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A Study of Rhythm in Bartók's Music Both in Its Historical and Musical Dimensions

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In addition to melody and harmony, rhythm is one of the basic elements of music. It has played a major part in religion, society, art, and music throughout the history of mankind. It contains and reveals the emotions and expressions of the interpreter and the people whom he represents. Its character and nuance change in each country and every continent.

> Rooted deep in psychological ground as a function of our bodies; rhythm permeates melody, form, and harmony; it becomes the driving and shaping force, indeed, the very breath of music, and reaches up into the loftiest realm of aesthetic experience where description is doomed to fail because no language provide the vocabulary for adequate wording.[1)]

These thoughts help to sum up this introductory section. Rhythm is more than a part of several musical elements in a song. Rhythm can exist if the other important time signatures, the meter and tempo are represented. Bartók's rhythm is very

1) Curt Sachs, *Rhythm and Tempo* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1953), p. 11.

complex and unique. In this study only the societies that have a direct bearing on the development of rhythm in the Eastern European and North African countries which became the foundation of Bartók's folk style writing will be discussed. The discussion will contain the rhythmical structures found in the societies which influenced Bartók and their impact on his music with examples of each of his compositional periods.

First it is worth examining the historical background of Bartók's development in rhythm throughout his career. Rhythm was perhaps the most important central element in his music. He was given a drum at the age of three, which he played with great pleasure. His mother wrote in a letter the following:

> When I played the piano, he sat in his little chair, his drum on a footstool before him, and beat time precisely. When I changed from 3/4 to 4/4, he stopped beating for a moment and then went on in the correct time... At the age of four he could play the folk songs he knew on the piano, with one finger. He knew forty songs, and if we said the first few words, he could immediately play the tune, Even at that time he had a good memory.[2)]

Bartók at the age of six began his piano studies under the watchful eyes of his mother. In the first decade of the 20th century, after his school years, he started to be interested in peasant songs and their structural elements: melodies, harmonies and rhythms. After finishing his piano and compositional studies (1899-1903) at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, he became a piano teacher at the same institution (1907). His compositions in the years between 1903-1907 are transitional works moving from romanticism to the first appearance of the "real" Barókian style. He had not yet begun collecting folk music Zen he composed the *Piano Quintet*

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2) János Demény, ed. *Bartók Béla levelei* [Béla Bartók's letters] (Budapest: Müvelt Nép Könyvkiadó, 1951), p. 203.

(1903-1904), after completing the *Kossuth-Symphonic Poem* (1903) and the early *Violin Sonata* (1903). Lajos Kossuth was the figure of greatest historical importance in the nineteenth-century struggle for Hungarian national independence. Inspired by the memory of one of the greatest Hungarians, Bartók's music sounds more like Brahms. In his Autobiography of 1921 we can read the following:

> It was the time of a new national movement in Hungary, which also took hold of art and music. In music, too, the aim was set to create something specifically Hungarian. When this movement reached me, it drew my attention to studying Hungarian folk music, or, to be more exact, what at that time was considered Hungarian folk music. Under these diverse influences I composed in 1903 a symphonic poem...[3)]

Bartók was not only under the influence of nationalism but also the contemporary popular nationalist music style: the Gypsy music. This symphonic poem shows two different rhythmic influences: csárdás rhythm (alternation between a slow and a fast section, ex. 1, ex. 2) and the verbunkos. Their characters can be defined by their tempo and rhythmic patterns. The slow verbunkos song has a lamenting style with dotted rhythms, triplets. The fast verbunkos is heroic, with the same rhythmic patterns with faster tempo (ex. 3). Gypsys performed the slower one in a rhapsodic rubato style. Both verbunkos and csárdás music was provided in cities mainly by Gypsy bands. A particular style has developed that is characterized by excessive rubato, ornamentation, tempo changes, and display of virtuosity. It is interesting that even Bartók's own mother organized her own Gypsy band. Another influential factor is that Bartók always resided in urban areas, where these Gypsy bands were active. For any nationalist composers in this time, the "Gypsy" was the Hungarian style.

