ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

VIRTUAL AGENCY IN BÉLA BARTÓK'S NIGHT MUSIC COMPOSITIONS

Ph.D. THESIS

Kaan Muzaffer BIYIKOĞLU

Department of Music

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Kaan Muzaffer BIYIKOĞLU
(409142008)

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Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eray ALTINBÜKEN

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ISTANBUL TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ ★ LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ

BÉLA BARTÓK'UN GECE MÜZİĞİ BESTELERİNDE SANAL EYLEMLİLİK

DOKTORA TEZİ

Kaan Muzaffer BIYIKOĞLU
(409142008)

Müzik Anabilim Dalı

Müzik Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Eray ALTINBÜKEN

HAZİRAN 2023

Kaan Muzaffer Bıyıkoğlu, a Ph.D. student of İTU Graduate School student ID 409142008, successfully defended the thesis/dissertation entitled "VIRTUAL AGENCY IN BÉLA BARTÓK'S NIGHT MUSIC COMPOSITIONS", which he prepared after fulfilling the requirements specified in the associated legislations, before the jury whose signatures are below.

Thesis Advisor :	**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eray ALTINBÜKEN** Istanbul Technical University	.....
Jury Members :	**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jerfi AJİ** Istanbul Technical University	.....
	Prof. Dr. Tolga TÜZÜN Istanbul Bilgi University	.....
	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ozan BAYSAL Istanbul Technical University	.....
	Prof. Dr. Hakkı Alper MARAL Ankara Music and Fine Arts University	.....

Date of Submission : 30 December 2022
Date of Defense : 20 June 2023

To whom it may concern,

FOREWORD

I would like to thank my advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eray ALTINBÜKEN for his help and support during the preparation of this thesis. I also would like to thank the members of my jury, Prof. Dr. Tolga TÜZÜN, Prof. Dr. Hakkı Alper MARAL, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jerfi AJİ, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ozan BAYSAL for their valuable comments, criticism, and encouragement. I am further grateful to Assoc. Dr. Jerfi AJİ for showing his belief in me and my work, and dissuading me from quitting my graduate studies at a stressful time during the pandemic.

I would like to thank Cenk GÜRAY for providing me with crucial support in several stages of my graduate studies with his friendship, his positive personality, and intellectual integrity.

I am forever indebted to the late Kris GOESSENS for his inspiring friendship and mentorship. Kris was the kind of musician that constantly inquired about the things that resided beyond the notes or abstract musical structures: for him, the musical inquiry was always a metaphorical inquiry about the meanings of things in life. I would not be the musician I am, nor the person I am, without his influence and his teachings.

I will be forever grateful to my family for being there for me on all the journeys that I have undertaken in my life. Needless to say, I would not be able to finish this work without their encouragement. I would especially like to thank my wife Mine who supported me during every stage of the preparation of this dissertation. She watched over me, gently put me back on the track whenever I was derailed, and always provided me with love and assurance.

December 2022

Kaan Muzaffer BIYIKOĞLU
(Musician)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Op **:** Opus number

Sz **:** Work number in Szollosy's catalogue of Bartók's Compositions

BB **:** Work number in Somfai's catalogue of Bartók's Compositions

mm **:** Measures

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VIRTUAL AGENCY IN BÉLA BARTÓK'S NIGHT MUSIC COMPOSITIONS

SUMMARY

This dissertation aims to provide an adequate description of Béla Bartók's 'night music' style, to elucidate the compositional strategies in these works, and to present this style in a historical context. It is argued that Bartók's night music style relies primarily on the semantic implications of musical material in terms of various levels of musical agency or implied sources, which can be elucidated by the categorization of musical statements according to the theoretical framework provided by Hatten's (2018) theory of virtual agency in western classical music.

The 'night music' is a style or subgenre in the music of Bartók composed after 1926. These compositions utilize very elaborate background textures which are perceived as superimposed layers of stylized noises. Many previous authors did not hesitate to use the term 'night music' without resorting to an explicit definition, and only most systematic previous study of Béla Bartók's night music style was provided by Danchenka (1987) where the author used a classification scheme based on gestural archetypes for the identification of the night music style.

The following key works from Bartók's night music style were analyzed in this dissertation to elucidate the common stylistic features among these works: The Night's Music from Out of Doors, prima parte section of the String Quartet No.3, the slow movements from the String Quartet No.4 and String Quartet No.5, the second movement of the Piano Concerto No.2, and the third movement of the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta.

It was observed that these compositions utilized non-tonal and essentially non-expressive noise like gestures in a highly segregated fashion. Due to having distinct timbres, spatial locations, registers, pitch-collections, and gestural patterns of movement, and as a result these gestures did not form a unified auditory stream, and hence perceived as if coming from distinct virtual sources. This segregated musical surface was achieved by certain compositional strategies of pitch-space and register segmentation that Bartók utilized, and these strategies relied heavily on the human capacity of what Bregman (1994) refers to as the auditory scene analysis.

Due to the above-mentioned segregated structure of the music, the layers of noise like gestures implied the presence of virtual musical sources that are categorically distinct from the implied sources of melodic material in the music. This categorical distinction is investigated by using the dichotomy between musical actants and agents brought forward in Hatten's (2018) theory of virtual agency through music. The noise gestures in Bartók's night music compositions fulfilled all of the requirements for the virtualizing of actants, yet they are unable to meet certain requirements for embodying virtual agents, such as independence and intentionality.

By referring to Hatten's (1994) theory of markedness, this thesis proposes that the most significant stylistic feature of Bartók's night music style is the presence of a

marked semantic opposition between the actantial noise-like gestures and the agential musical material in these compositions. All the musical analyses of this repertory indicated that Bartók characterized the actantial sources with either short gestures that were immutable and usually confined to certain registers and pitch-classes, or with sheets of sounds that are based on distinct pitch-class collections. Moreover, usually the pitch content reserved for an actantial statement is segregated from those reserved for other agential/actantial layers, creating a pitch space partitioned according to the multi-agential organization. The actantial gestures are static and do not produce harmonic implications like tension or resolution, hence their contributions to musical tension are governed by their rate of activity, rate of presentation, volume, or gesture span, i.e., what Meyer (1989) classifies as the secondary parameters in music.

BÉLA BARTÓK'UN GECE MÜZİĞİ BESTELERİNDE SANAL EYLEMLİLİK

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı Béla Bartók'un 'gece müziği' stili için yetkin bir tanımlama geliştirmek ve bu sayede bestecinin kullandığı besteleme tekniklerini ortaya koyarak bu stili tarihi bir bağlam içerisinde gözlemlemektir. Bu çalışmada Bartók'un gece müziği stilinin temel özelliğinin bu eserlerde kullanılan müzikal malzemelerin çoklu ve birbirinden değişik tipte sanal müzikal kaynaklar ve eylemlilikler ima ettiği öne sürülmektedir. Eylemciler ve eyleyenler olarak sınıflandırılabilecek söz konusu çoklu eylemlilikler bu eserlerde birlikte sunulmaktadır. Değişik sınıflardaki eylemliliklerin birlikte sunulmasının sonucunda tüm bu eylemliliklerin ima ettikleri anlam çağrışımları belirgin bir semantik karşıtlık ortaya koymaktadır. Bu karşıtlıkların Hatten'ın (2018) 'batı klasik müziğinde sanal eylemlilik teorisi' (theory of virtual agency in western classical music) çerçevesinde müzikal ifadelerin incelenmesi yoluyla aydınlatılabileceği iddia edilmektedir.

Gece müziği, Béla Bartók'un ilk kez 1926 yılında bestelediği Açık Havada isimli piyano süitinin 'Gecenin Müziği' başlıklı dördüncü bölümünde ortaya koyduğu, sonrasında ise birçok eserinin yavaş bölümlerinde kullandığı bir stil ya da alt janr olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bestecinin bu stildeki eserleri stilize edilmiş gürültülermiş gibi algılanan çeşitli müzikal ifadelerin üst üste yığılmasıyla oluşturulmuş son derece ince işlenmiş çok katmanlı dokular içermektedirler. Bu stil işitsel olarak son derece belirgin olduğu için, birçok yazar 'gece müziği' ifadesini herhangi bir tanımlamaya gerek duymadan kullanmaktan çekinmemiştir. Her ne kadar 'gece müziği' Bartók'un kendisinin bu eserlerinden toplu olarak bahsetmek için kullandığı bir terim olmasa da besteci bu yöndeki bir adlandırmaya karşı çıkmamıştır.

Gece müziği stili ile ilgili daha önceki en kapsamlı çalışma Danchenka (1987) tarafından yapılmıştır. Danchenka (1987) Bartók'un gece müziği yapıtlarını incelenerek bu eserlerde sıklıkla kullanılan müzikal jestleri belirlemiş ve sonrasında elde ettiği jest arketiplerine dayanan bir sınıflandırma şeması yoluyla gece müziği stili tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Söz konusu çalışmada göre elde edilen jest arketiplerini belirgin bir şekilde öne çıkaran yapıtların gece müziği olarak sınıflandırılabilecekleri öne sürülmüştür. Böyle bir yaklaşım gece müziği stilinin kendine has yapısal özelliklerine değinmemektedir. Öte yandan Danchenka'nın (1987) arketipleri arasında yer alan müzikal jestleri Bartók'un ya da çeşitli başka bazı bestecilerin stil açısından gece müziği türüne oldukça uzak olan yapıtlarında görmek de mümkündür. Yukarıda belirtilen sorundan ötürü, Danchenka'nın (1987) ortaya koyduğu yaklaşım aşırı genelleştirmeye neden olmakta ve gece müziği stilinde olmayan yapıtların bu şekilde sınıflandırmasına yol açmaktadır. Ayrıca sadece jest arketipleri üzerinden yapılacak bir açıklama bu stilde yer alan müziksel yapılar ve değişik müzikal katmanların birbirleri ile ilişkisi hakkında bizlere fazla bir şey söyleyememektedir.

Bu çalışmada Bartók'un gece müziği stili Hatten'ın (2018) sanal eylemlilik teorisi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Bestecinin gece müziği eserlerinde kullandığı ve doğal

gürültülerle ilişkilendirilen jestlerin Hatten'ın (2018) teorisindeki 'sanal eyleyenlere' (virtual actants) karşı geldiği ileri sürülmektedir. Belli bir tonaliteye ima etmeyen ve kendi başlarına belirgin bir ifade içermeyen söz konusu gürültü jestlerinin bu eserlerde birbirlerinden oldukça ayrıştırılmış olarak sunuldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Birbirinden farklı tınılar, uzamsal konumlar, yükseklikler, nota kümeleri ve hareket örgüleri içeren bu jestler ortak bir işitsel akış yerine birbirlerinden ayrık sanal kaynaklardan geliyormuşçasına algılanmaktadırlar. Yukarıda bahsedilen ayrıştırılmış müziksel sunumlarından ötürü, bu eserlerde gözlemlenen söz konusu çok katmanlı gürültü jestleri birbirinden çok farklı sanal müzikal kaynakları işaret etmektedirler. Bartók'un söz konusu ayrıştırmayı sağlayabilmek için kullanılan nota kümelerinin ve ses yüksekliklerinin jestler arasında bölüştürülmesine dayanan bir besteleme stratejisi geliştirmiştir. Bu strateji sayesinde besteci Bregman'ın (1994) işitsel görünüm analizi (auditory scene analysis) olarak adlandırdığı ve insanların etraflarındaki ses kaynaklarını belirlemelerine olanak sağlayan bilişsel yetilerini zengin müziksel ifadeler oluşturmak amacıyla kullanmıştır.

Bartók'un gece müziği eserlerinde gürültülerle özdeşleşen kaynaklar kategorik olarak eserlerde yer alan melodik yapıların kaynaklarından farklıdır. Gürültülere öykünen jestler ve melodik yapıların ima ettiği kaynaklar arasındaki bu kategorik farklılık da Hatten'ın (2018) batı müziğindeki sanal eylemlilik teorisi skullanılarak incelenmiştir. Bartók'un gece müziği eserlerinde kullandığı gürültü jestlerinin ima ettiği kaynakların sanal eyleyenler (virtual actants) olmanın tüm koşullarını yerine getirdiği, fakat sanal eylemciler (virtual agents) olabilmek için gerekli olan amaçlılık, yönelmişlik ve ifadelilik gibi şartları sağlayamadıkları tespit edilmiştir. Hatten'ın (1994) ortaya koyduğu belirginlik teorisi (theory of markedness) kullanılarak, Bartók'un gece müziğinin en önemli stilistik özelliğinin bu bestelerde kullanılan eyleyensel gürültü jestleri ve sanal eylemcileri ima eden müzikal malzemeler arasında ortaya çıkan belirgin semantik karşıtlık olduğu gözlenmiştir. Kullanılan müzikal malzemelerden kaynaklanan bu semantik karşıtlık Bartók'un zengin müzikal anlatılar kurmasına olanak sağlamaktadır.

Bartók'un eyleyensel kaynakları karakterize etmek için belirgin ses yükseklikleri ve nota kümeleriyle kısıtlandırılmış kısa ve sabit jestler ya da eylemcilere karşı gelen melodilere armonik devinim içerisinde eşlik sağlamayan statik ses tabakaları (sheets of sound) kullanmış olduğu, mevcut repertuar üzerinde yapılan tüm müzik analizlerde ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, herhangi bir eyleyensel ses ögesi için kullanılan nota kümeleri diğer eyleyensel ya da eylemcisel ögeler için kullanılan nota kümelerinden ayrık olarak tasarlanmış olduğu ve bu yolla Bartók'un sistematik olarak nota uzamını ayrıklaştırarak birden çok eylemci ya da eyleyeni ima eden bir müzikal organizasyon elde ettiği saptanmıştır. Kullanılan eyleyensel jestler tasarımlarından gelen kısıtlamalardan ötürü değişmez olduğundan gerilim ve çözülüm gibi armonik yönelimler içermemektedirler. Bu yüzden bu jestlerin ancak Meyer'in (1989) müzikteki ikincil parametreler olarak adlandırdığı birim zamandaki aktivite, gösterim sıklığı, ses şiddeti, jestin uzamı gibi değişkenlerle müzikal devinime katkı sağlamaktadırlar.

Birçokları tarafından Bartók'un gece müziğinde kullandığı eyleyensel ögeler doğal seslerin müziksel stilizasyonu olarak duyulmuş ve bu nedenle bu müzik stili çoğunlukla pastoral müzik geleneğinin modern bir yansıması olarak ele alınmıştır (Somfai, 1984; Harley, 1995; Schneider, 2006). Öte yandan gece müziği stili ve pastoral geleneği arasındaki paralellik olsa dahi, böyle bir ilişki Bartók'un yaşamında halk müziklerinin yoğun etkisinden ya da Gecenin Müziği'nde halk ezgileri

kullanmasından kaynaklanmamaktadır. Bestecinin birçok gece müziği eserinde halk müziğine atıf bulunmadığı gibi, kuş sesi taklitleri gibi pastoral tarzlarla ilişkili aşikâr doğa sesi öykünmelerine rastlanmamaktadır.

Bütün bunlara karşın, müziksel eyleyenlerin kullanılması açısından Monelle'nin (2006) 18'nci ve 19'uncu yüzyılların 'yüksek pastoral' stili olarak adlandırdığı müzik tarzı ile Bartók'un gece müziği stili arasında derin paralellikler bulunmaktadır. Halk ezgilerinden ve ulusalcılıktan beslenen 19'uncu yüzyılın pastoral akımlarından farklı olan aristokratik yüksek pastoral geleneği antik çağlara öykünmekteydi ve bir çeşit gerçeklerden kaçış yoluyla her şeyin mükemmel olduğu idealize edilmiş bir dünyanın hayali sunuyordu. Hiçbir gerilimin ve arzunun olmadığı, sürekli devinimsiz bir huzur durumunun hüküm sürdüğü bir dünyayı betimleyen bu tip pastoral yapıtlarda statik tonik armonileri sürdüreduran eyleyensel eşliklere ve kuş sesleri gibi gene eyleyensel özellikler taşıyan müzikal ögelere sıklıkla rastlanmaktaydı. Bu tip statik ve değişmez eyleyensel müzikal ögelerin kullanılması sayesinde Monelle'nin (2006) 'zamanın askıya alınması' olarak adlandırdığı yüksek pastoral stilinin en belirgin duygu durumlarından birisi ortaya çıkıyordu. Ayrıca yüksek pastoral estetikle bestelenmiş eserlerin tonal gerilimlerden mütemadiyen kaçınması ve son derece diyatonik armonik yapılar içermesi de zamanın askıya alınması hissiyatını kuvvetlendiriyordu.

Bartók'un gece müziği stili, diyatonik ve tonal bir stil olmamasına karşın, eyleyensel müziksel ögelerin melodik ve tonal hareket eğilimleri ima etmeden benzer bir şekilde kullanılması sayesinde zamanın askıya alınmasına ve adeta alternatif bir gerçekliğin müzikle tasvirine olanak sağlıyordu. Bu yüzden, Bartók'un gece müziği stilini pastoral bir stil olarak nitelemek doğru olmasa da, eyleyensel ögelerin kullanımı ve zamanın askıya alınması hissiyatı açısından bu stil ve yüksek pastoral stili arasında bir paralellik gözlenmektedir.

Dramatik karşıtlıkların ortaya koyulması amacıyla çoklu eylemliliklerin betimlenmesine romantik dönem müziğinde sıklıkla başvurulmuştur. Değişik çalgı gruplarını karşıt müzikal malzemeler ve ifadelerle özdeşleştirmek yoluyla farklı eylemliliklerin aynı anda betimlenmesine bu dönemde sıklıkla rastlandığı gibi, eyleyensel statik ses tabakaları (sheet of sound) kullanarak doğal olgu ve kuvvetlerin betimlenmesine Bartók'tan önce Wagner ve Liszt'in müziklerinde rastlamak mümkündür. Wagner'in Rheingold operasının açılışında Ren nehrini betimlemek için kullandığı dakikalarca devinen mi-bemol majör arpejin seneler sonra Bartók'un bestelediği Tahta Prens bale müziğinin açılışını etkilediği aşikardır. Ayrıca eyleyensel ses tabakalarının ve değişmeden tekrar edilerek sunulan eyleyensel jestlerin statik armonik yapılar ile sunmalarına Bartók'tan önce Debussy ve Ravel gibi izlenimci bestecilerin eserlerinde rastlanmıştır. Stravinsky'nin Petruşka ve Bahar Ayini eserlerinin özellikle açılış bölümlerinde yer alan çok katmanlı ostinatolar da Bartók'un gece müziği stilinin öncülleri olarak görülmektedir.

Bartók'un gece müziği stilini net bir şekilde tanımlayabilmek için bestecinin bu stili ortaya koyduğu Açık Havada adlı piyano süitinden Gecenin müziği, Üçüncü Yaylı Sazlar Dörtlüsünün prima parte kısmı, Dördüncü ve Beşinci Yaylı Sazlar Dörtlülerinin yavaş bölümleri, İkinci Piyano Konçertosunun ikinci bölümü ve Yaylılar, Vurmalılar ve Çelesta İçin Müzik adlı eserin üçüncü bölümü incelenmiştir. Tüm bu eserlerde çoklu eylemliliğe rastlandığı gibi, bu eserlerde gece müziği olarak nitelendirilebilecek her kısımda eyleyensel jestlerin ve statik bir armonik plan dahilinde sürdürülen eyleyensel ses tabakalarının bariz bir şekilde öne çıkarıldığı gözlenmiştir. İncelenen tüm bu yapıtlarda gece müziği ile ilişkilendirilebilecek çoklu eylemliliklerin ve

eyleyensel ögelerin diğer müzikal ögeler ve yapılarla olan ilişkileri incelenerek Bartók'un kullandığı besteleme stratejileri aydınlatılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bartók'un eyleyensel ögeleri özellikle ses salkımları (tone clusters) kullanarak ortaya koyduğu ve 12 kromatik notayı değişik eylemlilikler arasında paylaştırdığı bu eserlerinde gözlemlenmiştir. Ses salkımları kullanma konusunda da Bartók'un Henry Cowell'dan esinlenmiş gözükmektedir.

Bu çalışmada Hatten'ın (2018) sanal eylemlilik teorisi üzerinden Bartók'un gece müziği stili incelenmiştir. Ortaya koyulan yaklaşım gece müziğini önceden Danchenka'nın (1987) ortaya koyduğu jest arketiplerinden çok daha iyi kavramaya olanak sağladığı gibi, hem bestecinin kullandığı müzikal yapıların hem de bu yapıların karşı geldiği semantik çağrışımların daha iyi anlaşılmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca çoklu eylemlilik ve eyleyensel ögelerin kullanımı açısından Bartok'un gece müziği stiliyle ortaya koyduğu müziksel yaklaşımın doğrudan etkileri Oliver Messiaen, György Ligeti, Witold Lutoslawski, Charles Mingus ve Pauline Oliveros gibi birbirinden çok farklı birçok müzisyenin eserlerinde görülebilmektedir.

1. INTRODUCTION – THE NIGHT MUSIC

Schneider (2006) refers to "night music" as "one of Bartók's most abstract, evocative, and influential contributions to the vocabulary of twentieth-century music" (p. 118). 'Night music' is a compositional style or topic which is located in several slow movements of Bartók's multi-movement works. These movements often incorporate dissonant nontonal textures made up with one or several layers of stylized sound effects which allude to the kind of sounds found in a natural environment – like the sound of waves, the singing of birds, the noise of insects, the croaking of frogs, etc. In these pieces, Bartók juxtaposes the aforementioned sound textures with hymn or chorale-like musical statements, folk melodies, or other musical material, resulting in poignant expressions and rich musical narratives.

It is not easy to describe Bartók's "night music" with words, yet the "night music" is aurally quite distinctive. Therefore, many authors do not hesitate to use the term quite freely without resorting to an explicit definition. Taruskin (2010) refers to it as a "genre" emulating "the sense of a night spent camping outdoors, in proximity to enigmatic, indefinable sounds of nature" (p. 394). Cooper's (2015) recent biography of the composer has 19 index entries for 'night music' at the end of the book, and the author freely refers to "night music" as a "texture", as a "style", as a "type of material", or as a "genre" while discussing several pieces of Bartók, without giving a definition for the meaning of the term. Several authors including Gilmore (2004) and Schneider (2006) identify "night music" as a "topic" found in Bartók's works, whereas James (2016) uses the term as both "topic" and "style". While it is customary to use the term for whole movements in Bartók's works, Danchenka (1987), Gilmore (2004), Schneider (2006), and Cooper (2015) also utilize the term while discussing specific sections within movements.

The name "night music" comes from the fourth movement of Bartók's piano suite *Out of Doors* (1926), which the composer titled as *The Night's Music*. This piano piece is often referred to as the prototypical work in the "night music" style, and naturally it is extensively scrutinized in the Bartók literature (Somfai, 1984; Harley, 1995; Gilmore,

2004; Schneider, 2006). According to Somfai (1984) the piece is a musical realization of the loneliness of an "Ego" (represented by a hymn-like lament) which is irreconcilable with the "Peoples" (represented by a flute-like folk-tune) – and this dramatic realization is staged in the nighttime in "Nature" which is represented by the disinterested background texture comprised of very elaborate stylizations of nocturnal sounds and noises (p. 5-6). The psychological themes that were investigated in *The Night's Music* were the emblematic mythical romantic dilemmas of 'man versus people' and 'man versus nature', yet Bartók came up with an utterly modernist portrayal of these complications by a profound depiction of human alienation in a pastoral setting. The similar psychological themes, and similar musical effects and combinations, were subsequently explored in several important works. The following is a partial list of movements that were composed after *The Night's Music* of 1926, which utilize the night music idiom significantly[1]:

- String Quartet No. 3: *prima parte* (1927)
- String Quartet No. 4: movement 3 (1928)
- Piano Concerto No. 2: movement 2 (1931)
- String Quartet No. 5: movements 2 and 4 (1934)
- Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta: movement 3 (1936)
- Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: movement 2 (1937)
- Concerto for Orchestra: movement 3, "Elegia" (1943)
- Piano Concerto No. 3: movement 2 (1945)

1.1 The Scope and the Purpose of This Thesis

The primary aim of this thesis is to come up with an adequate description of Bartók's night music style. In order to elucidate the compositional strategies in these works and to present this style in a historical context, this thesis will argue that Bartók's night music style relies primarily on the semantic interpretation of musical material in terms of various levels of musical agency or implied sources.

[1] This list contains pieces which listed in the lists of "night music" compositions given by both Danchenka (1987) and Schneider (2006).

As stated in the previous section, these compositions utilize very elaborate background textures which are perceived as superimposed layers of stylized noises. It will be argued that these layers of noises imply the presence of virtual musical sources that are categorically distinct from the implied sources of melodic material in the music, and to achieve this distinction Bartók devised special compositional strategies that rely heavily on the human capacity of what Bregman (1994) refers to as the auditory scene analysis, which is the ability to distinguish auditory sources and streams from a composite auditory signal consisting on superimposed layers of sounds.

The aesthetic dichotomy between noise gestures and the rest of the musical material is crucial in Bartók's night music style. Moreover, this dichotomy also extends to the implied virtual sources for the noises and the musical material. Hence the listener is faced with both expressive virtual musical *agents* that seem to produce the emotive melodic content of the music, and also disinterested virtual musical *actants* which are responsible for the impartial environmental noise gestures. Here, I am using the terms agent and actant in line with Hatten's *theory of virtual agency in western music*, and these notions will be clarified in the upcoming sections of this chapter.

Moreover, I will argue that the agential dichotomy between noise gestures and the rest of the musical material in Bartók's night music style operates as *marked* semantic opposition between the actantial *noise gestures* (non-tonal segregated gestures on the auditory scene) and the agential musical material. In order to do so, I will be building on the concept of *markedness* in musical analysis as it is put forward by Hatten (1994), and further elaborated in his following works (Hatten, 2004, 2018). Yet, I will be utilizing Hatten's concept of markedness in the agential dimension, which is, to my knowledge, not explored in his theoretical work. I will argue that depending on the programmatical or the topical context of a composition, this agential/actantial markedness will be interpreted as a contextualized dichotomy among the musical virtual sources, which will yield rich narrative interpretations even in the absence of a program or literal description about the meaning of a piece of a music.

This thesis also aims to elucidate the compositional strategies that Bartók utilized in order to create the above-mentioned marked oppositions in his night music compositions by analyzing several key works of that style. These compositional strategies will be also presented in a historical framework by searching precedents in the works of earlier or contemporaneous composers.

While Bartók's night music style may be present throughout a whole piece (as in *The Night's Music* from *Out of Doors*), the style is used in several works as covering a main formal section of a large movement (as in the middle sections of slow movements from *Piano Concerto No.3* or *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*), or even as shorter episodes in movements (as in the slow movements of the *5th String Quartet* and the second movement of *Piano Concerto No.2*). Hence it is important to analyze the night music sections of these works within their formal contexts, and to explain how actantial/noise content of the music relate to the other musical elements, tonal hierarchies, pitch relationships, and musical form in Bartók's larger movements.

The final purpose of this thesis is to analyze the formation and communication of aesthetically warranted meanings in the night-music compositions of Bartók. Such analyses should be able to account for not only the paradigmatic or extroversive meanings correlated with musical constituents, but also be able to account for the formation of more specific new meanings by the intersections or juxtapositions of such extroversive meanings. Moreover, the analyses should be able to reveal meaningful oppositions of contrasting musical constituents, and elucidate introversive musical meaning which emerge due to syntactic and structural features of the work as the composition unfolds – and hence illuminate the musical narration. Eventually in-depth examination of different night-music compositions of Bartók will yield both strategic commonalities and key differences among these compositions, and yield a better understanding of composer's musical style.

1.2 Bartók's Night Music Style and Musical Genres Associated with The Night

As stated earlier, the name 'night music' originates from the title of the 4th movement of Bartók's piano suite *Out of Doors* (1926), *The Night's Music*. Due to the appearance of the word 'night', this style is sometimes erroneously confused with music genres that are specifically associated with nightly moods or activities, such as *nocturne* or *serenade*. This confusion is enhanced further because the title of the *The Night's Music* has been translated to French as 'Musiques Nocturnes' – although the word 'nocturne' does not appear on the original Hungarian title, given as 'Az éjszaka zenéje', which literally means "music of the night" or "the night's music" (Schneider, 2006, p. 81).

The programmatic content of *The Night's Music* undoubtedly connects this particular piano piece with the nocturnal imagery and the sounds that can be heard outdoors on

a summer night. Moreover, the piece conveys a tranquil and solitary mood that is generally associated with nocturnes. Because of all these properties, one may be inclined to view *The Night's Music* as a particular sort of nocturne, perhaps as a nocturne that refrains from the romantic sentiments associated with this genre. Nevertheless, these observations cannot be generalized for many night music pieces that Bartók composed since these pieces lack the precise nocturnal associations that are observable in *The Night's Music*. For example, both the Second and Third Piano Concertos of Bartók utilize night music passages in their slow movements, yet these night music passages take place in the fast scherzo-like sections that are found in the middle of the slow movements which sound very much unlike any nocturnes.

Dissatisfied with the name 'night music', Harley (1995) proposed "nature music" as a better name for this compositional style of Bartók. Harley's (1995) 'nature music' title is inspired by the presence of stylized noise-like musical gestures which might be heard akin to natural noises. Yet such a naming invites many other problems, since it is almost impossible to assess the semantic association with a natural phenomenon without an explicit programmatic reference, and assessing what is natural and what is unnatural is a profound problem by itself from a philosophical point of view.

Given all these complications, it is better to accept 'night music' as a proper name for this particular composition style of Bartók, without any literal association that may be carried out by the name of the style.

1.3 Characteristics of the Noise Gestures in Bartók's Night Music Style

One characteristic feature of Bartók's night music – one that is brought upon in almost all accounts of this style – is the use of gestural constituents which are generally interpreted as being stylizations of sounds or noises that one can hear in nature. For the sake of argument, and for a lack of a better term, I will refer these gestures collectively as noise gestures for the time being. Several significant characteristic properties of Bartók's noise gestures are provided below:

The noise gestures are usually highly segregated from each other and from other musical elements: Bartók organizes these noise gestures around distinct timbres, spatial locations, registers, pitch-collections, and gestural patterns of movement. Such an organization prevents the formation of a unified musical stream and results in a

segregated auditory scene[2] where each noise gesture usually operates within its allocated layer, and this layer is reserved solely for that specific noise gesture.

The noise gestures are generally heard as integral, and almost atomic musical units: They might exhibit temporal augmentation or diminution (i.e., shortening or lengthening the duration of a gesture), but most of the time noise gestures are replicated "as is". They do not undergo sequential presentation, fragmentation, variation, elaboration, or any other kind of melodic transformation that can be employed to the themes. Therefore, they preserve their identities in a composition much more so than any thematic material. The basic activity of noise gestures is recurrence. In that sense, noise gestures are almost binary entities in music, that is, they are either ON or OFF. They exist or do not exist.

The noise gestures are not melodic: they do not exhibit typical melodic gestures or phrasing, and do not seem to be governed by tonal hierarchies which produces melodic tensions or resolutions. Hence noise gestures are energetic movements in time that do not display tonal goals or directed movement. They are generally perceived as discrete sound events, or recurring textures.

The noise gestures may not behave as syntactic musical entities: Meyer (1989) defines the primary parameters of music as "melody, harmony, and rhythm", which he considers as being "syntactic" – that is "rule governed, learned, and conventional" (p. 209). The primary parameters are perceived as operating on discrete musical spaces such as the pitch or the beat which exhibit "fixed proportional relationships" (Snyder 2001, p. 195). On the other hand, the secondary parameters are usually perceived as operating relatively within a continuum, such as *loudness, speed, thickness, height* (Meyer 1989, p. 209), and which lack definite identifiability (Snyder 2001, p. 197). Bartók's noise gestures do not yield syntactic expectations, maybe because pitch collection of a noise gestures is not an independent parameter but usually a fixed property or invariant. As a result, the noise gestures behave as entities governed by secondary parameters of music. Hence the main strategies for increasing the musical tension through noise gestures are 'growth-based' processes like (a) increasing the intensity of volume, (b) increasing the rate of presentation in a given unit amount of time, (c) increasing the span covered by a gesture, (d) or increasing the register of a

[2] I use the terms "auditory scene", "segregation" and "stream" as they are utilized by Bregman (1990).

gesture – if register is not a parameter that is used for the segregation of that gesture. Whatever regularity that may arise from the employment of a set of noise gestures in a composition is purely statistical, and do not generate syntactic expectations.

1.4 The Semantic Properties of Bartók's Noise Gestures

The noise gestures may carry *topical* associations. These topical associations might be *iconic*, in the sense that, the gestures might be likened to the sounds produced by specific things. The literature about Bartók's night music style has abundant mentions about these pieces employing musical stylizations of insects, frogs, birds, waves, or the wind, yet it is almost impossible – and probably futile – to identify the precise sources of these noise gestures (Somfai 1984, p. 6; Harley 1995, p. 331). Similarly, these gestures might also carry topical associations which are *indexical*, not as directly referring to the specific things that produce the sound, but to the location or time of the sound event, i.e., the nocturnal sounds that can be heard outdoors on a summer night at Szőllős-puszta, Hungary (Schneider 2006, p. 86).

Yet the most crucial semantic aspect of Bartók's noise gestures are due to actantial/agential qualities of the implied sources of these gestures. Due to the high degree of segregation among the noise gestures (because of having distinct timbres, spatial locations, registers, pitch-collections, and gestural patterns of movement), these gestures do not form a unified auditory stream, and hence perceived as if coming from distinct *virtual sources*. Here I resort to the term *virtual source*, because all of these noise gestures might actually be produced on a single musical instrument such as the piano (which is the instrument for *The Night's Music*). Yet, due to the high degree of segregation, the noise gestures imply distinct moving bodies or sound producers, and hence distinct virtual sources. Furthermore, each virtual source is invariably associated with only one specific and almost immutable musical gesture throughout the composition. Hence there is an almost one-to-one association of noise gestures and their implied virtual sources. Therefore, Bartók's night music compositions create a virtual sound world in which certain virtual sources produce only one kind of fixed noise gesture, which is not melodic (i.e., not human). And since these virtual sources invariably produce the same gesture over and over, they do not display any intentionality or expressivity (i.e., not human). These noise gestures primarily express the mere existence of their virtual sources – and in addition to that, by examining the

strength of the sound, we may infer the relative energy level or vitality of the source, and maybe a relative approximation of the physical distance between the source and us – or between the source and other musical elements. In that sense, the noise gestures are not much different than the sound of frogs to us: we know the existence of frogs nearby when we hear their sound, yet their sound does not tell us anything about their intentions or expressions, only their strength (numbers, health) and distance. We may like the sound of frogs or be disturbed or frightened by that sound; we may find the existence of frogs desirable or not – but these considerations have nothing to do with frogs. The same can actually be said about any kind of ambient natural sound, be it waves, rain, storm etc. By the segregation of the auditory stream and assigning a single non-tonal and non-melodic gesture to each layer, Bartók was able to represent through music four important qualities of natural sounds that are essential for our survival as a species – and these are (1) the recognizability of their source, (2) their relative intensity, (3) their relative distance, and (4) their indifference to our existence.

1.5 Virtual Agency of Noise Gestures in Bartók's Night Music

While putting forward his theory of virtual agency in Western Music, Hatten (2018) proposed that:

> Whenever listeners interpret a musical movement as an action, they are inferring a virtual actant as an individual source of the force, whether specified as human or not. Virtual agency is humanized whenever the listener can infer actions as willfully intended, expressed, or experienced. (p 65)

Building over Larson's (2012) theory of musical forces, theories of embodied cognition (Johnson, 2007; Cox, 2016), and observations on gestural communication of music (Hatten 2004; Pierce 2007), Hatten (2018) advances his theory of virtual agency for western music. Hatten's (2018) theory, first of all, implies that when we hear a musical movement, we infer, or engage with, a virtual agent moving in a virtual environment. Secondly, whatever qualities we may infer from the musical movement of such a virtual agent will metaphorically constitute our perceived sense of embodied movement and gestural characteristics of the virtual agent. Thirdly, Hatten (2018) posits that, for tonal music, the virtual environment in which such a virtual agent moves is determined by Larson's (2012) musical forces of gravity, magnetism, and inertia. A virtual agent may yield to these musical forces, and in this scenario the forces

will drag the agent to the nearest most stable pitch; or a virtual agent may willfully engage in an energetic movement in the same directions of these forces, which will be reflected in the energetic shaping of musical movement by an increase in speed or an increase in volume; or the virtual agent may counteract the musical forces and move by a step or leap in the opposite direction. Note that for the last case of opposing the virtual environmental forces, such a movement "would require additional energy, and the requisite energy cannot be provided by the three musical forces if it contradicts each of them", and therefore "we are compelled to infer some kind of agency capable of generating what might be called initiatory energy" (Hatten, 2018, p. 49). Eventually our ability to infer embodied motion metaphorically from musical motion rests on "hearing a succession of pitches as motivated by an energetic agency that can counteract as well as give in to the virtual environmental forces of gravity, magnetism, and inertia" (Hatten, 2018, p.49). Hence our perception of musical gestures directly correlates with the qualities of movement of an inferred virtual musical agent moving under the influence of musical forces, and from these qualities we may make inferences about the identity, the energetic disposition, the psychological state, or the character of that virtual agent – just as we may make similar inferences from the movements of a person that we observe from a distance.

Hatten's (2018) theory differentiates between actants and agents as implied or imagined sources of musical content. According to Hatten (2018), virtualizing an actant is made possible by several lower-level auditory facilities that enable (1) the perception of a sonic event as having "a significant character" and "ongoing shaping…and thus possessing identity as an event", (2) the capacity to infer a source for the sonic event, (3) the ability to deduce that a sonic event "has sufficient coherence or particular dynamic projection as to suggest a singular activating source", and (4) the deduction that the sonic event is caused by an action of an actant which reveals the identity of the actant (pp. 18-19).

The noise gestures in Bartók's night music compositions fulfill all the above requirements for the virtualizing of actants, yet they are unable to meet certain requirements for embodying virtual agents – such as independence and intentionality (Hatten, 2018, p.20) – due to the immutability of gestures, since the immutability of the noise gestures prevents them from acting as themes that undergo thematic processes like sequential presentation, fragmentation, variation, and elaboration.

It would be illuminating in that regard to bring a contrasting piece by Bartók as an example. Mikrokosmos No. 142, *From the Diary of a Fly* is a programmatic miniature piece which depicts the terror experienced by a fly entrapped in a cobweb. This piece is not considered in the corpus of Bartók's night music works, even though its theme is similar to the noise gestures that are found in night music compositions in many aspects. Nevertheless, while listening to that piece we perceive not an actant but a musical agent corresponding to the protagonist of the story, since the theme is not isolated and frozen in time, but undergoes many thematic variations which follow the narrative of the piece. The piece *humanizes* the fly by depicting it with a virtual musical agent, just as Aesop's fables feature *humanized* animals.

Thus, the *human* vs. *nature* distinction that has been utilized throughout the above discussion should be interpreted metaphorically. The real distinction is *agential* vs. *actantial*. In that sense the actions of a man perceived as repetitively doing the identical manual labor on an assembly line can be viewed as being actantial, whereas the trains depicted by Duke Ellington in "Daybreak Express" and by Arthur Honegger in "Pacific 231" call for humanized virtual agents[3].

Just like an agent in a theater play, a virtual musical agent can be developed and imbued with more complex meanings as a piece of music unfolds through time. Once the agential identity is established, that identity can be sustained through techniques like thematic and topical transformation of leitmotivs, or developing variation (Hatten, 2018, pp. 91-92). On the other hand, musical actants lack independence and intentionality and we could only expect a very constrained degree of transformation in the musical material associated with them, since increasing the degree of freedom in their music would bestow them agential characteristics.

One important concept in Hatten's theory of virtual agency is *melos*, which is given as

> …melos refers to the continuity of coordinated musical elements in a work as they unfold to produce a coherent musical discourse. Arising from melody and its gestural and energetic inflections (and already synthesizing all the secondary parameters of expression, such as dynamics, articulation, tempo, and pacing), this continuity in time expands in space to embrace compound

[3] Honegger is reportedly said "I have always loved locomotives passionately since, for me they are living beings which I cherish, as others cherish women or horses" (Hess 2013, p. 52).

> melody, thickened melody (through heterophony or planning), counterpoint (as refracted or agentially motivated), and (since melody for tonal music is already harmonically generated) harmony itself, including such functions as a contrapuntally supportive bass line or directed progressions that enhance agential energy. (Hatten, 2018, pp. 99-100)

As it can be inferred from the above paragraph, melos is a unified sense of agency that emerges by the coordination of distinct musical ingredients, lines, or sources by means of harmony and counterpoint, common thematic material, and other shared properties. Likewise, musical lines on a 4-part Bach fugue work together to form a melos, and hence it is not plausible, nor helpful, to assume the existence of 4 distinct musical agents in such a composition. Whereas, in Mozart's *Cosi Fan Tutte*, Guglielmo's refusal to join in the bridal cannon initiated by three other protagonists sets him agentially apart from the melos formed by the others, and symbolizes his disapproval of the cross-marriage in-between the couples in musical way.

Yet, it should be noted that being agentially in or out of a melos is not a black or white issue, and music also allows for a gray area in between. In this regard, one fascinating example provided by Hatten (2018) is "the bassoon countermelody against the violas' melodic presentation of the Freude theme from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony" (p. 113). Hatten (2018) sees this countermelody as depicting the

> …subjectivity of an individual of the Enlightenment (the bassoon) who both empathizes with (shares) and also comments on (diverges from) the communal spirit of the hymn theme (the violas and cellos) while also experiencing support from a similarly attuned agency (the basses). (pp. 113-114)

1.6 Agential Markedness in Bartók's Night Music Style

Hatten's (1994) concept of *markedness* is a context depended paradigm for evaluating the difference of opposing musical entities, and evaluates how well a musical ingredient typically fits within a given musical moment. For example, an unexpected minor harmony in a predominantly major context will be marked (like an unforeseen expression of sadness; misery hiding behind joy), and similarly a major harmony will be marked in a minor context (like a surprise bliss; or a deceitful gentleness). Stylistically, the use of the Picardy third at the end of minor movements is marked,

and can be interpreted as a surprise positive meaning (i.e., light at the end of the tunnel, going form darkness to light, bliss after struggle, etc.). On the other hand, when the use of Picardy third becomes a cliché for minor movements then it is not marked – and in those situations a minor ending for minor movements will be marked and induce extra negativity (i.e., expected positive outcome will not come, the futility of struggle, affirmation of the tragedy, etc.).

As it can be inferred from the above discussion, markedness is highly context dependent. Therefore, using musical gestures associated with certain topical meanings can also result in marked utterances. For example, fanfare gestures are not marked in a "march" topic, but they will be marked in a chorale setting. Or, buffa gestures will be marked in a tragic composition, and will give an ironic character to the overall piece.

Building over Agawu's (1991) beginnings-middles-endings model, Hatten observes that markedness further operates strategically and thematically, that is, our interpretation of musical material is also context-dependent according to our formal expectations and the formal functions of the material (Hatten, 1994, pp. 115-116). For example, using cadential or development material at the beginning of a composition will be marked since we will be expecting thematic material at the very start of a movement. Likewise, using closural gestures in a development core will be marked since we will be expecting more continuation/material in such a location, or introducing a new theme in the coda section of a movement will be marked, and etc.

Determination of the moments of markedness is crucial for identifying the twists in the narrative trajectory of a composition. Moreover, marked constituents of music because such moments correspond to locations where the attributable range of musical meanings narrows down and becomes more specific.

In that regard, Hatten proposes the term aesthetically warranted emotions, which he defines as those "emotions that are directly motivated by stylistically competent interactions" with "the expressive trajectories" of a piece of music (Hatten, 2018, p.179). Such emotions may arise from very low-level physiological reactions to the audiological stimuli in the music (i.e., being shocked by a sudden loud outburst), or they may be triggered by complex symbolic associations attributed to various styles within a musical culture (i.e., court music, vulgar music, military music, religious

music, etc.), or they may even be emotional associations unique to an individual's personal experience. Note that while aesthetically warranted emotions are culturally conditioned, they may even vary among individuals belonging to the same society with different personal histories (Hatten, 2018, p.197). Moreover, a passage of music may convey more than a single aesthetically warranted emotion, hence the concept enables the representation of emotional ambiguities. Hence, given the high degree of freedom and arbitrariness involved in providing literal descriptions of music, Hatten's concept of aesthetically warranted emotions enables us to constrain our discussion on musical emotions with the semantical associations that can be constructed between musical features, and corresponding cultural and physiological structures.

This thesis proposes that one of the significant stylistic features of Bartók's night music style is the presence of a marked semantic opposition between the actantial *noise gestures* (defined here as non-tonal segregated gestures on the auditory scene) and the agential musical material. Depending on the program or the topical context of a composition, this agent/actant marked opposition may be interpreted as a contextualized dichotomy. Several context dependent viable semantic dichotomies that might be generated from agent/actant marked opposition is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Agent/actant marked opposition and several viable dichotomies.

Agent	Actant
Intentional	Unintentional
Expressive	Inexpressive
Willing	Indifferent
Men	Nature
Human	World
Self	Environment
Higher Life Form	Lower Life Form
Actions by choice	Habitual actions
Intelligent	Unintelligent/Ignorant
Music	Noise
Song	Sound

As can be seen in Table 1.1, the marked oppositions between agential and actantial sources is asymmetrical, in the sense that agential meanings comprise a much narrower set of meanings encapsulated by the actantial meanings. This situation is very much in line with Hatten's original conception of markedness, or the linguistic examples provided in his original work (1994). For example, the unmarked concept of "man" may be used to signified all mankind, whereas its marked counterpart "woman"

“invariably specifies the gender” (Hatten, 1994, p. 35). Or the unmarked present tense (as in the sentence “he works late”) also denotes the past, whereas the marked past tense (as in “he worked late”) excludes the present.

In that sense musical agents are more specified musical actants with intentionality. Similarly, a listener can feel the emotive effect due to the presence of both actant or agent, but can only identify with or feel empathy towards an agent. Hence this duality of virtual agents and actants provides Bartók’s with enormous expressive capabilities which he realized with utmost musical poetry in his night music compositions, and which I am aiming to bring forward in my forthcoming investigations of examples from this repertoire.

2. PRECURSORS OF BARTÓK'S NIGHT MUSIC STYLE

2.1 Night Music and the Pastoral Styles

The Night's Music from *Out of Doors* and many other night music movements by Bartók are often discussed within a pastoral tradition (Harley, 1995; Schneider, 2006). Such pastoral associations are usually motivated on one hand by the identification of 'natural sounds' or quasi-pastoral signifiers such as the bird-song, and on the other hand by the utilization of folk-music material – which one can find abundantly in Bartók's works but not necessarily in all pieces identified as night music. Moreover, the typical signifiers for the pastoral topic are not necessarily found in every night music movement in Bartók's oeuvre.

This thesis does not consider Bartók's night music style as a special type of pastoral – after all the primary claim of this thesis is that the defining characteristic of Bartók's night music style is the existence of a marked opposition between the actantial and agential elements in music, and the musical implication of multiple agencies. Nevertheless, a discussion about several pastoral traditions and their relevance to Bartók's night music style is inevitable, since some pastoral works also showcase an actantial versus agential opposition, and given enormous folk-music references in Bartók's work and folk-music's strong association with the nationalistic 19th century pastoral traditions.

2.1.1 The 'high' pastoral versus the 'low' pastoral

Before examining the possible relationships between Bartók's night music and the pastoral, we should state beforehand that the pastoral is one of the oldest and long-lasting cultural and literary topics, and there has been various distinctive pastoral traditions throughout the history of western classical music. As Monelle (2006) states the pastoral genre in music dates far back to the trobadour *pastourelles*, and "leading, through the madrigal, early opera, the Arcadian movement, and Romantic nature worship, to the songs of Debussy and Strauss's Daphne" (p. 185).

Throughout the history of the genre up until the 19th century, the pastoral served as an illusionary escapism to an idealized Golden Age or paradise lost, and it was never associated to the real world with its recurring social and political problems – and it was never meant to be related to reality. In the classical literature, the pastoral promises a return to the nature, to a state of innocence devoid of conflicts and hardships, "a freedom from passion, or, in the erotic tradition, of another kind of innocence, that of sexual freedom" (Monelle, 2006, p. 195). Essentially, the pastoral projected an ideal world where nothing seemed to change, where there were "no goals, no ambitions, no disappointments" (Monelle, 2006, p. 195).

Certainly, the classical pastoral tradition was not realist at all and had nothing to do with real shepherds or peasants. Its artificiality was very much evident to the audiences in the past as it is to the audiences of today. The contemporary audience of the classical pastoral was the people from the higher classes with no real interest to the lives of contemporary peasants, and they "would have found any critical reference to contemporary country people crassly vulgar" (Monelle, 2006, p. 201).

