside great composers such as Kálmán and Lehár. Pieces of his Operetta "Royalty", dealing with Empress Maria Theresia were also performed by celebrated artists. In 2011, he put on two Christmas shows at the Fészek Club in

Hungary, with big names appearing, and in 2011, he was honored with a show of his own works at the Hungarian House in New York City.

During his career, he was honored with different awards for his work. He was a loyal Hungarian and he raised his family this way. From 2005 to 2015, I sang songs of his in more than 150 Hungarian shows and occasions. He passed away at the age of 90 on October 30, 2015 in Shelton, Connecticut. We miss him terribly.



1947 Indulás Kisvárdáról



Mikulásgyár (Santa Claus' Factory)

Instead of elves at the North Pole, Hungary has a Santa Claus' Factory where donations are accepted to provide Christmas gifts to needy families. It is one of the largest charitable efforts in all of Europe.

Charles Bálintt Jr.

As children we are so excited to receive presents at Christmastime. We count down the days and then can't wait to tear open the packages. For most of us this is also accompanied by a delicious meal with our families and friends; not to mention the many cakes and other goodies and festive decorations that will surround us. However, we tend to forget about the many families that can't afford to have such a wonderful Christmas.

Christmas should be a special holiday for every Christian family. And since 2005 in Hungary, the Santa Claus' Factory has been trying to do this by providing Christmas gifts to needy families. This charity has no religious or political affiliation. The sole purpose is humanitarian. They only accept donations of such things as food, clothing, books, toys, candy and other household items, but no money.

The *Mikulásgyár* will be operating this year from December 4th till December 20th. The main location is in Budapest at the "56-osok tér" (open from 9 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily), but they have numerous other locations as well. In addition to this, they have partners throughout the country. Donations are accepted in other places, including Invázió clothing stores all over Hungary, Duna House offices and Post Offices.

The *Mikulásgyár* is run by volunteers, mostly from the Budapest area, but some have come from as far away as Australia to help out with this terrific cause. It is one of the largest charitable efforts in all of Europe, distributing gifts to over 250,000 children in each of the last few years.

Besides giving presents, they also host concerts and other happenings during December. Orphaned and handicapped children are invited to special events in the hope of making their Christmas magical.

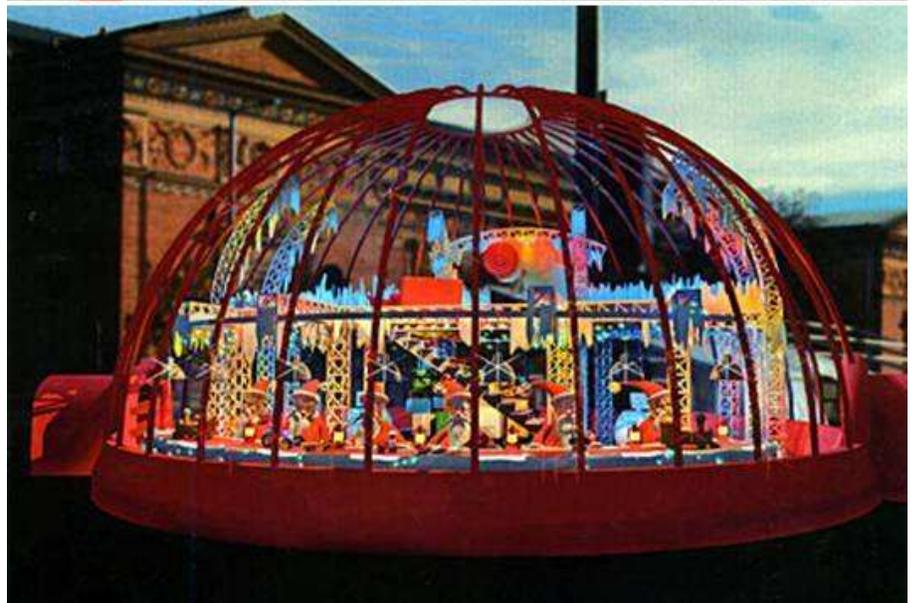
The gifts also reach families in Hungarian communities outside the borders of Hungary. To make sure that as many needy families as possible are assisted, this organization utilizes the help of the Hungarian Red Cross.

