BARTÓK'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO PIANO PEDAGOGY: HIS EDITION OF BACH'S WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER AND IMPRESSIONS OF FORMER STUDENTS

DOCUMENT

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To my beloved husband, Jyh-Cheng Yu and my parents
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The exploration of diversified methods in piano pedagogy has become increasingly important in recent years. A great number of pedagogues such as Kochevitsky and Sándor established their own teaching theories and developed various training methodologies of piano pedagogy based on their experience. Others (Cooke, Mach) devoted themselves to the compilation of the performance experience from interviewing the top concert pianists. However, apart from the above approaches, Béla Bartók, an internationally known composer, pianist, and pedagogue, had his unique expression of teaching.

Bartók maintained his dual profession as a piano teacher and concert pianist for nearly 40 years. He seldom talked about the technical details in his teaching, neither did he form any theory for his performance. “I never created new theories in advance, I hated such ideas” (Gillies, 1991, p. 225). He even mentioned that piano teaching was not his best interest comparing with his other talents. Nevertheless, numbers of Bartók’s students became active concert pianists with international fame. His piano works, such as
the *Mikrokosmos*, are full of remarkable teaching idioms. Furthermore, Bartók’s editions of the keyboard repertoire are highly regarded as teaching requisitions. His contribution to piano pedagogy is almost second to none. “Bartók’s greatest influence today is not as a composer but rather as a piano pedagogue” (Crow, 1976, p. 11).

**Bartók’s Influences On Piano Pedagogy**

Piano teaching was Bartók’s first and the last profession during his career. He was appointed as piano professor at the Liszt Academy of Music right after the end of his student life. He even turned down a lucrative position of teaching composition offered by the Curtis Institute of Music at his most difficult time in the United States during the World War II. However, he still taught private piano lessons and played concerts with his second wife until his death in 1945.

Numbers of Bartók’s students, including Ernő Balogh, György Sándor, and Storm Bull, became not only active concert pianists but also distinguished pedagogues. Ernő Balogh was one of Bartók’s most outstanding students at the Budapest Academy of Music. He mentioned that “All of his students admired and loved him for his genius, for his profound knowledge of every phrase in music, for his gentle manners, for his unfailing logic, for his convincing explanation of every detail” (Balogh, 1956, p. 45).
His phenomenal musical ideas and detailed technical training were embodied in his piano works. In his last American radio interview, Bartók mentioned that “when the Suite, Op. 14 was composed, I had in mind the refining of piano technique into a more transparent style, more of bone and music, opposed to the heavy chordal style of the late romantic period, that is, unessential ornaments like broken chords and other figures are omitted, and it is a more simple style” (Crow, 1976, p. 138).

Bartók loved children. “He regarded them as the raw material from which a finer humanity could be shaped” (Gillies, 1991, p. 26). His collections of 85 pieces, For Children and Ten Easy Piano Pieces, were designed with the pedagogical intention to provide young pianists with easy contemporary pieces. “I wrote them to acquaint the piano-studying children with the simple and non-romantic beauties of folk music” (Bartók, 1976, p. 427).

Bartók established a Bartók-Reschofsky Piano Method (Zongora Iskola) for beginners in 1913. Assisted by a junior colleague, Alexander Reschofsky, Bartók wrote these 18 pieces and a five-page guide for piano teaching. His approach to beginners is opposite that found in modern methods such as those by Suzuki and Pace. In his method and also the first part of the Mikrokosmos, he attempts to develop reading ability earlier than playing ability. Singing the melody is the first step to piano learning. As Peter Bartók recalled his beginning piano training from his father, he said that “my first piano lessons did not use a keyboard at all. I
had to learn to read music by singing it, and so learned songs which later were to be played in their piano version" (Peter Bartók, 1977).

*Mikrokosmos*, freely translated as “Little World” and Bartók’s last collection for piano, attracts the most attention of Bartók researchers. It is regarded both as a model of 20th century composition and a collection of remarkable teaching material for piano. The first two volumes were written for teaching his son, Peter. All the pieces were organized accordingly to technical difficulties. A recording of the *Mikrokosmos* by Ditta Bartók, his second wife, is regarded as the best interpretation of this collection. Bartók even recommended that students hear it before they played (Székely, 1971, p. 132).

*Mikrokosmos* has been the required teaching material in Peiking for a number of years (Székely, 1971, pp. 131). Barothy (1975) even applied the *Mikrokosmos* to the music-listening curriculum of the general school in his research (pp. 209-212).

Bartók also edited numerous piano works pertaining to his teaching purpose including pieces by F. Couperin, Handel, Bach, D. Scarlatti, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schumann (Lindlar, 1984, p. 29). His edition of J.S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* (WTC) is probably the most widely-used of his other editions. It was published by the Hungarian publisher, Rozsavolgyi, in Budapest around 1920. This edition was popularly used at the Liszt Academy of Music. Bartók showed his unique view
of the pedaling, fingering, and dynamic expression in this edition. His ideas regarding fingering especially attracted attention.

**Literature Review**

Growing interest in his personality, works, pedagogy, and influence on music history is clearly seen from the large number of available publications. *A Memorial Review on Bartók*, published by Boosey & Hawkes, is the early compilation of Bartók’s piano works and discography. It also includes some recollections from Bartók’s publisher, Ralph Hawkes.

Stevens (1953) authored the first bibliography of Bartók written in English. It provides an important list of books and articles about Bartók, including information about the publications and dedication of his piano works up to 1953.

Ujfalussy (1971) provided a chronological survey of the major events of Bartók’s life. He addressed mostly the social and political environments which influenced Bartók’s life and works. In comparison, Griffiths (1984) discussed the importance of Bartók’s creativity from his scores, recordings, and documentation.

Bonis (1980) spent 25 years in compiling 440 pictures and documents to present the originality of Bartók’s life. A number of Bartók’s concert pictures provided by his two wives and sons are especially valuable. Some pictures even show a close view of Bartók’s hands while performing.
Antokoletz (1988) compiled an updated and annotated bibliography which organized the references in terms of Bartók's historical, biographical, theoretical, analytical, pedagogical, and ethnomusicological issues. It is an indispensable reference collection for Bartók researchers.

Gillies (1991) and Crow (1976) collected reprinted articles and recollections about Bartók. Gillies included tales about Bartók's early years from his mother, students' views of his teaching style, impressions of his personality, and his transitional period in the United States to his death. Both books include English translations of some recollections from Bartók's Hungarian students. Though Gillies's collection contains more entries than Crow's, most of them are either summaries or partial citations from the original articles.

Many first-hand references of Bartók's pedagogy are in Hungarian, which imposed some difficulties in my literature review. The most significant references about Bartók's teaching are works by Székely (1971, 1978). She was Bartók's piano student at the Budapest Academy of Music between 1923 and 1926. In her book, she provides detailed information about Bartók's teaching methods. She also covers Bartók's approach to the piano works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Kodaly, and Bartók himself.

Peter Bartók and former students of Bartók at the Budapest of Music and in the United States have published a few
recollections of his teaching. Most articles are written in Hungarian and only a few provide English translation. Bull (1941) discusses Bartók’s teaching in a more philosophical way, presented in Chapter 2. Selden-Goth (1991) described Bartók’s austere personality and negative reaction to her composition. These recollections provide a vivid picture about Bartók’s personality and teaching, and will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Numerous authors have analyzed the pedagogical purpose of Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos* (Suchoff, (1983); Bull, (1951); Földes, (1957); Parker, (1987); Hodges, (1974); and Lust-Cobb, (1993). In addition to Bartók’s own preface and notes, Suchoff (1983) provides the best reference regarding the history of this composition. Suchoff describes Bartók’s ideas concerning piano playing and musicianship related to the *Mikrokosmos*. He also analyzes each piece from the aspect of technique, musicianship, Bartók’s comments, and his own suggestions. In contrast, Parker (1987) focuses her research on the pitch organization of the work, including pentatonic scales and modality.

Most recollections from Bartók’s associates and students did not focus on his piano pedagogy, but rather provided general descriptions of Bartók’s life, personality, anecdotes, and interactions with students. Publications by Székely (1971,1978) are regarded as primary references, but some critics claim that her view is personal and overdid in asserting her literary talents (Demény, 1976, p. 242).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a perspective of Bartók’s approach to piano teaching. Based upon personal interviews with two of Bartók’s former students at the Budapest Academy of Music, Mr. Storm Bull and Mr. György Sándor, I studied Bartók’s principles of piano pedagogy and his influences on their current performance and teaching styles. Although numerous works pertaining to Bartók’s pedagogical purpose have been published, they focus on analysis of his piano works, particularly the Mikrokosmos. Few address his interpretation of the standard piano repertoire in his teaching, such as works by Bach and Beethoven. In order to obtain a perspective of Bartók’s position in the history of piano teaching, the analyses of his editions for other piano repertoire should be included. This document studies Bartók’s edition and annotations of Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier to explore his pedagogical philosophies.

Outline

The remainder of this document is organized as follows: Chapter 2 gives an overview of Bartók’s piano study and performance career followed by my personal interviews with Mr. Sándor and Mr. Bull. The transcripts are organized according to three aspects: 1) their motivation to study with Bartók, 2) their recollections of Bartók’s piano teaching, 3) Bartók’s performing
style and composition, and 4) Bartók’s impact on modern piano pedagogy. Chapter 3 analyzes Bartók’s edition and annotations of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and Chapter 4 concludes with a summary and the contribution of this study.

Appendix A lists the names of Bartók’s former students at the Budapest Academy of Music. The complete transcripts of my interviews with Sándor and Bull are enclosed in Appendices B and C. Appendix D provides the numbers and themes of 48 Preludes and Fugues of the Bach WTC in Bartók’s arrangement. Finally, Appendix E is the complete list of Bartók’s piano works.
Overview of Bartók's Piano Studies and Performance

Bartók was born in a musical family. His father was the head of an agricultural school and a gifted musician. He played several instruments, and founded a music society and an amateur orchestra. Bartók's mother was a pianist and also worked as a school teacher. The Bartóks held family concerts frequently. They played lots of Hungarian music. Cultivated in such a music environment, Bartók showed his interest and inborn talent of music in his early years.

Mrs. Bartók recalled her son's early musical talent:

Already at a very early age we realized that he (Bartók) liked singing and music a great deal. ... when he was 1 1/2 years old, I played a dance piece, which he listened to carefully. At the age of 3 he gave out the exact beat on his little drum when I played the piano. ... When he was 4 he pounded out the folk songs which he then knew on the piano using one finger. He knew 40 tunes, and if we gave him the opening words to a song he could immediately play it (Gillies, 1991, pp. 6-7).

Bartók started taking piano lessons from his mother at the age of six. Unfortunately, his studies were interrupted frequently.
because of the illness of both his father and himself. Bartók studied with Ferenc Kersch for only a year due to Mrs. Bartók's discontent with Kersch. In her letter in later years to Bartók's son, Mrs. Bartók recalled that

Kersch gave him pieces which were too hard. He loved your father to play in a brilliant fashion and was happy if he learnt a rather difficult piece in one week. ... A faultless performance was impossible. (Gillies, 1991, p. 8)

However, Bartók made himself familiar with the major works of composers during his study with Kersch.

After Kersch, Bartók studied with Ludwig Burger and then Laszlo Erkel. Erkel came from a famous musical family. He was also an orchestra conductor and often brought Bartók to the bountiful musical activities in Pressburg. However, this study did not last long mainly due to the uncertainty of Mrs. Bartók's post.

In 1894, when the Bartóks finally settled down in Pozsony, Bartók returned to Erkel and started a systematic study. After this, Bartók made tremendous progress in piano playing and had more opportunities to attend the concerts of major orchestras and operas. He writes that “by the time I was 18, I had learned the literature of music from J.S. Bach to Brahms - though in Wagner no further than Tannhauser - pretty well.” (Bartók, 1976, p. 408)

Bartók went to Hyrtl after Erkel's death in 1896. He made more progress in counterpoint lessons than his piano study while studying with Hyrtl. In 1899, Bartók took Dohnányi's advice to
study with one of Liszt's outstanding pupils, Istvan Thomán, at the Budapest Academy of Music. Bartók admired his teaching deeply and respected him as a father figure.

In his letters to Mrs. Bartók, he mentioned quite often about Thomán's care and assistance. In his letter of Jan. 21, 1900, Bartók wrote:

Mr. Thomán again did all sorts of things for me. He said that I should buy the Schubert Impromptus in the Liszt Edition, but I told him that it was not possible this month because I had no money. So he bought it for me as a souvenir. (Lesznai, 1973, p. 19)

In his article about Thomán, Bartók (1976) recalled that Thomán influenced him a lot in the mastery of the color of piano tone. Bartók's piano technique was marvelous, but he lacked the flexibility to producing color of tone.

Thomán taught me the correct position of the hands and all the different natural and summarizing movements which the newest pedagogy has since made into a truly theoretical system and which, however Liszt had already applied instinctively and Thomán, a former pupil of Liszt, could acquire directly from his great master. (p. 490)

Székely (1978) believes that the success of Bartók's performance of Beethoven's piano works was inherited from Thomán. She mentions that "Thomán studied with Liszt, who was a student of Czerny. Beethoven was Czerny's teacher and the relationship between them is quite obvious." (p. 62)
Bartók started his public performance while he was at the age of 11. The first frustration during his pianist career occurred in 1905 when he was 24. He lost to Wilhelm Backhaus in the Prix Rubinstein Competition (Bónis, 1980, p. 11). However, eight years later, Bartók regained his glory on the concert stage.

Bartók performed duo piano concerts with his second wife, Ditta Bartók, quite often after 1940. On Jan. 21, 1943, Bartók played his Sonata for Two Pianos with conductor Fritz Reiner at Carnegie Hall in New York City. That was Bartók’s last public performance (Ujfalussy, 1971, p. 393).

