

# Bela bartok

[Science](#), [Physics](#)



Research Paper on Bela Bartok..... By Jibin Parayil Thomas (2011B4A7628G) Introduction Bela Bartok (1881-1945) is regarded as a key innovator of the twentieth-century music. He is widely known for compositions strongly influenced by his folk music studies, and for his activities as a concert pianist, music editor and teacher. The works of Bela Bartok are generally approached from either of two theoretical premises.

The first being an extension of traditional western art music that has preceded him (particularly the expanded harmonic resources which emerged during the 'Romantic' musical period), the other being from Bartok's own research into the folk music of Europe. It has been said that through this research, Bartok was able to free himself from the tyrannical rule of the major and minor keys, leading eventually to a new conception of the chromatic scale, every tone of which came to be considered of equal value and could be used freely and independently.

Bartok was not noted for his use of 12-tone concepts per se, but his search for harmonic freedom did parallel the concepts of the 12-tone composers of his time. His music rarely displays the consistent vocabulary that would prove a set-theory approach to be worthwhile. There are certain pitch collections that do appear consistently in his work. Bartok achieved something that no one had before his time, the symbolic handshake between East and West: synthesis, a seamless blending of two sources into a single style.

Bartok was a knowledgeable ethnomusicologist who wrote and lectured on his areas of research into the cultural music of Europe in general, and of Hungary in particular. (Ethnomusicology is defined as " the study of social

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and cultural aspects of music and dance in local and global contexts). The research paper comprises three sections: the first explores Bartok's general philosophy on life, as it evolved within the turbulent political and cultural environment in which he grew up.

Focusing on his major works the second section identifies the innovative characteristics of his musical style within the context of the diverse genres in which he composed. The third section examines the wide variety of critical and analytical responses to his compositions and his performances. 1- Bartok's background and development Bartok's family reflected some of the ethnic diversity of the country. His mother Paula Voit Bartok, was ethnically German, though she spoke Hungarian fluently, his father, Bela Sr. considered himself thoroughly Hungarian, though his mother was from a Serbian family. Although Bartok's musical upbringing was purely German, parts of his background leaned towards Hungarian nationalism. Some of Bartok's most important musical colleagues were the members of the Waldbauer-Kerpely String Quartet, who came together in 1909 specifically to perform Bartok's and Kodaly's first string quartets, and the composers and musicians of the New Hungarian Music Society.

The turn of the twentieth century, which marks the beginning of Bela Bartok's musical career, witnessed a Hungarian society divided from the point of view of its musical taste into three distinct layers: the upper classes which included the nobility, the urban financiers, industrialists and bourgeoisie turned to the west for their musical needs; the gentry and the urban middle class found satisfaction in the music of gypsy bands and in

popular art songs; it was only the agrarian folk who lived with its folksongs and musical customs, isolated from the rest of society.

Bartok obtained his childhood impressions of Hungarian music from his provincial urban environment. At the age of four he could play with one finger on the piano the folk tunes familiar to him, about forty of them. When Bartok entered the Academy of Music in Budapest in 1899, he had no better knowledge of his country's folksongs than that of the general public.