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3) Benjamin Suchoff, ed. *Béla Bartók Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), p. 409.

Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* were based on these popular melodies. Bartók's *Piano Quintet* (1903-1904) was still under the influence of this compositional style, using csárdás rhythm in the last movement.

For Bartók, the great folk music revelation came in 1904 when he spent the summer in a house in northern Hungary and heard the singing of a servant girl from Transylvania. He wrote down the songs as she sang them. These were totally unknown melodies with unique rhythms, very different from the urban Hungarian popular song types. In 1905 he started his travels to collect Hungarian folk songs with his colleague and friend, Zoltán Kodály. Later he extended his trips to Slovakian and Romanian territories. The differences between the Hungarian and Romanian national styles are not easily defined, although they manifest themselves above all the areas of rhythm and meter. A typical Romanian feature is illustrated by both of the *Two Romanian Dances* (1910), in which the second and fourth beats of a 4/4-bar are often heavily accented (ex. 4, ex. 5). Unlike the metrically consistent tempo giusto of Romanian dances, the collection of the *Romanian Christmas Carols* (1915) changes meters in almost every measure, suggesting similarities to the Bulgarian rhythm. The origin of the *Ten Easy Pieces* (1908) derived from the musical material collected by him in the Transylvanian mountains. These Romanian territories belonged Hungary until the close of the second world war. In comparison, the No. 5 and No. 10 pieces are very different both technically and musically. The No. 5, "Evening in Transylvania," represents two different styles of Hungarian folk music; the older vocal melody accompanied by chords like a free narrative *parlando-rubato* and a newer dance music from m. 10 in tempo *giusto* (ex. 6). The No. 10, "Bear Dance," gives the impression of a bear dancing to the song of his trainer and growling to the accompaniment of a drum (ex. 7). This is one of the first attempts of Bartók percussive-like piano songs, where the drumming rhythm has the main role. Two or more recordings of the same composition played

by Bartók offers unique source material for considering what could have been a momentary interpretation and what was an essential part of the text of the music. In László Somfai's book there is a study on different interpretations of the same song by Bartók (e.g. No. 5, "Evening in Transylvania," ex. 8).[4] The song is Bartók's own creation without any folk material. Bartók said in an interview in 1944;

> Evening in Transylvania is an original composition that is my... with themes of my own invention but it... the themes are in the style of the Hungarian-Transylvanian folk tunes. There are two themes. The first one is a parlando-rubato rhythm and the second one is more in a dance like rhythm. The second one is more or less the imitation of a peasant flute playing. And the first one, the parlando-rubato is an imitation of song, vocal melody.[5]

In the case of *parlando-rubato*, the performer's rhythm is always different. It sounds like an improvisation on the same melody, but with different momentary feelings. There is a definite reason for the rhapsodic nature of the Hungarian folk song. A melody may appear several times, but each time in a different rhythmic pattern. The first occurrence of the melody may be in 4/4 time, and then re-occur in 5/4 or 3/4 time. Generally, the native Magyar (Hungarian) song is not written in definite and regular rhythmical pulsation throughout the song. Phrases vary from eight bars to three, five, or seven bars. This change of time and rhythm leads most naturally into variation and improvisations as in the Bartók performances in 1928, 1929, 1935 and 1946.[6]

In Somfai's study there is another example for the rubato interpretation: the *Three*

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4) László Somfai, *Bartók Béla kompoziciós módszere* (Béla Bartók's Composition, Concepts, and Autograph Sources) (Badapest: Akkord, 1996), p. 296.

5) Béla Bartók, *Írásai/I* (Writings), (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1989), p. 262.

6) *Bartók at the Piano,* Hungaroton, 1991 and *Bartók Recordings from Private Collections*, Hungaroton, 1995.

Burlesques. A Bit Drunk (1911) is the title of the second piece of the series, and Bartók's performance of this piece shows the grotesque rubato with sudden tempo changes and hiccup-like rhythms. This song is not based on any folk material. Therefore the rubato as rhythm in this piece is totally independent from the one originated in folk songs (ex. 9).

