

From Order to Chaos? Compositional Process and Concept of Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*

Abstract. “I must state that all my music ... is a matter of instinct and sensibility; so no one should ask me why I wrote this or that, or did something in this rather than that way. I have but one explanation: that is how I feel it, and that is how I wrote it down,” said Béla Bartók in a 1937 interview, which clearly emphasised the role of intuition. On the other hand, his meticulous and very systematic categorisation of folk tunes from various nations nevertheless suggests his personality as quite rational, and even several scholars stress the existence of rational structure in his composition.

The examination of autograph manuscripts may offer interesting and more profound insights into Bartók's (possibly) actual compositional concern. More often than not, rational frameworks – whatever pedagogical, compositional, or programmatic – served as points of departure and intuitive approaches further develop the music (e.g. No. 67, *Thirds against a Single Voice* and No. 133, *Syncopation*). At the same time, the apparently intuitive refinement of details nevertheless follows a rational plan (No. 133, *Syncopation*). In a certain case, a rational structure is also introduced subsequently (No. 141, *Subject and Reflection*). Consequently, one may observe intriguing interaction of rationality and intuition. The reason why Bartók himself emphasised the role of intuition rather than acknowledging such interaction can be found in his artistic ideal: the spontaneous expression inherited from the peasant music.

Keywords: Béla Bartók, compositional process, sketch study, musical symmetry, pedagogical composition.

Introduction

Concerning the role of rationality and intuition in the compositional process, Béla Bartók might be considered a very interesting case. On the one hand, he did meticulous research on a huge amount of folk music materials from various nations.¹ He tried to categorise thousands of folk tunes on the basis of certain musical as well as functional characteristics, which naturally involved quite a systematic approach. This scholarly experience allowed him, to some extent, to objectively deduce national musical characteristics, and to rationally develop his own musical language (Ito 1997: 111–112). For instance, he discovered the consonant quality of minor seventh interval as a possible harmonic resource through pentatonic Hungarian folk songs: borrowing his own words, “a vertical projection of the ... horizontal form,” which “is obtained by a logical process, and not, as many objectors believed, through sheer whimsicality” (Suchoff 1976: 335).

On the other hand, while Bartók apparently defended his own compositional approach which has a logical background, he rather emphasised the role of intuition, especially in his late years. In a 1937 interview with Denijs Dille, the later director of Budapest Bartók Archives, he made the following response in regard to Edwin von der Nüll's dissertation, the first extensive study of Bartók's music:

“Let me make it clear: although I carried out my harmonic research in a rational and reasonable way, the role of intuition is greater than one would think. I must state that all my music and this question of harmony we are talking about is a matter of instinct and sensibility: so no one should ask me why I wrote this or that, or did something in this rather than that way. I have but one explanation: that is how I feel it, and that is how I wrote it down” (Vikárius 2006: 14).²

And later, in the draft for the lecture series at Harvard University, he further elaborated his ideas:

“I never created new theories in advance, I hated such ideas. I had, of course, a very definite feeling about certain directions to take, but at the time of the work I did not care about the designations which would apply to those directions or to their sources. This attitude does not mean that I composed without [preliminary] set plans and without sufficient control. The plans were concerned with the spirit of the new work and with technical problems (for instance, formal structure involved by the spirit of the work), all more or less instinctively felt, but I never was concerned with general theories to be applied to the works I was going to write” (Suchoff 1976: 376).

We may be able to observe an apparent conflict between “rational” research and “intuitive” approach, which probably implies certain complex artistic criteria which Bartók strove to meet. Being a composer of high-art Classical music involves continuing or developing the past centuries' tradition and being conscious of and responsible for what he composes; at the same time, the act of composition is not a mechanical process, which cannot be done automatically but involves much musical inspiration.

¹ Besides many ethnomusicological articles, Bartók composed several monographs devoted to particular nations (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian), some of which were only posthumously published.

² The interview was made in German but originally published in French, in 1937.

