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*We wish all our kind Readers a very blessed Christmas and
a happy and healthy New Year!*

~ ~ ~

*Minden kedves Olvasónknak kívánunk áldásos karácsonyi ünnepeket és
békés, boldog új esztendőt!*

Mennyből az angyal (God's Glorious Angel)

Menny -ből az an - gyal le - jött hoz - zá - tok,
God's glo - rious an - gel comes down be - fore you

Pász - to - rok! Pász - to - rok!
Shep - herds wake! Shep - herds wake!

Hogy Bet - le - hem - be si - et - ve men - vén
Beth - le - hem calls you, Je - sus is born

Lás - szá - tok! Lás - szá - tok!
For your sake. For your sake.

Wishing You a Musical Christmas

I grew up in a Hungarian-American family where Christmas combined the best of Hungarian and American Christmas food and festivities. I remember, from my earliest years, that every Christmas Eve, the family would get together and we would sing "Mennyből az angyal" around the Christmas tree.

Down through the years, I have tried to continue that tradition with my children, and later with my grandchildren. Whenever I have the opportunity to hear or to sing that beautiful Hungarian Christmas carol, the words and the melody help me to recall those wonderful early times, and the family members who sang with me.

Perhaps you would like to start that tradition in your own family, and so, keep the Hungarian spirit alive at Christmastime. Magyar News Online is pleased to pass on the words and music of this wonderful carol. Enjoy it and may it strengthen the Christmas spirit in your home.

Robert Kranyik

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Itt van a szép karácsony

Dsida Jenő

Itt van a szép, víg karácsony,
Élünk dión, friss kalácson:
mennyi finom csemege!
Kicsi szíved remeg-e?

Karácsonyfa minden ága
csillog-villog: csupa drága,
szép mennyei üzenet:
Kis Jézuska született.

Jó gyermekek mind örülnek,
kályha mellett körben ülnek,
arany mese, áhítat
minden szívet átítat.

Pásztorjátások be-bejönnek
és kántálva ráköszönnek
a családra. Fura nép,
de énekük csuda szép.

Tiszta öröm tüze átég
a szemeken, a harangjáték
szól, éjféle üzenet:
Kis Jézuska született!



1929

Dsida Jenő (1907-1938) erdélyi költő, Benedek Elek fedezte fel. Több irodalmi folyóirat szerkesztője vagy munkatársa volt, szívbajban szenvedett. Első verseskötete 1928-ban jelent meg. A részvét költője volt, aki mindenkihez szeretettel



Rófusz Ferenc,

Another Film Award for Hungarian Film Animator

A Hungarian has won this year's Golden Spike award for best animated short film in Valladolid, Spain. Rófusz Ferenc gained international fame in 1981 for winning an Oscar for his animated short film "The Fly."

Rófusz Ferenc, the first Hungarian to have won an Oscar – 30 years ago, in 1981, with his short animated film entitled "The Fly" – this year won the Golden Spike award at the Valladolid (Spain) International Film Festival with his 9-minute short entitled "Ticket". All of the animation was hand-drawn, and the film seeks to answer the perennial question, "What is the meaning of life?" Presented through the eyes of a man, whose face is not shown throughout the entire film, it is a poetic overview of life's landmarks, from birth to death.

Rófusz was born in Budapest in 1946, studied there and worked on animated TV programs. When he won the Oscar in February of 1981, the Hungarian government did not allow him to leave the country to attend the ceremony. A delegate of the Hungarian government accepted the statue in his stead, and Rófusz did not even see it at the time. He was eventually able to accept it in person.

His next project, "Deadlock", mixed animation with live shots, and tells the story of an execution, with the soldiers speaking Russian. Needless to say, it was not given much publicity in Hungary at the time. He did not receive support, and so turned to working as a musician. This allowed him to travel abroad, and in 1984 he decided to stay in Germany. That same year, his short film "Gravity", based on the legend of Newton's apple, won an award for Best Short film at the Ottawa International Animated Film Fest.

Four years later, he applied for a visa to Canada. There he founded his own studio, RF Flyfilm, and made several quality films, commercials and music videos. In 2002, he moved back to Hungary, and continues to produce animated shorts, including "Ceasefire" and "Dog's Life". His two sons are professional film animators in Canada.