In his book, Bartók summarizes his research on Hungarian Folk Songs, categorizing the special rhythms of this style:

> The various stages of the evolution of rhythm may be conceived this:
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> 1. *Tempo* "*giusto*" (strict) rhythm consisting chiefly of equal values. It is likely that the earliest music arose in connection with rhythmical motions of the human body (work, dancing). No complicated rhythmic pattern could evolve out of primitive elements.
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> 2. "*Parlando-rubato rhythm.*" In proportion as tunes gradually became independent of the human body's motions, the dance-like rigor of the original terse rhythm relaxed. The rhythm of the runes was then bound to adapt itself to the rhythm of the words; and performers were able to emphasize and prolong single notes. This stage of evolution is illustrated by the old *parlando-rubato* tunes of Hungarians, Slovaks, and Rumanians.
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> 3. "*Tempo giusto*" rhythm evolved out of the "*Parlando-rubato*" method of performance. Many rhythmic patterns originating in this "*Parlando-rubato*" method of performance may have become set quantities even in "*Parlando-rubato*" performance. Supposing that the tune of this kind comes to be performed "*tempo giusto*" (say, for the purpose of dancing), it will naturally retain the complicated patterns created by *rubato* performance. And the "*tempo giusto*" rhythm marking the third stage of evolution will be far more complex than the original "*tempo giusto*" rhythm, that which characterized the first stage.[7]

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7) Béla Bartók, *Hungarian Folk Music*, translated by M.D. Calvocoressi (London: Oxford University Press,

To learn more about Bartók's explanations on the parlando-rubato and giusto rhythm it is necessary to study the Harvard lectures by Bartók. Three years before his death (1942) he was asked to summarize his art in eight lectures given at Harvard University. Unfortunately, he could give only three of the eight lectures because of his diminishing state of health. However, his fourth lecture was started but not finished. The fourth lecture generally explains the rhythm found in Eastern Europe and its influence on his music. Bartók adds one more type to the above mentioned two kinds of rhythm found in Eastern European peasant songs; the dotted rhythm.

In his list, the first important rhythm in the Hungarian peasant songs is the parlando-rubato (declamatory, free) interpretation. Often it is characterized with regular measure numbers and the lack of an upbeat and time signature. Perhaps its close relative is the Western European recitative and even the older Gregorian chant.

The second one is the tight, giusto rhythm with the often used 2/4 time signature and regular measure numbers. This type also can alternate different time signatures (e.g. 3/4 changes into 2/4). If the tempo signature is solely 3/4 without alternation to 2/4, the origin of the peasant song is definitely Western European. There are several examples in Bartók's music on other time signature: 5/8, 7/8. In his lecture, Bartók pointed out that there is no significant difference between the alternating 2/4 with 3/4 and the 5/8, 7/8. The 5/8 can be explained, as the trebling of one of the eighths in 2/4 time measure. The 7/8 trebling of one of the eighths in a 3x2/8 time measure.

The third common rhythmic pattern in Hungarian peasant songs is the dotted

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1931), p. 16.

rhythm, which is very typical in certain songs. The following rhythmic forms can be combined: ♪ ♩ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♩

There is typical phrase-ending in Hungarian music: ♪ ♩ 𝅗𝅥 or ♩ ♪ ♩ ♪

Bartók calls this type: anti-Hungarian, because it is not used in peasant songs at all. Perhaps Gypsy music (which we know is not the genuine folk music in Hungary) can be characterized with this rhythmic pattern. According to Victoria Fischer "the Hungarian dotted rhythm in Bartók's works plays a significant role in the dramaturgy of music. Appearing at the climatic point of movement, it is usually accompanied by a simplification of texture" (e.g. Bagatelle No. 11, mm. 52-68; No. 7, mm. 97-104; ex. 10).[8)]

Rhythm has always been an integral part of folk music and has been strongly determined by the language of the people. It is important to study the Hungarian language if one wants to understand more about Hungarian peasant songs, which rhythm is often used in Bartóks music. The main emphasis is always on the first syllable of each word. The Hungarian language has two kinds of vowels: short and long (e.g. o-ó, e-é) which are pronounced very differently. The long vowel sound is approximately twice as long as the short one. When one speaks Hungarian with a normal speed, the dotted rhythm becomes more obvious. The difference between short and long vowels can be compared to the difference between short and long notes in music.