Monelle (2006) identifies two distinct musical pastoral traditions in the European music of 18th and 19th centuries, which he refers to as "the high pastoral" and "the low pastoral" (p. 227). The high pastoral was a continuation of the idealized classical pastoral that is mentioned above. The musical signifiers of the high pastoral were the major mode, soft dynamics, 6/8 or 12/8 Siciliana rhythm (popularized by Alessandro Scarlatti, its folkloric origins are questionable), imitation of shepherd's flute or pan-pipes, bird-song, bag-pipe or musette like drone accompaniment, rocking or wave-like accompaniment, stepwise smooth melodic contour (Hatten, 1994, p. 98-99; Monelle, 2006, p. 207-228). By using the above-mentioned musical ingredients, pastoral music always strived to project a "quality of simplicity" and a "lyric temporality", which Monelle (2006) defines as "music's power to arrest time" (p. 244), while painting an artificial world where desires and conflicts do not play any function.

The low pastoral emerged around the end of the 18th century. It also projected an idealized image of peasants and rustic life, but now the main focus was on the landscape – the subjects were the woods, mountains, fields and rivers (Monelle, 2006, p.202). Partly due to the philosophic elevation of nature, such natural or geographic formations were portrayed almost with a religious character in pastoral works, as if they were divine objects or as if they reflected "God in the landscape itself", and

consequently pastoralism “lost its lightness and charm and gathered a kind of moral tension” (Monelle, 2006, p.202).

The two pastoral traditions continued to co-exist in parallel throughout the Romantic period, and there were certain musical features which were common in both the high and the low pastoral styles (such as pedal harmonies or, imitation of the rural bagpipes, etc.). While the aristocratic high pastoral was completely disinterested with the music of the peasants, the bourgeois low pastoral claimed to have a genuine affection with the folksongs which they envisioned to reflect the collective sincerity, innocence, and the ancient wisdom of the uneducated people living in harmony with nature (Monelle, 2006, p. 227). Unfortunately, the values associated with the mythological Arcadian peasants were being projected towards the real 19th century rural populations, and eventually such prejudices resulted in a distorted view of both the peasants and their music. The studies on folk music were conditioned by an idealized quest for simplicity, which resulted in the association of the peasants with a musical style which was partially invented by the researchers (Monelle, 2006, p. 220). Many 19th century folksong collections either simplified – or “improved” – the music by removing its “imperfections” according to the tastes of the urban populations, or freely included novel compositions in the so-called “folksong style” – so much so that, sometimes the published folk songs did not bear much resemblance with the music of the rustic populations (Monelle, 2006, pp. 223-24).

The published lyrics of the songs also experienced a similar distortion: the original lyrics could be censored if they were thought to be not fitting the idealized vision of the folk, where the lyrics were politically dangerous, sexually explicit, obscene, vulgar, or scatological. Or, worse, the lyrics could be changed for educational purposes to propagate values that seem to be proper for feeding the youth with, or for political propaganda (Gioia, 2019, pp. 279-284). Eventually folk-music became a tool for the 19th century nationalism, and lost its pastoral associations.

2.1.2 Pastoral signifiers in the night music style

The pastoral genre recreates the classical *human vs. nature* dichotomy by creating an idealized world which is set opposite to the imperfect world of the spectators. Time is suspended in this ideal world where there are no unfulfilled desires, no conflicts, no goals, no ambitions, and no disappointments. This illusion, which is described by

Monelle (2006) as the "arrested time" or "lyric temporality", is achieved through several signifiers of the pastoral style that contribute to the musical statis such as not having abrupt dynamic changes, harmonic pedals, rocking or wave-like accompaniment, or drone accompaniment (recalling bag-pipe or musette). Note that these characteristics can be observed also in *The Night's Music* from *Out of Doors*, where the wave-like left-hand ostinato figures and the harmonic pedals contribute to the arresting of time and the creation of a lyric temporality.

The creation of an illusionary world is one of the most significant parallels between Bartók's night music pieces and the pastoral style. *The Night's Music* achieves this through the wave-like ostinato figure and quasi-randomly presented noise gestures, by depicting the nocturnal experience in the countryside as seen by an alienated urban spectator, which is either the composer, or we as the listener. Even though the noise gestures in the piece lack a hierarchical tonal organization, one can say that the harmonic experience is one of statis due to the ever-present unchanging wave-like ostinato and the presentation of the noise gestures always from the same register and from the same pitches.

Suspension of time by harmonic statis provided by pedal points and rocking accompaniment is one of the most common tools used by composers for depicting ever-present forces with mystical associations. Such prolonged pedal points with constant harmony but inward undulations were called Klangfläche or "sheet of sound" by Carl Dahlhaus and they were frequently used to symbolize natural forces (Schneider, 2006, p.111). One of the most well-known such musical depictions is found in the Prelude to Wagner's *Das Rheingold* which starts with a perpetually undulating E♭-major chord that is prolonged and intensified for several minutes. Within the context of the opera, this musical figure is usually interpreted symbolically, as if it is standing for the river Rhine as an eternal authority which will eventually outlast the greedy gods and witness their demise.

Note that the musical depiction of the Rhine River in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* fulfils the requirements of a virtual actant but not a virtual agent according the definitions given by Hatten's virtual agency theory (2018). The music that stands for the river, while undulates or grows with secondary parameters (by changing volume, intensity, instrumental color, range of undulation) is static harmonically and lacks expressive melodic motion. The static character of the music for the river implies an actantial

source, and prevents the perception of a musical virtual agent with intentions, goals, directions, or dramatic or psychological states. Similarly, by using Larson's (2012) observer/participant dichotomy, we can engage with the music for the river mainly from an observer's perspective. We can force an engagement form a participant perspective and imagine ourselves moving with the river, but still the non-agential quality of the music does not allow us to feel *as the river*: we do not have any clue about the feelings of the river, or if the river has any feelings at all, and forming any sort of empathy is out of question. As the listeners, we experience the magnificence of the river. Paradoxically, the music creates the illusion of something that is not expressive, yet it expresses its magnificence.

A very direct musical homage to the waves in the prelude of *Das Rheingold* is found in the *Introduction* of Bartók's *The Wooden Prince* from 1917. This work presents a more modernist "sheet of sound" where a C-major undulating drone is prolonged and later colored with harmonic extensions of B♭ and F#, whose first measures are presented in Figure 2.1 below.

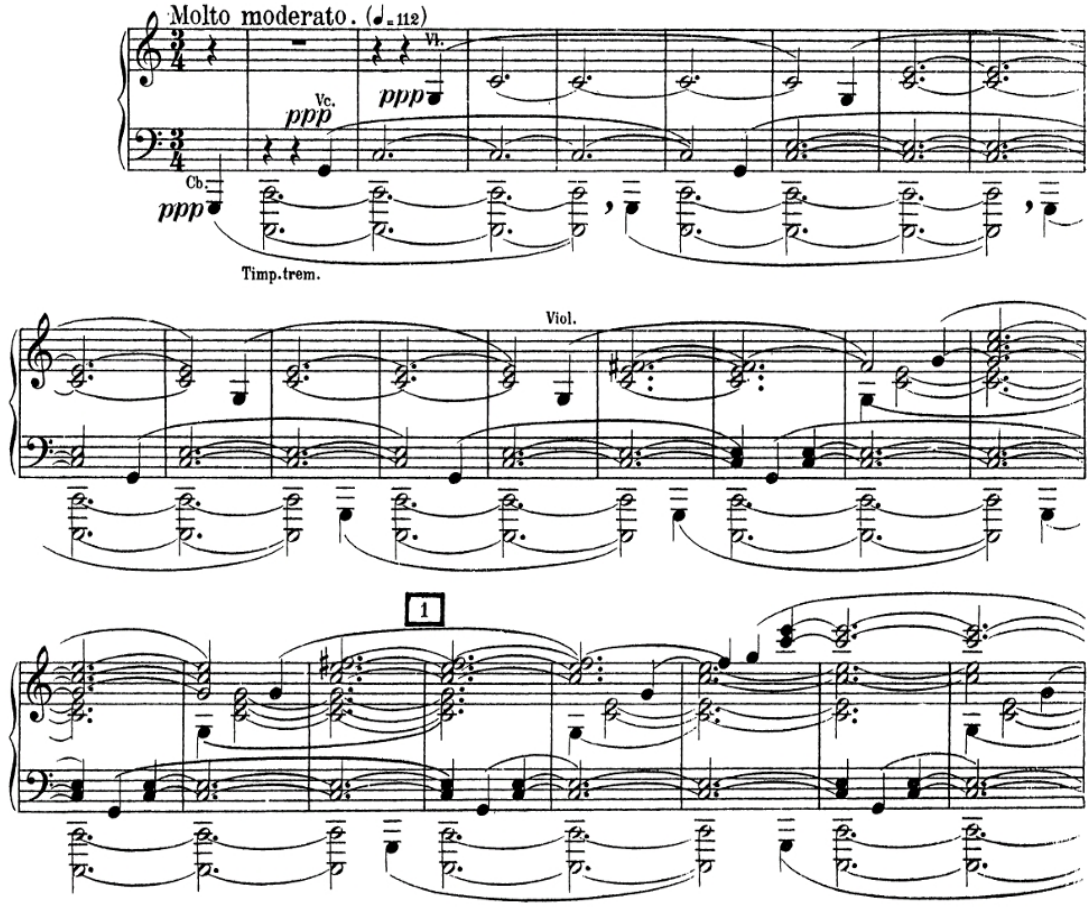

Figure 2.1 : Bartók's *The Wooden Prince*, the first measures of the *Introduction*.

Schneider (2006) compares the opening of *The Wooden Prince* with the left-hand ostinato of *The Night's Music* from *Out of Doors*: according to him the widely spaced harmonies in the beginning of *The Wooden Prince* portray "the sublime grandeur of the forest, an effect Bartók heightens with expansive sweeps of a minor seventh in the horn, an instrument long associated with woodland scenes" (Schneider, 2006, p. 112). On the other hand, instead of the grandeur of the forest, the compressed chromatic cluster found in the left-hand ostinato of *The Night's Music* invites the listeners to a more alert listening state where they are ought to "focus on the small details of the nocturnal world" (Schneider, 2006, p. 112).

While the sheets of sound in *Das Rheingold* and *The Wooden Prince* can metaphorically stand for animist and almost God-like natural energies, it is interesting that they can do so due to their lack of harmonic and melodic movement. Because, in these pieces the lack of harmonic or melodic movement endows the music with actantial characteristics, enabling the arresting or suspension of time and creating a kind of *lyric temporality* which has evolved from the pastoral topic. The left-hand ostinato of *The Night's Music* does not possess the magnificence found in the above mentioned works due to its very condensed range, chromatic compression and very soft dynamics, yet it also creates its own kind of *arrested time* due to its sustained actantial characteristics. It is also metaphorically perceived as a force of nature, albeit a very subtle one.

Another characteristic feature of the pastoral topic which is frequently mentioned in discussions about Bartók's night music works is the "birdsong" (Somfai, 1984; Harley, 1995; Bayley, 2000; Schneider, 2006). Monelle (2006) lists birdsong as one of the pastoral signifiers, but he is wary about their practical value since there is not an apparent musical feature which means "birdsong" and most imitations of birdsongs are not identifiable without titles or programmatic descriptions (pp. 243-244).

In addition to identification problems, I would argue also that birdsongs do not necessarily carry associations that are typical of the high pastoral as defined by Monelle (2006). One such birdsong imitation which lacks the quality of simplicity of the high pastoral is present in Rameau's *Le Rappel des Oiseaux*, from his *Pièces de Clavessin* of 1724, which is given in Figure 2.2 below. The piece is a fast and virtuosic toccata featuring frequent imitations and interlocking rhythms between the hands. The first 5 measures present almost actantial music, where the tonic harmony is prolonged

and where both hands are playing jumping intervals and mordents which could altogether stand for the birdsong. Moreover, the tension is gradually increased in the first 5 measures by increasing the number of jumps within the phrases, hence by rate of presentation which is a secondary parameter. Nevertheless, the actantial characteristics of music are disrupted from measure-6 on as the harmony progresses to a dissonant vii^0, and later on to other tonal areas. Measures 11-17 progress like a toccata, and the music is too developmental to suggest birdsongs especially during measures 14-17. The 5-measure birdsong motive found at the beginning of the piece returns back in measure 18, but this time again on a dissonant harmony of V^6_5. The piece is simply too agitated to be characterized as fitting the high pastoral topic. If there is any birdsong in this music, it is not the serene song of the actantial birds of the high pastoral style.

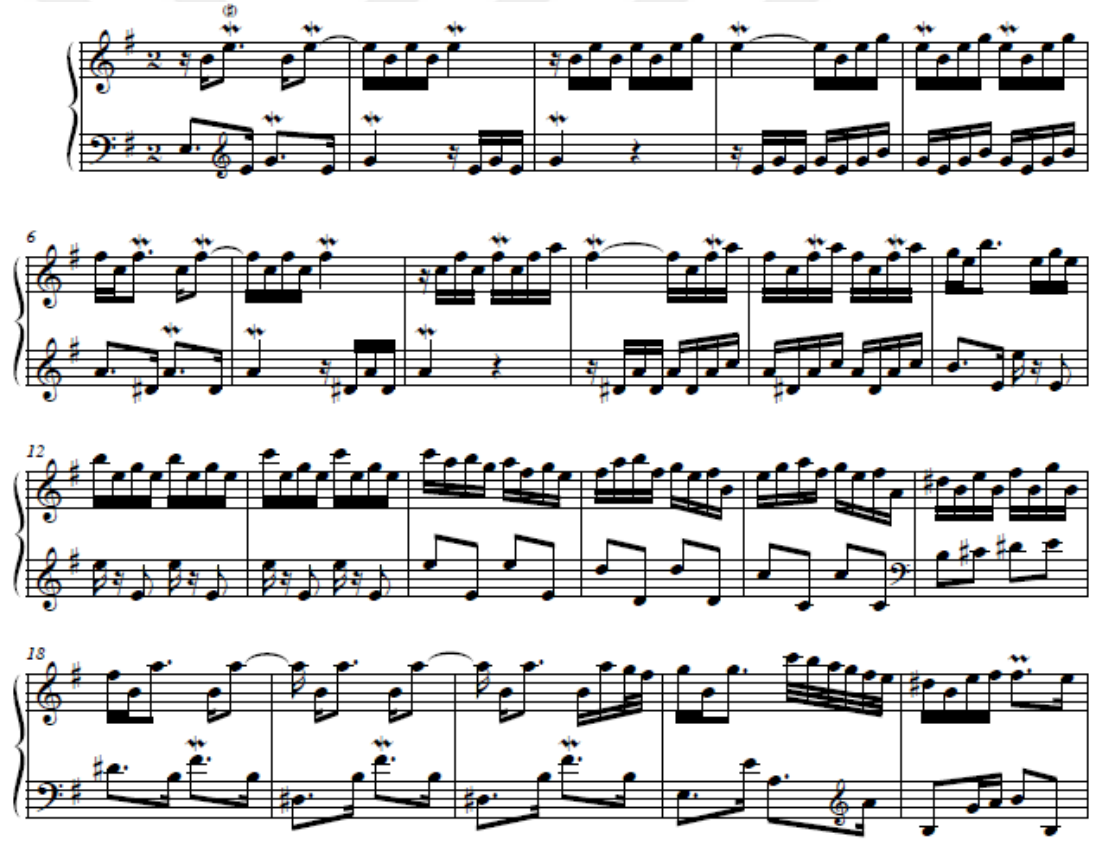

Figure 2.2 : Jean-Phillippe Rameau, *Le Rappel des Oiseaux* (1724).

As stated in the previous section, the high pastoral has always served as an illusionary escapism to a world devoid of conflicts and hardships, where time is suspended and nothing seems to change, and where there is no need for goals or ambitions. Note that there is no need for intention, desire, or free will in a perfect world where nothing

changes, and these are precisely the qualities that differentiate virtual agents from virtual actants

In order for the high pastoral illusion to persist, the pastoral birds must always be depicted as being pleasant. Moreover, the pleasantness of these birds must not be a consequence of their desire to be so, but must be an externally observed effect they have in their spectators. The ideal pastoral birds will have no need for intentions, desires, or free will. Hence, they could well be perceived as virtual actants. The thematic processes in the Rameau piece discussed above sustains the same agential entity through goal directed harmonic movements, exhibiting tensions and relaxations. Yet precisely these transformations, ebbs of tension and relaxation, and goal directed movements altogether bestow the music its agential qualities, and prevents the actantial interpretation of the musical source. Therefore, the musical birds depicted by Rameau in *Le Rappel des Oiseaux* are not actantial, but higher-level agential sources with goals, motivations, and desires.

As for the actantial birds, Consider the famous birdsong episode from the first movement of *The Spring* in Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, which comes right after the first ritornello. The beginning of that section is given below in Figure 2.3.

The harmony constantly stays in E-major throughout the above birdsong episode from Vivaldi's *The Spring*, which creates a sharp contrast between the preceding and following ritornellos. The constant harmony provides almost an alternative universe devoid of any dissonances. The birdsong gestures are almost arbitrarily placed, not much different than the noise gestures in *The Night's Music*. Since all the gestures revolve around the three notes that make up the E-major triad, everything is consonant and there is no desire for harmonic resolution, and this is again not much different than the highly chromatic noise gesture sections of *The Night's Music* where the harmony does not provide an organizational hierarchy. In such an environment where primary parameters of rhythm and pitch hierarchy are suspended, the intensity of music can only be increased by boosting the secondary parameters such as the rate of presentation of events, and this precisely happens on the second violin in measures 19-21, where the alternations between G#-A are gradually speeded up.

While being tonal and extremely consonant, this short episode by Vivaldi displays all the hallmarks of Bartók's night music style including a marked opposition between

agential ritornello music and the actantial birdsong episode. The same piece can also be compared to the night music episode from the 3rd movement of Bartók's String Quartet No. 4, which is given in Figure 2.4 below. Many commentators refer to the melody in the first violin as "bird-song" or "nightingale melody" (Harley, 1995; Bayley, 2000). The melody of the first violin has only the notes E♭ and F, and both of these pitches are almost unrelated and highly dissonant with respect to the sustained drone chord which consists of C-B♭-D-G-E-C#, suggesting a fractured and complimentary pitch organization similar to the organization in *The Night's Music*. This nightingale melody undulates between the notes E♭ and F in various octaves, while the intensity of the music is adjusted by the secondary parameters like the rate of events and the register.

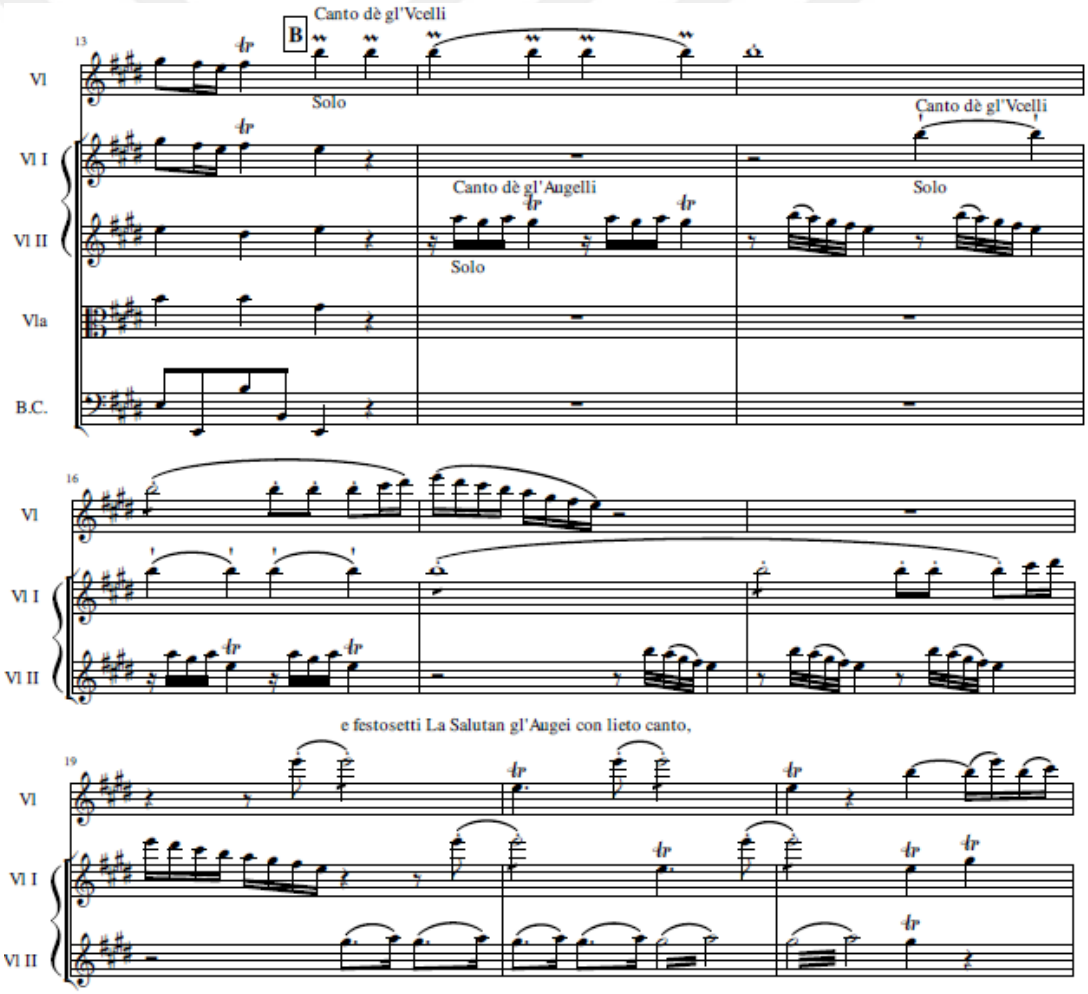

Figure 2.3 : Antonio Vivaldi, *The Spring* from *The Four Seasons* (1724).

The nightingale melody given in Figure 2.4 is highly contrastive with the preceding expressive folk melody which is highly ornamented and has speech-like rhythms

(Bayley, 2000, p. 369). The speech rhythms and expressivity suggest a virtual agent for the preceding folk melody, and this forms a marked agential opposition with the actantial nightingale melody.

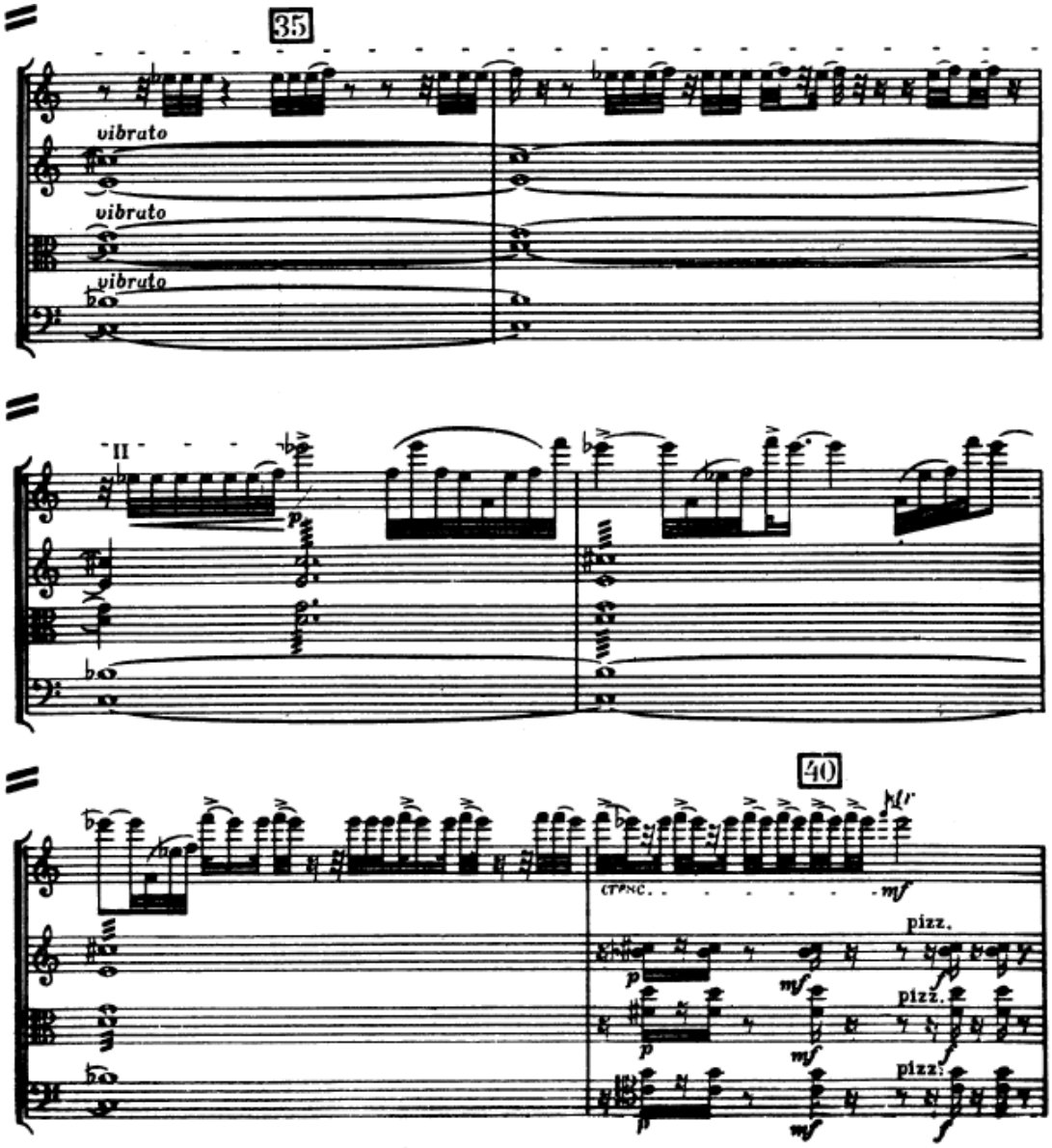

Figure 2.4 : Bartók, String Quartet No.4/III, mm. 35-40.

The pastoral genre may present actantial/agential oppositions similar to the oppositions found in Bartók's night music compositions, and it should be noted that having such oppositions is not a precondition of the pastoral genre. Nevertheless, the actantial/agential oppositions and the affect of the *arrested time* that is provided by a prolonged harmonic statis (by means of pedal points, *sheets of sound*, or recurring ostinatos) are the two basic musical ingredients that are shared by both the pastoral and night music styles. It should also be noted that not all of Bartók's night music

compositions have musical actants that resemble natural entities, and nor the representations of the cultural and literary associations of the pastoral genre. Also due to Bartók's highly chromatic and dissonant musical language, the night music compositions do not necessarily present the *lyric temporality* of the pastoral topic which is generally associated with prolonged major sonorities in pastoral compositions. In the high-pastoral style, the arrested time operates as an illusionary escapism to an ideal world without conflict, whereas the arrested time in Bartók's night music style usually presents itself as a window opening to an alternative magical world which has markedly different rationalities than the organization of the music that encloses the night music sections or movements. Hence, it is possible to propose that the *arrested time* acts similarly as portals to alternative universes in both the pastoral and night music styles. Yet the expressive qualities of the alternate universes may be different in these two styles of music. While the high pastoral style creates illusionary escapisms to idealized and serene worlds where nothing changes because everything is perfect, the night music style, on the other hand, may open up portals to much sinister worlds with their own suspended realities, exhibiting a vast potential for complex expressions.

2.2 Multiple Agency in Instrumental Music Prior to Bartók's Night Music

As stated in the previous sections, this thesis proposes that the existence of a marked agential/actantial opposition is an essential feature of Bartók's night music style. We can easily propose that the first movement of Vivaldi's *The Spring* also provides such a marked opposition between the actantial birdsong episode (see Figure 2.3) and the agential ritornello sections that encloses the birdsongs. Yet note that these agential manifestations in Vivaldi's composition are provided in disparate formal sections, whereas Bartók's night music compositions frequently highlight the oppositions between disparate musical agents/actants by juxtaposing them simultaneously, as we have already exemplified in *The Night's Music* from *Out of Doors*, creating a multi-agential/actantial musical virtual world. Therefore, in order the trace the precursors of Bartók's night music style, we are required investigate how multiple agencies were simultaneously depicted in the instrumental music prior to Bartók's night music compositions.

The portrayal of multiple agencies through music was certainly not a primary artistic concern for the baroque composers since the aesthetics of that era required from a piece of music to express and sustain a certain mood or feeling throughout the duration of that piece. This situation is nowhere more evident in the *opera seria* tradition, where the dramatic action is mostly confined to the recitatives, and almost no action takes place during the arias: the arias simply convey the sentiment or expression of the protagonists that are confronting the dramatic situation. We may even say that, in an *opera seria*, the dramatic time stops during the arias, and hence arias were not the places for the unfolding of multi-agential conflicts.

This situation changed drastically in the late 18th while, as Rosen (1998) puts it, "dramatic sentiment was replaced by dramatic action" (p. 43). The emergence of the sonata form enabled a musical style which exploited the emotive tension between expressively conflicting musical materials. And as for the late 18th century opera, the simultaneous portrayal of multiple musical agencies on the stage through music, through expressing the conflicting agendas of various protagonists, became one of the hallmarks of the dramatic style, just as many ensembles from Mozart's operas (for example, the ends of the first acts of *Don Giovanni* or *Cosi Fan Tutte*, or the end of the second act of *Le Nozze di Figaro*) operas may testify.

2.2.1 Issues of actorial continuity and multiple agency

While in the opera the agency is implied by the dramatis personae on the stage, the number of virtual agents or protagonists may be considerably ambiguous for the instrumental music. Moreover, having conflicting musical material is not, by itself, a sufficient indication of multi-agency in an instrumental piece of music. The topical, thematic, dramatic or stylistic changes in the musical content may reflect the dramatic trajectory that is underwent by a single musical agent, expressing its inner conflicts or emotive states as the music unfolds, while sustaining the agential identity throughout the dramatic action. In fact, many topical changes within and between themes in movements should be better interpreted as unfoldings of dramatic trajectories involving a single musical virtual agent, and Hatten (2018) reports several strategies that composers employed for sustaining agential identity or actorial continuity (pp. 84-126).

Consider, as an example, the theme that is found at the beginning of the 4th movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.10 No.3, which is given below in Figure 2.5. This theme exhibits several rhythmically rich motives having various durations that are delivered with contrasting dynamic and textural differences, which are separated by rhetorical silences in between the motives. Despite the unpredictable and fragmented presentation of the thematic material, this theme does not necessitate a multi-agential interpretation – and a more favorable musical reading would involve a single virtual musical agent behaving in a seemingly erratic manner, rendering the theme as ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations.

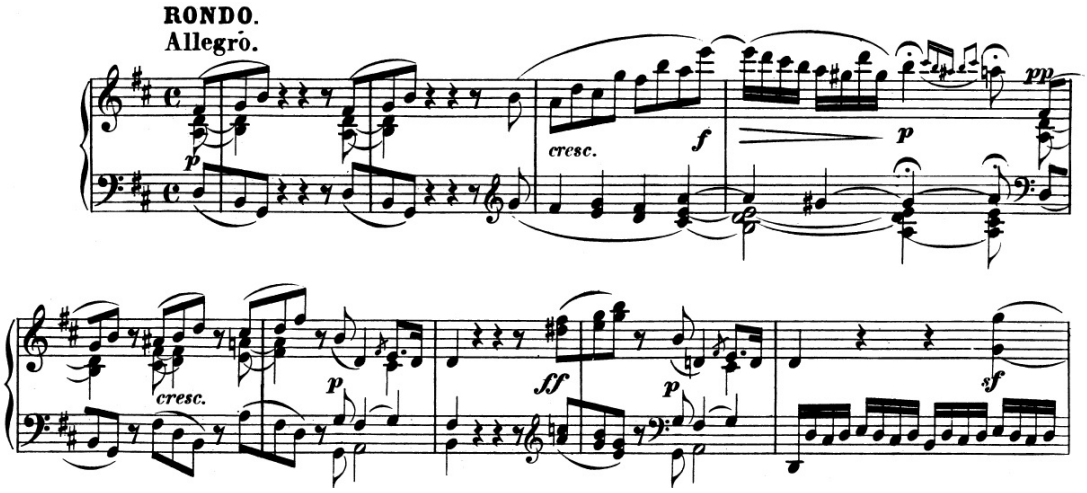

Figure 2.5 : Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op.10 No.3/IV, mm. 1-9.

Several agential narratives[4] can be constructed for the theme given in Figure 2.5. One may be inclined to assume a humorous virtual agent, where the unexpected ending and metrical lopsidedness of the opening gesture would be intentional as elements of surprise within a joke, its repetition would be rhetorical, and the silence in between the gestures would provide the required amount of time to digest the joke. Or, on the other hand, we can also assume a tragic narrative where the abrupt ending of the opening motive and its further recurrences could be interpreted as the inhibition of the melodic goal, hence the movement, of the virtual agent by some obstacle that is operating

[4] The agential narratives for Beethoven's theme given in this section are produced in accordance to a video commentary given by pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim (2016), where he presented two such seemingly contrasting interpretations about the meaning of this theme that were handed down to him by pianists Edwin Fischer and Claudio Arrau. According to Barenboim (2016), Fischer considered this theme as expressing the humor in music, whereas Arrau described this theme as having a tragic expression. We can propose that, while verbally explaining the meaning of this theme, Edwin Fischer and Claudio Arrau posit different kinds of virtual agents each possessing distinctive intentionalities and psychological dispositions.

beyond the agent's control. In such a tragic interpretation, the lack of proper melodic closure would be metaphorically synonymous with not being able to realize one's desires, or not having control over one's destiny or fortune, and hence the theme will be interpreted as a perpetual series of attempts and failures. While both of these agential approaches seem to be mutually contradictory, either of these readings that sustain the agential identity or actorial continuity would interpret this theme better than a multi-agential reading, since there are not enough clues that explicitly force a multi-agential reading.

The analysis given above shows how seemingly disparate meaningful scenarios can be projected onto Beethoven's theme under consideration assuming musical virtual agencies with different intentionalities and predispositions. Different narratives highlight different meanings associated with the same gestures, producing contrasting subjective interpretations.

We can argue that both of these interpretations are aesthetically warranted by Beethoven's composition. Hence "a listener may go beyond obvious programs and characters to hear a deeper subjectivity as triggered by the music's own structuring – even when it may appear to deny the presumed communicative intent of the composer" (Hatten, 2018, p.178).

Such seemingly paradoxical meaningful situations are essential for the expressive richness in music and other art forms. If we want to inquire beyond the obvious formal aspects of music and comment on its artistic content, we need to observe how musical syntax interacts with the emergence of such paradoxical situations. In this regard, Larson's (2012) and Hatten's (2018) theories provide us with a powerful framework for understanding how musical structure and expression relate with embodied human experiences.

2.2.2 Multiple agencies in the instrumental music of the 19th century

Multi-agential confrontations were being portrayed in purely instrumental music starting from the classical period, enabling the operation of dramatic musical narratives without the existence of verbal clues. This section presents several examples from the 19th century in order the elucidate the compositional and expressive strategies to portray multiple agencies in purely instrumental music used by several of Bartók's predecessors.

The second movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto clearly benefits form a multi-agential interpretation, whose measures 24-37 are reprinted in Figure 2.6. Although no program was given for this piece by the composer, several 19th century commentators posthumously sought a relation between this mysterious movement and the Orpheus myth, associating this music with mythological scenes like "Orpheus taming wild beasts" or "Orpheus pleading with the Furies of the Underworld" (Jander, 1985, pp.195-196). The movement progresses as a dialog between the piano and the unison strings. In addition to the timbral difference between these two parties, piano and the strings have also distinctive thematic material presented at different registers, with contrasting textures (homophonic versus unison), and different articulations (legato versus staccato). All these factors enhance the division of the musical surface into two distinct streams, creating a segregated auditory scene.

While the music for piano and strings are segregated into two different auditory streams each possessing their own identities, these two streams also do not form a unified sense of agency, what Hatten (2018) refers to as *melos*, since these two streams do not have common thematic material or are not fully coordinated. Moreover, compared to the music written for the piano, the music of the strings (which is fantasized to represent the beasts or the Furies of the Underworld) has a considerably much less varied musical material (only descending scales with dotted rhythms, or detached step-wise ascends with anacruses), and as a result – if we are to follow the associations with the Orpheus myth – we can posit that the music written for the beasts or the Furies signify almost an actantial agent with a constrained degree of intentional or expressive capabilities, whereas the music that represents Orpheus implies a high degree of intentionality and emotional expression. Hence, we are compelled to infer distinct virtual sources for these musical streams based not only on the acoustical, thematic, and registral clues, but also on differing emotive or cognitive capabilities that may be communicated by the music – and these differing emotive or cognitive capabilities may indicate contrasting agential or actantial dispositions. Eventually, all of these contrasting factors oblige us to envision more than one virtual source for the musical agency, and imply a musical narrative that involves multiple virtual agents.

The next chapter of this thesis will reflect on how the musical flow in Bartók's *The Night's Music* was organized by layering distinct auditory streams, all of them keeping their identity by having their own melodic content, register, articulation, and

expressive qualities. A similar compositional strategy is also at work in the Beethoven work given in above in Figure 2.6. Indeed, layering of auditory streams with distinct characteristics, without forming a coordinated musical flow or melos, is a common strategy utilized by the romantic and early modern composers in depictions of multi-agential confrontations through music.

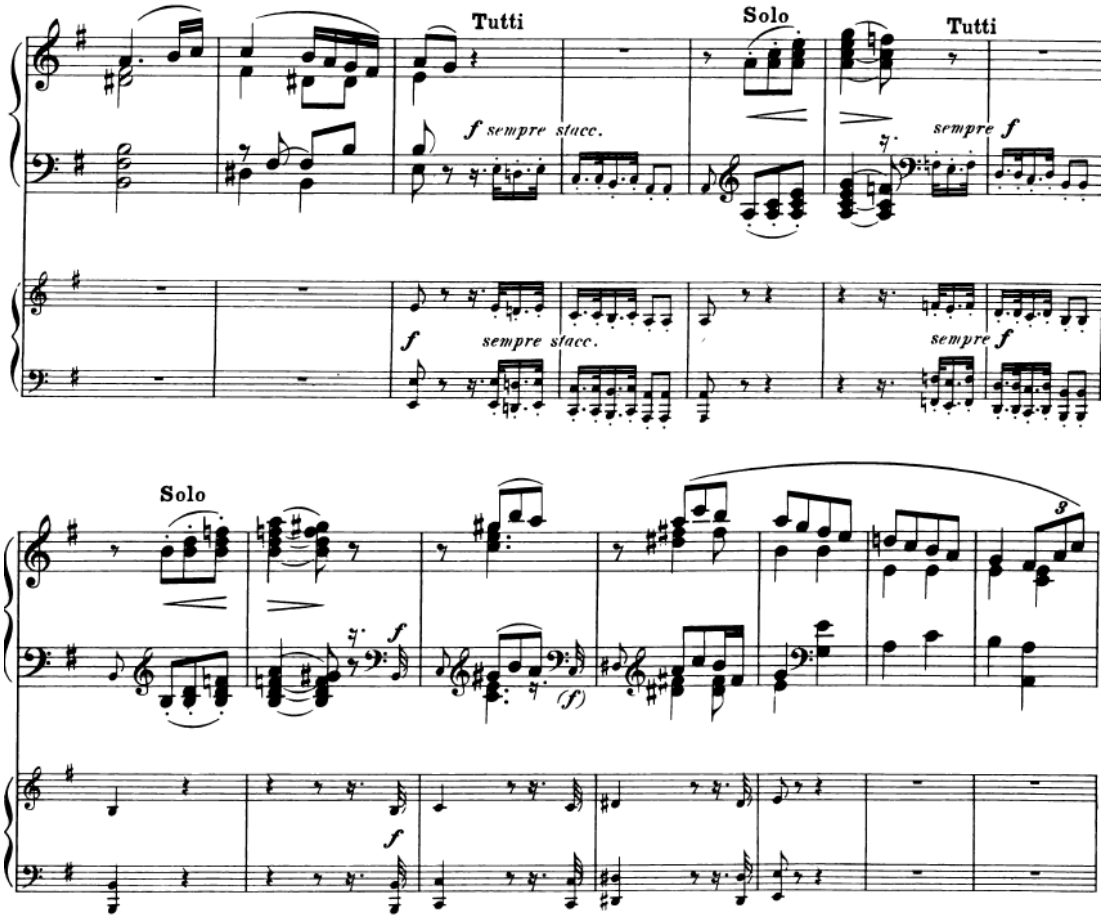

Figure 2.6 : Beethoven, Piano Concerto No.4, Op. 58, 2nd movement, mm. 24-37.

One of the archetypal dilemmas of the romantic period is the confrontation of 'the ego versus the nature', and Somfai (1984) interpreted Bartók's *The Night's Music* within that binary opposition. Liszt presents a multi-agential musical depiction of an analogous subject matter in his *Légende No. 2*, S. 175: *St. Francis of Paola walking on the waves*. A short excerpt from Liszt's piece is given below in Figure 2.7.

This composition depicts the miracle of St. Francis of Paola, whose story is printed at the beginning of the score. According to the given program, St. Francis was mocked and refused entry by a boatman while aiming to cross the strait of Messina to Sicily. In response, the saint laid his cloak on water, made himself a sail by using his staff as a mast, and sailed to the other side of the channel under the gazes of the boatmen,

passengers, and the spectators on both sides of the channel who witnessed this divine miracle.

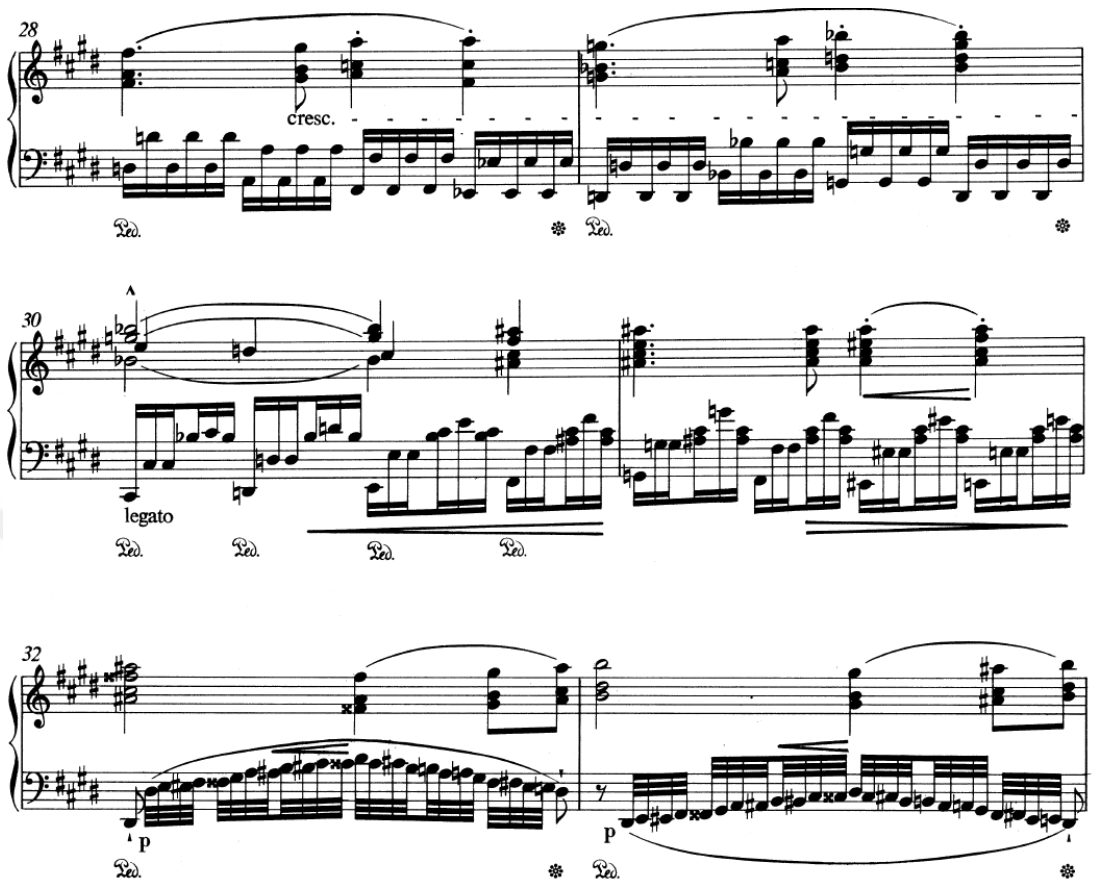

Figure 2.7 : Liszt, Légende No. 2, mm. 28-33.

In order to depict the confrontation between St. Francis and the turbulent waters running in the strait of Messina, Liszt makes use of two auditory streams. The first stream, which depicts St. Francis, is given on the right-hand stave in Figure 2.7, and it carries a homophonic chorale-like musical statement progressing with a monotonous rhythm, whose melodic motives are based on the monophonic chant given in the first 5 measures of the composition. This homophonic chorale-like music is layered above a *Klangfläche* or *sheet of sound* that depicts the waters running in the strait of Messina. Yet, unlike the perpetually undulating sheet of sound that depicts the river Rhine in the Prelude to Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, Liszt gradually metamorphoses the sheet of sound – which first starts as tremolos in the bass register, later gradually receives occasional ripple-like gestures, slowly and slowly increases in span and converts to wave-like arpeggios, and gradually morphs into a storm. As we get to measures 28-33 given in Figure 2.7, the harmonies become highly chromatic, modulating to distant tonalities, and the left-hand becomes considerably more mobile and active. Yet, even

though the sheet of sound depicting the waters gets much more intense and agitated, the chorale on the right-hand remains unshaken as it is taken through various major and minor key areas, still projecting the steady rhythm of the opening chant with a stubborn quarter-note tactus over the agitated arpeggios. In a certain way, keeping the monotony of the rhythmic gesture of the opening chant theme reflects the single-mindedness of the saint who is not swayed by the obstacles surrounding him. Amidst all the storm underneath, the unwavering rhythm of the chant holds itself as a representation of the firm belief and determination of St. Francis.

Contrary to the steady sheets of sounds presented in the previous examples, Liszt's composition introduces a very active and dynamic sheet of sound that moves with the harmony, and which gradually mutates from tremolos to arpeggios, and then to quick chromatic scales having wave-like gestures. Through all these diverse musical figurations, the gradual transformations of the sheet of sound ensure the sustaining of the agential identity and the actorial continuity. Moreover, the dynamic changes in the shape and undulation of the sheet of sound also contribute to the musical tension in the composition. Hence, frequency of the waves (i.e., decreasing the wave-length) and the wave-amplitude act like non-syntactic secondary parameters governed by growth-based processes.

In this composition, the actorial continuity is also achieved by limiting the musical material presented at each of the agential streams. The monophonic chant that is found at the first 5 measures of the piece acts as a calling card for St. Francis, and almost all of the melodic content of the piece is derived from this melody by techniques like thematic transformation or developing variation. Such a process also enables the perception of a virtual musical agent expressed through a well-defined collection of topics, by confining the musical agent to gestures correlated with religious topics like *chant* and *chorale*.

One of the most effective strategies for multi-agential musical expression is the juxtaposition of different melodies that were introduced earlier in a composition, and Bartók also utilized this strategy in *The Night's Music* by superimposing theme-1 (folk-lament) and theme-2 (flute-like folk dance) (see Figure 2.10 and Figure 2.12). An earlier use of this compositional strategy was presented in the 6th movement of Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, which depicts 'two Polish Jews: one rich, the other poor'. Mussorgsky's juxtaposition of

themes starts in measure 19 of the composition, and that section is reprinted below in Figure 2.8.