**Interviews With György Sándor and Storm Bull**

The English references regarding Bartók’s piano pedagogy are very limited. In order to obtain first-hand information, I interviewed two of Bartók’s former students at the Budapest Academy of Music, Mr. Storm Bull and Mr. György Sándor. Both of them were also close associates of Bartók when he moved to the United States. Bull was the soloist of the American premiere of Bartók’s 2nd piano concerto. Sándor made corrections on Bartók’s 3rd piano concerto upon his request and gave the world premiere with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1946.

The interview with Mr. Sándor took place at his residence in New York City on June 18, 1994 (Figure 1). The interview with Mr. Bull was recorded at Mr. Bull’s residence in Boulder, Colorado, on July 5, 1994 (Figure 2). Each interview took about three hours. We
talked freely about Bartók’s personality, teaching philosophy, performing style, and interesting anecdotes. Sándor addressed Bartók’s significance as a pianist and pedagogue in the 20th century. He also expressed his opinions about modern piano pedagogy and pointed out his disagreement about some of Bartók’s references regarding his compositions.

Bull explored Bartók’s teaching in a more philosophical way. He mentioned details of his lessons with Bartók and the influence on his teaching. We also talked about the Hungarian mores and educational system during the time of his study with Bartók.

The interviews were taped using a portable cassette tape recorder. I transcribed the conversations by myself and the complete transcripts are enclosed in Appendices B and C respectively. The brief biographies of Sándor & Bull are also listed in the beginning of the transcriptions. This section organizes the interviews in the following fashion.

1. Bartók and his students
   a. Their motivations to study with Bartók
   b. The relationship between Bartók and his students
   c. Bartók’s personality

2. Recollections of Bartók’s piano teaching
   a. General impressions
   b. Examples about Bartók’s technical approaches

3. Bartók’s performing style and composition
   a. Performing style
b. Bartók as a composer

4. Their opinions of Bartók’s impact on modern piano pedagogy
   a. Modern piano teaching
   b. Piano technique
   c. Bartók’s concept of music
   d. Bartók’s editions
   e. Bartók’s influences on their piano teaching and performing

Their descriptions and views coincide with the previous recollections of some of Bartók’s other students such as Földes, Balogh, and Székely, but provide more specific details particularly in his teaching and influences. In the beginning of some discussion topics, I organized and enclosed some observations and opinions from previous publications as a cross reference.
Figure 1. György Sándor and author at Sándor's residence

Figure 2. Storm Bull and author at Bull's residence
1. Bartók and His Students

a. Their motivations to study with Bartók

The Liszt Academy of Music is a glamorous music institution in Hungary. It has produced numbers of internationally known musicians including Antal Dorati, Eugene Ormandy, and Peter Frankl. In the early 20th century, there were many other “big-name” piano teachers at the Music Academy besides Bartók.

He (Dohnányi) was the “big shot” at that time. The best talented students all went to study with Dohnányi...I was also accepted in his studio. However, after the first lesson (with Bartók), I forgot about Dohnányi. (Sándor, 1994. See disclaimer in Appendix B.)

Székely (1971) stated that there were quite a few piano teachers at the Music Academy. Each of them usually instructed 30 to 40 students at one time. Students could only get 30 minutes per lesson. In comparison, Bartók accepted at most 8 or 10 students at a time and often spent lots of time with students (p. 113).

There were several piano teachers at that time, such as Dohnányi. Bartók was one of them. I had good luck to study with him. I gave my first piano recital in public at the age of 18. I was a very promising young pianist, therefore they took me to Dohnányi. He was very nice to me and accepted me in his studio, but I had to wait for a year and a half to study with him. At that time, I did not want to stay with my old teacher. Therefore, I decided to have lessons with someone else. So I got in touch with Bartók. Now, Bartók is a monument. But in those days, he was thought of as an interestingly strange
composer. Everyone knew he was a wonderful pianist. Then I auditioned for Bartók; he was very nice and accepted me. After the first lesson, I forgot about Dohnányi.

When I first went to him and played for him, he said that I should learn a Mozart sonata and a Brahms Rhapsody. As I knew him as an avant-garde composer, I suspected how ingeniously he interpreted the classical pieces. For the first lesson, I learned Mozart’s C minor sonata and Brahms B minor Rhapsody. The way he reacted to my playing made me decide to study with him. He was a genius. The way he made the music and the way he played was his own, but based on good tradition of the composers. He very personally and originally approached everything. His whole personality was very definite and very marked. (Sándor, 1994)

Bull (1994) also recalled that:

I first went to Ecole Normale de Musique (Paris) in 1931 to study with Mr. Lazare Levy. He had small hands, therefore he emphasized mostly piano technique-finger exercises. After studying one year with him, I decided to switch to someone else. At about the same time, I had a chance to hear Bartók’s performance and his works. In 1933, I enrolled at the Budapest Academy of Music and studied with him.

At the end of each year, the top pianist or the top teacher in each group at the Budapest Academy could keep the student that he wanted. Any student that the teacher no longer wanted, the option would have to be picked up by another teacher or you would be out of the school. You could have an absolute disaster.
1. Bartók and His Students

b. The relationship between Bartók and students

Even though Bartók was already regarded as an important figure of the new generation at that time, he did not care about superficial fame. Földes (1991) writes that “The Academy was chock-full of ‘Masters’ at the time, as most teachers insisted that they be called by that title. Bartók was an exception. Mr. Professor, or Professor Bartók, was the only title the great master ever kept (p. 77).

Following the tradition of Hungary, Bartók, like the rest of the teachers, kept a certain distance between his students and himself.

You have to be bound by the Hungarian mores. The whole thing was so formal that even though my relationship with Bartók was far more informal. (Bull, 1994)

Another American student of Bartók, Dorothy Domonkos (1991), who also studied with him at the Budapest Academy of Music, recalled that “our relationship was rather formal when I was there. When he came to America, the distance between Bartók and his young students dissolved. He was very human and approachable as far as I was concerned” (p. 179).

Bull (1994) said:

I always called him “Mr. Bartók.” In fact, I have pictures and books that he autographed “sent to Mr. Storm Bull,
Dear friend.” It was not until later years that I would get things from him. But when I was a student there, it was impossible.

First of all, you were bound to some extent by Hungarian mores. The mores would be the kind of manners culture, and the whole thing that surrounds them as people. Therefore, the whole thing was so formal that even though our relationship was far more informal.

The first year in Budapest, I got a room at the dormitory in the University of Budapest. I felt good up here and I thought it would be fun. Whenever you saw one of the professors on the street, you stopped, clicked your heels, and saluted. You hardly ever expected even a nod or a return. But this was the general approach and there was a tremendous separation between teachers and students.

1. Bartók and His Students

c. Bartók’s personality

Bartók never volunteered anything disagreeable about anyone. But if you asked a direct question about how he thought about somebody’s performance or something else, you could expect the most direct answer that might be the most undiplomatic. You have to be ready for the answer that you might not like. But he never volunteered to say it.

Bartók is very very difficult to be other than serious. He occasionally told humorous things from time to time. I have pulled a couple of them in those articles. However, he still is certainly not an easy man for entertainment. (Bull, 1994)
2. Recollections of Bartók’s Piano Teaching

a. General Impressions

As far as piano technique goes, he recommended practicing. How? That was up to you. Bartók played almost everything and always showed his way to students. That was it! His only concern was the music itself. (Sándor, 1994)

Bartók was very severe and demanding. He wanted everything to be perfect (Székely, 1971, p. 111). He was especially fastidious about rhythm and accentuation (Székely, 1971, p. 135; Balogh, 1991, p. 46; Földes, 1991, p. 77). His attitude of asking for perfection showed not only in his composition, but also in his teaching. Besides, demonstration was the main way of his teaching. He did not explain much details about piano technique (Székely, 1978, p. 49; Bull, 1941, p. 7; Uhde, 1959, p. 46). Bartók’s approach was perhaps more appropriate to advanced students than mediocre students. He attributed those basic elements of piano playing to students’ responsibilities (Hernádi, 1968, p. 198).

✓ Bartók’s main teaching was performing, showing you how to play. He never talked about how to practice the difficult passages. He would just sit down and play. He did not care much about how you solved the problem. What he did was demonstration, and then explain the technique if you asked.

He had two pianos in the room, a Bechstein and Bösendorfer. He often sat at the second piano for demonstration. He did not use pedal too much when he played. He often used the half pedal. His playing was
very plastic and very clean. When he played Bach and
Mozart, I was fascinated by his unique way of playing
phrases, his colors, and his own personal style. (Sándor,
1994)

Bull recalled his lessons with Bartók in a great detail:

My piano lessons were at his house. I paid for it. I
remembered that my lessons were usually set on Monday
at one o’clock. They lasted one hour and a half or two.
Sometimes, we had a long talk after the piano lesson.
Bartók wanted me to help him with English and explain to
him American culture. Therefore, we almost talked
about anything other than music.

I really do not know how good a teacher he was for
others. There are not all that many people who would be
that independent. I was sufficiently independent.
Therefore, I did not go back to the United States once in
four years.

I was supposed to find out at least some ways of doing
the music before I went to his lessons. It was always up
to tempo and memorized. In fact, he no longer really
wanted to teach piano at that time. Therefore, he did not
accept students who were incapable of doing what I was
doing.

Bartók’s teaching had two characteristics. First, he
always asked students to memorize the music and play it
up to tempo at the first lesson. He would also ask you to
play the entire piece without stopping the first time.
Then he made corrections by showing you the way he did.
You might repeatedly play certain passages before he
was satisfied with the changes.

If you found the difficult passages and asked for help, he
would just sit down and show you the way he did. He did
not talk about the details of technique unless you asked.
Neither did he mark things on your music unless it was
necessary. Musical expressions and accents are few exceptions (Figures 3-5). The only way to learn it was just doing the same thing he did. (Bull, 1994)

Figure 3. Accent markings and phrases by Bartók
(Suite Op. 14, No. 2)

(Music collection of Storm Bull)
Figure 4. Expression marks by Bartok
  a. Allegro Barbaro
  b. Details of Fig. 4a

(Music collection of Storm Bull)
Figure 4. (con’t.)

b. Details of Fig. 4a
Figure 5. Musical expressions and accent markings by Bartók (2nd piano concerto)

(Bartók's original manuscript, music collection of Storm Bull)
Bull continued to recall:

He never asked me to do any finger exercises. A selection from Clementi’s *Gradus ad Parnassum*, edited by Arpad Szendy was the only piano studies he wanted me to play. He suggested that those difficult passages should be solved in thinking of the musical way rather than the finger exercises. With anything demanding unusual stamina, Bartók would suggest for me to practice until the passage could be played twice through without stopping.

Second, he asked for absolute accuracy of musical markings and dynamics. For instance, he thought that the *dot* has only half value and *staccato* should be played as fast as you can. The dash above notes “---” means the slight separation between notes and needs a little bit of accent.

*Sostenuto* marking represents the moral emphasis. It sounds like a *ritardando*. Every detail of the length or the dynamics of those markings should be played to mathematical accurateness first. After that, you were allowed to have your own expressions and be able to free from it.

Bartók taught interpretation by asking questions which would lead the student along the right track. The individual interpretation was encouraged under the circumstance of being conscious of its design. When he explained how he thought a phrase should be played, you were not asked to imitate, but you needed to reason out the way he did.

While playing his piano suite, op. 14, Bartók asked me to actually feel the three measures of rest at the end of the music (Figure 6). In his opinion, the phrases are the continuous flow of the music. Music does not stop until the very end of the measure, even if it is a three measure
rest. You have to feel the continuous flow of music over those rests. (Bull, 1994)

Figure 6. Musical phrasing by Bartók (Suite Op. 14, No. 2)

(Music collection of Storm Bull)

The other thing is that when I first came to him, he said that the works I would be given to do would be no more than I should be able to accomplish in four to five hours a day. I did not know whether he told it to me was part of the general folklore that has been passed on at the Budapest Academy, or that he honestly believed in somewhere or another that would be true for me. However, it probably would be so if I knew how to practice then.

Well in fact, I worked 10 hours a day, seven days a week, and still found it hard to get it all done. That was not something I was about to tell anyone. As for the other students, I had the feeling that we were all laboring
under the same thing, thinking somebody else could do it. (Bull, 1994)

2. Recollections of Bartók’s Piano Teaching

b. Examples about Bartók’s approaches to technique

Bull gave several examples to illustrate Bartók’s approach to technique:

With specific respect to how one brings out one note as opposed to another, for instance, in a triad: C-E-G, Bartók liked to emphasize that there was only one way to make one note louder than another, that is, the finger that’s placed on that note must travel faster than the others. Therefore, if the notes all end up together and one has to be louder, the finger on the one that has to be loudest must be the fastest in order to end up there at the same time. This is the way of doing it.

There is another way which Bartók did not mention. I am not certain if he was aware of it. He was not, to my knowledge, aware of mechanical things, although he certainly was scientifically inclined. He loved Bach’s music and studied it most carefully.

For example, when you press the key down slowly, you cannot feel where the jack is. If we press the first part of the key down, the hammer is going up three times as fast as the key is going down. However, the hammer will be six times faster when we keep pressing the key down.

Now, let us suggest that in the three-note example. Two notes stop in the descent before get to the 6:1 ratio and only one continues through the 6:1 ratio. When you place your fingers in a slightly curved way, these two fingers, which you do not want to bring out, do not go all the way down to the bottom of the keyboard. Then you stop
before it gets to the jack. This way will make one note louder than the other.