Bartók uses the first type of rhythm mostly in his vocal works (e.g. *Bluebeard' s Castle*) or declamatory instrumental pieces (like the previous example of the "Evening in Transylvania"). Bartók mentions Debussy's opera, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, where the composer uses the old style French recitative technique. In addition to the

8) Victoria Fischer, "Bartók's Fourteen Bagatelles op. 6, for Piano: Toward Performance Authenticity" in *Bartók Perspectives*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz, Victoria Fischer, and Benjamin Suchoff. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 276.

old-style peasant songs' influence on Bartók's opera – *Bluebeard' s Castle*, Judit Frigyesi in her study shows other close connections with the Hungarian Romantic symphonic style – the verbunkos style. Frigyesi believes that the verbunkos style's rhythmic progression can stand on its own. The composer picks out the rhythmic ornamentation and variation of this style and creates a system of rhythmic variation in his opera. The idea is that the "main note" is distinguishable from notes that are "ornamental." In the words of Frigyesi: "The connection among themes could be described, then, as a chain of rhythmic variations that move in a circle that leads back to the beginning point as shown."[9]

In the fourth Harvard lecture Bartók mentions the giusto rhythm as an interesting feature from the aspect of meter-change. There are countless examples of this rhythm (e.g. fifth movement of *First Suite*, first movement of *Second Suite*, third movement of *Dance-Suite*). Bartók says that his contemporary, Igor Stravinsky, used the same rhythmic device (tempo giusto) in his major work: the *Rite of Spring*. The third rhythmic formation is the dotted rhythm, which is often used not only in the vocal, but in the instrumental music of Bartók (e.g. Dance of the Trees in *The Wooden Prince*, the second theme of the "Evening in Transylvania", ex. 6). There is a similar rhythmic pattern to the dotted rhythm, which is smoother: ♪ ♩ ♩ ♪ | ♪ ♩ ♩ ♪ or ♪ ♩ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ‖

Bartók uses this in his *Sixth String Quartet* (1939). The mirror image of this rhytmic pattern precedes the above mentioned one (First movement, second theme; third movement, trio). We can state that the above mentioned rhythmic patterns appeared throughout his career from the 1905 to 1945. If we examine his dependence on folk music, we realize that his music became marked not only in

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9) Judit Frigyesi, "The Verbunkos and Bartók's Modern Style: The Case of Duke Bluebeard's Castle" in *Bartók Perspectives*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz, Victoria Fischer, and Benjamin Suchoff. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 145.

the areas of rhythm, but folk theme formation and melody.

1910 is an important date in Bartók's career. In this year Bartók had his first "composer's evening" on 19 of March in the Royal Concert Hall. This was a memorable date in the history of Hungarian music: Bartók's evening had been preceded two days by a similar concert in which Zoltán Kodály made his début. Bartók played various piano pieces as well as the *Piano Quintet* and the *First Quartet*. The First Quartet marks the moment when, at the age of twenty-seven, Bartók had discovered his own tone and could clearly see the path of his own future development as a composer. The Adagio melody of the episode has a markedly folk character in parlando-rubato. This melody, which approaches pentatony, is the first real evidence of the fact that by this time the more ancient style of Hungarian folk music had also had an effect on Bartók (ex. 11, 12). György Kroó describes the First Quartet's third movement in the following manner:

> The Allegro introduction (Introduzione) of the third movement constitutes the link between the second and the third movements. Three instruments drum the ancient anapest rhythm, and there are many striking tone repetitions. The extraordinarily marked rhythmic background and the drumming rich in peculiar barbaric effects develop into the core of the fast and furious (Allegro vivace) third movement.[10)]