Thus, exactly due to this conflict, it is interesting why Bartók put such a strong stress on the intuition, instead of manifesting the co-existence of rationality and intuition. It is also interesting that, especially in the several decades following Bartók's death, analytic/theoretic approaches flourished: to name a few, Ernő Lendvai and Elliott Antokoletz are considered outstanding in this field (Lendvai 1983 and Antokoletz 1984). Apparent negligence of the role of intuition in Bartók's workshop is probably related to the compositional trend at that time. Paraphrasing Richard Taruskin's criticism on Allen Forte's book, the approaches by Lendvai or Antokoletz can also be regarded the children of its positivistic time, when extensive pre-compositional work was elevated to the status of a requirement for responsible composition (Taruskin 1979: 115). One may reasonably conclude that they rather tried to prove Bartók's works (at least partially) to match the posterior criteria for the masterpieces by a great composer.

The situation has significantly changed by the 21st century, when Bartók's music is considered "classic" and no longer directly related to our own contemporary value judgement, so historical approaches with proper distance became more welcomed; furthermore, and more importantly, an enormous amount of documentary as well as compositional sources are now publicly available.³ Such primary sources more often than not allow us to more closely trace the composer's creative thinking, and discover the composer's actual concern which cannot be disclosed through (pure) analytical speculation on the published score.

My own research is basically in line with László Somfai's several studies of masterpieces, which tried to reveal the composer's secret concepts through a meticulous examination of the compositional sources.⁴ The fundamental methodology of this approach is not to analyse the music according to pre-existing analytic concepts regarding certain segments of music but to compare different sources, or different layers even within a single source. It may involve mere objective description of textual differences but the purpose is to yield fruitful interpretation which otherwise cannot be gained.

The following part of my paper solely concentrates on only three relatively simple and short *Mikrokosmos* pieces. The scope of my paper is practically affected by my current occupation as an editor of the forthcoming *Mikrokosmos* volumes of Béla Bartók Complete Critical Edition, but the decision can be justified by the fact that the *Mikrokosmos* pieces offer very interesting aspects which are generally missing from Bartók's other compositions. Contrary to Malcolm Gillies's assessment – Bartók's "individual compositions are not normally manifestations of one rigorously pursued concept or one intensive working out of materials from the smallest detail to the largest formal span" (Gillies 1995: 321) – the *Mikrokosmos* pieces are, more often than not, built on a single technical or musical element, as is observed on the three pieces to be examined in the present paper: No. 67 *Thirds against a Single Voice*, No. 133 *Syncopation*, and No. 141 *Subject and Reflection*. A further clarification is, however, needed whether this "rigorously pursued concept" is related to the rational plan.

Clarification of the Terms

The distinction of "rational" and "intuitive" compositional approaches can be quite a hard issue. In a certain sense, they cannot be distinguished totally. Concerning the harmonic language of fourth chords, "... many other (foreign) composers, who do not lean upon folk music, have met with similar results at about the same time – only in an intuitive or speculative way, which, evidently, is a procedure equally justifiable. The difference is that we created through Nature, for: the peasant's art is a phenomenon of Nature" (Suchoff 1976: 338). Thus, Bartók regarded the result of his own logical approach based on the folk music and other "intuitive" or "speculative" (i.e. rational?) approaches appears similar.

Furthermore: "... what appears simple to some might be perfectly incomprehensible to others. The spontaneous expression of Genius is sometimes more complicated than a mechanical creation, and the simplest means sometimes appear as the most complex" (Suchoff 1976: 516). Following this logic, an intuitively devised passage can possibly appear to be more rational.

For the sake of clear discussion, the present paper nevertheless tries to apply an *ad hoc* subjective definition concerning rational and intuitive approach. The creation of a kind of conceivable order (e.g., symmetry or some other unambiguous musical pattern) is to be regarded "rational", and the deviation from such order is to be considered "intuitive". There is potential risk of fallacy (e.g., certain contrapuntal structure such as

³ The majority of original documents, possessed by the composer's younger son, Peter Bartók, are now deposited in Sacher Stiftung, Basel, and the majority of the rest is available at the Bartók Archives Budapest.

