

An Analytical Comparison
of the
Second and Fourth Movements
of
Bartok's String Quartet No. 5

by
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Sectional divisions used in this paper:

II

A-mm. 1-9
B-mm. 10-25
C-mm. 26-35
C'-mm. 36-45
B'-mm. 46-49
A8-mm. 50-56

IV

A-mm. 1-22
B-mm. 23-41
C-mm. 42-63
C'-mm. 64-81
Conclusion-mm. 82-101

The Andante of Bartok's Fifth String Quartet structurally parallels the Adagio Molto, and is based on the same material, although there is some added. To begin with, the first four phrases have the same pitch structure, played with the same instrumentation:

II

IV

Vn. I Vc. II Vn. II Va.

Transposition: 5th down 4th up 4th up 4th up

These four phrases in the second movement use trills; those in the fourth use pizzicato. The first notes in each phrase yield the intervals upon which the middle sections of both pieces are based: the perfect fourth and major second. The fourth movement continues to parallel the second by using the viola's B[#] and E[#] (II, mm. 3-4) an eleventh higher, and the cello's following cadential figure C[#]-G[#]-D a fifth lower. The six notes in the first violin (II, mm. 3-4) and the G in the viola are not reflected in the Andante. The rest of the A section in the 2nd mvmt. is expanded into two subsections in the fourth mvmt. (mm. 7-14 and 15-22). The tonic D in mvmt. II lasts for 3 measures out of the 5, a positive golden section; the repeating tonic G in mvmt. IV continues for six measures out of the 16, a negative golden section. The succession of pitches over the bass line in the second part of IIA falls into groups of whole steps and tritones thusly:



In mm. 7-12 of mvmt. IV, the pitches around the drone on G are also whole steps and tritones, but alternating:



At m. 13 of mvmt. IV, the close relationship to II ends. C^\sharp and E^b (which latter is the next pitch in the descending half-step progression of tritones) move to a new drone on D, and some new material emphasizing the fourth is introduced which will become more important in later sections. The whole steps and tritones continue to be used in the same manner. In mm. 15-20 the 2nd violin plays on each first beat a descending chromatic line which could and will be seen as being related to the descent of the cello line in mm. 7-10 of mvmt. II. Section A of mvmt. IV, then is similar to that of II, but with the second subsection repeated. An important addition in IV is the melody in mm. 13-14 and 19-22; IIA used only melodic fragments. In m. 22 of mvmt. IV, the 2nd vn. cadences with the same figure it uses to cadence in m. 9 of mvmt. II, but the rhythm has been modified to perhaps foreshadow the motive which predominates the last half of mvmt. IV: *good point*



In section B of each mvmt., Bartok uses the diatonic system. The texture of both is chordal, with melodies that suggest the chromatic system. Both sections

begin with a typical Bartok dominant, the whole step below the tonic, which here acts as a subdominant of the subdominant. *2. Just Dom (secondary branch)* Here the parallel between the chord progressions ends, but both generally move back to the tonic axis through alternating dom. and sub. chords. In mvmt. II, these chords are triads and 7th chords; in IV they are mostly 9ths.

Diagram illustrating chord progressions for Movement II and Movement IV. Movement II shows a sequence of chords: D, S, D, T, S, D, T. Movement IV shows a sequence: D, S, D, D, T, D, T?, T. A red note is written below the T? chord in IV: *yes (superimposed 4th)*.

In both movements the chords are differentiated from the other material by the manner in which they are played: sustained in II, and tremoloed in IV. Among these chords are little melodic fragments usually outlining a perfect 4th or tritone. In mvmt. II they are played over the chord, and in IV between them. Each section closes with a melody derived from the violin phrase in m. 3 of mvmt. II (which had no counterpart in IV), which was in turn vaguely related to the succession of whole steps in mm. 6-7 of II:

II, m. 6 (transposed) m. 3

m. 22

IV, m. 38

Both movements end with a very thin texture.

In the third section of the fourth movement, C^\sharp (the tonic counterpole) is played continuously; as G, the subdominant, was in the Adagio Molto. Instead of a tremolo, as on the G, the C^\sharp is played as a double-stop, one note of which alternates with D. This reflects the pizz. A^b-G in the 2nd mvmt. ^{good} The 64th-note figures derived from the melodies in section B in mvmt. II are paralleled in the 32nd-note figures in mvmt. IV, also derived from section B.



Around these two elements, the drone and the fast figures, each movement has a melody based on alternating fourths and (usually) major seconds. The two melodies have many similarities, and the one in the 4th mvmt. is somewhat of an elaboration of that in the 2nd.

