



Bela Bartok (1881 – 1945), ungarischer Komponist und Pianist Foto 1927

Bela Bartok wurde in Nagyszentmiklós, Transylvania, Ungarn (heute Sinnicolau Mare, Rumänien) geboren. Seit 1905 widmete sich Bela Bartok gemeinsam mit dem Freund Zoltan Kodaly der Volksliedforschung. Er

unternahm Reisen durch Ungarn, Rumänien, Transsilvanien, Slowakei, in die Türkei und in andere Länder und sammelte mit dem Edison-Phonographen, auf Papier und im Kopf circa 10.000 Lieder. Bela Bartok beginnt eine Pianistenlaufbahn, aber er komponiert immer häufiger selbst.

Als Komponist begann Bela Bartok im Stil von Liszt. Schon früh wird aber ein eigenständiger, neuer Klangstil erkennbar. Dieser Stil grenzt oft hart an die Atonalität und ist reich an unaufgelösten Dissonanzen. Die ungarische Folklore wird wirksam in der geschärften Rhythmik und in der Melodie. 1911 schreibt er "Allegro barbaro". Dieses Stück für Klavier hat eine ungeheure Wirkung auf die Jugend Europas. Das Stück ist von enormer, Mauern einreißender Vitalität. (Vielen von uns durch die Adaption von „Emerson, Lake and Palmer“ bekannt geworden)

Bela Bartok entdeckte unaufhörlich neue, visionäre Klangfarben (Beispiel: "Musik für Saiteninstrumente, Sonate für 2 Klaviere und Schlagzeug"). Die letzten, in Amerika entstandenen Werke tragen Züge der Abgeklärtheit. Als Pianist unternahm er Konzertreisen durch Europa, Amerika und in die Sowjetunion. 1940 emigrierte er in die USA, dort betätigte er sich wissenschaftlich an der Columbia University New York. 1943 entsteht das großartige Werk "Konzert für Orchester", es wird 1944 uraufgeführt. Weiter entstehen in unermüdlicher Arbeit "Konzert für Bratsche und Orchester" und das dritte Klavierkonzert. Beide können nicht mehr vollendet werden. Sein Schüler Tibor Serley bringt sie zur Aufführungsreife. Im Alter von 64 Jahren stirbt Bartok in New York an Leukämie. Er gehört zu den bedeutendsten Komponisten unseres Jahrhunderts.

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**Verwendete Textauszüge aus dem
Lexicon of Musical Invective**

1.

If the reader were so rash as to purchase any of Bela Bartok's compositions, he would find that they each and all consist of unmeaning bunches of notes, apparently representing the composer promenading the keyboard in his boots. Some can be played better with the elbows, others with the flat of the hand. None require fingers to perform nor ears to listen to.... The productions... of Bartok [are] mere ordure. (1915)

2.

The bulk of the Bartok Violin Sonata seemed to me the last word (for the present) in ugliness and incoherence. It was as if two people were improvising against each other. (1922)

3.

I suffered more than upon any occasion in my life apart from an incident or two connected with 'painless dentistry.' To begin with, there was Mr. Bartok's piano touch. But 'touch,' with its implication of light-fingered ease, is a misnomer, unless it is qualified in some such way as that of Ethel Smyth in discussing her dear old teacher Herzogenberg- 'He had a touch like paving stone.' I do not, by the way, believe that Mr. Bartok would resent this simile. What I am describing is, I believe, a deliberate part of his intentions, and he will probably feel no more aggrieved at my denying him 'touch' than the village blacksmith if I refused it to him in some description of his musical performance with his two-stone hammer upon his red-hot horseshoe. If Bartok's piano compositions should ever become popular in this country, there will have to be established a special Anti-Matthay School to train performers for them, and I believe that it will be found that piano manufacturers will refuse to hire out pianos for the recitals of its alumni, insisting that these shall always be bought outright, and the remains destroyed on conclusion... The Bartok tone is, I take it, a symbol of adherence to the 'no-sentiment' school of modern music, and, as a matter of fact, many passages in Bartok's compositions might disqualify him for membership of that school were they less thunderously delivered, since some of his little two-note and three-note motives could easily become rather plaintive in their querulous repetitions... It appears to me that the Bartok system of composition and performance is one of the most rigid-minded, rigid-muscled ever invented; that in shunning sentiment Bartok has lost beauty, that in shunning rhetoric he has lost reason. (1923)

4.

Bela Bartok has done it. He has achieved one of the great desires of the modernists, in turning things upside down.... He has made big music sound small.... He has converted the grand orchestra into a mere mandolin.... He has gone after beauty with hammers and sticks.... In time, the object doubtless will be even better attained. If not Bartok, then someone else will compel a 120-man orchestra, everybody blowing, scraping and smiting at full bent, to sigh as thinly as a rubbed goblet and to twang as faintly as a Jew's harp. For out go not only melody and harmony, but also the timbre of violin, the volume of the trombone and the shading of the piano. (1928)

5.

Mr. Bartok is old enough to know better. We managed to live through his Piano Concerto. We read Dr. Gilman's notes with respect, listened to a few of the masterminds afterwards, and in our own unimportant opinion, this work from first to last was one of the most dreadful deluges of piffle, bombast and nonsense ever perpetrated on an audience in these environs... One of our handsome young managers asserted during Bartok's Concerto that he was rushing home to drink thirty quarts of bitter champagne. (1928)

6.

Mr. Bartok elected to play his composition dignified by the title *Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra*. Note the omission of key. Ultra-moderns cannot be bothered with such trifling designations.... Bartok plays the piano part from memory. How does he do it? And would it make any difference if memory failed and different notes were substituted for those written in the score? Perhaps the unaccountable chaos of sound was caused by an incorrect distribution of the parts to the musicians... Is Bartok making fun at our expense? If so, the laugh is on us... It has been said that the Concerto is based upon folk tunes. They have been successfully concealed. Only tonal chaos arises from the diabolical employment of unrelated keys simultaneously. It is like a mystic maze. The guide alone knows the way out... He is in music's no man's land, and ingress and egress have been deliberately protected by heavily charged barbed wire. From the vantage point of his own planning, he hurls gas bombs in the direction of friend and foe indiscriminately. The tonal grenades burst with alarming detonation. If you emerge from the conflict without suffering from shell shock, you may consider that you have been a favorite of the gods. (1928)

7.

The opening *Allegro* took me straight back to childhood and gave me in turn the rusty windlass of a well, the interlinking noises of a goods train that is being shunted, then the belly-rumblings of a little boy acutely ill after a raid on an orchard, and finally the singular alarmed noise of poultry being worried to death by a Scotch terrier. The second movement gave me continuously and throughout its short length the noise of a November wind in telegraph poles on a lonely country road. The third movement began with a dog howling at midnight, proceeded to imitate the regurgitations of the less-refined or lower-middle-class type of water-closet cistern, modulating thence into the mass snoring of a Naval dormitory around the dawn- and concluded inconsequently with the cello reproducing the screech of an ungreased wheelbarrow. The fourth movement took me straight back to the noises I made myself, on wet days indoors, at the age of six, by stretching and plucking a piece of elastic. And the fifth movement reminded me immediately and persistently and vividly of something I have never thought of since the only time I heard it: the noise of a Zulu village in the Glasgow Exhibition- a hubbub all the more singular, because it had a background of skirling Highland bagpipes. Both noises emerged in this final movement of this Fourth Quartet of Bela Bartok. (1951)