

#### ***IV. List of Publications***

“A ritmus autonómiájának kérdései Bartók írásaiban” [The autonomy of rhythm in Bartók’s writings]. *Magyar Zene* XL/2 (2002 május), pp. 175–200

“A parlando–rubato változatainak jelentősége *A kékszakállú herceg vára* ritmikai nyelvében” [The Significance of the Varieties of Parlando–Rubato in the Rhythmic Language of *Bluebeard’s Castle*.] *Zenetudományi dolgozatok* 2003. Edited by Pál Richter and Márta Rudas. Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2004, pp. 385–94; in English: “The Significance of the Varieties of Parlando–Rubato in the Rhythmic Language of *Bluebeard’s Castle*.” *Studia Musicologica*. Volume 49, Nos. 3–4, 2008 September, pp. 369–382

“A ritmikai polifónia típusai Bartók zenéjében”. [The Types of Rhythmical Polyphony in Bartók’s Music] *Zenetudományi dolgozatok* 2006–2007. Edited by Márta Sz. Farkas, Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2007, pp. 93–115

“Keringőritmusok és valse-allúziók Bartók zenéjében”. [Waltz Rhythms and Valse Allusions in Bartók’s Music] *Zenetudományi dolgozatok* 2008. Edited by Gábor Kiss, Budapest: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2008, pp. 203–229

“Ritmikai személyiségek Bartók *Zongoraszonátájában*” [Personnages rythmiques in Bartók’s *Sonata (1926)*”], *Zenetudományi dolgozatok* 2009. Edited by Gábor Kiss, Budapest, MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, pp. 33–49

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## EMBLEMATIC STYLISTIC MARKS IN BARTÓK’S RHYTHM

*PhD theses*

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## I. Antecedents of the Research

Bartók's exceptional rhythmical creativity has already been recognized by his contemporaries. In one of his reviews in January 1935 Aladár Tóth characterized a performance of *The Wooden Prince* with the following words: "a new pantomime which is plenty of ancient Hungarian rhythms." (*Selected Music Reviews of Aladár Tóth, 1934–1939*, 1968) Paul Sacher wrote about "the elemental force of Bartók's rhythm." (*In Memory of Béla Bartók*, 1945). Among the remaining writings of Kodály we can find the following remark on Bartók probably from October 1953: "the power of his works is not in the melody, but in the rhythm." (*Hungarian Music, Hungarian Language, Hungarian Verse*, 1993). Olivier Messiaen quotes numerous passages of Bartók's music to illustrate different asymmetrical and irreversible rhythms. (*La technique de mon langage musical*, 1944; *Traité de rythme, de couleur et d'ornithologie*, 1949–1992). Bartók himself made few statements about his rhythmical language. His sporadic remarks however and particularly his ethnomusicological works leave little doubt about the exceptional role of the rhythm in his thinking both as an analyst of folk music and a composer. In spite of all these, Bartók's rhythm has so far not become an independent field of research, although some special rhythmical phenomena are discussed in detail in the literature. In the centre of the analysis of Bartók's style has stood from the beginning the phenomena of the tonal system and the questions of form.

Among the dissertations dedicated to Bartók's music there are only three which concerns rhythm in the strict sense. The first of these is a dissertation by Elliott Antokoletz titled *Rhythmic Form in Three of Bartók's String Quartets* (1970). This work was in part included in 1975 in the appendix of an other dissertation by the same author in 1975 (*Principles of Pitch Organization in Bartók's Fourth String Quartet*, 1975). The second extended essay in the topics of Bartók's rhythm was Judit Frigyesi's diploma work, written in 1980. (*Investigations on Rhythm in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Asymmetrical Rhythms and Polymetre in a Special Rhythmical Style of Bartók*). The most recent dissertation on Bartók's rhythm wrote Daphne Leong in 2001: *A Theory of Time-Spaces for the Analysis of Twentieth Century Music:*