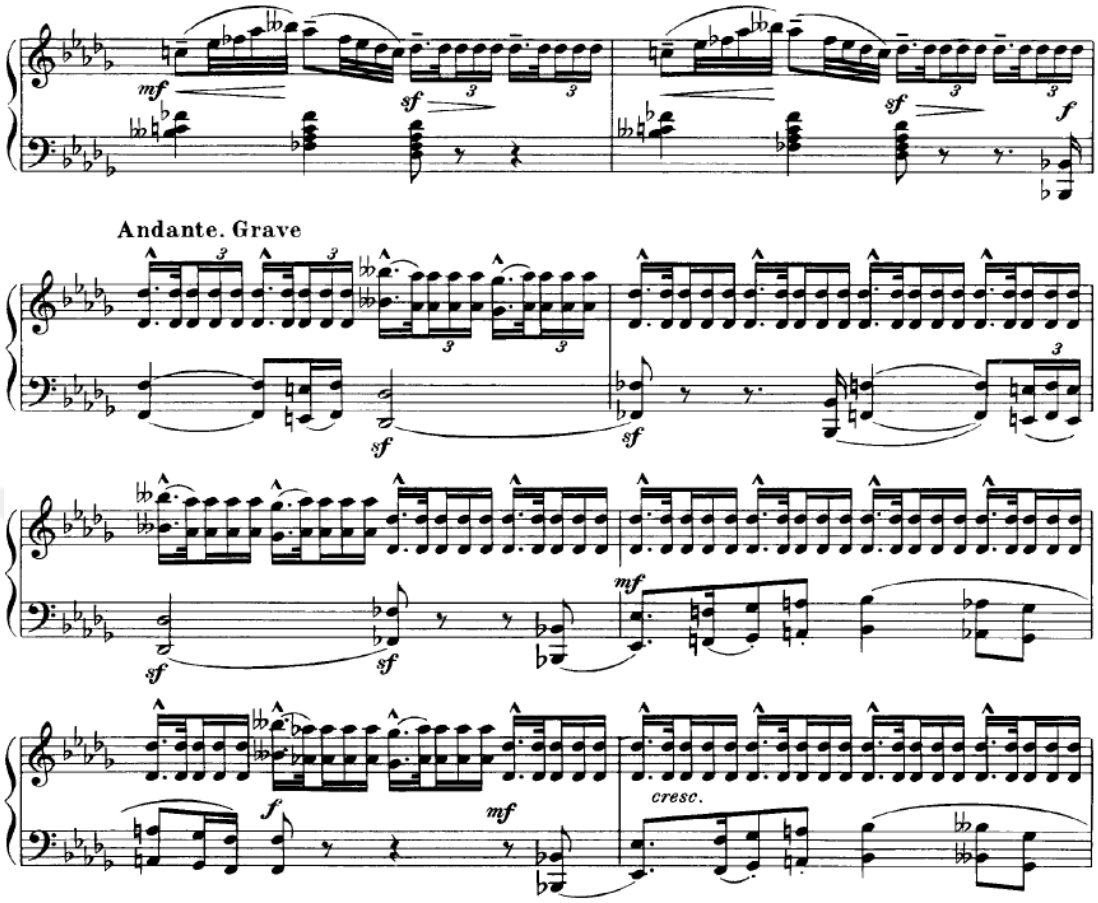

Figure 2.8 : Mussorgsky, *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, mm.17-24.

Of course, the juxtaposition of the themes may be interpreted as a *melos*, what Hatten (2018) defines as a unified sense of agency arising from the tight contrapuntal coordination musical streams. Yet, presentation of themes in isolation beforehand may greatly enhance the multi-agential perception of the juxtaposition, and the present example from Mussorgsky is a good illustration of how previous presentation of the themes prevents the formation of a melos.

As you can see in Figure 2.8, starting from measure 19, the juxtaposition of Mussorgsky's themes is coordinated securely by having consonant minor-6th, major-6th, or perfect-5th intervals between the voices, and by having overlapping beginnings and endings of the phrases in between the voices – which is made possible because Mussorgsky did not use the theme for 'the poor Jew' verbatim, but devised a variation of its opening phrase that fits together with the other theme. By looking only to the music starting from measure 19, one can argue that, a multi-agential musical

perception would not take place due to this tight combination of the voices. Yet, prior isolated presentation of the themes enables a multi-agential perception of the juxtaposition due to several factors, which are discussed below.

First of all, earlier presentation of the themes in isolation would enable the listeners to imprint in their memories the musical bits that are distinctively associated with different agents – and this would greatly enhance the multi-agential perception of the juxtaposition if they can recall such former melodic associations. From measure 19 onwards, the bass line is almost the verbatim repetition of the monophonic theme given at the beginning of the composition, whereas the treble staff presents, within the repeated D♭ octaves, a diminution of the descending melodic line (B♭♭-A♭-G♭-A♭-D♭) that is found at the beginning of the second theme (see Figure 2.9), preserving the actorial continuity through variation. Also observe that this melodic figure (B♭♭-A♭-G♭-A♭-D♭) is accompanied by a low D♭ during the juxtaposition in measures 19 and 21 (see Figure 2.8), just as it was formerly accompanied by a D♭ in the bass when the theme was first presented (see Figure 2.9). As a result, the contrapuntal combination during the juxtaposition preserves the initial harmonic sonority of the second theme, further contributing to the actorial continuity.

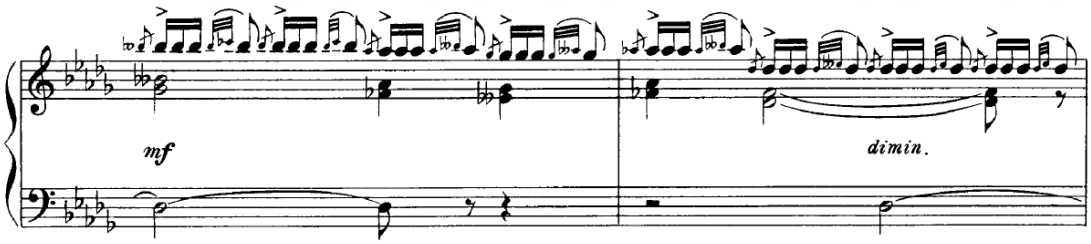

Figure 2.9 : Mussorgsky, *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, 2nd subject.

Another factor that enhances the actorial continuity at the point of juxtaposition is the rhythmic figure of the right-hand in measure 19 (Figure 2.8), which is correlated with the theme given in Figure 2.9, since both has the repeating 16th-note triplets. Moreover, the same rhythmic figure is already present in the measures 17 and 18 through repeating (D♭)s, and it is uninterruptedly carried over to the juxtaposition in measure 19, and by doing so, sustains the actorial continuity of the second theme as it is merged with the first one.

Mussorgsky's *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle* incorporates a polymodal combination of the themes at the point of juxtaposition, and in that sense also paves

the way for Bartók's *The Night's Music*. The initial theme is in B♭ double-harmonic-minor scale (also known as the gypsy-scale), whereas the second theme starts in D♭ Phrygian and ends in D♭ minor. Note that not only the modes but also the modal tonics are different for these two themes. While B♭ is felt clearly as the tonic of the initial theme during the juxtaposition, the feeling of D♭ as a modal tonic is also retained throughout the juxtaposition due to (1) the repeating (D♭)s on the right-hand throughout the juxtaposition, and also due to (2) accompanying the melodic motto of the second theme (B♭♭-A♭-G♭-A♭-D♭) by a low D♭ in the bass in measures 19 and 21. Not only polymodality but also having distinct modal tonics precludes the perception of the juxtaposition as a *melos*, and reinforces the multi-agential perception of the music by the listeners.

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In order to summarize the discussions related with the musical examples given above, the following are several observations about the factors that may contribute to the multi-agential perception of a piece of music:

(1) Having contrasting melodic material or diverse topical correlations do not necessarily indicate multi-agency in music. The topical, thematic, dramatic or stylistic changes in the musical content may reflect the dramatic trajectory that is underwent by a single musical agent, expressing its inner conflicts or

emotive states as the music unfolds, while sustaining the agential identity throughout the musical piece.

(2) Multi-agency calls for a segregated auditory scene, and that calls for differences of thematic material, timbre, register, texture, articulation, gestural characteristics, or agential/actantial disposition. If there are not enough differences in between the musical layers, then their combination would be interpreted as a *melos*, a kind of unified agency which is akin to a well-regulated society acting jointly as an institution.

(3) A *Klangfläche* or *sheet of sound* may be standing analogically as a symbol for an eternal, everlasting, and inert force of nature. Due to their inertness, generally sheets of sounds do not imply musical agents, but musical actants. Nevertheless, a sheet of sound can be gradually transformed by keeping its actorial continuity, and such mutations might even be felt as being intentional, – and therefore agential. Such a process may lead to a somewhat animistic perception of the natural actant, and may comply the listeners to attribute intentional and andromorphic characteristics to natural phenomena, hence bestows it with agential characteristics.

(4) Auditory streaming is hugely influenced by the effects of memory (Bregman, 1994, p.220), and therefore having earlier memory imprints of several themes, by presenting them previously in isolation, may greatly enhance the multi-agential perception of their juxtaposition.

2.3 Precursors of Bartók's Night Music Style from the Early 20th Century

The dissolution of the traditional idea of tonality was arguably the most significant musical innovation of the early 20th century music. This fact enabled the composers to stage agential or actantial confrontations through music in harmonic environments which did not proclaim a well-defined tonal hierarchy. This section will present several musical excerpts from the standard repertory of the early 20th century, which could possibly be direct or indirect precursors of Bartók's night music style.

The second movement of Ravel's *Miroirs*, which is entitled 'Oiseaux tristes', presents a textural combination that is foreshadowing the layered representation of noise gestures in Bartók's *The Night's Music*, and that section of the piece is reprinted below

in Figure 2.10. Measures 13 and 14 introduce an ostinato sheet of sound derived from the octatonic scale on the left-hand, whereas the right-hand presents two gestures that look a lot like the noise gestures in *The Night's Music*: (1) a gesture composed of two downward broken-octaves filled with fifths (A6-E6-A5 and C7-G5-C6), and (2) a gesture consisting of an articulated single-note (F#4).

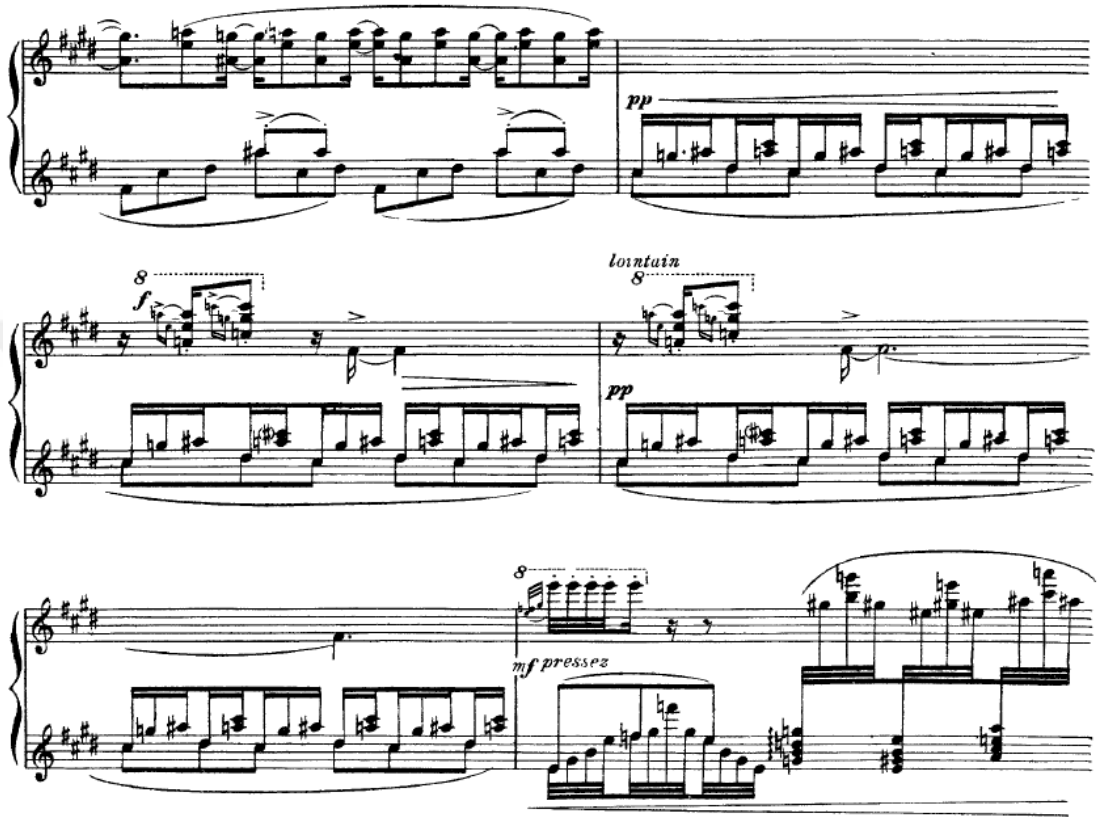

Figure 2.10 : Ravel, Miroirs, II. Oiseaux tristes, mm. 12-15.

The downward broken-octave gesture given on the right-hand in Figure 2.10 in measures 13 and 14 are also dynamically separated from the sheet of sound on the left-hand, since they are presented *forte* above the *pianissimo* ostinato figure. Note also the registral separation of the articulated single-note gesture (F#4), which is given below the register covered by the sheet of sound. Eventually, these differences in the register, articulation, and dynamics compels the listeners to perceive the auditory scene as being split into three distinct layers.

There is a complementary relationship between the pitch-classes employed in the left-hand ostinato figure and the gestures given on the right-hand: the ostinato figure employs the pitch-classes (C#-D#-G-A-A#), the downward broken gestures additionally introduce the pitch-classes (E-G) as the octave fillings, and finally the

articulated single-note gives (F#) – together all of them completing the octatonic collection (F#-G-A-A#-C-C#-D#-E).

Note that the octatonic collection is symmetrical, and therefore produces a neutralized harmonic space where the issues about pitch stability diminishes and there is no motive for tonal resolution. Hence, the above example from Ravel's *Oiseaux Tristes* shares an important harmonic organizational property with the chromatic noise gesture sections of Bartók's *The Night's Music,* or with the birdsong episode in E-major from Vivaldi's *The Spring* given in Figure 2.3. While all these examples employ different pitch collections (the notes of the E-major triad in Vivaldi, octatonic collection in Ravel, chromatic collection in Bartók), they all present a motionless harmonic plateau where the notions of consonance or dissonance are not pertinent for the organizational hierarchy of music. In all these examples the desire for musical movement is inhibited, and the listeners are left with a feeling of suspense arising from – quoting from Monelle's (2006) pastoral description – "music's power to arrest time" (p. 244).

A similar sense of harmonic statis is also present in *Voiles* from Debussy's first book of preludes, and the first 13 measures of this piece are given below in Figure 2.11. Formally the piece is organized in three sections, with a middle section based on the E♭-minor pentatonic scale, while the outer sections employ the whole-tone scale (B♭-C-D-E-F#-G#) – and it is these outer sections that show the closest affinity to Bartók's night music style. Just as it was the case for the previous Ravel example, the utilization of the symmetrical whole-tone scale in these sections undoubtedly contributes to the feeling of harmonic statis or the sense of arrested time in the composition. This sense of suspense is also enhanced by the perpetual (B♭1) pedals in the bass, which start in measure 5 and continue throughout the piece, contributing to the mysterious character of the composition.

As it can be seen in Figure 2.11, the first 13 measures of the composition are clearly organized in three musical layers. In order to facilitate a multi-agential perception, the musical material on these layers are devised and presented in a very elaborate way that brings out the individuality and autonomy of each layer, creating the illusion of an uncoordinated and arbitrary musical flow. (1) Note that each layer has a distinctive sonority: the top layer is presented with parallel thirds, the middle layer has octaves, and the bottom layer consists of single notes. (2) The music in each layer has distinctive rhythmic characteristics: the top layer almost always has rhythmically

unarticulated short notes – 3 notes, or 1 note only on the measure 2 – which are followed or preceded by longer notes falling on strong beats; the middle layer usually moves steadily with 8th-notes; the bottom layer presents a syncopated rhythmic figure which is like a slowed Hungarian rhythm. (3) All three layers present a distinctive melodic contour: the top layer exhibits perpetual step-wise descents followed by upward jumps; the middle layer has an overall hill-like shape, ascending from A♭ to E, and then descending backwards to A♭; the bottom layer stays on B♭1 constantly. (4) The beginnings and the endings of the phrases in any layer never coincides with the phrase boundaries on another layer. All of these factors enhance the autonomy of music presented in these three layers, and lead to a multi-agential perception of the music given in Figure 2.11.

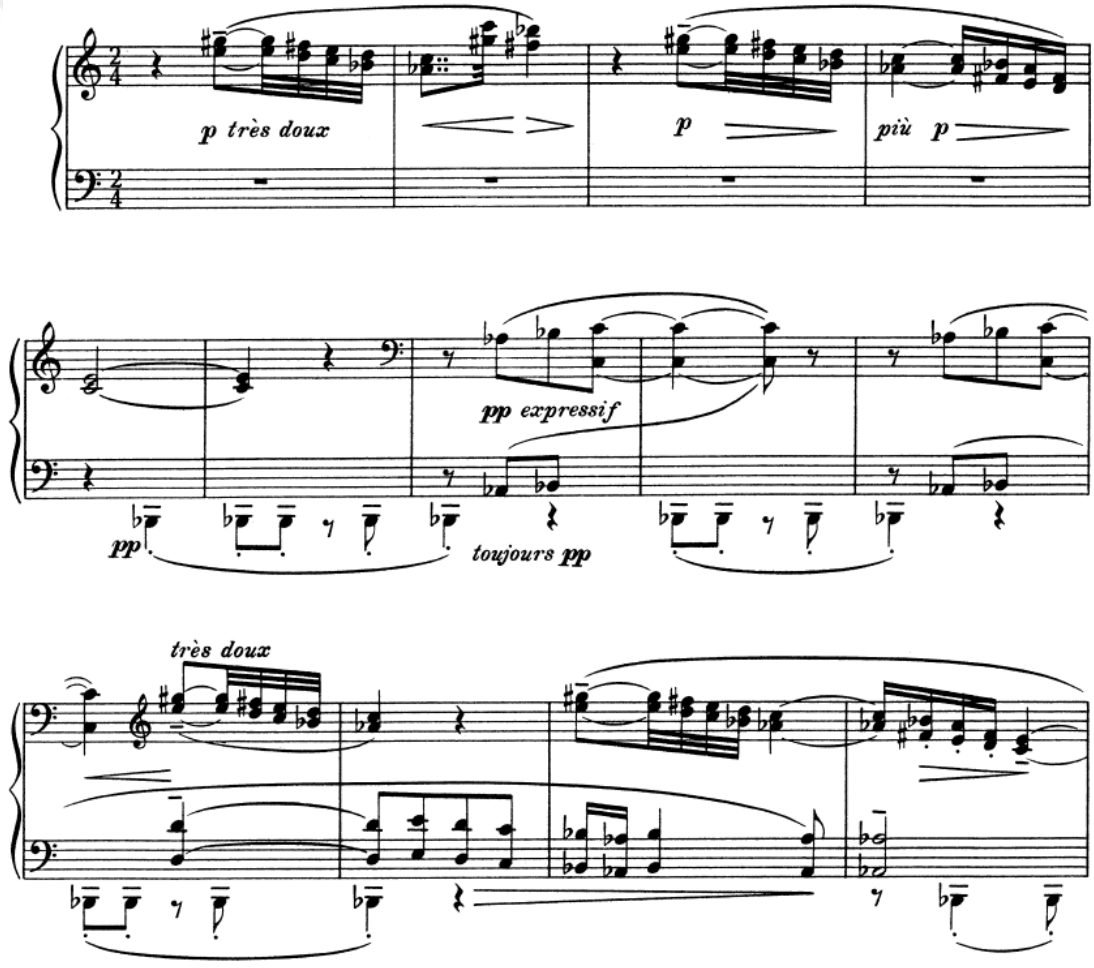

Figure 2.11 : Debussy, Préludes, Livre 1, *Voiles*, mm. 1-13.

Note that, due to the repeated notes, the bottom layer acts like a sheet of sound. Its virtual source would likely be interpreted as a musical actant because of repeating more or less the same rhythmic figure over and over, and due to the lack of any melodic

movement. The top layer is also very repetitive and redundant in terms of its melodic and rhythmic content, always providing more or less identical stepwise descending figures, and therefore this layer also shows actantial characteristics. On the other hand, the middle layer exhibits considerable melodic variety and intentionality, and hence, contributes the only musical statements in Figure 2.11 which definitely call for a virtual musical agent. The agential nature of the middle layer is further confirmed by the *'expressif'* marking in measure 7 in Figure 2.11.

The coda section of Debussy's *Voiles* is reproduced in Figure 2.12 below. This section is organized in four layers instead of three, and is very similar in its material and layout to the opening measures of the composition. Likewise, every layer in the coda section of the *Voiles* provides musical statements with actantial characteristics. Recall that, Bartók's *The Night's Music* also ended with a fade out by bringing back the actantial musical statements that were provided at the start of the composition. This similarity brings out a peculiar connection between the formal organization of these two compositions.

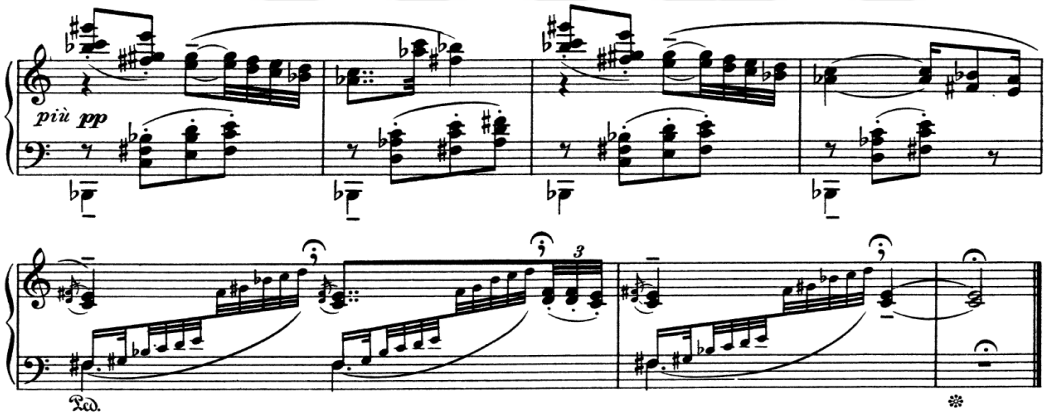

Figure 2.12 : Debussy, Préludes, Livre 1, *Voiles*, coda section, mm. 58-64.

Following Agawu's (1991) beginning-middle-ending paradigm, Caplin (2005) investigates how musical topics can be correlated with different formal functions in compositions. Caplin (2005) affirms that there is not a strict correspondence between the topics and formal functions, but, nevertheless, observes that several topics are noticeably associated with certain formal functions. For example, *Mannheim rocket* is likely to be found at the beginnings; *learned style* and *Sturm und Drang* are better correlated with the medial functions due to their harmonic instability; and the topic associated with harmonic steadiness are better suited for ending or post-cadential functions.

Actantial musical statements are unintentional, and therefore they do not promote any tendency of further musical movement. Consequently, a musical style based on juxtaposition of actantial musical statements would essentially yield a static expression –especially so if these statements are superimposed over a sheet of sound delivering a harmonic statis. Following these statements, if we view Bartók's night music style as a topic, then it would not come as a surprise to have the night music style frequently associated with the formal functions belonging to the *ending* category. Indeed, Bartók utilized his night music style frequently in the coda sections of his night music compositions, as we shall see in the following chapters.

Certainly, the night music style is not confined to the endings or coda sections. Yet it's utilization in other formal functions can be interpreted as a case of *strategical markedness*, which Hatten (1994) describes as a discrepancy between the formal function and the musical material[5] (pp. 112-116). Both *Voiles* and *The Night's Music* start with the juxtaposition of actantial musical statements, which somewhat lack thematic properties, and for that reason the beginnings of both of these pieces are strategically marked. Hence, it seems that Debussy's *Voiles* is a precursor of Bartók's *The Night's Music*, not only because of using actantial musical statements or portraying multi-agency through music, but also in terms the formal functions inhabited by these musical elements.

The final example that will be discussed in this section comes from the 'Introduction' section of the first part of the Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. This orchestral introduction is supposed to be played during the ballet in total darkness before the curtain raises, and it was described by the composer in a letter to a colleague as "a swarm of spring pipes" (Taruskin, 1996, p. 874). Indeed, the introduction portrays several episodes of music consisting of swarms of ostinatos superimposed on top of each other, and one such episode is demonstrated below in Figure 2.13.

[5] For example, using cadential or development material at the beginning of a theme will be strategically marked; using closural gestures in a development core will be strategically marked; introducing a new theme in the coda section will be strategically marked; and etc. Strategical markedness works as a kind of surprise element generated from formal expectations, and the determination of the moments of strategical markedness is crucial for identifying the twists in the narrative trajectory of a composition.

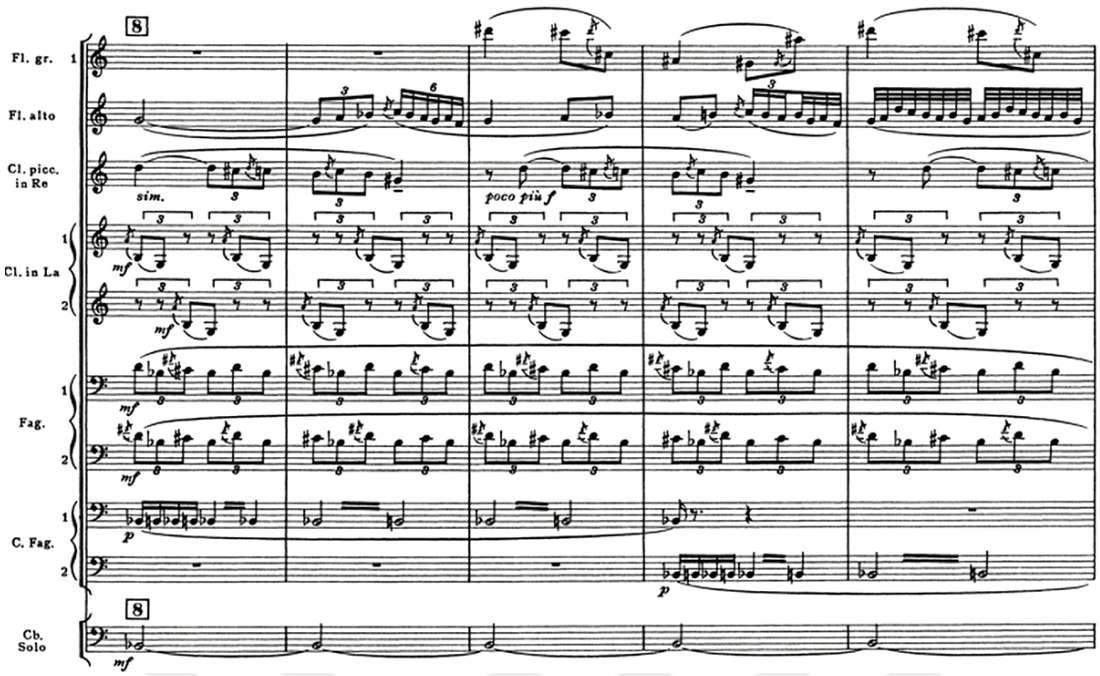

Figure 2.13 : Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring, Part I. Introduction, mm. 46-50.

Each musical staff in Figure 2.13 presents frenetic repetitions of short melodic cells. As a result, the music does not exhibit agential characteristics like intentionality or expressivity and implies a collection of virtual musical actants. While the juxtaposition of musical actants in this way furnishes the essential similarity between this passage and Bartók's *The Night's Music*, the effects of these pieces are significantly different. One of the factors for this difference is the complexity arising from the sheer number of simultaneous musical layers in the Stravinsky example. The music given in Figure 2.13, just like the other similar passages from the introduction of *The Rite of Spring*, projects a chaotic grandeur by overwhelming the listeners with the amount of information, and almost leaves the audience with a feeling of numbness induced by over stimulation. In a way, this is the inverse of the effect induced by *The Night's Music*, which simulates a heightened state of awareness and attentive listening.

Table 2.1 lists the pitch-classes employed by each staff on the music given in Figure 2.13, and also gives the scales implied by the musical bits presented on each staff. Moreover, the final column of the table presents a probable modal or scalar implication accorrding to the notes utilized on that staff and their relative stability and metric promenance. Because each staff uses a few notes, their scalar implications are mostly partial and ambiguous, and one can come up with other scalar implications for music presented in most of the staves in Figure 2.13.

Table 2.1 : The pitches at each staff in Figure 2.13, and their modal implications.

Staff	Pitch-classes	Scalar Implication
Flute	G# A# C# D#	A#-pentatonic (partial)
Alto Flute	B♭ C D E E♭ F G	C-mixolydian/minor (partial)
Picc. Clarinet	A# C# D D# E	A#-octatonic (partial) + passing tone (D#)
Clarinets	E G# F#	E-major (partial)
Bassoons	B♭C# D F#	B♭-Hexatonic (partial)
Contrabassoons	B♭B	-
Double-bass	B♭	-

As you can see in Table 2.1, the melodic material on various staves in Figure 2.13 imply several different scales, but nevertheless B♭/A# emerges as an overall tonal center for this musical excerpt. Yet, B♭/A# as a sense of centricity is considerably challenged by the music given on the alto flute and the clarinets, and there are also considerable clashes among the voices that pronounce B♭/A# as the tonal center due to employing different scales – producing a distorted pitch space that is overly saturated with dissonances. Note also the registral overlaps between the piccolo clarinet and the flute, and between the alto flute and the clarinets, further boosting the intensity of the harmonic clashes. Obviously, Stravinsky's music deliberately lacks the sophistication that Bartók displays in partitioning the register and the pitch space for the noise gestures in *The Night's Music* (see Figure 3.2 and Table 3.2 in the next chapter), since it aims to achieve and sustain the above-mentioned harmonic clashes, in order to overwhelm the listeners in a frenzy of rhythmic momentum provided by multiple ostinatos.

Since the noise gestures in Bartók's *The Night's Music* are essentially non-melodic and do not imply any tonal center or scale, their superimposition is perceived as simultaneous coexistences of isolated sound events that do not imply harmonic relations. Whereas, the juxtaposition of ostinatos in Figure 2.13 is perceived as a competition among different options of pitch hierarchy – mostly because Stravinsky's ostinatos utilize melodic cells derived from folk music with differing modal implications.

Stravinsky derives actantial and almost mechanical impressions from bits of folk melodies by subjecting them to obsessive ostinatos, in a way destroying their authentic meanings and human expressivity. In a certain sense, the techniques that Stravinsky uses degraded what was originally agential folk music to catatonic actantial statements,

and this aspect of Stravinsky's art caused anxiety and uneasiness in some of his listeners. In this regard, Stravinsky had his detractors, and a lot has been written about the dehumanizing aspects or ideological complications of *The Rite of Spring* (Levitz, 2017; Taruskin, 2017; Adorno 1947/2007) – which are beyond the context of the present study. Yet, it should be said that, these ideological complications can also be expressed within the framework provided by a theory of virtual agency in music, as Stravinsky's music can be seen as dehumanizing the 'folk' by degrading their music to actantial statements, in a way downgrading expressive human agency to senseless mechanical utterances.

Actantial dehumanization of folk music could already be observed in Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. While commenting over this work, Taruskin (2010) states that "the human element" in *Petrushka* is depicted by diatonic folk music, and the nonhuman – i.e., "the secret world where the puppets live" – is represented by "Rimskian chromaticism based on circles of major and minor thirds, that is, symmetrical divisions of the octave by three or four semitones" (p. 161). Yet, according to Taruskin (2010), this contrast between 'human' and 'nonhuman' is expressed in the work with a shrewd agential twist:

> the 'people' in Petrushka, with only negligible exceptions, are represented facelessly by the corps de ballet. Only the puppets have 'real' personalities and emotions. The people in Petrushka act and move mechanically, like toys. Only the puppets act spontaneously, impulsively—in a word, humanly. (p. 161)

Not surprisingly, the adherents of the Russian nationalist school were antagonized by Stravinsky's brand-new approach for handling folklore in Petrushka, despite its freshness and innovation, and were vehemently offended by the work and its composer (Taruskin, 1996, pp. 759-70). Ultimately, Stravinsky cultivated a very complicated and somewhat dishonest relationship with his folkloric heritage in the years subsequent to his 'Russian' period. He distanced himself from the Russian musical nationalism and rebranded himself as a cosmopolitan composer – not only he tried to obscure the influence of folk music in his compositional technique, but he also strived to cover-up the amount of music he directly borrowed from the Russian folklore (Taruskin, 2006, p. 271). In that regard, one can interpret the following Stravinsky's comments on Bartók, which were quoted in Taruskin (2006), as an attempt to disguise his debt to his own folkloric heritage: "I never could share his lifelong gusto for his native folklore.

This devotion was certainly real and touching, but I couldn't help regretting it in the great musician" (p. 270).

Bartók's relationship with folklore is so vast a topic to discuss here. But let's suffice to say that, his interest and devotion to folklore was not confined only to his homeland, and attained a truly cosmopolitan stature by 1910s. By that time, he was making use of any kind of musical material or technique that interested him, whether folkloric or not, and wherever it originated. In fact, his interest in the avantgarde and especially the folk music of the neighboring nations frequently brought him at odds with the authorities at his homeland, and as Schneider puts it, "made him appear to be almost the antithesis of a national composer" (Schneider, 2006, p. 120). He was certainly not interested in exploitation of folklore for nationalistic propaganda, and always distanced himself from the right-wing Hungarian politics (Schneider, 2001, p. 180). Ultimately Bartók's political idealism and cosmopolitan stance put him at odds with the rising Hungarian nationalism in 1930s, and prompted the composer to a voluntary exile in 1940.

Bartók was definitely inspired by Stravinsky's music, though not uncritically, and for a time considered the Russian composer as an ally in devising a modernist musical expression nurtured by folklore (Bartók, 1976a, p. 343). Yet he was at odds with the "objective and impersonal tendencies" strongly advertised by Stravinsky's neoclassical aesthetics, and "maintained a traditional Romantic allegiance to human expression even after the First World War and regarded the radical concept of music devoid of expression as an oxymoron" (Schneider, 2006, p. 150). As opposed to Stravinsky's music, Bartók's music is devoid of the actantial degradation of folk music. Throughout his creative life, Bartók composed in a manner "in which peasant music played a humanizing role, as Herder had envisioned it more than a century before" (Schneider, 2006, p. 147).

2.4 Precursors of the Night Music Style in Bartók's Earlier Works

This section will discuss several works of Bartók composed before 1926 – the year of the composition of *The Night's Music.* The works that are to be examined either foreshadow the characteristic properties of later night music style, or are labeled as night music compositions in the Bartók literature.

Danchenka (1987) includes the 12th piece from Bartók's *14 Bagatelles Op. 6* in his list of Bartók's night music compositions (p. 22). Opening measures of the 12th Bagatelle is given below in Figure 2.14.

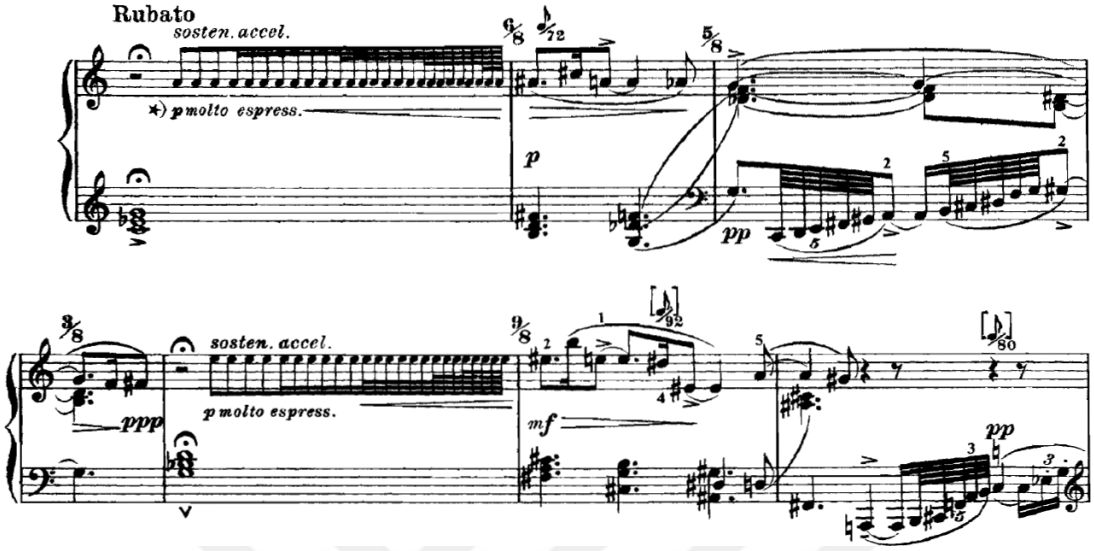

Figure 2.14 : Bartók, 14 Bagatelles, Op. 6, No.12, mm. 1-7.

Danchenka (1987) utilizes a gestural criterion for the identification of the night music compositions, which is very different from the rationale for night music given in this thesis. He examined a collection of pieces commonly labeled as night music compositions, and came up with a collection of gestural archetypes. Within Danchenka's (1987) framework, a piece is considered as a night music composition if it saliently includes any of those archetypical gestures.

There is a circularity in Danchenka's (1987) methodology, since Bartók's night music pieces were used to identify the gestures, and these gestures were again used to identify night music pieces. Moreover, Danchenka (1987) did not present an adequate description of the night music style, and simply stated that these pieces are easy to recognize for they introduce "an atmosphere incapable of misinterpretation" (p. 24). Moreover, it might be possible to compose a piece totally alien to Bartók's night music style by using Danchenka's archetypical gestures, and this fact kind of diminishes the usability of his criteria for discerning night music compositions.

Gradually accelerating repeated-note gesture that resides in measures 1 and 4 in Figure 2.14 matches with Danchenka's 3rd gestural archetype. After having identified 2 other gestural archetypes in this piece, Danchenka (1987) labels the 12th Bagatelle as one

of the night music compositions. Note that this piece is dated 1908, and hence composed 18 years earlier than The Night's Music.

Gradually accelerating repeated-note gesture, which is present in measures 1 and 4, resides also at the beginning of the third movement of Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta from 1937. On that work, this gesture is used purely as an isolated actantial gesture. Whereas the repeated-note gesture is used on the earlier 12th Bagatelle as the start of poignant lamenting phrase, and it is part of a very expressive agential statement. Similarly, the other gestures Danchenka (1987) identified on the 12th Bagatelle are also used thematically in the piece, and they don't exhibit actantial characteristics. The 12th Bagatelle does not have multi-layered textures, and does not exhibit the opposition between the actantial and agential elements. As a result of all these shortcomings, this piece just does not possess the unmistakable atmosphere of the night music pieces.

Nevertheless, there are two pieces in the Bagatelles Op. 6, the 1st and the 3rd, which foreshadow several characteristic properties of Bartók's night music style. The 1st Bagatelle is reproduced in its entirety in Figure 2.15 below.

First of all, note the different accidentals used for the upper and lower the staves in Figure 2.15 – the right-hand is scored with 4 sharps while the left-hand uses 4 flats respectively, already creating a partitioned pitch space for different musical agencies. Moreover, the music given in both hands are not substantially coordinated to form a melos, and seem to imply two distinct agents or actants.

In Figure 2.15, the right-hand presents an expressive singing melody, while the left-hand monotonously repeats the same gesture over and over. This repeating gesture on the left-hand consists of 5 consecutive notes, and it starts descending from either G, C or D♭. Also note that the descending scales in measures 15 and 16-17 does not introduce a new gesture on the left-hand, since these scales can be seen either as an extension of the initial gesture, or the concatenation of a 5-note descent from G and another 5-note descent from Db. Due to the significant redundancy of its gestural make-up, the music presented on the left-hand is almost actantial, and forms a marked opposition with the expressive agential music on the right-hand. Hence, considering all the above observations, Bartók's 1st Bagatelle from Op. 6 already displays certain characteristic ingredients of the night music style in a miniature composition, and it is

especially notable for displaying an actantial accompaniment which is not a sheet of sound.

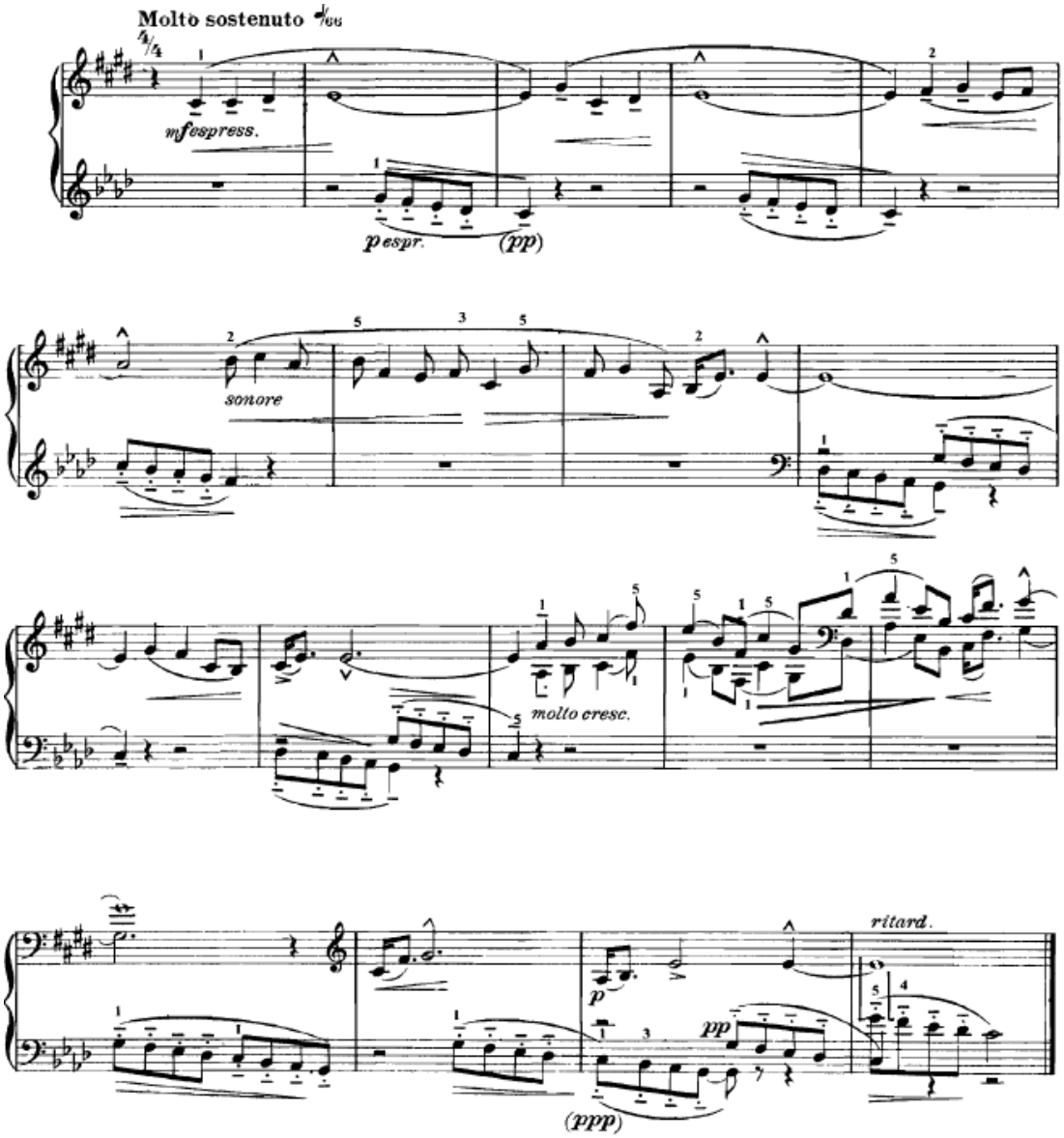

Figure 2.15 : Bartók, 14 Bagatelles, Op. 6, No.1.

There are many pieces of Bartók's that employ actantial sheets of sound, and many earlier works are seldom mentioned as night music pieces for doing so. Nevertheless, the 3rd Bagatelle from Bartók's Op. 6 displays both the opposition between the actantial and the agential elements in music, and partitioning of the pitch space among different musical agencies. The beginning of this piece is reproduced in Figure 2.16 below.

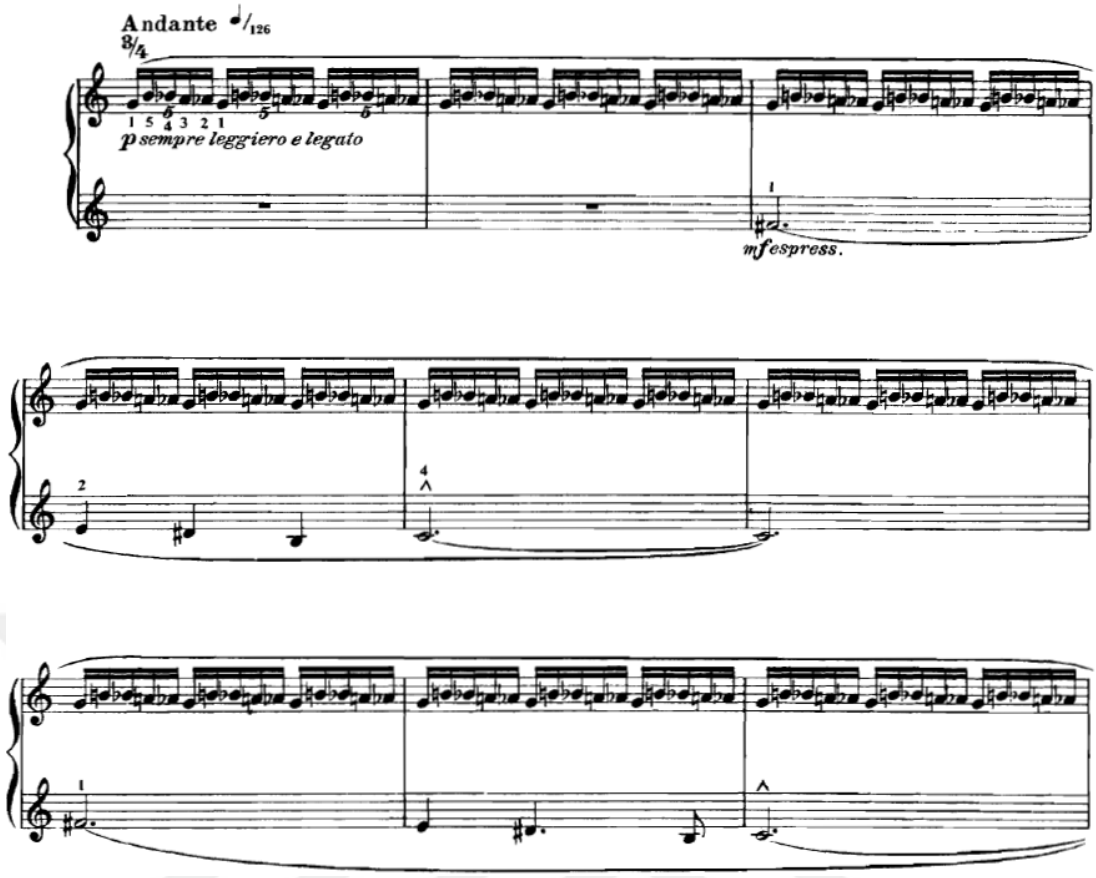

Figure 2.16 : Bartók, 14 Bagatelles, Op. 6, No.3, mm. 1-9.

The 3rd Bagatelle uses a sheet of sound which is similar in its chromatic make-up to the left-hand ostinato figure used in The Night's Music, which is made up of all the chromatic notes within the range of G4-B4. This sheet of sound continues without interruption until the end of the piece. The melody of the 3rd Bagatelle uses all most all of the chromatic notes in the interval A3-C#5, yet none of the notes reserved for the sheet of sound G4-B4 are employed in the melody. Hence the expressive melody has a gap in the middle of its range, where the gap is reserved for the pitches of the sheet of sound, creating a partitioning in the pitch space for the different agencies.

Schneider (2006) considers the song *Itt lent a völgyben* (In the Valley) from 1916 as a forerunner of *The Night's music* for that piece associates "tone clusters composed of adjacent half steps with a dark, lonely landscape" (p. 114). The first 8 measures of this song are given below in Figure 2.17.