THE PRICE OF ANGELS

Martha Matus Schipul



Mother wanted an angel, not just any angel, but the white wicker one that perched all twinkly on the flat roof of what used to be "Friedrich's Feed and Grain" but was now "Friedrich's Garden Boutique." She rose, faceless, eight feet tall, from the hem of her garment to the tips of her stiff wings and she held a long golden trumpet up to her non-lips. Otto Friedrich's retarded daughter, little Rosie, who was too afraid and too slow of mind to ever set foot inside Walther High, had this way with birch and willow branches and dried grape vines. Ever since she was a small child, she would twist the pliable branches into fantastic shapes. Her ever-practical father saw that there was money to be made from this gift and gave her material: the branches and vines, tiny Italian lights, baling wire, elastic cord and wooden stakes that she would fashion into illuminated rampant reindeer stags, feeding does and gamboling fawns, with the help of her three younger brothers who towered over her.

But her most wondrous creations were these angels, copied from a snapshot of her Aunt Rosalinde standing in Rockefeller Center at Christmas with her arm around one of these mystical creatures. Rosie made them in two sizes: six feet tall, seven hundred and fifty dollars, and eight feet tall, a thousand dollars. She would stand silently, tears streaming down her face in the doorway whenever one of the city people would pull up in her Jeep Cherokee and pick one out and Mr. Friedrich would drive around back of the store with a cherry picker to transport one of Rosie's seraphim to the back of the pickup truck for delivery, because these angels, after all, were her children.

The deer sold faster, though I cannot

for the life of me understand why anyone would pay good money for fake deer when there were so many of the real ones around us; darting in front of 4'x4's on a foggy night or tearing up silky shoots of corn or decapitating my favorite white lilies the very instant they came into bloom.

But the angels; they were a different story. They seemed somehow alive—somehow meaningful. She only could make ten per season because they involved so much work.

The sun glinted brilliantly on the ice-covered ground on Friday morning, when I drove up to town to Friedrich's to pick up some pig and chicken feed with Mother along for the ride. The last of the angels for the season was trumpeting her silent song on the roof surrounded by the herd of starry reindeer. When I saw her, I thought of a Victorian aviary or those wicker cages in which the blue Celts immolated their hapless victims, but Mother saw something else. Little Rosie was hunched over a too short broom sweeping up while her father tended to other customers buying glass ornaments off the artificial display Christmas trees when we pushed in out of the biting cold. My tiny white-haired Hungarian mother, eye level with Rosie, rolled her walker right in front of her and spoke even more loudly than usual to get her attention. I wanted to remind Mother that Rosie was retarded, not deaf like she was getting, but I thought better of it.

Mother shouted, "I hear you make them reindeers and angels up there. I want one—that big angel. Helen," she said to me, "don't you think it would look real nice on the front lawn—or no, maybe in "Yes, but don't you think you'd better ask Rosie how much it costs." I already knew, but I wanted Mother to hear it for herself.

"It's my last one, I was hoping to hang on to it---it's a thousand dollars," Rosie said hopelessly as if having to give up the last kitten in the litter. But Mother is nothing if not persistent. "I'd take real good care of her and you could come over and visit her any time you want. I need her – that's all." Meanwhile, I'm getting a case of the cold robbies thinking about what Elton would say if he knew we were planning to toss away a thousand dollars on an extremely large Christmas orna-

ment. Mother always called him "Elemér," the closest Hungarian approximation of his name, perhaps so that she could pretend to herself that I was married to a Hungarian. He always called her "Mrs. Baranyai." He could never bring himself to call her "Mother" or even "Mother Bessie." This was not a flush year for us. The price of corn had taken a tumble and there had been so much rain this summer that the few tomatoes that developed were small and hard and we owed the bank, big time. It is only our part-time jobs that kept body and soul together. Elton does the night-shift at Fairport Machines three nights a week and I do private duty nursing for the few hours a day I can spare to be away from Mother.

