A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF

THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN by BÉLA BARTÓK

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

By

EUGENE ALLEN PHILLIPS, B.M.
The Ohio State University
1968

Approved by:

Advisor
School of Music
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is given to Professor Gertrude C. Kusheftuhs for her patience and guidance in the preparation of this thesis. Special recognition is due my wife Bonnie, whose long hours at the typewriter made completion of the final drafts possible.

E.A.P.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE SELECTION OF MATERIALS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. FORMAL ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. MELODIC CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. HARMONIC MATERIALS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. RHYTHMIC PRACTICES</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. TECHNIQUES OF ORCHESTRATION</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. SUMMARY</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons With Later Works</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"It is a paradox that the *Miraculous Mandarin* became the great failure in Béla Bartók's career, because eight years after he composed the pantomime he still considered it 'the best work for orchestra that I have written up till now', and after another nine years he still felt enough concern for the piece to have one last revision of its final pages printed."¹ Unsuccessful attempts to perform the work have been attributed to the wave of criticism which arose concerning the unusually daring scenario. In fact, the dramatic action drew so much attention that little concern was shown for the music which has since come to be recognized as one of the composer's most significant works. Emil Harasztí has named the *Mandarin* as Bartók's "greatest work before the *Cantata Profana*."² "Its language reflects the achievements of the new European music to a greater degree than any other work of Bartók; it also contains more of the dramatic and rhythmical dynamism peculiar to him than any of his former works."³

It is because of its importance and unfortunate history that


the Miraculous Mandarin has been selected as the subject for this investigation. I will attempt to identify and describe the formal organization, and the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral materials of the work in relation to their 'dramatic effect'. It must be understood that the music follows the dramatic exigencies of the scenario as closely as one could imagine possible, thus making it necessary to view the composer's 'musical choices' in relation to the stage action in order to fully understand the meaning behind these choices.

Examples will be provided wherever possible. However, the interested reader is advised to obtain a copy of the full score and familiarize himself with the music before proceeding to the following discussions.

The Boosey and Hawkes score has been used for this paper. This score includes the entire work as well as the ending of the orchestral-suite version which is given on pages 210-215. Since the following analysis concerns the ballet only, pages 210-215 will not be considered.

Abbreviations include:

M - major, e.g., M3 (major third)
m - minor, e.g., m3 (minor third)
A - augmented, e.g., A2 (augmented second)
d - diminished, e.g., d2 (diminished second)
F - perfect, e.g., F4 (perfect fourth)
TT - tritone
m. (ms.) - measure(s)
Ind. - indeterminate (tonal center)

Numbers enclosed in boxes (e.g., A), indicate rehearsal numbers. Additional score references take the following forms:

1b A - one measure before rehearsal A
1a B - one measure after rehearsal B
CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Miraculous Mandarin was completed in May, 1919 and was revised in 1924 and again in 1936. The first performance did not take place until November 27, 1926, when Jenö Szenkar conducted the work in Cologne. Other stagings were attempted in 1931 and 1941 but were prevented by the storms of protest which arose concerning the plot of the ballet. The first United States performance took place in September 1951 in New York. The work was first performed in Budapest in 1945 under the direction of Egisto Tango.

The composer is reported to have said, "My guiding idea is—which I am conscious of ever since I found myself as a composer—the idea of the brotherhood of nations, a brotherhood in spite of war and strife. This is the idea I am trying to serve, with the best of my ability, in my music."1 Thus it would seem obvious that the theme of the Mandarin was deeply appealing to Bartók, and might explain why he was so uncompromising with regard to the scenario. This was a trying period in his life, and "... in the background of this work we can detect the great excitements of the 'debacle' of 1918 and of the subsequent months of revolution."2 It is not

---


2Ibid., p. 47.
surprising that the ballet is considered the major work of this 'crucial period' in the composer's life, and that, in spite of the public's reaction, most of his revisions concerned the stage action rather than the plot.

There is little doubt that the principal character held a strong attraction for Bartók. He is an invention of the imagination, something unreal and inaccessible to the rational mind. Few writers have been able to overcome their innate literary desires for creating all manner of symbolic references to the Mandarín. It may be significant to say that he is "...a figure of extremes, unable to compromise with 'normality' but capable of both an absolute zero of coldness and a complete, devouring concentration of passion, two states equally incomprehensible to the 'homme moyen sensuel'." However, it should be clear that any such reference was of a deeply personal nature to the composer and I should prefer, in the final analysis, to let Bartók's 'guiding idea' speak for itself.

The following is a summary of Kenyherz Lengyel's scenario as provided in the score by Boosey and Hawkes:

"In a shabby room in the slums, three tramps, bent on robbery, force a girl to lure in prospective victims from the street. A down-at-heel cavalier and a timid youth, who succumb to her attractions, are found to have thin wallets, and are thrown out. The third 'guest' is the eerie Mandarin. His impassivity frightens the girl, who tries to unfreeze him by dancing - but when he feverishly embraces her, she runs from him in terror. After a wild chase he catches her, at which

---

3Leo Black, In his Introduction to the Score (New York: Boosey and Hawkes Inc.), [ili].
point the three tramps leap from their hiding place, rob him of
everything he has, and try to smother him under a pile of cushions.
But he gets to his feet, his eyes fixed passionately on the girl.
They run him through with a sword; he is shaken, but his desire is
stronger than his wounds, and he buries himself on her. They hang
him up; but it is impossible for him to die. Only when they cut
him down, and the girl takes him into her arms, do his wounds
begin to bleed, and he dies."4

4 Ibid., [vi].
CHAPTER II

THE SELECTION OF MATERIALS

In reference to the Mandarin the composer has said that the music "...definitely does express emotional happenings - as opposed to the current objective, reasoned, etc. tendencies." This statement provides the key to understanding Bartók's selection of materials. Each section of the drama is vividly described by its musical content. Fragmented melodic materials and extremely dissonant sonorities are given expressive treatment through variation in color, texture, and rhythmic techniques. While tremendous variety is provided by Bartók's use of these particulars, the most impressive feature of the entire work is their relative economy. The large number of motivic items is based on the varied combination and development of a limited number of basic intervals which are derived from a scale pattern given at the outset. The seeming variety in harmonic development also stems from the many combinations and transpositions of these intervals. The scale pattern which serves as the generator of these materials thus provides the principal means of musical unification as well.

In contrast to this is the incredible variety of treatment through rhythmic and orchestrational means. It is through his use of

---

these items that Bartók effects the expression of those 'emotional
developments' referred to above. The result of such variety is that
the Mandarin has often been described in terms of its '
...deliberate
disorder which soon gives the impression of an orgy of sounds...strident
peals of the brass...contrasted by a very distant murmuring, almost
melting away.' While this analysis is true, it refers only to the
composer's treatment of those musical details as defined by the needs
of the scenario and can be misleading, since it overlooks the under-
lying economy of content which obtains throughout.

