



BARTÓK

WORLD COMPETITION BUDAPEST  
String Quartet 2021

MEGHÍVÓ

# BARTÓK VONÓSNÉGYESEI

A Bartók Archivum

nemzetközi konferenciája [angol nyelven]  
a Zeneakadémia Bartók Világversenyének keretében

Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Zenetudományi Intézet

BARTÓK TEREM

2021. OKTÓBER 29., 10 ÓRA

*A rendezvény csak száját és orrot fedő maszkban látogatható!*

**BARTÓK: THE STRING QUARTETS**

An International Colloquium  
organized by the Budapest Bartók Archives  
in association with the Bartók World Competition at the  
Liszt Academy

**Bartók Hall, Institute for Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities**

**10 AM 29 OCTOBER 2021**

*In memory of János Kárpáti*

10:00 *Greetings:*

**Andrea VIGH** [President of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music]

**Pál RICHTER** [Director of the Institute for Musicology]

*Chair:* **Veronika KUSZ** [Archives and Research Group for 20th and 21st-Century Hungarian Music, Institute for Musicology]

10:10 **László VIKÁRIUS** [Bartók Archives / Liszt Academy of Music]: **Introduction to the Conference on Bartók's String Quartets**

10:20 **László SOMFAI** [Bartók Archives / Liszt Academy of Music]: **Bartók's Most Daring Concept of a Palindromic Structure: The Sonata-Form Opening Movement of the Fifth Quartet**

11:00 *Coffee break*

11:20 **François DELÉCLUSE** [Institut de recherche en musicologie, Paris]: **New Insights into Debussy's String Quartet Sketches**

12:00 **Yusuke NAKAHARA** [Bartók Archives]: **Concealed Fragmentariness: On the Composition Process of Bartók's String Quartets**

12:40 *Lunch break*

14:00 **Gianmario BORIO** [Università di Pavia / Institute of Music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice]: **Thematic Structures and Formal Ideas in the Fourth String Quartet of Béla Bartók**

14:40 **Zsombor NÉMETH** [Bartók Archives]: **The Fourth of the Fourth: On the Genesis of the Allegretto, pizzicato Movement of Béla Bartók's Fourth String Quartet**

15:20 *Coffee break*

16:00 – 17:45 **Festive Programme on the Occasion of the 60th Jubilee of the Budapest Bartók Archives [in Hungarian] including:**

Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm from *Mikrokosmos* played by Fülöp Ránki

Introduction to a New Website *Béla Bartók's Works – Databases to Bartók's Works: His Compositions, Writings and Folk Music Research* [Pál RICHTER, Viola BIRÓ, Márton KERÉKFY and László VIKÁRIUS]

Presentation of Vols. 40–41 of the Béla Bartók Complete Critical Edition, *Mikrokosmos*, Ed. by Yusuke Nakahara [Interview led by Sándor KOVÁCS]

Select Show of Béla Bartók's Newly Acquired Letters to Zoltán Székely

*Photo by József Pécsi [Bartók Archives]: Sándor Végh, László Halmos, Dénes Koromzay, Vilmos Palotai and Béla Bartók, 1936*

# ABSTRACTS OF THE CONFERENCE PAPERS

**László SOMFAI**

## **Bartók's Most Daring Concept of a Palindromic Structure: The Sonata-Form Opening Movement of the Fifth Quartet**

In Movement I of String Quartet No. 5 inversion shapes of the themes are recapitulated in reverse order – probably the most daring concept of a palindromic structure of a sonata-form movement in Bartók's realm. After all, for him a strict *hin und zurück* form with strong thematic characters was unthinkable. Already the strategy of this opening movement involved danger. If Theme I after a transition leads to Theme II, which leads to Theme III, as a dramatic series of actions, how could the reverse order of these themes be “natural”? To minimize the danger, in this movement Bartók reconsidered the usual dramaturgy of the exposition. Instead of a continuous growth of the musical “scenes” welded together, he presented three thematic blocks very much different in character, heavily punctuated by fragments of the first theme. Therefore dramatic contrast rather than organic development is the key word, and so the reverse order of the thematic blocks in the recapitulation is less artificial.

**François DELÉCLUSE**

## **New Insights into Debussy's String Quartet Sketches**

This paper provides new insights into Claude Debussy's compositional process in his string quartet. New perspectives can be brought through examination of existing sources using the method of genetic criticism. The compositional context is well known: the work was written at the beginning of Debussy's maturity, when he was also composing musical works marked by Symbolism, such as the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, the *Proses lyriques*, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Composing an instrumental work at this point in Debussy's life had a notoriously social function, intended to foster Debussy's integration within the Société nationale, led by César Franck's followers such as Vincent d'Indy and Ernest Chausson, to whom Debussy had become close at the time. Debussy's string quartet was considered as *avant-garde*, especially for daring harmony, rhythm, and singular textures; this work has nevertheless a rather classical and cyclic form, linked with the aesthetics of Franck. Analysis of the small body of sketches, preserved in a pocket notebook kept in the Bibliothèque nationale, reveals the genesis of musical ideas as well as stages of the composer's thinking about musical structure and, combined with a study of the correspondence, shows the singular difficulties encountered by Debussy.

**Yusuke NAKAHARA****Concealed Fragmentariness: On the Composition Process of Bartók's String Quartets**

One of the most fascinating aspects of Bartók's compositional drafts is that the music is continuously notated in the manuscript from beginning to end and so one may consider that he managed to imagine and then write down the music seamlessly, without any interruption. The sense of continuity is retained despite the fact that the pages are occasionally filled with numerous subsequent corrections, including deletions and insertions in the margin. A close examination of the manuscripts, however, offers a somewhat different interpretation. It can be observed that Bartók, while writing the draft, occasionally (if not very frequently) skipped at least a few measures and then continued with a new passage on a new system (occasionally at the top of a new page). Later, he filled the gap by connecting the point of interruption and the new start. Thus, an apparently continuous passage of music could have consisted of fragments that the composer subsequently put together. This is interesting especially when the newly composed phrase requires a significant rearrangement of the barlines, and such a rearrangement of the barlines may also reveal the composer's actual concept of the metric structure of a composition, such as in the first movement of String Quartet No. 4.

**Gianmario BORIO****Thematic Structures and Formal Ideas in the Fourth String Quartet of Béla Bartók**

This paper is a part of a research project devoted to the influence of the German *Formenlehre* on the European composers between the two world wars. I will comment upon Bartók's own analysis of String Quartet No 4 and discuss some hypotheses on the reference models of their themes, trying to understand the reasons for their transformations in the framework of post-tonal thinking.

**Zsombor NÉMETH****The Fourth of the Fourth: On the Genesis of the Allegretto, pizzicato Movement of Béla Bartók's Fourth String Quartet**

As already pointed out by László Somfai in the late 1980s, Béla Bartók's first fully developed five-movement realization of the so-called "bridge" or "palindrome" form was only an afterthought, a further development of a composition originally intended as a cycle of four movements only. As also discussed briefly by Somfai, the evolution of the *Allegretto, pizzicato* movement itself had distinct stages. A recently surfaced source further clarifies these compositional phases, among others confirms the existence of a 140 measures long version without a proper conclusion, which, at one point, the composer considered as a definitive version (for which only the ending needed to be composed) and tested with the Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet. The present paper re-examines the compositional process of Bartók's String Quartet No. 4 with an emphasis on its additional fourth movement and discusses the different compositional phases of the *Allegretto, pizzicato*.