As we grow older, many of us realize that it is often more rewarding and satisfying to give than to receive. The volunteers of the *Mikulásgyár* seem to be among those who place a greater value on this feeling and would seem to de-

rive their greatest enjoyment from the smile of a poor, sometimes forgotten child above almost anything else.

For more information you can go to their website at www.mikulasgyar.hu

Charles Bálintt Jr. is a working Customs Broker in Lawrence, NY and a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.



Carl Dudash, Builder of Harpsichords

Erika Papp Faber, with Carl Dudash

Endowed with a musical name (Dudás means "piper"), Carl must have been meant to work in the music field. He and his wife have made a career out of producing beautiful works of art in the form of musical instruments.

"*Canto ergo sum*" – I sing therefore I am. This twist on Descartes' dictum adorns one of the harpsichords in Carl Dudash' Norfolk, CT workshop. (The harpsichord is a precursor of the piano, popular in the 16th to the 18th centuries, and revived in the 20th.)

Carl is a grandson of Hungarian immigrants from Telkebánya (southeast of Kassa), Gamás (south of Lake Balaton), and Rád (east of Vác) who came

to this country after World War I. His father was born in a coal mining town in Pennsylvania, and later moved to Perth Amboy, NJ, where he became a photographer. Carl grew up there and attended Our Lady of Hungary Church where he sang in the choir. His whole family, aunts, uncles and cousins enjoyed singing and he learned many – mostly gypsy – Hungarian songs. Other than that, he has had no formal musical training; he is a self-taught musician.

While studying engineering at Catholic University in Washington, DC Carl joined the University Chorus, and was intrigued by a harpsichord – unfortunately locked – in the music room. Later, when he was already working as an aeronautical engineer in Hartford, CT, a co-worker had a photo on his desk showing a harpsichord he had built. This fellow engineer lent Carl



harpsichord books and recordings, and encouraged him to begin by building an instrument from a kit. He did, and he was hooked!

As he became more and more involved in building instruments from his own designs which are based on historic principles, people started asking him to make harpsichords for them. He finally quit his engineering job in 1981 to devote himself entirely to custom building harpsichords.

His wife, Marilee, is a self-taught artist who gave up an accounting career to devote her time to decorating harpsichords. She studied the various styles of decoration in museums across Europe and in the USA. This enables her to decorate each instrument in the style appropriate to the model and typical of the historic period to which it belongs. For example, a German harpsichord will have a more open, less busy style of decoration. For a Flemish instrument, she will paint floral patterns and birds, realistic or fanciful, on the soundboard, as well as Latin mottoes on the inside of the lid. The lids, which are propped open, lend themselves especially well to landscapes. According to the customer's wishes, she may cover the outer case with gold leaf designs or, in the case of Flemish style instruments, traditional *faux marbre*, a painting technique that imitates marble.

Customers have included the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, Wesleyan and other universities. The latest one was built for the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music. A unique event occurred in May of 2009, when four of their instruments were used in a concert at the Norfolk Library, Simon's Rock College, and in Albany, NY.



Carl and Marilee turn out masterpieces in several different styles: Flemish, French, German and Italian. Each of them has different characteristics and a different sound. There is no standard size of harpsichord, and customers are asked what harpsichord literature they would like to play and what their preferences are in decoration. Then a particular instrument is suggested from the dozen or so different designs Carl and Marilee have made, and modified if necessary, to suit the customer's wishes. Although most of their orders come from the US, they have sent a number of instruments to Europe, including several to France.

Building a harpsichord is time-consuming, and so is its decoration which may require just as much time. It may take six months to a year to produce a finished instrument.

In addition to harpsichords, Carl has also built clavichords, which are much smaller, and above all, much quieter. He has even created an upright clavichord, which may be the only such model in the world.

Living in Connecticut since 1974, Carl and Marilee have been working in Norfolk since 1984. Their workshop is a brightly lit 150-year old carriage house adjacent to a burgundy-colored Queen Anne mansion they call home.