Bartók visited the Biskra district of Algeria in 1913. The significance and the creative experience involved in his North African collecting can really be fully understood only when we reflect on the fact that Bartók composed *Allegro barbaro* as early as 1911. It is customary to mention the rhythmic patterns recurring with barbaric stubbornness-the ostinato principle. Bartók's main observation on Arab music was that they accompany almost all of their songs with percussion instruments;

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10) György Kroó, *A Guide to Bartók*, (Budapest: Zenemükiadó, 1971), p. 49.

sometimes in a very complicated rhythm (it is chiefly varying accentuation of equal bar lengths that produce the different rhythmic patterns). Naturally these primitive, very different songs had an impact on his music: the motorized rhythm of the movement without any doubt has much in common with certain drum accompaniment in Arab folk music. The third movement of the *Suite Op. 14* (1916) has two elements used in Arab folk dances: a percussion effect and a fragmentary motive (its ambitus has less than three notes) (ex. 13). As János Kápáti describes, "the Dance *Suite* (1923) is a 'model' for using or imitating folk music of various nations." All the rhythmic features present along with the nation's folk melodies (Hungarian parlando-rubato, giusto, Romanian change of meters, Arab ostinatos and syncopation). Therefore we can name the years (1906-1926) of "fusion of national styles." After composing the *Dance Suite*, there was a pause of two and a half years, but in fact this was the preparation to the period.

The summer of 1926 was one of the most radical turning points in Bartók's life. His output was the *Sonata for Piano, Out of Doors, Nine Little Piano Pieces,* the *First Piano Concerto*. In addition to the national styles' influence, these pieces represent a nea language which are the works of an innovative artist. For example, in the third movement of the *Sonata*, the rhythm schema of the first theme is a transformation of Hungarian kanász-tánc (swine-herder's dance) rhythm (ex. 14). The *Sonata* shows 11-note (6+5) structure which is derived from the Ruthenian, Ukrainian kolomyjka (round dance) of the Northern-Eastern neighbors of Hungarians. One of the similarities between the *Sonata* and the *First Piano Concerto* is the concept of the piano as a percussion instrument. The main character of third movement of the *First Piano Concerto* (1926) is established in the first measures: a dramatically sto le "primeval rhythm," a barbaric ostinato in the timpani, piano and brass (ex. 15). These ostinatos are reminiscent of Stravinsky, who was one of the most influential artist in the period of Bartók's life. Often the ostinatos passages are

the basic elements of increasingly fast and ecstatic episodes (e.g. *First Piano Concerto*, first movement, mm. 269-331, ex. 16). In this section the rhythmic ostinato is six measures long and repeated several times, starting with an Allegro moderato and ending in a Piú vivo. What makes the third movement of the First and the *Second Piano Concerto* (1930-31) similar is the aggressively motoric mood. Bartók encompasses the following tools:

kaleidoscopically varied ostinato repetitions of tiny motifs within the theme; isorhythmic conformity of sections; structures organized round an ostinato pattern, with a very small ambitus (like in Arabic music). These "chain forms" built on constant use of rhythmic ostinato lines cause tension. The middle period's works are innovative, modern. Bartók is tearing apart the regular compositional styles, trying to find new ways of expression: the bar lines are not important anymore, what counts is the sound. In his *Fifth String Quartet* (1934) we can examine how the motivic development projects, but with vague barlines in Bulgarian rhythm (ex. 17). The repeated Bulgarian rhythm (4+2+3/8) ostinatos become motives, which are interwoven into the whole texture of this movement.

The ostinato passages appear as frequently in twentieth-century music as in previous eras. In Bartók's career the following are examples taken from his instrumental music illustrating various rhythmic ostinatos. First, a figuration of notes of different values repeated on the same pitch. A combination of eight, quarter and half notes are played simultaneously (ex. 18).