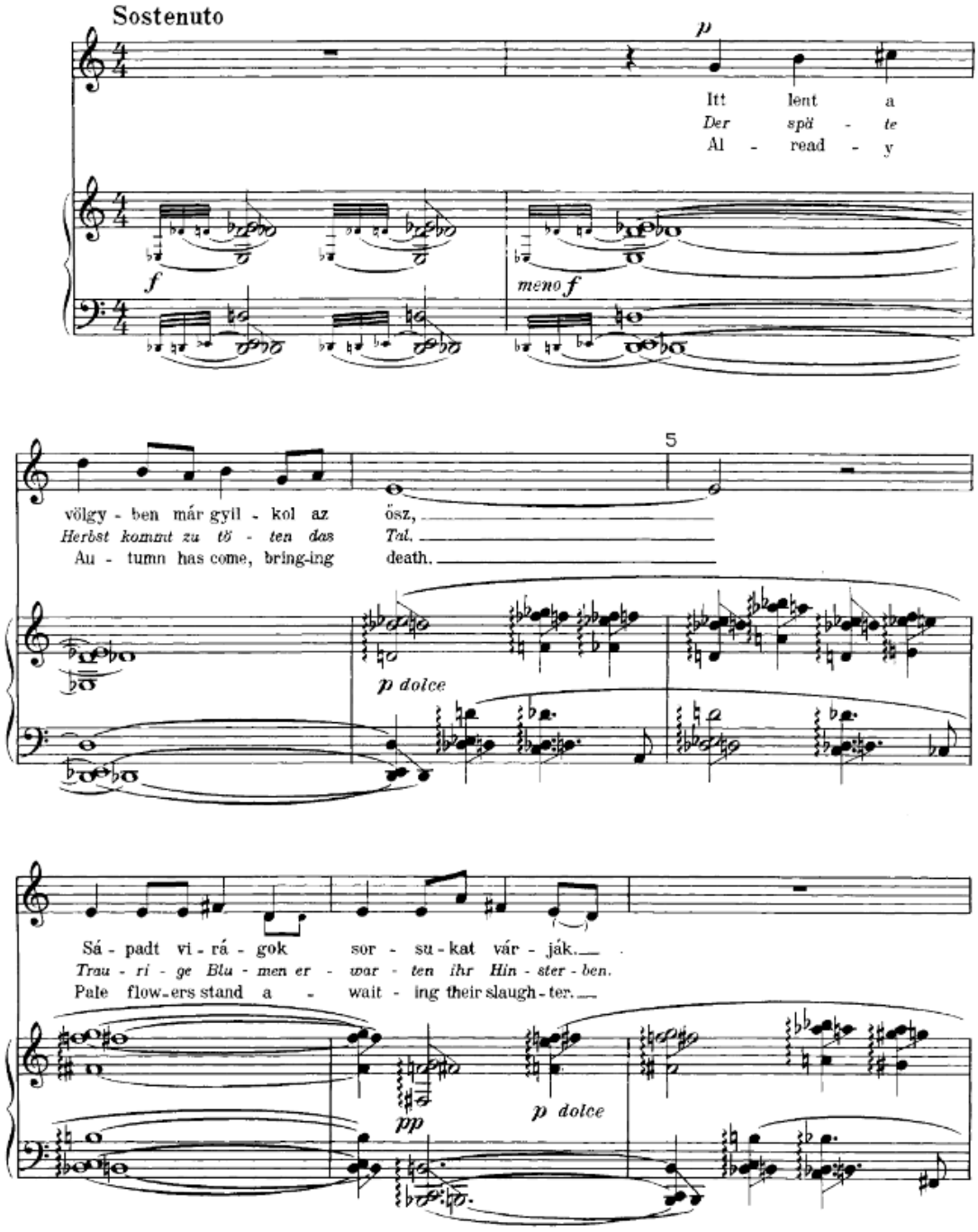

Figure 2.17 : Bartók, *Itt lent a völgyben (In the Valley),* Op. 15, No.5, mm. 1-8.

The lyrics to the song, as translated in Schneider (2006, p. 114), depict the loneliness induced by a promenade taken in the fog during a cold autumn day. Schneider (2006) assumes that the muddy clusters in the piano accompaniment is a representation of the fog surrounding the protagonist, and goes on to state that "Bartók further emphasizes the protagonist's isolation from her surroundings by strictly separating the musical material of the vocal line from that of the piano" (p. 114).

As it can be seen in Figure 2.17, the song *In the Valley* has a simple diatonic vocal melody, which receives a very dissonant accompaniment from the piano. Both hands on the piano play octaves, the thumbs playing the two primary voices of the accompaniment, whereas the outer fingers double those voices together with the immediate chromatic neighbors. The main melodic lines played with the thumbs on the piano are already considerably chromatic, and yet the clusters played with the outer fingers severely mask and distort these main melodic lines. As a result, the accompaniment becomes very much removed in both material and treatment from the simplicity of the vocal line, hence their superimposition hardly indicates a coordinated musical whole, which would imply a melos.

Brown (2007) considers such distortions, as exemplified in the accompaniment in Figure 2.17, as expressions of the 'grotesque' in Bartók's music, akin to the idea of grotesque distortion of the bodily figures in the visual arts in the first quarter of the 20th century (pp. 138-139). There is considerable dramatic contrast between the plan and simple vocal line and the distorted grotesque accompaniment in Figure 2.17, and it is hard to disagree with Schneider's above observation about the isolation of the vocal line from the piano accompaniment which may indicate the isolation of the protagonist of the song from her surroundings. Indeed, this isolation may indicate different musical agents for the protagonist and the surroundings, and therefore a multi-agential expression in the music.

The 3rd piece from *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs, Op.20* was composed in 1920, and it is also sometimes associated with Bartók's night music style (Danchenka, 1987, p. 53). This composition is organized within a miniature free variation form, where a folk melody is presented three times with different harmonic and textural environments, together with bridging sections between presentations and a brief coda. The first presentation of the melody, given below in Figure 2.18, employs a sheet of sound obtained from rolling the notes C#4-F#4-D4-G4, which provides the harmonic statis over which the folk melody is presented.

The sheet of sound that is given in the first 10 measures is indeed gesturally almost identical with the ostinato left-hand figure in The Night's Music, and this gestural likeliness is the sole reason for labeling this piece as a night music composition. Yet the effect is brief, and any correlation the piece might have with the night music idiom vanishes after the first 10 measures.

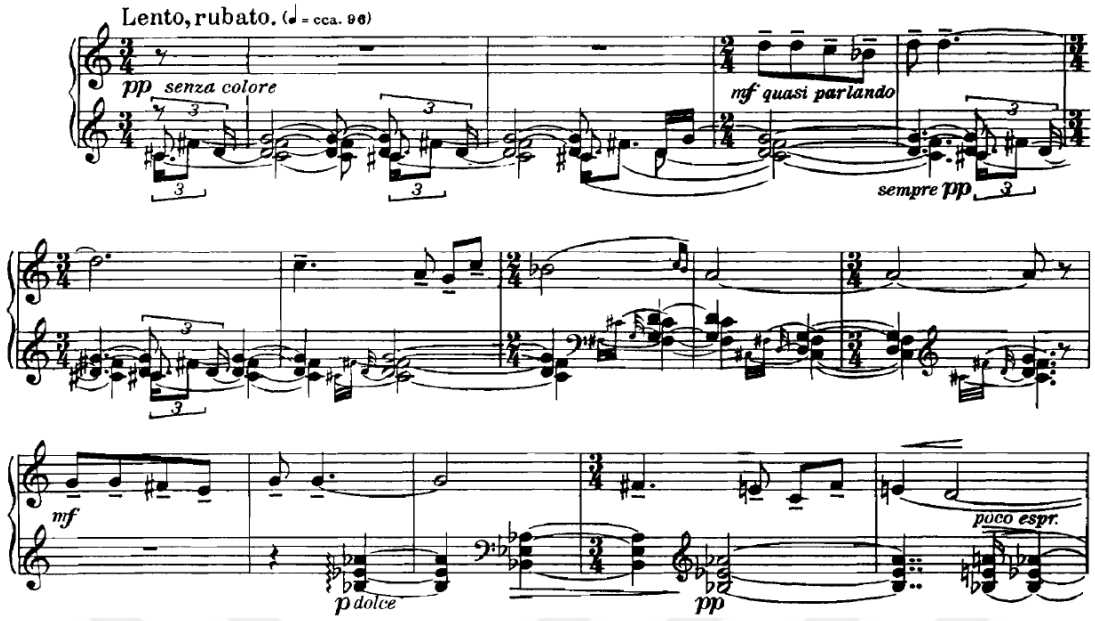

Figure 2.18 : Bartók, Improvisations, Op.20, No.3, mm. 1-14.

Bartók occasionally used wide-spread static chords as sheets of sound in his night music compositions, and such a composition predating *The Night's Music* is the 4th movement of the *Dance Suite, Sz. 77* from 1923. The piece was originally scored for orchestra, and a piano reduction was later provided by the composer in 1925. The opening measures of the 4th movement is provided below in Figure 2.19.

As given in the first measure in Figure 2.19, the movement starts with a static chord made-up of the set (G-A-C-D), and the piece progresses with alternating sections of the static chords and monophonic melodies. This static chord is occasionally embellished with chromatic neighbors as can be seen in measure 6 in Figure 2.19. Note that the unison melodies given in Figure 2.19 are in the A♭-Dorian mode, which does not include the notes in the static chord, and as a result the piece employs a partitioning of the pitches between the unison and chordal sections.

In the following measures, the composition gradually progresses to (F-G-B♭-C) and (C-D-F-G) as static harmonies, before concluding with the initial (G-A-C-D) chord. Note that all of these chords have (0257) as their prime form, and therefore belong to the same genus. Moreover, the unison melodies in between the chordal sections always employ scales that are clashing with the static chords, sustaining the pitch space partitioning. Hence the movement progresses with alternating chordal and unison sections, based on alternating pitch classes, which can be precepted akin to a dialogue between two distinct parties.

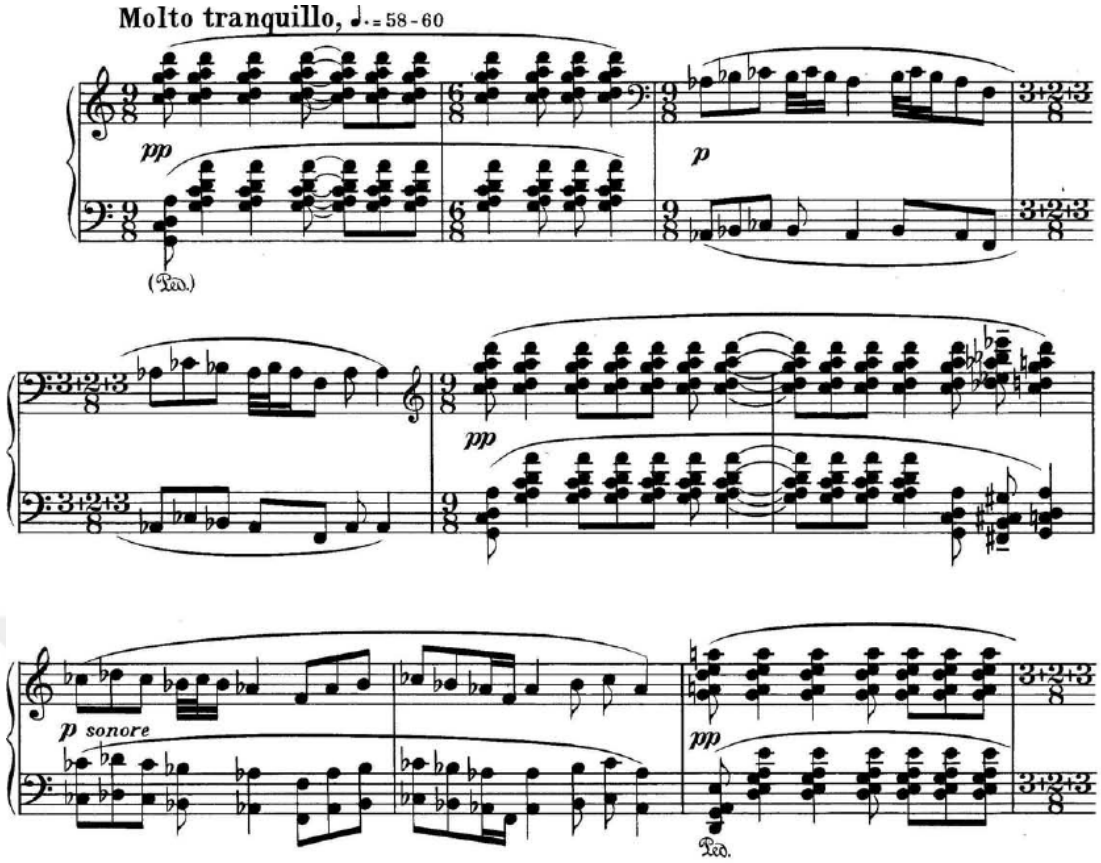

Figure 2.19 : Bartók, Dance Suite, Sz.77, 4th movement, mm. 1-9.

3. THE NIGHT'S MUSIC FROM OUT OF DOORS

An in depth look towards *The Night's Music* from *Out of Doors* is imperative for this present discussion. Therefore, this chapter will present a thorough analysis of this piece.

The Night's Music was composed in 1926, and the piece resides on the 4th movement of Bartók's *Out of Doors*, Sz. 81 BB. 89. The title of the work, 'Out of Doors', suggests already a preoccupation with the nature and the pastoral topics, and *The Night's Music* is already filled with many stylized sound effects that allude to the kind of sounds that one might be exposed to during a night outdoors at the countryside. While the following analysis will briefly touch upon the semantic associations of the musical ingredients of the composition, the main focus will be on the formal organization of musical materials and their pitch content, and the semantic content of the piece will be covered in detail in the forthcoming chapter of this thesis.

The material of the night music consists of specific noise-like musical gestures which allude to the nocturnal sounds of the nature, and two contrasting themes. The first of these two themes, theme-1, is a lament-like slow theme; whereas the second one, theme-2, is a lively folk melody that might have been played on a shepherd's flute. The formal sections of the piece strongly correspond to the locations of these musical ingredients. Table 3.1 presents the divisions of these formal sections, their locations on the score, and also the prevailing musical material found in these sections.

Table 3.1 : Formal sections of Bartók's *The Night's Music*.

Section	Measures	Description
Section 1	01-17	Noise gestures
Section 2	17-34	Theme-1 (stated twice, second time with thicker texture)
Section 3	34-37	Noise gestures
Section 4	37-58	Theme-2 (stated twice, with differing accompaniments)
Section 5	58-67	Juxtaposition of the themes
Section 6	67-71	Coda: noise gestures and the initial motive of theme-2

Yeomans (1988) argues that the formal organization of *The Night's Music* resembles a "loose rondo form (ABACABA)" where "the A sections supplying the atmospheric semitonal figurations, and B and C the melodic material" (p. 107). Yet it should be

stated that theme-2 is directly followed in measure 58 by a statement of theme-1 which is later on superimposed with theme-2 resulting in a simultaneous presentation, and there is not an episode of "atmospheric semitonal figurations" (A) in between these sections. While (ABACBA) seems like a better description of the structure of the piece, once again it should be noted that the second presentation of (B) also includes theme-2 (C), and the final (A) section has small bits from theme-2 (C). Hence a presentation like (ABACDF) might even be more accurate where (D=B+C) and (F=A+C), and we are further removed Yeomans' initial argument. It seems like that a loose rondo proposition is not very helpful in eluding the structural organization of this piece, since it is not organized around the clear-cut syntactic formal models of the classical style, and the organization of this composition has much more resemblance to the kind of organic musical forms that are dictated by a romantic musical narrative.

3.1 The Analysis of Section 1 (mm. 01-17): The Noise Gestures

The Night's Music takes off with a series of soft gestures on the left-hand that present the chromatic cluster of pitches that fill up the major-third interval F4-A4. This cluster is repeated in every half-note duration as a perpetual ostinato throughout the first section of the piece, setting up a slow and steady beat.

As shown in Figure 3.1, one of the pitches (G♭ G A♭ A) shown in the middle-staff is sounded together with the lowest-note F4 at the onset of the beat in each iteration of the F4-A4 cluster, and the remaining 3 pitches are sounded in a kind of zig-zag like gesture: the middle one first, followed by the lowest and the highest remaining pitch of the collection. This presentation creates a pattern of undulation, a wave like shape, while also giving a slight prominence to one of the pitches in the chromatic cluster that is indicated in the middle staff. The resulting effect creates a sense of sway and vibrancy within the sounding cluster, adding a slight variety in its texture. This vibrancy is sustained throughout the opening section, since no pitch in the middle-staff repeats itself consequently. Yet the pitch G4 has a prominence over the other notes in the collection by virtue of having a higher rate of presentation: among the 47 half-note clusters in the first section of the composition 18 of them bring out this note. Moreover,

note that G-G also happens to be the axis of symmetry[6] of the notes found in the cluster (F4-A4). As a result, when G is sounded on the middle-staff, the lowest staff incorporates two chromatic dyads that are separated by a minor-3rd, resulting in the collection (F-G♭-{}-A♭-A) whose set in prime form is (0 1 3 4).

On top of the soft clusters presented on the left-hand, right-hand introduces the gestures that are given in Figure 3.2 gradually. The Figure 3.2 shows these gestures in their order of presentation in the first section of the composition. While each of these gestures are built around the chromatic collection, they are organized around different registers, pitch collections, and shapes that separate them distinctively from each other.

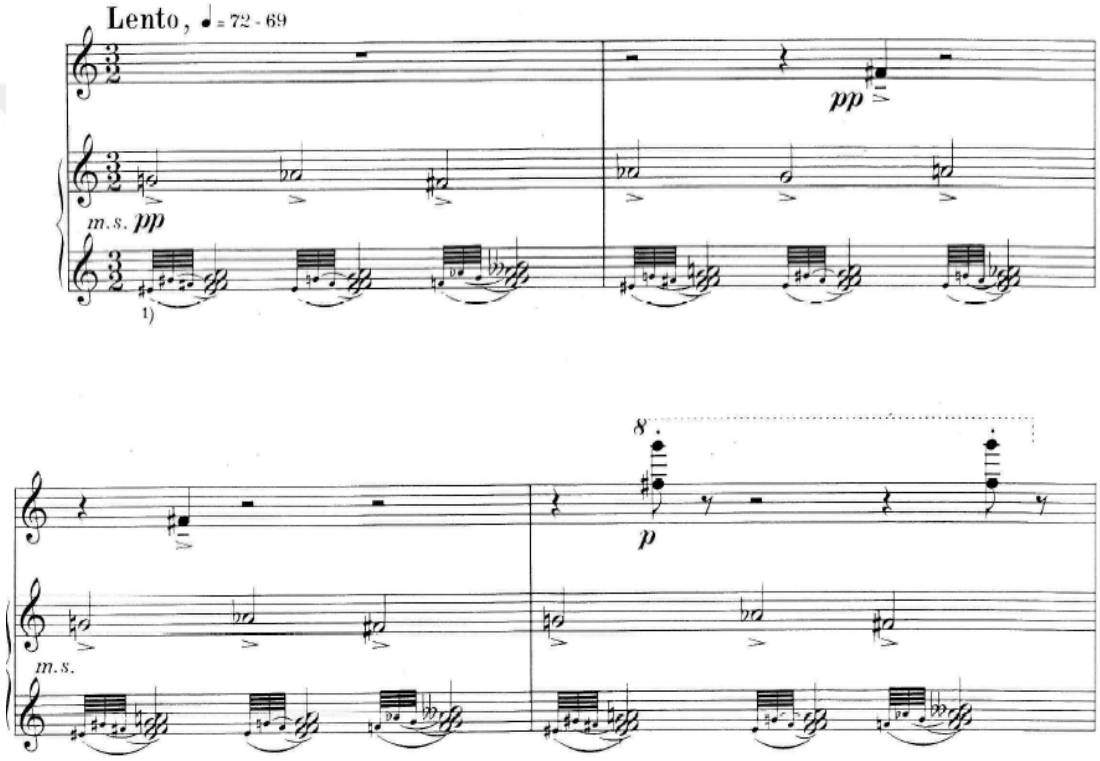

Figure 3.1 : The beginning of Bartók's *The Night's Music*.

The Table 3.2 presents the pitches employed by gestures indicated in Figure 3.2. Note that these gestures are not only separated by employing differenty registers of the keyboard, but also that most of these gestures introduce new pitches that are not employed in the previous gestures. All these factors enhance the peculiarities of these gestures. Taken together, Figure 3.2 and Table 3.2 demonstrate that Bartók organized

[6] One of the primary theses of Antokoletz (1984) is that symmetrical pitch formations play special functions in Bartók's music, and also that in such cases the axis of symmetry may play roles that are akin to the role of tonic in traditional tonal music. The special role of the pitch G in The Night's Music will be demonstrated later in this analysis.

his gestures to achieve maximum aural distinctiveness, while also forging a logical connectivity and transition in-between them.

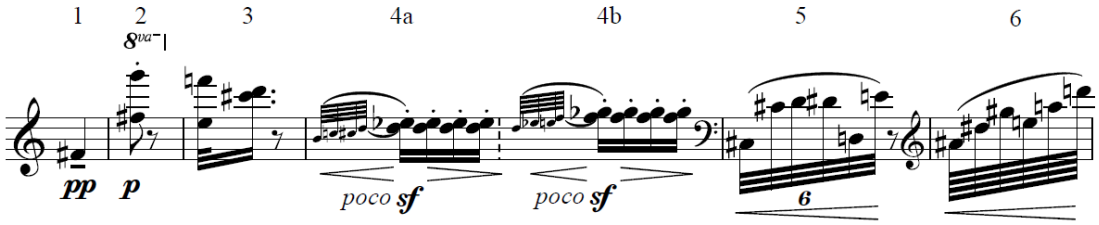

Figure 3.2 : The noise gestures played by the right-hand during mm. 1-17.

The first gesture consists of a single F#4 which is supposed to be played with a tenuto articulation.

The second gesture also has the pitch F# but as a two-octave higher F#6 which is coupled with a G7, resulting in a minor-9th interval, or a minor-2nd between the pitch-classes, and it is written with a staccato articulation.

Table 3.2 : The pitches employed by the gestures in *The Night's Music*.

Gesture	Employed Pitches	Set in Prime Form
1	F#	-
2	F# G	(0 1)
3	E F C# D	(0 1 3 4)
4a	B C C# D E♭	(0 1 2 3 4)
4b	D E♭ E F G♭	(0 1 2 3 4)
5	C# D D# E	(0 1 2 3)
6	A# D# G# E A D	(0 1 2 6 7 8)

The third gesture consists of two events, E5-F6 and C#6-D6. Register-wise it falls in the open space provided between the first and the second gestures. Note that the pitch-classes constituting the second gesture (F#-G) and the first event on the third gesture (E-F) are a major-2nd away from each other, hence introducing a new interval class to the make-up of the noise elements. Similarly, two events of the third gesture, (E-F) and (C#-D), are a minor-3rd away from each other, hence introducing another interval class. Moreover, there is an ingenious similarity between the background cluster (F-F#-G-G#-A) played on the left hand and the collection of pitches on the third gesture (C#-D-{}-E-F). Both collections span a major-3rd interval, yet the collection of the third gesture miss the central E♭, and also E♭-E♭ is also the axis of symmetry for this collection.

The fourth gesture (4a) spans the cluster of pitches in the interval B4-E♭5, falling just below the third gesture in terms of register whose lowest pitch is E5. This gesture, moreover, provides the E♭, the missing axis of symmetry of the collection of pitches in the second gesture, hence it complements the pitch-class collection of the third gesture. This gesture is made of a chromatic rise during the anacrusis, followed by repetitions of the (D-E♭) dyad, and its various instances on the score has 3 to 7 repetitions of the final dyad. Just as the left-hand cluster and the third gesture, the fourth gesture also has a span of a major-3rd interval. Moreover, two newly introduced pitches on its lower end (B-C), and the repeated dyad concluding the gesture (D-E♭) constitute a collection made of two pairs of minor-seconds that are a minor 3rd apart, forming a transposition of the collection of the third gesture (C#-D-{}-E-F).

The second version of the fourth gesture (4b) is a minor-3rd transposition of the first version of the fourth gesture (4a), and it does not introduce any new pitch-classes. In *The Night's Music*, this second version of the gesture (4b) is somewhat auxiliary: this version of the gesture is not independent like the other gestures, and it comes only right after an occurrence of the first version (4a) in the composition, acting as a somewhat intensified echo of the original gesture. Nevertheless, since (4b) is a minor-3rd transposition of (4a) and since it occurs only after an occurrence of (4a), the combined presentation of (4a) and (4b) brings out the repeated dyads (D-E♭) and (F- G♭) at the ends of the two versions of the fourth gesture. The combination of these two dyads produce the collection (D-E♭-{}-F-G♭), which is a minor-2nd transposition of the collection of the third gesture, and which also spans the interval of a major-3rd, just like the (F4-A4) cluster played on the left-hand.

The fifth gesture does not introduce any new pitch-classes, yet it is separated from all the other gestures due its register. This gesture is the only one that is played by crossing hands, where the right-hand is positioned below the left-hand, and it falls right next to the (F4-A4) cluster of the left-hand. Moreover, the fifth gesture is also distinct from the other gestures due to its sonority, because this gesture produces the major-2nd (or major-9th) intervals vertically, bringing out two dyads made of major-ninths that are a minor-2nd apart, namely (C#3-D#4) and (D3-E4). Hence, while not introducing any new pitch classes, the fifth gesture is highly distinctive from the other gestures due to its register and its major-9th sonority.

The sixth gesture brings the 3 pitch-classes that were missing from all the other noise gestures, namely A#, G#, and A, thus completing all the twelve pitch-classes. This gesture is also very distinct aurally from all the other gestures, since it is formed by two arpeggiated 4th-chords that are a diminished-5th apart from each other. The arpeggiated chords (A#-D#-G#) and (E-A-D) form a symmetrical pair along the axis F#-F#. Figure 3.3 shows the sixth gesture together with its totality of pitches rearranged in normal form. As you can see in the normal form rearrangement, the pitches also form a symmetrical collection made of two chromatic segments (D-D#-E) and (G#-A-A#) which are symmetrical around the axis F#-F#. Hence, while still implying the chromatic relationships, the sixth gesture is distinctive from all the other gestures for introducing three new pitch-classes and completing the 12 chromatic pitches, and moreover the sixth gesture also introduces the interval classes of the perfect-4th and the diminished-5th, hence representing all the possible intervallic options in the makeup of the noise gestures.

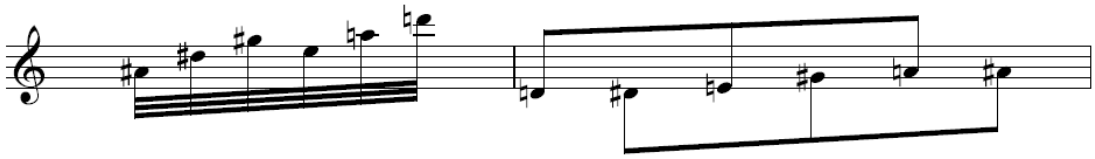

Figure 3.3 : Noise gesture 6, and the rearrangement of its content in normal form.

Throughout *The Night's Music*, these noise gestures act as discrete units. They are always presented with the same pitch formations and articulations, and always in their respective registers that are shown in Figure 3.2. As a result, they never attain a thematic character, and they are heard like distinct and static sound objects. In that sense, they are almost perceived as sounds reproduced by a sampler, and the first 17 measures of the composition nearly feels like a collage of sounds produced by the juxtaposition of pre-sampled sound recordings. And since the composition is built around a set of fixed sound gestures, one can even envision a 21st century performance of the piece using a controller such as NI-maschine or any other sampler that could be triggered by MIDI.

In the first 17 measures of the composition, the gestures are introduced gradually over the harmonic stasis provided by the (F4-A4) cluster on the left-hand, following the order given in Figure 3.2. Once a gesture is introduced, it becomes available and is used freely during the rest of the piece. Hence the introduction and usage of gestures

during the initial section of *The Night's Music* (mm.1-17) is somewhat similar to the introduction of a musical scale during the *alap* sections of *raga* performances in Indian music, where the pitches that form the scale of a raga are presented one-by-one until the whole scale becomes available to the performer. In that sense, once introduced, any gesture can be followed by any other, the only exception to that pattern in *The Night's Music* being the fourth gesture where its second form (4b) can only be preceded by its first form (4a).

At the initial measures of the composition Bartók presents the noise gestures on metrically weak off-beats that follow the left-hand gestures, as can be seen on Figure 3.1, and only the fourth gesture falls on the strong beat following its chromatic rising anacrusis. Such off-beat or out-of-sync presentation of the gestures contributes to the rhythmic drive of the composition and also enhances the perception of the gestures by further separating them from the background accompaniment.

As the piece progresses, Bartók increases the musical tension by increasing the rate of gestures introduced at a given time. Another mechanism that further contributes to the musical tension is the metric diminution of the rests between the left-hand clusters and the gestures. These procedures are illustrated in Figure 3.4 which reproduces the mm. 7-9 of the composition. As shown in Figure 3.4, the gestures on m. 8 follow the left-hand (shown in the two lower staves) by a quarter-note rest. Whereas, beginning from the measure 9, the rate of presentation of gestures is increased by diminishing the intermediary silences to half-note rests, and as a result the initial half-note in m. 9 receives two noise gestures. Also note that all the fourth gestures (4a) in Figure 3.4 commence together with the half-notes on the left-hand, yet the (4b) gesture at m. 9 starts unexpectedly and hesitantly at the 4^{th} quarter-note of the final half-note.

Taken as a whole, the first section of *The Night's Music* can be summarized as a gradual introduction of the noise gestures and a gradual increase of activity on the right-hand, all of which is presented over the wave-like monotonous cluster gestures played on the left-hand. The rate of the presentation of noise gestures builds up to a maximum rate of activity (and hence tension) around mm. 13-14, followed by a cooling down period in mm. 15-17 before moving to the next section of the composition which introduces the lament-like theme.

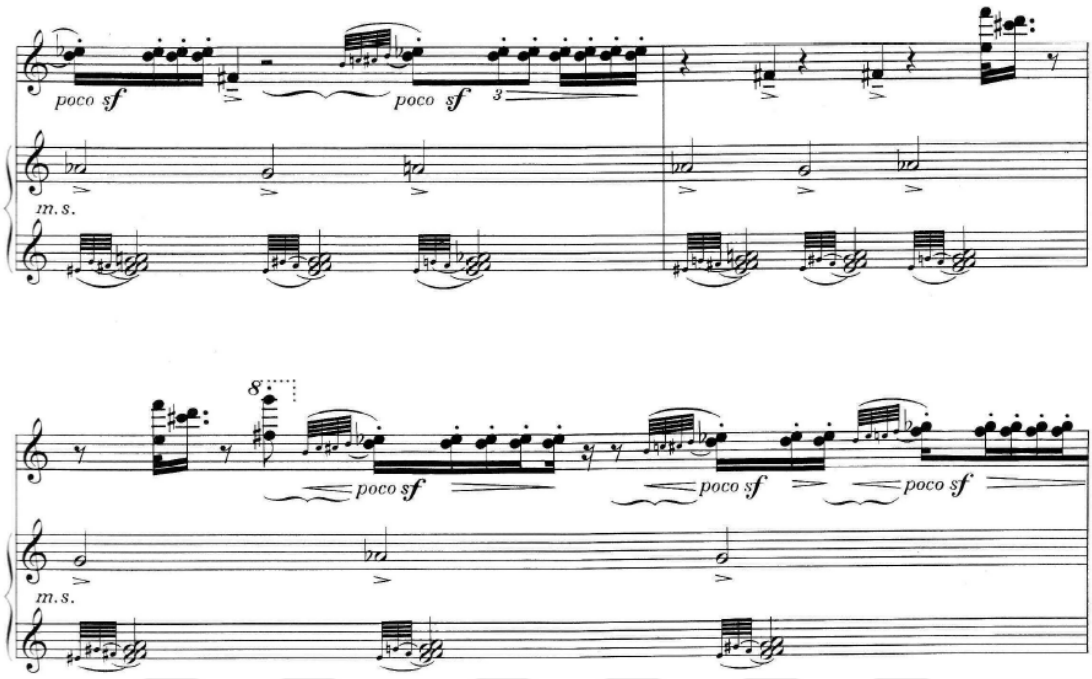

Figure 3.4 : *The Night's Music* mm. 7-9, increased tension and rhythmic activity.

On writing about *The Night's Music*, Yeomans (1988) comments that "the random and fragmentary presentation of material, in keeping with the unpredictability of nature, makes this work extremely difficult to memorize" (p.107), yet an anecdote reported by Lampert (2001) indicates that Bartók had a more open and improvisatory attitude towards the performance of his composition. Accordingly, after hearing a performance of *The Night's Music* by one of his students, Bartók commented that the performer was not necessarily required to play "exactly the same number of ornaments that imitate the noises of the night and at exactly the same place[s]" indicated on the score, and was free to "place them anywhere and play of them as many as" she liked (Lampert, 2001, p. 240).

The above anecdote clearly states that for Bartók the processes that carried out the realization of this piece of music was much more important that the singular realization of those processes on the printed page. One can even fantasize about how Bartók would score the first 17 measures of *The Night's Music* had he lived through the 1950s and witnessed the aleatory techniques and alternative notation strategies that became prevalent since that era. Although *The Night's Music* is a strictly written out composition from 1926, the elaborate design of the piece heralds those later developments in the post-WWII avantgarde music. Moreover, even though the piece is made up of highly dissonant constituents, the opening measures of *The Night's*

Music also anticipates the organizations of early minimalist compositions by Terry Riley and Steve Reich where a complex musical texture emerges from the superimposition of predetermined musical patterns over a recurring ostinato.

Somfai (1984) argues about the existence of a very elaborate design in the notes that are brought out within the (F4-A4) cluster the left-hand, which are shown on the score in the middle-staff. His claim is that these notes form an ostinato melody built upon the symmetrical cell made up from the first 5 notes (G-A♭-F#-A♭-G), and that melody "has a ternary form with a genuine varied return" (Somfai, 1984, p.10). Yet given the high degree of freedom in the neighboring motion and the lack of any metrical grouping on the middle-staff, one can posit many different and plausible structural segmentations over this stream of notes. For example, one such partitioning may be obtained by observing that the first 9 notes are repeating verbatim right after their presentation, and the same chunk of 9 notes are brought back identically at m. 11, resulting in a segmentation that implies a different ternary form (AABA-Coda). Yet whatever long range elaborate structures we may impose upon this stream of notes, it is quite plausible to say that they will not be perceptibly pertinent, since the frequencies of these notes are highly masked by the chromatic cluster surrounding around them, and they are highly backgrounded by the noise gestures preformed above them. Moreover, Bartók's statement that the performer is not necessarily required to stick strictly to the score implies that such a long-range and elaborate design posited by Somfai (1984) – even if it existed – was not really indispensable or important for the composer.

A close examination of Figure 3.2 and Table 3.2 reveals that the two pitch-classes that are underrepresented in the make-up of the noise gestures are G and C. Both of these pitches have only single occurrences: G only occurs on the second gesture as a high G7 over F#6, and C resides at the second note of the chromatic rising anacrusis of the fourth gesture (4a) as C5. Both G and C play a prominent function in the next section of the composition, which introduces a polymodal melody with a descending-5th progression from G to C.

3.2 The Analysis of Section 2 (mm. 17-34): Theme-1

Bartók might have stated that the performer can play any gesture anywhere, yet he chose specific gestures at the boundaries between sections of *The Night's Music* to

facilitate the transitions. Hence, the first section of *The Night's Music* concludes with two iterations of the second gesture which is made of (F#6-G7), directly leading to a theme which starts with the same two notes and which is presented in unison in both hands, as can be seen in Figure 3.5. Also note that theme starts on the right hand with F#6, at the same register of the previous gesture, further smoothing the transition.

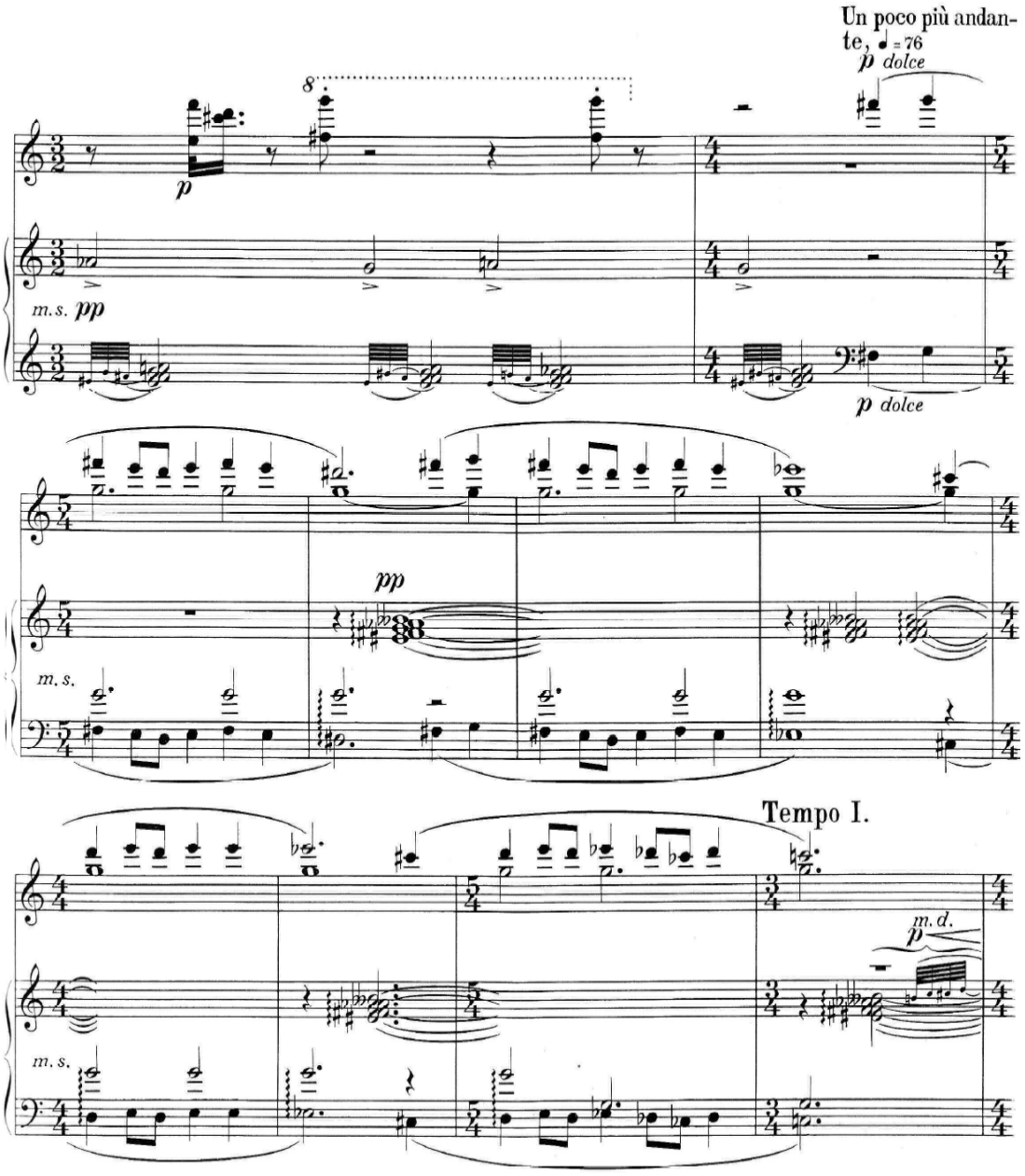

Figure 3.5 : *The Night's Music*, mm. 16-25, theme-1.

The complete theme-1 can be seen in mm. 17-25 in Figure 3.5. Several commentators identified this theme as a mournful chorale melody (Somfai, 1984, p.5; Schneider 2006, p. 82; Harley 1995, p 335), whereas Hungarian pianist András Schiff refers to

this theme as a *sirató* – which Schiff describes as a kind of lament which is sang by village women when somebody dies (Explore the Score – Klavier-Festival Ruhr, 2020). The steady and slow rhythmic pace, soft dynamics, stepwise motion, and gradually descending melodic line contribute to hearing the theme as a hymn or choral melody, whereas the polymodal character of its melody and the bourdon-like accompaniment endow it with the qualities of a folkloric lament.

As it is shown in Figure 3.6, theme-1 consists of four sub-phrases, which are later grouped in pairs the whole theme. Note that the soft (FA-A4) cluster which formed the background in the previous section – spelled on the score as (E#-F#-G-A♭-B𝄫) in m. 19, 21, 23, and 25 in Figure 3.5 – is brought back at the phrase boundaries, and it is repeated twice in m. 23 at the more prominent boundary between the two halves of the theme. These clusters not only act as boundary markers or cues reminding the opening section of *The Night's Music*, but they also create one of the most poetic and subtle perceptual effects in the composition: these clusters position the theme at the same physical environment with the noises. It seems that Bartók has created the illusion that the theme auditorily masks the background noises, and we can hear the initial background noises only in between the silences between the phrases. The effect is like as if our attention is so much diverted by a thought and we are not anymore consciously aware of our immediate surrounding – altogether subtly implying the existence and continuation of the background noises even if they are not brought to our awareness.

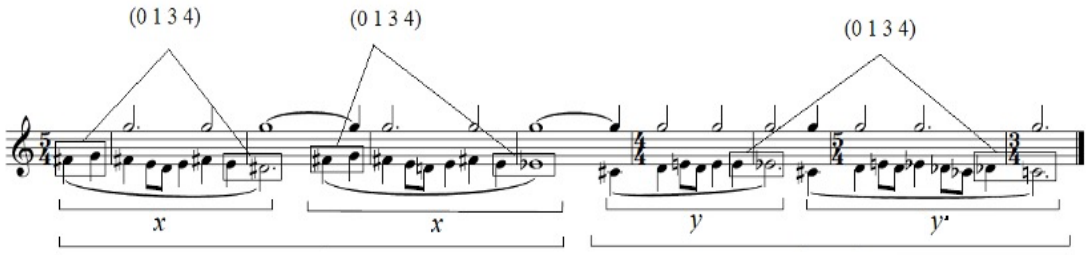

Figure 3.6 : The phrase structure of theme-1 and thematic relations in its motives.

The theme-1 can be identified as a descending-5th progression over a polymodal mixture of Lydian and Phrygian modes in C, whereas the sustained Gs act as an inverted pedal point on the 5th degree of the mode, as a drone or bourdon type of accompaniment. Yet the theme is highly chromatic, especially note that every subphrase starts with an ascending minor-2nd and end with a descending minor-2nd, and the modal center C occurs only at its very end. Therefore, all of the above

observations about the modal quality or centricity of the theme can only be attained or validated once the listener arrives at the end of the theme, and various conflicting hypothesis about the modal hierarchy is implied to the listener while listening the music in real time, all and all contributing to the drama of the theme.

The most dramatic melodic movement occurs at the end of the second half of the theme, shown as *y'* in Figure 3.6, where instead of following the (E-D) to the modal goal C, the melody makes a sharp turn through (E♭-D♭-C♭-D♭), cancelling the pitches E and D and the Lydian mode hypothesis. That final melodic movement strongly undermines the note C, so much so that when we reach the goal at the end of the of the phrase, we still do not hear a strong sense of closure even though we have just arrived at a stable perfect fifth (C-G).

There is also an ingenious structural cross relation between the endings of the two half-phrases of theme-1. In the first half of the theme, the basic ideas (*x*) terminate with the instable pitch D# which conflicts with the modal implications set by pitches (F#-E-D) which precede it. Whereas the second half of the theme concludes on a stable C after going through the instable collection of (E♭-D♭-C♭). Hence the ending of the first half of the theme forms a (STABLE => NONSTABLE) relationship, whereas the ending of the second half is (NONSTABLE => STABLE). Yet a close examination of the pitch collections at these endings indicates that the pitch collection at the end of the second half of the theme is a minor-3rd transposition of the collection that is at the end of the first half. Hence Bartók realizes both (STABLE => NONSTABLE) and (NONSTABLE => STABLE) patterns at the ends of these half phrases by using the same intervallic structure (3 1 11 0).

The same phenomenon can also be explained by referring to Kárpáti's (1995) theory of mistunings, where D# would be interpreted as a mistuned 2nd degree of the mode, and likewise E♭, D♭, and C♭ would be mistuned 3rd, 2nd, and 1st degrees. From that perspective, the ending of the first half of the theme would form the relationship (PERFECT => MISTUNED), and the ending of the second half would be interpreted as (MISTUNED => PERFECT), while keeping the exactly the same intervallic relationships[7].

[7] In Kárpáti's theory, a mistuned degree is a semitone augmentation or diminution of that scale degree, and Bartók's music frequently employs these mistunings to create distorted versions of melodies or

Theme-1 embodies several other significant intervallic parallels within its constituents, which not only creates rhymes within its constituents but also connect the theme together with the noise gestures heard in mm. 1-17. As I have already stated, theme-1 starts with the two pitch-classes (F#-G) that make-up the second noise gesture in Figure 3.2. Also note that combining the notes that begin and end the basic idea (*x*) (See Figure 3.6) form the collection (D#-E-F#-G), which is based on the same intervallic cell (0 1 3 4) that makes up the third noise gesture in Figure 3.2. The repeated dyads at the ends of noise gestures (4a) and (4b) also have the same intervallic structure. Note also that the same pitch relationship is also provided at the ends of the two subphrases of the second half of theme-1 (*y* and *y'* in Figure 3.6). Hence it would be fair to say that the cell (0 1 3 4) acts as a link that connects not only the constituents of theme-1, but also theme-1 to the noise gestures that were presented earlier in the piece in mm. 1 - 17.

At the beginning of theme-1, Bartók ensured a smooth transition from the noise gestures to the theme by starting the theme with the same notes that were included in the preceding final noise gesture. The same strategy is also used at the end of theme-1: the last five pitch classes used in theme-1 (C♭-C-D♭-D-E♭) are identical with those that are used in the fourth noise gesture (4a), which is heard right after theme-1 in mm. 25-26.

Theme-1 is repeated in mm. 26-34 with a thicker unison texture, and another instance of the fourth noise gesture (4a) connects the theme smoothly to the following episode of the composition consisting solely of noise gestures.

3.3 The Analysis of Sections 3 & 4 (mm. 34-58): Theme-2

Section 3 of The Night's Music brings backs the noise gestures in mm. 34-37 for a short episode. These gestures than give way to the second melody of the piece in mm. 37-58, which will be referred to as *theme-2*, which is shown in Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8.

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accompaniments. Note that Bartók uses a C♭ instead B in measure 24, implying that this note is not a leading tone to C (as in a double-neighbor or enclosure situation) but a neighbor-note of D♭. Bartók's choice of C♭ favors an interpretation using Kárpáti's theory over a polymodal explanation since C♭ lies outside of a C-Phrygian collection. See Kárpáti (1982;1995) for a detailed explanation of the theory of mistunings.

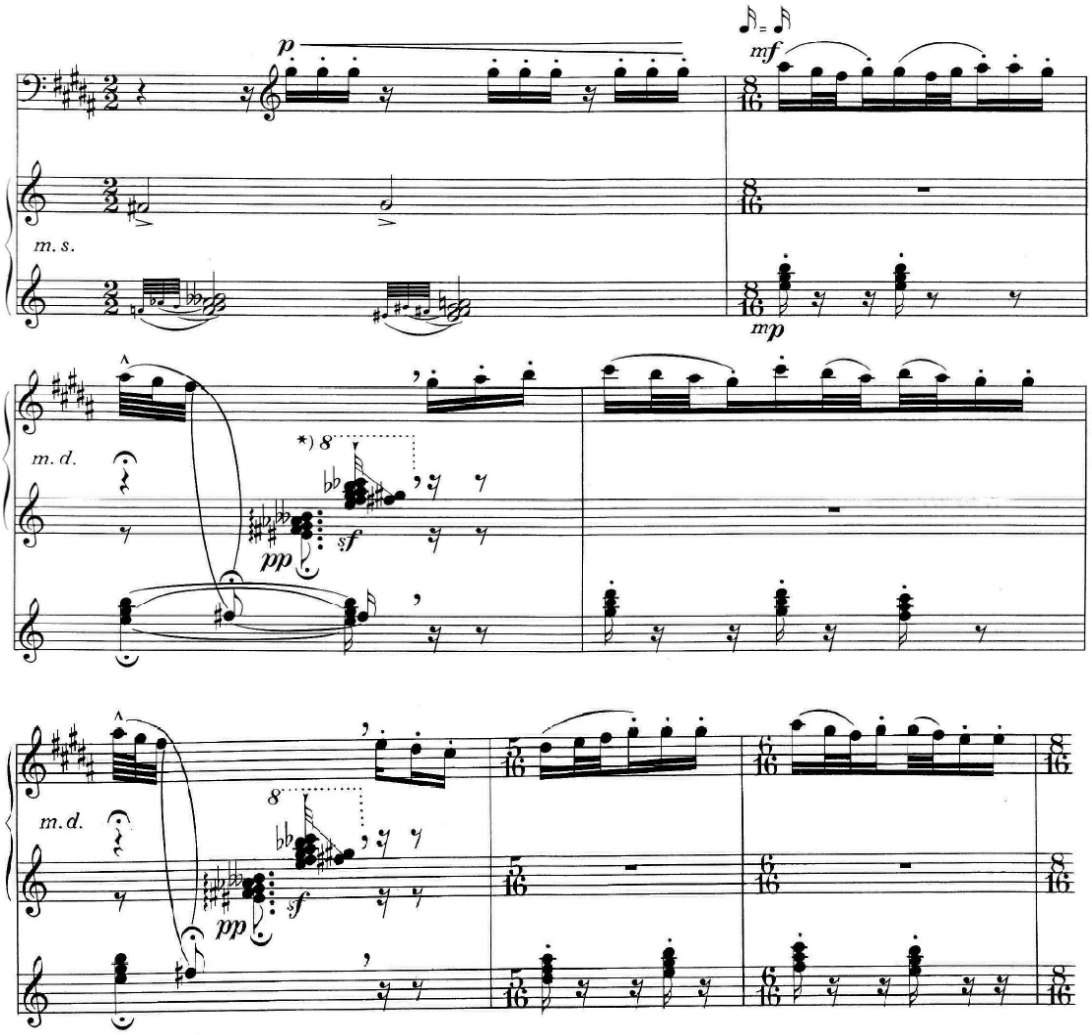

Figure 3.7 : *The Night's Music*, theme-2, mm. 37-43.

