

7 Piano music: recital repertoire and chamber music

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The sin against the spirit of the work always begins with a sin against its letter. . .

IGOR STRAVINSKY, *POETICS OF MUSIC*

Unlike Bartók, who had almost nothing to say about his own work, Stravinsky was a man of many words, both philosophical and eminently practical. Had Bartók been minded to expand on the subject of his own music vis-à-vis performance, he too might well have observed that ‘The sin against the spirit of the work always begins with a sin against its letter’, as well as endorsing Stravinsky’s remark that ‘An executant’s talent lies precisely in his faculty for seeing what is actually in the score . . .’¹ But it is at this point that Stravinsky the composer evidently parts company with himself as performer, since he too-often fails, by default, to provide the very information he trusts the talented executant to note. Not so Bartók, for whom intervallic shape and motivic phrasing is a *sine qua non* for the cut and thrust of his Beethovenian developments. It is not so much that, like Debussy, he expanded the range of classical accentuation according to the needs of his own music, but that he succeeded in devising an articulation precisely appropriate to the needs of each particular piece (see for instance *Nine Little Piano Pieces*, Nos. 1–4); in other words, the relative weight of phrase and of points within that phrase may be signalled by metre, dynamics, accents and, everywhere, by articulation slurs which define shape and intervallic content. Any properly articulate performance should of course take account of all these punctuating elements.

Although Bartók and Webern were born scarcely two years apart and died within eleven days of one another in September 1945, their musical eventualities could hardly have been more different. Yet both were descended from Brahms through their teachers, Hans Koessler and Arnold Schoenberg and, had the seventeen-year-old Bartók taken up the scholarship offered him by the Vienna Academy, their separate futures might have become more closely entwined; instead, he decided to follow his compatriot, Ernő Dohnányi, in electing to study in Budapest. Yet, despite the example of Liszt’s interest in the gypsy mutations of Hungarian peasant tunes, it was as much that of Brahms (who also drew on folklore filtered through similarly popularizing processes in the hugely successful arrangements of four sets of Hungarian dances for piano duet) which impressed

the teenage composer; Bartók's own schoolboy orchestrations (Halsey Stevens does not say which, or how many, but evidently not the three already arranged by Brahms himself²) were given at the Pozsony gymnasium in 1897. But it was the overwhelming experience of his initial encounter (in 1902) with the work of Richard Strauss (in a Budapest performance of the tone poem, *Also sprach Zarathustra*) that was to rekindle his dormant enthusiasm for composition. Like his earlier Brahms orchestrations, Bartók's piano transcription of *Ein Heldenleben* was a labour of love, in this case one that served immediately to unleash a notably prolific compositional outpouring, as well as more directly to influence the narrative structure of his own symphonic poem, *Kossuth* (1903), written midway through the Four Piano Pieces discussed below.

If the child be indeed the father of the man, then Bartók at the age of eleven foreshadows his adult self as a man of chords rather than melodies; for while most musical children make up little tunes, the harmonically sophisticated Béla starts and ends with chords, leaving the tune to unfold a stream-like course (of 'The Danube River') deriving from the topmost notes of each ensuing chord pattern. Such early childhood efforts aside, there are quite a few unpublished pieces dating from his later teenage years including Three Piano Pieces, a Sonata, and a Piano Quartet (all dating from 1898). Five years on and the unmistakably Brahmsian Study for the Left Hand from Four Piano Pieces (1903) is proof only of lessons well learnt. Spreading over eleven pages of printed score, it reveals an impressive compositional fluency as well as an ability to construct a large-scale sonata movement out of an arpeggiated chord and a much-used descending scale pattern which eventually turns into something approaching a second subject. Between this and the extended virtuosity of the final Scherzo (dedicated to Dohnányi who, as it happens, was to act as Bartók's repertoire coach that year of his graduation³) come two slow movements, Fantasias 1 and 2. Fantasia 1, ostensibly in C minor, predates the *Kossuth* Symphony, and follows the free-flowing Straussian outlines of a bass-dictated harmony which here, in the context of what seems uncannily like a song transcription, shows him master of the art of melody and accompaniment. Post-dating *Kossuth*, Fantasia 2 in A minor is much less predictable, especially in terms of writing for the instrument, and with an exploration of registral contrast linked to the tentative beginnings of a recognizably motivic development.

If the shadow of Brahms still hovers over Fantasia 2, albeit more distantly, it is now the questing, introspective Brahms of the late *Intermezzi* from Op. 116/119 rather than that of the rhetorically outspoken, occasionally bombastic composer of the Two Rhapsodies Op. 79. Different yet again, the waltz-cum-polka of the final Scherzo approaches the more

flamboyantly diatonic mode of its dedicatee (Dohnányi), with an anarchic little rhythmic variant of the opening that is first heard to bridge the end of the $\frac{2}{4}$ polka from the middle section and the return of the $\frac{3}{8}$ waltz from the opening. With this, the twenty-two-year-old composer is already imagining a counterpoint of metrical emphases five years before beginning to toy with counterpoints of different keys in the first of the Fourteen Bagatelles Op. 6 (1908).