The second thing is, what happened when you performed? Among the things that happened, suddenly you think about things you have not thought about before, right? So you must think about it before. For instance, your left hand is going down. You looked at it and it looks like a stranger. You said where were you going? That must happen in practice; taking a stop and name it. It is very, very difficult. But the more automatic it becomes, the more dangerous it becomes. The more dangerous it becomes, the more scared you get, and the less spontaneous you are. You come to a place that you do not know.

Therefore, in Bartók’s general approach, if there was a technical way you could not do, do it! Learn it! If you could not play by weight, learn to play it by weight, and learn what the good points are. Why do we have all the different technical ways of playing? Because no one way is done at all, which tells us if we are going to play all kinds of music, we had better be able to play by many ways of technique. (Bull, 1994)

3. Bartók’s Performing Style And Composition

va. Performing style

Sándor was particularly impressed by Bartók’s performance:

The way he played Mozart, I have not heard done before. The way he played Bach, nobody played Bach before. That is the freest interpretation. And he also had the most flexible interpretation for Beethoven’s music. It was hard to see what it was really like with so many different approaches. He himself was a composer. Therefore, he taught in many composers’ approaches.
Bartók played like a composer. His playing was so creative and spontaneous that I always felt that I heard this piece for the first time. The greatest pianists can be the greatest composers, such as Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and Bartók. They were tremendous pianists. They all had their own personality. They reached the music in a very artistic way. (Sándor, 1994)

3. Bartók’s Performing Style and Composition

b. Bartók as a composer

Bartók never taught composition. ... He was afraid that he would become too self-conscious and only think of his own music (Bull, 1994).

However, his students learned more about music forms from his interpretation of piano works than in other composition classes (Földes, 1991, p. 77). Being a composer and pianist, Bartók often modified the music according to the need of individual students. He simplified certain passages of his works, which demand big stretches, for students with small hands (Székely, 1978, p. 91). He also changed a few bars of music for Bull’s premier performance of his 2nd piano concerto in 1939 (Figure 7).
Figure 7. Bartók’s modifications of his 2nd piano concerto for Bull
(Music collection of Storm Bull)

Sándor recalled the characteristics of Bartók’s compositions:

When I studied with him in 1931, I did not understand his sonata. It was a new type of music. After seven months later, I learned it and asked him whether he agreed for me to play it in my next Italian concert. He suggested that I should only play the third movement. I asked him, "Why not the whole piece?" He said that not long before, he played it at a concert. The audience threw eggs on the stage. It was really difficult for them to understand the music.

Very few composers took composition class. He was on his own. He never explained anything about his composition. Besides, he never taught composition. He had no composition students at all. There was only one
lady who was much older than me. She sponsored him at certain times. Therefore, he gave her some lessons when he was about 20 years old. Other than that, he did not teach anybody composition.

Bartók had small hands. He could hardly reach tenth. So, he had to do something for small hands to play. In Bartók’s Dance Suite, that I happened to have the chance to play in 1945, Bartók changed the text for me. He cut out and added some measures for me to play. When I played his Allegro Barbaro, he asked me to play more at the end of the piece. Therefore, he changed things all the time to make things not so difficult.

Tibor Serly orchestrated five or six of the Mikrokosmos pieces for string quartet. It is published now. He then played for Bartók, and Bartók was very delighted. He himself transcribed some of the Beethoven works for two pianos. Those are wonderful works, even better than the original one.

The rhythm in most of Bartók’s music is like prose. To make sense of it, you must group those notes, not play them mechanically. His piano sonata has been referred to as bitonal music. Bartók never in his life wrote bitonal or atonal music. I happened to have a letter by Bartók in which he says clearly that although people in 1925 liked to classify this kind of music, they liked to reach the things they did not understand. He never did the bitonal music. Some books writing about Bartók’s music are very misleading. You have to be careful on reading those. The way they analyzed his music was wrong. The tonality of Bartók’s music is the same as Schubert’s or Chopin’s. He uses purely tonal music. He extends the tonality, but they are all within one tonal center. (Sándor, 1994)
Bull explained why Bartók did not teach composition:

I was interested in composition during the time I studied with him. He would only give some general comments about my works. That was just an outline, nothing detailed. Since he did not want to spoil his intuition to the music. He was afraid that he would become too self-conscious and only think of his own music. Therefore, he did not set any theory about composition. That can also apply to his piano teaching.

One of the early things that he asked me to do was sight-read the string quartets. I was not very good at it. So before he took me off that, I did all the volumes of the Scarlatti sonatas and then read the string quartets and orchestra scores, which he thought was an important part of being in the music period. So I think that is something specific and can indicate to some extent a more musical approach, rather than a purely instrumental approach of a single instrument. (Bull, 1994)

4. Bartók’s Impact on Modern Piano Pedagogy

a. Modern piano teaching

Sándor talked about some confusing situations in modern piano teaching:

In my piano study, I was in the track of abstractness. You know very well today, that piano teaching becomes very standardized. They stop playing the piano. Today, most of the piano teaching is most questionable. And I do not speak theoretically, I speak realistically.

Thousands of people get sick of piano playing. The best pianists do not play anymore. They teach. That is a very strange situation. They are not just good pianists, but
very top pianists. They cannot play anymore. They have inflammations in one way or another. They got tired. How can you get tired? It shows something which is not right.

If you are artistic and talented enough, you practice 6-7 hours a week, and you get the inflammation. That is because the so-called piano teaching ways are very strange. Most of them are human methods. Pianos are invented and used by human beings. However, no matter where you go, you will see pianists who are suffering from this.

Human bodies are the same. People in Taiwan, Korea, Budapest, or Columbus are all the same. They might have slight differences; fundamentally, we are all built in exactly the same way. So if you did the fundamental things correctly, all from the natural system, how can you get the inflammation or sickness?

When you practice, you should acquire the habit which does not cause you illness. None of the really great pianists are sick. If they are, they will stop doing that. Unfortunately, a lot of the piano teaching consists of motion. If you are painful, that is because your muscles are weak, so you have to strengthen your muscles. You cannot use your whole muscles all the time either, but you have to help your weaker muscles coordinating with your stronger muscles.

Whether Bartók knew about this or not, I am not sure. But he did it. He talked about this in his own way. He was a formidable, a tremendous pianist. He played the Hammerclavier sonata.... His concerts included everything. You should listen to Bartók’s recording of his own Suites. It is just wonderful. He was such a tremendous pianist. He had his own way to show you how to do it. (Sándor, 1994)
4. Bartók’s Impact on Modern Piano Pedagogy

b. Piano technique

Now you watch any of the so-called famous pianists. You will find very peculiar, very questionable things. Bartók also had some peculiar things he did. We all have that. The thing is that we all have excessive energy, and we don’t need so much energy to place on the key. A child can do this. If you utilize your energy well, you don’t use it all into the piano, because the piano cannot take it.

When you sing, you force, then you get an ugly sound. The piano has the same position, and these forced practices produce the ugly sound. So this excessive energy which we have must go to somewhere according to the piano manifesting all kinds of complex emotion.

In piano playing, you constantly change the position to get the sound rather than fix your position. Bartók’s playing was very flexible. That is a long story to talk about today’s piano pedagogy. That is maybe why Bartók did not talk about it, simply because of too much confusion and nonsense in piano playing today. Besides, I do not think everybody must know these things. Some people do these things instinctively. (Sándor, 1994)

4. Bartók’s Impact on Modern Piano Pedagogy

c. Bartók’s concept of music

Bull stated:

Bartók and I often discussed music in a more philosophical way. For instance, we felt the same way that any period of the music history becomes outdated as the means have been presented. The means of the Baroque period is contrapuntal. When the counterpoint
became more important than the music, it was over. When the richness of the sound of the large orchestra and the opulence of the sound became more important than the message, the Romantic style was over.

When the means becomes important, the message suffers. Things of that kind discussed would surely be part of his teaching, even though I do not know he was directly attempting to teach it or not.

After 60 years, I still feel that Bartók taught music rather than piano. Therefore, his answers were in general far more philosophical. I wonder if in fact he tried to be specific in respect to things such as crescendos, diminuendos, how much putting in the metronomic markings, etc. In all these things, he was quite consistent about what it was.

He never volunteered to have you learn one of his own pieces. Everything that I learned was because I asked. I do not know whether he did or did not like to teach his own pieces. But in general, he found it was difficult to teach his own works. (Bull, 1994)


d. Bartók's editions

Bartók's edition is very reliable. He put in his phrasing that is very reliable for me, since Bartók was a very great musician and composer himself. So what he edited in the music, I could trust. There are hundreds of editions which are totally nonsense. Looking for a good edition is very difficult. That is why Bartók himself edited the music. He put in his own ideas. He doubled octaves if it was necessary. He did Mozart's piano works, which is also a wonderful work.

Lots of the information I gave to you is against the standard normal situation. Living with those traditional
mistakes, you will find that Bartók is wonderfully opened-minded, with lots of wisdom and lots of knowledge. So when he showed you something, that was very reliable. (Sándor, 1994)

4. Bartók’s Impact on Modern Piano Pedagogy

e. Bartók’s influences on their piano teaching and performing

Many of his students liked to copy his playing instinctively, because when you listen to his performance, you sort of imitate it without consciousness. He did not think you were like him. So, many of Bartók’s students copied his mannerism. They moved like Bartók, rolling and doing extra musical things like Bartók. Those are his influences.

I was like other young pianists: I wanted to play like Bartók. But after I left him, I did not want to be like him, even though I got so many wonderful ideas from him. I had to find my own way of playing.

When I was 18 years old, I gave my first debut in Budapest. That was a very ambitious program. I just played. My piano teacher before Bartók told me that I had to impress myself when I played. After that, I started to think about the style of my own playing, then I went to Bartók. I found that this giant interpreted the music in so many different ways. I also listened to lots of concerts. Each of them all sounded different. After 40 years later, I figure out those technical things and the way I should play. (Sándor, 1994)

Bull stated:

I was influenced by Bartók in the way of not to follow other people’s opinions. He would never be threatened by anyone or any theory. He was always on his own. He said that you quote somebody because you agree with them, or
disagree with them. You've got to know what is in your mind.

Besides, Bartók did try to give me an early twentieth century approach to the different styles of the different periods. Well, it does not make an awful lot of difference whether his approach to the different style was the right approach or not. The fact that there should be a different approach to the different styles is the important thing. The important thing is not the conclusion, but how you reach the conclusion. If you reach a conclusion with which you no longer agree, even though you did not make a mistake, you will doubt you had the information. You did not have it. But the information you have if your way of reaching it was right, then what changes this is the information. But what is changing is your way of reaching it. So, the way of reaching it is more important than the conclusion.

The way I teach now is certainly influenced by Bartók. I am a part of all of the things which I have been told. Some I did not like have influenced me one way. Some that I like have influenced another. What I am today, they all have contributed to it. There is no question about it.

I continue to change, but not necessarily away from or towards what they had done to me. I do not think my approach to music, if I could have duplicated exactly what Bartók did, would have made it work as well as perhaps it did for him, or not as well. (Bull, 1994)
CHAPTER III
BARTÓK'S EDITION OF BACH'S WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER

Introduction

There are many different editions of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier (WTC) available for today's performers, requiring them to decide on their own musical interpretation, based on their understanding of the music and knowledge of Baroque performance practices. Among those editions (Dover, Alfred, Henle, Guild, and Schirmer), the Henle edition (1968) tried to preserving the composer's intentions by exploring the original sources. In contrast, Bartók's edition extensively shares his personal interpretations particularly in respect to fingerings, expression marks, and tempo markings.

As a composer and pedagogue, Bartók (1976) rearranged the order of the preludes and fugues according to the technical and performance difficulties rather than Bach's chromatic order (p. 447). Bartók's edition begins with the G major Prelude & Fugue (WTC II:15) which he views as the easiest, and ends with the most advanced one, the B major Prelude & Fugue (WTC II:23).

At the top of each piece, Bartók notes Bach's original number in parentheses, while the Henle edition adopts Bach's original
arrangement. A comparison of WTC arrangements by Bach and Bartók is listed in Appendix D.

Bartók edition of the WTC is used by all piano students at the Franz Liszt Academic (Földes, 1957, p. 24). Bartók provided detailed fingerings for each piece, also adding tempo and metronomic markings for most pieces with only a few exceptions. These markings provide a clear view for the speed of music, determined by Bartók (1976) according to the character of the piece: “It is hardly possible to establish a rule concerning tempo; one must perceive it from the character of the piece” (p. 447). That is probably why, in several of the pieces, Bartók left the phrasing and interpretation to the performer’s discretion, as in 12 (WTC II:19), 23 (WTC I:17), 24 (WTC II:13), 35 (WTC II:4), 36 (WTC I:23), 47 (WTC II:16), and 48 (WTC II:23). However, he still provided some suggestions for the performing of these pieces in the Appendix of the edition.

For pedagogical reasons, Bartók provides detailed annotations in his edition. The Preface and the Appendix contain Bartók’s general approaches to this collection. His instructions about the performance of each Prelude and Fugue are also available in the footnotes.

This chapter explores Bartók’s pedagogical ideas according to phrasing, orchestration, accentuation marks, expression marks, and fingerings. It is hoped that his written interpretations, combined
with his students' recollections, will reveal the significant viewpoints of his teaching concepts.

**Phrasing**

Bartók regarded phrases as the continuous flow of musical ideas (Bull, 1994). Therefore, marking phrases to specify musical ideas was favored in Bartók’s teaching (shown in Figure 6, Chapter 2). In his edition, Bartók uses curves and lines to indicate the musical phrases (shown in Figure 8).
a. C sharp minor Fugue, No.37 (WTC II:3)

b. E minor Fugue, No.29 (WTC II:10)

c. G minor Fugue, No.30 (WTC I:10)

Figure 8. Bartók’s indications of musical phrases
a. C sharp minor Fugue, No.37 (WTC II:3)
  b. E minor Fugue, No.29 (WTC II:10)
  c. G minor Fugue, No.30 (WTC I:10)

When three, four, or five voices are mixed, these unusual lines lead attention to and clarify the structure of the music, making the crossing motives from the marked phrases easier to see.