polyrhythm) of Bartók's composition the dissertation contains independent chapters in which the relationship between the text and music in Bartók's opera, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* is investigated. An exploration of Bartók's thinking about rhythm through his writings has not been attempted so far. Therefore in one of the introductory chapters were gathered Bartók's statements on rhythm arranged by topics. These statements lead to new recognitions in the field of understanding Bartók's compositional principles. During the examination of Bartók's writings, it becomes clear that his most important endeavour was to dissolve the isochronal metric based on equal time measures. The decomposition of the isochronal metrical order was the most important precondition for the renewal of musical rhythm in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This recognition proved to be decisive for the method of the analysis. It became a central task to prove that Bartók was concerned with the possibilities of introducing novel rhythmical processes from the very beginning of his career and he dissolved the frames of the isochronic metric system before the *locus classicus* of the autonomous rhythm, i.e. the first performance of *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Furthermore the analytical chapters of the dissertation prove that Bartók's view of rhythm is characterised by the balance of tradition and innovation. This way of looking at rhythmical processes is parallel to Bartók's attitude to the principle of tonality. The succession of equal bars in his music is usually complicated by changes of metre while in his parlando melodies bar lines always have a determining role. A bar line is in Bartók's compositional thinking the guarantee of the preservation of the principle of metrical tonality. The dissertation applies the concepts of the 'rhythmical tonality' to the model of Bartók's notion of 'rhythmical dissonancy' and János Kárpáti's term of 'rhythmical mistuning'. Finally in the chapter in which the different types of waltz rhythms of Bartók's music are discussed presents Bartók's Bulgarian rhythm from a new perspective.

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organist and theorist: „Est autem in rhythmica tempus, principium rhythmi” (Time is present in the rhythm, a principium of the rhythm).

The examinations in the field of musical meaning – apart from Bartók’s own sporadic notes related to the content of music and a few allusions in some of his scores – are based first of all on his vocal works. The approach to some of the rhythmical phenomena from the point of view of the philosophy of time was inspired by the theories on the time of Augustine and Henry Bergson’s.

In the examinations of Bartók’s rhythm I was helped by other branches of knowledge. The direction of the research was decisively influenced by lessons on metrics and prosody and the experiences which were gained during the investigation of the history of folk-music notation. The opportunity to study all these was presented by the topics of my doctoral examination.

### III. Findings

The dissertation focuses on the basic elements of the vocabulary of Bartók’s rhythmical language and offers a systematic survey of the most important characteristics of the composer’s rhythmical style. Its main aim is to explore and examine in detail the rhythmical phenomena which have so far been neglected by literature and to prove that they are essential and determining factors. Moreover it is a contribution to the re-evaluation Bartók’s role in the process of the emancipation of the rhythm, in which Stravinsky’s initiative role has so far been regarded indisputable.

I consider the most important result of the dissertation that it calls attention to the significance of renovation of the devices of rhythm in Bartók’s compositional thinking. The investigation extends to Bartók’s whole oeuvre. It endeavours to follow with attention the rhythmical phenomena from beginning to end keeping in view the results of both ethnomusicology and historical research. The dissertation does not argue that the unity of the oeuvre is indisputable but aims to demonstrate the basic rhythmic elements that provide its continuity.

Apart from the discussion of the most characteristic types of movement (tempo giusto, parlando–rubato, waltz-rhythms and

*Applications to the Music of Béla Bartók*. The author of this treatise presents a method for analysis based on the time-space theory of philosophy. Lynn Marie Hooker also lays special emphasis on rhythm in the fourth chapter (*Writing Hungarian Music: Motive, Genre, Spirit*) of her dissertation (*Modernism Meets Nationalism: Béla Bartók and the Musical Life of Pre-World War I Hungary*, 2001). She describes the way in which the 19<sup>th</sup> century *style hongrois* motives present themselves both in Bartók’s melodies and rhythm. Günter Weiss in his doctoral dissertation (*Die frühe Schaffensentwicklung Béla Bartóks im Lichte westlichen und östlichen Traditionen*, 1970) treated the elements of rhythm, melodies and harmonics as equally significant. Arnold Elston’s study (*Some Rhythmic Practices in Contemporary Music*, 1956) which was written to the Musical Quarterly and concerns with contemporary rhythmical structures contains important observations on Bartók’s polyrhythmical technique, asymmetrical rhythms and bar-line organization.

The discussion evoked by Ernő Lendvai’s theory and method of analysis in 1950s might have contributed to the relatively subordinate role of the examinations of rhythm in the Bartók studies in Hungary after the World War 2. Ernő Lendvai did not extend his research to the field of rhythm. The first studies on Bartók’s rhythm were written in Hungary in the second half of the 1960s. Numerous rhythmical problems in Bartók’s music were closely studied in these treatises. A pioneering analysis was written in 1967 by András Mihály. The subject of this study is the polyphonic metric structure in the second movement of the *String Quartet No. 4 (Metric in the Second Movement of Bartók’s String Quartet No. 4, 1967)*. This essay was one of the first among those which drew attention to Bartók’s leading role in the emancipation of the rhythm during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rhythms in quadruple time in Bartók’s music had been included in a compilation of examples in Lajos Bárdos’s study entitled *Folk-Rhythms in Bartók’s Music* (1969). János Breuer shared this approach in his 1977 study entitled *Kolinda Rhythm in the Music of Bartók*. These analyses were followed by the essays of János Kárpáti. Beyond examining the influence of the elements of folk music and of Arabic folk rhythm on Bartók’s rhythmical language (*Bartók in North-Africa: A Unique Fieldwork and Its Impact on His Music*, 1995) Kárpáti extended to the

