On the Persistence of an Iconic Misrepresentation: Two Musical Examples by Béla Bartók

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Example 1

*Bärentanz – Bear Dance* (Sonatina, 1915)

Ex. 1 \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \frac{6}{8} \) \( \frac{12}{8} \)

Ex. 2 \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \frac{6}{8} \) \( \frac{12}{8} \)

Ex. 3 \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \frac{6}{8} \) \( \frac{12}{8} \)

Ex. 4 \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \frac{6}{8} \) \( \frac{12}{8} \)

Bartók at the Piano,
Hungaroton, 1981

c. 1920, Berlin?

(*) “jocul ursului”, aufgezeichnet in Vancsfalva (Oncesti) Komitat Máramaros

Edition Schott
A boy’s dance from north Transylvania, today part of Romania.
Transcriptions


For Violin and Piano: arr. Endre Gertler, 1931

\[ \text{Tempo} = 66 - 48'' \]

** (1971)
Dances of Transylvania II

... “The bassoon and the tuba give to the second movement the character of a ‘bear dance’, deep and rumbling. The single melody is Moderato in tempo with a taut rhythm, and when it is taken up by the violins it slowly dies away as if receding into the distance.”

**Jocul ursului** (Peasant Original, 1913)

Vera Lampert, ed., *Bartók népdal-feldolgozásainak forrásjegyzéke*  
Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1980
Jocul ursului (Peasant Original, 1913)

Béla Bartók, Volksmusik der Rumänen von Maramures (1918)
Bear Dance = Ancient Pattern

4-line, 7-syllables, pentatonic
' = caesura after second line

A – Mi Re Mi Re Do La Do
B – Mi Re Mi Re La So La '
C – So La Do Do Do La Do
D – So La Do Do Do La La
“The Last of the Dancing Bears”


“This dancing bear will soon be rescued from this gypsy village and taken to the sanctuary.”

www.awionline.org
Dancing Accents?
Bärentanz – Bear Dance, 1915

Béla Bartók auf der Orgel

Bartók on the Organ

= 80 - 41"

Oskar Gottlieb Barr
an der Rieger-Orgel
Neander-Kirche Düsseldorf (1976)
**Bärentanz – Bear Dance***(Sonatina, 1915)***

Jánosi Ensemble, Hungaroton, 1991

= 84 - 51”

Bartók at the Piano, Hungaroton, 1981

= 96 - 29”

c. 1920, Berlin

(*) “jocul ursului”, aufgezeichnet in Vancsfalva (Oncesti) Komitat Máramaros

Aufführungsdauer 32”

Edition Schott
Example 2

Bartók, *Piano Sonata* (1926), II mvt.
Bartók’s *Parlando, Parlando rubato, Rubato*

“In Hungarian music, the symbol: — — — above or below the notes, always signifies a *parlando* articulation”

György Sebők

“the vowels of our language divide into two groups: short vowels and long vowels. The discrimination in the pronunciation of the two kinds is very marked, very distinct, especially in emphatic speech; the long vowels have approximately double the length of the short ones...; this circumstance is an intrinsic difference between the vowel sound system of the English, French, and German languages, and the Hungarian...”

*Béla Bartók Essays: Harvard Lectures, 384.*
Siratók

Parlando, \( \frac{1}{32} \)

2 Clicks

A Magyar Népzene Tára
( Corpus musicae popularis hungaricae Vol. V, 1966)

Siratók
Sostenuto e pesante

Single-note *parlando*  [speech rhythm]
On Peasant dirges

- "When Bartók played for me some records he had made of improvised lamentations, or rather orations, it was a gripping revelation. Sorrowing peasant women who had lost some dear one—a child, or a grown son—had been induced somehow to face the (to them) terrifying recording machine, chant into it their names and ages, describe their grievous loss in unrhymed song (or rather Sprechgesang); they would sometimes break down, sobbing, in the middle of a record...."


- "It is musical prose on the borders of music and speech, and its 'music' is only a variation in pitch. It has no rhythm except speech rhythm, and there are no clearly defined bars or regularly repeated rhythmic formulae...."