Ours is the last honest-to-goodness working farm in Gilead, Connecticut. All the others were sold to be carved up into lots to satisfy the city people's appetite for McMansions. One had even been developed into an agricultural theme park with milk bottles traveling on conveyor belts visible behind plate glass and dancing chickens and singing cows and hayrides for the kiddies. Our property, clinging to a rocky hillside on Hiram's Hill, has been in Elton's family for six generations, although a large chunk of it was sold off in the fifties and another parcel in the seventies. There is enough room for a couple of cows and three pigs and a coop for the araucarias that lay pretty, multicolored eggs. We have a couple of acres planted in corn and pumpkins and a vegetable patch, but Elton is pinning his hopes on the Christmas trees to keep us going over the winter. We've been hanging on by our fingernails the last five years. And yet Mother persisted. She stared hard into the dismayed eyes of Rosie. "You don't make those angels for yourself, Rosie. You make them so other people'll be happy. If you don't let other people have them, pretty soon they'll be so many of them that there won't be any room for them on the roof and you'd have to fill up your daddy's store with them and there wouldn't be any room for his bags of fertilizer and grass seed and plastic flamingoes and lawn gnomes and

those concrete fountains with the peeing cupids and he'd tell you you couldn't make any more of them. Now you wouldn't like that, never being able to make any more angels, would you? That's the real fun of it, isn't it? That's your joy." She looked down at her tiny pink tennis shoes and delivered her

most compelling argument. "I'm an old woman. I might not see another Christmas." In a way she was right. Elton had pressured me into putting her name on the list for the White Oak Shade Home a few months ago. He has a hard time putting up with her ways, like leaving her false teeth on the kitchen table, or having those accidents in her pants. I mean, she's eighty-nine. What does he expect? But the fire in the kitchen when she'd turned on the gas for a cup of tea and forgot about it. That was it as far as he was concerned. I got a call from the home last week to tell me her name was two from the top of the list.

They said sometime in January or February.

Rosie suddenly smiled. "You really need my angel, don't you, and you'll take good care of her. She comes with a bunch of cords to attach to the metal stakes and a spare set of lights in case a string blows. Make sure you pound those stakes in real tight so she don't fly away in the wind."

"Whoa, wait a minute, Mother, we need to talk," I whispered in her good ear.

"Rosie, we'll think about it," I said as I grabbed Mother's walker and aimed it toward the door. I could see the pale melancholy reflection of the rooftop angel in my rearview mirror as I sped away.

That night, I made Elton's favorite: pot roast seethed in beer with dilled baby potatoes. Elton is a large, dark, quiet man, something around six feet eight. Yet he's not too quiet to make his opinion known when it comes to spending. He comes from a long line of careful people, the first of whom received this land from the confiscated property of a Canada-bound Tory dur-

ing the Revolutionary War. On the other hand, I, I must admit, was somewhat indulged by my immigrant parents. This has put us at loggerheads on occasions too numerous to mention. Yet, both of us want to hang on to this land, no matter what it takes.



As I set his supper in front of him at the kitchen table, I summoned up the courage to ask him. "It's for Mother." I spoke softly even though she was ostensibly dozing in front of the TV in the next room. You never knew when she was listening.

"Helen, are you out of your frigging mind. A thousand dollars for a bundle of twigs! For Christ sakes!" He went over to the counter where we keep our unpaid bills in a basket. He snatched it up and spilled envelopes all over the kitchen table. "Look at all of this!"

I could feel heat rise behind my eyes. "Okay, all right, all right. Forget I mentioned it."

"Helen, I swear you're always living in some fairyland. You wave a magic wand and kerchong – money falls from the skies." I turned to escape from the kitchen but Mother was standing there in the doorway. Her fine white hair stood out from her head like a halo, backlit by the golden light of the living room lamp. It used to be thick, wavy and black but now

there was a pink bald spot in the back, no matter how much I try to hide it with careful brushing. She was once as tall as I am but now has shrunk drastically because of osteoporosis. Yet, her fierce golden eyes blazed like an ancient eagle's. I don't think her willfulness has been diminished by her loss of height, but rather has become more concentrated and potent.

"Well, it's about money again, isn't it? Don't worry about me. I can just move to the poorhouse. Better yet, just put me on an iceberg and let me float out on the Saugatuck Reservoir. Isn't that what you Yankees do with your old people, Elemér?"

"Ma, that's the Eskimos," I said, "and we'll do no such thing. Where did you get a crazy idea like that?" I bent down and tried to encircle her with my arms but she shoved me roughly away. "It's about that angel you saw at Friedrich's. I don't know if we can afford to get it this year."

"This year—this year, I may never see another Christmas. It's that squeeze-a-nickel-til-it-screams husband of yours, isn't it?"

Elton pushed back in the wooden chair. It wobbled and toppled over as he rose like a breaching whale. "I take you into my home. I feed you—" "My home—my dishes—my furniture, everything is my, my, my," Mother barked.