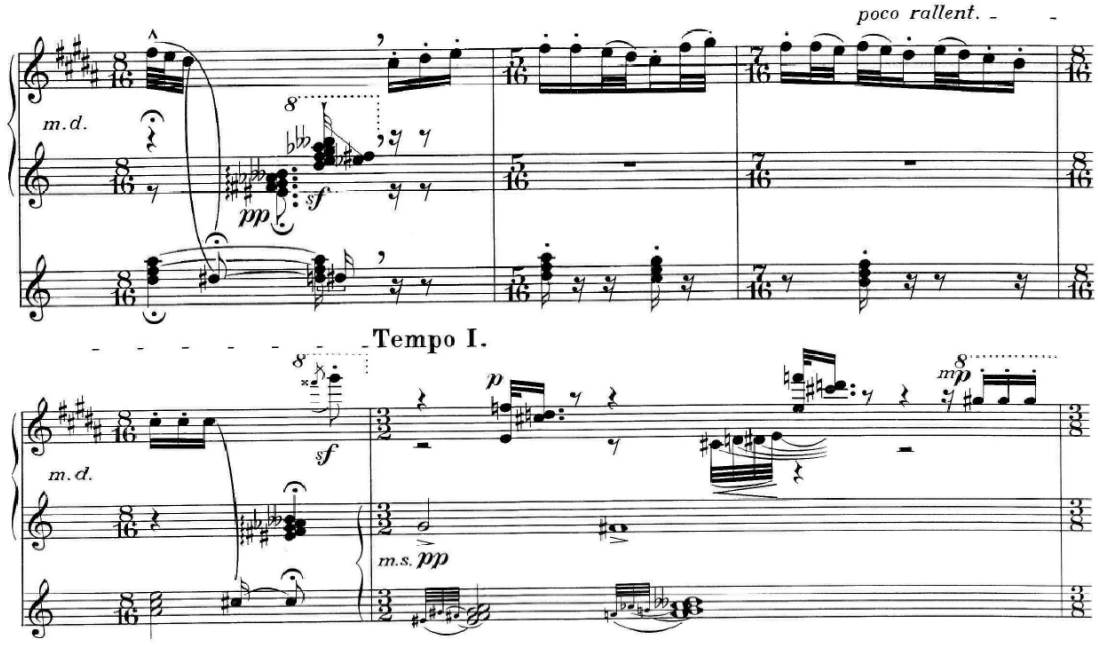

Figure 3.8 : *The Night's Music*, theme-2 (cont.), mm. 44-48.

As it is shown in Figure 3.7, the pick-up of theme-2 consist of repeated staccato G#5s which are sounded over the perpetual left-hand cluster (FA-A4). Hence the beginning of theme-2 sounds as if it is another noise gesture. This ambiguity at the beginning of theme-2 is also brought forward at the final bars of *The Night's Music*, and both Somfai (1984) and Harley (1995) regard this theme as an antipode of theme-1 heard at the previous section. According to Somfai (1984, p. 5) theme-1 represents "a solitary Ego" embodying "individual poetry" and theme-2 is a "peasant flute-like music" symbolizing "Peoples" through the "powerful art of a folk community", whereas for Harley theme-2 is "*folk-nightingale* melody" that unites the birdsong (implied with the staccato G#s at its inception) with the shepherd's pipe forming an "ecological unity of people and nature" (1995, p. 336).

Several musical parameters contribute to the significant contrasts between theme-1 and theme-2. As can be seen in Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8, contrary to the high degree of chromaticism in theme-1, theme-2 is completely diatonic in C#-Dorian mode. It is faster, it is delivered at a relaxed ***mf*** dynamic, and it has a lively folk-dance rhythm with metric accents falling irregularly in groupings of 2 or 3 16th-notes. Both themes have exclusively stepwise motion, yet contrary to the generally slowly descending movements of theme-1, the phrases in theme-2 span larger intervals in both upward and downward directions, resulting in much more energetic musical motions. Contrary to the hymnal wide parallel octaves texture of theme-1, theme-2 is presented with a single musical line, and it's register coincides comfortably with the register of the flute, supporting its interpretation as a peasant's flute melody. Compared to the solemnity of theme-1, the theme-2 comes with exuberance and joy, yet it should be noted that the joyous character of theme-2 is undermined with the final rallentando in mm. 46-47 (shown in Figure 3.8), which embodies the theme with an air of desolation at its closure.

Yet, within all these contrasts, there are also several striking parallels between theme-1 and theme-2. Both themes encompass a modal descending-5th progression. The centricity or the key is ambiguous for during both themes until the moment we receive the final closures on the modal centers: the beginning of theme-2 implies the G#-Aeolian, later the third sub-phrase (shown as *y* in Figure 3.9) moves around D#-Phrygian, and the mode of C#-Dorian becomes evident only on the last sub-phrase (shown as *z* in Figure 3.9). Moreover, just like theme-1, the first half of theme-2 also

consists of a repetition of a basic melodic idea, whereas this time the basic idea of the undergoes a variation in its second iteration (shown as *x'* on Figure 3.9). Just as it has been for theme-1, the noise gestures are also present in between the phrases of theme-2, yet this time Bartók introduces a new noise made up of a cluster played by the palm of the right-hand following the recurring F4-A4 cluster (see measures 39 and 41 in Figure 3.7).

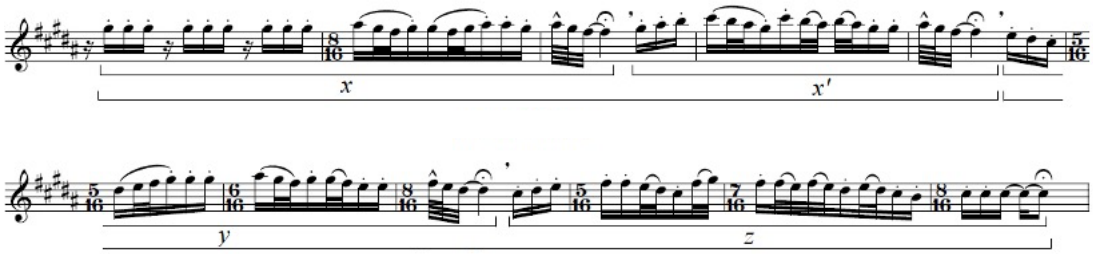

Figure 3.9 : The phrase structure of theme-2.

As it can be seen in Figures 2.7 and 2.8, Bartók provides an accompaniment to theme-2 by employing white-key triads revolving around the same register of the melody. These triads are always moving parallel with the melody on the white keys, and they are always located around the central position of the melodic span they are accompanying, hence the hands located always on top of each other – for example, in mm. 38-9 in Figure 3.7, right-hand plays around (F#-G#-A#) while the left-hand accompanies with an E-minor-triad covering the white keys around the same register. Rather than providing a polytonal effect, since melodic motion is always more assertive, this kind of accompaniment is heard as a harmonic distortion (or mistuning) that blurs the diatonic sonority of the melodic movement[8].

The above mentioned white-key accompaniment produces another unexpected harmonic connection between the two themes of *The Night's Music*. The opening measures of theme-2, which revolve around G# are harmonized by an E-minor-triad, whereas the final cadence on C# in measure 47 (see Figure 3.8) has an A-minor, creating in both instances a sonority having both the minor and major thirds (0 3 4 7). Note that (0 3 4 7) is also a characteristic sonority of theme-1 since, within its span

[8] Earlier prominent uses of white-key versus black-key distributions include *the Petrushka chord* from Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1911), Debussy's *Brouillards* from the second book of Preludes (1913), and Villa-Lobos's *O Polichinelo* from the first book of *A Prole do Bebê* (1918). Yet, Bartók had already utilized this technique extensively before these composers in his *Bagatelle No.7* for piano, Op. 6 (1908).

from (C-G), every subphrase of the theme-1, except the last one, end with a melodic movement from (E-D#), and the final subphrase has both major and minor thirds as (E-E♭).

As it has been the case for theme-1, theme-2 is also enveloped by noise gestures that possess related pitch collections. The last noise gesture heard at the end of m. 36, just before the beginning of theme-2 is the sixth gesture (see Figure 3.2) which has the complete chromatic collection from C# to E, and which smooths the transition to C#-Dorian. Similarly, the theme-2 is followed in m. 48 by the third gesture which is acoustically correlated with the C#-Dorian mode due to having the pitches C# and E although these are both distorted by their upper chromatic neighbors. Also note that in m.48, Bartók chose to bring the third gesture not in its original register shown in Figure 3.2, but one octave lower in order to have the same C#5 which also concludes theme-2. Note that the second installment of the third gesture on the same measure has the gesture in its original register, an octave higher, which is followed by the repetition of theme-2 commencing an octave higher. Thus, Bartók is not only utilizing noise gestures which have pitch collections that are related with the themes, but he is also coupling the registers of these gestures with the registers of the themes.

The repetition of theme-2 is displayed in Figure 3.10 below, and the repetition brings back the same melodic content under a regular 3/8 meter. Instead of mirroring the melodic movement, the white-key accompaniment gradually descends stepwise from E-minor to A-minor, yet this time the accompaniment alternates between triads in open voicings and clusters obtained by filling-in the white keys that fall within the triad. Yet, after the completion of theme, the final A-minor harmony is followed by the perpetual F4-A4 chromatic cluster in m. 57 instead of the white-key cluster from A2 to E3.

3.4 The Analysis of Sections 5 (mm. 58-67): Juxtaposition of the Themes

The return of the theme-1 starts with the note C# in m. 58 (see Figure 3.10), on the same pitch with which theme-2 ends in the previous measure. Hence the C# from the previous C#-Dorian descent becomes the neighbor note in theme-1 which precedes the descent from D to G. The in its return, theme-1 is transposed a fourth below than its initial presentation, from (C-G) to (G-D).

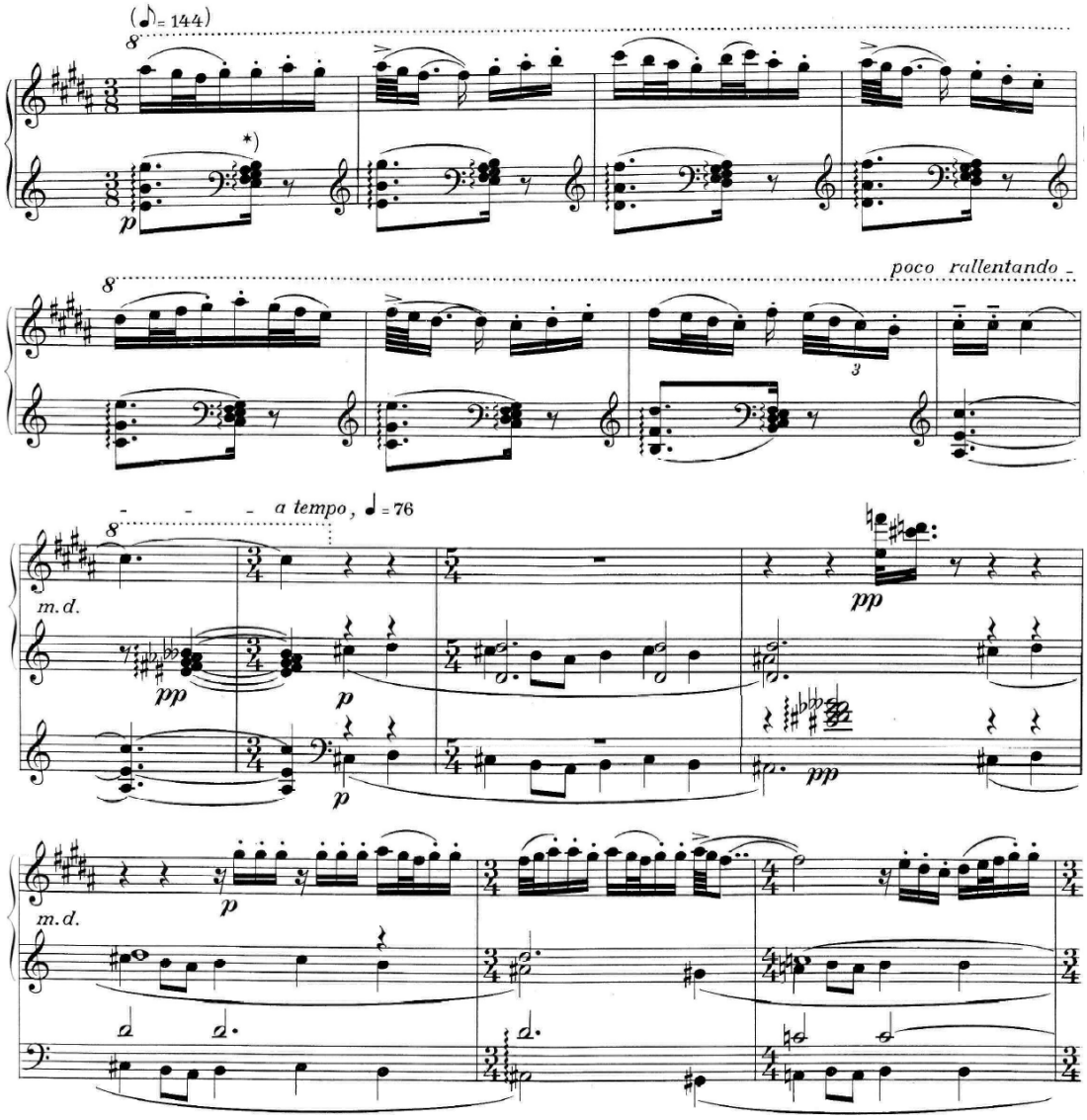

Figure 3.10 : *The Night's Music*, mm. 49-63.

Antokoletz (1984) proclaims that, in Bartók's music, axes of symmetries generally play roles similar to that of tonal functions. The return of the initial theme in *The Night's Music* serves a good example corroborating Antokoletz's claim. The two versions of theme-1 covered the perfect-5th intervals of (C-G) and (G-D), and these two intervals are symmetrical around the axis C#-C#. Note that C# serves in this piece as the modal center of theme-2. These relationships are demonstrated in the reduction provided in Figure 3.11. The final melodic movement in the first instance of theme-1 was a Phrygian descending cadence in the form of ♭2→1, as in D♭→C. After the episode of theme-2 in C#-Dorian (enharmonic of D♭), the return of theme-1 begins with the rising Lydian melodic movement of #4→5 in G-Lydian, as C#→D. Hence the episode in C#-Dorian can be seen as the prolongation of the upper neighbor D♭

which acts as ♭2 in the end of the first instance of theme-1, and which later acts as #4 in the second instance (as C#) as a lower neighbor to the 5th of the G-Lydian. All these symmetrical relationships are made possible because the first 5 notes of Lydian and Phrygian modes are symmetric and have exactly the reversed intervallic distances among their constituents.

Figure 3.11 : Reduction of the melodic progression in *The Night's Music*.

While the juxtaposition of the themes, theme-2 is introduced over theme-1 at m. 61 during the second iteration of the basic idea of theme-1 (see Figure 3.10). As a result, the basic idea of theme-2 is presented only once during the juxtaposition. There is a temporal lag of three beats between the starts of phrases of theme-1 and theme-2, and therefore the endings of phrases in theme-2 (showed in the upper-staff) coincide with the beginnings of phrases in theme-1 (showed in the middle-staff). As a result of this temporal lag between the voices, the theme-2 resides over the notes that are occupying the second-halves of phrases of theme-1, which are either one of (B-A#-B♭-A♭-G♭). Note that all of these pitches-classes are also included in a C#-Dorian collection, and as a result the juxtaposition of themes do not cancel clash with or cancel each other's modes. As it can be seen in Figure 3.12, the harmony between the voices is broken as soon as we reach the final note of theme-1 in m. 66, which brings a sustained G under the second-half of the final phrase of theme-2, resulting in a final augmented-4th of (G-C#) between the voices.

3.5 The Analysis of Sections 6 (mm. 67-71): Coda

The clash between voices in m.66 is followed by a final episode of noise gestures over the background provided by the perpetual (F4-A4) clusters (see Figure 3.13). The beginning of theme-2 is brought back in m.70, following a series of fourth gestures (see Figure 3.2) as (4a)-(4b)-(4a) in m. 69. Note the thematic similarity between these gestures and the beginning of theme-2 due to the repeated notes.

Hence at the end of the composition, the beginning of the flute melody of theme-2 is presented as just like any other noise gesture, just as it was first introduced in m.37.

The fragments of the flute melody revolve around G#, and the sound of the flute and the background noises gets fainter and fainter as we reach to the end of the composition. The final (F4-A4) cluster slightly brings out the F#4, which is countered by the repeated G#s in the melody. Note that both the cluster (F-A) and the pitches (F#-G#) produce symmetrical pitch collections around the axis of G-G.

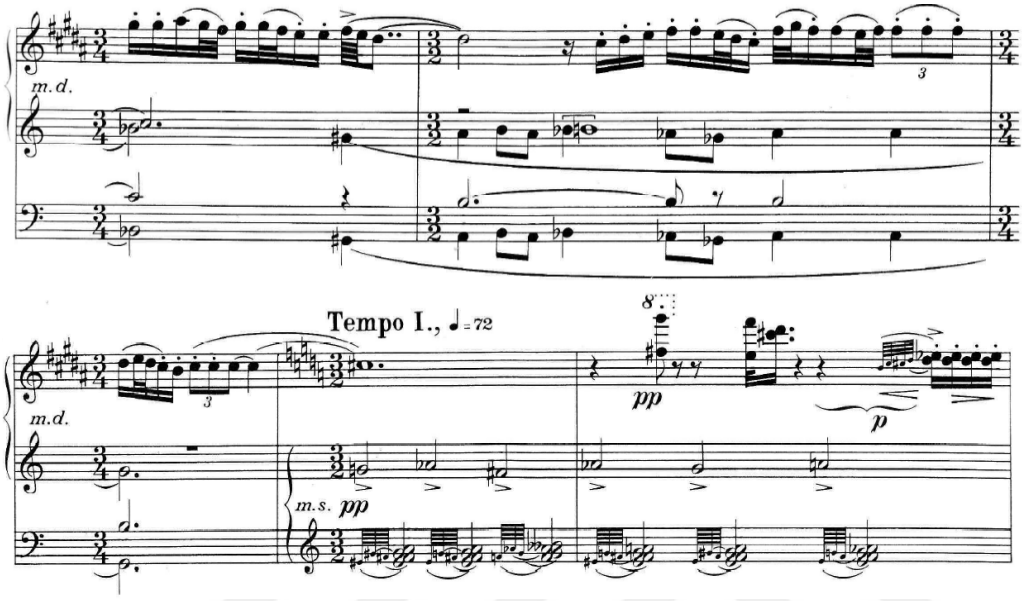

Figure 3.12 : *The Night's Music*, mm. 64-68.

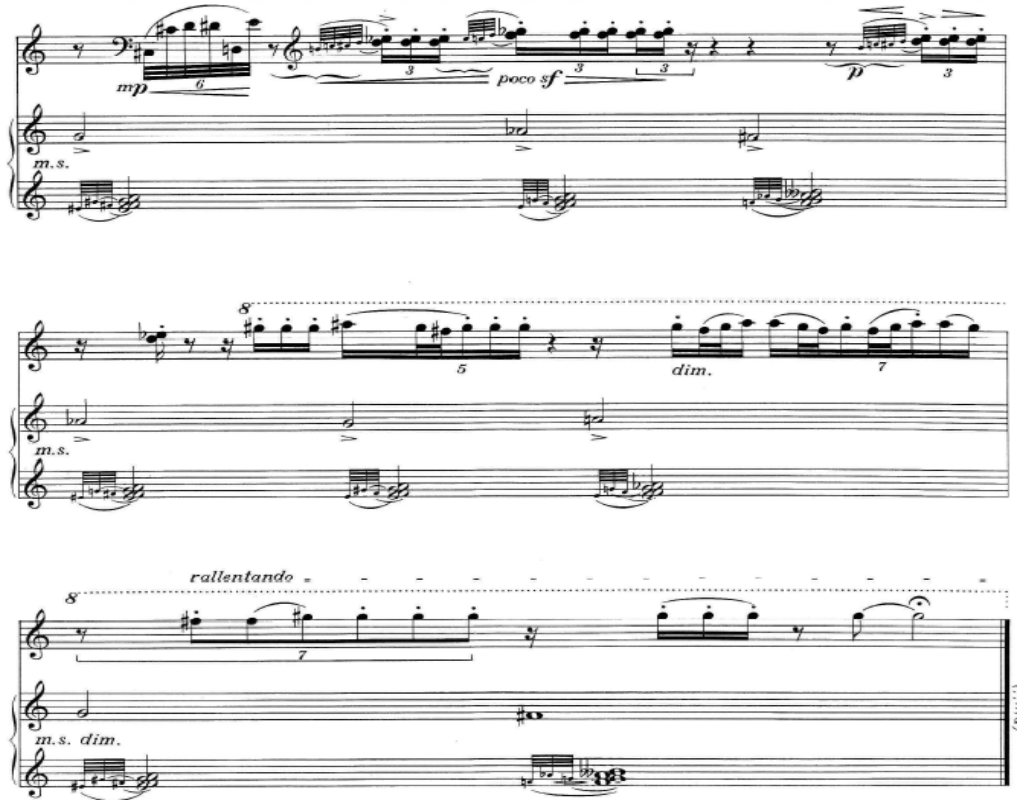

Figure 3.13 : The Night's Music, mm. 69-71.

3.6 The Semantic Associations in The Night's Music

There is a wealth of aesthetically warranted musical meanings that are communicated to a listener in *The Night's Music*. This section will mainly focus on how these meaningful associations are portrayed in the piece as the composition unfolds as a musical narrative.

The start of the piece is quite unusual because of the lack of thematic material. Hence there is thematic markedness at the beginning of the piece since the piece starts with noise gestures instead of a theme. This beginning gives the piece a very special aura, and moreover, the noise gestures do not form a melos due to their disparate registers, distinct pitch contents, and their almost arbitrary presentation. The actantial characteristics of the noise gestures and their fragmented presentation also prevents the listener's identification with this music as an emphatic, emotive or sympathetic way, since their attention is constantly shifted from one gesture and another. As a result, this music sounds as the music of the outside, in the sense that listeners cannot connect this music with empathy, in the sense that a listener cannot feel that they are singing this music, or experiencing this music in an embodied way in the participant level. Hence the listener's embodied experience is more akin to that of a distant observer.

Larson (2012) distinguishes two different modes or strategies for embodied engagement with music as participant and observer perspectives (p. 71). The participant perspective appears when the listener engages with the music with their own bodily experiences of motion, analogous to themselves moving in a musical landscape. Whereas the observer perspective is more distant, and operates as perceiving other objects move in a musical landscape (Larson, 2012, p. 72). Both participant and observer perspectives are strategies that can be adopted by a listener, and Larson claims that "whereas the participant perspective seems more natural for the performer, the observer perspective seems more natural for the listener" (Larson, 2012, p. 72).

I assume that emphatic engagement or identification with a virtual musical agent is necessary for the listener to adopt a participant perspective for experiencing the music. Yet, due to the actantial nature of the musical content present in the opening of *The Night's Music*, the listener is forced to remain in the observer perspective. The listener

is also forced to adopt an observer perspective due to the segregated nature and arbitrary presentation of the noise gestures, which constantly shifts the attention of listener to various registers and pitch collections. Hence the music stimulates a distant engagement, one that is not experienced by a quasi-bodily experience, yet observed as an outside phenomenological experience. The above observations are also in line with Cox's (2016) observation that "different kinds of music 'invite' (motivate) different kinds of mimetic engagement, and this contributes to the different feel (quale) of different kinds of music" (p.14). In that sense, the music at the opening measures of *The Night's Music* resists mimetic participation. On the other hand, listeners may engage with the later music of theme-1 and theme-2 from either a participant or an observer perspective. This sense of categorical differences or constraints among the embodied engagement options provided to the listeners is one of the hallmarks of Bartók's night music style. Moreover, forcing the listener to adopt an observer perspective also enhances the feeling of being out of doors, being in the nature, or sensing the music as if not related to the inner-self but to the surrounding environment.

Yet certain clues in the composition oblige the listener to stay in the observer perspective while also engaging with the music of theme-1 and theme-2. As stated in the previous section, both themes by Bartók are strongly tied to the environmental noise gestures; as for theme-1, by starting with similar pitches with the just previous gesture and being intrinsically linked with the pitch collections of gestures; and as for theme-2, by starting with repeated notes which can almost be identified with another type of noise gesture in the first hearing. Moreover, both themes are placed over the subtle undercurrent of the noise gestures which come to the foreground during the silences in between the phrases of the themes. Hence by using such compositional strategies, Bartók places both of the themes in the same *mise en scène* with the noise gestures, which is set apart from that of the listener, facilitating a detached emotional involvement. Hence the music enables the listener to sympathize with the expressions of the themes like a distant observer, but does not enable the listener to subjectively identify with those expressions.

There are significant contrasts between of theme-1 and theme-2, suggesting disparate psychological states and virtual agencies for these themes. Apart from possessing contrasting thematic material, the disparate psychological states are clearly displayed in the affective qualities of melodic movements. Both themes are moving in a stepwise

manner, yet theme-1 moves with a gloomy pace and within shorter intervallic spans, whereas theme-2 has a lively folk-dance-like rhythm and its phrases span larger intervals. Hence theme-2 clearly implies a musical agent which is considerably more generous in the energy it invests for its movement, suggesting an abundance of resources and overall positive disposition. Theme-1 is highly chromatic, presented in a polymodal mixture of Lydian and Phrygian modes, and moreover the chromatic alterations always take place at the cadential locations and over pitches which were previously stated as stable scale steps: like for example the first phrase moves over D as a scale step yet ends on D#, and final phrase establishes C♭ as a scale step before terminating on C. Such highly chromatic movement which negates its previous steps, coupled with steady slow pace, gives the music an aura of uncertainty, indecisiveness, or insecurity. Yet theme-2 moves along diatonically in C#-Dorian mode with animation, lightheartedness, confidence, and impetuousness.

Apart from the differing qualities of melodic movement and implied psychological states, the musical ingredients of theme-1 and theme-2 possesses distinct symbolic/paradigmatic or extroversive meaningful correlations. As for these symbolic meanings, I will refer to the theory of *topics* that was put forward by Leonard Ratner (1980), and later elaborated by Agawu (1991, 2009), Hatten (1994, 2004), and Monelle (2000, 2006).

As stated in the previous section, theme-1 is usually identified as a mournful chorale melody (Somfai, 1984, p.5; Schneider 2006, p. 82; Harley 1995, p 335), or a village lament, *sirató*, (Explore the Score – Klavier-Festival Ruhr, 2020), and the theme displays qualities which can correlate with both of these topical interpretations: the steady and slow rhythmic pace, soft dynamics, stepwise motion, and gradually descending melodic line contribute to hearing the theme as a hymn or choral melody, whereas the polymodal character of its melody and the bourdon-like accompaniment endow it with the qualities of a folkloric lament. In that sense, it is possible to identify the topical correlations of theme-1 altogether as what Hatten (1994, 2004) refers to as a trope, where like a metaphor in language, a new musical meaning emerges due to the juxtaposition of musical ingredients with distinct topical correlations. Accordingly, a trope obtained by the intersection of elements from *chorale* and *folk-lament* topics capture the musical meaning communicated with theme-1 more specifically and literally than refers disparately to either one of *chorale* or *folk-lament* topics.

Both Somfai (1984) and Harley (1995) interpret theme-1 as a chorale melody standing in for a solitary ego – perhaps that of the composer, that is set apart from the nature represented by the pastoral associations of theme-2 and the noise gestures. Yet I have to disagree with such an interpretation since the chorale topic carries communal connotations inside it: a chorale is, by definition, social music, and hence the idea of a solitary ego is not entailed by that topic. Moreover, the communal aspect of this theme is reinforced by its presentation in octaves, which may imply homophonic singing. Hence the narrative trajectories posited by both of these authors, whether it is "incompatibility of the ego versus the nature" (Somfai, 1984) or "unification of the ego with the nature" (Harley, 1995), has an inherent flaw as long as theme-1 is associated with the concept of ego.

Ending of the piece clearly unites the flute-like folk dance melody of theme-2 with the noise gestures of the nature, and all the more enhancing its pastoral interpretation. This fact also supports Harley's claim that this theme represents an "ecological unity of people and nature" (1995, p. 336).

I also claim that a similar unity with nature is implied through theme-1 due to its shared pitch structure with the noise gestures, and also due to the juxtaposition of both themes over the noise gestures in measures 58-71. As stated earlier, both themes possess similar formal structures, and both of them span descending-5th progressions. These factors are brought forward in the juxtaposition, creating a broadly coordinated downward progression which is initiated and finalized by a diminished-5th between the voices.

Note that the noise gestures that are heard in the opening of the piece are almost chaotic in their presentation, and hence they do not form what Hatten (2018) would refer to as a *melos*. Yet, the themes, however distant or unrelated they might seem, are coordinated. Certainly, the coordination of the themes at the very end does not yield a perfect melos, as it would in a Bach fugue, and we may clearly speak of disparate virtual musical agencies which still retain their individuality and which are to some extent harmonious with the nature due to shared internal make-up or gestural movements.

4. ACTANTIAL MELOS IN BARTÓK'S NIGHT MUSIC

According to Hatten (2018), a *melos* is an integrated musical agency arising from the coordination of several voices by means of common melodic motives, counterpoint, and harmony (p. 12). In Hatten's (2018) theory of musical virtual agency, the concept of melos accounts for the continuity of an agential expression made-up of coordinated musical elements throughout a musical discourse (p. 21).

As it was stated while commenting on the noise gestures in *The Night's Music*, the actantial elements in Bartók's night music compositions behave almost like immutable non-syntactic units, and hence they do not partake as motives in thematic processes like sequential presentation or developing variation. Likewise, the noise gestures in *The Night's Music*, actantial elements, were always replicated starting from the same pitch: if a noise gesture was replicated from another pitch, then that might have indicated some sort of sequential melodic movement, which would imply a virtual agent more than a virtual actant.

Nevertheless, there are numerous instances in Bartók's night music where the same actantial musical material is replicated horizontally or vertically starting from a different pitch. In most of such situations, there are usually huge intervallic distances between consecutive replications of the musical materials, and also usually different instruments are utilized. Due to such spreading-out of the materials in terms of distance and source, the audience perceives a segregated auditory stream compiled from sounds coming from different sources in the environment. Hence the replication is not perceived as expressive melodic movement or as an indication for a virtual musical agent, but as a collection of actants operating in tandem. Such collective behavior need not necessarily be chaotic: the collective behavior can have its own emergent patterns – just like a flock of starlings, or like a swarm of insects. One may perceive an emergent coordinated action of a multitude of actants, yet this does not imply any intentionality or agential characteristics attributable to its individual members. I will refer to such a multitude of actants as an *actantial melos*, where multiple replications

of an immutable musical gesture are coordinated in such a way which does not create a sense of musical movement or an agential expression.

The above outlined concept of *actantial melos* differs from Hatten's (2018) original conception of melos in several significant ways. First of all, the original concept of melos was formulated in order to account for the actorial continuity not only among different voices, but also throughout the musical narrative: a melos can evolve as long as the actorial continuity is preserved, whereas an actantial melos is always constrained by the same atomic material. Secondly, one may imagine different actants reacting to each other in an actantial melos, but there is never a genuine 'call-and-response' pattern due to the constrained shapes of gestures: the actants merely replicate the same gestural elements from different pitches, and hence there is not a genuine response as something that is musically answering or complementing the initial gesture. As a result of this, the communication in an actantial melos is severely limited compared to that of agents in a melos. If we can imagine a Bach fugue as a perfect example for melos, an actantial melos, on the other hand, can be likened to a fugue in which there are only subjects, but no countersubjects or any other material. Finally, change of register in successive presentations of motives implies a sequential melodic movement for a musical agent, and such movement is akin to the movement of the virtual agent to a higher or lower energy state. On the other hand, register is more like a location property for an actantial melos, and iteration of the same motive from various pitches means only multiplicity of actants that are spread out to different positions. This observation agrees with the *niche hypothesis* of sound ecologist Bernard L. Krause, which states that, in a natural habitat, the animals coordinate their sounds with respect to the other sounds in their environment, so "each creature appears to have its own sonic niche (channel or space) in the frequency spectrum and/or time slot occupied by no other at that particular moment" (Krause, 1993, p. 8).

It was stated earlier in this thesis that a key characteristic feature of Bartók's night music compositions is the existence of a marked opposition between the actantial and agential musical elements. In the above formulation, the concepts 'actant' and 'agent' are not musical properties per se, but they form a marked a binary opposition in our cognitive framework, which is hardwired in our mental capacity for making sense of the world around us.

Certainly, such a musical expression based of agential oppositions depends on our ability to discerns agents from actants, and vice versa – and this is a very sophisticated cognitive distinction. Note that, every agent is already an actant by definition. But something is endowed with agency only if it exhibits qualities like intentionality, expressivity, and individuality, in addition to actantial characteristics. While the distinction actant/agent is always binary, it is not easy to state what kind of, and how much, movement is enough proof for intentionality, or individuality. Moreover, humans always have a capacity of attributing andromorphic characteristics to even non-living things through creative analogy – and such sophisticated aesthetic faculties further make it almost inaccessible to come up with a simple rule of thumb for making actantial/agential distinctions in music.

4.1 The Ambiguous Agency and Melos in Bartók's String Quartet No.3

There are ambiguous passages in Bartók's music where the composer threads on the thin line where the actantial/agential distinction is blurred, either due to the presence of some - but lack of enough – agential clues, or due to having conflicting clues about the nature of the agency in the music. In those cases, the musical stream is deliberately designed to be somewhere between an agential melodic statement or a successions of noise gestures attributable to an actant. The composer plays with our inability in identifying the disposition of this ambiguous source, and we are left with the feeling of been confronted with an unfamiliar alien beast whose next action is, at the same time, both predictable and unknowable.

Such a musical passage where the actantial/agential distinction blurred is found in the *prima parte* section of Bartók's Third String Quartet from 1927. Composed one year after *Out of Doors*, the work includes a weirdly mysterious 8-bar segment (measures 35-42) which is identified as the first instance of night music in Bartók's oeuvre following *The Night's Music* (Danchenka, 1987, p.22; Schneider, 2006, p.84). That musical excerpt from the Third String Quartet is given below in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

The night music section in the Third String Quartet starts at rehearsal mark '4' on the score, in measure 35 where there is a new tempo directive as *più andante*. As it can be seen in Figure 4.1, this section is significantly separated from the preceding music by the rests in measure 34, the drop of volume from fortissimo to pianissimo, as well as the new tempo given at the start of measure 35.

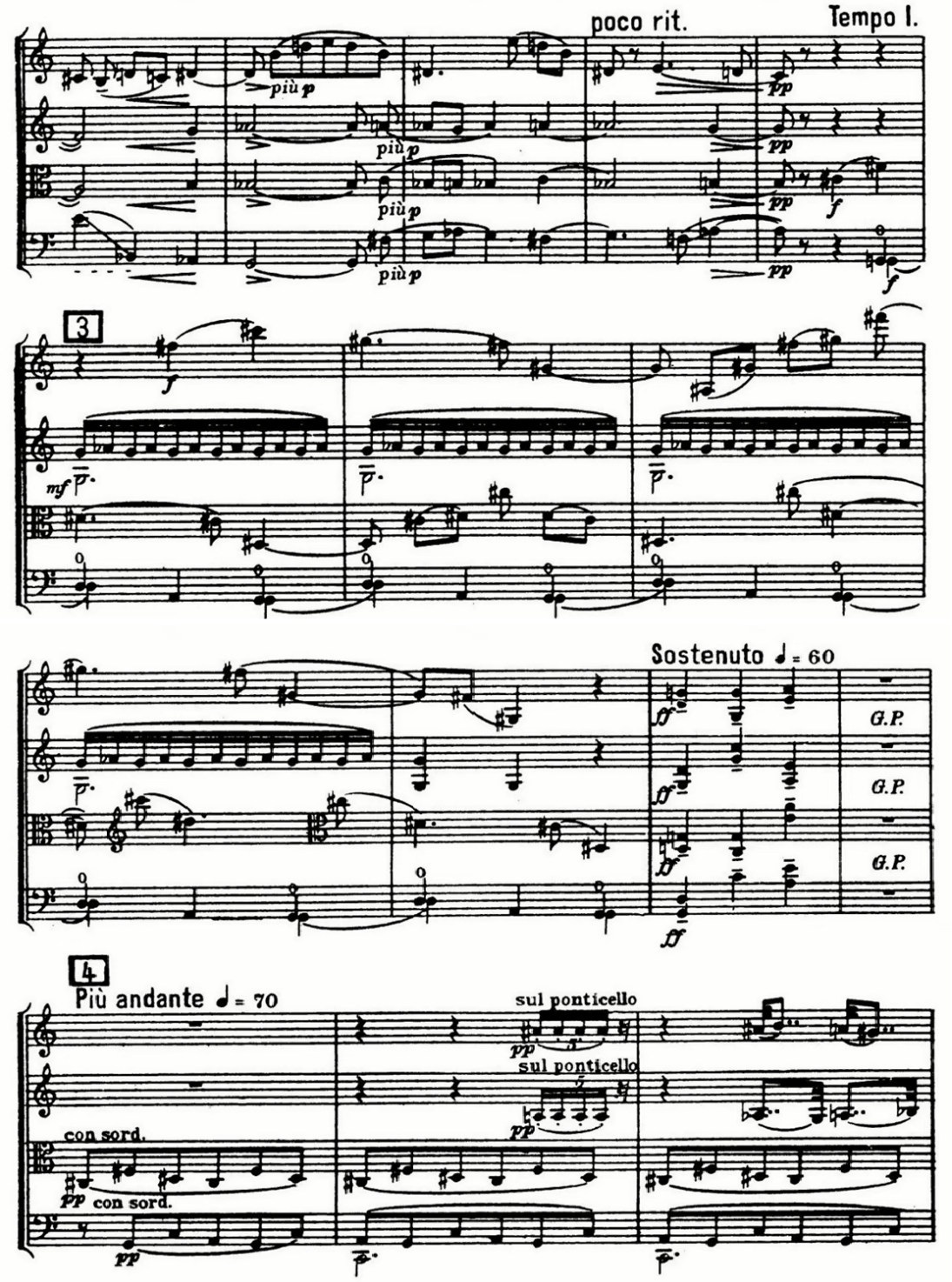

Figure 4.1 : String Quartet No.3, *prima parte*, mm. 23-37.

Formally, the night music section of the Third String Quartet is organized in two phrases that loosely resemble a period structure, where measures 35-39 form the first phrase which is replied by a shorter second phrase in measures 40-42. The listeners are transferred to an alternate universe by the harmonic statis provided by an exquisitely designed sheet of sound played by the viola and the cello right from the

beginning of the night music section in measure 35 in Figure 4.1. Both these instruments are playing *con sordino*, and are looping 3-note pentatonic phrases with the prime form (025): (C#-F#-D#) on the viola, and a tritone-down (G-C-A) on the cello – in addition to the C2 sustained on the cello on the open string. An 8th-note phase, as well as the 3/8 hemiolas on both instruments also contribute to the sense of cloudiness implied by the sheet of sound.

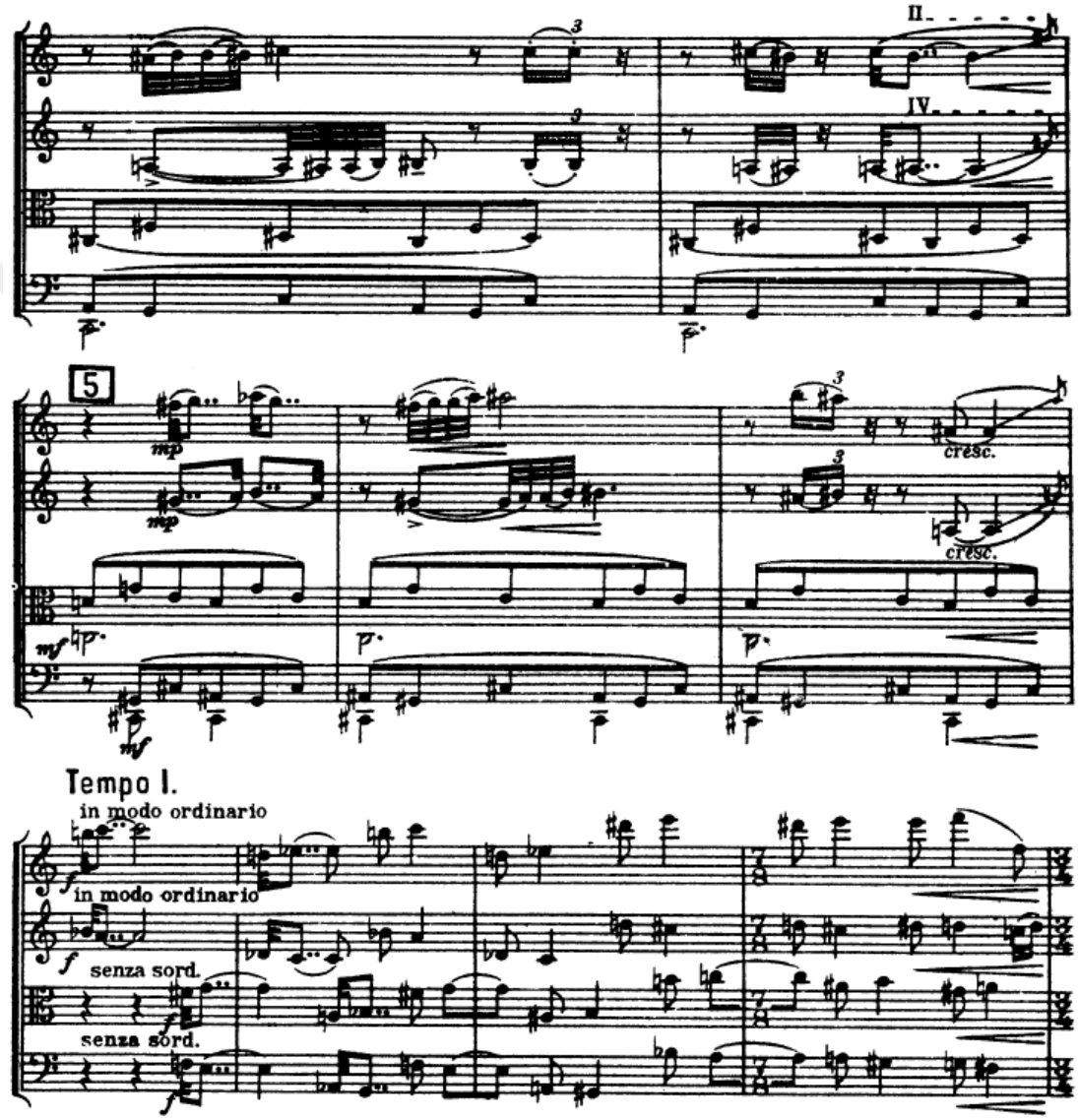

Figure 4.2 : String Quartet No.3, *prima parte*, mm. 38-46.

Over this sheet of sound, two violins present an eerie duet which owes its character to the quiet yet very dissonant phrases that are played *sul ponticello*. Violins start with a minor-9th interval of A3-A#4 in measure 36. In measure 37, the first violin plays (A#-B-A-G#), while the second violin has (A♭-G-A-B♭). Note that both of these chromatic

motives are based on the (0123) set class[9]. Moreover, these two motives are also symmetrical around the A-A axis, and the set of pitches presented on the second violin is a minor-9th below that of the first violin. Both violins continue to present collections of pitches confirming to (0123) in measure 38 (see Figure 4.2), where the second violin follows the first violin from a minor-9th below, albeit from a little bit behind.

The second phrase, which is given in measures 40-42 in Figure 4.2, transposes the sheet of sound a minor-2nd up, and utilizes the motives presented in the antecedent phrase on the violins – but this time the interval between the violins is a minor-7th. The measure 41 presents the same motive that was used in measure 38, but this time both violins present sets of pitches that conform to (0134) instead of (0123): (F#-G-A-A#) on the first violin, and (G#-A-B-B#) on the second violin. That (0134) sonority was already presented vertically in measure 39: the combination of pitches employed in both violins in measure 39 makes (A-A#-B#-C#) whose prime form is (0134).

During the night music section of the Third String Quartet, the steady sheet of sound is provided by the coordination of the actantial materials provided by the viola and the cello, and therefore this sheet of sound can be virtually interpreted as an actantial melos. The violin duet on top of this sheet of sound is also very coordinated both thematically, because of employing the same type of sets, and contrapuntally, due to having tightly regulated movements between the voices. Nevertheless, in terms of the type of its agency, the violin duet in measures 35-42 represents an ambiguous case, since its musical constituents show both actantial or agential characteristics to some degree.

There are certain similarities between the motives presented by the violins during the night music section of the Third String Quartet and the noise gestures of *The Night's Music*: both collections present fragmented, non-tonal, short, segregated, and primarily chromatic gestures that lack elaborate melodic movement. Yet motives of the quartet and the noise gestures of *The Night's Music* are presented in very different formal organizations. In *The Night's Music*, the noise gestures were presented in a deliberately random manner; on the other hand, the night music section of the Third String Quartet is formally organized in two parts where the second part presents all the motives

[9] The chromatic (0123) set class is named as the *set X* by Perle (1955) due to its frequent occurrence in Bartók's music.

(except the repeated notes) in the same sequence. Moreover, both of these phrases of the night music section in the quartet present an overall rising shape, culminating with the upward glissandi at the ends of the phrases. The parallelism between the two phrases might suggest that the night music section is formally organized like a period, which might imply thematic characteristics for the motives and an agential melodic declamation. Yet, the violin duet has a considerable lack of variety because of generally employing chromatic rising gestures and upward shapes, which hinder the perception of that section as a melodic declamation, and lack of cadential gestures that imply closure (phrases end, paradoxically, with upward glissandi) hinder the perception of that section as a period theme, and consequently imply a fragmented developmental or sequential progression which could depict actants moving upwards. The violin duet has a very distorted timbre as a result of being played *sul ponticello*, and this effect also brings the duet conceptually closer to the noise gestures. Hence, while this violin duet exhibits certain 'melodic' characteristics that can be associated with an expressive virtual agent, it also displays considerable actantial associations.

I wrote in the above paragraph that the violin duet of the night music section of the Third String Quartet 'could depict actants moving upwards', and a visual analogue to such movement could be the flight of two insects in tandem, one following the other sometimes from a little behind. In fact, aurally this violin duet could as well remind the sound of the buzzing of insects with its softly delivered dissonant chromatic intervals and the *sul ponticello* timbre. Indeed, a programmatical connection with the world of entomology and this night music section is provided in the opening measures of Bartók's *From the Diary of a Fly* from Mikrokosmos, which are replicated in Figure 4.3 below. The first two measures of this piece introduce the notes (G-G♭-A♭-A), which is another instance of the (0123), the X-set. If we transpose this collection half step up, we obtain (A♭-G-A-B♭) – which is exactly the motive played in the second violin in measure 37 in Figure 4.1.

As stated above, the coordinated violin duet given in the night music section of the Third String Quartet is ambiguous in terms of its agency, since it is not clear whether its implied virtual source is a musical actant or a musical agent. Yet, we can still propose that this night music section establishes a marked semantic opposition between the preceding and following agential musical episodes of the quartet – not

only due to the actantial sheet of sound given on the viola and the cello, but also due to the contrasting timbres and the almost-actantial musical material used in the violins.

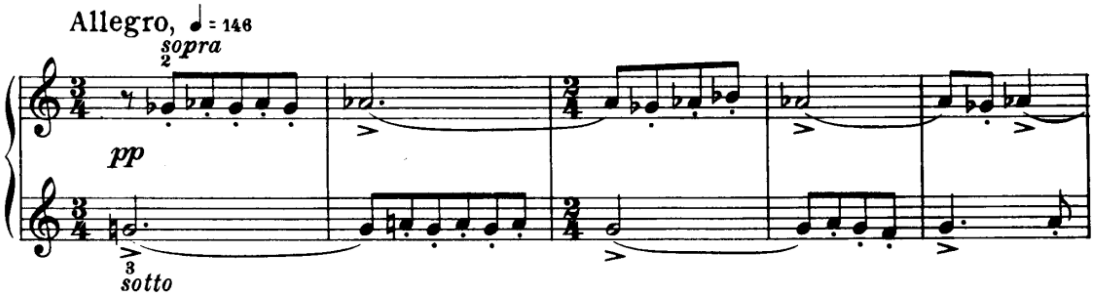

Figure 4.3 : *From the Diary of a Fly*, Mikrokosmos, Book VI, No. 142, mm. 1-5.