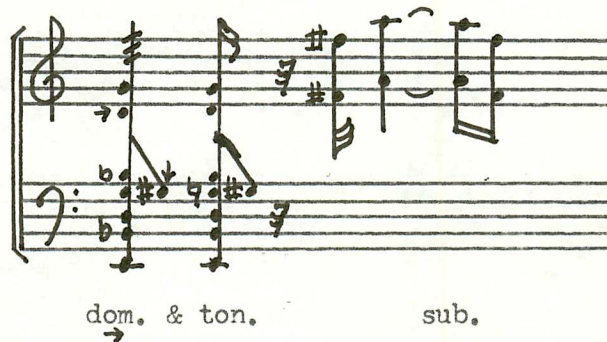


etc.

At m. 54 in the 4th mvmt. begins a rather strange section in which four voices move in half steps over a constant D and E. This section strictly has no

counterpart in mvmt. II, although the ascending chromatic lines in mm. 30-33 (mvmt. II) seem related. Although there are other chromatic lines in the 4th movement, this passage (mm. 54-59) seems to be ultimately derived from the kind of note-circling found in m. 45. C^\sharp is a well-emphasized note here, because the viola and cello repeatedly move from C^\sharp to G^\sharp , and the 1st violin moves from C^\sharp (tonic) first to A (subdominant) and then to F (dominant). These six measures are somewhat based on an alpha chord, with C^\sharp and E from the tonic axis and D and the 1st violin's repeated F from the dominant. This is borne out in measure 60 when the climax of this section occurs on a chromatic alpha chord. This alternates with some pitches from the subdominant axis.

IV, m. 60



good

These tremoloed chords are a reference to the B section of mvmt. IV. In the 2nd mvmt. also there is a reference to the B section at the end of the C section. This is accomplished by the use of sustained chords in m. 34. The chords on the first and third beats of this measure can also be considered alpha chords, using members of the tonic and ~~sub~~dominant axes:

II, m. 34



This first chord is a transposition of the pitches played in the last half of mm. 60-62 in the 4th mvmt.

Passing through a rather uncalled-for signature chord, Bartok begins the next section, which could possibly be called the C' section, with a series of the 32nd note figures used in mm. 42-52 of IV. The melody in this section (which is played canonically, though not strictly, like the melody in section C) is based on the alternation of alpha chord and subdominant axis in mm. 60-62:



This is partially an inversion of the melody at the beginning of section C' in mvmt. II:



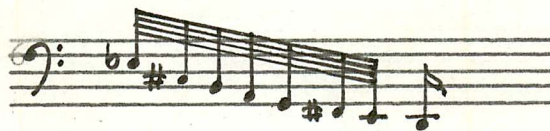
The 32nd-note figures in mvmt. IV begin on the pitches B, D, and G from the tonic and dominant axes when the melody uses those axes; the pitches are all dominant, B, D, and G[#] when the melody moves to the subdominant. These four pitches are again a transposition of the pitches used in the last halves of mm. 60-62. At m. 73 the canon ends and the entire process is transposed down a 5th. During the C' sections in both mvmts. the melody becomes more fragmented, reversing the process in sections A and B. In both mvmts. the materials die out over a group of sustained chords.

At this point in the Adagio Molto there occurs a B' section. The corresponding section in mvmt. IV is not so much a B' as a reference to the B section of mvmt. II. The chords are mostly simple triads in a progression very similar to the progression of the B section in both mvmts. Upon listening to the piece, one is immediately struck by the fact that the minor thirds in mm. 82-91 ~~along~~ ^(to C-Sub) with the F in the bass at m. 95 form a scale identical to the one that ends mvmt. II:

IV, mm. 82-91, 95



II, mm. 55-56



good
in each case, an acoustic
scale built upon the Dom!

The return of the pizz. glissandi in m. 92 of IV is a return to the original timbrally differentiated material that opened the movement. The same thing happens in mvmt. II at m. 51 when the trills return. The root movement in mm. 92-93 of IV is a retrograde inversion of the 1st violin's C[#]-A C[#]-F in mm. 54-57. At m. 95 the B section is referred to, delayed from where it was expected at the end of C'. The final chord is approached through three subdominant-function chords on F[#], A, and C; similarly the final D in mvmt. II was approached through three subdominant notes- G, B^b, and E. Mvmt. IV ends on a major-minor chord on G.

In summary, the fourth movement of Bartok's Fifth Quartet begins as a very close analogue to the second movement, and becomes more independent of it as it progresses. The first halves of the A sections are very similar; in the 4th mvmt., the second half is repeated and elaborated. The B sections are very alike in texture and material, although there is no strict correspondence, and they end with the same melody. The C sections are alike in texture, and they have a parallel melodic structure, *this forms an axis of symmetry to the movement as a whole!* although in mvmt. IV there is a ten measure appendage that has no counterpart in II. The C' sections hold approximately parallel relationships to the C sections, and use the same P4-M2 motive throughout, but the 32nd-note figures have become much more prominent in mvmt. IV. At this point the relationship becomes much more general, because instead of the B' expected in IV, Bartok refers back to the B section of mvmt. II. The entire last section of mvmt. IV, from m. 82 onward, is kind of a summary of both movements, and contains elements from sections of both.

Excellent analysis, very well presented!

A