Bartók even used multiple staves for one voice in the Fugue (Figure 9).
FUGA
a 5 voce

Andante sostenuto (d=60)

a. Fugue, No.41 (WTC I:22)-B flat minor

FUGA
a 4 voce

Molto maestoso (d=40)

b. Fugue, No.31 (WTC II:25)-D Major

Figure 9 Bartók's separation of voices with multiple staves
a. Fugue, No.41 (WTC I:22)-B flat minor
b. Fugue, No.31 (WTC II:25)-D Major
He mentioned that every voice had to be presented with a different tone color, and lived its own special and autonomous “register life” (Szőkely, 1978, p. 59). In order to play four or five lines together but keep each independent, Bartók (1967) provides his suggestion in the footnote of Fugue No. 31 (Vol. II, p. 35). He indicates that the way to add middle voices with outer voices is to use the right hand to play those notes with stems up and the left hand for stem-down notes. Fingering is also applied accordingly (1967, Vol. II, p. 35).

In Prelude No.33 (WTC I:24) and Fugue No.7 (WTC I:2), Bartók changes meters for several measures to show the musical phrases. He then sets new bar lines according to the length of the motive (Figure 10). He indicates that the musical phrases should not be restrained by the original bar lines. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the accents according to the new phrases during the performance. In his footnote of Fugue No.7 (WTC I:2), Bartók (1967) mentions that the performer should pay careful attention to the change of meter. The main accents of the new phrases are based on Bartók’s notation of the meters (Vol. I, p. 31).
Figure 10. Meter changes in Bartók’s edition
  a. C minor Fugue No. 7 (WTC I:2)
  b. B minor Prelude No. 33 (WTC I:24)
Orchestration

Szekely (1978) writes that Bartók applied the concept of orchestration while teaching interpretation. "In teaching Bach's works, Bartók repeatedly directed our attention to the need of these piano pieces as being principally for organ, and only occasionally for cembalo" (p.59). In the E-flat minor Prelude, No. 44 (WTC I:8), Bartók indicates the execution of rolled chords to resemble the cembalo playing style (Figure 11).

Figure 11. The execution of rolled chords for the E-flat minor Prelude
In addition, Bartók also pointed out that the interpretation of cembalo music should avoid excessive emotional playing. This Prelude, in his opinion (1967, Vol. I, p. 115), is a Bach work which requires the most imagination from the performer. Therefore, the softest expressivo and the most flexible touch are required for accurate and expressive performance.

In the B-flat Prelude No.3 (WTC I:21), Bartók believed that Bach’s intention in the Adagio section (Bar 11) should be interpreted as Largo. Figure 12 shows that those full and strong chords should be coupled with pedals to imitate the strength of organ (1967, Vol.I, p. 15). This is one of the few passages where Bartók suggested to use pedal. Székely (1978) recalled that Bartók often said that if you play the music of Bach, you should only use the pedal as the very last resort (p. 59). See Figure 12.
B-flat Prelude, No. 3 (WTC I: 21)

Figure 12. The use of pedals for full chords
Bartók modified the music to resemble the tone color of an organ. He doubled the bass line in the A major Fugue, No. 14 (WTC I:19) and A-flat major Prelude, No.42 (WTC II:17), and suggested the use of octaves in the bass to get the best voicing (1967, p. 65). See Figure 13.

a. A major Fugue, No. 14 (WTC I:19)

b. A-flat major Prelude No.42 (WTC II:17)

Figure 13. Doubling the bass line
a. A major Fugue, No. 14 (WTC I:19)
b. A-flat major Prelude No.42 (WTC II:17)

It is quite unusual to see increased voices in this collection when compared with other editions (Henle, Dover, Schirmer).
Accents, Dynamics, and Expression Marks

Bartók adds numerous accentuation marks, which include accents and dynamics, to most of the Preludes and Fugues except No. 12 (WTC II:19), No. 23 (WTC I:17), No. 24 (WTC II:13), No. 35 (WTC II:4), No. 36 (WTC I:23), No. 47 (WTC II:16), and No. 48 (WTC II:23). As with the omission of tempo markings in these pieces, he leaves expression to the performer's discretion. These accentuation marks are essential in this edition. Accents and dynamics comprise the few comments that Bartók marked on his students' scores, shown earlier in Figures 3, 4, and 5 of Chapter 2.

Székely (1978) described that “He was especially fastidious about accentuation and rhythm. In order to make a single accent perfect, he would ask students to get up from the piano fifteen or twenty times” (p. 45).

Accents

Bartók's principal of accent marking can be classified in four categories: 1) notes at the beginning of the phrase, 2) the highest note with longer value during the phrase, 3) the longer note in syncopation, and 4) full chords at the end of a cadenza. Figure 14 shows typical examples of these accent markings.
Figure 14. Examples of accents in Bartók’s edition

a. G major Prelude No.25 (WTC I:15)
b. G major Prelude No.1 (WTC II:15)
c. G major Fugue No. 1 (WTC II:15)
d. D minor Prelude No. 2 (WTC I:6)
Dynamics
Bartók mentioned that great composers, such as Bach and Beethoven, always showed their motives in slightly different ways. They usually implied a different orchestration while expressing the same motive in a different voice (Székely, 1978, p. 47). Bartók applied the same idea by specifying the dynamics level of each voice. In additions, Balogh (1956) added that “Bartók did not permit any unnecessary accents and had a marvelous sense for the balance of voices and for the proportion of tempo and dynamics” (p. 51).

In the D major Fugue, No. 31 (WTC II:5), Bartók uses double fortées for the upper two and the bass voices (Bar 27-28). The middle voice should be played as a support and with less emphasis (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Different dynamics for the same motive in four voices
Between Bar 28 and 29, Bartók used crescendo and diminuendo respectively marks for the same motive in the different voices. Playing each line with different dynamic expressions would sound like four instruments interacting with each other.

Expression Marks

Careful study of Bartók’s edition revealed that leggiero, quasi legatissimo, and sempre dolce are the most frequently used terms in the Preludes. In contrast, Semplice and marcato il tema are preferred in the Fugues. Bartók provided a vivid picture of the music by managing these expressions, often noted at the beginning of the piece to indicate the characteristics of the music.

Bartók (1976) states that Bach’s clavier works were not composed for today’s piano, but for the clavecin (p. 447). In addition, he disagrees with the idea of avoiding the crescendo- and diminuendo- like timbres in Bach’s clavier works:

It is highly probable that if, in some wonderful way, these old composers had suddenly become acquainted with the pianoforte, after a few short trials they would have recognized the advantages of the new instrument and would have altered accordingly the performance of their compositions. Mozart, for example, as soon as the pianoforte was invented, notated his sonata with crescendo indications, notations which would hardly have been committed to paper in a much different form had they been written for the old clavecin (p. 285).
In this edition, Bartók uses the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* marks extensively to express the music phrases. He applies the *crescendo* marking for most of the ascending motives including scales, arpeggios, and melodic lines. Descending motives are often coupled with *diminuendo* (Figure 16).

![Musical notation]

a. C-sharp major Prelude, No. 39 (WTC I:3)

![Musical notation]

b. D-sharp minor Fugue, No. 40 (WTC II:8)

Figure 16. The *crescendo* and *diminuendo* marks in Bartók’s edition.

a. C-sharp major Prelude, No. 39 (WTC I:3)

b. D-sharp minor Fugue, No. 40 (WTC II:8)
Fingering

Bartók provides detailed fingering for each piece, even for those pieces without annotations. His unique way of reaching certain keyboard intervals is still debatable. Brown (1981) believes that Bartók’s fingering repays careful study for some of their unusual nature (p.16). His favorable usage of expansion between fingers to reach notes, rather than turning fingers over, shows another creative aspect of his teaching.

Figure 17 shows finger expansions for those arpeggiated motives in the G major Prelude:

![G major Prelude, No.25 (WTC I:15)](image)

Figure 17. Bartók’s fingering showing expansion between fingers.

Hernadi (1973) suggests that students should alter some fingerings to suit their own ability and approach to the piano because Bartók had his own style of playing (p. 31). Nevertheless, Bartók's fingering is significant for indicating the structure of music and connecting notes for musical phrases. It is especially helpful for performers in playing the four- or five-voice Fugues.
Summary

“Bartók’s edition of Bach’s WTC conveys his greatness, seriousness, and conscientiousness to the full” (Hernadi, 1973, p. 31). His demanding personality and perfectionism are easily found in this edition.

Bartók’s edition, with his thorough understanding of this collection, provides a vital reference for students and teachers. His tempo markings, annotations, phrasing, music expressions, and fingering clearly represent his interpretation of the music. He organized the materials in a systematic way which facilitates their study and performance.

It is interesting to compare the relationship between his real teaching, based upon student recollections, and his annotation of piano works. Most of his students recalled that Bartók did not explain details of piano technique. In contrast, he provided a thorough, detailed, and systematic approach to technique in this edition of Bach’s WTC. For example, Bartók lists various executions for each ornament rather than provide general guidelines in the preface. He also indicates pitch duration and differences in touch for dots and dashes.

I believe that technical training was a major concern in Bartók’s teaching, although he did not stress it. We can observe the significance of technical considerations in the Mikrokosmos and the WTC, clearly illustrated in the footnotes, preface, and epilogue.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS

This document addressed Bartók’s contributions to piano pedagogy by assimilating the recollections of his former students and his edition of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* (WTC). In order to obtain a perspective of his teaching concepts, I analyzed his teaching from three types of sources: literature review, two personal interviews, and selected Bartók annotations and editions.

The English references regarding Bartók’s piano pedagogy are very limited. Most references are written in Hungarian, such as works by Székely (1978, 1980) and Bartók’s annotations of Bach’s *WTC*, and two in German (Uhde, 1959; Lindlar, 1984). I arranged to have these books translated into English and included the pertinent information in this study.

Previous publications about Bartók’s piano teaching are mostly general recollections and lack specific details. Therefore, I interviewed two of Bartók’s former students at the Budapest Academic of Music, György Sándor and Storm Bull, to explore their study experiences with Bartók and his influence on their current performing and teaching.
Chapter 2 begins with an overview of Bartók's learning experience in piano. I then combined these two interviews and the related references to present Bartók from his students' viewpoint. We talked about his life, piano teaching, performing style, their opinions of Bartók's impact on modern piano pedagogy, and some interesting anecdotes. Some photographs of the original manuscripts and his markings on Bull's music taken during the interviews are also enclosed.

All of his students recalled that Bartók neither talked very much nor developed any theory about his teaching and approach to technique. However, he detailed many of his pedagogical ideas in his editions of some other classical music, particularly the Bach WTC. Therefore, I analyzed Bartók's edition of the WTC to extract and verify his teaching methods.

Chapter 3 presents my observations of Bartók's teaching ideas from his edition of the Bach WTC. I compared the major differences, such as the arrangement of the pieces, between the Bartók and Henle editions. I organized his annotations into four aspects: 1) phrasing, 2) orchestration, 3) accents, dynamics, and expression marks, and 4) fingering. Selected examples of these categories were also presented. I also compared the relationship of his teaching concepts, based upon student recollections, and his annotations of the WTC.

Bartók was a remarkable but introverted piano pedagogue. He had tremendous teaching ideas but did not systematically publish
his methods. After study of the recollections of Bartók's students and examination of the WTC and Mikrokosmos, we can gain a perspective of his teaching philosophy and appreciate more fully his contributions to 20th century piano pedagogy and performance.