In addition to building harpsichords for over 40 years, Carl has also repaired instruments damaged in transit or, in one case, by water from a pipe break pouring on it for two weeks. But he no longer does much repair work. He and Marilee are too busy building and decorating their 74th harpsichord.

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online

Petrás Mária

Olga Vallay Szokolay

On November 25, 2015, the Foundation for the Art of Transylvania (Erdély Művészetiért Alapítvány) opened an exhibit of the works of Csángó mother-daughter ceramicists Petrás Mária and Petrás Alina, at the E-Gallery in Budapest. Our header this month is a sample of the work of Petrás Mária.



"In the world where I was born, the day began with bells amidst prayers and it ended the same way.

"The riches of families was demonstrated by eight-ten-twelve children. Everyone, from the five-year-old to the eldest one had an indispensable role. On weekdays, one would work with strength and diligence because a holiday was approaching. Before holidays there were always great preparations.

"People cleaned out their souls, their lives, their houses, barns, stables, yards, their villages; they forgave, reconciled, went to Mass dressed in their Sunday best and, in the afternoon, they visited each other. Holidays were spent in great joy. People could procure themselves all their needs so that they had to be nobody's servant. They knew the order of the world because the Sun, the Moon, the stars, the weather and their deep faith guided them. They would do or say nothing mean.

"I grew up among anonymous saints who, surrounded by a host of their children, could weave, spin, embroider while singing, turning that hard world magical. Fasting and praying, with the strength of Mary they distanced physical and spiritual trouble. It is their image that I should like to present to the world as ideal."

The above is the *Credo* of Csángó singer and potter, Petrás Mária. It belies her biographical data of having been born on January 19, 1957, the first child of Moldavian Csángó farmhands Petrás Vazul and Miklós Nyica, at the multi-national small village of Diószén in Bákó County, Romania.

Tucked away in a remote pocket outside the Carpathian Basin lies a small settlement of an ancient, all-Catholic, restless Hungarian tribe, the Moldavian Csángós. The name roughly translates as "wanderers". They can be found

in many diverse locations, even including Italy.

"...Less than 300 miles (500kms) from the European Union, from the world of genetic engineering, space exploration and Internet surfing, a world that Romania is scheduled to join in just two years...in their traditions, their absorption in magic, sorcery and shamanistic charms... the Moldavian Csángós inhabit a timeless universe ... where assumptions of the 21st century have little force."

Mária had four sisters and three brothers. She started school at age 6, at Diószén, where she first encountered the Romanian language. After completion of 10 grades she continued her studies at Hétfalu in a trade school. She finished with honors as an electro-technician and started working while studying graphics in adult education at Brassó for three years.

In night school she finished, and successfully graduated from, high school (*gimnázium*). She worked at a local factory as decorator. Her theater posters won first prize at a national graphic competition. In 1988, out of necessity she became a self-employed painter and graphic artist, to support her 10-year-old child. She purchased a dwelling at Hétfalu.

Mária first went to Hungary in 1990, as a member of a Csángó delegation to celebrate the birthday of the great folklore collector, Domokos Pál Péter. At the festivities, some noticed the drawings she prepared for him and one of the participants invited her to study at the International Preparatory Institute.

This was when Mária first started to learn reading and writing in Hungarian. In September, 1991 she already was a student at the Academy of Industrial Arts (now *Magyar Iparművészeti Egyetem*), majoring in ceramics. In 1995, she received her degree with honors. She was instantly accepted in the Masters program that she finished with high honors. Her degree work, a 3.5m tall x 2m wide (11 ½ ft x 6 ½ ft) near life-size unglazed ceramic piece incorporating five figures is still standing in the Franciscan monastery at Déva.

Her first significant solo exhibit in Budapest took place in 1997, followed by more than 90 in the Hungarian capital and all over the country. Outside the borders she exhibited five times in Italy, twice in France, recently in Canada.

She has an invitation to Rome and to several cities of the United States. Several of her outdoor works stand in public places.