Secondly, Bartók also is ingenious in the utilization of rhythmic motives. These motives make their appearance frequently not only in the smaller pieces, but also in extended movements of a string quartet or rhapsody. One can realize the rhythmic motive's unifying power in the first theme of the third movement of the *Divertimento* (ex. 19). They appear in varying patterns throughout the movement, but they are not monotonous. Besides occurring in varying patterns they are

displayed in inverted order. The *Hungarian Folksongs for Violin and Piano* (1934) is unique to the extent that the qualitative rhythm is in ostinato form but syncopated. An interesting polymetric outcome is exemplified in the treble line of the piano accompaniment. The bass in the piano part is in syncopated 2/4 time, while the treble fits the meter of 4/8. Still more exciting us the entry of the violin solo in a strict giusto 2/4 dance meter. Polymetric and Polyrhythmic treatments are evident in this piece. Bartók used repeated notes as a means of expressing rhythm patterns or complex rhythms (ex. 20).

One can not complain that the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) lacks the above mentioned complicated rhythms. Fortunately, they return quite often; hence, both the performers and listeners can understand their complexity and integrity more clearly after a couple of repetitions. The ostinato is probably the most ancient form of repetition in history. Even the primitive tribes had this in their repertoire. Bartók's music is often characterized as barbaric. Perhaps this comes in part from his constant use of ostinato patterns. As Stravinsky used it in his *Rite of Spring*, ostinatos are somehow connected with the dark, barbaric nature of the human world. In Bartók's music rhythmic ostinatos have a very similar meaning (*Allegro barbaro*).

In his *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (ex. 21) there are several important spots composed in ostinato style. In m. 32 the hammering, syncopated, main theme appears, bringing a folk-like melody based on a supplementary rhythmic ostinato between the pianos and the timpani part. The unequal-beat pattern of 2+2+2+3/8 which may suggest the influence of Bulgarian folk music, is described by Kárpáti in other terms: "The way the metric division of 3x3/8 switches into a *limping* even time clearly justifies the term aksak used by Brailoiu [*Le rhythme aksak* (Abbeville, 1952)].[11] The main theme was previously prepared with similar ostinato rhythm from m. 26. In mm. 26-31 the ostinato splits into three octave dimensions. The

purpose of this technique is to fill out the space between the introductory material and the main theme. It seems that more than one ostinato pattern can be heard at the same time starting from m. 41. The second theme is centered on G, accompanied with an ostinato in the second piano. It is simply a two eight-note motive doubled in both hands by fourths. After eight measures same musical material will be played but the piano parts are interchanged (transposed up by a fourth). The purpose of this ostinato pattern is the constant noise under the melody of the "nervous" piano I. At the same time, the well known rhythmic pattern stubbornly returning in the second percussion part (mm. 41-42, 47-49, 53-55). More and more new ostinato patterns are created as we move forward towards the end. These ostinatos alternate each other or, sometimes, are supplementary or imitative (from m. 72), when e.g. the two piano parts play syncopated patterns. The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion is a good example of rhythmic ostinato technique. In many cases the percussion instruments' limitations let the performers play not melodic but rhythmic ostinatos.* The "melodic" instruments (pianos in this case) imitate their chamber partners and have the same percussive, stubborn rhythmic repetitions. This major work also belongs to the list of "percussive-piano playing." Beside rhythmic ostinato, Bartók other novelty is the use of the Bulgarian rhythm. First he collected Bulgarian folk music in 1912, when he reordered several Bulgarian songs in a village near Timisoara in Romania. According John Pernecky's ethnological writing "Historically Bulgaria has had more political and musical contact with Greece than with any other Balkan country. Thus Bulgaria was in a position to absorb much of the Byzantine elements of melody and rhythm."[12] Whereas the European music known to Bartók consists of measures with single beats of a single

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11) János Kárpáti, *Bartók kamarazenéje* (Bartók's Chamber Music), (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 410.