Of singular importance is the scale formation referred to
above. It consists of a major scale which runs to an augmented
octave - G-A-B-C-D-E-F-G. The interval structures characteristic
of this scale (P4, TT, A5/A5, and M7), are the principal determinants
of melodic and harmonic structures and are in fact, more important
than the scale itself. The term 'tonality' is obviously inapplicable
to the construction of, and relationships between, sonorities resulting
from the various combinations of these intervals. However, ostinatos
and pedal-points are ever present and seem to anchor the harmonic
structures in such a way that reference to 'tonal centers' will be
seen to be significant. No attempt is made to provide functional
relationships between these 'centers', therefore their presence is
of little importance to any formal considerations.

Rhythm and orchestration are most important in the role of
effecting the atmospheric conditions required by the dramatic action.
While 'economy' is the most significant term to use with reference to

2Serge Vorieux, Béla Bartók (London: Harvill Press, 1953),
p. 124.
melodic and harmonic materials, 'variety' is the watchword in rhythm and orchestration. Their treatment is adjusted for each change in the dramatic action - presented in a highly sectional organization consisting of two major divisions and several subdivisions. Besides creating the necessary atmosphere for the dramatic situations, the orchestration serves several other functions including character associations and contributing through various repetitions to the musical unity of the whole. Rhythmic items serve as elements of the accompaniment. At the same time, they contribute to those functions mentioned above in connection with the orchestration.

In order to comprehend fully Bartók's individual style, it is necessary to observe that no one technique is treated independently of the rest. Melody, harmony, rhythm, and orchestration are considered together in terms of their total effect. All of the elements of musical composition are combined in a complex web of relationships that 1) determine the content of the music on the one hand, and its emotional significance on the other; that 2) produce incredible variety while at the same time satisfy (through the continuous use of specific devices in various transformations and metamorphoses) the need for musical continuity (the principal formal determinant being continuous variation). It is only through an understanding of the above discussion that one can come to appreciate the genius of Bartók.

In reference to the "miraculous mandarin," Serge "oreux states that there is "no folk music," as if to say that Bartók's studies in the field of comparative musicology have no effect on his compositions.

\[\textit{Tbid.}, \textit{p. 124}.\]
unless he quotes or imitates the folk-music he so diligently collected and studied. It should be clear that nothing could be further from the truth. In this regard the composer once wrote, "The appropriate use of folk-song material is not, of course, limited to the sporadic introduction or imitation of these old melodies, or to the arbitrary thematic use of them in works of foreign or international tendencies. It is rather a matter of absorbing the means of musical expression hidden in the treasury of folk tunes, just as the most subtle possibilities of any language are assimilated. It is necessary for the composer to command this musical language so completely that it becomes the natural expression of his own musical ideas." Thus we will see in the following discussions that the identifying characteristics of Hungarian folk song and dance (i.e., the abrupt and shifting accents; the declaratory lyric line; the barbaric rhythms; and the free tonality), are at the same time obvious features of the Mandarin and of Bartók's music in general. On this basis, I have chosen to make no further reference to folk influences except in the chapter on rhythm where specific references will be seen to be significant.

The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the introduction to the ballet in order to clarify the above statements, and to facilitate the introduction of those details to be dealt with in the chapters that follow. The analysis considers each area in terms of those materials that will be of subsequent importance and in connection with the principle of 'total effect'.

---

THE INTRODUCTION

In the introduction extreme dissonance and vague tonal centers, irregular rhythms, ostinatos and pedal-points, the absence of regular phrase structure and the massing of orchestral colors combine in the rapid tempo and driving 6/8 rhythm to produce a confusion vividly suggestive of a scurrying, hectic metropolitan scene.

The second violins begin with an ostinato scale passage based on a G-major scale with an augmented octave (suggestive in part of a whole tone scale).

Ex. 1: Second Violins

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{It is from this scale that the principal melodic/harmonic materials are to be derived. The woodwind chords in measure three (see ex. 3) consist of the superposition of a tritone and perfect fourth (both obvious features of the scale formation shown below). Other intervals clearly derived from the scale are the } & m9 (m7), \text{ and its inversion, the } M7. \text{ The chromatic nature of these latter intervals is to figure prominently in the expansion and development of motivic materials.}
\end{align*} \]
The G pedal-point in the bassoons, coupled with the same pitch as tonic of the ostinato scale gives the impression of G as the tonal center to 3. While it is vague at best, it is made even more so by the presence of other pitches which, by virtue of their prominence and foreign relationships, seem determined to obscure the G in the same way as a person's voice would be buried under the rush of the city's traffic. The D♯ in the flutes (m.3), is the first of such tones - given prominence by its position and through its insistent repetition to 2 where it changes to G. At that point the third trumpet takes over its enharmonic equivalent, F♯. The trombones enter at 1 on C♯ which serves for the most part as a pedal-point as does the B in the first trumpet (2). All of these pitches continue to 5, interrupted from time to time for rhythmic effect.

The woodwind chords entering in m.3 are based on the M7 interval, subdivided to produce the superposition of conjunct TT and P4 intervals. The first chord in m.5 (also based on the M7) serves more as a punctuation in what would best be described as a rhythmic ostinato.

Ex. 3:

These intervals are then subjected to extensive development through superposition, interlocking, transposition, modification and in general a gradual piling up - an increasing of the density of the
effect as a whole - which produces incredible excitement when coupled with rhythmic development and other items to be discussed later. There is no attempt to relate the resulting harmonies to any tonal center. In fact, these chord formations seem to conflict intentionally with all attempts to establish a feeling for tonality. This style - with vague tonal centers and the development of sonorities from a selection of a limited number of carefully determined intervals - continues throughout the entire work producing a unity of harmonic content which is surprising when one remembers how closely the music is to reflect the dramatic action.

At [3] the tonal center shifts to F. It too is obscured in the same manner as that described above. The ostinato becomes less regular and more chromatic. Thirds, fifths and sixths, as well as a variety of augmented and diminished intervals are added to the increasing harmonic complexity. F and E seem to vie with one another, with the latter winning out by [4]. At [5] the tonality becomes indeterminate as the orchestra begins its gradual cadence to [6].

From the beginning the process is simply one of development of basic materials (i.e., the ostinato scale and the intervals: TT, P4, m9/m2, and M7). At [3] the ostinato becomes more chromatic, and overlappings of the intervals mentioned above have produced others which then become more prominent. This 'building-up' process produces weak impressions of tonal centers, chiefly determined by the use of pedal-points and the ostinato which persists throughout the introductory section. A measure-by-measure harmonic analysis would be pointless here because the vertical sonorities can hardly be analyzed using any conventional system. The Hindemith classifications by interval
content were found to be uninformative. The only conclusion to be drawn from their use involves a preponderance of class B chords (structures containing one or more tritones). Furthermore, many chord formations are difficult, if not impossible (according to Hindemith's system) to identify with any precision.

Modulations are similarly difficult to describe as they are more a matter of 'slipping into' a new tonal center than of movement by harmonic progression. Thus in our present discourse we have attempted only to describe the nature of prominent harmonic items through relating their interval content to the beginning ostinato scale. Even though the following chapters will be concerned with greater detail, it should be understood that the manner of constructing sonorities from these few intervals will remain the most significant explanation of harmonic procedures.

The ostinato scale passages and the insistent 6/8 rhythm propel the music forward and continue without let-up throughout the entire introduction. The lengthy repetition of a simple rhythmic pattern (coupled with the use of extremely dissonant sonorities), was a prominent means of establishing tension in the Rite of Spring, written only six years before. It is conceivable that the earlier work may have exerted some influence on Bartók as the 6/8 rhythm recurs throughout the Miraculous Mandarin to represent the three thugs, whose timely entrances occur at the climactic points of the ballet.