I slipped between them as usual. "Please, please calm down. I can't stand this. Stop it!" I shrieked. The loudness of my voice startled me – and both of them, too.

Mother wheeled angrily away, her walker banging into the doorframe leaving a quarter-size dent. Elton slammed the kitchen door as he left with his barn coat still dangling from its hook beside the door.

"Elton, you'll catch your death ---," but he didn't listen. I sighed and sank into a chair and buried my face in my folded arms. That night I woke up drenched in sweat, kicking off the heavy quilt. Elton was in the middle of one of his snoring barrages, which was just reaching a teeth-rattling cres-

cendo. I stared at the ceiling for a while. I've been having quite a few nights like this lately. I cooled down quickly because it was bitterly cold that night. I could almost see the fingers of cold probing for a cranny or crevice to penetrate the house. "Fuel oil is killing us, just killing us, Helen," Elton would say. It was hopeless. Every year we seem to be sucked further into debt. Perhaps some day a vast yawning chasm would open in the middle of the cornfield and swallow us all—house, barns, pigs, chickens and tractor. Maybe we'd be better off that way. No, no. What we need is a guardian, a champion against disaster – the angel Mother wants as if her life depended on it. We could set it in the middle of the high field, just like Mother said, and he or she—do angels have gender?—could ward off developers and other evil spirits with a blast of its golden trumpet. I slipped out of bed quietly in order not to disturb Elton and pushed aside

clothing in the bottom drawer of the bureau to secure my father's Lady Elodie cigar box. Dad didn't believe in banks, not since the Depression wiped out his father in Miskolc. After he died, we found little dribs and drabs of money all over the house, in seat cushions and in coffee cups, in the pantry, under the sink in a sock, and when I found a thousand dollar bill in his Bible, I ran excitedly to Mother with it. She said, "No, you keep it for mad money. Daddy meant for you to find it."

That was five years ago and I squirreled it away in the box under the bureau with a dog-eared pamphlet depicting the swaying palms and blue-green surf under a violet sky at Sanibel Island. A vacation for one. Elton would never go. His idea of a vacation was a day at Yankee Stadium. I didn't know if I really would have wanted anyone else to go with me, truthfully, even though I felt I was being terribly selfish. The little

girl on the cover of the brochure held a pink conch shell to her ear. What would it be like to hear the hiss of the tropical surf? I knew then that I probably never would know. I fumbled around for my purse by the bed, thrust the bill in my wallet and crept back into bed.

The next morning was blustery and chill and starry snowflakes were melting on the windshield as I drove the pickup down to Friedrich's. I got out of the truck and stared up at Rosie's last angel. A sudden gust of wind arose that buffeted the angel about and managed to levitate her a few inches off the top of the roof before the cords pulled her back, almost as if she were struggling to take flight.

Martha Matus Schipul is a graduate of the University of Bridgeport, a writer and a playwright, and member the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online

Three Christmases

Ella Bitskey

At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, let us remember that Christmas for many Hungarians has not always been a matter of Christmas trees, gifts and family gatherings. Here is a memoir of several starker Noels from the Stalinist era, that period from 1945 to 1953 (the year Stalin died). It was a time of Communist party control of every facet of life, when the individual seemed to exist and work solely for the good of the State and for the glorification of the occupying oppressors: Russia and its "Great Leader".

Three Christmases. Why exactly three, why not more, or fewer? The answer is simple: These three belong together. Let me start with the first.

We were living the time of the darkest Stalinist era. The country was celebrating the birthday of the "Great Leader", "Our Country's Friend and Benefactor". Or, as was customary at the time to celebrate. At the office, it was announced: be at work half an hour earlier, the day will start with a festive *ad hoc* political meeting. "Everybody be there" was the order, which they especially emphasized for me. It was common

knowledge that until then, I had managed to "miss" every meeting and parade. The patience of the higher-ups was running out. If I'm not there this time, they will kick me out, they said simply and believably.