It is hoped that this document will provide an objective reference for future studies regarding Bartók's piano pedagogy.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF NAMES OF BARTOK'S FORMER STUDENTS AT THE BUDAPEST ACADEMY OF MUSIC

(Source from the Music Library of the Budapest Academy Of Music)

Aggházy Katalin 1920/21, I.
Albrecht Sándor 1906/07, III., 1907/08, IV.
Antony Irén 1906/07, I., 1907/08, II., 1908/09, III.
Babos Gizella 1916/17, III., 1917/18, IV.
Balabán Imre 1907/08, III., 1908/09, IV., 1909/10, IV.
Balogh Ernő 1909/10, I., 1910/11, II., 1911/12, III., 1912/13, IV.
Bartók Ilonka 1915/16, I. előkészítő, 1916/17, II.
Bartók János 1930/31, III. előkészítő, 1931/32, I.
Bellovits Margit 1907/08, III.
Benedek Erzsébet 1920/21, III. előkészítő
Berger Margit 1927/28, III.
Berg Lili 1911/12, II., 1912/13, III., 1913/14, IV.
Bossányi Erzsébet 1908/09, III.
Brém Riza 1909/10, I., 1910/11, II., 1911/III, 1912/13, IV.
Brícht Klára 1906/07, III., 1907/08, IV., 1903/09, IV.
Brunovszky Ida 1909/10, I., 1910/11, II., 1911/12, III.
Csikor Elemér 1906/07, IV., 1907/08, IV.
Dánicl László 1921/22, II., 1923/24, III., 1924/25, IV.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
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<td>Dolmár (Weil) Dezső</td>
<td>1908/09, II., 1909/10, III., 1910/11, IV., 1911/1, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deutsch Jenő</td>
<td>1929/30, II., 1930/31, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamant Malvin</td>
<td>1906/07, IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doroghy Albertina</td>
<td>1915/16, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egri Irén</td>
<td>1909/10, I, 1910/11, II., 1911/12, III., 1912/13, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egri Margit</td>
<td>1914/15, II., 1915/16, III., 1916/17, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engel Renée</td>
<td>1907/1908, I., 1908/09, II., 1908/09, II., 1909/10, III., 1910/11, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engel Rózsi</td>
<td>1906/07, IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fábry Anikó</td>
<td>1925/26, II., 1926/27, III., 1927/28, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fábry Irma</td>
<td>1906/07, II., 1907/08, III., 1908/09, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenyes Gábor</td>
<td>1914/15, 11., 19 17/18, II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fischer Ilona</td>
<td>1922/23, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fischer Stefánia</td>
<td>1931/32, III., 1932/33, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fischer Zelma</td>
<td>1911/12, II., 1912/13, III., 1913/14, IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fodor Lili</td>
<td>1921/22, II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frommer Rózsi</td>
<td>1908/09, I., 1909/10, II., 1910/11, III., 1911/12, IV.</td>
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<td>Fulcz Erzsébet</td>
<td>1920/21, II., 1921/22, III., 1922/23, IV.</td>
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<td>Gábor György</td>
<td>1923/24, I., 1924/25, II., 1925/26, III., 1926/27, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gergely lászló</td>
<td>1923/24, IV., 1924/25, IV.</td>
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<td>Gerster Jolán</td>
<td>1906/07, II., 1907/08, III., 1908/09, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gidófalvy Ilona</td>
<td>1916/17, III., 1917/18, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heimlich (Hernádi) Lajos</td>
<td>1924/25, III., 1925/26, IV., 1926/27, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herskovits Auguszta</td>
<td>1930/31, III., 1931/32, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hertz Szidónia</td>
<td>1916/17, III., 1917/18, III.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hevesi Erzsébet</td>
<td>1906/07, II., 1907/08, III., 1908/09, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hevesi Piroska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horváth Emilia</td>
<td>1914/15, I., 1915/16, II.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janovitsch Valentina</td>
<td>1922/23, I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jünker Erzsébét</td>
<td>1910/11, I., 1911/12, II., 1912/13, III., 1913/14, IV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kajári Anna</td>
<td>1912/13, I., 1913/14, II., 1914/15, III., 1915/16, IV.</td>
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<td>Kajári Katalin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kármán Ella</td>
<td>1917/18, II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemény Viktória</td>
<td>1915/16, I., 1916/17, II.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kende Hilda</td>
<td>1909/1910, I., 1910/11, II., 1911/12, III., 1912/13, IV.</td>
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<td>Keresztény Ernő</td>
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<td>Körffy Endre</td>
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<td>Kósa György</td>
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<td>Kósa Stefánia</td>
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<td>Kovacsics Olga</td>
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Le Fevre Karola 1911/12, II., 1912/13, III., 1913/14, IV.
Löwinger Irma 1910/11, I., 1911/12, II., 1912/13, III., 1913/14, IV.
Löwy Margit 1915/16, I., 1916/17, II., 1917/18, III.
Mészáros Margit 1916/17, I., 1917/18, II., 1918/19, III.
McInár Erzsébet 1920/21, II., 1921/22, III., 1922/23, IV.
Morvay Zsuzsi 1906/07, I.
Müller Elvira 1906/07, I., 1907/08, III., 1908/09, IV.
Nászay Teréz 1907/08, II., 1908/09, III., 1909/10, IV.
Németh (Samorínsky) István 1918/19, II., 1920/21, IV.
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Norgauer Jenny 1915/16, I., 1916/17, II., 1917/18, III., 1918/19, IV.
Nosz Margit 1917/18, II., 1918/19, III.
Pásztory Ditta 1922/23, II.
Pataki József 1913/14, I.
Perényi Jolán 1912/13, II., 1913/14, III.
Pető Imre 1906/07, I., 1907/08, I.
Rácz Ilona 1916/17, II., 1917/18, III., 1918/19, IV.
Radó Erzsébet 1925/26, III., 1926/27, IV.
Regéczy Margit 1906/07, IV.
Reiner Frigyes 1906/07, 111., 1907/08, 1V.
Rosenfeld Aladár 1906/07, IV., 1907/08, IV
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<td>Bull, Storm</td>
<td>1932/35</td>
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<td>Damonkos, Dorothy</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sándor, György</td>
<td>1930/33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

GYÖRGY SÁNDOR BIOGRAPHY AND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Biography

György Sándor: admired Hungarian-born American pianist, cousin of Arpad Sándor; born in Budapest, September 21, 1912. He studied piano with Bartók and composition with Kodály at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. After making his debut in Budapest (1930), he toured in Europe before settling in the U.S. (1939), where he became a naturalized citizen in 1943. After World War II, he played in major music centers of the world. He taught at Southern Methodist University in Dallas (1956-61), was director of graduate studies in piano at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (1961-81), and taught at the Julliard School in New York City (from 1982). He won particular distinction as an interpreter of the music of Bartók, Kodály, and Prokofiev; and was soloist in the premiere of Bartók 3rd piano concerto (Philadelphia, Feb. 8, 1946). He made brilliant transcriptions of Dukas’s L’apprenti sorcier and Shostkovich’s Dance russe; and published On piano playing: Motion, Sound, and Expression (N.Y., 1981). (Mize, 1951, p. 364)
Disclaimer

September 20, 1994

Professor Jerry E. Lowder
Adviser, Document Committee
1899 College Road
Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Professor Lowder:

I have given great deal of thought and time to the difficult situation with the Document. Let me suggest the following:
I am enclosing a list of the erroneous data I have found and that should be no problem to correct these. Next, I would suggest that Fung-Yin rewrite the following pages:

32 Omit: very few composers took composition class.
33 I gave the world premiere of the piano version of the Dance Suite

Allegro Barbaro: Bartok asked me to add a few bars after bar 100, not at the end.

Serly transcribed a few pieces of the Mikrokosmos for string quartet and piano. Mrs. Bartok and a string quartet from the Philadelphia Orchestra (with Serly's participation) performed it at Bartok's birthday, in Serly's home.

Bartok did not transcribe Beethoven works for two pianos.

34 Omit: "...I was in the track of abstractness." Alter: "Thousands of people get hurt by the way they play piano." (not sick of...)

35 Please, rewrite the whole page (2d, 4th paragraphs particularly: you do not strengthen muscles, you must coordinate them with the already strong muscles: pain is a warning of abusing certain muscles. You get inflammation not because of talent, or 6-7 hours of practice, but because you are forcing certain muscles.

36 You get an ugly sound when you force, not when you sing. Some phrases make no sense and most of them are taken out of context and are unrelated... One must change the position of the hands and arms according to the fingers used.

38 Omit: He did not think you were like him.
Omit (or make sense of): ...to impress myself...
Omit: After 40 years I figure out etc...

This is just an attempt to call attention to the misunderstood and incorrect statements. The language and grammar must be corrected too.
Incorrect statements:

Page 112
Concerto for 2 Pianos, Percussion & Orchestra missing
Listing of students should include Storm Bull, Dorothy Damonkos and myself. The dates of Vasarhegyi and Deutsch are not correct.

Page 61
The name of the theory teacher (after Erkel) was not Hyrtl, but Herzl.

Page 13
I did not make corrections on the 3rd Piano Concerto at Bartok's request. He was dead at the time I received the score. They were made many years later.

Page 14
I did not disagree about some of Bartok's references regarding his compositions.

Page 39
Bartok did not give an early twentieth century approach to the different styles of the different periods. On the contrary, the approach was always in/stile negotiated.

Dohnanyi was the Director of the Liszt Academy, not the head of composition. Bartok was not the head of the piano department, he was one of the piano teachers.

May I suggest that the transcript of the tapes should be corrected carefully. The selection and omission of certain statements causes confusion, since certain statements are not explained at all, simply presented, usually out of context. There are innumerable examples of this on pages 68, 70, 71, 73 (vibrato, volume, etc.) 75 (Hungarian pedagogy, etc.) 76 (Bartok's music is very gentle?? Letter says about the twenties, not 1925... Suggest: "The tonality has always one tonal center, just like in Schubert's or Chopin's music; it is an extended tonality, but never bitonal, poli- tonal or atonal.") 77 (Bach Society Edition is very thorough and comprehensive, but is not Urtext. Explain what is Urtext, from tapes. Don't use "standard normal situation", but "tradition", "Opened-minded" ??? "Paragraphs"?? 78 (Bartok's changes in the Dance Suite and Allegro Barbaro were not because of small hands, but for matters of sonority and musicality. ) The piano version of the Concerto for Orchestra is nearly unplayable.

Obviously, tapes must be listened to and must be organized, they cover about three hours and many, varied subjects, at random. Apparently, because of lack of time, the result was full of real mistakes, and must be corrected. I did ask Fung Yin to send me the text for approval, and this is what should be done now. I was trying to be as helpful as possible - and still try to be - but one must salvage the Document, before it is being put to use. In this shape and form, my quotes and observations are totally unacceptable and I must disassociate myself with them. Hope the above guidelines will be followed. Incidentally, as you have mentioned it, Dr. Lowder, it is imperative that she send me any material that she wishes to have included in articles, magazines for publication, or for limited use.

Every good wish to you, and I am available here till the 18th of October.

Yours sincerely,

Gyorgy Sandor
Transcript of the Interview with Sándor, György

Interview Date: June 18, 1994
Place: New York, New York

Q: You had studied piano with Bartók in the Budapest Academy of Music for three years (1930-1933). How do you feel about his teaching?

S: There were several piano teachers at that time, such as Dohnányi. Bartók was one of them. I had good luck to study with him. I gave my first piano recital in public at the age of 18. I was a very promising young pianist, therefore they took me to Dohnányi. He was very nice to me and accepted me in his studio, but I had to wait for a year and a half to study with him. At that time, I did not want to stay with my old teacher. Therefore, I decided to have lessons with someone else. So I got in touch with Bartók. Now, Bartók is a monument. But in those days, he was thought of as an interestingly strange composer. Everyone knew he was a wonderful pianist. Then I auditioned for Bartók; he was very nice and accepted me. After the first lesson, I forgot about Dohnányi.

Q: What impressed you most after your first lesson with him?

S: When I first went to him and played for him. He said that I should learn a Mozart sonata and a Brahms Rhapsody. As I knew him
as an avant-garde composer, I suspected how ingeniously he interpreted the classical pieces. For the first lesson, I learned Mozart's C minor sonata and Brahms B minor Rhapsody. The way he reacted to my playing made me decide to study with him. He was a genius. The way he made the music and the way he played was his own, but based on good tradition of the composers.

He very personally and originally approached everything. His whole personality was very definite and very marked. So the way he played Mozart, I have not heard done before. The way he played Bach, nobody played Bach before. It was hard to see what it was really like with so many different approaches. He taught in many composers' approaches. He himself was a composer, too. He was very resilient and very flexible. I do not think I learned the same thing with Kodály many years ago. I hope he saw the same thing.

He had two pianos in the room, a Bechstein and Bösendorfer. He often sat at the second piano for demonstration. He did not use pedal too much when he played. He often used the half pedal. His playing was very plastic and very clean. When he played Bach and Mozart, I was fascinated with his unique way of playing phrases, his colors, and his own personal style. When I studied with him in 1931, I did not understand his sonata. It was a new type of music. After seven months later, I learned it and asked him whether he agreed for me to play it in my next Italian concert. He suggested that I should only play the third movement. I asked him, "Why not the whole piece?" He said that not long before, he played it at a
concert. The audience threw eggs on the stage. It was really
difficult for them to understand the music.

Q: Júlia Székely, one of Bartók's pupils at the Budapest Academy of
Music, mentioned that Bartók did not talk about the details of
technique. He took it as the student's responsibility. How do you
feel about that?

S: Bartók's main teaching was performing, showing you how to play.
He never talked about how to practice the difficult passages. He
would just sit down and play. He did not care much about how you
solved the problem. What he did was demonstration, and then
explain the technique if you asked.

Very few composers took composition class. He was on his
own. He never explained anything about his composition. Besides,
he never taught composition. He had no composition students at all.
There was only one lady who was much older than me. She
sponsored him at certain times. Therefore, he gave her some
lessons when he was about 20 years old. Other than that, he did not
teach anybody composition.

In the piano lesson, he just sat down and played. He was very
nice, performed well, and very polite. As far as piano technique
went, he recommended practicing. How? That was up to you.
Bartók played almost everything and always showed his way to
students. That was it! His only concern was the music itself.
Q: Everybody learns things from different ways. However, it sounds too vague for me to understand only from the teacher's demonstration. How do you feel about Bartók's teaching approaches?

S: I was in the track of abstractness. You know very well today, that piano teaching becomes very standardized. They stop playing the piano. Today, most of the piano teaching is most questionable. And I do not speak theoretically, I speak realistically. Thousands of people get sick of piano playing. The best pianists do not play anymore. They teach. That is a very strange situation. They are not just good pianists, but very top pianists. They cannot play anymore. They have inflammations in one way or another. They got tired. How can you get tired?

It shows something which is not right. If you are artistic and talented enough, you practice 6-7 hours a week, and you get the inflammation. That is because the so-called piano teaching ways are very strange. Most of them are human methods. Pianos are invented and used by human beings. However, no matter where you go, you will see pianists who are suffering from this.

Q: Is that because of practicing too long or because their gestures are incorrect?

S: No. You cannot practice too long if you are sick of it. It is not like the computer. In piano technique, look at the top level pianists, like Rubinstein, and they all look different. So you see
there is not a school. The influence of a school cannot have them all. Human bodies are the same. People in Taiwan, Korea, Budapest, or Columbus are all the same. They might have slight differences; fundamentally, we are all built in exactly the same way. So if you did the fundamental things correctly, all from the natural system, how can you get the inflammation or sickness?