While these features clearly establish the meter of the introduction, a variety of rhythmic devices is employed in contrast to the rigid regularity of the 6/8 rhythm. The brass instruments play a prominent role in this by their irregular, forceful syncopations.
Ex. 4: 6\textsuperscript{t} \textsuperscript{3}, Trombones

At 5\textsuperscript{a} \textsuperscript{3}, the eighth-note accents shown in the example above become sixteenth-notes as the momentum begins to build.

Ex. 5: Trumpets

By 3b \textsuperscript{3} the \textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{4} rhythm becomes frantic as it is beamed across the bar line and shifts its position with respect to the regular metrical accents. As shown in ex. 6, the \textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{4} figure repeats its position in relation to the beat on every fourth occurrence, which results in a large pattern consisting of six beats.

Ex. 6: Trumpets

At 3a \textsuperscript{3} the horns begin a pattern which implies 3/4 meter.

Ex. 7:
and at 5a[4] the trombones begin a series of forceful glissandos. Both of these devices add to the already growing momentum and complexity of the music.

Other items more subtle in their rhythmic effect will be mentioned briefly. At 5b[4] the woodwinds (except for the first and second flutes) introduce a new figure which continues to 5] (Ex. 3:

\[ \text{Three one-measure meter changes occur: } 9/9 \text{ at } 1b[5]; 9/3 \text{ at } 4a[5]; \text{ and } 5/3 \text{ at } 5a[5]. \text{ A variety of syncopated patterns occurs without any apparent order and often without repetition. An equally large number of non-accentual rhythms appears (ties across strong beats), with a similar vagueness resulting from their irregular occurrence. These devices lie hidden for the most part within the massive orchestral textures and the propelling 6/8 rhythm. Their effect is felt in a combined sense which becomes more than obvious as one recalls the programmatic implications of the drama. Indeed, it is doubtful whether or not Bartók intended for these individual items to be heard at all, as the total effect is what the ear immediately perceives.}

Another contributing factor is the absence of regular phrase structure. In fact, the entire introduction can be conveniently divided into only eleven phrases, consisting of 10, 13, 11, 4, 5, 5, 5-8, 3,2 and 9 measures. These divisions have been made with rhythmic considerations serving as the principal determining factors.
While they may appear to be somewhat arbitrary, it is obvious that Bartók has been consistent throughout in his careful avoidance of regularity other than in the persistent $6/8$ meter.

In his orchestration the composer gives special attention to the idiomatic possibilities of the various families. The 'scurrying' ostinato is thus given to the strings (later to the woodwinds and piano), while the brass and percussion are utilized primarily for rhythmic effect and power. From the beginning (second violins alone), the procedure is simply one of adding instruments gradually and increasing their activity until an impressive climax is finally reached at [5]. This additive technique assumes primary importance in slower sections where the development of color and texture becomes the focal point. After [5], the process is reversed and the orchestra decreases to a piano level in the low strings and piano at [6]. At this point the curtain rises and the drama begins.

It remains only to mention that amidst all the confusion, Bartók is somehow able to present the basic melodic and harmonic materials to be employed during the entire work. Some rhythmic material of subsequent significance is also introduced. Specific melodic items from which character identifications or otherwise important material are to be evolved will be discussed in the chapters that follow as their importance can only be seen when compared with the motives developed from them.
CHAPTER III

FORMAL ORGANIZATION

The musical form of this work is dependent entirely upon the dramatic action. The result is a highly sectional organization which has created problems for analysis. Vincent Persichetti states: "The work lacks a well planned, over-all graphic design, although from phrase to phrase, and section to section there is the most severe logic."¹ This statement implies a comparison to abstract music in which a "well planned, over-all graphic design" is a practical necessity. To begin with, the Mandarin is not abstract music; nor is it anything but well planned.

Leo Black, in his introduction to the score, remarks that the work exhibits "a more tightly-knit musical structure than have most ballets, though Bartók did not attempt to mould his 'programme music' in absolute musical forms."² He goes on to describe the musical organization as consisting of "a series of self-sufficient structural units bound together by a limited amount of recurring thematic symbolism. Deep motivic inter-connections (e.g., between the wood-


²Leo Black, In his Introduction to the Score (New York: Boosey and Hawkes Inc.), [iii].
wind figure heard at the outset, that for the trombones after [72], and the music for horns and choir after [101] are the very stuff of musical form and make it impossible to refer to any of the music as 'purely descriptive'.

Exactly what is meant by the phrase 'purely descriptive' is difficult to say. In any event, Bartók's preference for thematic transformation and continuous variation in the treatment of melodic materials is well known. An early interest in Liszt may have been significant in this respect, but it is likely that his folk music studies were more directly influential. He recalls that "this variability, this diversity, found also in our folk music, are basic traits of our nature." Irregular phrasing, along with certain rhythmic elements and frequent pentatonic implications, lend support to the argument that folk influences are far greater in this work than heretofore recognized.

It is important to note that Mr. Black makes reference only to melodic procedures. Similar treatment with respect to the development of rhythmic and orchestral devices will be discussed at length in the following chapters. Their contributions to the development of musical unity should not be overlooked, as the repetition of important thematic items is characteristically associated with a similar repetition of instrumental settings and accompaniment patterns.

In his later works, Bartók often permits the traditional forms

---

3Ibid.

of absolute music to function as a basis for the development of freer forms. Serge Moreux suggests that the form of the orchestral-suite version is basically an allegro, followed by a slow movement (waltz) and a finale. This is rather forced and does not recognize the highly sectional structure resulting from the dramatic organization.

Mr. Black suggests a more plausible division which takes this into account. The work may thus be divided into two major parts: \( \frac{6}{12} \) to \( \frac{26}{36} \); and \( \frac{37}{72} \) (entrance of the Mandarin), to the end. The entrance of the Mandarin marks a new phase in the development of the drama and is the principal reason for the two-part division at that point.

---

**PART I**

This first division is made up of several small sections determined by the stage action. They may be listed briefly as follows:

1. \( \frac{6}{12} \) to \( \frac{13}{18} \) - Persuasion, dialogue
2. \( \frac{13}{18} \) to \( \frac{16}{19} \) - Decoy Game I (A)
3. \( \frac{16}{19} \) to \( \frac{17}{21} \) - Tramps hide
4. \( \frac{17}{21} \) to \( \frac{21}{27} \) - The old rake (B)
5. \( \frac{21}{27} \) to \( \frac{22}{33} \) - Tramps enter
6. \( \frac{22}{33} \) to \( \frac{25}{29} \) - Decoy Game II (a')
7. \( \frac{25}{29} \) to \( \frac{29}{33} \) - The young man (C)
8. \( \frac{29}{33} \) to \( \frac{31}{32} \) - Tramps enter

---

9. \( \text{3b} \ [21] \text{ to } [24] \) - Decoy Game III (A")

10. \( [24] \text{ to } [26] \) - Tramps hide

Section 1 from [6] to [13] is introductory as it serves to set the stage for the ensuing drama. It creates the atmosphere and introduces the protagonists of the first half of the ballet. Sections 3, 5, 9 and 10 are rather short and involve the activities of the three tramps. Their movements mark either a return to previous material (decoy games), or a transition to new material. It may then be proposed that the remaining sections (2, 4, 6, 7 and 9), provide the basic structure for Part I, taking the five-part rondo form as shown above (A3A'CA`). The three decoy games represent the recurring A sections. The thematic material in each is given to the clarinet. The accompaniment is based on sustained textures. Each is more extended and developed than the previous one which is indicated by the use of prime ('') marks. This development takes the form of extended chromaticism in melodic movement and additions to the accompaniment texture which increases in density in each succeeding appearance. Combined with a gradual rise in pitch level and extremely irregular rhythmic treatment, these sections produce a high level of dramatic tension. The tonality is vague, suggested only by pedal-points which recur throughout. Supporting harmonies result from the combination of individual lines.