Mária is as well known as a folk singer as she is as a ceramicist. She brought the knowledge and love of *Csángó* songs with her virtually from the cradle. Since 1990, she has been participating actively in the work of domestic and international organizations serving *Csángó* issues and to that end she has been utilizing her singing *Csángó* folk songs week after week at national festivities as well as in radio and television. In those early days, I heard her and her group sing at a fair on Castle Hill in Budapest – my first exposure to *Csángó* culture through those sad melodies in the pentatonic scales that were left out from Bartók and Kodály's collection areas.

Since then, over the past decade, Mária has collected a slew of various prizes, too lengthy to list here. Her video: "In Clay, Fire, Song" is well worth seeing and listening to.

Mária's daughter, Alina followed in her mother's footsteps in ceramics. While Mária's themes are mostly religious ones, Alina is inspired by ancient Hungarian tradition.

In her Artistic Creed, Petrás Alina writes: "Since my early childhood, I was surrounded by people who created the necessities for a nice life with their special sense for love and humility. From my great-grandmother I learned to spin, from my grandmother to cook and I often helped with weaving. From my aunts I copied the technique of knitting and sewing. I grew up participating and assisting in almost all work of my mother. Her guidance, teaching promoted the development of my own language of form. I like the motives of the tree of life, tulips, sun as symbols and I'm interested in the Hungarian world of myth. I believe in carrying on the legacy of our ancestors and building it into our everyday life."

Mária's husband, the prize laureate

poet Döbrentei Kornél is also participating in the exhibit. They live at Pomáz, a town near Budapest in a slowly-built house that gives a home not only for them but her studio as well.

Olga Vállay Szokolay is an architect and Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College, CT after three decades of teaching. She is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.



Christmas; Madonna 3; Angels; Mary and Joseph on the Road with baby Jesus; Mary and baby Jesus with Angels; Detail of Ceramic Composition; Pietà2

How the Christmas Stuffed Cabbage is Made in Zágon

Zita Balogh

Zita Balogh describes not only the preparation of stuffed cabbage, but also how they observed Christmas in Zágon when she was a child. She used the local dialect in telling this, which does not come through in the translation.

My mother thoroughly thought through everything, even the pickling of the sauerkraut for winter. According to tradition, she would figure out which day it would have to be salted down, water added, put into the oaken barrel in rows, so that it would ripen by the time of the pig killing before Christmas, and especially for the stuffed Christmas cabbage cooked in the earthenware crock.

By All Souls' Day, the cabbage had been put in the oaken tub which had a tap. She used this oaken barrel exclusively for this.

You will need:

- an oak barrel with a capacity of 100-150 liters (quarts), rinsed out and dried.
- 20-30 hard, mid-sized heads of winter cabbage
- a handful of savory
- a handful of dill
- lots of horseradish and coarse salt
- garlic (optional)

Cut out the core of the cabbage, fill the hole with salt. On the bottom of the barrel place the savory, dill and part of the horseradish. Put in the heads of cabbage in rows as tight as possible. On the very top place the remaining horseradish, which is a good preservative and is very healthy. Place on it two or three oak slats used only for this purpose, and weight it down with a heavy flat stone. Leave for 3-4 days, then fill up the barrel with slightly salted lukewarm water. Circulate the liquid every second day. Let it run out of the tap, and pour it back over the top, so that the juice is turned.

During this time, the pig is killed and there is plenty of smoked ham, which is

necessary for stuffed cabbage.

By then the cabbage too has aged. Take off the leaves that come off easily from one or two mid-sized heads of cabbage, cut out the heavy veins, thus preparing them to be filled. Slice the remaining cabbage thin.

You will need:

- an earthenware pot, or just a large pot (figure two rolls of stuffed cabbage per person.)
- 2 pounds of ground pork, not too fat nor too lean
- 1 onion, diced small, slightly sautéed in a little oil
- salt, pepper, paprika to taste
- 1 egg
- 3 ½ oz. of rice (the stuffing must not have too much rice in it)
- at least one smoked ham, and smoked bacon slices to cover the rolls of stuffed cabbage

• Work together the above ingredients and roll into the previously prepared cabbage leaves. (I find it easier to do it in my hand, but it can be done on a cutting board too.) I fold it from the bottom, the left, the right and from the top over the ground meat. This way I am sure the stuffing will not open up during cooking and the rolls will look nice too.