field of rhythm the theory and concept of ‘mistuning’ originally employed to the examinations of melodic and harmonic phenomena (*Perfect and Mistuned Structures in Bartók’s Music*, 1995; *Alternative Bar Structures in Bartók’s Music*, 2006). János Kárpáti’s Bartók book (*Bartók’s Chamber Music*) first published in Hungarian in 1976, has plenty of observations relating to rhythm as well. Exciting analyses on rhythm were published by Judit Frigyesi in 1998 in her book *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* (1998), in which the possibilities of rhythmical variation are examined in relation to musical meaning. Numerous analytical writings, first of all the works of László Somfai besides all this contain important observations related to certain rhythmic phenomena and Bartók’s rhythm in general (“A Characteristic Culmination Point in Bartók’s Instrumental Forms”, “Analytical Notes on Bartók’s Piano Year of 1926”, “The Metamorphose of the Finale of Bartók’s Piano Sonata”. In id., *Eighteen Bartók Studies*, 1981).

There is a field of exceptional importance in the Bartók research: Bartók’s Bulgarian Rhythm. This type of rhythm is the most frequently discussed phenomenon in the literature. The first study on the relation between Bartók and Bulgarian Rhythm was written by Lajos Kiss in 1965 (*Bartók and the Bulgarian Rhythm*). Bartók’s Bulgarian rhythm is also discussed in János Kárpáti’s above- mentioned book in the chapter entitled “Predecessors and Contemporaries”. Timothy Rice, a specialist of Bulgarian folk music, published a study specifically on the question of Bartók and the Bulgarian Rhythm in 2000 (*Béla Bartók and Bulgarian Rhythm*, 2000). László Vikárius discussed Bulgarian Rhythm starting from rhythmic and metric units comprising fifth in Bartók’s music (*Rhythmic and Metric Fifth in Bartók’s Composition*, 2003).

Beyond the studies and articles on Bartók’s rhythmic language almost all significant Bartók researcher contributed to the knowledge and interpretation of Bartók’s rhythm with numerous valuable observations. Among the comprehensive works which give an overall picture of the composer’s life and his music, I draw the attention to Halsey Stevens *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók* (1953, rev. 21964), József Ujfalussy’s *Bartók Béla* (1965, rev. 21970, 31976, Eng. 1971),

*A Guide to Bartók* (1971) by Kroó György and *Bartók Béla* written by Tibor Tallián (1981, Eng. 1988).

## II. Methods

The initial interest to investigate the rhythmic elements of Bartók’s compositional style come from two directions. The idea of the topic arose in one of the Bartók lectures in the Department of Musicology of the Liszt Academy of Music delivered by László Somfai, when he called my attention to the fact that inquiries on rhythm in the Bartók research were relatively neglected. The other guiding force was Messiaen’s music. His compositional principles and his theory of rhythm I studied while working on my diploma dissertation on his *Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*. The present dissertation is written in the spirit of Messiaen’s view of rhythm and at the same time Bartók’s own writings and statements relating to rhythm. The view of the two great composers regarding rhythm have not proved entirely irreconcilable. Messiaen’s compositional self-definition – „Je suis compositeur et rythmicien” (I am a composer and a creator of rhythm) – can be applied to Bartók as well. Both composers show an inclination to interpret the concept of rhythm in the broadest sense of the term, i.e. that rhythm is not merely a component part of the musical process but its autonomous and comprehensive factor. All the elements of music – melody, harmony, form, tone, the order of tempos- and stresses, the *personnages rythmiques* themselves – are embodied in rhythm. Bartók describes rhythm as follows: “under the term rhythm is understood the grouping of notes with variable length in order to constitute intelligible formulas.” (*Remarks on the Rumanian Folk Music*, 1914). According to this definition, certain rhythmic patterns have a meaning in Bartók’s compositional thinking. The significant role of the *personnages rythmiques* in the view of rhythm of both Bartók and Messiaen makes it possible that the basic patterns of their rhythm are to be got in connection with metrical foots and poetic metres.

The method of the analysis regards the rhythm as sounding form of time in the spirit of the notice of Francisco de Salinas a 16<sup>th</sup> century