In contrast, sections 4 and 7 provide a reduction in the level of tension, particularly through the use of more regular rhythmic and melodic styles. Ctophases and more positive harmonic techniques provide a clearer definition of tonal centers. The entrance of the old rake is marked by a full chord at [17]. The
shy young man is introduced by a plaintive oboe melody and a general thinning of the supporting textures at 23.

PART II

The second part begins with the entrance of the Mandarin at 36. It can be divided into four long sections again determined by the dramatic action:

1. 36 to 41 - Dialogue
2. 41 to 59 - Waltz
3. 59 to 76 - Chase
4. 76 to the end - Death of the Mandarin

They are more independent and do not conveniently combine as in Part I. They are linked together basically through the recurrence of motives from one section to another.

The first of these, a descending minor third, is introduced at 36 by the brass, and is associated with the Mandarin throughout the remainder of the work. The Mandarin is also characterized by a tritone-plus-fourth chord which appears 4a 36 (also in the brass). The remainder of this section involves a brief dialogue between the girl and the Mandarin (to 41). The music for these 32 measures (6a 36 to 41) is built over the minor third as a pedal-point. A third motive (of secondary importance), consisting of a series of three chromatic tones, is introduced at 39 in the flute.

The second section (41 to 59), is devoted to a seductive waltz by the young girl which grows gradually in intensity. At first she is hesitant (41 to 5a 44). The music of this segment involves much rubato treatment and includes frequent references to
all three motives established in the previous section. This segment may be considered introductory as the opening motive of the waltz does not appear until $4a[44]$. The use of the descending minor third interval firmly links this section with the preceding one. Between the initial statement and its return at $4b[47]$ and at $4b[56]$, the music centers around the development of the minor third both melodically and harmonically. References to the dialogue segment are frequent. The series of three chromatic tones is especially conspicuous at $4a[49]$ (French horns), $50$ (clarinet), and $51$ (violins), and may well be the generator of more extended chromatic passages such as occur before $54$ in the woodwinds. Other treatment includes octave displacement of one or more tones (such as in the second clarinet at $1b[54]$), and even some use of augmentation as in the French horn after $55$ (see Chapter IV). The tritone-plus-fourth chord does not often appear in isolation (as at $4a[49]$ in the French horn, and at $51$ in the first violins). If at all present, it usually makes up only a part of more complex structures. In these its use as a character reference is obscured and is of little value as a unifying element except in a most subtle way.

The chase scene ($55$ to $76$), builds on the excitement produced by the preceding section. The tension continues to rise with each successive entry of the principal theme beginning at $42$ in the viola. The form takes a loose sort of incipient ternary design with parts B and the return of A each shorter than the first by at least one-half. The first five measures at $59$ consist of string tremolos and passage work in the woodwinds in imitation of the trembling excitement of the Mandarin as he embraces the girl. From
6a [59] to [62], the girl fights with the Mandarin in an attempt to break away. The melodic activity is given to the trombones and anticipates the principal theme which begins the A section at [62]. The next 62 measures are built over a pedal-point of full orchestral chords in which the tritone-plus-fourth chord appears in varied forms (e.g., P5 plus TT in the lower strings). The viola melody at [62] soon gives way to the violins at [64] as the excitement begins to build again. The minor third appears 3a [65] in the strings along with the three chromatic tones as a glissando on the trombones. The theme shifts to the woodwinds at [66] as the brass become more forceful. A harmonization of the theme in tritones (at [68]) combined with its brief appearance in the first trumpet pushes the tension to extremes. The tension is relaxed somewhat at [69] as the pedal-point is finally dropped.

At [71] the Mandarin stumbles, but quickly resumes the chase. The B section now begins as the previous theme is left in favor of a development of the material of the Mandarin's entrance at [36]. The trombones assume the principal thematic material which includes the tritone-plus-fourth chord, and further develop the activity begun at 4a [36]. The minor third is outlined in the woodwinds (filled out by chromatic tones), and presented as glissandos by the third trombone.

The A section returns with the original theme ([62]) at [74]. The brass continue the minor third harmonically as they did at 6a [36]. This leads to the entrance of the three tramps at [76] and the beginning of the final stages of the drama.

The entrance of the three tramps is signaled by a return to
the 6/8 rhythm which characterizes them throughout the ballet. The remainder of the section exhibits no clearly definable form as it is devoted entirely to describing the dramatic activity. Its relation to previous sections is established through references to those motives which appeared at the beginning of Part II, and to earlier material as well (e.g., the 6/8 rhythm).

The section includes the following divisions on the basis of the dramatic action:

1. [75] to [79] - the tramps appear from their hiding place and rob the Mandarin of his jewelry and money

2. [79] to [84] - they try to kill him by smothering him beneath a pile of pillows

3. [84] to [92] - the Mandarin revives

4. [92] to [99] - they stab him with an old sword

5. [99] to [101] - they hang him from a lamp hook

6. [101] to [104] - the Mandarin persists

7. [104] to [110] - the Mandarin embraces the girl

8. [110] to the end - the Mandarin dies

The minor third interval is used extensively throughout this section, often filled in by chromatic passing tones; e.g., cello at [92]; French horn at [95]; before [96] in the French horn and trombone; and at several other spots, the last time being three measures before the end. It takes on special meaning from [101] to [104]. As the Mandarin looks longingly at the girl, the falling third is given to a chorus whose only appearance is in this section.

The effect - the Mandarin's longing and the pain from his fatal wounds is immediate and startling in its realism. The tritone-plus-fourth
chord is built into may of the harmonies, making its final appearance in the brass at [110]. The third motive (three chromatic tones) is often combined with the minor third as a melodic filler. The 3/4 section at 43(107) recalls the waltz from section two of Part II.

Other items refer to material in Part I. The first of these is the 6/3 rhythm at [76] which has represented the three thugs throughout. It returns at la[37] where its treatment recalls the introduction to the ballet. The trombone melody at [73] resembles their activity at [12].

It must also be remembered that the melodic and harmonic materials of Part II are built from the same set of primary intervals as Part I. While variety is the watchword in the treatment of these intervals, their consistent application marks the most important unifying element in the ballet. The most obvious example is the tritone-plus-fourth chord which first appears in measure three of the introduction, and occurs for the last time at [110] in the Mandarin's death scene. The usage of these intervals recalls the principal formal technique - continuous variation. Regardless of its association with the folk music which so inspired the composer, the technique remains as much a practical necessity for this work as was sonata-allegro form to a Mozart symphony. Continuous variation is the only procedure which could serve to unify such a highly sectional work. Its absence would have meant chaos.