⁴ The most important literature is (Somfai 1996) but there are also a lot of important independent articles, including the essay on the third movement of *Piano Sonata* (1926), which convincingly argues that this rondo movement exploits an imaginary folk tune played by various peasant instruments (Somfai 1981).

mirror inversion can automatically be done without rational thinking); however, for instance, an exact (or an almost exact) correspondence of notes suggests (at least partly) a rational thinking process, and the decline of correspondence does the role of intuition.

Symmetry as Pedagogical Concept – *Mikrokosmos* No. 67 *Thirds against a Single Voice*

This simple 16-measure-long piece, composed around 1934, may well demonstrate how a rational plan is changed in the course of composition, and such a compositional process can only be observed through the examination of autograph sources.⁵

While the published version of this piece appears to be a free composition, quite a mechanical structure can be observed in the original layer of the draft (Ex. 1).⁶ The first and the second halves of this piece were in almost literal inversion. At m. 9, both hands exchange the parts in the way that the right (or left) hand plays what the left (or right) hand previously played in inversion, in an octave higher (or lower).

Example 1. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* BB 105 No. 67, transcription from the draft

The application of inversional symmetry can be a mere technical issue to form a piece. Writing a piece by using such a contrapuntal technique may possibly be related to Bartók's reverence for J. S. Bach, who was not only one of the great masters for him but also one of the most significant predecessors in the realm of pedagogical music; as is known from the fact that he dedicated an *homage* to Bach (No. 79 *Homage à J.S.B.*, which was supposedly composed in the same year).

Nevertheless, certain pedagogical concerns might have played a far greater role: to practice double notes, particularly parallel thirds. The etudes for double notes can be found in piano methods as obligatory technical exercises – such a technique has little use at the beginner level. It was probably Bartók's initial intention to create a playable miniature piece devoted to this technical problem. And the application of inversional symmetry makes it possible to equally train both hands.

Certain pedagogical concepts may, however, function as hindrance. In most of the cases, Bartók was able to find unique solution to both achieve musical quality and realize a pedagogical concept; in the case of No. 67, however, he seemingly failed to do so. The original layer was written throughout in a very narrow register (in perfect fifths, e^2-a^1 and $a-d$, respectively) in stepwise motion, the strictest technical limitation which he applied in the first dozen pieces. The result was musically not very promising, due to the monotony in the melodic line going up and down.

The subsequent revisions, however, considerably changed the music and improved the quality (see the final version as Ex. 2. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 67). While Bartók essentially kept the narrow register, he strictly stuck to neither the technical concern as exercise of parallel thirds (contrary to the title of the piece), nor the literal inversion through the modification of rhythm, by introducing some leaps. The harmony also became more interesting: while the original version essentially did not contain any dissonance – one of the hallmarks of Bartók's music – the revised version has at least one acute dissonance, namely minor second in m. 7, as the climax of the piece (placed as the destination of a *crescendo* hairpin and supplied with a *marcato*). Here

⁵ For the date of composition, see (Vinton 1966: 55–57). Vinton established an approximate chronology through the examination of autograph manuscripts.

⁶ The source of the transcription is: Basel, Paul Sacher Foundation, Béla Bartók Collection, deposit from Peter Bartók, shelfmark 59PS1 (photocopy in Budapest, Bartók Archives, Institute for Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), p. 57.

the imitated style (Baroque or Classical) may require the resolution of the dissonance, but the resolution is considerably prolonged and takes place only indirectly in m. 9, separated by a rest.



Example 2. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 67

In this case, inversional symmetry, closely related to pedagogical concern (which includes the application of double notes and strict stepwise motion), merely served as a rational framework for a point of departure, but did not hold any essential importance. Thus, it can be concluded that Bartók sacrificed the rational structure for the sake of musical quality.

Mikrokosmos No. 133 *Syncopation* – Bartók’s Twelve-Tone Composition?

The following example, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133 *Syncopation* may serve as a good example of the verification of certain analytic approaches and of the demonstration how sketch study can offer insights into the composer’s hitherto unknown creative thinking.⁷

This piece is one of the first *Mikrokosmos* pieces composed in 1932, when Bartók intensively composed dozens of pieces during his summer vacation. The title *Syncopation* is, however, doubly misleading. First, the title may distract our attention from the quite unique musical character. The texture is totally devoid of a clearly discernible melodic shape – “melodic” in a common sense – thus, one might consider it as sober abstract music, which might indeed be underlined by the non-expressive, merely technical title. However, the music clearly speaks for itself; an almost unpredictable alteration of rhythmic groups (consisting of two, three, and four eighths) creates a humorous, a kind of “a bit tipsy” effect, which can be observed, for instance, in *Three Burlesques*, BB55, No. 2.