You're not supposed to play over six hours a day. But if you are, then you have to find the way you change your position. So when you practice, you should acquire the habit which does not cause you illness. None of the really great pianists are sick. If they are, they will stop doing that. Unfortunately, a lot of the piano teaching consists of motion. If you are painful, that is because your muscles are weak, so you have to strengthen your muscles. You cannot use your whole muscles all the time either, but you have to help your weaker muscles coordinating with your stronger muscles.

Whether Bartók knew about this or not, I am not sure. But he did it. He talked about this in his own way. He was a formidable, a tremendous pianist. He played the Hammerclavier sonata.... His concerts included everything. You should listen to Bartók's recording of his own Suites. It is just wonderful. He was such a tremendous pianist. He had his own way to show you how to do it. Now the thing is this. Now you watch any of the so-called famous pianists. You will find very peculiar, very questionable things. Bartók also had some peculiar things he did. We all have that. The thing is that we all have excessive energy, and we don’t need so
much energy to place on the key. A child can do this. If you utilize your energy well, you don’t use it all into the piano, because the piano cannot take it.

When you sing, you force, then you get an ugly sound. The piano has the same position, and these forced practices produce the ugly sound. So this excessive energy which we have must go to somewhere according to the piano manifesting all kinds of complex emotion. Bartók also had some peculiarities. For example, his hand position was like a “v,” other people play like this “——.” Many of his students liked to copy his playing instinctively, because when you listen to his performance, you sort of imitate it without consciousness. He did not think you were like him. So, many of Bartók’s students copied his mannerism. They moved like Bartók, rolling and doing extra musical things like Bartók. Those are his influences. But he did not teach technique. He did not teach composition, either.

I remember every time I played something for him. He was usually polite and understood it. Then he sat down and played his own ways. That is the way you should play, not the way you should copy. Besides, in technique, he was very wise. His interpretation in music showed lots of options. Some people played like this, others played like that. There are lots of options in technique. We all have five fingers on one hand, in one body. Our techniques all look different, with different activities, and with our own measurements, but the body - the structure - is the same. Just like in the composer’s system of decrescendo. Your decrescendo is
different from mine, from Bartók's, even from most others'. What you do with your decrescendo is like what you do with your technique. You should apply with your own ways, but you should do the right way. The first thing shown you in playing the piano is not to get tiredness or tightness. It is different from playing sports. If the muscles did not work, it did not hit stronger; you must build your muscles. That cannot apply to the piano.

You must have been told to lean on the key and then press it in order to make the sound *legato*. However, the piano should not be under pressure. The violin needs it for the *vibrato*, but you do not press the piano. The moment you press is the time of your fixation. In piano playing, you constantly change the position to get the sound rather than fix your position. Bartók's playing was very flexible. That is a long story to talk about today's piano pedagogy. That is maybe why Bartók did not talk about it, simply because of too much confusion and nonsense in piano playing today.

On the piano, the loudness depends on the speed the hammer falls, not the mass. How to generate the speed is your business. You generate it from your effort. The piano is not the instrument that you always get a louder sound when you hit faster. There is a limit for the speed. For instance, if you hit it 10 miles/hour, the hammer will produce the maximum sound. When you hit eight miles/hour, the sound will be less. But if you hit 50 miles/hour, it will not be louder but the sound will become harsh.
Therefore, you should try to obtain the least amount of effort to play the piano. If the falling speed of the 50 pound and the 20 pound is the same, then why do you need the 50 pound?

You find the way of using the least of effort to generate the speed. That is what the piano technique should be. It is the method to examine how do you coordinate the stronger muscles with the weaker ones.

We have a wonderful musical world now. It is absurd that more and more people make music, but at the same time, more and more people get sick.

The interesting fact is that not many of his students are internationally concertizing pianists. Erno Balogh is an exceptional one. There are some of Dohnányi’s students who are active pianists. The reason for that is Dohnányi was in charge of the artist’s degree. He was the "big shot" at that time. The best talented students all went to study with Dohnányi. He was also a remarkable pianist, however, he did not teach technique, either. It is like the situation today. Those young pianists enrolled at the Julliard School of Music all come to the big name.

Bartók played like a composer. His playing was so creative and spontaneous that I always felt that I heard this piece for the first time. The greatest pianists can be the greatest composers, such as Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and Bartók. They were tremendous pianists. They all had their own personality. They reached the music in a very artistic way. All of Bartók’s students imitated his playing unconsciously. I was like other young pianists:
I wanted to play like Bartók. But after I left him, I did not want to be like him, even though I got so many wonderful ideas from him. I had to find my own way of playing.

Bartók did not like to teach much because he did not want to spend time to teach technique. I do not think everybody must know these things. Some people do these things instinctively. However, if you do things instinctively, you will only reach a certain level. You will not go beyond that. Then the problem is that how do you practice this.

Q: Do you think that piano pedagogy in Hungary has any specialty comparing to that in the United States?

S: I do not know anything about the tradition of Hungarian piano pedagogy. There is the so-called Russian School, the German School, and maybe the Hungarian School. However, Bartók’s playing was totally different from Dohnányi’s. These so-called schools are full of mistakes. They always forced people to do something which are against the human nature.

Lots of famous pianists seldom practice. It is not because they are genius. They do not practice, they just play. You acquire certain habits which become your second nature. That is the definition of practice. Good practice does not cause pain or tiredness.

When I was 18 years old, I gave my first debut in Budapest. That was a very ambitious program. I just played. My piano teacher
before Bartók told me that I had to impress myself when I played. After that, I started to think about the style of my own playing, then I went to Bartók. I found that this giant interpreted the music in so many different ways. I also listened to lots of concerts. Each of them all sounded different. After 40 years later, I figure out those technical things and the way I should play.

Bartók's music is very gentle and expressive. He never played mechanically. The way he played Bach's pieces was the freest, and also the most flexible interpretation [was] in Beethoven's music.

The rhythm in most of Bartók’s music is like prose. To make sense of it, you must group those notes, not play them mechanically. His piano sonata has been referred to as bitonal music. Bartók never in his life wrote bitonal or atonal music. I happened to have a letter by Bartók in which he says clearly that although people in 1925 liked to classify this kind of music, they liked to reach the things they did not understand. He never did the bitonal music. Some books writing about Bartók's music are very misleading. You have to be careful on reading those. The way they analyzed his music was wrong. The tonality of Bartók’s music is the same as Schubert's or Chopin's. He uses purely tonal music. He extends the tonality, but they are all within one tonal center.

Q: How do you feel about Bartók's edition of Bach's WTC?

S: First, he used it for his teaching purpose. Second, there is a Bach society edition which published a very original edition of
Bach. (Urtext means the first edition prepared by the composer, not the manuscript. There is the Beethoven Urtext sonata edition, but there is no Mozart Urtext nor Bach Urtext edition.) Bach did not write tempo indications, phrasings, or dynamics. What he wrote was notes. Therefore, we should be very careful to select the edition of Bach’s music. Bartók’s edition is very reliable. He put in his phrasing that is very reliable for me, since Bartók was a very great musician and composer himself. So what he edited in the music, I could trust. There are hundreds of editions which are totally nonsense. Looking for a good edition is very difficult. That is why Bartók himself edited the music. He put in his own ideas. He doubled octaves if it was necessary. He did Mozart’s piano works, which is also a wonderful work.

Lots of the information I gave to you is against the standard normal situation. Living with those traditional mistakes, you will find that Bartók is wonderfully opened-minded, with lots of wisdom and lots of knowledge. So when he showed you something, that was very reliable.

Bartók liked to do things right. That is why he just sat down and played it. Bartók was many things, but basically, he made sense of things. He was an artist and had lots of knowledge. Bartók’s recording of his Allegro Barbaro is the best recording I have ever heard.

Q: Székely said that Bartók changed some paragraphs for her small hands to play. Did you have the same experiences?
S: Bartók had small hands; he could hardly reach a tenth. So, he had to do something for small hands to play. In Bartók's Dance Suite, that I happened to have the chance to play in 1945. Bartók changed the text for me. He cut out and added some measures for me to play. When I played his Allegro Barbaro, he asked me to play more at the end of the piece. Therefore, he changed things all the time to make things not so difficult.

Tibor Serly orchestrated five or six of the Mikrokosmos pieces for string quartet. It is published now. He then played for Bartók, and Bartók was very delighted. He himself transcribed some of the Beethoven works for two pianos. Those are wonderful works, even better than the original one. In addition, he made the piano version for the concerto and orchestra. The piano version is unplayably difficult. He usually prepared the piano version of the orchestra part by himself when he played concertos. He changed things all the time.

Q: How do you feel about his Mikrokosmos?

S: Mikrokosmos is not a piano method. It is just the collection of many little pieces. Mikrokosmos means "a little world." with all kinds of wonderful pieces. The rhythm is Bulgarian, but the melody is Bartók's. There are lots of master pieces. They are always tonal. He just used the major and minor scales, whole-tone scales,
pentatonic scales, and all sorts of scales, but they all center on one tonal system.
APPENDIX C

STORM BULL BIOGRAPHY AND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Biography

Storm Bull: American college music educator and concert pianist. He was professor of music and head of the Department of Piano in the College of Music of the University of Colorado. He was born October 13, 1913 at Chicago, Illinois, to Eyvind Hagerup and Agnes (Hagerup) Bull. Both of his grandfathers were first cousins of Edvard Grieg, his great uncle was the violin virtuoso Ole Bull, and his father was an accomplished composer and formerly associate-editor of the Music News magazine in Chicago. A 1931 graduate of the University High School in Chicago, Bull was educated at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, 1919-31; the Chicago Musical College under summer scholarships, 1927-28, 1930; the Encole Normale de Music in Paris, 1931-32; the University of Budapest, 1933-35; and the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest, Artist's Diploma 1932-35. He studied piano with Louise Robyn, Stella Roberts, and Adolph Weidig at Chicago (1919-31); Perey Grainger at Chicago (1927-28, 1930); Lazare Levy at Paris (1931-32); and Béla Bartók at Budapest (1932-35). Since his debut recital at Chicago on January 25, 1925, Mr. Bull has
concertized extensively throughout America and Europe, including his first European appearance as piano soloist with the Oslo (Norway) Philharmonic Orchestra on September 29, 1929; giving the first American performance of the Bartók Second Piano Concerto with Chicago Symphony Orchestra on March 2, 1939; and appearances with other symphony orchestras and in numerous piano recitals. Mr. Bull was a member of the faculty of the Chicago Conservatory of Music, 1941-42; Baylor University, 1945-47; and the University of Colorado which he joined in September, 1947. During World War II he served in the U.S. Navy, 1942-45. He is a member of the AAUP, the American College of Musicians (honorary), the MTNA, the NGPT, and Phi Mu Alpha. (Ernest Kay, 1984, pp. 132-133)

Transcript of the Interview with Storm Bull

Interview Date: July 5, 1994
Place: Boulder, Colorado

Q: Why did you want to study with Bartók?

B: I first went to Ecole Normale de Musique (Paris) in 1931 to study with Mr. Lazare Levy. He had small hands, therefore he emphasized mostly piano technique-finger exercises. After studying one year with him, I decided to switch to someone else. At about the same time, I had a chance to hear Bartók's performance and his works. In
1933, I enrolled at the Budapest Academy of Music and studied with him.

My piano lessons were at his house. I remembered that my lessons were usually set on Monday at one o'clock. They lasted one hour and a half or two. Sometimes, we had a long talk after the piano lesson. Bartók wanted me to help him with English and explain to him American culture. Therefore, we almost talked about anything other than music.

Bartók never taught composition. I was also interested in composition at that time. He would only give some general comments about my works. That was just an outline, nothing detailed. Since he did not want to spoil his intuition to the music. He was afraid that he would become too self-conscious and only think of his own music. Therefore, he did not set any theory about composition. That can also apply to his piano teaching.

Q: Could you describe his piano teaching?

B: Bartók’s teaching had two characteristics. First, he always asked students to memorize the music and play it up to tempo at the first lesson. He thought that it was the students’ responsibilities to figure out those basic elements, such as memory and technique. If you found the difficult passages and asked for help, he would just sit down and show you the way he did. He did not talk about the details of technique unless you asked. Neither did he mark things on your music unless it was necessary.
Musical expressions and accents are few exceptions. The only way to learn it was just doing the same thing he did.

Besides, he would ask you to play the entire piece without stopping the first time. Then he demonstrated his way of playing at the other piano. He started making corrections and frequently asked you to repeat until he was satisfied with the changes.

He never asked me to do any finger exercises. A selection from Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, edited by Arpad Szendy was the only piano studies he wanted me to play. He suggested that those difficult passages should be solved in thinking of the musical way rather than the finger exercises. With anything demanding unusual stamina, Bartók would suggest for me to practice until the passage could be played twice through without stopping.

Second, he asked for absolute accuracy of musical markings and dynamics. For instance, he thought that the *dot* has only half value and *staccato* should be played as fast as you can. The *dash* above notes "---" means the slight separation between notes and needs a little bit of accent. *Sostenuto* marking represents the moral emphasis. It sounds like a *ritardando*. Every detail of the length or the dynamics of those markings should be played to mathematical accurateness first. After that, you were allowed to have your own expressions and be able to free from it.

Bartók taught interpretation by asking questions which would lead the student along the right track. The individual interpretation was encouraged under the circumstance of being conscious of its design. When he explained how he thought a phrase
should be played, you were not asked to imitate, but you needed to reason out the way he did.

While playing his piano suite, op. 14, Bartók asked me to actually feel the three measures of rest at the end of the music (Figure 6). In his opinion, the phrases are the continuous flows of the music. Music does not stop until the very end of the measure, even if it is a three measure of rest. You have to feel the continuous flow of music over those rests.