The form of the ballet is summarized in Column I of the Appendix.
CHAPTER IV

MELODIC CONSTRUCTION

The technique of thematic variation and transformation can be found in most, if not all of Bartók's music, and is to be considered one of his most important identifying characteristics. Thematic items are arrived at through the combination or expansion of brief motivic structures that recur throughout the work. Their development typically becomes chromatic and limited in range. The extensive use of fragmentation characterizes their rhythmic treatment. Such usage often serves to identify the motives which make up the various melodic lines (listed at the end of this chapter).

The most important melodic interval is the m2 which appears in almost all of the examples. The $\overrightarrow{\text{4}}$ rhythm is also a prominent member of motive structures and serves as an important means of tracing their development. Although the figure introduced by the woodwinds at $5b\ [\text{4}]$ (see ex. 2), is partially obscured by the massive orchestral textures, it does serve to introduce the $\overrightarrow{\text{4}}$ pattern. It appears throughout the work in various transformations (discussed in Chapter VI), and is shown in the examples by a horizontal bracket. This is the most important motive of Part I and can be clearly traced through examples 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 15 and 19.

The first measure of ex. 3 shows the motive inverted and the
intervals contracting. Its fragmented setting suggests a slower pace as regards the stage action. As the latter picks up at 8, the motive becomes more regular in its metric setting. The repetition of the motive (exact in exs. 2 and 4, modified in ex. 3), is characteristic of most of the thematic structures. Exact or modified repetition and sequential treatment of motives play an important role in the melodic construction of all of Bartók's music.

The three decoy games (exs. 6, 15 and 19) make considerable use of the ascending skip, half-step interval series. In measure four of ex. 6, this series is extended by the addition of another skip-plus-half-step movement which acts as though the motive has simply been piled on top of itself, the connection being made by elision.

![Musical notation](image_url)

In measure six of ex. 6, the motive is modified by reversing the rhythmic pattern and is then extended by additional chromatic movement. In measure two of ex. 15, the motive is expanded to form a six-note group consisting of the ascending interval series (skip, half-step), followed by its inversion. A similar variant occurs in ex. 19, measure two, which involves both a change of direction (up-down), and a reverse of the order of intervals (half-step, skip). These examples also show Bartók's fondness for writing a motive followed immediately with the same motive in an altered version.

While these examples are concerned with variation in the
interval series, other examples are clearly involved only with the figure (e.g., m.1, ex. 5; m.2, ex. 10; ex. 13; ex. 22; ex. 25).

The principal motive of Part II is a descending minor third which is associated with the Mandarin. Although it is not prominent in Part I as a single interval of thematic importance, its appearance is subtly prefigured by the frequent use of descending thirds at the ends of phrases (e.g., ex. 4; ex. 5; ex. 10; and in m.1 of ex. 16). Later in Part II, the third is filled in by chromatic passing tones which may be thought of as an extension of the three-note groupings found in exs. 3, 4, and 5. The minor-third also appears in exs. 8 (filled in by trombone glissandos), and 12 (filled in by chromatic tones).

The Mandarin's theme (ex. 20) is the only one which makes use of the pentatonic implications of the beginning scale pattern. As if to make the association doubly clear, Bartók harmonizes the theme with two lines of parallel tritones. The descending minor third and the rhythm are also built into the line.

Motivic variation thus remains the principal determinant of thematic structures. The most important developmental techniques are inversion, interval contraction or expansion, melodic extension by elision of varied patterns, retrograde, rhythmic variation, and change of direction within the motive pattern. The combination of these varied forms may result in both melodies of limited range and small-interval relationships (e.g., exs. 4, 7, 8, 12, 20, etc.), and melodies with opposite characteristics (e.g., exs. 4, 6, 9, 11, etc.).

Special effects, such as glissandos, muting and harmonics
occur frequently. Although they are most important for their atmospheric qualities, they may also assume thematic importance, as in ex. 8. The trombone glissandos fill in the minor-third interval which is similar to the chromatic movement in ex. 12 and preview the entrance of the Mandarin at [30]. The asterisks (*) in ex. 35 indicate the use of quarter-tones which are also involved with chromatic movement filling in the minor-third interval.

Although folk melodies are neither quoted nor imitated, some melodic techniques suggest their influence. Folk melodies make much use of repeated notes and a typically narrow range. They are frequently characterized by motives based on a single pitch that stands as a focal point around which the melody revolves. These features are prominent in the example which follows and may be found in many of the melodies on the following pages.

PALOC MAR'TOGATOS (Dipping or Squating Dance)

---

THEMATIC LISTING

Ex. 1: m. 3 (flute)

Ex. 2: 5b \( \text{[note]} \) (piccolo)

Ex. 3: 7a \( \text{[note]} \) (viola)

Ex. 4: \( \text{[note]} \) (violin I)
Ex. 5: 11 (violin I)

Ex. 6: 13 (clarinet)

Ex. 7: 16 (trombone)

Ex. 8: 2a 17 (trombone)

Ex. 9: 7a 17 (viola)
Ex. 10: 12 (English horn)

Ex. 11: 5b 20 (oboe)

Ex. 12: 20 (cello)

Ex. 13: 5b 21 (violin I)

Ex. 14: 21 (trombone)

Ex. 15: 3a 22 (clarinet)
Ex. 22: 2a | (flute)

Ex. 23: 5a | (violin I)

Ex. 24: 3b | (violin I)

Ex. 25: | (clarinet)

Ex. 26: | (trumpet)

Ex. 27: | (violin I)
Ex. 28: 4b 56 (violin I)

Ex. 29: 4b 60 (trombone)

Ex. 30: 62 (viola)

Ex. 31: 71 (trombone)

Ex. 32: 76 (trombone)
Ex. 33: 3a [79] (trombone)

Ex. 34: [84] (cello)

Ex. 35: 4b [88] (violin I)

Ex. 36: 1a [101] (viola)

Ex. 37: [104] (violin I)
CHAPTER V

HARMONIC MATERIALS

The harmonic structures of the entire ballet are based upon those intervals characteristic of the scale passage quoted in the preceding chapters (G-A-B-C-D-E-F♯-G♯). Most important is a three-note chord composed of superimposed tritone and perfect fourth (provided by the scale from its two tetrachord extremities). It is introduced in the third measure of the piece and reappears throughout, particularly in Part II where it is associated with the Mandarin. The outer notes of the scale provide the minor second (minor ninth), and its inversion, the major seventh. These four intervals form the basis of the harmonic development of the entire ballet. Much of the time the building of harmonies involves simply combining these intervals in various ways. Of all the combinations the tritone receives the most consistent use and may be considered the principal component of the harmonies throughout.

These intervals also serve to generate others through a variety of methods. One technique involves separating a tone in the interval by octave transposition(s) and filling in the resultant space (e.g., 1a[12] in the French horn, see ex. 1a). Here the outer notes provide the tritone. Harmonic fillers produce a m7, m3, and P4 in adjacent tones. Through their scalar derivation and structural
importance in such procedures as this, the P4, P7, m2 and M7 will subsequently be referred to as primary intervals. All others resulting from the varied division, combination or overlapping of these will be termed secondary intervals. Of these, the m7, M2, M3, and m3 occur most often. The m3 achieves thematic importance in Part II.