12) John Martin Pernecky, *The Historical and musico-Ethnological Approach to the Instrumental Music of Béla Bartók*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1956, p. 99.

length (e.g. quarter notes), most of the Bulgarian tunes feature consistently repeated measures with two different duration in a relationship of 2 to 3, e.g. a quarter and a dotted note. In Bulgarian music, this possibility of adding together unequal values of 2 and 3 in a measure creates a large number of additive meters: e.g. 5/16 (2+3), 7/16, 9/16, 11/16. Bartók began to use Bulgarian meters as a structural device. He defines the rhythm in the following: "Bulgarian rhythm is that in which the quantities indicated in the irregular time-signatures are exceptionally short (M.M.=300-400), and in which these very short, basic quantities are not evenly - that is to say not symmetrical - grouped within larger quantities. We can find this metrical principals in the fifth movement of the *Fourth String Quartet* (1928), the third movement of the *Fifth String Quartet* (1934), *Music for Strings Percussion, and Celesta*, fourth movement (1936), *Sonata for Two Pinos and Percussion*, second movement (1937), *Contrasts*, third movement (1938); and *Mikrokosmos for Piano*, nos. 113, 115, and 148-53.[13]

Timothy Rice in his writing on Bulgarian rhythm corrects the name of this rhythmical feature and changes into: Bulgarian meter.

> To find other Bulgarian influences in Bartók's work requires, as a first move, making a distinction between meter and rhythm, something the literature in English on Bartók fails to do; instead, it routinely uses only the expression *Bulgarian rhythm*,... in Bartók scholarship as Bulgarian rhythm in reality primarily concerns *Bulgarian meter*... I will use the phrase Bulgarian meter.[14]

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13) The chronology for these compositions is given in László Somfai, "Béla Bartók: Works," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 2, ed. Stanley Sadie (London:Macmillan, 1980), pp. 219-22.

14) Timothy Rice, "Béla Bartók and Bulgarian Rhythm" in *Bartók Perspectives*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz, Victoria Fischer, and Benjamin Suchoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 197.

In the Nos. 148-153 pieces in the *Mikrokosmos* (1932-39), Bartók summarizes (ex. 22) the principles that underlie Bulgarian meters to create his own additive meters. He uses the meters of his own creation for non-Bulgarian musical expression; for example, he employs the 8/8 (3+2+3) meter to capture the syncopated rhythms of American popular and jazz in No. 151 (Gershwin style). After hearing the piece, we can realize that this piece is rather American than Bulgarian from the musical view. Bartók states that:

> The metrical unit is no longer the quarter-note but a quite fast eight-about M.M.= 200-250. The most common metres are 5/8 [No. 150], which is usually articulated as 3+2 (more rarely: 2+3), and 7/8 [No. 149], normally articulated as 4+3. But one also meet hetherto unfamiliar divisions of 8/8 [No. 151] and 8/9 [No. 148] metres: the former may be articulated as 3+2+3, which naturally results in a completely dif. rent rhythm from a 4/4 metre of equal duration; the latter articulated as 4+2+3 is wholly different from the 3x3 types of 9/8.[15]

It is a well know fact that a typical form of a multi-movement work by Bartók usually is palindromic (symmetric, arch-form). However he quite often used asymmetrical rhythms, like Bulgarian rhythm. Perhaps this duality balanced the opposite symmetry against asymmetry (e.g. in the *Fifth String Quartet*, the third-middle movement is "Scherzo alla bulgarese").

> The existence of this kind of rhythm in Rumanian folk music is an extremely important fact, except for the Bulgarian territory, they are rarely found elsewhere. The Turks of Asia Minor, and expecially of Turkestan, have such rhythms in their music... The various rhythm patterns called "Bulgarian," because of their frequency in Bulgarian

15) Benjamin Suchoff, ed. *Béla Bartók Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), p. 41.