Second, the rhythmic feature of this piece is not syncopation in the common sense. The measures are divided into small metric units consisting of two to five eighths but no “regular” pulses can be observed, which function as a referential point to the effect of syncopation. Instead, one may relate the characteristic rhythmic feature of this piece to “the so-called Bulgarian rhythm”.⁸ Interestingly, in the first half of the piece (up to mm. 17), these units affect the organisation of bar lines, thus there are frequent changes of time signatures (i.e. 4/4 and 5/4, see Ex. 3) and metric units never cross the bar line. In the second half (especially mm. 18–23), the metric units appear essentially independently from the invariable time signature, 4/4 (Ex. 4).



Example 3. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133, mm. 1–8

⁷ The draft of this piece can be found on PB59PS1, pp. 18 and 22. For the full description of the source, see Footnote 6.

⁸ The term is coined by Bartók, as he first discovered this phenomenon through the collection of Bulgarian folk music (Suchoff 1976: 47). Nowadays a more scholarly appropriate term *aksak* (in English, “limping”) proposed by Constantin Brăiloiu (1951: 1), is widely used.

Example 4. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133, mm. 18–21

A particularly interesting feature of this piece is that Bartók originally wrote the piece in 4/4, and he later introduced the change of time signatures during the process of composition. At the beginning of the piece (mm. 1 and 5), he added an additional beat and then transformed the regular 4/4 into asymmetrical 5/4 (Ex. 5). In the measures corresponding to mm. 11–17 of the published version, it appears that he became uncertain of the proper organisation of measures as he progressed (Ex. 6; above the system, straight lines mark the original, alternative bar lines which were eventually abandoned). Supposedly mm. 11ff. were also originally written in 4/4 throughout but Bartók seemingly revised the bar lines several times until he eventually managed to reach the final version (horizontal brackets show 4/4 measures which might have existed at some point of the compositional process).

Example 5. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133, the original layer of mm. 1–8 from the draftExample 6. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133, mm. 11–17

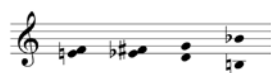
This brief examination of bar organisation on the basis of the draft can give one example of how Bartók composed: he did not work out the overall structure (including number of measures or beats) in advance – contrary to what Ernő Lendvai's proportional analyses suggest. Rather, Bartók intuitively drafted the piece, and then partly elaborated the rhythm (at mm. 1 and 5) or sought a more appropriate way of notation (mm. 11–17).

Can the same be said, however, in the case of pitch organisation, an over-researched field of Bartók's music? Elliott Antokoletz argues that *Mikrokosmos* No. 133 *Syncopation* exemplifies the synthesis of traditional and non-traditional tonality, on the basis of the juxtaposition of triadic and symmetrical pitch constructions (Antokoletz 2016: 21). The core of his claim, the simultaneous presence of traditional and non-traditional elements, is indeed quite obvious: not to speak of the final authentic *D–G* bass progression in mm. 37–38 (Ex. 7), the long sustained notes on *D* (in mm. 18ff. and mm. 31–33) as well as *G* (in mm. 35ff.) also emphasise the existence of traditional functionality beyond a highly chromatic texture. However, it is questionable to what extent the symmetrical pitch constructions are actually important for this piece.



Example 7. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133, mm. 37–38

According to Antokoletz, the eight pitches at the beginning, namely the four chromatic pitches of the right hand ($E_b-E-F-F\#$) and the G major-minor chord of the left hand ($G-B_b-B-D$) shares the common axis of symmetry, $E-F$ (Ex. 8). Strangely, however, he does not deal with the concluding, characteristic non-traditional tetrad ($A\#-C\#-E_b-F\#$) which frequently appears from m. 25 on, and concludes the piece (see Ex. 7).