There are those composers whose greatest gifts were not necessarily musical, but were constructed. They had the capability to construct. Beethoven would probably have been an outstanding architect, engineer, or whatever else he chose to be. I think that one can also be certain Beethoven threw away many good musical ideas, but they were not practically developed. No one can claim that the motive of the beginning on his Symphony No. 5 is the musical idea of any merit.

Mozart came out with ideas that were complete. But when you find them in Beethoven, the piece of counterpoint is accurate. When you find it in Mozart, most often it is not. Mozart did not write counterpoint; he wrote the song of counterpoint. He wrote the thing as that was the sound in his mind. You can tell, when you play Beethoven, at this point it is a good idea to do a certain thing and he does it.

Therefore what do we have? We have Ravel who was not an Impressionist at all. In fact, neither was Debussy. After all, they were retarded philosophically by many decades. Then, the
philosophy of Impressionism came in. What they did was write music which other people can easily describe as Impressionism because of the things they did, just like describing Mozart's music by saying it is Alberti bass. It has nothing to do with it.

They are a 180 degrees apart from one another philosophically. You have Bach in Baroque, but he was not Baroque. Telemann wrote better counterpoint than Bach did. But Bach wrote music. And the easiest thing for him to write was contrapuntal music. Why was he not recognized again? I am telling another 50 years old later. He skipped; Bach was the man who wrote in Baroque style romantically.

Now, what is the Romantic period? Here again, now we come into the philosophy, the type of thing I discussed with Bartók, but not necessarily coming to the conclusion that I am here now drawing from it, but the general picture which would be presented. And I would say for now, that the Romantic period starts when individuals, instead of saying that they could create by the grace of God, say they could create because they were human. At that point, it became possible to be the hero. After all, what is more typical of the Romantic period than thinking of someone standing on the top of the hill and holding his sword on high. It is corny, but it is really true in the 19th century.

All right, did you understand the placing of the music - the placing of the arts inside of the philosophical concept? It is not to say that everybody has the same concept. I think it can be said that any period becomes outdated as the means that have been
presented. In other words, we said the means of the Baroque period is contrapuntal and such. When the counterpoint became more important than the music, it was over. When the richness of the sound of the large orchestra and the opulence of the sound became more important than the message, the Romantic style was over. And we always have this, that when the means becomes important, the message suffers. Things of that kind discussed would surely be part of his teaching, even though I do not know he was directly attempting to teach it or not.

Q: What did you discuss about the musical performance there?

B: He never volunteered anything disagreeable about anyone. But if you asked a direct question about how he thought about somebody's performance or something else, you could expect the most direct answer that might be the most undiplomatic...but never volunteered. If you asked a thing, you had to be ready for the answer that you might not like.

He was a short man. I lost about three and half inches in my height, largely due to World War II. I was a frog man in the Navy. I had a paralyzed left arm after the war and I overcame it all. I have other injuries which kept me from playing piano for the past 25 years. But nevertheless, my attitude towards performance became better. Once I got out of the concert business, I realized how much one can learn from teaching. You have to go back in your own way of doing things to see how did you do it.
Q: How do you feel about his interpretation of his own works?

B: Bartók was not teaching the piano, but teaching music. Then his answers were, in general, far more philosophical. I wonder if in fact he tried to be specific in respect to things such as crescendos, diminuendos, how much putting in the metronomic markings, etc. In all these things, he was quite consistent about what it was. He never volunteered to have you learn one of his own pieces. Everything that I learned was because I asked. I do not know whether he did or did not like to teach his own pieces. But in general, he found it was difficult to teach his own works.

I can give you a specific here again related to his own pieces. He said that most frequently other people's performance of his music was almost invariably too heavy. Now we have to go into what does it mean to be heavy or otherwise, because he certainly was not talking about weight. What he was talking about is the heaviness...You see, the piano is not an ideal instrument to do things other than creating illusions. There are no ways of producing a better sound. You cannot do any of the things that you can do in the harpsichord.

By the way, I studied harpsichord in England in the summer of 1932. The thing is that you can create an illusion of heaviness by sounding slightly overweight. You create the illusion of crispness by almost having slight detachment of it. You can also make the sound more or less percussive. You can do it by overlapping, which
keeps the entrance of the new sound from being as noticeably percussive because you have it overlapped by the sound before.

When you cut off the sound on the piano, you can cut it off suddenly, or bit by bit. So you have some control over the weight that the sound is struck. In all of these things, you have complete control over the relative dynamics between various notes. Bartók was very very insistent on playing different dynamic levels simultaneously. There is no such thing as equality of sound or the evenness of sound. If you play every note physically equal, it seems to increase. In other words, the only way you get a quality is through the control of every quality. The degree of the quality - that is obviously up to the performer. But the concept was not only Bartók, but I think other performers will notice.

Certainly, he emphasized it a great deal during the time that I was there. He mentioned that every note you played either helped you or hurt you. There is no such thing that a note simply "comes along for the ride." While playing musical phrases, you have to know which one is important to be a support, which is important to take over. It is important to know if it allows other things to be noticed. It is impossible to give a completely artistic performance that pieced everything together. In other words, take a marvelous pianist, such as Glenn Gould, who completely ruined his spontaneity by piecing it together. Now, why would this be the case? A part of this could come out of my discussion with Bartók. We talked about movies and stages. The thing good about the stage is that all of the unintended things are taken by the good performer and the growth
comes out from them. The result is not perfection, but excitement. Gould’s performance is a degree of perfection and admiration but lack of excitement. When you piece all the things together, you are not excited. It does not make you really well up and have the feeling. But how does one learn to be spontaneous? You travel. How spontaneous can travel be? By planning. Simply say you are going to Italy. It is on Monday, at 10 o’clock. You want to go to town B. You suddenly find out that the trains going over there are on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9 o’clock. You are already an hour late. If it turns before you got over there, you knew what could be done. Then before 9 o’clock, you thought: “Do I want to go to such and such places?” The only thing that permits spontaneity is planning. The same is true in performance. If you cannot play it in every way, you cannot play it in one way.

What happened when you performed? Among the things that happened, suddenly you think about things you have not thought about before, right? So you must think about it before. For instance, your left hand is going down. You looked at it and it looks like a stranger. You said where were you going? That must happen in practice; taking a stop and name it. It is very, very difficult. But the more automatic it becomes, the more dangerous it becomes. The more dangerous it becomes, the more scared you get, and the less spontaneous you are. You come to a place that you do not know.

Therefore, in Bartók’s general approach, if there was a technical way you could not do, do it! Learn it! If you could not play by weight, learn to play it by weight, and learn what the good
points are. Why do we have all the different technical ways of playing? Because no one way is done at all, which tells us if we are going to play all kinds of music, we had better be able to play by many ways of technique.

Fine, if you want to keep your elbows out, remember one thing: that your elbows only go horizontally. So you have to move them up and down from your shoulders. If you want to make your elbows go up and down, you have to get your elbows in. It does not make any difference whether you like it or not like it, no matter how uncomfortable it is. So you see Glenn Gould sit playing piano like this...all kinds of things that happen. For instance, the lower my wrist is down, then the more difficult it is to raise my fingers. You cannot have all things doing it one way. Therefore you have to decide not what way do I want to play the piano, but what results do I want?

It is ridiculous to use only the fingerings that are intended for playing scales at an examination. Where you learn from the finger exercises, those are fine for doing that. But you do not have that in music. The scale is long. It goes from a given place to a given place. It has certain points of accent, or lack of accent. It is going to be crescendo, decrescendo, or curved. Fingers are used accordingly.

With specific respect to how one brings out one note as opposed to another, for instance, in a triad: C-E-G, Bartók liked to emphasize that there was only one way to make one note louder than another, that is, the finger that's placed on that note must
travel faster than the others. Therefore, if the notes all end up together and one has to be louder, the finger on the one that has to be loudest must be the fastest in order to end up there at the same time. This is the way of doing it.

There is another way which Bartók did not mention. I am not certain if he was aware of it. He was not, to my knowledge, aware of mechanical things, although he certainly was scientifically inclined. He loved Bach's music and studied it most carefully.

The other way of doing that is when you have the action of the keyboard; when you press the key down slowly, you cannot feel where the jack is. If we press the first part of the key down, the hammer is going up three times as fast as the key is going down. However, the hammer will be six times faster when we keep pressing the key down.

Now, let us suggest that in the three-note example. Two notes stop in the descent before get to the 6:1 ratio and only one continues through the 6:1 ratio. When you place your fingers in a slightly curved way, these two fingers, which you do not want to bring out, do not go all the way down to the bottom of the keyboard. Then you stop before it gets to the jack. This way will make one note louder than the other.

You cannot do it by weight. Let me explain why. If you put an elephant's foot on the keyboard, and then release, it is already in contact with the keyboard. Then it will play no louder than anything else that is able to overcome the resistance of that keyboard. The
only thing that will happen is that the keyboard itself will collapse after the note was played.

Then these ideas are certainly part of what he would have passed on. Therefore the explanations that I give are my own, but the conclusions may very well have been also by Bartók. After 60 years, it is difficult to know where every idea comes from. So I do not pretend that. But I do pretend that it is unlikely that one builds everything all alone. Therefore I must give the possibility of credit to others for ideas I have.

Q: You mentioned that Bartók never talked about details of the technique unless you asked him. And then did he just demonstrate it?

B: He would simply say that this is the way I do. He would demonstrate the way he did it, and perhaps his method of practicing or something else. During the entire time when I was there, Bartók always used music when he played in public. He never played from memory in public. But he never played with music when he spoke in his lessons. It was all memorized, but he never memorized music for public performance.

One of the early things that he asked me to do was sight-read the string quartets. I was not very good at it. So before he took me off that, I did all the volumes of the Scarlatti sonatas and then read the string quartets and orchestra scores, which he thought was an important part of being in the music period. So I think that
is something specific and can indicate to some extent a more musical approach, rather than a purely instrumental approach of a single instrument.

I was supposed to find out at least some ways of doing the music before I went to his lessons. It was always up to tempo and memorized. In fact, he no longer really wanted to teach piano at that time, and therefore he did not accept students who were incapable of doing what I was doing.

Q: Have you used any of Bartók's editions of standard repertoire?

B: I did not even know of it until years later. I wrote a series of three articles on all of the piano works of Bartók for the *Repertoire Magazine* way back in 1951. Up until that time, I don't think I was even aware of the edition that Bartók had, because he did not use it in his lessons. But for Mozart, he insisted on using Urtext. If he specified anything, he would attempt to get to the original edition.

Q: Székely, one of Bartók's students, mentions that Bartók did not like to use too much pedal when he played Bach's music. Do you agree?

B: Yes. You will find that the generation of your parents to be quite threatening. The generation of your grandparents can be fine because they no longer threaten you. If the generation of your
parents threatens, then you try to do something that is distinctly different. If you are threatened by the red-velvet, the heavy curtains, and the dark colors of the Victorian period, you will paint walls light. It does not mean one is artistic and the other is not. You just tend to go away from that which threatens you.

Up to the time when Bartók went to the Budapest Academy, he had never been inside the present boundary of Hungary. He was born in the area now between Yugoslavia and Rumania. He then went to the area which is now part of Rumania. He had never really been inside Hungary as we know it today.

I remembered a painting that hung on his wall. He asked me about it one time. It consisted of a series of dots, some straight lines, and some other things. With it was a little pamphlet that explained if the three dots were here instead of being in that position, it would have been a woman bending over picking vegetables or a mammoth across the ocean. He quite seriously asked me if I could make sense [of it].

He was thinking that I was younger, and then maybe I could be a little bit more in tune with the things that were going on at that time. Of course, obviously, I was incapable as anyone else knowing why those three dots turned around in this way would be the difference between the mammoth across the ocean and the woman bending over picking vegetables.

But he was making an effort to understand these things. He was of the generation that found it very difficult to “call a spade a spade.” With The Miraculous Mandarin, he only tried one opera and
then asked them not to act. He thought the business of acting, scenery, and put them all together... So what he had was a pantomime Ballade which is basically the story of a prostitute who has a number of clients she brings in to her bedroom. And upon getting them there, they are murdered and the money taken away from them.

The Miraculous Mandarin is a Mandarin who is brought in there, but who for some reason cannot be killed until compassion is shown for him. Now the basic thing here is not what you refer to as an easy access to neat entertainment. That I think is typical Bartók. He found it very, very difficult to be other than serious. He occasionally told humorous things from time to time. You will find that I have pulled a couple of them in those articles. But he still is certainly not an easy man for entertainment.

And the seriousness of intent? Well, when I first came to him, I do not know whether he told it to me is part of the general folklore that has been passed on at the Budapest Academy or that he honestly believed in something or other that would be true for me. But he said that the work I would be given to do would be no more than I should be able to accomplish in four to five hours a day.

Well in fact, I worked 10 hours a day, seven days a week, and still found it hard to get it all done. That was not something I was about to tell anyone. As for the other students, I had the feeling that we were all laboring under the same thing, thinking somebody else could do it. But you see the truth of the matter is, it probably
would be so if I knew how to practice. Now, how does one practice?

First of all, here at the University of Colorado when we instituted it many years ago, it was one of the first 10 of the country. Then, you had no piano lessons. People could not take care of that piano on their own; they could not go for the DMA. Therefore, they would occasionally go in to play for people, but not as a direct student of anyone. With Bartók, I think that that idea probably came to me as an extension of the way Bartók did. I think that a doctoral degree, as you are writing about things of this kind on that level, then the number one thing to remember above all else is I think this would be something of Bartók's influence to me. Bartók would never be threatened by anyone or any theory. He was always on his own. You've got to know what is in your mind. You never quote anybody to make it so. You quote somebody because you agree with them or disagree with them, and so whether directly that the time you quote them or in the footnote, you say why. But the quotation itself can never be unsupportive.