> folk music and because they have been discovered and described by Bulgarian musicologists, can be regarded as derivative of common, symmetrical 2/4 rhythm. The transformation is effected by addition or subtraction of a one-sixteenth value to or from one or two value units of a symmetrical rhythm pattern in 2/4 time, the tempo of an eight-note being M.M.=150 or more. In other words, these thythmic patterns consist of unsymmetrical combinations of eight-notes and dotted eight-notes values.[16]

Rhythm is probably the most striking element of style in the *Mikrokosmos*. A short piece No. 140 (*Free Variations*) takes only one minute and forty seconds (according to the composer's indication). The piece has on its four pages no less than thirty-five time signatures in a continual change. On the first page every measure is in a different time. The measure is no longer the rhythmical unit (ex. 23). Another interesting item is the fact that a great majority of the pieces are written in a percussive, sharply rhythmic style. Much of the rhythmic material used in the *Mikrokosmos*, Bartók uses actual Hungarian folk-song and folk-dance tunes, which are melodically and rhythmically in their original form (e.g. Nos. 68, 116). Syncopation plays an unusually large and important part in Bartók's rhythm patterns. He even names the pieces *Syncopation*. The repeated syncopation often becomes a stubborn ostinato in Bartók's music (*Syncopation in contrapuntal style*). As we know, the *Mikrokosmos* has pedagogical purpose. If one wants to understand the various rhythmic patterns by Bartók that were discussed in this paper, it is a excellent collection of the various rhythms and meters.

The music written in the last period (1938-45) of Bartók's creativity suggests the recurring verbunkos style and so to speak, human idealism. It is interesting, that in 1938 Bartók uses the verbunkos style again but on a higher level. In his playful

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16) Béla Bartók, *Rumanian Folk Music* vol. iv, ed. Benjamin Suchoff, trans. E. C. Teodorescu (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 31-32.

Contrasts (1938) the original melody combines the stylistic elements of Hungarian peasant songs with asymmetrical Bulgarian-Romanian meter (ex. 24). In the 3/2+4/4 type bar, the simple "Hungarian" dotted rhythm acquires a more subtle content linking nations together. In Bartók's last period the primitive ostinato lines ostinato lines missing or rarely used, instead Bartók continued his efforts to define Classical forms and genres with the use of parlando-rubato and giusto rhythms. The *Second Violin Concerto* (1937-38), the *Divertimento* (1939), the *Concerto* (1943), and the *Third Piano Concerto* (1945) are perhaps his most played and popular works.

It is worth mentioning that folk songs were never written down for centuries. Therefore their contents including music and text were under constant change as well as their rhythm, meter and tempo. Bartók said "I want to raise folk music to the status of written music." Finally we can state that his work is influenced with very opposite elements: Western heritage, what he was studying in the music school system (he studied scores of many previous composers, e.g. Stravinsky); Eastern heritage (researching folk songs, using them as models). All these elements are mixed and their results is the most colorful individual of the twentieth century. Bartók elevated the rhythm and found new ways to variate it.

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국문 초록

리듬은 단순히 곡을 구성하는 하나의 음악적 요소 이상의 의미를 가진다. 리듬은 다른 중요한 박자기호, 박자, 빠르기가 제시될 때 존재 할 수 있다. 바르톡의 리듬은 매우 복잡하며 독특하다. 본 논문에서는 동유럽과 북아프리카 국가들 중 바르톡의 민속음악 스타일의 기초가 된 리듬의 발전과 직접적인 관련이 있는 지역 위주로 언급하였고, 바르톡에게 영향을 주었던 지역별 리듬 체계와 작곡 시기별로 받은 영향에 대해 논하였다. 즉, 헝가리 집시 음악인 버분코스와 챠르다스, 민속 음악에 관심을 가지게 된 이후 중요하게 사용된 템포 지우스토와 파를란도-루바토, 루마니아 리듬, 헝가리 음악에서 파생된 부점, 아프리카 대륙의 음악에서 영향을 받은 오스티나토, 불가리아 리듬 등의 다양한 리듬 체계들을 자세한 예를 들어 설명하였다. 덧붙여 이러한 리듬의 설명을 위해 바르톡이 직접 연주한 자료와 하버드 대학 강연 자료, 그리고 그의 저서들이 중요하게 인용되었다.