With this background we are now in a position to examine Bartók's procedures for the construction of harmonic combinations in more detail.

"Construction by division" refers to the procedure described above. It involves one or more octave transpositions of tones forming primary intervals. The space between is then filled in to form both secondary and often additional primary intervals as well. Of the four primary intervals, the tritone and major seventh are most often used for this process. The following examples represent only a small sampling of the possible results of such treatment.

Ex. 1: Outer notes form a tritone.

a) 1a[12] (horns) b) 8a[27] (strings) c) 2a[41]
Ex. 2: Outer notes form a major seventh.

a) 17 (full orch.)  

Ex. 3: Outer notes form a minor second.

a) 62 (harp)  

Ex. 4: Outer notes form a perfect fourth.

a) 5 (full orch.)  

"Construction by combination" refers to the piling up of primary intervals in a conjunct arrangement which avoids secondary intervals between adjacent tones. Again, the tritone is the most consistent member. Typical examples include:
Ex. 5:  a) $4a \frac{5}{3}$  b) $\frac{49}{41}$ (horns)  c) $1a \frac{71}{71}$ (trbn.)

"Construction by overlapping" again involves the use of primary intervals. Although overlapping usually produce secondary intervals as well, the use of a single interval type (e.g., 3 tritones at $\frac{41}{41}$; and 2 minor ninths at $\frac{34}{34}$), shows clearly the derivation of the structure as a whole.

Ex. 6:  a) $\frac{41}{41}$ (strings)  b) $\frac{34}{34}$ (brass)

Different types may also be used for overlapping as at $3a \frac{55}{55}$.

Ex. 7:  $3a \frac{55}{55}$
Obviously, there is no evidence to support that Bartok had these specific procedures in mind. However, the foregoing do illustrate the important position held by primary intervals as members of vertical structures. The application of these procedures may thus be informative, regardless of questions concerning actual methods of construction.

The previous types by no means exhaust the possible methods for harmonic construction. They are given special consideration due to their relationship to the progenitor scale pattern and their consistent application throughout the ballet. A variety of additional procedures for chord construction may also be found. In these, secondary intervals often take on greater significance, particularly when the tempo is more lively and rhythmic development is of principal interest. It is rare, however, that a vertical combination will not include at least one of the primary intervals.

Combinations such as in the strings at [16] are common. Here a tritone is flanked by major and minor thirds. The outer notes form the secondary interval of a major third.

Ex. 8: [16]

\[\text{Diagram of example 8}\]

Similar combinations include:
Ex. 9: a) \( \text{ab} \begin{bmatrix} 25 \end{bmatrix} \)  

b) \( \text{4b} \begin{bmatrix} 56 \end{bmatrix} \)

Primary intervals may also provide the extremities of tone clusters such as in the harp at 4a \( \begin{bmatrix} 93 \end{bmatrix} \).

Ex. 10: 4a \( \begin{bmatrix} 93 \end{bmatrix} \)

The treatment of these harmonies varies depending upon melodic and rhythmic characteristics. As the linear motion becomes more chromatic and/or rhythmically regular, the accompanying harmonies take the form of ostinatos or simple repeated chords. These structures are usually based on the primary intervals (as in the section from 3b \( \begin{bmatrix} 62 \end{bmatrix} \) to \( \begin{bmatrix} 59 \end{bmatrix} \)). When the tempo is slow and rubato treatment employed, the melodic lines become more fragmented. The harmonic function in these sections sometimes becomes percussive, with chord placement coinciding with prominent melody tones (set off by rhythmic stress, directional change, pitch range, duration, etc.). In these sections (e.g., 7 and 10), secondary intervals appear more often as a characteristic means of harmonic development. As the excitement or level of tension increases, all elements are subject to a corresponding development. In the waltz (41 to \( \begin{bmatrix} 59 \end{bmatrix} \)),
the harmonic rhythm is gradually speeded up and the density of the chord structures increased. At the same time, scale passages become more chromatic and the rhythmic motion more frantic. The incidence of secondary intervals increases gradually as the section progresses, and the description of tonal centers becomes more and more difficult.

Non-harmonic tones are difficult to define in this style. Vertical combinations are often so complex that identification on the basis of chord tone versus non-chord tone is practically impossible. Furthermore, the unusual construction and irregular application of harmonies makes it difficult to hear melody tones as belonging or not belonging to their supporting structures. On the other hand, rhythmic placement often implies a non-harmonic function and thus becomes the principal determinant. In many cases, even this consideration does not make it sufficiently clear which tones may be considered as non-harmonic. Unaccented passing and auxiliary tones, and appoggiaturas appear to be the most obvious and frequent varieties. Typical examples of these types include the following (structural definitions will be assumed):

Ex. 11: Unaccented passing tones.

a) \[ 3 \] (violin)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(sheet music) }
\end{align*}
\]

b) \[ 20 \] (cello)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(sheet music) }
\end{align*}
\]
c) 2a [39] (flute)

Ex. 12: Auxiliary tones.

a) 7a [17] (cello)

b) 2a [15] (English horn)

c) 4a [20] (violin)

Ex. 13: Appoggiaturas.

a) 2b [9] (violin)

b) 4b [13] (viola)
Although other types may be found (e.g., escape tone in the oboe line at $3a^{[40]}$), their selection may often seem more arbitrary than would make further references clear and informative.

From the preceding discussion, it is obvious that tonality is no longer dependent on chord function or progression. This does not mean to imply, however, that tonality is not present. In 1923, Bartók remarked, "It is true, for a while I came close to a kind of twelve-tone music. But even at that time, an unmistakable characteristic of my compositions was that they were built on a definite tonal basis."\(^1\) Just how definite remains a question of individual response as the 'tonal basis' of the *Mandarin* is actually more a result than a procedure. Tonal centers are established primarily by emphasizing a tone through its treatment as a pedalpoint or as an accented member of an ostinato pattern. These represent the most positive techniques for establishing and maintaining tonal centers, particularly through lengthy sections. They are used extensively throughout the opening stages of the drama, becoming less frequent as the tension builds in Part II. In their absence, the feeling for tonality becomes increasingly vague. Tonal centers may then be defined by the tone or tones which appear most often in a section, and the roots of scale passages and other figurations. These centers shift frequently and abruptly from one to another and

are rarely maintained for any great length of time. Their use is reserved for Part II where, combined with irregular rhythmic treatment and continually changing color combinations, tremendous tension is built up. The one which recurs most often in a section may be considered its tonal center.

Formal relationships as in section 1 of Part I ([6] to [13]), are rare. At [6], A♭ asserts itself as the tonal center through its appearance as the lowest member of pedal-points in the strings. The tonality shifts to C♯ at 1b [7] (also treated as a pedal-point). At [10] the cello line begins to develop as part of an ostinato pattern. His melodic movement revolves around E which soon gives way to C at 3b [11]. The tonal centers continue to shift abruptly through the remainder of this section (dialogue between the girl and the three tramps), moving from C at [11], to C♯ at 3b [12], and to G♯ at [12]. The feeling for tonality is here again dependent upon long tones and pedal-points. A likely choice as the principal tonal center of the section would be A♭, which begins the section and returns near its end. The final measures on C♯ may be considered a transition to section 2 which is built entirely on a C♯ pedal-point. In this case, the selection of A♭ has been primarily based on formal considerations - ternary design being implied. Similar treatment may be found in sections 4 (C♯), and 6 (G), of Part I, and section 2 (G), of Part II.