- "gejammert"

  Bartók on Trauerlieder
  *Volksmusik der Rumänen von Maramures*, 1923 (Introduction)
A Magyar Népzene Tára
*(Corpus musicae popularis hungaricae Vol. V, 1966), *Siratók*

*sirató*

*siralom*

*jaj*

“Alas, damned war, damned shell, that robbed you of your life in a moment, my dearest, kindest, suffering man!
Alas, where shall I go, where shall I meet you; for I’ve been looking for you all the time during these fifteen years, but I could never find you! Haven’t I been roaming to and fro, looking for you high and low, yet I could not find you anywhere!”

Corpus musicae popularis hungaricae V. No.160
Second Piano Concerto
II mvt. *Adagio* b. 39-60

Recorded in 1938 in Budapest.
Ernest Ansermet, conductor.

Fragments - Bartók Record Archives -
Hungaroton 1981
Three Elements:

1. Single-note repetition

2. Abrupt voice breaks

“Very characteristic features include the ending of some of the sections in which the shortened final tones, produced with a break of the voice, give the effect of stylized sobs.”

Bartók, Rumanian Folk Music, vol. II, Introduction

3. Round figure

3 Clicks
Bartók, *Piano Sonata* (1926), II mvt.

[Bartók II mvt.](http://www.cbc.ca/radio2/cod/concerts/20080926langl)
If it says not found, click X to close.

[Bartók II mvt](http://www.cbc.ca/radio2/cod/concerts/20080926langl)
If it says not found, click X to close.
Click #8 for Sonata II.
Sonata II mvt. Performed by two pianists

** **

** (1981)
“Very characteristic features include the ending of some of the sections in which the shortened final tones, produced with a **break of the voice**, give the effect of stylized sobs.”

Bartók

*Rumanian Folk Music* vol. II, Introduction
# Bocet (Text)
Lament for dead mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Draga mele, maica mele (2x)</em></td>
<td>My dear, my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dumne (?) maica cu caru</em></td>
<td>Take me away with the hearse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eu ramii cu doru/domoru (?)</em></td>
<td>I remain yearning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Trage-mi-te clopot tare (2x)</em></td>
<td>Let the bell toll loud for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Trageti clopotele tare (2x)</em></td>
<td>Make the bells sound loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Da sa marga sanatele</em></td>
<td>To carry the sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pa la toate neamurile (2x)</em></td>
<td>To all the relatives/community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intinde brinca peste pragu (2x)</em></td>
<td>Reach out (with your hand) over the threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sa ma dai torta cu draga (2x)</em></td>
<td>To give me light (torchlight/candlelight) with love.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Folk Music of Romania  
Collected & Recorded in Romania by Béla Bartók  
Ethnic Folkways Library (1951), Side I, band 5.

[Text transcribed from the recording and translated by Rodica Ieta (2004)]
Bocet
Lament for dead mother

“I hope this makes some sense. It’s a simple song, but I realize how much background there is to each line, as we are so remote from this kind of tradition.”

Piano Sonata, II mvt.

“... it is still a surprise. Here again it seems that Bartók ends a movement by creating an abrupt change to cut off a process that has no natural conclusion.”

“The final 3-3 thus completes a type of deceptive cadence, the function of which is to end the piece percussively and sharply…” p.77.

“Thus the concluding events of all three movements of the Sonata contain some elements of the arbitrary or the unprepared.” p.84.

(Paul Wilson, The Music of Béla Bartók, 1992)
Un peu gris...

« Paul Dukas décrivait la fin des Nuages pour orchestre comme ‘une agonie grise doucement teintée de blanc’. ‘Un peu gris’: nous lisons ces mots en tête de la deuxième Burlesque de Béla Bartók. Cette grisaille automnale qui a la couleur de la poussière et de la cendre n’évoque-t-elle pas les ciels debussystes? Le gris représente en quelque sorte la source neutre et informe de toutes les tonalités. On dirait que la musique, par jeu, feint de se perdre dans l’océan gris de la prose. »


“Paul Dukas described the end of Debussy’s Nuages for orchestra as ‘grey agony lightly tinted with white.’ ‘Un peu gris’: we read those words at the head of Bartók’s second Burlesque op.8. Autummal greyness, which has the color of dust and ashes: does it not evoke Debussyst sky? Grey represents the neutral source and informs all optical tonalities.”

Un peu gris...

(a bit drunk...)
(a bit tipsy...)
Fin

www.damjanabratuz.ca

<Bartokiana>
Bartók, *Piano Sonata* (1926), II mvt.
Accents