Thus I started out early the next morning, to be present at the first *ad hoc* meeting of my life. As I was headed for the Pest side over the *Lánchíd* (Chain Bridge) that cold, dark December morning, fighting with the icy wind, I accidentally met a companion in distress. We went to the "celebration" together, where we stood next to each other. And half an hour later, also together, we had been "kicked out". It was a huge affair. Perhaps only the old-timers still remember that you could "throw out" someone with disciplinary action, effective immediately, and with such discharge papers as would close the doors not only of the workplace, but would keep every other door closed as well, for the simple reason that a person did not clap. Because we two, next to each other, did not clap. We did not clap when they cheered our homeland's "only", "true" and "greatest friend". We did not clap when they glorified the "liberators", but we especially did not clap when the slogan was struck up: "A true Hungarian loves the Soviet Union before everything

else, and his own country only afterwards." We did not clap. By the evening, somehow or other, even the BBC broadcast the news. And we two owed it to special patronage and assistance that the ÁVÓ did not get involved.

So I did not have a job, nor did I have hope that with these discharge papers I would ever be able to get one. I took refuge with friends in the country. They said they had so much against them that one more thing didn't matter. But I hoped that this rural hiding would not last very long, and that I would escape at the first opportunity. Except that that "first opportunity" in those days was a long time coming. Weeks, months, even years passed. And then came another Christmas, the second.

One evening in Christmas week, we, suspicious characters, were herded to the police station, thanks to the special attention of the regional center. There were about 30 of us. It was late evening already, with pouring rain. I had only one pair of shoes, and that with a hole in the sole. I trudged along behind the policeman in those leaky shoes. With every step along that slushy dirt road, the mud went into my shoe from the bottom, to come out again at the top with an odd, squishing sound.

A strange sight met me at the police station. Frightened, fearful people; arrogant officials fully aware of their superiority. An ÁVÓ official had come out especially to wish us happy holidays in his own way. At the precinct there was an iron stove glowing with torrid heat. On one side of the table, the representative of authority was in a heavy ÁVÓ winter coat, with a fur cap on his head. Around him, also in coats, were the Witnesses. Their duty was to nod when damning evidence or sins were brought up against the accused or suspect. In the middle of the room, across from the fur-capped one, stood the offender, the enemy of the people, alone, pilloried, left to himself.

Questions, accusations showered down. Fear paralyzed thought, but opened the dams of intuition. That's what dictated the answers, not wisdom, least of all strategy. Thanks to that, they let me go, but stipulated that I would have to take a job within a few days, or I would be interned together with my hosts. I knew that I would not get a job within a few days. But what I did not know was how true the saying was, even for me, that "Whoever gains time, gains life". We put the most necessary items in a sack, tied it with string, and waited. We waited for them to come for us. That they would come for us on the last "free" night. And that night, in the midst of this waiting, I learned that fear can be the spiritual spring for physical pain. But I also learned that nature helps itself, if we allow it. It happened to me.

I was so overcome by fear, my heart hardened into such a painful cramp, that I couldn't stand it any longer. I fell into a comatose sleep. How long did it last? I don't know. I came to myself when someone rapped on the window. Dawn was breaking. We looked out with alarm: They've come for us. Here they are! But that was not so. The gay, shining little face of a neighbor's child appeared. It was beating the window and kept repeating: "You stay! You stay! Don't have to go!" We didn't understand. We thought we were hallucinating. Then we learned the almost unbelievable. We owed our luck to the nationalization of a house. What happened was that the ÁVÓ officer who, a few days previously, had been considered master of life and death, had become his own victim. His greed reached such a point that he pilfered from his prey not only before nationalization, but even afterwards, when it had the official seal – the breaking of which carried with it punishment of up to ten years in

prison. How much he got, whether he got anything, I don't know. But I wasn't even interested. It was enough for me that, while he wanted to have us taken away, he was the one whom they took, as a whim of fate. And with that change of place, the faint light of escape flared up that cold winter dawn. It took a long time – with earthly and heavenly help – for that tiny spark to become clear day.

It was a race for time. What would happen first? Would the file reach the ÁVÓ's desk, or would the possibility of freedom precede it? Nerve-wracking months. Months, which finally led to the third Christmas. This third one I experienced already in Salzburg.

Salzburg in winter is always different from Salzburg in summer. It is more quiet, turned more inward. At Christmas, the poorly lit, slippery, snowy streets were black with people. Everyone was hurrying to midnight Mass, which in those days actually was celebrated at midnight. It is an Alpine custom that the pealing of bells is varied by the sound of bugles. Buglers greet the Holy Night from the church steeples, like late successors of the angels with bugles.