Another technique involves a kind of polytonal treatment in which tonal centers are piled on top of one another. At [69], the melodic movement in strings and upper woodwinds seems firmly rooted to F, while the accompanying harmonies are built on G♭. This half-
step relationship assumes thematic status through its association with the 6/3 meter which characterizes the three tramps. At \([21]\), \(E\) and \(F\) vie for recognition as the tonal center (similarly \(C\) and \(D^b\) at \([22]\); and \(B\) against \(C\) at \([76]\)).

The tonal center(s) for each of the sections are included in the Appendix.
CHAPTER VI

RHYTHMIC PRACTICES

The most striking aspect of Bartók's music has always been rhythmic vitality. The Mandarin is certainly no exception. The composer employs an incredible variety of rhythmic devices including changing meters, asymmetrical metric divisions, non-accentual rhythms, shifted accents and ostinatos, to mention a few of the more obvious.

Much of Bartók's rhythm resembles that of Hungarian peasant songs which, to begin with, do not maintain a definite, regular meter throughout. The rhythms are irregular and characterized by abrupt, shifting accents. Although these comparisons would seem to be somewhat coincidental, they gain significance through supporting details.

While examining Bartók's own discussion of folk-music, specific items were noted. The composer establishes that there are three separate styles determined by historical developments. First is the "Ancient style" characterized by the presence of parlando-rubato rhythms. These consist of the free alternation of note values to suit agogic needs. This alternation involves the grouping of note values into typical patterns, the most frequent including:

Although these patterns are not specifically used in the Mandarin, the idea of parlando-rubato frequently appears in the form of repeated patterns that change their relation to the main beats in succeeding measures.

Ex. 1: 4b

or 2) different, though related patterns insucceeding measures.

Ex. 2: 16

Although folk compositions of the "second style" group contain no unity of style, the rhythm is particularly frequent. The relationship of two short notes followed by a longer value will be seen to be the most significant single rhythmic unit in the Mandarin.

In the "neo-Hungarian style" (a development of the second half of the nineteenth century) alternating meters such as 4/4 + 2/4 + 3/4 or 3/4 + 2/4 + 3/4 occur. Similar practices occur sporadically throughout the ballet.

All of these items are given significant treatment in the Mandarin, and, together with a countless number of devices, serve several functions. These include: factors in the construction of
Ex. 1: 2b [33]
at 5b [21].

In several sections (16 to 17; 21 to 22; and 29 to 3b [31]) the activity is almost entirely rhythmic. Ostinatos again provide the foundation for these sections, while secondary parts may take several forms. At 16, the repeated string rhythms clearly show the metric organization of the section. The remaining parts provide a marked contrast through syncopated patterns which avoid exact repetitions (see ex. 2). Similarly, the 6/8 rhythm at 21 and 29 is combined with a variety of contrasting motion including repeated chords, pedal-points, and chromatic passages in quintuplet groupings. The rhythmic complexity of these sections results in the selection of brass instruments for the performance of the principal melodic lines.

The most unusual orchestral treatment occurs in the three decoy games and in the final portion of the drama (76 to the end). It is in these sections that color and texture play the most important role. Special effects such as glissandos, col legno, pizzicato, muting (brass, woodwinds and strings), occur throughout these passages for their atmospheric qualities. The three keyboard instruments and harp are also most prominent in these sections. While sustained tones are distributed among all of the parts, the remaining activity involves the idiomatic treatment of woodwinds and strings on scale passages and rapid figurations while the brass are reserved for more dramatic utterances. The individual lines are lost in a maze of constantly-changing color combinations whose sole purpose is to create the atmosphere required by the various dramatic situations. At 59, the feverish trembling of the Mandarin is vividly suggested through
tremolo strings, and chromatic passages and tremolos in the woodwinds. The tension is further heightened by the descending minor-third motive filled in by glissandos on the trombone. The use of massive effects is balanced by a frequent thinning of the texture. At 97 the tramps attempt to kill the Mandarin by hanging him from a lamp hook. The most prominent device in this section is the appearance of long glissandos in the cello, piano, timpani and trombones. As the lamp falls to the floor, the Mandarin's body begins to glow with a greenish-blue light. Here (101), the chorus enters with the descending minor-third motive against staccato chords for flutes, celesta, harp, piano and strings. Although the texture is now somewhat transparent, it is no less effective than the large resources employed at 36.

The importance of the scenario in determining orchestral choices cannot be overemphasized. Where important thematic elements are present, the accompanying textures are carefully balanced to maintain clarity and distinctness in the primary linear motion. When the thematic items become fragmented and employ rubato treatment, supporting textures become more important, often obscuring the principal melodic line. Even in these cases, a specific item is emphasized for its particular effect (such as the prominence of glissandos at 97). Therefore, the differentiation of foreground and background is an ever-present concern, the latter depending on the setting of important thematic or coloristic items. The result is that the orchestration becomes an important part of the compositional process. Instrumentation is an important factor in determining thematic and accompanying materials, and cannot be considered
an element "divorced from the basic compositional techniques."
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

In a conversation with Ralph Martino, conductor of the Chicago Symphony, Bartók admitted that "the work was not so precise", but stated firmly that it had to be so because of the nature of the scenario. The emotionally-charged character of the music is impossible to ignore. To begin with, we have shown that the musical form depends entirely on the sectional structure of the drama. Traditional forms exist not as pre-determined abstract structures, but more as a chance result of the stage action.

Within each of the sections, melody, harmony, rhythm and orchestration combine on an equal footing. Although specific items may assume primary importance in one or more sections, no single element is given a consistently subordinate role. The actual treatment of these devices depends to a great extent upon tempo considerations. When the tempo is fast, the treatment is less complicated and more direct. The rhythmic development becomes more regular through the use of ostinato patterns and repeated choruses based on consistent metric organization. The ostinatos also provide the clearest references to tonal centers. Vertical structures are, on the whole, less dense and rely heavily on the use of primary intervals. Thematic structures are also more clearly defined.
When the tempo is slower, extensive rubato treatment is introduced. The result is irregular rhythmic motion and jagged melodic phraseology. Chord structures become more complex, often resulting from combinations of individual lines. Secondary intervals assume greater importance in harmonic development. The accompaniment generally increases in density, and greater attention is directed to the expressive treatment of color and texture.

Tremendous variety exists between these two broad extremes. Close analysis reveals that much of this is due to variation in treatment rather than variety of content. The basic materials are surprisingly few in number. The four primary intervals serve as the generators of the harmonic content of the entire work and are also influential in the construction and development of melodic patterns. The themes are often further related by the combination or expansion of motives heard previously. This results in the technique of continuous variation so characteristic of Bartók's music.