When the leaves have been stuffed, I place a layer of chopped cabbage on the bottom of the pot and put the smoked ham in the middle. I place the rolls of stuffed cabbage around the ham. Then I add water, just to barely cover. If necessary, I will add water during cooking. For those who prefer it more sour, you may add more water from the cabbage in the barrel.

Cook over very low heat for 2-3 hours.

Tips:

If you use an earthenware pot, place the pot in cold water for the whole night before use, so the pot will absorb the water. In this case do not pour water under the stuffed cabbage. I place it in the oven and it will be done much sooner and will taste much finer than if made in any other kind of pot.

Serve with sour cream. Freshly baked crusty homemade potato bread is ideal

with it.

The homemade potato bread was baked on Holy Saturday*, as was the flaky *kalács*, the stuffed cabbage in the earthenware pot, and the Angel came. Tastes, fine aromas and the Christmas spirit belonged together.

*Holy Saturday: In our part of the world, before every holiday there is a penitential week called Holy Week. Then the bells ring every evening from 6:30 to 7 PM, every 15 minutes, calling people into the house of God (the first is at 6:30, the second at 6:45 and the third at 7), and all who are able will go to church to repent their sins, properly preparing themselves to receive the Lord's Supper. (If you consider it, the minister says at every Lord's Supper: "If you have properly prepared yourselves, come to the Lord's Table.")

"Holy Saturday" does not always fall on a Saturday, but since it is "Holy Week" (the week before a holiday), the day just before the holiday has been called Holy Saturday. This is when the housewife has very much to do: she cleans, scrubs the floor, bakes the breads, bakes the flaky *kalács*, stuffs the cabbage and if possible, puts some gifts under the Christmas tree. Everything has to be nice and clean, everything has to be fresh and the Christmas tree too has to be prepared at this time, "dressed". Something has to be invented for the children, because they had to go to bed early so that, with the help of the neighbor, or of grandma, the Christmas tree could be dressed very quickly.

When they finished, the candles burned (on the tree), the sparklers** threw sparks and the bell rang. Then we didn't know how to jump out of bed fast enough because the ANGEL had come.

There was great joy, sincere anticipation and love. No luxuries, and thus Christmas was for an entire lifetime.

**No Hungarian Christmas tree was complete without sparklers. Since houses were not built of wood, this did not create quite as bad a fire hazard as they would here in the States.

Zita Balogh comes from Zágon, Transylvania, where she studied hotel management. She is currently receptionist at The Inn at Fairfield Beach.

Hogy készül a Karácsonyi töltött káposzta Zágónba?

Balogh Zita

Édesanyám mindig alaposan átgondolt mindent, még a télikáposzta besavanyítását is. Hagyomány szerint, kiszámítva, hogy melyik nap kell besózni, fellevezni, a cserefakádba (hordóba) szép sorba berakni a káposztát, mert ez így beérik a disznyó vágásra, Karácsony előttre és főleg a Karácsonyi cserépedénybe főzött töltöttkáposztára.

(Zita megtartotta itt a székely tájszólást.)

*

Hallottaknapjára a káposzta cserefakádba került (csappal ellátott hordó). Ezt a cserefa hordót csak szigorúan erre a célra használta.

Szükséges:

Egy 100-150 liters cserefa hordó, szépen kimosva és megszáritva, 20-30 kemény fejes közép nagyságú télikáposzta, egy marok csombor, egy marok kapor, jó sok torma és darabos só, esetleg fokhagyma.

A káposztákból kifúrjuk a torzsát, az így kapott lyukat megtöltsük sóval, a hordó aljára betesszük a csombort, kaprot és a tormának egy részét. Szépen sorba berakjuk a káposztákat, szorosan mennyire csak lehet. A legtetejére rárakjuk a fenn maradt tormákat, ami jó tartosító hatással van és egészséges. Két-három tenyér szélességű, csak erre a célra használt cserefa lécet teszünk rá, végül lenyomtassuk egy nehéz lapos kővel. 3 - 4 napig így hagyjuk, utána feltöltsük enyhén sós langyos vízzel, minden második nap a levet megforgassuk. Leengedünk belőle, és a tetejére vissza öntsük, így a káposzta leve megforgatódik.