On this my first free Christmas I too stood there among the celebrants. True, I did not yet have my own clothes, but my shoes no longer leaked. In one pocket I did not have a red cent, but in the other, possibilities were gathering. My room was not yet warm, but I did not have to shiver. But most importantly – I did not have to be afraid!

How strange, I thought to myself, going over past Christmases again. If the first had not been – that darkest, misery-bringing Stalin era one; if it had not been followed by the other, the one promising internment; if all these had not been, I could never of my own strength have made the journey that led to midnight Mass in Salzburg.

Three Christmases. But together they are one and complete.

Translated from Hungarian by EPF

Ella Bitskey had worked for Radio Free Europe, and is a sometime contributor to Magyar News Online

An Unusual Way to Usher In the New Year

Here is a different New Year's Eve custom with historic roots from Hajdúszoboszló.



Hajdúszoboszló is a city 200 km east of Budapest, southwest of Debrecen. In 1925, thermal waters were discovered, and the whole city has developed into a spa that is sometimes called "the mecca for rheumatism".

In addition to the beneficial waters, Hajdúszoboszló is also known for its unusual way of ushering in the New Year: they call it "szilveszteri csergetés". It is a custom that goes back to 1559, when on December 31st of that year a large Turkish army encircled the city, expecting it to be an easy target for looting. As it happened, there were not enough armed defenders to withstand them. So the Hungarians resorted to a ruse: when evening came, Magyar cowboys (*csikós*) in the town cracked their whips and rattled cowbells, making a lot of noise to give the impression of a vast crowd. The ruse worked, and the Turks turned back. The Hungarians pursued them past the next settlement. Then very thick fog closed in, forcing them to turn back. The townspeople lit fires, and rang the alarm bells to help them find their way back.

Nowadays, to keep up the tradition, every New Year's Eve in Hajdúszoboszló, a swarm of *csikós* drive away "the evil forces" in the same way. There are light music concerts, dancing in the streets and fireworks.

Together with the people of Hajdúszoboszló, "Boldog Új Évet kívánunk!"



Some of the modern "csikós" on New Year's Eve

Makovecz Imre, Architect, 1935-2011

Olga Vallay Szokolay

If you knew the name and life's work of the Hungarian architect, Makovecz Imre, you are probably deeply shocked by the news of his departure from this life in September. He would have completed his 76th year this November 20th.

I had the privilege of having met him, oddly enough not as a fellow architect, but as the husband of one of my closest friends in our teenage years. Marianne herself has been a very talented textile designer who, after two mismatched marriages, finally found her real life partner in Imre.

Makovecz, in spite of his last name, was the Hungarian prototype, if there is such a thing. What I mean is, he incorporated the incredible ethnographic mix of the Carpathian Basin that, in diversity, is second only to the United States, rendering both countries' populations unusually talented, varied and unpredictable.

Historic Hungary with its pre-World-War-One borders has been the European mixing bowl over the millennia. There were some migrating tribes, searching for rich hunting and fishing terrain, that decided to stay. And, as legend has it, the Magyar prince Árpád had purchased the land and its waters for a white horse from the reigning Slav ruler, Svatopluk. Árpád's great-great grandson, St. Stephen, the first king of the Magyars, adopted Christianity and received his crown from the Pope. All the innumerable previous settlers and inhabitants of the plains and hills were henceforward quasi-united under the reign of the Árpádház kings. The land was ransacked over the centuries, from the Tatars in the 13th to the Turks in the 16th through 17th centuries, to 20th century occupiers like the Germans and Russians. They all left their footprints in the nation's DNA, language and culture. From this diverse heritage, soil and soul, came Makovecz Imre, the architect of over 100 unique buildings of diverse functions, recipient of every possible Hungarian and many international architectural awards, an educator, philosopher, patriot, known by all from professors to simple people and, as was men-

tioned in his eulogy by one of his colleagues, he was "The Conscience Of The Nation".

He was born and educated in Budapest, graduated from the Technical University in 1959. He worked in some state architectural offices of the day and, on account of his design ideas and ideals being different from the accepted norm, as well as his "political incorrectness" in general, he was fired from some. In 1981, he established his own collaborative practice but, after several years, had



Paksi templom—hg.hu

to close it in 2010 since he was still expected, but unable, to pay taxes after fees he could never collect.