Example 8. Symmetrical pitch relationship at the beginning of Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 133

A more convincing interpretation was offered by Roy Travis, who succeeded in largely describing the tonal progression of this piece (Travis 1959). He acknowledged the tonic quality of the beginning chord ($G-B-D-E_b-F\#$), which appear throughout the piece and is later transformed into a complex chord ($G-B-D-F-A\#-C\#-E_b-F\#$).

A close examination of the draft indeed supports Travis’s insight; however, what is more important, it reveals that the earliest layer of the draft was very skeletal and containing only the essential ideas in possibly the simplest form. Not to speak of the change of time signature (mentioned above), the augmented second $e_b^1-f\#^1$ were repeatedly struck in mm. 1–2 and still not filled chromatically. Thus, the first two measures only contained the collection of pitches ($G-B-D-E_b-F\#$), as Travis identified.

Yet Travis does not deal with “irregular” notes in mm. 5–8, namely $F\#$ and G (see Ex. 3). Are these notes regarded as non-structural and less important? In fact, except these notes, mm. 5–8 are essentially the transposition of mm. 1–4 a major second lower, thus one may conclude they were intuitively revised, in order to avoid mechanical repetition.

Table 1 (the pitch collections of mm. 1–8) represents the pitches used in the original layer of the first eight measures, divided into two sections (N.B. mm. 1–4 and 5–8 contain fewer notes than the published version). It is interesting that all the twelve notes are used in the first eight measures, and the two sections apparently complement each other.

Table 1

| | | pitches | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|---------|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| | | C | C#/D _b | D | D#/E _b | E | F | F#/G _b | G | G#/A _b | A | A#/B _b | B |
| measures | 1–4 | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | | | x | x |
| | 5–8 | x | x | | | x | x | | | x | x | x | x |

It was one of Bartók’s compositional strategies to use as many chromatic notes as possible. From an early experimental *Fourteen Bagatelles* (1908) No. 2 to the “tonal” twelve-tone theme in the Second Violin Concerto (1937–38), several examples are known, and this *Mikrokosmos* piece can also be included with this group of works. Thus, the use of all twelve notes could be a rational plan which might have served as the first step of the composition. Yet, in this case, this plan seemingly survived and further developed in the following stages.

Table 2 shows the pitches found in the published version (the additional pitches are represented in italics). While in the original layer all the twelve notes were almost equally scattered over eight measures, in the published version, each section contains much more pitches and now all the twelve notes can be found in the second section alone (mm. 5–8). The notes with key importance are the two pitches in the $f\#^1/g^1$ dyad – the very two notes dismissed by both Antokoletz and Travis. Quite understandably: these notes cannot be integrated into their own imaginary system. However, if one tries to seek a system on the basis of the compositional sources, it is possible to establish a more convincing system (if it is not necessarily generic).

Table 2

| | | pitches | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|---------|--------------|---|--------------|---|---|--------------|---|--------------|---|--------------|---|
| | | C | C#/D \flat | D | D#/E \flat | E | F | F#/G \flat | G | G#/A \flat | A | A#/B \flat | B |
| measures | 1–4 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x |
| | 5–8 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

In this case, the rational plan can be considered the usage of twelve notes but what is really interesting is that, while Bartók considerably revised the original draft, he nevertheless maintained this rational plan, or, in a certain sense, achieved a different kind of perfection by introducing all the twelve notes within a very short passage (mm. 5–8).

From Order to Chaos? *Mikrokosmos No. 141 Subject and Reflection*

The interaction of rational and intuitive compositional approach can also be observed in *Mikrokosmos No. 141 Subject and Reflection*, but here the role of rational thinking seems to be more important and intriguing.⁹

This piece was composed in 1933, at a time when Bartók composed both easy pedagogical and difficult concert pieces. The form of this piece is a seven-part rondo. Differently from conventional rondo-form, each rondo section (i.e. refrain and episode) is in a different tonality (overall tonal relationship is $B\flat-B-D-E\flat-F\sharp-G-B\flat$). This tonal design is indeed logical, as every episode is a semitone higher than the preceding refrain, and followed by a new refrain a minor third higher.