"So and so" having said it does not make it so. I believe that it is so because he said it for the following reasons. I think what he said is almost always nonsense. Therefore I quote it. That would be again, Bartók did try to give me an early twentieth century approach to the different styles of the different periods. Well, it does not make an awful lot of difference whether his approach to the different style was the right approach or not. The fact that there should be a different approach to the different
styles is the important thing. The important thing is not the conclusion, but how you reach the conclusion. If you reach a conclusion with which you no longer agree, even though you did not make a mistake, you will doubt you had the information. You did not have it. But the information you have if your way of reaching it was right, then what changes this is the information. But what is changing is your way of reaching it. So, the way of reaching it is more important than the conclusion.

Therefore, I would say that all of the talking in English in half hours all contributed to some of the philosophical approaches that I doubted day after day. Now, Bartók as a teacher, four hours in the afternoon is one thing, and Bartók as a teacher in a half hour I would not know.

Q: What was the relationship between you and Bartók at the music Academy?

B: I always called him “Mr. Bartók.” In fact, I have pictures and books and other things that he autographed “Sent to Mr. Storm Bull, Dear friend”. It was not until later years that I would get things from Bartók. But when I was a student there, I could not remember ever. First of all, you were bound to some extent by Hungarian mores. The mores would be the kind of manners and other things. I am talking about the culture, the whole thing that surrounds them as people.
The first year that I was in Budapest, I got a room at the dormitory in the University of Budapest. I felt good up there and I thought it would be fun. Whenever you saw one of the professors on the street, you stopped, clicked your heels, and saluted. You hardly ever expected even a nod or a return. But this was the general approach and there was a tremendous separation between teachers and students. I think that this is worthwhile making the distinction which we have in language, but which very few people make: the difference between the “Pupil” and the “Student.” A pupil is one who is taught, and a student is one who learns. You are a student for all your life if you are reasonable, but we hope not a pupil.

Q: Were you required to have recitals for the degree?

B: No, I did not give any recital there. I played in several towns and places and things of that kind, but not in an official way. In fact, the closest I had ever done in an official way at the Liszt Academy was in 1975, when I was visiting judge there deciding on who their honor students were going to be. That was it.

Their examinations were very, very formal. You brought in a grade book; you would find every grade that you ever got. You would come in with the other two students. At least this would be the rule of the Liszt Academy. There would be one or two examining professors plus a kind of a judge to sit over to the left. When you came in for the examination, you would wear striped trousers, a
dark, short jacket, black tie, white shirt, and black shoes and act absolutely just so. You would follow their orders and wait until you were told to sit down. First of all, they would look at the examining book. By the way, the professors who examined you would not be the ones with whom you studied. They would come down and say something like you had not got such a good grade in your third year and so on. They would go through the whole thing: what was good and what was not, you know. Then they would ask questions, and you would have literally a four-hour oral exam in the morning, followed by another four hours in the afternoon. Then your written examination was at the other time; that would also be another eight hours. You would be asked endless questions; you would be absolutely petrified!

Therefore, the whole thing was so formal that even though our relationship was far more informal, I called him "Mr. Bartók." In 1934, I came to his house. He had just finished the fifth string quartet. I came in and knocked on the outside door, but he could not hear it. So I just opened it and went in. He was working on some other things and without wearing a shirt. Next, he asked me to come back as soon as he had gotten dressed.

Next, he said he was having trouble with the written fifth string quartet. It had been commissioned by people at the congressional library. He was now sending out one of his copies. He wanted to insure them for the amount of money that would cost him to do all this time to get it done. And you could not send anything insured out of the country. You must remember, up to the
present time, this was probably the closest that he ever gotten anything resembling democracy. They never had democracy, or nothing resembling it. Before, they even had Communism for a year in 1919. Therefore, he could not send these things out. I must have told him that I was a friend of the Consular General in America. He said he wondered whether there was any way that I could suggest how he might conceivably get these to the Library of Congress. One of my roommates eventually married the daughter of the Consular General. I mentioned getting the fifth string quartet sent to the congressional library through the diplomatic mail box. I mean, that was a degree of personal contact which was far closer than the ordinary Hungarian students and a teacher, but...informal contact as we would understand in the United States.

Q: Did you have contact with Bartók's other students? Did you talk about music together?

B: My understanding is that there was a student even younger than I, the only other student who was there during that time. I, up to this date, could not find out who he was. We did not know any students over there. There was no social life among students at all. Besides, the Liszt Academy was a dirty, old building. You could not imagine spending even an hour [there] if you did not have to.

I did not even know any faculty either. Very slightly, I got to know Zoltán Kodály. Even in the classes, attendance was not required. If you wanted to fail completely, that was up to you.
At the end of each year, the top pianist or the top teacher in each group could keep the student that he wanted, not take the student he wanted, but keep the student he wanted. For any student that he no longer wanted, the option would have to be picked up by another teacher or you would be out of the school. You could have an absolute disaster.

Q: How about Dohnányi at that time? Did you have any contact with him?
B: Dohnányi was the head of composition. He was also the conductor of the symphony and the principal individual for the radio. He was the “big cheese” in that. He and Bartók had one time been very good friends. Dohnányi was very important in assisting Bartók from time to time. Dohnányi was very much a political person. He played his cards right and got all these things done. Bartók did not want to teach composition, of course. Therefore, Bartók was the head of piano, and Dohnányi was the head of composition. In large measure, he was far more a “big wheel” at the Academy than was Bartók.

A very, very strange thing is that the last concerto that Dohnányi wrote, while he was at Florida State, shows he was eventually influenced by Bartók. It is very interesting! The thing is that the personality of a composer shows through to the point where you can recognize even though you do not know the piece; you can know the composer.
Q: Why was piano education so successful in Hungary?

B: Hungary is a fantastic country. During the 30's and 40's and following also the World War II in the 50's, and perhaps the 60's, over half of the major orchestras in South America, and many numbers in the United States, for instance Anton Dorati, Eugene Ormandy, and numbers of others were all graduates from the Liszt Academy. They also completely ran the music industry.

When I came from Paris to Budapest, Budapest was a much more glittering town than Paris. The question now comes why. Hungarian is completely different from most European languages. There is a slight structure relationship to Finnish, but my knowledge of Hungarian never helped me any with my Finnish.

In 1848, Hungary won their release from the Austrians in war. They were against the World War I with their one vote in Parliament and they lost 60% of all their natural resources and 40% of their land following the World War I including even land in Austria. During the entire time that I was there, I never saw the map of Hungary without the parts that had been separated from it been shown separated. As late as the 70's, it was impossible to go from Rumania to Hungary, getting a visa at the boundary. You had to get that back in Budapest. You could not order a hotel room from Budapest through a travel agency in Rumania. They were still complete enemies to one another.

All this territory was given away, and most of their natural resources were taken. Therefore, they were thoroughly isolated,
then felt the need to excel on their own alone. They had a characteristic which in my time they described as the Hungarian: one who got into the revolving door behind you, and emerged ahead of you without your knowing it happened.

The first time in my life that I ever saw an artificial wave in a big pool was a hotel in 1932, in Hungary. No place else in the world had it. The first subway in the world was in Budapest. This was in the early 30's. This was a different country. George Sándor and a number of pianists there were all remarkable musicians from the Budapest Academy of Music. I do not think it was because they were smarter. It was because they worked harder. You do not have to be smarter than anybody else. Who cares how hard you worked. And the more you have done on your own, the easier it gets later on. So I would say, the Hungarians forced their way through.

They were working harder, and they pooled their resources. They had only one Liszt Academy of Music. It was mighty hard to get in. There was only one cost for the examinations; the tuition was free.

In fact, I was not very impressed when I was there. Young people always thought something must be better somewhere else. Certainly I was going along with the best of them. There had to be something better than that because you knew somebody certainly was better than you. There must be! Also, when the standards are subjective - which they have to be - we are dealing on a subjective field and how can you say what is the best. And the young also want to have the right answer.
I think that the difference is not whether one young person is that way or not. It is the degree to whichever young person is that way... some more and some less. There was a little competition between the students because they really did know very little about one another. Bartók at the Academy taught the usual master class. And, you could sit in and hear what the other students were doing if you had nothing better to do at that time. You were not required to come to the master class.

I had so many subjects and other things to do, both in France and the United States. In general, I did not attend many classes. The private lessons that I had were with Bartók. I paid to him directly. It was about eight or nine dollars per lesson. I really do not remember the exact amount.

Q: Do you think your teaching style has been influenced by Bartók? In what aspect?

B: Certainly, I cannot help doing that. I am a part of all of the things which I have been told. Some I did not like have influenced me one way. Some that I like have influenced another. What I am today, they all have contributed to it. There is no question about it.

I continue to change, but not necessarily away from or towards what they had done to me. I do not think my approach to music, if I could have duplicated exactly what Bartók did, would have made it work as well as perhaps it did for him, or not as well. I really do not know how good a teacher he was for others. There
are not all that many people who would be that independent. I was sufficiently independent. Therefore, I did not go back to the United States once in four years.

Q: Bartók was a good friend of Kodály. Did you study any of Kodály's piano works with Bartók?

B: Yes, he was not only a good friend with Kodály, they [also] musically criticized one another. I played some of his works, but I do not remember what they were. His works were just like any other repertoire. He just had to try them all.

I waded through and did not have the opportunity...until after the summer I left him. Then I worked on my first recital following being with him. He said once to me, "You want to learn something that is hard?" Being a young person, I certainly accepted the challenge. Then he gave me some pieces which were extremely hard to play. That is the reason I included them in my recital program.

You did not play a thing for him until you got it right. You played it for him until you thought you understood what they were to work on for it. I do not think whether he cared about it or not. He gave you the idea; if you went on to something else, so be it. For instance, he gave you the repertoire. I do remember what he did not want. I had asked for some of the standard repertoire in the way of concerti. He said, "All right, anything except the Tchaikovsky."
Obviously, he did not like it at all. I was sufficiently far from it. There was no threat to me at all.

Q: Any other 20th century repertoire that he suggest you learn?

B: Yes, I remember that he had me learn Stravinsky's *Rag Time*. I suspected one of the reasons he did it was because it is so difficult to figure it out. He wanted to hear what was it like. That was one of the things he simply could not sight-read. And I had the feeling that I brought it to him, so he could hear what it sounded like.

Q: Did he have any preference of piano repertoire?

B: I played very little Beethoven with him... a great many Mozart things, Schumann's couple of sonatas, and a fair amount of Debussy. It was a standard repertoire. He was more inclined to mark music than someone else. He sometimes used a V above the note to know the emphasis. That is borrowed from poetry, as you can see from his music- very sparsely written description.
Table 1. Comparison of WTC arrangements by Bach and Bartók

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APPENDIX E
LIST OF Bartók’s PIANO WORKS

Solo Piano Works of Béla Bartók

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<td>2nd version: piano and orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>For Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908-11</td>
<td>Three Burlesques, Op. 8c</td>
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1908-10 Seven Sketches, Op. 9
1909-10 Two Roumanian Dances, Op. 8a
1909-10 Four Dirges
1910 Deux Images, Op. 10:
   I. Flowering
   II Village Dance)
1911 Allegro Barbaro
1913 First Term at the piano
1914-17 Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs- for piano
1914-17 Three Hungarian Folk Tunes- for piano
1915 Sonatina ( I Bagpipers II. Bear Dance III. Finale)
1915 Roumanian Folk Dances- for piano:
   I Joc Cu Bata-Stick Dance
   II Braul-Waistband Dance
   III Pe Loc- On the Spot
   IV Buciumeana-Hornpipe Dance
   V Poarga Romaneasca-Roumanian Children’s Dance
   VI Maruntel- Small Step
1915 Roumanian Christmas Songs(20)- for piano
1916 Suite For Piano, Op. 14
1918 Three Studies, Op. 18
1920 Improvisations(8), Op. 20-for piano
1926 Sonata
1926 Out of Doors:
   I With drums and pipes
   II Barcarolla
   III Musettes
   IV Night’s Music
1926  Nine Pieces:
      1-4  Four dialogues
      5  Minuettino
      6  Chanson
      7  Marcia delle bestie
      8.  Tambourine
      9.  Preludio-All 'Ungherese

1916-27  Three Rondos
1936    Petite Suite
1926-39 Mikrokosmos- 6 volumes

Chamber Music with Piano

1898    Piano Quartet
1898    Three Songs, for voice and piano
1902    Four Songs, for voice and piano
1903    Violin Sonata
1904    Quintet, for piano and strings
1905-06 Twenty Hungarian Folk Songs, for voice and piano
1915    Roumanian Songs (9), for voice and piano
1916    Five Songs, Op. 15, for voice and piano
1916    Five Songs, Op. 16, for voice and piano
1917    Four Slovak Folk Songs, for 4-part mixed chorus and piano
1817    Eight Hungarian Folk Songs, for voice and piano
1921    Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano
1922  Sonata No. 2, for violin and piano
1924  Five Village Scenes  for voice and piano
1926  Concerto No. 1 for piano and orchestra
1928  Rhapsody No. 1, for violin and piano
1928  Rhapsody No. 2, for violin and piano
1929  Twenty Hungarian Folk Songs for voice and piano
1930-31 Concerto No. 2 for piano and orchestra
1937  Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion
1938  Contrasts, for violin, clarinet and piano
1945  Unfinished Cycle of Ukrainian songs for voice and piano
1945  I Bought Barley (Ukrainian Folk Songs)for voice and piano
1945  Concerto No. 3 for piano and orchestra
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