Makovecz was the most prominent proponent of organic Hungarian architecture who, like, Frank Lloyd Wright, his world-renowned counterpart half a century earlier, believed in using natural, local materials, making buildings part of their surroundings, their environment. He held the "Connection of Heaven and Earth" his absolute standard. His architecture, resting on philosophical bases, embodies symbolic spaces relating to human forms, as they can be traced from folk art to the mythical world of the Migration that still lives in the collective subconscious. He ordered architectural technology and materials, simultaneously archaic and environmentally sustainable, to be true to the spirit of the locality and the land. His architectural vocabulary reflects influ-

ences of Antoni Gaudi and is a continuation of the Hungarian *Art Nouveau* and of the National Romanticism greats Lechner Ödön and Kós Károly.

His works constitute an element of conjunction and superimposition between modernity and tradition. The shapes of his buildings do not follow the classical principles of Euclidean geometry, but draw from the rich symbolic treasure trove of Hungarian heritage, pursuing a union between past and present. His use of a material such as wood, particularly familiar in the national panorama, gives the buildings a traditional aspect in a modern social context. Nature is a constant element in the realization of this architect: openings surrounded by shapes of branches and trees, designs of leaves, symbols of life that all lead to an intimate relation of nature and structure.

Symbols of culture (the tulip), animals (the falcon), ancient religious motifs (the moon and the sun), human elements (windows used as eyes), are utilized and reinterpreted in a new and innovative key. For historical and geographical reasons, the symbols of the traditional or folk art coincide with ancient Celtic ones. This is more than a coincidental, formal similarity. Working around the signs and symbols of the ornamental motifs of popular tradition, he discovers the particular characteristics of symmetry that the spiral generates on the plane and in space, demarcating complementary surfaces, equal and opposing, with asymmetric references that call to movement. All this becomes a metaphor of life and death in which architecture becomes an instrument of communication and goes beyond traditional stylistic canons.

Makovecz once said about his work: "From the beginning, I have been wanting to build that single building which had been standing before the outstart of mankind." Sometimes it seems that he did... His genius embraces a broad spectrum of architectural subject matter, from cultural and community centers, sports complexes, municipal buildings, to university buildings, restaurants and inns, schools, theatres and churches ranging from Hungary to Germany, Serbia, Romania and, by invitation of Prince Charles, even to England. Some give you the impression that they had sprung out of the soil like trees, or have been there forever, having a dialogue with the skies. They have started an original school in Hungarian architecture that will



Church of Csikszereda designed by Makovecz Imre. There are altogether 10 crosses on the two church steeples, each one representing one century of the Hungarian millennium.

define a measure of quality in the built environment in generations to come. Besides his unparalleled architectural activity of five decades, Imre was a well-known figure as an outspoken patriot in the truest sense, not intimidated by sycophants and lackeys of the ever-changing political scenario. His work began as a critique of Communist ideology and the brutal uniformity of system building but, after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, it became a comment on the nature of globalization and corporate culture. Thus he became a perennially controversial individual with a host of jealous fellow-professionals,

ideological foes, as well as drawing a great following of young architects whom he educated, for whom he created summer camps and employed in his collaborative studios. A great humanitarian, he was always there where help was needed. With his passionate group of architects, he rushed to the aid of those left homeless by the red sludge disaster. Over the decades, with some spirited young colleagues, he organized cultural clubs in some declining villages and managed to re-build several community buildings with minimal price tags, using inexpensive local materials. In this way, they

even started to construct human-scale residential buildings much cheaper than the ubiquitous conventional panel-structure of the day. Time and again he did *pro bono* work where funds were inadequate but the cause worthy. Craftsmen enthusiastically fabricated his intricate designs. Legend has it that when one of his roof frames was declared "unbuildable", he said: "Well, then my Székely boys will build it." And they did.... One would imagine an architect of his caliber would have built a mansion for himself and his family. Not Makovecz. Until his death he lived in a fourth-story,

four-room apartment where they had raised their three children. It was the same apartment where his wife, Marianne, grew up across from our Alma Mater and where we enjoyed many great parties in our happy teen years. The septuagenarian couple has six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In 1992, he was commissioned to design the Hungarian Pavilion for the World Expo in Sevilla, Spain, which eventually became his best known *opus*. The building, with its seven spires, resembled a church, and the Ark-like ribbed wooden roof system provided as stunning a sight as the bare oak tree showing its roots spreading under the glass floor. The boat shape echoed the 500-year remembrance of Columbus discovering the New World, the bells locked in the spires immortalized the 1456 victory at Nándorfehérvár. He founded the Hungarian Academy of Arts, was its president for life and was an environmentalist in the truest sense. Internationally recognized and appreciated, the Hungarian Department of Energy claimed him as one of their heroes. In July, 2011 Pope Benedict XVI celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination. For this occasion, he invited 60 artists from around the world who had contributed to Church art. Makovecz and his wife were among those invited to the Vatican and Imre asked the Holy Father to bless his past, present and future work.