It is quite possible that Bartók originally intended this piece to be a relatively easy pedagogical piece. The decisive element is that it is almost thoroughly written in pentachords, similarly to No. 67 as well as the most of easy *Mikrokosmos* pieces, and in a single tonality, A (instead of the very frequent modulations of the published version, which occasionally require difficult thumb positions on the black keys).

The title, “Subject and Reflection”, suggests one of the primary concepts of this piece, the (almost) literal inversion, around the long sustained notes played by the thumb of both hands.¹⁰ Thus, while the right hand plays a phrase $b\flat^1-c^2-e\flat^2-d^2-f^2$, the left hand plays $b\flat-a\flat-f-g\flat-e\flat$, in exact mirror inversion.



Example 9. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos No. 141*, mm. 1–7

This inversional relationship can be related to a pedagogical concept; however, in this case, Bartók was reported to relate a programmatic concept, that is, the reflection on water, and “as the water becomes disturbed the reflection becomes distorted” (Suchoff 2002: 100).

The disturbance of water can gradually be observed in the course of music, especially from the third episode on, where the simultaneous movement of the eighth notes become broken (Ex. 10). The last refrain is apparently out of order: while the right hand repeats the same phrase, the left hand no longer produces an exact inversion of the right hand (Ex. 11). The music itself may represent chaos, or, borrowing Bartók’s own words, it could be regarded as the “disturbance” of water.

⁹ The draft of this piece can be found on PB59PS1, pp. 47–48. For the full description of the source, see Footnote 6.

¹⁰ The combination of these elements suggests that this piece was composed as a counterpart to No. 60 *Canon with Sustained Notes* (composed the previous year), where another contrapuntal technique, canon in perfect fifth, is used instead of the inversion.



Example 10. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 141, mm. 47–50

Example 11. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* No. 141, mm. 63–73

It is worth mentioning, however, that this effect is indeed created in a very rational way. While the temporal distance becomes broader and broader from two eighths to four eighths, the register of the left hand becomes narrower and narrower, from diminished fifth to diminished fourth.

In this case, the concept “reflection on water” might have served as the source of technical solution as mirror inversion. Bartók partially abandoned this concept at the end of the piece, where strict inversive relationship became broken. It can be an intuitive thought to do so but, as is mentioned above, the outcome was nevertheless achieved very rationally, by gradually changing the parameters (e.g., temporal distance as well as pitch contents).

Conclusions

The three case studies have shown different relationships between rational and intuitive creative thinking. More often than not, rational frameworks served as points of departure and intuitive approaches further develop the music (Ex. No. 67, *Thirds against a Single Voice* and No. 133, *Syncopation*). At the same time, the apparently intuitive refinement of details nevertheless follows a rational plan (No. 133, *Syncopation*). In a certain case, a rational structure is also introduced subsequently (No. 141, *Subject and Reflection*).

The rational plans can be related to different compositional concepts with different kinds of importance – it can be pedagogical, purely technical, or programmatic. A question, however, still remains unanswered: why did Bartók emphasise the role of intuition, despite the fact that such plans have obvious significance?

We can suppose that it was Bartók’s artistic ideal which affected his consciousness. In a well-known manifestation of his *ars poetica*, originally from a letter to Romanian publicist, Octavian Beu, he claimed: “... I don’t reject any influence ... The source must only be clean, fresh and healthy!” (Demény 1971: 201).¹¹

¹¹ Letter to Octavian Beu, January 10, 1931.

Bartók related this freshness to the peasant music, which, according to him, “gives the impression of being a far more spontaneous and vivid manifestation despite its primitiveness” – in comparison with the urban music which “frequently sounds stilted, affected, and artificial” (Suchoff 1976: 38). On the other hand, in an interview with Dille, he explains: “I never present the same musical thought twice in the same way, and that I never repeat a section identically – which explains my great love for variation and the transformation of themes. ... this extreme diversity, which is characteristic of our folk music, is part of my nature.” (Vikárius 2006: 15).¹² These “spontaneity” and “extreme diversity” might be related to “the spirit of peasant music”, which Bartók wished to absorb. Regardless of whether he succeeded in doing so, or not, we can reasonably suppose that there might have existed conscious exercise of intuition in the compositional process.