Just as it was the case for the noise gestures and the melodies in *The Night's Music*, the night music section of the Third String Quartet also exhibits elaborate thematic connections with the preceding and following sections of the composition. The partial pentatonic phrases looped by the viola and the cello during the sheet of sound were both heralded in the section of music that is just before the night music section in Figure 4.1. The fortissimo power chords on measure 33 that end the previous episode have G, C, A as their roots, giving away the pitches presented on the cello during the sheet of sound. Moreover, that previous episode stars in measure 27 with the entrance of the viola in measure with the notes C#, F# and D#, which are the pitches used by the viola during the sheet of sound. Throughout measures 27-32, the cello plays an accompaniment with a steady quarter-note beat using the notes (G-D-A), which is an augmentation of the latter (G-C-A). Note that the rhythm of the cello is also the augmentation of the 8th-note ostinato pattern found in the sheet of sound.

The violin duet also of the night music section also showcases several thematic connections with the preceding and the following music. Berry (1979) observed a very tight and symmetrical contrapuntal design based on (0123) and (0134) set classes in measures 43-44 in Figure 4.2 – the section that which is marked *in mode ordinario* on the violins and *senza sordino* on the viola and the cello –, and (0123) and (0134) are the set classes that provide the bulk of the pitch material for the violins during the night music section (p. 359). In measures 43-44, every instrument of the quartet plays a 4-note melody that showcases different instances of the (0134) sonority: which are (B-C-D-E♭) and (A-B♭-C-D♭) on the violins, (F#-G-A-A♭) on the viola, and (E-F-G-A♭) on the cello. Note also that the union of the upper two voices and the lower two voices produce different instances of the (0123) set class: the combination of the violins in

measure 43 is (A-B♭-B-C), while the combination of the viola and the cello produce (E-F-F#-G) in the same measure; the combination of the violins at the start of measure 44 is (C-D♭-D-E♭), while the viola and the cello produce (G-A♭-A-B♭) – all different instances of the (0123), the *set X* of Perle (1955).

Straus (2008) observes another thematic connection involving (0123) between the night music section and the opening of the Third String Quartet. The first 6 measures of the Third String Quartet are reproduced below in Figure 4.4. As you can see in Figure 4.4, the background chord that accompanies the first violin melody incorporates the pitch classes (C#-D-D#-E), which is another instance of (0123) – the set class that was outlined in the motives played by the violins in measures 37-38 (Straus, 2008, p. 35).

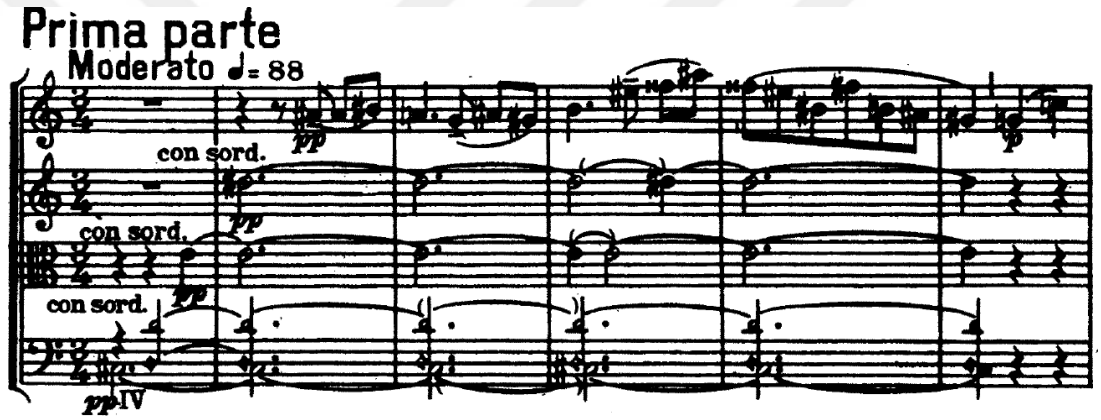

Figure 4.4 : String Quartet No.3, prima parte, mm. 1-6.

Another thematic connection between the night music and the first measures of the quartet is found in the second phrase of the violin melody that starts in the middle of measure 3 in Figure 4.4, which outlines the notes (G-G#-A#-B) belonging to the set class (0134) – that set class was utilized in the night music section in the violins in measure 39 (vertically) and 41 (linearly).

4.2 Night Music in Bartók's String Quartet No.5

Bartók's Fifth String Quartet was composed with an arch form using five movements. Within this symmetrical overall design, the second and the fourth movements constitute the slow movements of the quartet, and these slow movements showcase the sections that utilize the night music style.

Bartók (1976b) wrote a brief analysis of the fifth quartet, where he stated that both of the slow movements had identical formal designs within a "song form" having an ABA' structure (p. 415). Bartók's own segmentation of these two movements is presented below in Table 4.1. According to the composer, the A-sections of these movements consists of two subsections (indicated as 'a1' and 'a2' in Table 4.1). These sections are recapitulated in A'-sections "in reverse order and very short": first a section corresponding to a2, followed by a section corresponding to a1, and finally a section corresponding to the introduction (Bartók, 1976b, p. 415). Hence, according to this description, both of the slow movements of the quartet are designed with the arch form as (introduction + a1 + a2 + B + a2' + a1' + introduction').

Table 4.1 : Formal segmentation of the slow movements of String Quartet No.5.

Formal Section	II. Adagio molto	IV. Andante
Introduction	1-5	1-6
A / a1	5-10	7-22
A / a2	10-25	23-41
B	26-46	42-81
A'	46-56	82-101

In addition to sharing identical formal designs, both of the slow movements of Bartók's Fifth String Quartet employ very similar – and sometimes identical –themes, gestures, and pitch relations. As a result of all these similarities, Bayley (2001) states that the fourth movement can be seen as a free variation of the second movement (p. 164). These similarities in materials and organization also affect the agential implications in these movements, and both movements employ night music techniques in corresponding formal sections. As a result, for both the second and fourth movement, the night music associations are observed in the introduction, the first subsection of the A-sections (a1), the beginnings of the B sections, and corresponding musical areas in the A'.

4.2.1 Night music in the second movement of the String Quartet No.5

The introduction of the second movement takes place in the first 5 measures of the composition, and can be seen below in Figure 4.5. As can be seen in Figure 4.5, Bartók creates a mystical mood during the introduction with quiet, sparse, and chromatic gestures that are widely distributed in different registers.

The introduction of the movement outlines most of the pitch material that will be used in the forthcoming measures. The motives in the first measure in Figure 4.5 are designed deliberately to form clusters of adjacent pitch-classes. In first measure in Figure 4.5, the first gesture in the first violin introduces the pitches (E#-F#-G), and the complementary gesture in the cello produces (B#-C#-D#-E) belonging to the set class (0134). The first violin gesture in the first measure is repeated a perfect-4th below in the second violin in the measure 2, and this is replied by the viola repeating the complementary gesture from (Cx-D#-E#-F#), that is by transposing the pitch-classes used in the cello up a major-2nd. In measure 3, the first violin outlines an instance of the (0123) set-class as (G#-A-A#-B). A series of chromatic perfect-4th intervals lead to a cadential gesture towards (D) in measure 5, concluding the introduction. Note that Bartók (1976b) stated D as the tonal center in his analysis of this movement (p.414).

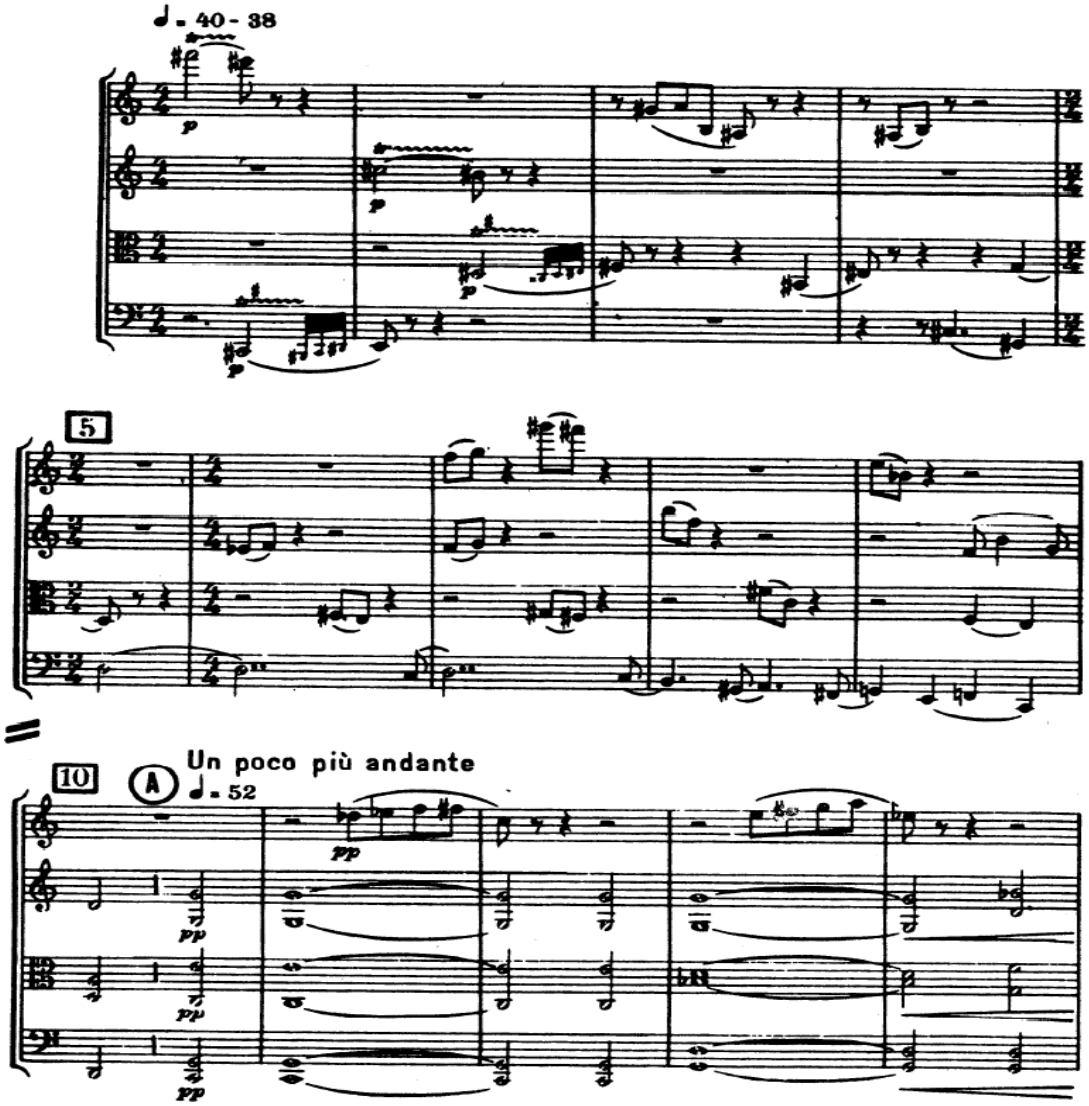

Figure 4.5 : String Quartet No.5, II. Adagio molto, mm. 1-14.

The first subsection of the A-section, a1, is given in measures 5-10 in Figure 4.5. Note that D is sustained as a pedal in measures 5-7. Measures 6-7 introduces a series of major-2nd gestures as (E♭-F), (F#-E), (F-G), and (G#-F#) – which are dispersed in different octaves and instruments, hence creating the illusion of different virtual sources, but nevertheless produce a chromatically rising progression of pitch-classes. Note also that the consecutive union of any of these major-2nd gestures result in the set-class (0123), which was given in the first violin in the 3rd measure in the introduction. Also note that the major-2nd interval was also showcased as the interval class between the two instances of the complementary gestures in cello and viola in the first 2 measures of the introduction.

In measures 8-9, the cello replies the chromatically rising major-2nd gestures of measures 6-7, but with chromatic gestures descending in major-seconds as (G#-A), (F#-G), and (E-F) – note that the consecutive union of any of these chromatic gestures result in the set-class (0123). The same measures also introduce a series of augmented-4th intervals in the upper three voices that are spread around various registers, but whose pitch-classes have, nonetheless, chromatic neighbor relations. In measures 8, the second violin introduces the augmented-4th (B-F), which is replied by the viola as (F#-C), jointly producing the (B-C-F-F#) tetrachord of the set-class (0167) – another symmetrical tetrachord that frequently shows up in Bartók analysis – commonly known as the Z set-class (Antokoletz, 1984, p. 71). Measure 9 presents (E-B♭) on the first violin together with (B-F) in the second violin, producing (B♭-B-E-F) – which is the other instance of the Z set-class that uses (B-F). Note that the upper pitches of the two dyads that are the chromatic neighbors of (B-F) presented in measures 8-9, (F#-C) and (E-B♭), lead melodically to (D) as (F#-E-D). Moreover, these two dyads, (F#-C) and (E-B♭), are symmetrical around the axis D-D. Hence, while spread-out in different registers, the augmented-4th intervals in measures 8-9 also imply a movement towards D in two different ways. All these factors, plus the melodic movement in measures 8-10 in the bass register in the cello, confirm D as the tonal center of the movement.

The above analysis shows a very coordinated musical structure in the first 10 measures of Bartók's string fifth quartet, albeit one with musical material spread out to different instruments and registers. There is a sense of a long and continuous melodic progression in measures 6-9 due to the tight organization of the pitch-classes, but his

sense of continuity is challenged by the fragmented and pointillistic musical texture that utilizes two-note gestures presented from various registers and interviewed with rests in between. The gestures are isolated from one other, and each gesture has its own make-up in terms register and instrumentation, which recalls Krause's (1993) *niche hypothesis* about the sound ecology in natural habitats, implying multiple virtual sources that are replying to one another from different locations.

Measures 1-10 of the movement does not provide a stable sheet of sound, while a stable harmonic statis is provided only for a brief time by the sustained D3 in the cello in measures 5-7. But even in those measures, while the music is presented in different registers, mostly it boils down to a texture made-up of two voices – and as result we do not experience the multi-layered textures that are associated with the night music style. Consequently, the music given in measures 1-10 of the second movement presents certain characteristics of the night music style, but not a complete experience of the style.

Nevertheless, a complete experience of the night music style is provided in measures 26-35 of the movement, which corresponds to the first 9 measures of the B-section. Beginning of that section is provided below in Figure 4.6. A continuous tremolo G3 pedal is provided in the second violin, which provides the background for the two actantial gestures presented in measure 26: the descending slurred pizzicato on the notes (A♭3-G3), and swift 5-note-gesture as (A♭-A-B-C-D♭). Note that these gestures are slight variations of the two gestures played by the first violin and the cello at the first measure of the piece (see Figure 4.5). Measures 27-28 introduce a variant of the 5-note gesture in the first violin which spans and fills in the interval (G♭-C) in both directions, while the 5-note gesture is also replicated in its original form by the first violin (measure 27) and by the viola (measure 28). The same measures also introduce a short expressive *dolce* melodic phrase played *arco* in the viola and the cello (G♭-D♭-E♭) in measures 27 and 28. With all these ingredients, a complete multi-layered and multi agential/actantial night music experience is already provided in the first 3 measures of the B-section of the second movement of the Fifth String Quartet.

The following measures of the B-section of the movement showcase a gradual liquidation of the multi-agential night music organization that is presented in measures 26-28. This gradual liquidation is achieved through the thematicization of the actantial

gestures whereby these gestures are used as thematic motives or parts of melodic phrases. Eventually these gestures lose their atomic characteristics and multi-agential/actantial implications, and we are left with a complex contrapuntal texture that showcase these gestures without implying agential oppositions.

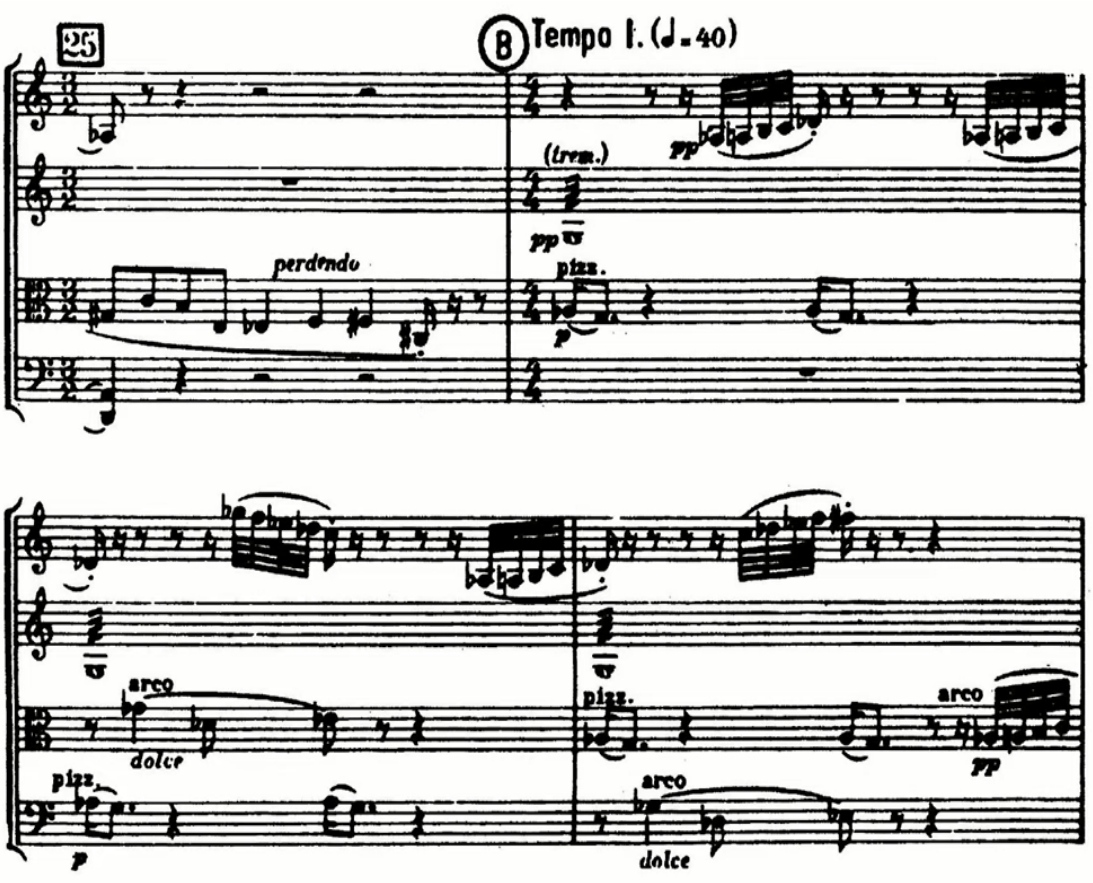

Figure 4.6 : String Quartet No.5, II. Adagio molto, mm. 25-28.

As it can be seen in Figure 4.7 below, the liquidation of the night music starts on the viola in measure 30, as the 5-note gesture is incorporated as the beginning of a melodic phrase. In measure 31, the first violin also joins the process by presenting an extension of the previous *dolce* phrase – and note the performance instruction on the score which says *'un poco express'*. In the following measure 32, the first violin plays a melodic phrase that terminates with a gestural imitation of the 5-note gestures. Moreover, the cello incorporates the 5-note gesture as the start of a melodic phrase and enters an imitative dialogue with the viola in the same measure 32. As we reach measure 32, the only remnant from the night music texture is the sustained G3 on the second violin. The night music completely fades away with a final slurred pizzicato on the notes (A♭3-G3) played by the second violin in measure 34.

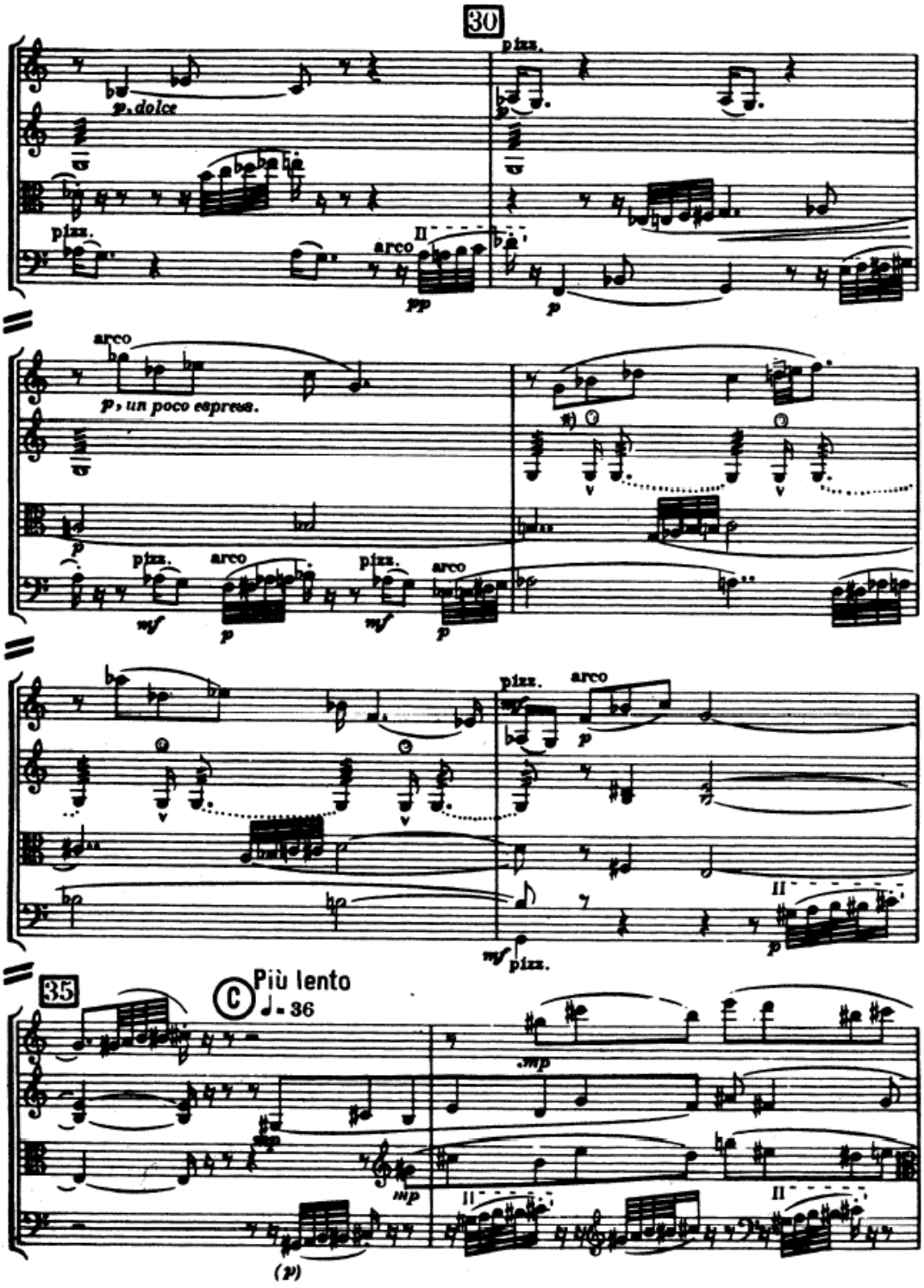

Figure 4.7 : String Quartet No.5, II. Adagio molto, mm. 29-36.

Bartók's (1976b) analysis of this movement stated that the A'-section recapitulated a condensed version of the previous introduction and the two subsections of the A-section, but in reverse order. The relevant measures of the movement are given below in Figure 4.8.

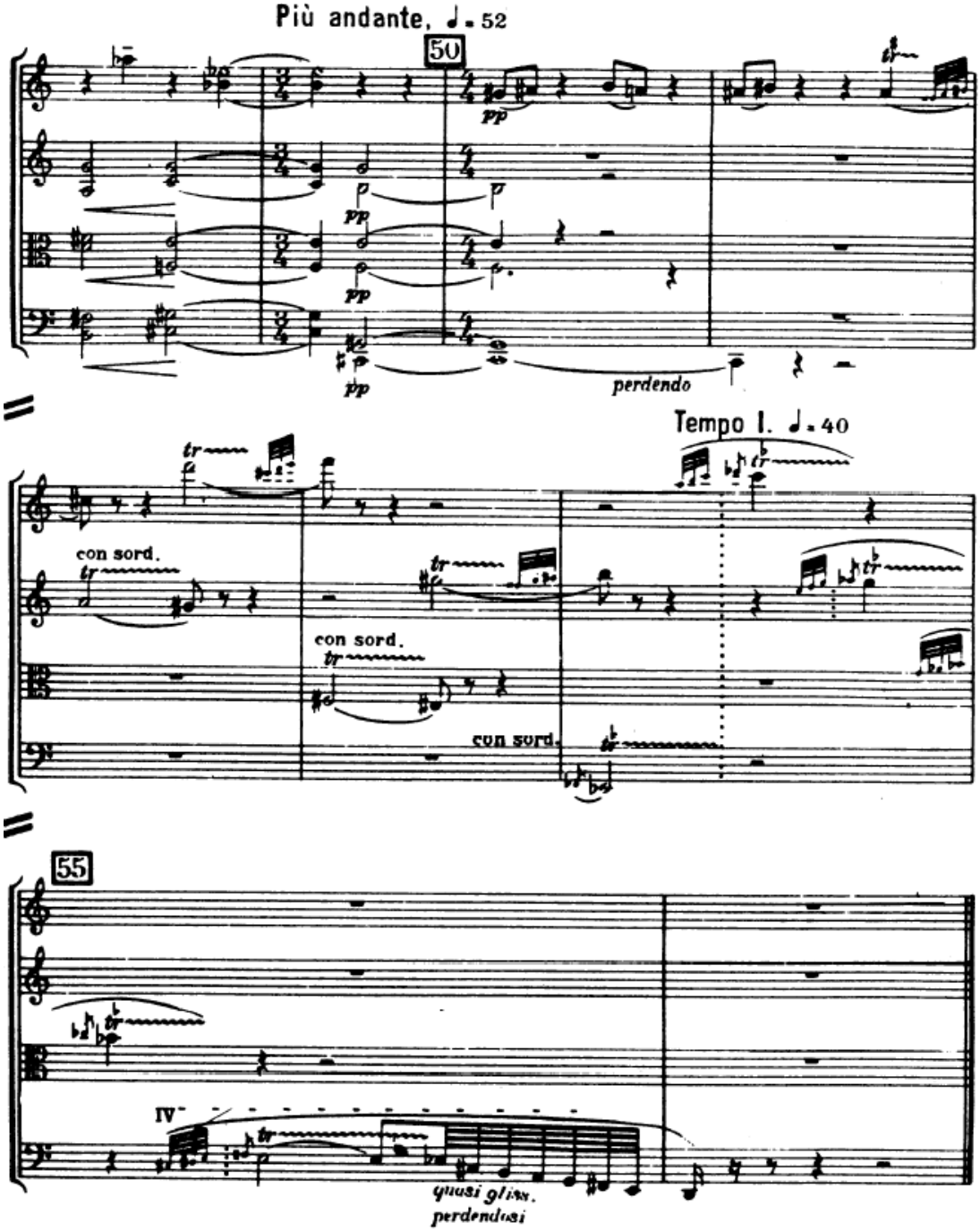

Figure 4.8 : String Quartet No.5, II. Adagio molto, mm. 48-56.

Measures 50 and 51 introduced the major-2nd gestures used earlier in measures 6-7, but without the registral displacements. From there on till the end, the music progresses with introducing the gestures found in the first measure in different registers. While presented in different registers, note that each new gesture in measures 51-55 introduces new pitch-classes by extending the pitch-classes covered by its forerunners. Such a presentation recalls the segregation of register and pitch space of the noise gestures in *The Night's Music*, implying multiple actants. Yet, the music in measures

50-55 retains certain characteristics of the night music style, but does not deliver a complete experience night music experience due to sparseness of musical texture and the lack of a perpetual sheet of sound.

4.2.2 Night music in the fourth movement of the String Quartet No.5

Bartók (1976b) states that the fourth movement is in G, while the second movement was in D (p. 414). Both slow movements showcase almost identical musical materials in the introduction sections. The introduction section of the 4th movement is given below in Figure 4.9, and as you can see this section almost replicates the introduction of the second movement (see Figure 4.5), except that the trills in the gestures are replaced by repeated notes, and everything is transposed to a perfect-4th up (or a perfect-5th down) to accommodate the change of key. Hence all the intervallic relationships between the gestures are preserved in the introductions of both of these movements.

As you can see in Figure 4.9, the introduction section of the fourth movement is played completely pizzicato, and also incorporates pizzicato glissando gestures in measures 5 and 6. As it was the case for the second movement, a series of perfect-4th intervals lead logically to G, establishing this note as the key center of the movement in measure 7.

The first subsection of the A-section starts in measure 7. Compared to its counterpart in the second movement, this section provides a more comprehensive account of night music due to the harmonic statis provided by the perpetual G3 notes provided by the viola. Bartók also uses a special sound effect here by alternating between the open and closed strings on the viola. As it was the case for the corresponding section in the quartet's second movement, this night music section uses gestures in major-2nd and augmented-4th intervals. As can be seen in measures 9-12, the major-2nd is used as gestures built over chromatically ascending dyads of pitch-classes, albeit distributed around various registers. The augmented-4th interval is, on the other hand, is utilized on the cello as chromatically descending pizzicato glissandos in measures 8-12.

The continuation of the movement is provided below in Figure 4.10. The night music is interrupted in measures 13-14 by expressive musical material (see the performance directives in measures 13 and 14). The night music resumes again in measure 15-18, but this time from the key of D – hence the sustained D4 notes in the first violin (measures 15 and 16) and the viola (measures 17 and 18). This night music episode in

measures 15-18 also showcase the major-2nd trills built on chromatically ascending pitch-classes that are distributed to different registers and instruments, and the descending augmented-4th intervals played pizzicato and glissando. This night music in interrupted again in measure 19 by the presentation of expressive musical material on the first violin and the viola.

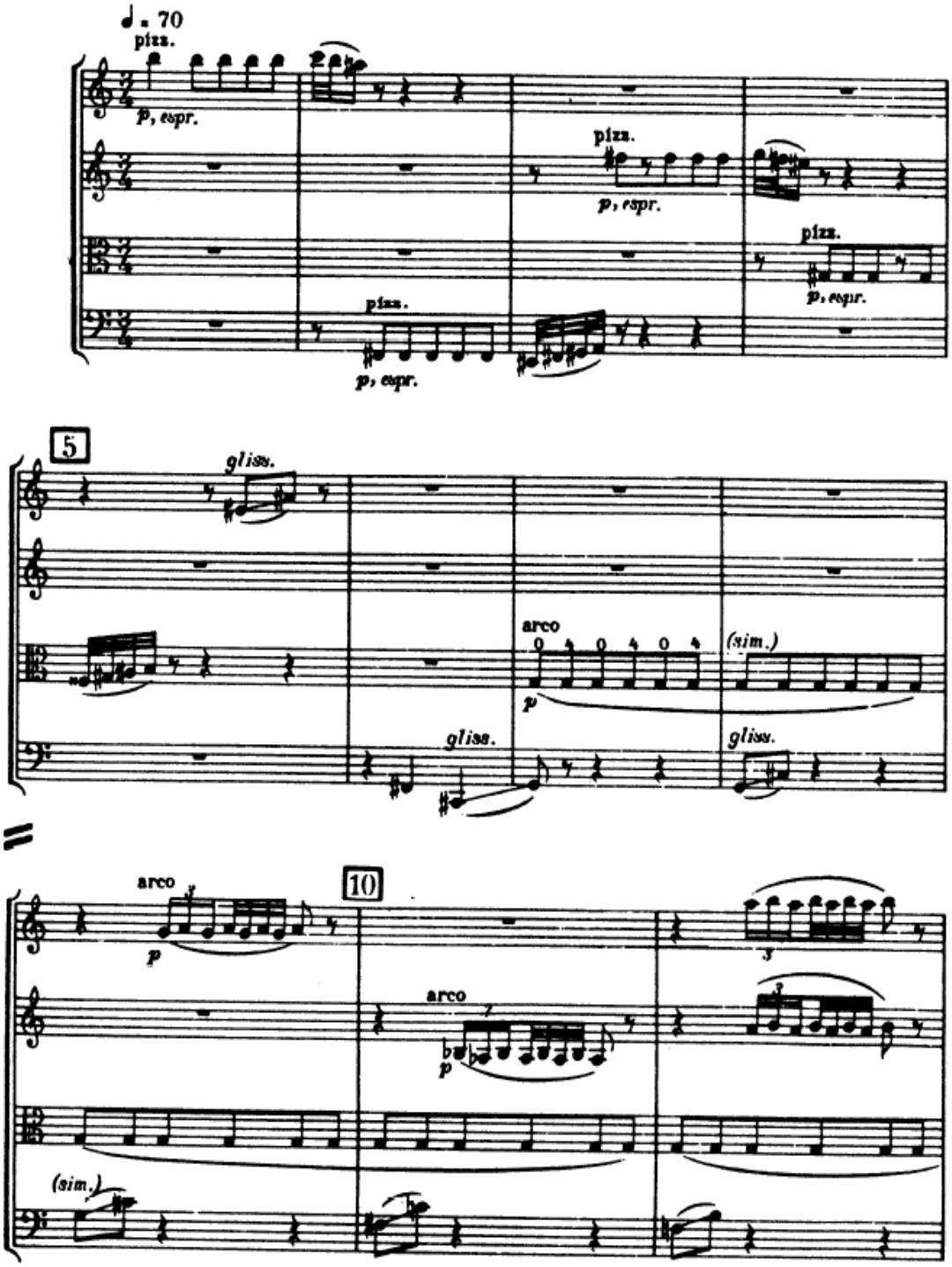

Figure 4.9 : String Quartet No.5, IV. Andante, mm. 1-11.

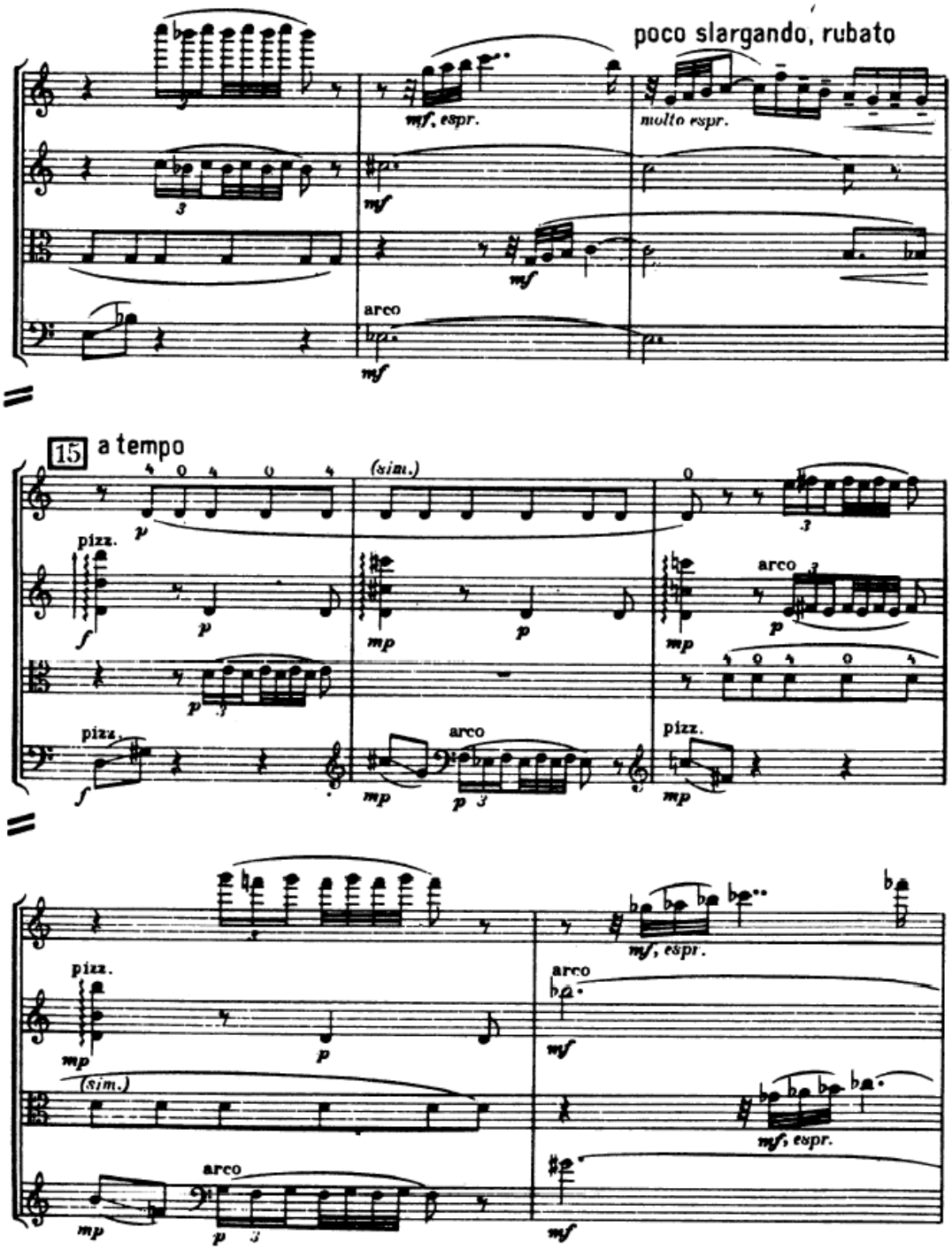

Figure 4.10 : String Quartet No.5, IV. Andante, mm. 12-19.

The following episode of the fourth movement that displays the characteristics of the night music style is found in the beginning of the B-section of the composition, starting from measure 42. As you can see in Figure 4.11 below, this episode showcases a lyrical cannon played by the first violin and the cello, which is accompanied *con sordino* by the musical textures and gestures presented by the second violin and the viola. The second violin always replicates a swiftly rising and falling actantial gesture using the

notes (D#-E-F#-G) in every four beats, while the viola presents two musical layers – a sheet of sound consisting of alternating (C#-D) sometimes as minor-2nd, sometimes as major-7th; and slow melody that uses sustained notes (C#-B#-B-B#). Note that the pitches used in these three accompaniment layers produce a closely-knit tonal cluster, while each layer highlights different pitches.

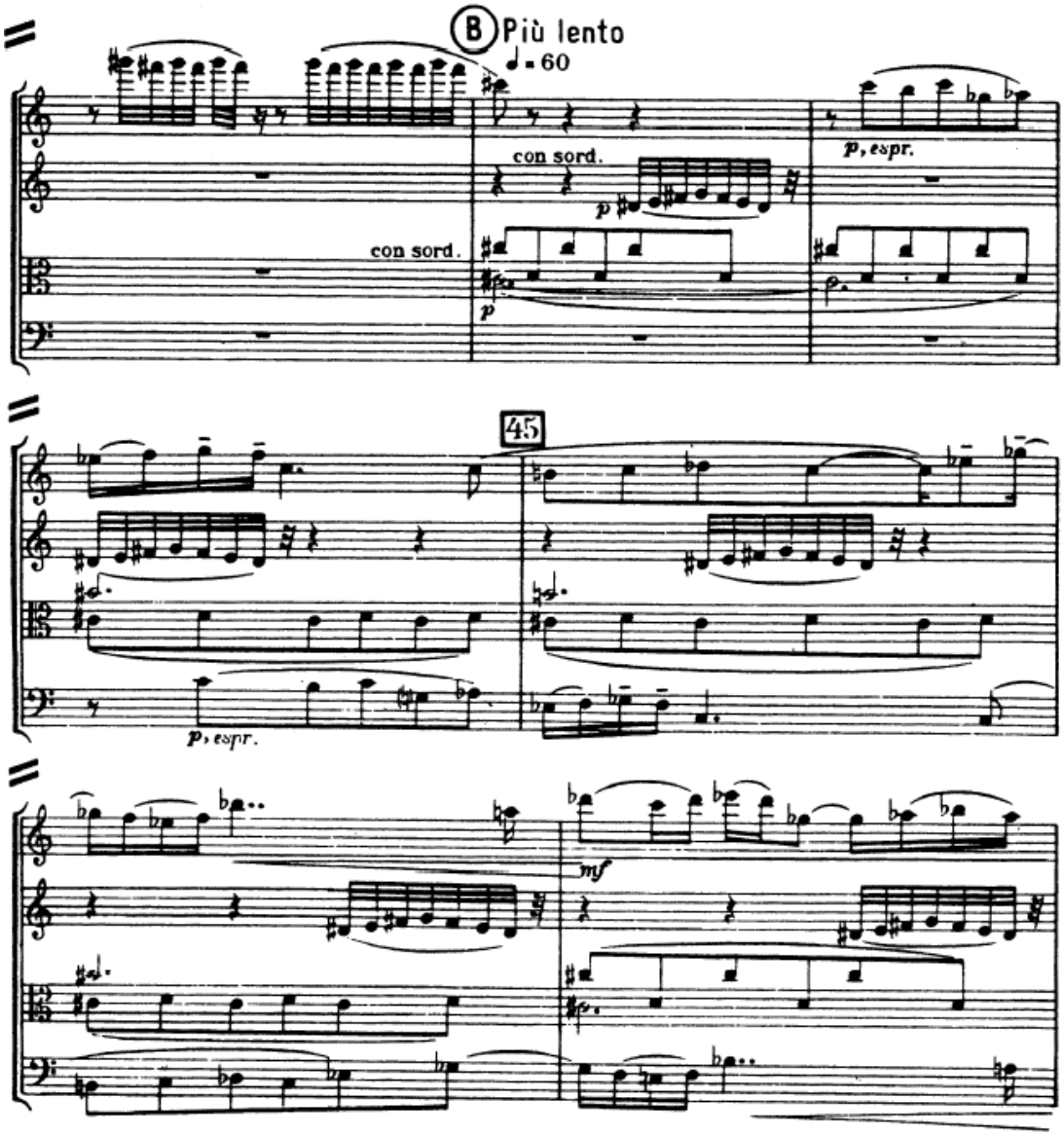

Figure 4.11 : String Quartet No.5, IV. Andante, mm. 41-47.

The multi-layered musical texture described above is sustained with minor modifications until measure 54, given below in Figure 4.12. As you can see in Figure 4.12, the background provided by the second violin and the viola halts at measure 54, and a completely new musical texture is initiated by the 16th-note runs played by the lower three voices.

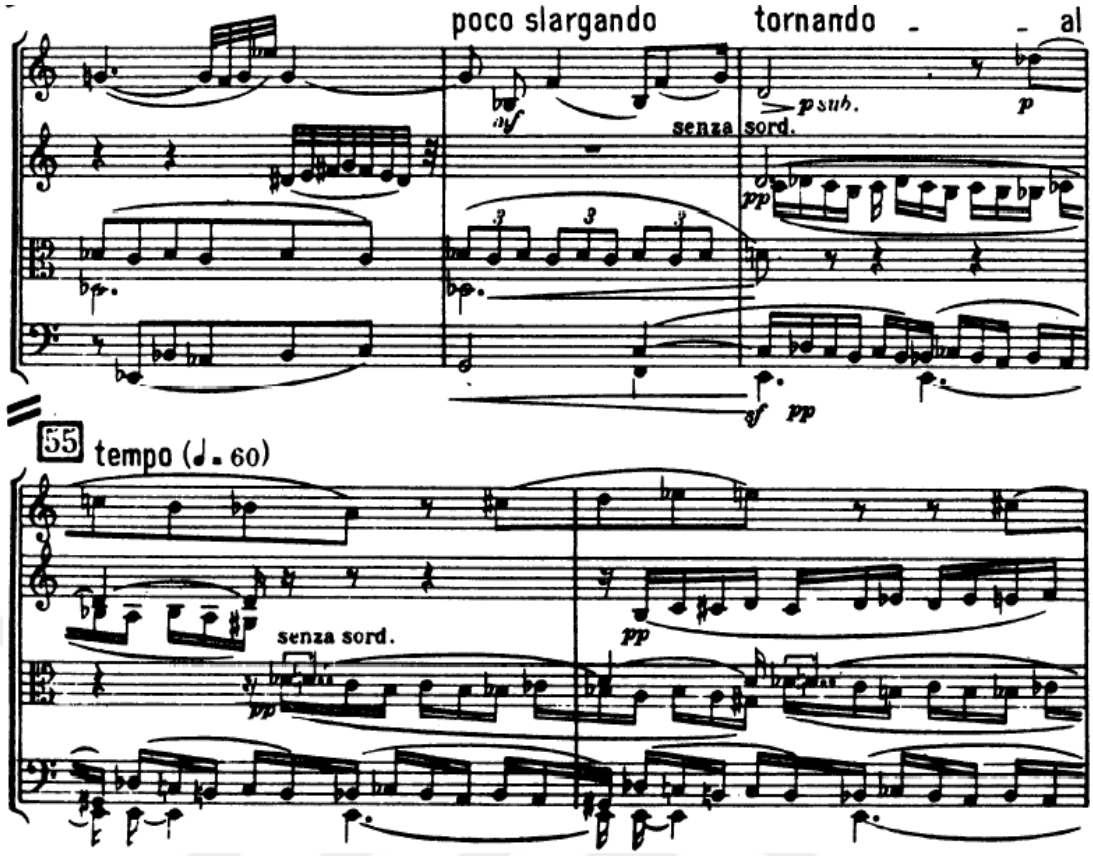

Figure 4.12 : String Quartet No.5, IV. Andante, mm. 52-56.

As it was the case for the second movement of this quartet, the A'-section of the fourth movement also brings back shorter versions of the introduction and the two subsections of the A-section, but in reverse order. During the recapitulation, the measures that correspond to the a1-subsection and the introduction are given below in Figure 4.13.

As you can see in Figure 4.13 below, the gesture played by the cello in measures 2-3 is condensed as a single minor-3rd interval (G-B♭) played by the viola in measures 90-94, which is carried upwards to different octaves. The first violin replies the viola by playing two different minor-3rd intervals – firstly (G#-B) in measures 94-95, and then the descending (D-B) in measures 97-98 – outlining the upper pitch-classes of the G major triad. The pizzicato glissandos are first replicated in measures 92 and 93 by the cello as glissandi of open-position minor triads. The bass chromatically moves upward from E (measure 93), to F (measure 95), to F# (measure 98), and finally to G in measure 100 through a series of pizzicato glissandi. The final chord in measure 100 outlines the notes (G-B♭-B-D), which is a symmetrically constructed union of two minor-3rd intervals that is a major third apart, namely (G-B♭) and (B-D).

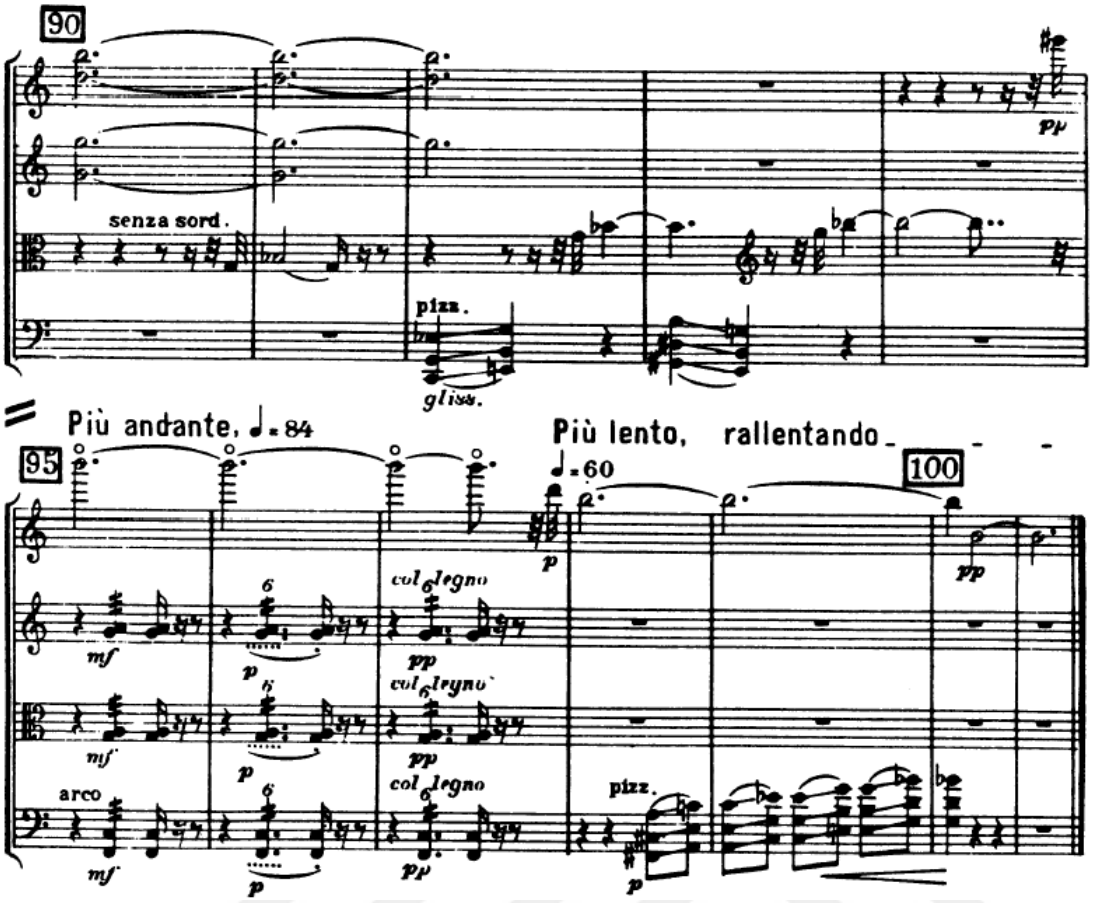

Figure 4.13 : String Quartet No.5, IV. Andante, mm. 90-101.