Two months later, several thousand people attended Makovecz Imre's funeral at the Farkasrét Cemetery in the Buda hills. The Funeral Chapel he had designed, with its wooden overhead ribs creating the effect of being inside an enormous living creature, housed his casket. Orbán Viktor was one of the luminaries bidding farewell, emphasizing that, unlike mediocrity, Makovecz never pushed himself ahead, he was always waiting for his turn in dignity, bowed neither to passing years, to the voice of power, nor to financial hardship. His visionary integrity rose above false idols, thus his creative genius will live around us in the physical as well as in the spiritual reality.

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Data was collected in part from Google. Further picture collections can be viewed there.

FONOTT KALÁCS VAGY BRIÓS

This versatile pastry is easy to make and delectable with any topping you care to use. It is good any time of the year – so why not now?

1,20 kg liszt
15 dkg cukor
10 dkg vaj
1,4 dkg élesztő
csipet só
4 tojássárgája
6,5 dl tej

A fele tejet felmelegítjük, hozzáadunk egy teáskanál cukrot, beletesszük az élesztőt és annyi lisztet amíg fakanállal könnyen keverhető. Ezt a félsűrű kovászt lisztel behintjük és meleg helyre tesszük keleszteni. Begyúrás előtt a tejnek a másik felét meglangyosítjuk, belekeverjük a tojássárgákat, cukrot, sót és olvasztott vajat, majd beleöntjük a megkelt kovászbába, elkeverjük, hozzátesszük a maradék lisztet és jól kidolgozzuk. Pihentetés után a tésztát feldaraboljuk, hosszúra sodorjuk és megkötjük az egyik végét fent középen áthúzva az alsót a tészta alá tesszük, tojással bekenjük, és 15 percig pihentetjük. Előre melegített 350 fokos sütőben megsütjük. Két fonott kalács vagy 30db. briós jön ki belőle.. Lehet citrom héjat, vaniliát használni, a kalácsba pedig mazsolát is tehetünk izlés szerint.

BRAIDED BRIOCHE

8 cups of flour
2/3 cup sugar
1 stick of butter (unsalted)
2 pkgs yeast
4 egg yolks
6 ½ cups of milk
1 pinch of salt
lemon zest, vanilla (optional)

Warm up half the milk, add 1 tsp sugar, the yeast and enough flour that you can stir it easily with a wooden spoon. Sprinkle this leaven with flour and put it in a warm place until it rises.

Before you start kneading, warm up the rest of the milk, mix in the egg yolks, sugar salt and melted butter. Then pour this mixture into the leavened dough, add the the rest of the flour, and work it until it gets smooth. Let it rest for a while, then cut it into pieces and roll it into long strips. Tie the ends and braid it, then brush it with the egg whites. Let is rest for 15 minutes.

Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees.



Did you know...

... that Dec 24, 1856 is an important date for two different reasons?

155 years ago, on that date Árpád Feszty was born in Ógyala. Feszty is the artist who painted the giant painting titled "*Magyarok bejövetele*" (The Conquest). The painting, after being moved many times, and damaged during World War II, is now restored and has been on permanent exhibit in Ópusztaszer since 1995. It is 15m X 120 m, and Feszty worked on it from 1892 to 1894 with nine other artists. The other important thing that hap-

pened on that day is that the "Trieszt Általános Osztrák Gáz Társulat " (The Trieste General Austrian Gas Company) lit the first gas lamps in the streets and public buildings of central Budapest, at a total of 838 locations.

(See the December 1996 issue of the Magyar News, or the Magyar News Classic in the April 2009 issue of magyarnews.org for more on Árpád Feszty.)

(For more on the gas lamps of Budapest, read Remy Papp's article, "I remember... Lamplighters in Budapest" in the November 2010 issue of magyarnews.org)



Part of Feszty's panoramic painting of the Conquest