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Nuo tvarkos link chaos?

Bélos Bartóko Mikrokosmos kompoziciniai procesai ir koncepcijos

Santrauka

„Aš turiu konstatuoti, kad visa mano muzika... yra nulemta instinktų ir pojūčių; tad neturėtumėte manęs klausti, kodėl aš parašiau vieną ar kitą elementą ar priėmiau vienokį ar kitokį sprendimą. Aš viskam turiu vieną paaiškinimą: aš taip jaučiau ir todėl tai parašiau būtent taip“, – teigė Béla Bartókas 1937-aisiais vykusiam interviu, aiškiai leisdamas suprasti intencijos svarbą jo kūryboje. Kita vertus, smulkmeniškai ir itin sisteminiškai įvairių tautų liaudies melodijų kategorizavimas sufleruoja, kad jis buvo gana racionalus. Pasak įvairių tyrėjų, jo kompozicijose racionali struktūra atlieka itin svarbų vaidmenį.

Pasitelkiant autorius rankraščių analizę, šiame straipsnyje aptariamas racionalių ir intuityvių Bartóko komponavimo procesų santykis. „Racionaliais“ procesais galima įvardyti numanomos tvarkos (sandaros) egzistavimą arba išsigalėjimą, o „intuityviais“ – nukrypimą nuo tokios sandaros. Pristatomos trys pjesės iš ciklo *Mikrokosmos*, sukurtos vadovaujantis ta pačia koncepcija (sprendžiant iš jų pavadinimų: Nr. 67 – *Tercijos prieš vieną balsą*, Nr. 133 – *Sinkopavimas*, Nr. 141 – *Subjektas ir atspindys*).

Racionalios konstrukcijos – nesvarbu, pedagoginės, kompozicinės ar programinės – dažniausiai tampa kompozicijos atspirties taškais, o intuityvūs metodai padeda toliau plėtoti kūrinį. Pjesė Nr. 67 *Tercijos prieš vieną balsą* dėl pedagoginių tikslų iš pradžių buvo sukurta taikant griežtą veidrodinę inversiją, bet vėliau, siekdamas muzikos kokybės, Bartókas paaukojo kai kuriuos elementus. Racionalūs ir intuityvūs kompoziciniai metodai gali ir koegzistuoti, kaip kad pjesėje Nr. 133 *Sinkopavimas*. Čia asimetriška taktų struktūra buvo parinkta intuityviai, o vėliau išgryninta taikant racionalių metodus. Tačiau aukščiau (beje, apimantys visus dvyliką vienos oktavos garsų), ko gero, yra racionali išmąstyti, o vėliau intuityviai išplėtoti laikantis pirminio racionalaus plano. Pjesėje Nr. 141 *Subjektas ir atspindys* Bartókas taip pat dėl pedagoginių tikslų iš pradžių naudojo veidrodinę inversiją (panašiai kaip Nr. 67). Vis dėlto vėliau šiam kūrinii jis pritaikė racionali tonacinį planą (*B–H–D–Es–Fis–G–B*), kurį galima priskirti programinei kūrinio koncepcijai – „atspindžiui vandenyje“. Muzikinė kūrinio kulminacija – chaotiškas vyravusios

¹² For the information about the interview, see Footnote 2.

sandaros naikinimas, arba, anot paties Bartóko, vandens drumstimas, priešingai jo keliamam stichiškam efektui, yra racionaliai išmąstyta, ir tai atspindi nuosekliai kintantis dviejų balsų santykis. Atstumas laike pamažu plėtėja (nuo dviejų iki keturių aštuntinių), o atstumas tarp kairės ir dešinės rankų registrų – siaurėja (nuo sumažintosios kvintos iki sumažintosios kvartos).

Taigi šiose kompozicijose galima įžvelgti intriguojančią racionalumo ir intuícijos sąveiką. Tai, kad pats Bartókas akcentavo intuícijos vaidmenį savo kūryboje, o ne pripažino racionalumo ir intuícijos sąveiką, galima paaiškinti jo meniniu idealu – spontaniška ekspresija ir didžiule įvairove, atsinešta iš liaudies muzikos.