Ez az idő alatt a disznyó is levágódik és van bőven füstölt sonka ami a töltöttkáposztához szükséges.

Beérett a káposzta is. Egy-két közepes káposztáról leszedjük a könnyen lebomló leveleket, a levelek-

ről az ormolyos részt szépen levágjuk, így előkészítjük a töltéshez. A fennmaradt részt apró, vékony szeletekre metéljük.

Szükséges:

Cserépedény, Róma-i tál vagy egyszerűen egy jó nagy edény.

Minden személyre számítunk 2 tölteléket.

1kg disznyó hús darálva, nem túl kövér, de sovány se legyen
1 fehér hagyma apróra vágva, kevés olajon enyhén megpárolva
Só, bors, piros paprika izlés szerint
1 tojás
10-12 dkg rizsa, ne legyen túl rizses a töltelék
Legalább egy szép füstölt sonka, füstölt szalonna szeletek a töltelékek leborításához.

A fenti anyagokat összedolgozzuk és a már előkészített levelekbe begöngyölgessük. (Nekem tenyérbe egyszerűbb a műveletet csinálni, de lehet deszkán is. Alulról, balról, jobbról és fentről hajtogatom rá a darálthúsrá, így biztos vagyok a töltelék nem bomlik ki főzés közben és csinosak is lesznek.)

Mikor a levelek megvannak töltve, akkor az edény aljába teszünk egy rend metélt káposztát és az edény közepébe behelyezem a füstölt sonkát, a sonka köre szépen körbe behelyezem a töltelékeket. Felöntöm vízzel, csak épp annyira hogy ellepje a víz; fővés közben szoktam utána tölteni ha szükséges. (Sőt, káposzta levet is kíván néha, mert van aki savanyóbban szereti.)

Nagyon lassú tűznél 2-3 órát főzöm.

Tudnivalók:

Ha Róma-i tálat használunk, akkor a tálat előző este tegyük hidegvíz alá egész éjszakára, hogy a cserép szívja meg magát. Ebben az esetben nem töltünk vizet alája, a sütőbe teszem és sokkal hamarabb elkészül és finomabb mint más edénybe.

Tálaláskor friss tejfölt adunk hozzá,

ropogós frissen sült krumplis házikenyer istenien megy vele.

Nagyszombaton* sült a házi krumplis kenyér, a foszlós kalács, a cserépedényes töltött káposzta, és jött az angyal. Ízek, finom illatok és a karácsonyi hangulat egymáshoz tartoztak.

*Nagyszombat: igen, mi felénk minden ünnep előtt van egy bűnbánó hét, amit nagyhétnek is neveznek, ekkor minden este 6:30-tól 7 óráig szólnak a harangok, negyed óránként hívogat a jó Isten a házába - 6:30-kor az elsőt, 6:45-kor a másodikat és 7-kor a harmadikat, (vagy behuzzak, meg így is emlegetik), és aki tud, azok mennek a templomba, bűnt bánni, készülnek az Úrvacsora vételre, kellőképpen előkészítik magukat. (Ha belegondolsz, minden Úrvacsora vételkor mondja a pap:

„Ha kellőképpen előkészítettétek magatokat, járuljatok az Úr asztalához.” Gondolom felétek is hasonló a szokás.) Nem mindig esik a nagyszombat szombatra, de mivel, hogy nagyhét (ünnepelőtti hét) így nagyszombatnak nevezték a közvetlen ünnep előtti napot, ekkor van a háziasszonynak nagyon-nagyon sok dolga: takarít, felsúrolja a padlót, megsüti a kenyereket, megsüti a foszlós kalácsot, megtölti a káposztát és ha van rá lehetőség még ajándékot is tesz a fa alá. Minden szép tiszta kell legyen, minden friss kell legyen és még a karácsonyfa is ekkor kell legyen elkészítve, „felöltöztetve”, sőt a gyerekeinek ki kellett találni valamit, mert korán le kellett feküdni, ahhoz hogy a szomszéd asszony segítségével, vagy nagymamával a karácsonyfát jó gyorsan fel tudják öltöztetni.