Just as it was the case for the ending of quartet's second movement, the final measures of the fourth movement, given above in Figure 4.13, do not fully represent Bartók's night music style – even though certain gestures utilized in the former night music episodes of the work (such as the pizzicato glissando) are also in these concluding measures. Nevertheless, these final measures still acquire some association with the night music style because of using these gestures, since these gestures remind former night music sections of the work.

The most comprehensive method for identifying Bartók's night music style was presented formerly by Dachenka (1987), and he argued for a strategy based on gestural archetypes for identifying night music sections in the compositions – and, I have argued before about the limitations of this strategy in the previous chapter. Danchenka's (1987) classification did label the music given in Figure 4.13 as 'night music' due to the existence of the glissandi in the cello. I would argue that the primary similarities with the music given in Figure 4.13 and *The Night's* Music are the sparseness, fragmented-ness, and the lack of expressive melodic declamation.

Danchenka’s (1987) method has the danger of labeling any piece with similar glissando gestures as ‘night music’. I believe that this is only possible if one experiences those gestures in a night music setting earlier in that piece, hence by associating those gestures with the style. I argue that multi-layered textures, actantial ingredients, multi-agency, and agential opposition present themselves better suited for describing Bartók's night music style.

5. NIGHT MUSIC AS MARKED FORMAL SECTIONS

Bartók showcased the night music style prominently in several slow movements of his large-scale works. The first instance of this approach was presented in the central slow movement of the String Quartet No.4 from 1928. The movement was designed in three parts, where the night music style determined the character of the middle section and the coda. Together with a series of important works leading up until the Third Piano Concerto of 1945, this approach turned into a significant compositional trend in Bartók's oeuvre, as demonstrated in the following list of works:

1. String Quartet No. 4: movement 3 (1928)
2. Piano Concerto No. 2: movement 2 (1931)
3. Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta: movement 3 (1936)
4. Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: movement 2 (1937)
5. Concerto for Orchestra: movement 3 (1943)
6. Piano Concerto No. 3: movement 2 (1945)

By utilizing the night music style, these movements presented marked actantial and agential oppositions between formal sections which, in certain movements, would even take the form of dialectic Romantic opposition like 'man vs. nature', stimulating rich narrative interpretations.

This chapter will present analyses of the night music sections of several key works listed above. The primary goal of the following analyses is to discover the organizational characteristics of these movements from the point of a virtual agential perception of the pieces. Moreover, it is hoped these examinations will shed light on different strategies utilized by Bartók throughout these works. In the following analyses, I plan to identify or clarify the following items for each of the examined work:

- actantial and agential musical elements, their interactions and semantic oppositions,

- the pitch collections and registers used by various actants and agents, and their harmonic interrelationships,
- how night music episodes begin and end, and the associated compositional strategies,
- formal functions taken-up by the night music sections,
- how night music identifiers are used in other sections of the compositions.

5.1 Night Music in the Third Movement of the String Quartet No.4

According to Bartók (1976c) the slow movement of the Fourth String Quartet "is the kernel of the work: the other movements are, as it were, arranged in layers around it" (p. 412). The following is Bartók's (1976c) description of the formal organization of the movement:

> **Movement III.**–Third movement is also in three parts:
> measures 1-34: Part One (melody in the cello);
> 34-54: Part Two (melody begins in the first violin, then in the second violin, finally in the second violin and viola);
> 55-63: Part Three (free recapitulation: the melody is inverted and divided between the cello and the first violin)
> 64-71: coda. (pp. 412-413)

'Part Two' of this movement is frequently identified as an instance of Bartók's night music style, and various commentators interpreted the actantial statements of the first violin in measures 34-40 is as a representation of "the nightingale", as a "bird-song", or as a "stylised chirruping of birds, frogs or crickets" (Harley, 1995, p. 332; Bayley, 2000, p. 377; Cooper, 2015, p. 231). That section from the slow movement of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet is provided below in Figure 5.1.

As it can be seen on measures 34-40 in Figure 5.1, the actantial 'bird-song' gestures on the first violin has only the notes E♭ and F, and both of these pitches are highly dissonant with respect to the sustained sheet of sound which consists of the non-diatonic chord (C-B♭-D-E-G-C#), suggesting a fractured and complimentary pitch organization similar to the pitch organization in *The Night's Music*. As a result, any melodic movement using E♭ and F does not induce a sense of tension or relaxation,

and they are heard as equally consonant notes implying a completely different harmonic plane. Hence, while this nightingale undulates between the notes E♭ and F in various octaves in measures 37-40, and the intensity of the music is controlled by the register, or the secondary parameters like the rate of events and volume.

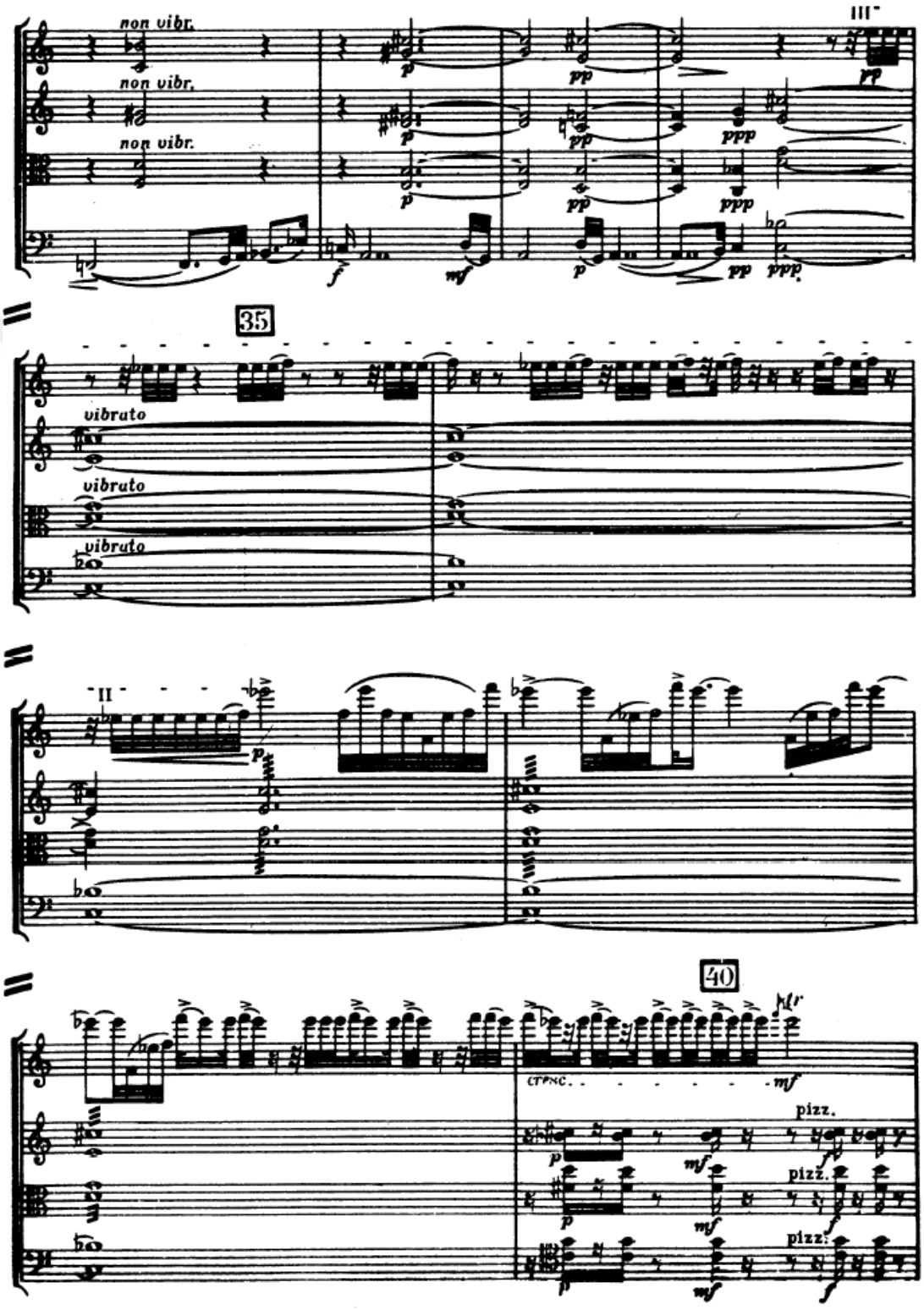

Figure 5.1 : String Quartet No.4, III. Non troppo lento, mm. 31-40.

The actantial bird-song of measures 34-40 creates a marked agential opposition with the preceding "rhapsodic *parlando rubato*" melody delivered in the measures 6-34 by the cello, which is identified by Bayley (2000) as an amalgamation of the "old-style Hungarian melodies" and "Romanian *hora lunga* ('long song')" (pp. 369-371). The opening measures of this melody are presented below in Figure 5.2.

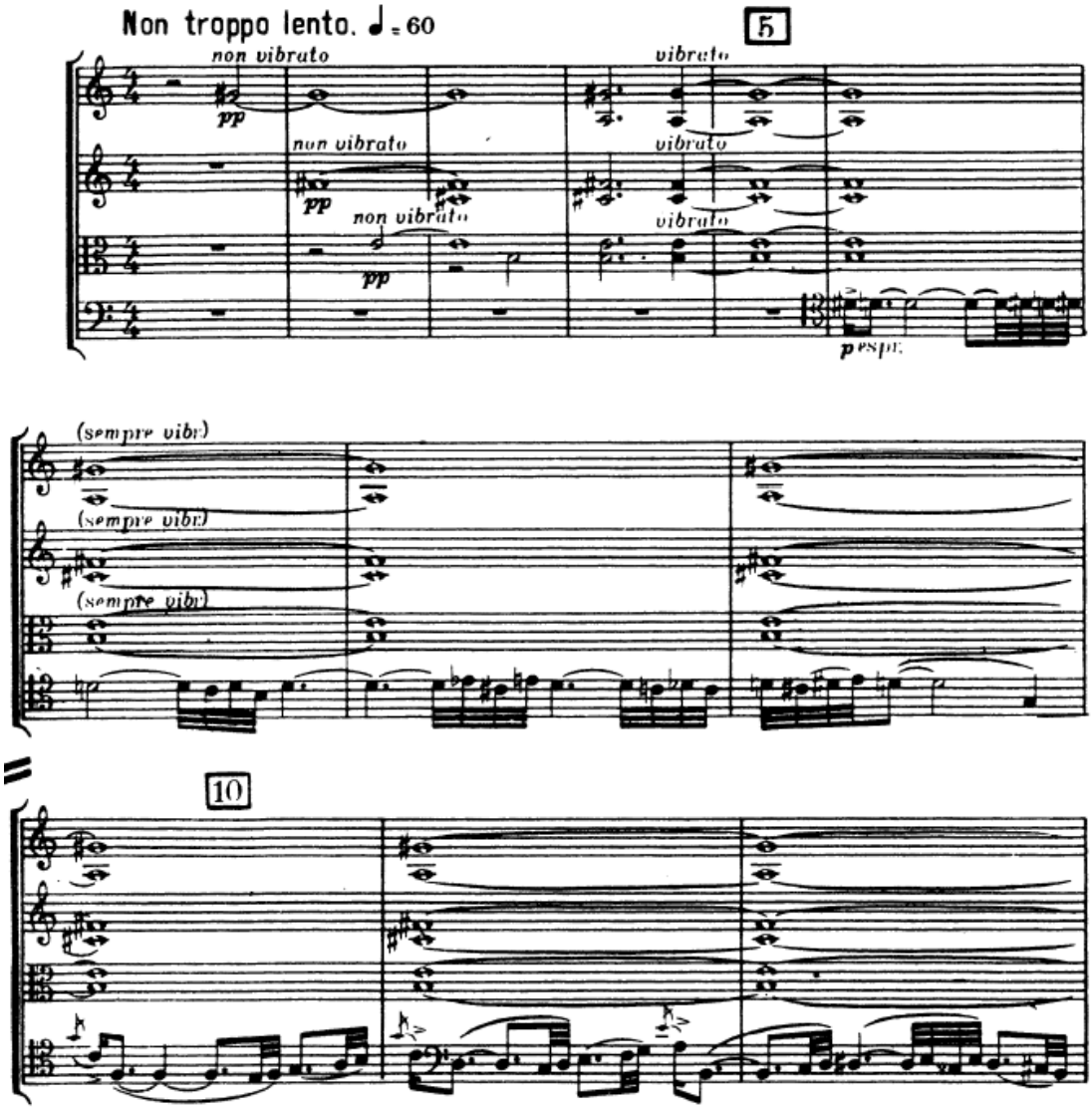

Figure 5.2 : String Quartet No.4, III. Non troppo lento, mm. 1-12.

The marked opposition between the agential and actantial statements in the movement is also enhanced by the registers of the instruments that are chosen to deliver these statements. The folk melody is given in the tenor range of the cello, whereas the actantial music in the night music section is given in the high registers of the violin.

These opposing agential and actantial musical statements also interact significantly differently with their harmonic environments. The cello melody in Figure 5.2 is

accompanied by the other three strings with a 6-note chord (A-B-C#-E-F#-G#) which can be complemented either with D or D# to form a diatonic scale. The cello melody starts in measure 6 with those two relatively consonant pitches: a sustained D4 which is ornamented by neighboring D#4. Therefore, the melody does not clash with the harmonic environment provided by the accompaniment. Even though the melody receives very chromatic and sometimes dissonant ornamentation, the initial consonant D4 is prolonged throughout measures 6-9. Except F3 and G3 in measures 9-10, the melody pauses only on notes (D-D#-E-B) during the first 12 measures of the movement given in Figure 5.2. Hence, while the cello melody in Figure 5.2 may stretch and sometimes contradict its harmonic environment, the melody eventually confirms the harmony, somewhat joining with the melody in the formation of a melos. On the other hand, the actantial first violin statements totally negate their harmonic environment by staying away from the underlying chord-tones during the night music section of the movement given in Figure 5.1, and therefore do not partake in a melos with the underlying harmonies.

The agential and actantial musical statements are introduced in different formal sections of the slow movement of the Fourth String Quartet, and this movement does not include a significant multi-layered section that brings out the marked semantic opposition between these statements. Nevertheless, later in 'Part Two', there is a short episode in measures 47-49 which presents both agential and actantial statements simultaneously, and that section of the work is given below in Figure 5.3, As it can be seen in Figure 5.3, the second violin presents a variation of the former folk melody played by the cello, prolonging the note C4 through some chromatic ornamentation, and the harmonic background in this section is provided by the cello and the first violin by sustaining the notes (G♭-A♭-B♭-D♭-E♭). Meanwhile, the viola plays short phrases in the background which look like actantial statements similar to the ones formerly played by the first violin. The statements of the viola bring out the notes (B-D-E-F) as chord tones, and completely clash with the harmony at the background.

It seems like Bartók strategically chose generally the most dissonant pitches in devising the actantial musical statements, in order to set them harmonically apart from the other music in their environment. The musical tension caused by the actantial statements played by the viola in measures 47-49 is later dissipated in measure 50, as the second violin and the viola start playing quick scalar figures in the key of C major

over the notes (G♭-A♭-B♭-D♭-E♭) provided by the first violin and the cello – creating a black key vs. white key bi-tonal harmonic environment.

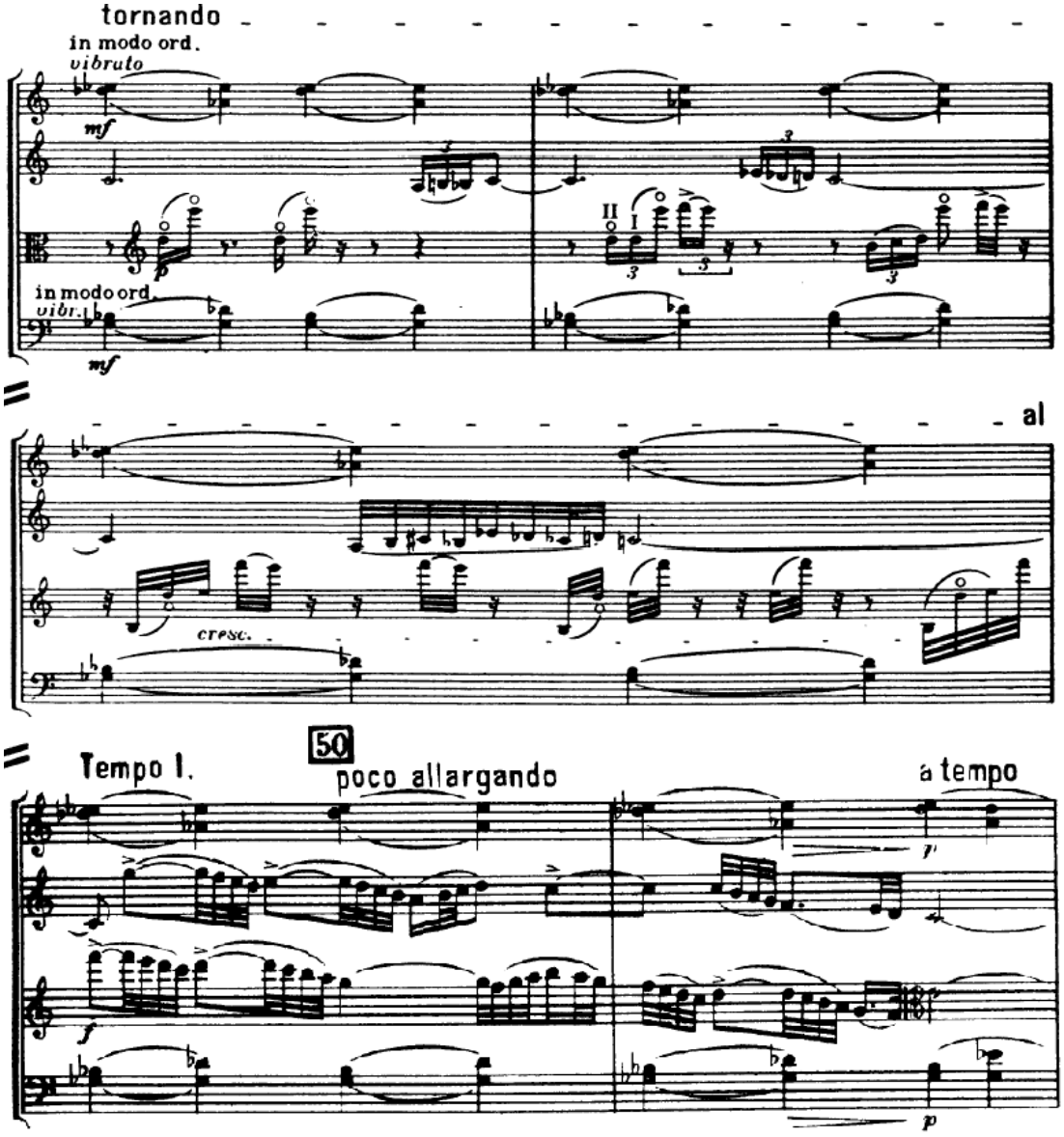

Figure 5.3 : String Quartet No.4, III. Non troppo lento, mm. 47-51.

The night music resumes fully during the coda in measures 64-71, and that is mostly presented below in Figure 5.4 which shows measures 65-71. In these measures, the second violin, the viola, and the cello play the 6-note diatonic chord (A-B-C#-E-F#-G#) that was used at the very beginning of the piece, but not as a tight cluster sandwiched within an octave, with more transparent open voicings. The cello moves up gradually in measures 65-70 from E2 to A3 together with embellishments that recall the folk melody at the beginning of the composition. Meanwhile the second violin and the viola also move upwards with gradual leaps, keeping the same pitch collection of

the chord in open voicings in the upper register. The first violin brings back the actantial bird-song of measures 34-40, initially starting with the dissonant notes (B♭-C), gradually moving up to (C-D) as we reach measure 68, and finally concluding with D in the final two measures. Note that the final note of the first violin (D) is diatonically plausible with respect to the underlying chord sequence, by complementing the diatonic scale implied by the harmony, producing a graceful sense of resolution. The underlying harmony evaporates from bottom to top in the final 2 measures, kind of mirroring the introduction of the chord in the first 2 measures of the composition, while the actantial D6 is hang up in the air almost like a celestial being.

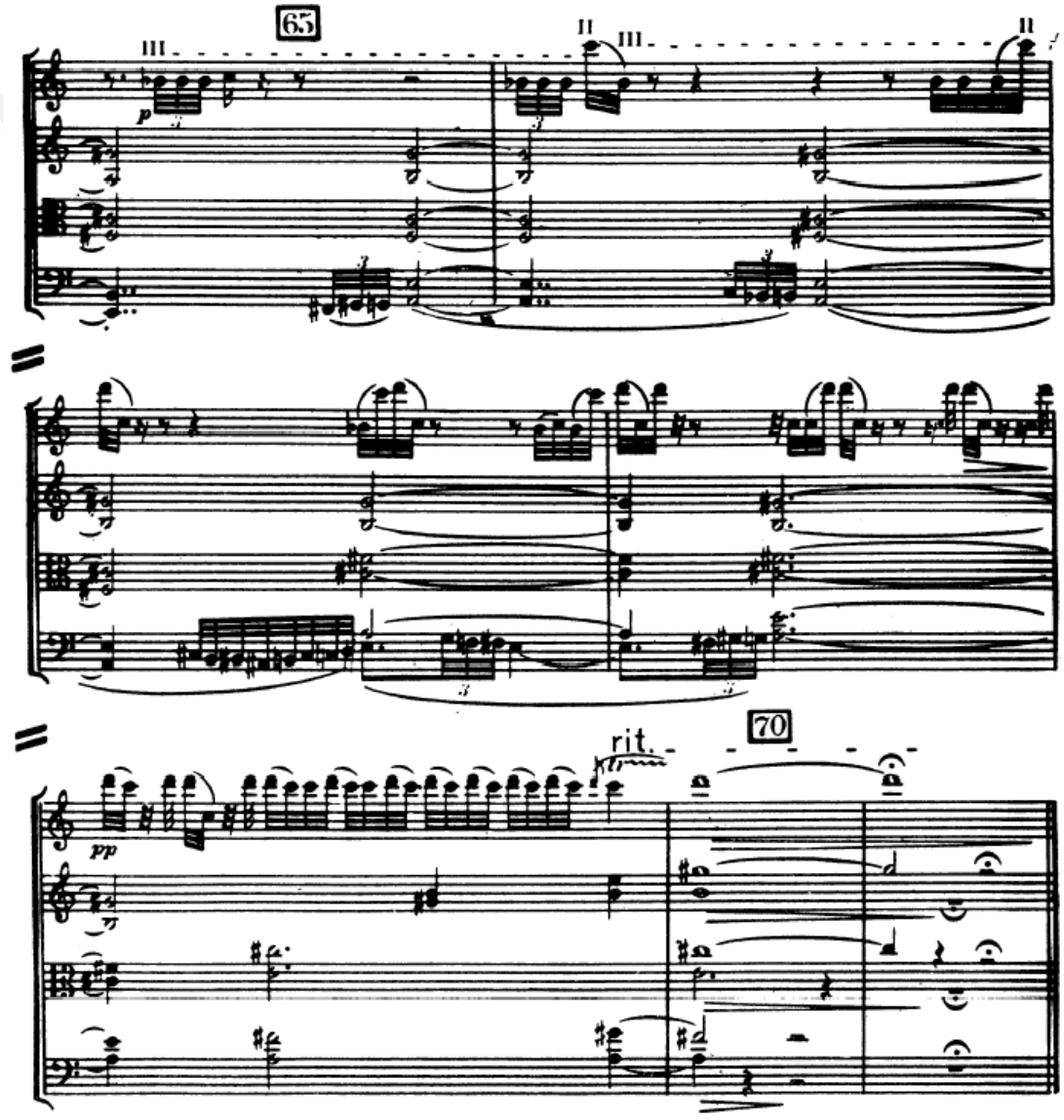

Figure 5.4 : String Quartet No.4, III. Non troppo lento, mm. 65-71.

As can be seen in the night music episodes shown above in Figures 51, 5.3, and 5.4, the actantial gestures in this movement are organized by using the pitch-classes that

are outside of the tonal environment implied by other musical statements occurring at the same time. Such a partitioning of the pitch space between different musical layers with opposing musical agencies was also observed in the night music sections of the Fifth String Quartet. This strategy enhances the agential/actantial opposition provided by the composition, and facilitates the alienization of the actantial musical statements by setting them harmonically apart from the normal agential expressions.

This movement primarily displayed the agential/actantial opposition of the night music style in both different formal sections, and very briefly at the same section with a multi-layered interlude in measures 47-49 in 'Part Two'. Ending with a coda that utilizes the night music style confirms Caplin's (2005) observation that the topics associated with harmonic steadiness are better suited for ending or post-cadential functions: and therefore, if we view Bartók's night music style as a topic, then it would not come as a surprise to have the night music style frequently associated with the formal functions belonging to the *ending* category.

Disagreeing with Bartók's (1976c) simple three-part analysis of the movement, Bayley (2000) proposes a sonata-like formal organization for the slow movement of the fourth quartet (p. 363). Her analysis labels 'part two', which introduced the night music elements, as the development section of the movement, not only due to the harmonic instability of this section, but also due to the increased tension by secondary parameters like dynamics, timbre, and the rate of activity. Bayley (2000) observes that the non-vibrato accompaniment in measure 34 is aroused first to a vibrato in measure 35, and then to tremolando in measure 37, "and then, for the first time, to a rhythmic figuration at the positional change of chord in bar 40 that incorporates an agitated pizzicato" (p. 368). In the same measures, the first violin also contributes to the heightened tension by the gradual increase in dynamics and frequent rests "which now give added emphasis to changes in rhythm and accentuation" (Bayley, 2000, p. 377).

If we agree with Bayley's developmental interpretation of the night music section, then the developmental use of the night music in this movement can be interpreted as a case of thematic markedness since actantial expressions are not typical development materials due to their immutability. In this case the thematic markedness works in tandem with the marked agential/actantial opposition in the movement, enhancing the feeling of unexpectedness and otherworldliness induced by the night music.

5.2 Night Music in the Second Movement of the Piano Concerto No.2

Bartók's Second Piano Concerto was completed in 1931, and the work was organized with an arch form similar to the Fourth and Fifth String Quartets. The composer described the second movement of the concerto as "a scherzo within the frame of an adagio or, if you prefer, an adagio containing a scherzo as its nucleus" (Bartók, 1976d, p. 422).

The adagio parts of the movement include alternating episodes devoted to either strings or duets of piano and timpani. The episodes for the strings present a quiet and gentle chorale played by the muted strings that displays harmonies obtained by superimposed fifths. On the other hand, piano and timpani duets feature dramatic unison melodies played by the piano, which are accompanied by the timpani with rolls and glissandi. While both group of instruments present contrasting musical materials, textures, and sonorities, this kind of formal organization recall the organization of the slow movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, as well as the fourth movement of Bartók's *Dance Suite, Sz. 77* from 1923 – two works that were discussed earlier as potential precursors of Bartók's night music style. Similar to the works mentioned above, the contrasting episodes in Bartók's adagio already portray different virtual musical agents. The agential opposition between these episodes is also strengthened by the virtuoso vs. the orchestra duality inherent in the concerto genre, as well as the contrasting topical associations portrayed by the groups of instruments (religious chorale in harmony vs the individualistic folk melody in unison).

The combination of piano and timpani is a very marked Bartókian sonority which would also be explored in Bartók's later pieces. During the adagio sections of this movement, the timpani heightens the dramatic expression brought forward by the piano. Therefore, instead of positing opposing agencies, it would be better to think of the piano and the timpani as a pair operating in tandem as a harmonious melos. Nevertheless, there are certain actantial gestures produced by the piano in the duet episodes, and the first of those episodes takes place in measures 23-29 which is reproduced below in Figure 5.5.

As you can see below in Figure 5.5 starting from measure 27, the piano introduces a series of grace-notes which at first look like vocal ornamentations. Those grace-notes later forks into another musical layer that accompanies the melody form the above by

prolonging the pitch E like an inverted pedal in measures 28-29. By the end of measure 29, the descending minor-3rd grace-note gesture (G-E) is established as an actantial motto. Note also that the melody concludes with F# in measure 29, producing dissonant intervals with both of the pitches in the grace-note gesture.

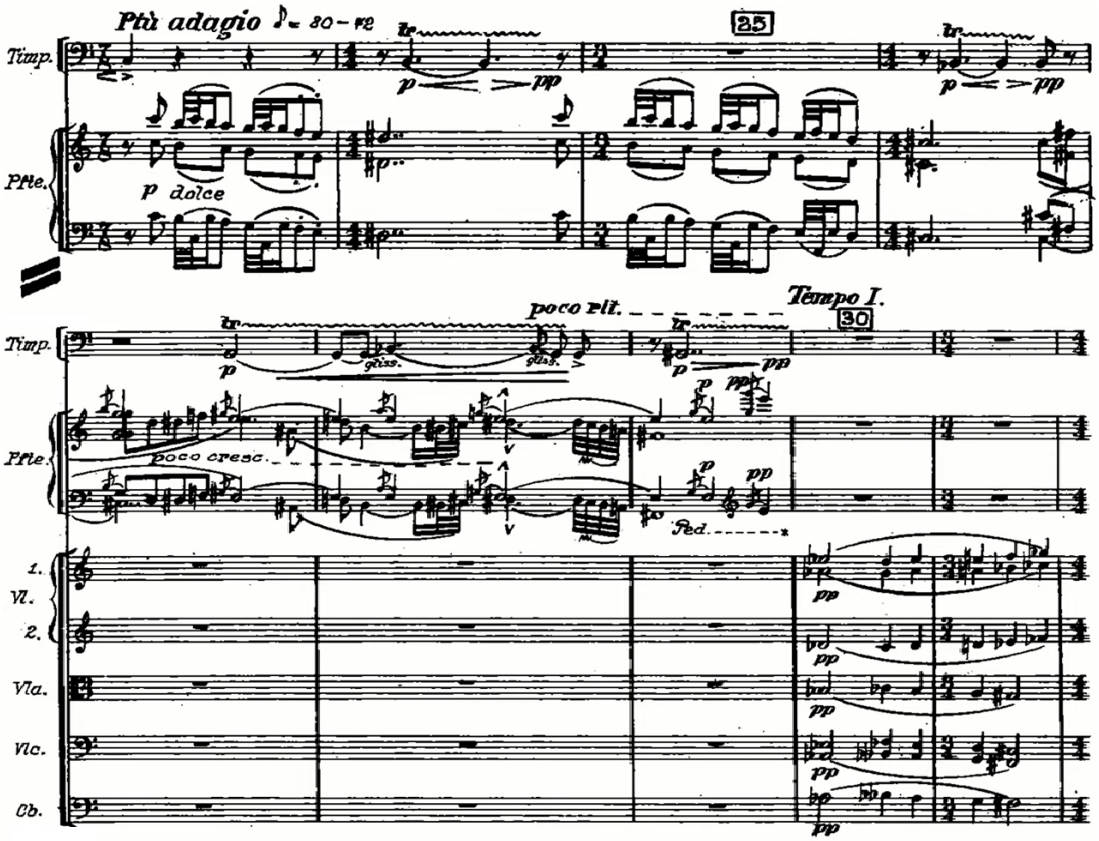

Figure 5.5 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/1. Adagio, mm. 23-31.

The second episode with the piano and timpani takes place in measure 39-53, and the first 4 measures of this episode is given below in Figure 5.6. As you can see in Figure 5.6, the actantial grace-note gesture (G-E) is replicated verbatim in measures 40 and 42. Note that both of the unison phrases given in Figure 5.6 start with E♭ which is also played again together with the final notes of the both phrases. These (E♭)s also clash with the (E)s that are sustained at the end ends of the grace-note gestures. Hence dissonant utilization of the actantial grace-note gestures in both of these duet episodes exemplify another case for the incongruity between the pitch-classes that are utilized by actantial and agential musical statements in Bartók's night music.

The central section of the second movement, which was described as a 'scherzo' by Bartók (1976d), commences after the brief third duet episode in measures 62-63. This *presto* section utilizes the night music style in two different episodes, and these are

located in measures 85-120 and 152-165 of the *presto* section – note that the measures numbers restart from 1 at the start of the central section.

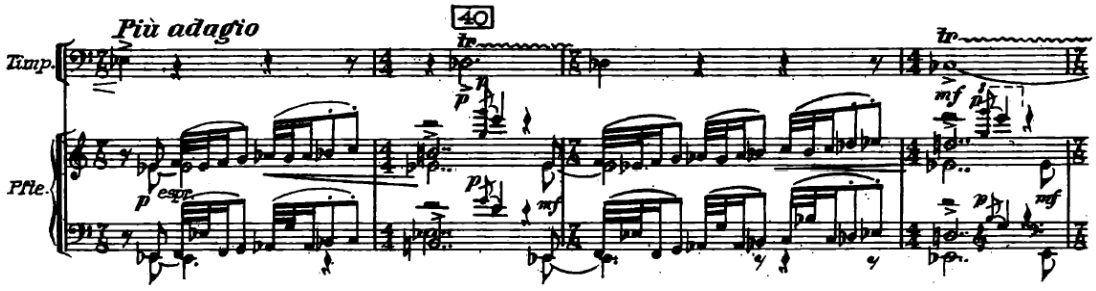

Figure 5.6 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/1. Adagio, mm. 39-42.

The first night music episode of the *presto* section starts in measure 85, and the first nine measures of this episode is presented below in Figure 5.7.

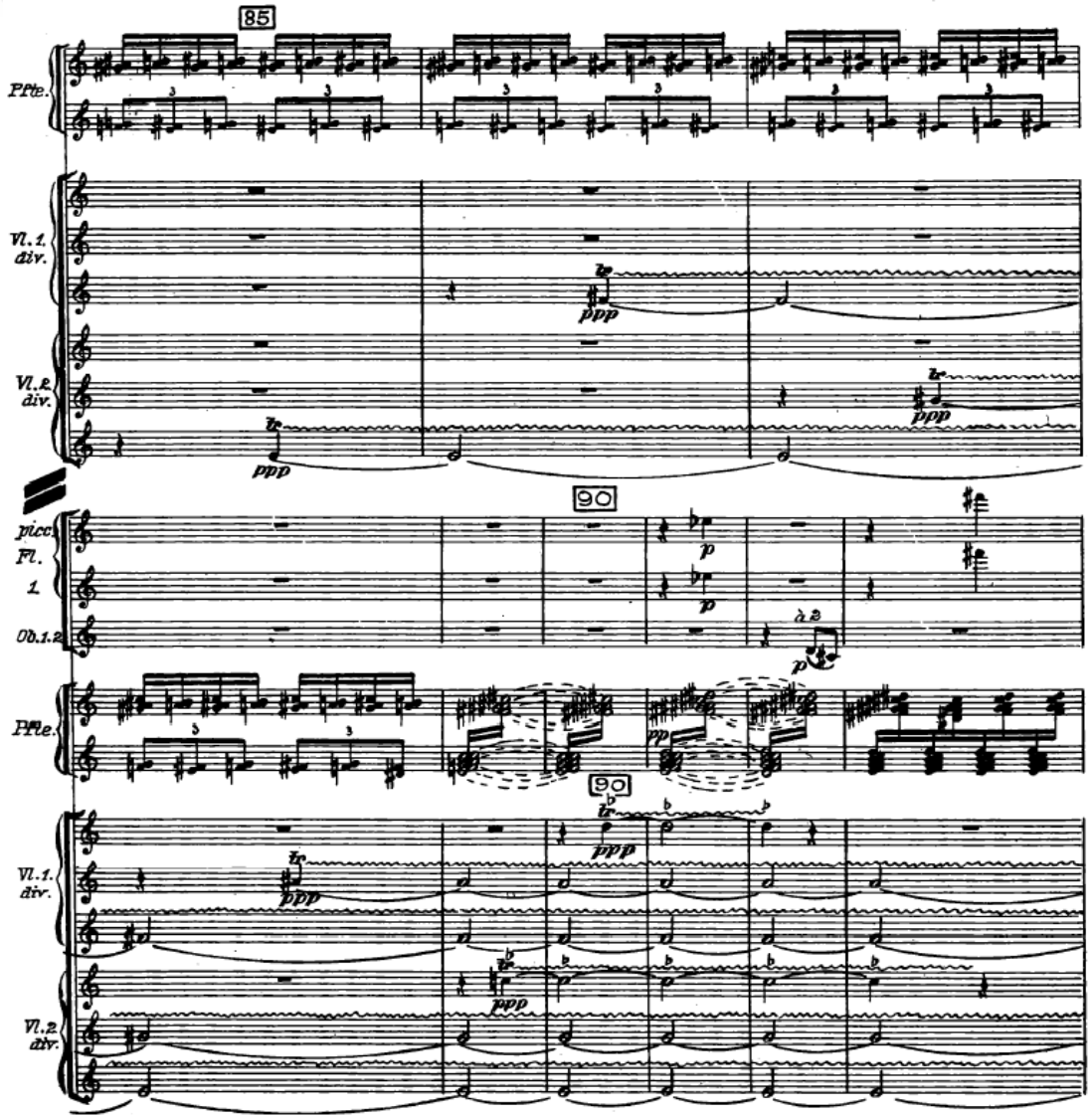

Figure 5.7 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/2. Presto, mm. 85-93.

The first night music episode of the presto section starts in measure 85 following a solo piano episode of 20 measures. The piano plays around compact cells that bring out the (0123) or X set class during that solo piano episode, and finally settles on a sheet of sound which brings (E-F#-F-G) on the left-hand and (G#-A#-A-B) on the right-hand in measure 85, as it is shown in Figure 5.7 above. The violins gradually augment the sheet of sound in measures 85-90 by introducing chromatic trills each starting from a note of the whole tone scale (E-F#-G#-A#-C-D), and hence the sheet of sound is completely saturated by measure 90. Piano starts playing white-key and black-key clusters starting from measure 89, and the night music gestures gradually emerge on this saturated background.

Just as it was the case for the previous examples, the actantial gestures partake in different areas of the chromatic collection. As you can see in Figure 5.7, measures 91-93 introduce three gestures that produce (E♭-F#) on the flutes and (D-C#) on the oboes. Later on, in measure 94, bassoons and oboes introduce C and B as shown in Figure 5.8. (C-B) is repeated three times in the clarinets in measures 95 and 96 together with flutes and oboe playing (A-B♭) in a rhythmic gesture that recalls earlier the grace-note gestures in the adagio section. The same gesture is repeated on measure 96 Figure 5.8 by reproducing the complete (0123) cell as (A-A#-B-C). Another actantial gesture consisting of repeated (G#)s is introduced by the French horn in measure 95.

The first night music episode continues until measure 120, together with gradual transformations on the sheet of sound and introduction of several other actantial gestures in a multi-layered texture. The final two measures of this episode are presented below in Figure 5.9. By that time the sheet of sound is reduced to quick runs on white and black keys on the piano, while the French horns are collectively sustaining the notes (G-A♭-A). The grace-note gesture with the descending minor-3rd was already reintroduced as (A-F#) in the woodwinds, and it is also repeated in measures 119-120 in Figure 5.9. This gesture is used as motive in descending sequential motion 121-123, together with a chromatically rising bass-line played by the double-basses and the cellos, signaling the end of the night music section.

The second night music episode in the presto section of the movement takes place in measures 152-165, and five measures of this episode is reproduced below in Figure 5.10. This section involves a thinner sheet of sound played by the piano as (D-D#-E-F-F#-A). Over this sheet of sound, the clarinets produce the earlier (0123) gesture as

(A-B♭-B-C) in measure 159. The same gesture is replicated by the oboes in measure 160 as (D-D#-E-F), while at the same time the trumpets play a descending gesture with the triplet rhythm over the notes (D♭-C-B), complementing the pitches used by the oboes. The trumpet gestures and the sheet of sound provided by the piano continue until measure 165. Finally, this night music episode ends in measure 166 by the introduction of new thematic material on the piano.

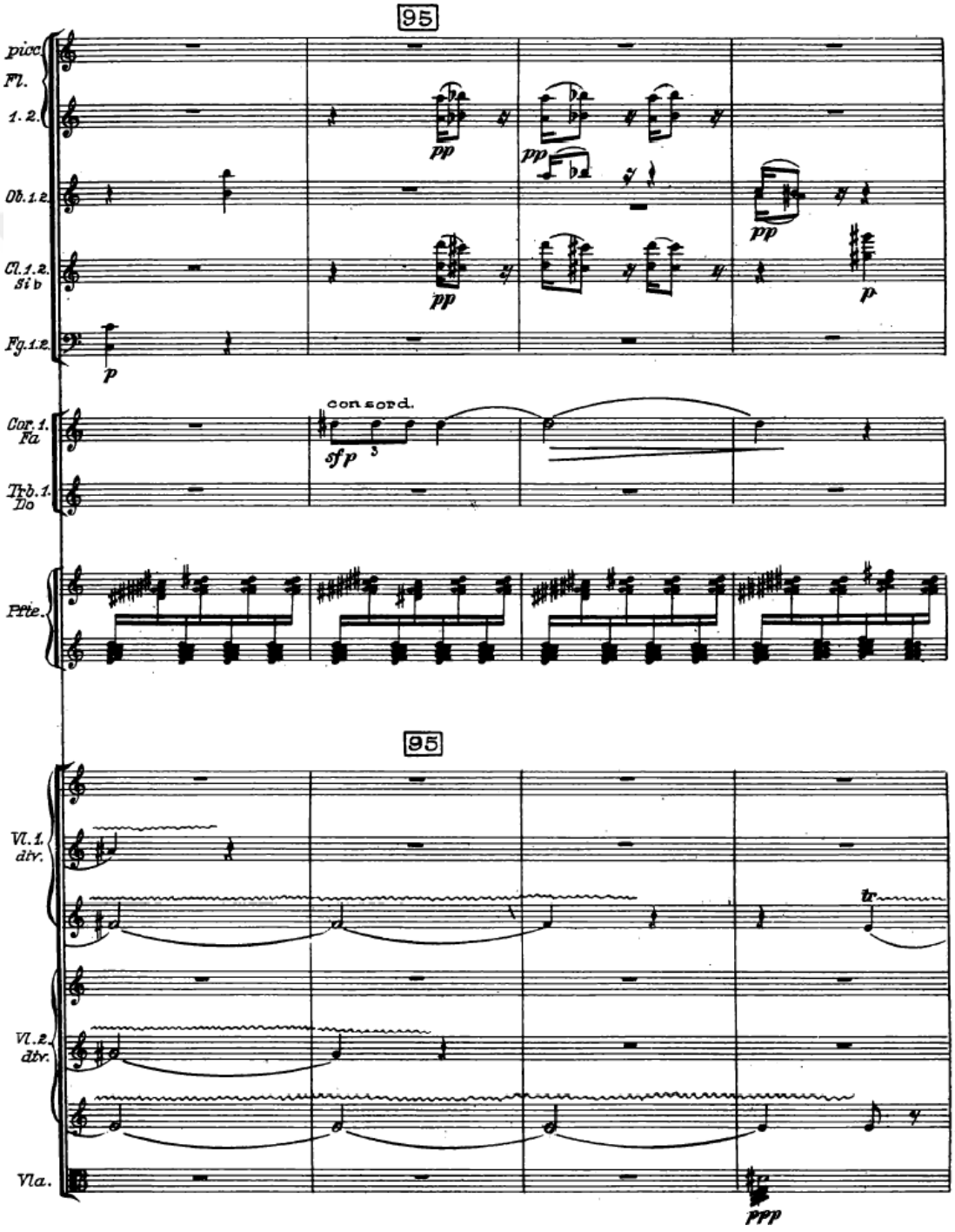

Figure 5.8 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/2. Presto, mm. 94-97.

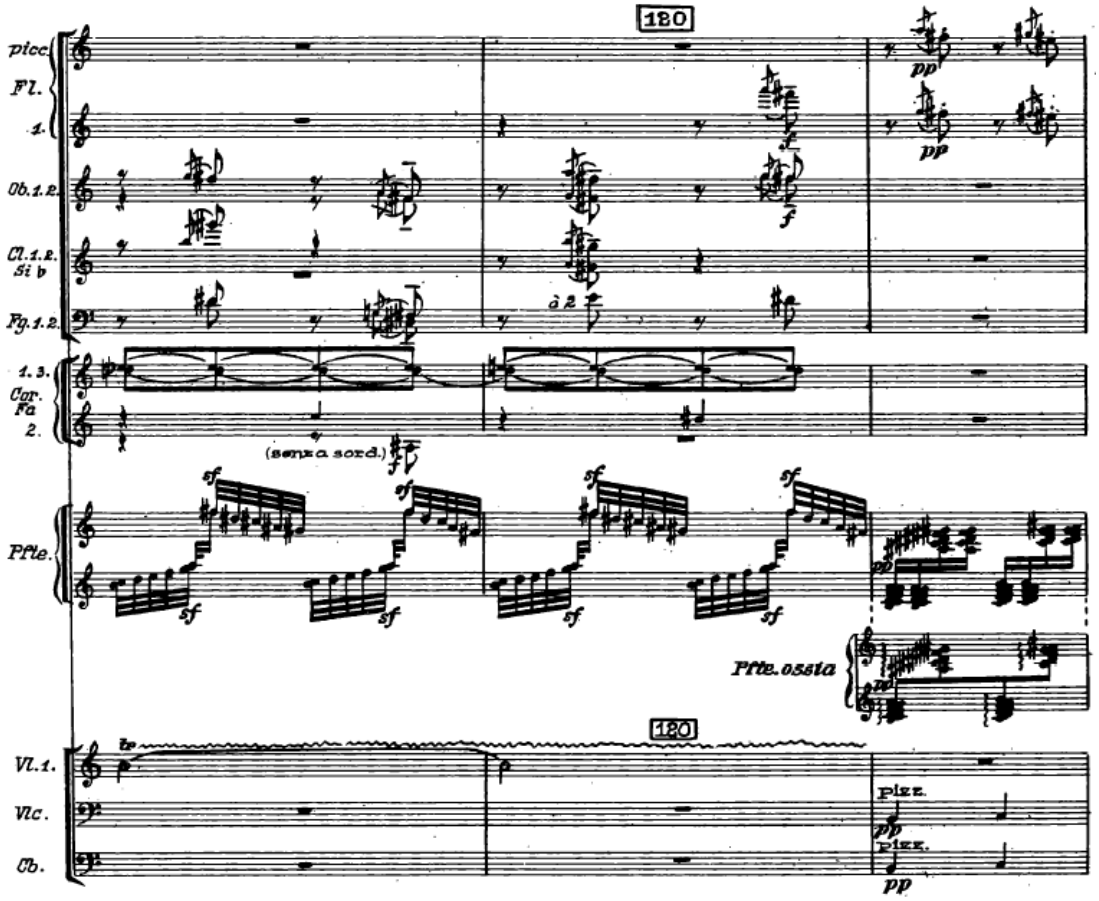

Figure 5.9 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/2. Presto, mm. 119-121.

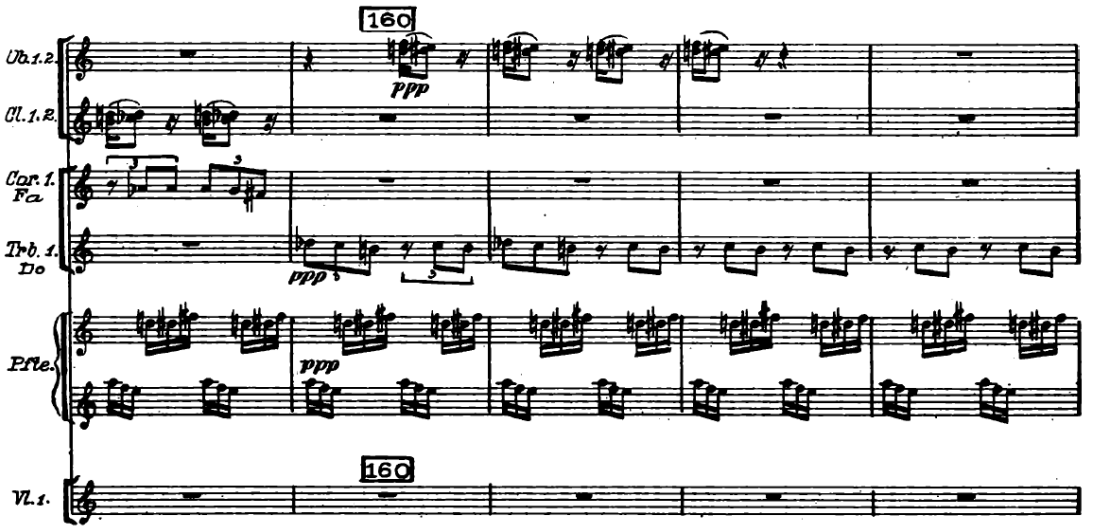

Figure 5.10 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/2. Presto, mm. 159-163.