Rhythm and orchestration contain the greatest variety of content, employing a tremendous number of devices. However, rhythmic and orchestral techniques are selectively employed on the basis of their dramatic or atmospheric qualities. Rapid tempos, for example, have been seen to require a more regular metric organization. It is in these sections that ostinato patterns, shifted accents, asymmetrical metric divisions, non-accentual rhythms, repeated notes and chords, etc., are most conspicuous and appear most often. In general, a different set of devices is employed for sections in slower tempos. These include: extreme fragmentation of melodic material; sustained accompaniment in the form of pedal-points, tremolos and trills;
unusual meters; changing meters; and extensive rubato treatment. In
either case, these devices are not heard individually. The selection
of any technique is dependent on its ability to combine with the
prevailing motion in such a way as not to detract from the general
mood. The total impression, in-so-far as it is able to produce the
atmosphere demanded by the scenario, is of prime importance.

Orchestral devices are determined by a similar process,
tempo again playing an important role. Thus, emphasis on color and
texture is greatest in slower sections. The assigning of instruments
to sustained parts, the frequent changing from one color combination
to another, and the increasing of textural density by addition of
instruments, or shifts of emphasis through changing doublings, provide
the basis for orchestral development in these sections. When the
motion becomes more regular, the differentiation of foreground and
background takes a position of primacy. Linear clarity and distinct-
ness become the principal concerns while considerations of color and
texture play a subordinate role.

**COMPARISONS WITH LATER WORKS**

Comparisons between the Mandarin and later works by Bartók offer
striking similarities as well as differences.

Writing about Bartók's Fifth String Quartet, Burdette Green
remarks: "the principal means of defining the tonal centers are
through: 1) the tones which recur most frequently in a given passage;
2) the sustained tones and pedal-points; 3) the roots of harmonically
strong intervals and scale figures; and 4) the harmonic implications
of ostinatos.\textsuperscript{1} As has been shown, the same procedures are employed in the Mandarin. Dr. Green also describes the importance of motive structures as "the main source of form"\textsuperscript{2} in the Fifth Quartet.

Again, the same applies to the Mandarin. Serge Yoreux mentions Bartók's use of certain "favorite intervals"\textsuperscript{3} (including the A\textsuperscript{4}, m3 and m2), which recalls the four primary intervals of the Mandarin.

Bartók bases much of his music on modes or scales of his own invention. A favorite type which combines modal and tonal tetra-chords is the scale C-D-E-F\textsuperscript{♯}G-A-B\textsuperscript{♭}C. The first tetra-chord fills in a tritone while the second outlines a perfect fourth. This is, of course, simply the opposite of the scale pattern used in the Mandarin.

It has been mentioned that Bartók's studies in the field of ethno-musicology were of singular importance in the development of his individual style. The result was not a literal borrowing of folk melodies, but rather a gradual process of assimilating their basic characteristics. In this regard, Halsey Stevens remarks, "...the last four Quartets, the Concerto for Orchestra, the Second Violin Concerto, and most of the other works after 1920 are manifestations of the folk idiom now entirely assimilated and become an integral and essential part of the composer's vocabulary."

\textsuperscript{1}Barrette Lamar Green, "A Comprehensive, Analytical Study of Béla Bartók's Fifth String Quartet" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Music, the Ohio State University, 1953), p.65.

\textsuperscript{2}\textsc{Ibid.}, p.75.


served as a testing ground for this integration of folk idioms. Abrupt and shifting accents, declamatory melodic lines, barbaric rhythms, and free tonality are important elements of Hungarian folk-song. It should be apparent that these are at the same time the identifying characteristics of the Mandarin. Relationships between specific rhythmic items were pointed out in Chapter VI.

At the same time, there are important differences between the Mandarin and later works. To begin with, the composer is reported to have said: "With maturity, it seems to me, comes the wish to economize — to be more simple."5 This simplicity proceeded in the direction of "clear-cut thematic and harmonic materials and the well balanced integration of such materials into concise and appropriate form."6 Another result was that after about 1926, his works made increased use of contrapuntal texture. Consequently, supporting orchestral textures are usually rather thin. The principal consideration becomes the maintenance of linear clarity (e.g., the Concerto for Orchestra). It is not surprising that, in the absence of counterpoint, the composer has often chosen thick, massive textures in the Mandarin. The excessive use of counterpoint also results in a corresponding decrease in chromaticism which helps to clarify the harmonic content.

Other differences relate to the types of compositions Bartók wrote after 1920. His stage works had met with so many difficulties

---


that Bartók never again wrote for the theater. He returned to writing keyboard and vocal music primarily, and did not even attempt orchestral works except on commission. It is indeed unfortunate that such conditions were forced upon him. As Halsey Stevens puts it: "Had the theater shown more interest in Bartók, and had his three stage works not been pursued by misfortune, he might have greatly enriched the repertoire of opera and ballet."  

BIBLIOGRAPHY


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Stage Action</th>
<th>Total Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.) 6 to 13</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>C; E at 13; F at 14; in 1.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>A 3 at 3; E at 11; in 1.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C at 14; G# at 14; F at 14;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C# at 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) 13 to 16</td>
<td>Decoy I</td>
<td>C# at 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) 16 to 17</td>
<td>Tramps hide</td>
<td>G/F at 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) 17 to 21</td>
<td>The old Pake</td>
<td>C at 14; A at 11; F at 14;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C# at 12; G at 12;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) 21 to 22</td>
<td>Tramps enter</td>
<td>E/F at 22; F at 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) 22 to 25</td>
<td>Decoy II</td>
<td>E at 22; in 1.; E at 25;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) 25 to 29</td>
<td>Young man</td>
<td>shifting; C at 26; A at 25;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C# at 26; C at 29;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) 29 to 33</td>
<td>Tramps enter</td>
<td>C/D at 29; D at 33;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) 33 to 34</td>
<td>Decoy III</td>
<td>G# at 33; shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) 34 to 36</td>
<td>Tramps hide</td>
<td>G/C at 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.) 34 to 37</td>
<td>Mandarin enters</td>
<td>A at 34; F at 7; B at 37;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 to 41</td>
<td>Hesitation</td>
<td>C# at 37;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) 41 to 59</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>B at 41; shifting;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G at 44; shifting; E at 47;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shifting; C at 41;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B at 50; G at 45;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) 59 to 63</td>
<td>Embrace</td>
<td>E at 59;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 to 63</td>
<td>Chace</td>
<td>G# at 59; F/G at 63;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>Stumbles, chase</td>
<td>A at 21; C# at 22;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) 24 to 28</td>
<td>Fight</td>
<td>F# at 23;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 to 28</td>
<td>Tramps rob</td>
<td>C at 28;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 to 32</td>
<td>Snother</td>
<td>C# at 28;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 to 37</td>
<td>Mandarin revive</td>
<td>in 1.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 to 39</td>
<td>Stabbing</td>
<td>B# at 18; E at 18;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 to 42</td>
<td></td>
<td>A at 27; 3b at 42;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 to 42</td>
<td></td>
<td>F# at 42;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 to 101</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>A at 94; shifting;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 104</td>
<td>Mandarin persists</td>
<td>C# at 97; B at 97;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104 to 110</td>
<td>Final embrace</td>
<td>shifting; G# at 108;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 -</td>
<td>Mandarin dies</td>
<td>G# at 110; F at 114;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>