Mikor kész voltak, akkor égtek a gyertyák, szorták a fényt a fényszórók és csilingelt a csengő. Ekkor mi azt se tudtuk, hogy ugorjunk ki az ágyból mert megjött az ANGYALKA.

Nagy öröm volt, őszinte várakozás és szeretet. Semmi luxus, és így egy életre szólott a Karácsony.

Did you know that...

... that a descendent of Hungarian immigrants, Navy Chief Petty Officer Stephen Koteles Sr., was the only reported veteran of four wars? Born in Pennsylvania in 1900, he served in World War I and World War II, the Korean conflict, and did two tours of duty in Vietnam, where he was the oldest active volunteer serviceman.

He was also the only enlistee to be sworn in by an astronaut: Koteles was a crew member of the USS Lake Champlain, the recovery ship which had picked up the Gemini 5 space ship from the Pacific Ocean, and it was on board that ship that Lt. Cmdr. Charles Conrad administered the oath for his second stint a few days later.

Later on, Koteles raised *vizsla* puppies in Bridgeport, CT, one of which he gave to Lt. Cmdr. Charles Conrad and an-

other to Bob Hope before he left for his 1970 Christmas show.

Stephen was the son of Elizabeth Papp Koteles. Elizabeth had donated her wedding dress and petticoats to Whitehead for his airplane, which he had flown in Fairfield two years before the Wright brothers.

He was featured on the cover of *Reveille* magazine (November-December 1976 issue).

The Stephen Koteles Memorial Award, named after him by the Veterans Council of Greater Bridgeport, annually honors a veteran for wartime and civil service.

... that together with Los Angeles, Hamburg, Rome and Paris, Budapest is also putting in a bid to host the 2024 Olympics? The decision will be made by the International Olympic Committee in September 2017.

... that the Transylvanian *Pálinka* Order of Knights (*Erdélyi Pálinka Lovag Rend*) has just been established in October of this year? As several speakers emphasized, *pálinka* is the national drink of Transylvania, seeing that they do not have vineyards nor produce beer. *Pálinka* accompanies the inhabitants literally from the cradle to the grave: when a baby is born, the father calls in the neighbors to celebrate the great event with a glass of *pálinka*, and it is drunk at the wake and at all important milestones in between. In Transylvania, it is part of everyday life.

The new Knights promised to serve the good name of Transylvanian *pálinka* with honor and fidelity, and to work to popularize the good quality distillate.

The Transylvanian Order joins similar Orders in Hungary, Slovakia and Vajdaság (now part of Serbia). In Hungary, *pálinka* has been declared a Hungarian product, i.e., a protected, typically Hungarian product. It is now a symbol of national affinity.

... that the Oxigén Hotel and Zen Spa at Noszvaj in the Bükk Mountains has been awarded the World's Luxury Hotel and Spa Award?

Considered the "Oscar" of the hotel business, the establishment received this recognition for being the most beautiful forest spa in the world. It has been operating since 2012 in the renovated Galassy Castle 10 km northwest of Eger. It can accommodate 130 guests. Voting for the Award is done by the guests themselves.

It's a Small World

Charles Bálintt Jr.

A number of years ago my mother went to a Native American Heritage Festival in Brooklyn, NY with another Hungarian friend of hers. There were various activities throughout the day with Native Americans in full dress with face paint and feathers.

For one of the events that featured some type of Indian dance my mother and her friend were quite close to one of the performers. When the dance was over my mother remarked to her friend: "Ez nagyon hasonlít egy tipikus magyar néptánchoz" ("This closely resembles a typical Hungarian folk dance"). Moments later one of the Indians came over to her and in perfect Hungarian said, "Lehet hogy igazuk van, de valamiből meg kell élni." (You may be right, but you have to make a living somehow).

REVEILLE

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