Both of the night music episodes in the *presto section* of this movement is concludes with introducing thematic motives and replacing the actantial background provided by the sheets of sound with more routine accompaniments that do not imply perpetually static characteristics.

The final adagio section of the movement brings back the agential opposition showcased between the strings and the duet of the piano and the timpani. The actantial grace-note gesture with the descending minor-3rd is brought back in measure 16 of the final adagio section, this time with the pitches (E♭-C) as shown below in Figure 5.11. Note that the sustained C in the gesture is a poignantly dissonant with the note B sustained by the timpani, the cellos, and the double-basses.

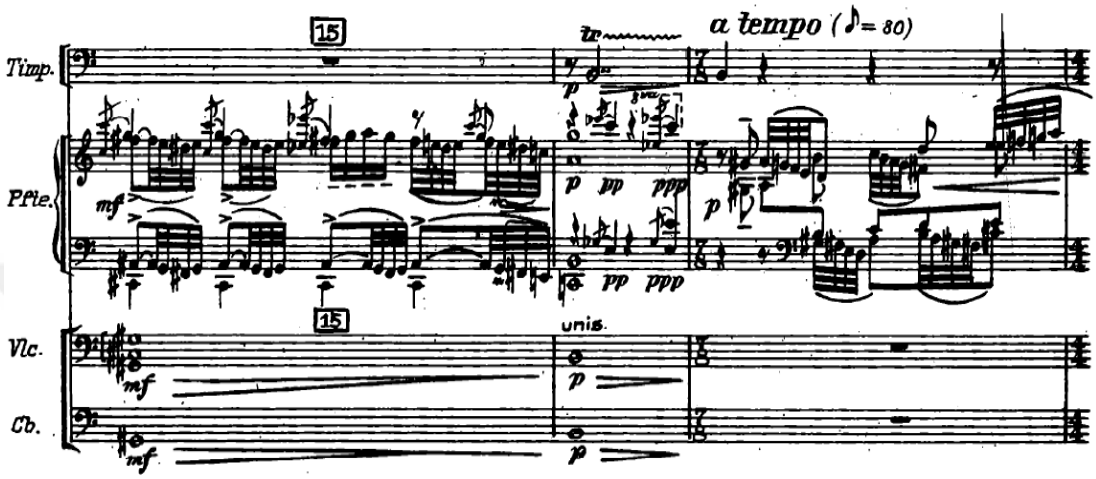

Figure 5.11 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/3. Adagio, mm. 15-17.

Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 5.12, this actantial (E♭-C) gesture later achieves agential characteristics as it is incorporated thematically as the endings of the phrases in measures 25 and 27 of the final adagio section.

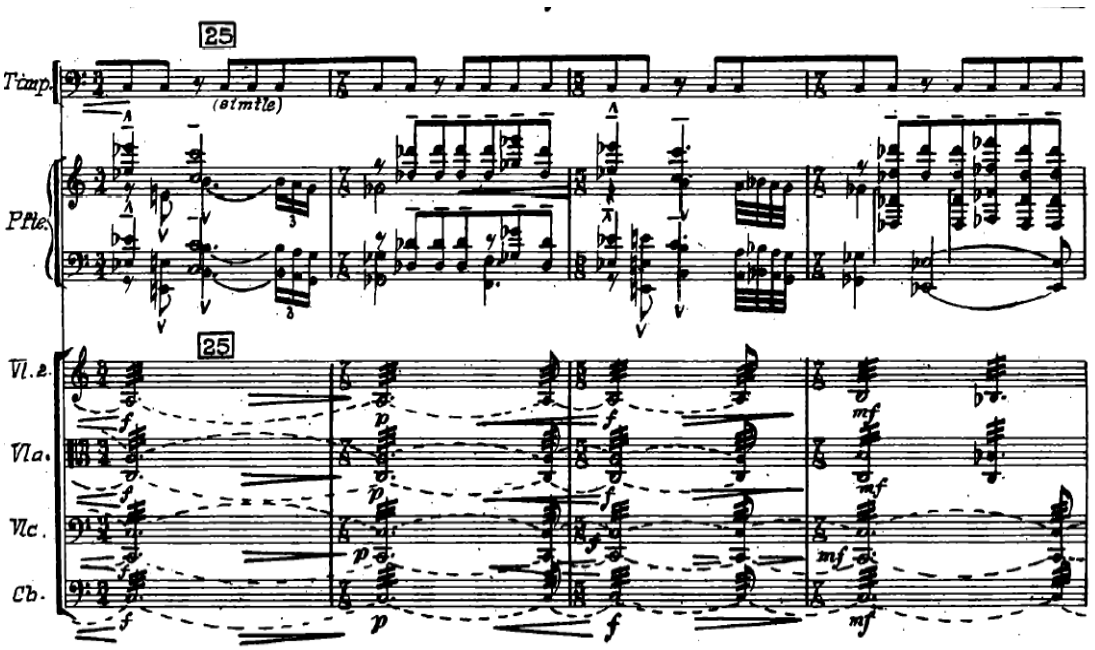

Figure 5.12 : Piano Concerto No.2, II/3. Adagio, mm. 25-28.

5.3 Night Music in the Third Movement of Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta

Bartók (1976e) described the formal organization of the third movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* as a (A B C B A) symmetrical form where each section is bridged by a part of the fugue theme from the first movement of the work (p. 416). Two actantial gestures that will persist throughout the movement are introduced in the first four measures of the movement that are replicated below in Figure 5.13. The first of these gestures is a slowly accelerating and decelerating F5 repeated by the xylophone, whereas the second one is the timpani glissando. Extremities of register and timbre of these gestures immediately indicate two distinct actantial energies as their sources. Moreover, the isolated presentation of these gestures at the very start of the composition recalls the introduction of *The Night's Music*, and enable these gestures to be encoded as signature properties that will be identified throughout the movement.

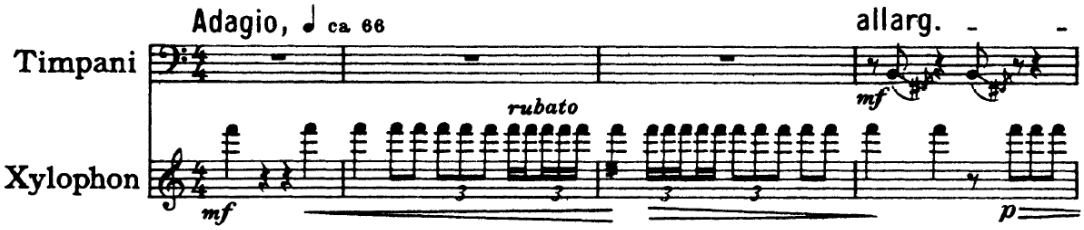

Figure 5.13 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mm. 1-4.

Throughout the A-section of the composition, these two gestures are used sparingly as accompaniments to a folk-like melody presented with the strings which is identified by Bayley as being "reminiscent of that in the third movement of the Fourth Quartet" (Bayley, 2001, p. 171).

Bartók identified the tonal center of the movement as F#, and Antokoletz (1984) observed several interesting tonal implications of the pitch-classes utilized by the actantial gestures (p. 184). The following Figure 5.14 shows both of these gestures in action. As you can see in measures 8-10 in Figure 5.14, double-basses and cellos are sustaining the perpetually the augmented-4th interval of (C-F#), while the xylophone and the timpani are introducing the symmetrically related pair of pitch-classes (F-B). Together the union of these dyads form the symmetrical (F-F#-B-C) tetrachord

belonging to the (0167) set class known as the Z-cell (Antokoletz, 1984, p. 71), which will show up in other instances and significantly affect the sonority of the movement.

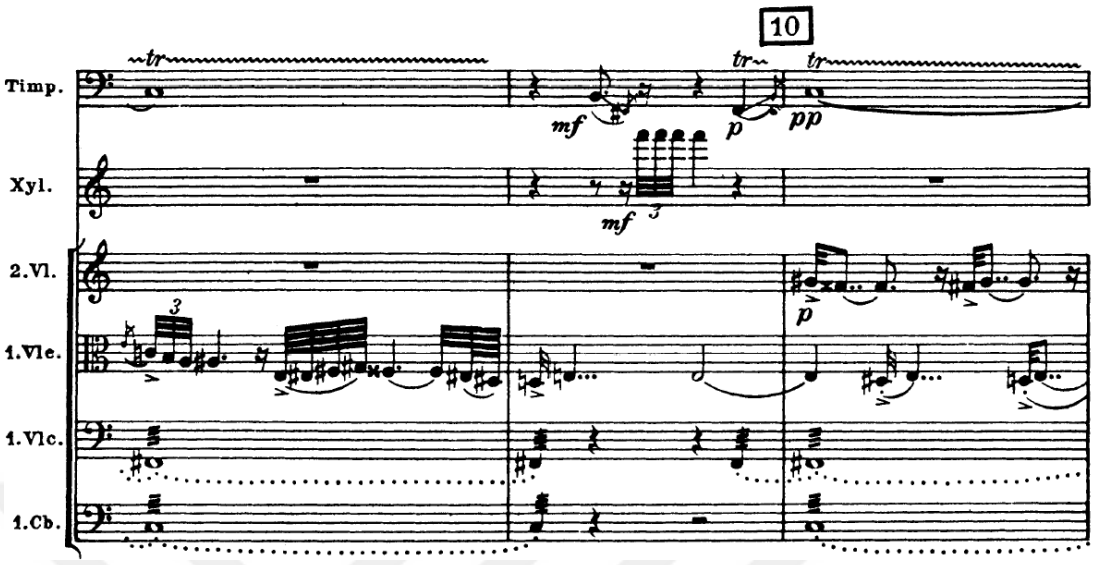

Figure 5.14 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mm. 8-10.

The B-section of the movement presents two superimposed sheets of sound, which can be seen below in Figure 5.15. The first sheet of sound is based on the whole-tone collection (D#-F-G-A) played with chromatic trills by the 3rd and 4th violins, similar to the sheet of sound played by the strings during the first night music episode of the presto section of the Second Piano Concerto, which saturates the interval of (D#-B♭) completely. The second sheet of sound is played by the piano, the 2nd violins, the 1st violas, and the 1st cellos; and it is an ostinato melody (D-D♭-C-C#) doubled at the major-7th. Note that the second sheet of sound consumes the remaining pitches that fall between (B-D), complementing the first one, and together the sheets of sound consume all the pitches in the chromatic collection. The 2nd violin glides through the major-7th intervals in the second sheet of sound, in a way mimicking the earlier timpani glissandos. The second sheet of sound is sustained through measures 22-27, and then the ostinato pattern is broken and the sheet of sound moves upwards chromatically in measures 28-30 to prepare for the transition.

Measures 29-33 of the movement is presented below in Figure 5.16 below. As you can see in Figure 5.16, the actantial xylophone and timpani gestures return in measures 31-33, together producing the notes of the E♭-major triad. The 2nd double-basses and the 2nd cellos sustain the (E♭-A) dyad while the piano, the celesta, and the strings producing the pitches (G#-D). The combination of these two dyads makes the tetrachord (D-E♭-

G#-A), which is another Z-cell with the (0167) prime form. All of these sonorities prepare E♭ as the tonal center of the next section, just as F# was the center in the previous A-section of the movement.

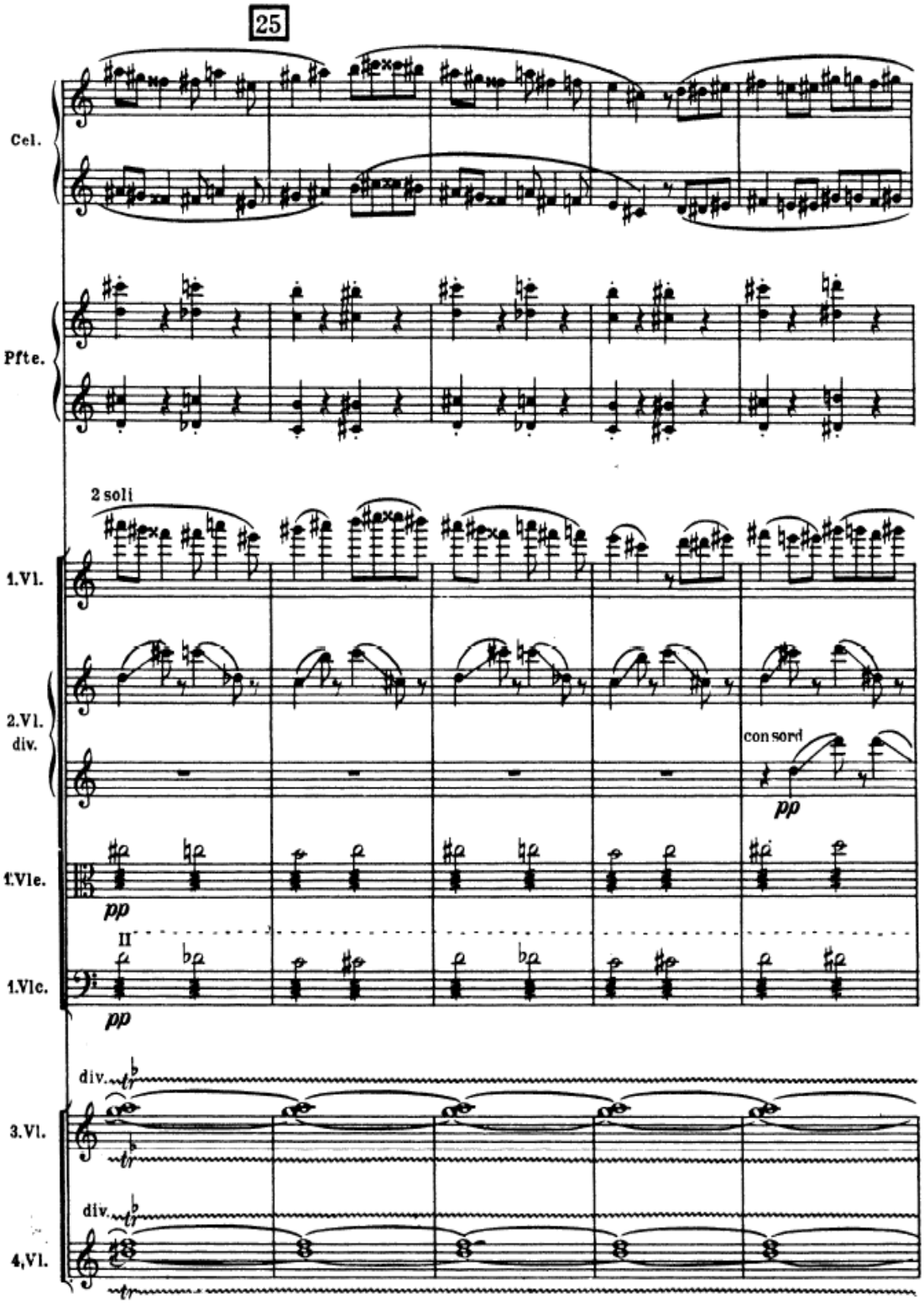

Figure 5.15 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mm. 24-28.

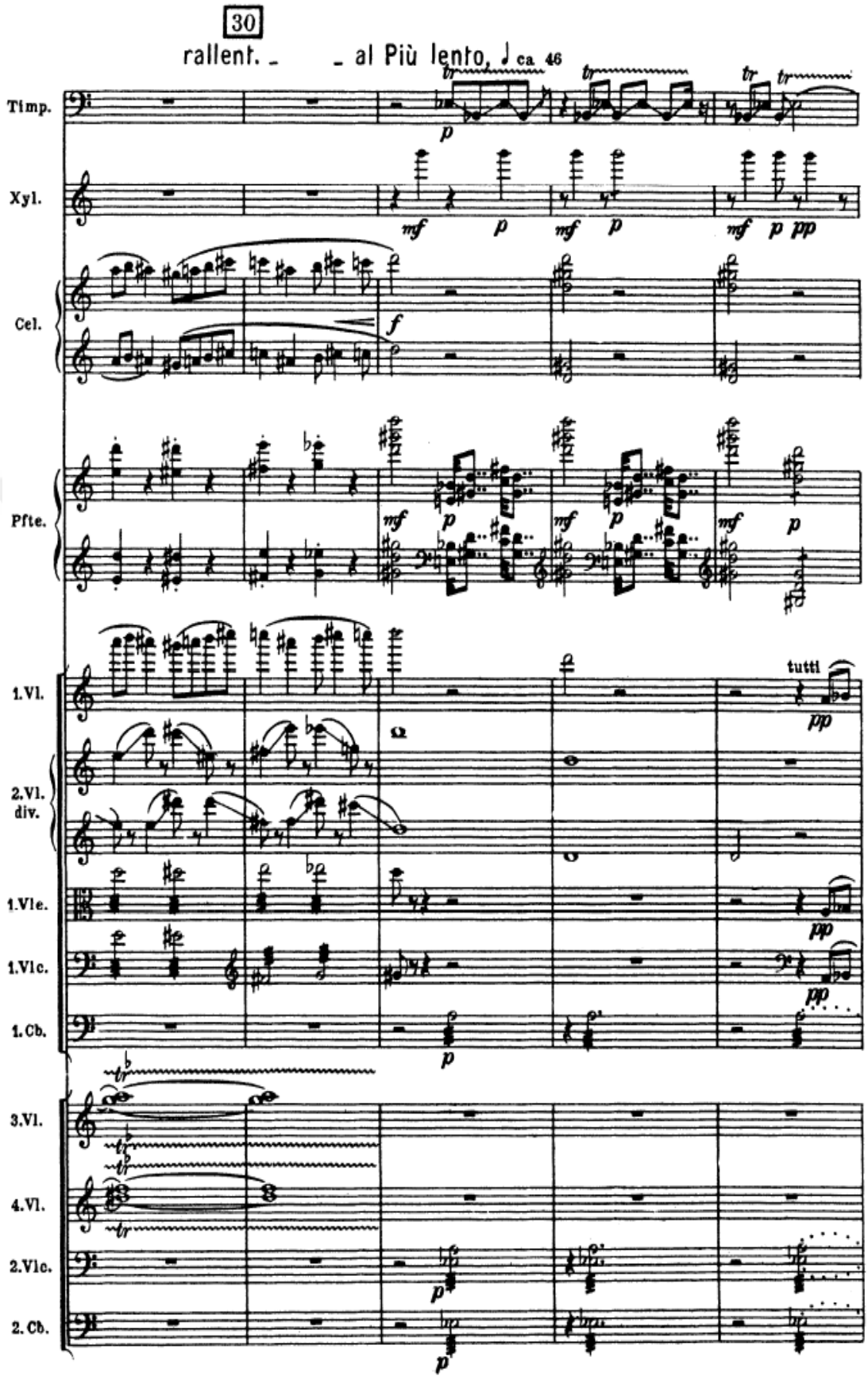

Figure 5.16 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mm. 29-33.

The C-section of the movement introduces the widest glissando figures of the movement. Hence there is a growth tendency in the composition as move from the timpani glissandos within a 5th in A-section, to the violin glissandi of major-7th, and finally leading up to the ultrawide superimposed glissandi in the C-section. Since the movement is organized having an arch form, the span of the glissando ranges will again decrease as we reach the B' and A' sections.

Measure 37 of the C-section of the movement is reproduced below in Figure 5.17. As you can see in Figure 5.17, two groups of strings present a two-part melodic texture played in octaves in tremolos, while the double-bass and the timpani hold down the E♭ pedal throughout measures 35-42. At the same time, the musical scene was saturated by three sheets of sound superimposed on top of each other. The first sheet of sound is presented by the celesta, and it incorporates up and down scalar runs using the E♭-minor and the E-minor pentatonic scales. The second sheet of sound is a 3-octave glissando from E♭3 till E♭6 performed by the harp, while the instrument is set to produce the pitches (E♭-F♭-G♭-A♭-B♭-C-D). The third and final sheet of sound is performed on the piano, and it includes downward runs over the E♭-minor pentatonic scale (i.e., over the black keys) and upward white-key glissandos. Interestingly, the white-key glissandos are notated from F♭3 till D6, using two pitch-classes that are symmetrically related to the tonal center of the passage E♭. Bartók's choice of F♭ instead of E-natural as the note name is arguably an indicator of the symmetrical organization of the pitch materials in the piece since, as Taruskin (2010) observed, the pitch-classes (F♭-D) resolve to E♭ as "a pair of leading-tone resolutions, as in a traditional augmented sixth chord" (p. 398). Moreover, the same symmetry is also observed on the harp glissandos over the pitches (E♭-F♭-G♭-A♭-B♭-C-D): this collection is symmetrical around E♭-E♭ axis, i.e. (B♭-C-D-E♭-F♭-G♭-A♭).

The reprise of the B-section starts at measure 63, and it features the melody played as a cannon in diminished-5th by two groups of strings. That cannon is accompanied by a narrower and less saturated sheet of sound that is provided by the celesta, harp, and the piano. These sheets of sound can be seen below in Figure 5.18, which reproduces the measure 70 of the composition. The tremolo figures on the harp and the piano produce the pitch-classes B♭ and C♭, while the celesta plays up and down arpeggios on three notes. Those arpeggios also feature (B♭-C♭) and the third note is choses from the

notes in between (E♭-A♭) which is doubled as a counter melody in octaves by the 3rd violin.

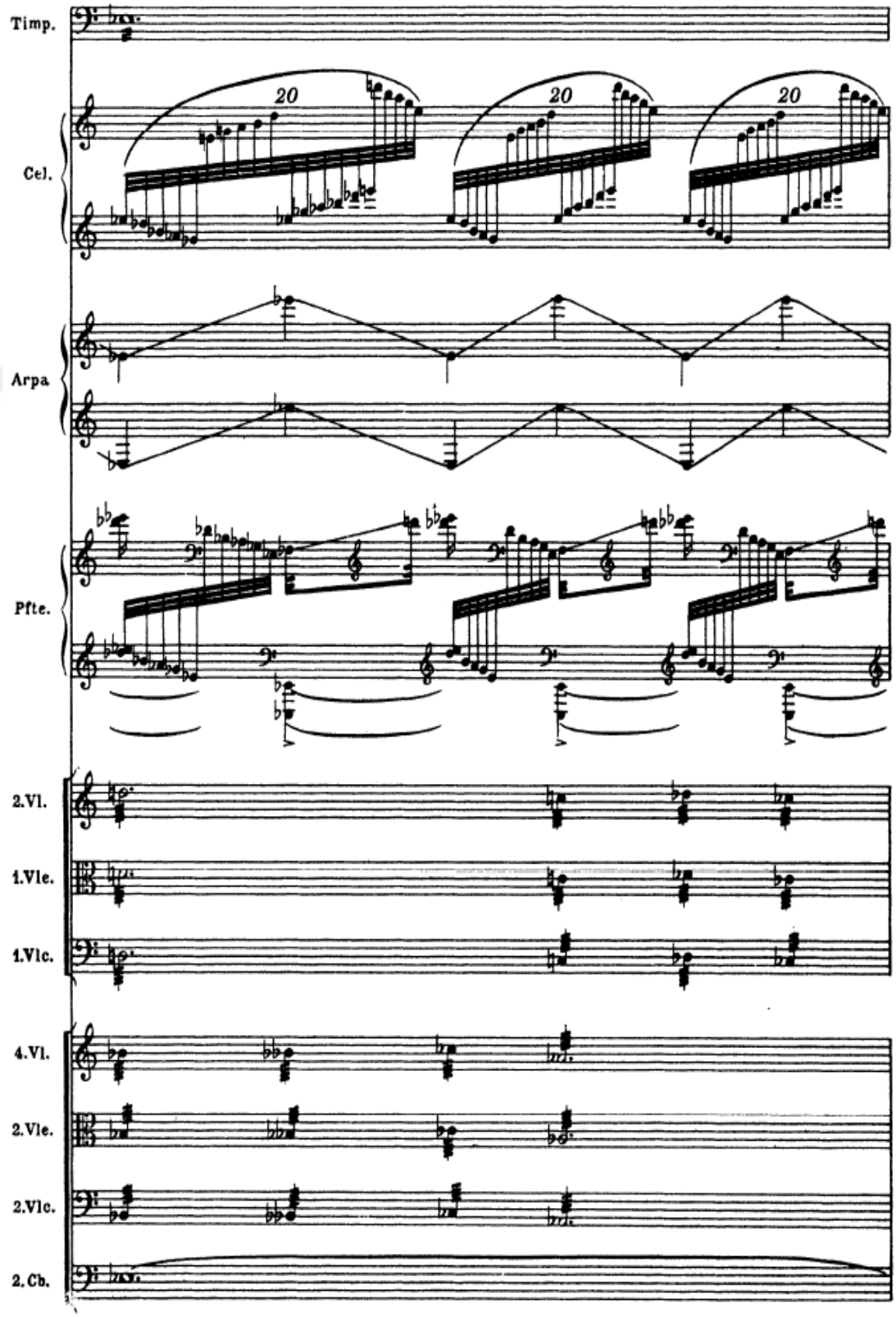

Figure 5.17 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mesure 37.

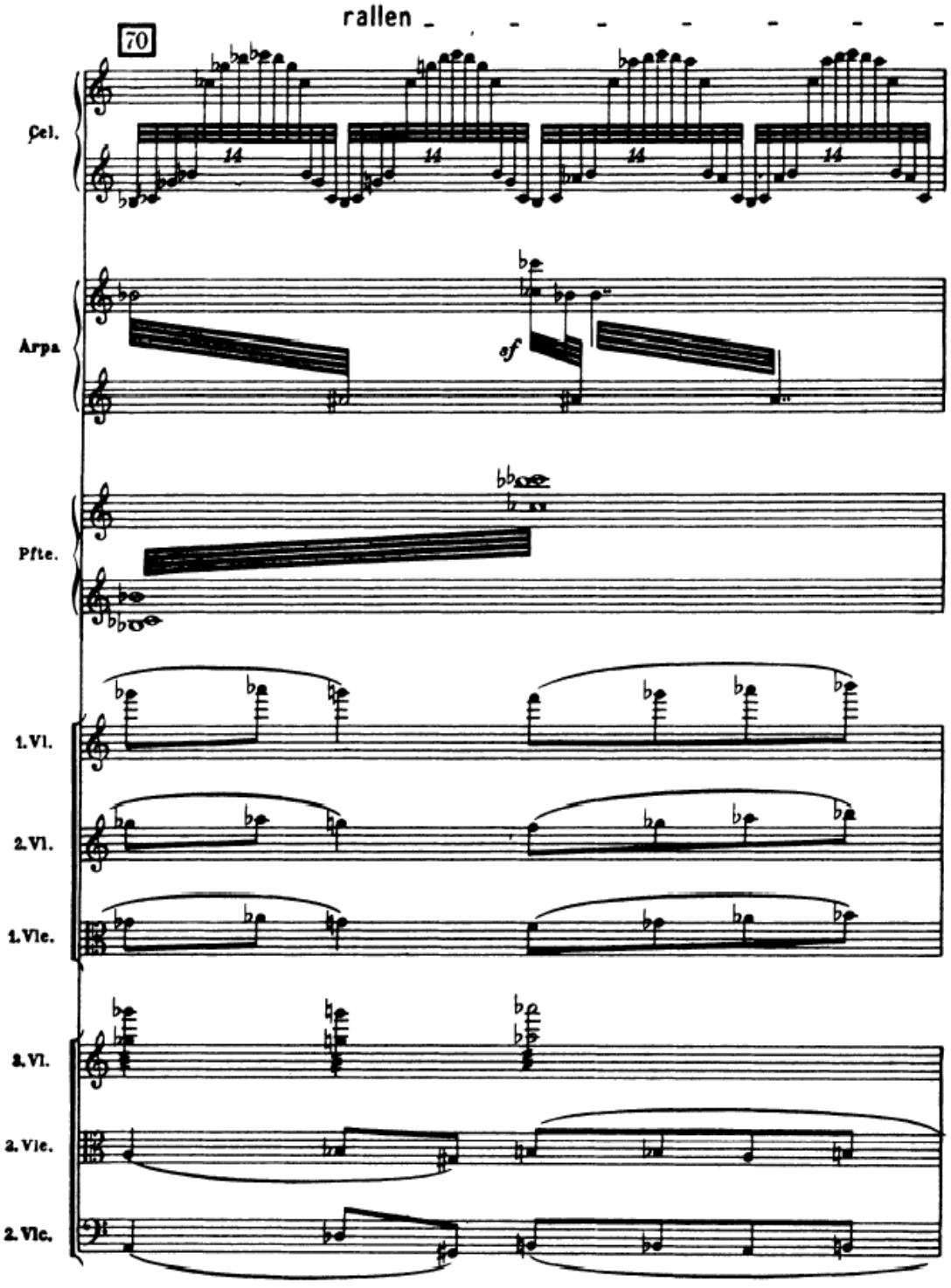

Figure 5.18 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mesure 70.

The arch form of the composition is concluded by the reprise of the A-section which begins in measure 75. The timpani glissandos and repeated notes on the xylophone are brought back as actantial gestures in this section.

The final measures of the movement are shown below in Figure 5.19. The timpani glissandos are replicated from D3 to A2 6 times in measures 77-79, and the final one

in measure 80 is given as an upward glissando from G2 to C3. The xylophone plays repeated notes on F5, the pitch note that was used earlier in the first A-section of the composition. The folk-like melody concludes on the F#3 played by the first viola. Hence, the three notes (F-F#-{}-C) that are used at the ending of the composition are partially reproducing the symmetrical Z-cell (F-F#-B-C) that was present at the first A-section.

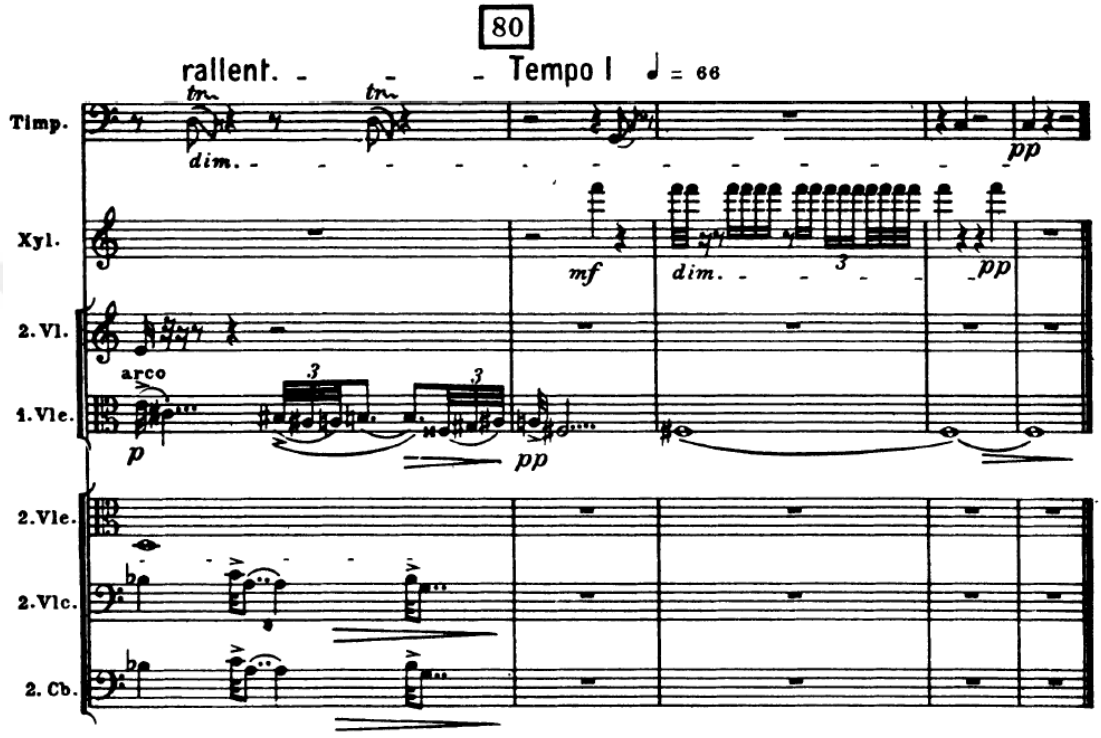

Figure 5.19 : Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, III. Adagio, mm. 79-83.

Contrary to the other musical examples that are analyzed, the slow movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* does not have a lengthy noise music section, except the very first 5 measures, which foregrounds the actantial musical elements. Yet using only the actantial gestures on the first 5 measures sets the tone of the composition, and enables those gestures to be noticeable in the forthcoming sections of the piece. While there are only two compact actantial gestures in the piece (timpani glissando, and the repeated notes on the xylophone), the piece nevertheless incorporates several sheets of sounds prominently. These sheets of sound make-up for the actantial energies represented by the music.

During the first B-section of the movement, the two superimposed sheets of sounds were composed by using disparate and complementary subsets of the chromatic collection, thus making them distinguishable in a saturated chromatic environment

even though both were in the background accompanying the mystical melodic line played by the celesta and the 1st violin (see Figure 5.15). In the earlier examples, we had seen how Bartók partitioned the pitch space among different foregrounded actantial gestures and the underlying accompaniment figures, in order to ensure their distinguishability and disagreement. The superimposed sheets of sounds in the B-section provided an example of the same strategy operating in two different accompaniment layers.

Having an arch form like ABCBA, this movement displays an arch pattern of a growth followed by a reduction – and this pattern is evident in terms of both the intensity/volume of events and the rate of events taking place at the same time. Note that a similar pattern also characterizes the introductory fugue movement. This movement used actantial glissando gestures of different sizes as in various formal sections, and the same arch-like growth/reduction pattern is displayed not only in the span of the glissandos, but also in their speed and (for piano and harp) the number of events incorporated. Hence the glissando span, speed, and range was used as secondary parameters for adjusting the musical tension and drama.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Significance of Bartók's Night Music Style

Schneider (2006) positions *The Night's Music* as a reinterpretation of the Hungarian pastoral tradition when he states that "one of Bartók's most abstract, evocative, and influential contributions to the vocabulary of twentieth-century music had its roots in a characteristically Hungarian Romantic tradition of using nocturnal nature to symbolize the nation" (p. 118). The use of folk-music like melodies and associations with the nature in the piece inevitably stimulate such a nationalist pastoral interpretation. On the other hand, Bartók's positioning of the folk-music like melodies as part of a landscape surrounded by the characterizations of ambient sounds of nature can be seen as a reflection of the composer's idealist view of folk-music as a remarkable natural phenomenon. And within that position, the work goes beyond the confines of a straightforward low pastoral with nationalistic associations, and becomes almost a utopic composition closer to the high pastoral tradition.

The real significance of *The Night's Music* was not the utilization of folk-music, but the characterizations of the nocturnal noises. These noises were provided as short, non-tonal, non-thematic, and immutable gestures over a harmonic statis provided by the left-hand ostinato clusters which acted like a perpetual sheet of sound. These gestures had fixed shapes, and Bartók devised a compositional method based on partitioning the pitch-classes and registers among different gestures in order to ensure their identification and separation from each other. Such a partitioning caused these gestures to be perceived as originated from different virtual sources, and hence created a segregated auditory scene. Since these noise gestures were immobile and immutable, they lacked expressivity and intentionality. Consequently, the sources of these gestures implied virtual musical actants. These actants were not communicative per se, did not stimulate individual emphatical involvement in the listeners, but nevertheless jointly created a soundscape which could have meaningful correlations. Within this soundscape, folk-music provided the human element as the expressive virtual agency of the music.

In his night music compositions, Bartók devised a compositional strategy based on humans' cognitive capacities for auditory scene analysis which enabled him to simultaneously represent and distinguish various musical actants and agents. Due to separation of pitch-classes and registers among different actants and agents, this strategy resulted in multi-layered textures where each layer represented a different source that was not coordinated with the others by means of harmony or counterpoint. Hence these different layers did not join together in the formation of what Hatten (2018) referred to as melos. Due to confining each layer to fixed pitch-classes, these multi-layered textures were harmonically static, and musical tension was controlled mainly by growth-based secondary parameters of music like volume/intensity, rate of presentation of events, etc.

Following *The Night's Music* of 1926 and up until the Third Piano Concerto of 1945, Bartók produced an important body of works by utilizing the same organizational principles. This style was undoubtedly influenced by Debussy's impressionist music with static harmonies and its precursors in the music of Wagner and Liszt. Certainly, Bartók was also influenced by Stravinsky's music which utilized multi-layered ostinato patterns. On the other hand, Bartók achieved harmonic statis in his night music compositions frequently by utilizing non-tonal tone-clusters instead of whole-tone or octatonic harmonies. In using tone-clusters, Bartók seems to be directly influenced by Henry Cowell whom he met in 1923 in London, and later asked for Cowell's permission to use tone-clusters in his own compositions (Somfai, 1984, p. 8; Cooper, 2015, pp. 264-5).

Night music style allowed Bartók to stage complicated musical narratives that involved marked oppositions between various musical agents and actants. Such agential oppositions are systematically present in all of Bartók's night music compositions which make a significant portion of the composer's work in his final 20 years.

Arguably the only composer among Bartók's contemporaries with a style that systematically portrayed agential oppositions was Charles Ives. Ives' multi-agential music also frequently placed different agential forces on different tonal planes, as in *The Unanswered Question* or his String Quartet No. 2, and relied on simultaneous presentation of different agential music to highlight their contrast. Yet Ives' music

always utilized expressive musical statements that necessarily implied virtual musical agents, but not stylized noises that called for virtual actants.

Disregarding the pieces that relied on sheets of sounds for static accompaniment, which are innumerous, the only contemporary musical work that I can think of which could stimulate a thoroughly actantial perception is Edgar Varèse's *Ionisation* for 13 percussionists from 1931, which relied on the differentiated sources and relatively limited tonal capabilities of percussion instruments. In that regard, night music becomes one of Bartók's chief musical contributions to the twentieth century music as a style that enabled multilayered actantial expressions by using tonal properties of various musical layers. Moreover, by creating a compositional style based on stylized noises produced by conventional musical instruments, Bartók's facilitated the integration of noise elements as artistic ingredients in music composition, paving the way for later sonic experiments in the second half of the twentieth century like music concrete and electroacoustic music.

6.2 What is 'Night Music'?

Bartók did not use the name 'night music' for depicting his compositions in this style that came after *The Night's Music*, but he also did not oppose the usage of the term either (Schneider, 2006, p. 89). Eventually many commentators freely used the expression 'night music' to depict a certain musical character aroused by the presence of stylized gestures without presenting a concrete definition for the term, and it was freely used to denote a musical mood, set of gestures, topic, texture, or compositional style. Nevertheless, the liberal use of the term 'night music' was not altogether approved by everybody – Hunkemöller (2003), for example, included only pieces whose titles made explicit reference to 'night' in his study of Bartók's night music idiom.

The most systematic study of Bartók's night music style was provided by Danchenka (1987), which relied on a group of gestural archetypes obtained from several night music compositions. Danchenka also investigated the pitch-class sets that Bartók utilized in these gestures. Yet, his investigations only briefly inquire the contextual implications of these pitch-class sets. Moreover, Danchenka does not provide a systematic answer to his choice of certain gestures as the archetypes from a perceptual point of view, and does not explain what is special about these gestures.

I claim that the archetypes of Danchenka are derived from the musical gestures which were utilized as the actantial musical elements in Bartók's night music compositions, either as noise gestures or as sheets of sound. Yet the gestures, by themselves, are not indicative of the night music style – their multi-agential and multi layered contextualization was responsible for the effect peculiar to the night music style. Bartók could well have also contextualized other types of gestures as actantial musical elements. Moreover, any of these archetypical gestures can also be used in pieces that does not fall into the night music category, as typical motives in themes, and gain typical non-actantial expressions. This fact was already illustrated with respect to the agential gesture used at the beginning of the slow movement of the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*, which was also found at the beginning of the 12th Bagatelle from Op. 6. Hence, taken out of a context which produces agential/actantial oppositions, the isolated gestures cannot indicate whether a piece is a night music composition or not.

This thesis claims that the crucial identifier for Bartók's night music style is the presence of a marked agential opposition between the actantial and agential musical elements. This opposition is made possible because night music compositions create the illusion of multiple virtual sources, with differing actantial or agential dispositions. Bartók characterized the actantial sources with either short gestures that are immutable and usually confined to certain registers and pitch-classes, or with sheets of sounds that do not present a harmonic accompaniment to the agential melodies. Moreover, usually the pitch content reserved for an actantial statement is segregated from those reserved for other agential/actantial layers, creating a pitch space partitioned according to the multi-agential organization. The actantial gestures are static and do not produce harmonic implications like tension or resolution, hence their contributions to musical tension are governed by their rate of activity, rate of presentation, volume, or gesture span, i.e., what Meyer (1989) classifies as the secondary parameters in music.

Bartók also occasionally differentiated agential musical statements from the actantial ones in multi-layered textures by using performance directives like *expressivo* or *dolce*. On the other hand, he reserved somewhat unconventional sound effects for the actantial elements in music, by delivering them in relatively distinct timbres or extended techniques like *sul ponticello* or pizzicato glissando on the strings, timpani glissandos, or using the extremes of registers on xylophone or piano.

Harley (1995) and several other commentators preferred to use the term 'nature music' instead of night music. While certain pieces in the night music idiom have relatively explicit pastoral associations (such as *The Night's Music* or the slow movements of the Fourth String Quartet and the Third Piano Concerto), these associations are not that pronounced or missing in other movements. I tried the address the problems of vagueness for symbolic associations while discussing the 'bird songs' in Chapter 3, and certain gestures like the repeated note played by the xylophone in the slow movement of *Music for Strings Percussion and Celesta* could stand for almost anything. Nevertheless, this gesture indicates a virtual musical actant within the confines of that movement since it is always presented as single note repetitions on either F5 or G5. Hence what the gesture symbolizes is a musical actant, without making its identity explicit. In any case, actantial/agential distinction seems like a better paradigm compared to positing arbitrary symbolic associations with the natural sounds while discussing the night music idiom.

I believe 'night music', when interpreted as poetic a metaphor, is still a very fitting name for this musical style. The vision is impaired at night, and therefore we are obliged to evaluate various sound sources without seeing them. Even if we cannot identify the sources, our partial judgements about their nature as actants or agents is important, because such judgements would indicate if these sources are directly engaging with us or not. Ability to make such agential/actantial judgements may even be crucial for the survival of the species.

6.3 The Successors of the Night Music after Bartók

The following is a list of compositions that display a musical organization akin to Bartók's night music idiom in displaying actantial musical statements. While I cannot claim a direct influence of Bartók for several of these musical that these pieces, I will try to comment briefly on their similarities with the night music style.

Messiaen, Quartet for the End of Time, I. 'Liturgie de cristal' (1941): The piece presents a multi-layered texture. A complex sheet of sound is provided by the superimposition of two intricate isometric ostinatos presented by the cello and the piano. Over that sheet of sound, both the violin and the clarinet present loops made of two series of seemingly uncoordinated gestures akin to bird songs. The gestures

presented by the violin have an uncanny resemblance to the 'nightingale melody' from Bartók's Fourth String Quartet.

Messiaen, Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus, III. L'échange (1944): A static Bartókian (0123) cluster made up from (F3-E♭4-E4-G♭4) is persistently presented in every two measures against four other almost-actantial rising gestures, stimulating a perpetual crescendo.

Ligeti, String Quartet No. 1 (Métamorphoses nocturnes), 'Ad lib., senza misura' (1954): This piece was composed before Ligeti emigrated outside of Hungary, and reflects a strong Bartók influence. 'Ad lib., senza misura' episode starts in measure 1059 (rehearsal mark UU), with a sheet of sound consisting of superimposed glissandos played with harmonics, which recall the string glissandos in the first B-section of *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Over that texture, one by one each member of the quartet introduces a slow motivic progression, first as (C-D-C#-D#), and then as (C-D-C#-D#-D-E) – note the similarity with the chromatically rising major-2nd gestures in the a1-sections of the second and fourth movements of Bartók's Fifth String Quartet.

Mingus, Pithecanthropus Erectus, 'A Foggy Day' (G. Gershwin) (1956): The intro to the Gershwin's classic song incorporates clusters played by piano over arco double-bass while the saxophones imitate the honking of car horns, suggesting the crowded noises of an urban traffic jam. While the melody is being stated by one saxophone, the other saxophone continues to imitate car honks by playing short out-of-key gestures, and sirens by playing glissandos. Noise episodes interrupt the flow between choruses of improvisations and thematic statements.

Lutosławski, Jeux Vénitiens, III. (1961): An expressive flute melody is presented over a sheet of sound provided by other woodwinds and the piano. The flow is occasionally interrupter by unexpected short chords played by the strings. The harp plays actantial gestures throughout the movement that are based on various (0123) cells.

Riley, In C (1964): 53 short melodic fragments are superimposed by a large number of musicians starting at different times over a fixed C repeatedly played in 8th notes for a duration of 45-90 minutes. Excessive mechanical repetition of the fragments produces a complex sheet of sound obtained by the superimpositions of various actantial

energies. The aleatoric presentation of the melodic fragments resemble the freedom of Bartók's utilization of noise gestures in *The Night's Music.*

Ligeti, String Quartet No. 2, V. Allegro con delicatezza (1968): Measures 23-35 present sustained harmonies presented on the extremes of the instruments with tremolos. Short quick noise gestures played with harmonics are presented over this static sheet of sound, in a design which looks like a further abstraction of the slow movement of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet.

Ligeti, Chamber Concerto, III. Movimento preciso e mecanico (1970): This movement sounds as almost like 'Bartók meets Terry Riley'. A first sheet of sound is obtained from repeated notes which start from E4 that deviate chromatically in both directions. A second more aggressive sheet of sound starts in measure 12 presented in various octaves of A♭, and develops into a thicker cloud of sound. Various additional actantial layers as noise elements are presented – such as strings with Bartók pizzicatos starting on measure 35, white-key plus black-key clusters on the harpsichord and the piano starting on measure 38. The climax at measure 46 presents polyrhythmic figures played by repeated notes in the high register: (G-F#-F-E) by the woodwinds, (E♭-D) by the piano, and (D♭-C-B) harpsichord, which is accompanied by low (B♭)s played by various instruments – showcasing a typically Bartók cluster segregated among various sources.

Oliveros/Dempster/Panaiotis, Deep Listening, 'Nike' (1989): 'Deep Listening' album by Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, and Panaiotis was recorded in cistern with a reverberation time of 45 (Dempster, n.d.). The instrumentation consisted of accordion, trombone, didgeridoo, vocals, and electronics. The piece 'Nike' from that album incorporates several noise gestures superimposed over a complex multi-layered ambient drone that dynamically evolves over the duration of the performance.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Name Surname **:** Kaan Muzaffer BIYIKOĞLU

EDUCATION **:**

- **B.Sc.** **:** 1998, Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering
- **M.Sc.** **:** 2002, Middle East Technical University, Informatics Institute, Department of Cognitive Science
- **M.A.** **:** 2006, Başkent University, State Conservatory, Department of Performing Arts
- **B.A.** **:** 2010, Codarts Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Rotterdam Conservatory, Jazz Piano

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND REWARDS:

- 1994 Middle East Technical University, Success Scholarship.
- 1998-1999 Structural Engineer, Coastal and Harbor Engineering Laboratory, Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- 1999-2004 Research Assistant, Informatics Institute, Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- 2000 American Association for Artificial Intelligence, Student Scholarship.
- 2004 Başkent University, Full Scholarship.
- 2010-2011 Instructor (Jazz and Classical Piano), Muziekschool 't MuzenHuis, Haarlem, The Netherlands.
- 2011-2014 Music Director, Crescent Double Quartet, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- 2013-2015 Instructor (Jazz Piano and Jazz Harmony), Hacettepe University, Ankara State Conservatory, Ankara.
- 2015-2021 Teaching Assistant, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Istanbul.
- 2019-2023 Pianist, Cemal Reşit Rey Jazz Orchestra, Istanbul.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE THESIS:

- **Bıyıkoğlu, K.M.** & Altınbüken, E. (2023). Aesthetically warranted emotions in the theme of the final movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.10 No.3. *Musicologist*, *7*(1), 26-49. https://doi.org/10.33906/musicologist.1185395