Whether or not Bartók came to regret his impulsive decision to allow the publication of several of his early works, including these Four Pieces (but not the closely contemporary Piano Quintet (1903–04), whose comparatively featureless and repetitive accomplishment Bartók revised extensively before discarding the score in pique following its third and supposedly final performance in 1921; it was eventually retrieved and later published in Hungary in 1971), will forever remain a moot point. For us, observers at the birth of a new language, they have much to tell of the stylistic problems faced by young composers in the early years of the twentieth century. In Bartók's case, a fluent keyboard technique might well have seduced him into settling for the confidently post-Lisztian expression of his own Rhapsody Op. 1 (1904). With the already long-standing popularity of *all'ongherese* and other 'exotic' musical ingredients reaching a positive frenzy of virtuoso endeavour in the second half of the nineteenth century, and with Liszt by far the best known of the Hungarian perpetrators, it was Liszt's virtuoso keyboard style that naturally lay behind the equally elaborate textures and sectional contrasts of Bartók's own Rhapsody. Composed only two years after his Straussian awakening and scored, apparently in one fell swoop, for piano, for two pianos and for piano and orchestra, this is by no means a routine student piece, nor even one sparked by a noticeably youthful ardour. There is instead much evidence of a zealous rhapsodizing in the supposedly grand manner whose expressive purpose the young Bartók must even then have begun to question. But even within the slightly alien context of an outdated rhetoric, he is already beginning to detail the intervallic shape of melodic fragments (motifs) in terms of their harmonic and rhythmic placing – that is to say, according to whether they are destined to arrive at or depart from the next shift in the series of elaborately defined tonal chords as they move in and out of the diatonic. It is moreover clear even at this stage that the directional emphasis of subsidiary chord formations may as readily be defined by dynamics as by slurs (Ex. 7.1).

It is worth emphasizing that it is the significance of intervallic definition that was to leave Bartók heir to a classical articulatory tradition that should on no account be confused with the stylistic neoclassicism espoused by Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Bartók's classicism is less a

Example 7.1 Rhapsody Op. 1, bars 30–31

matter of style than of a motivic articulation that dates back to Haydn and, in particular, to Beethoven – for whom musical punctuation (by whatever the means used to achieve it) was paramount when it came to promoting phrase structure as the outcome of the motivic connection or disconnection between one note and the next. Bartók was eventually to become past master in the art of Beethovenian development, and not only in his String Quartets. But a certain confusion was meanwhile to reign between the articulatory purpose of extended slurs as used to indicate phrase lengths and short slurs used to indicate the manner of performance, as well as the duration and articulatory emphasis of secondary clauses within the phrase. (Alban Berg's near-contemporary Sonata Op. 1 (1908) is still more confusing in this respect.)

At first glance, the eighth of the Fourteen Bagatelles Op. 6 (1908) might seem set to perpetuate a similar confusion, except that the longer slur showing the curve of a phrase is here underlaid by tenuto lines proposing a not-quite-legato articulation. Later, the thirds are shorn of their tenuto articulation and set above an expanding bass line that by implication increases in articulatory emphasis to a point where the balance of the three-part layout must allow for the extended melodic continuity of an expressive upper voice (see Ex. 7.2). The most important performance objective must be first to mark the connecting link between the descending semitones, whether separated by a major third (as here in a new context), or, later, by a semitone, then a minor ninth (in the 'recapitulation'), and then to promote the syncopated major triads with as much contrast in articulation as the dynamic rise and accented on-beat arrivals might suggest.

Example 7.2 Fourteen Bagatelles Op. 6 No. 8, bars 20–21

Example 7.3 Two Elegies Op. 8b No. 1, bars 1–6

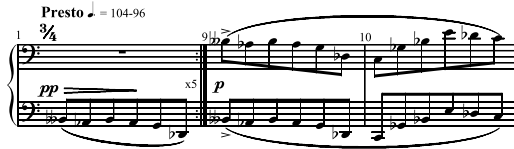
After five sabbatical years (1904–09) consumed by the collecting and transcribing of folk music, the *Two Elegies* Op. 8b (1908–09, following hard on the heels of the *First String Quartet* Op. 7) mark Bartók's return to entirely abstract composition. Picking up where the outer sections of the *Rhapsody* left off, filtered through his intervening encounter with the music of Debussy, they look backwards to the rolling reiterations of an intermittently formulaic bass, as well as forwards to the suspended harmonic movement of prolonged ostinati. The first piece begins as it intends to unfold, introducing staccato elements within the two-bar slurs that shape the opening motifs (see Ex. 7.3), both so as to throw the weight of each phrase towards the rising fourth which spans the bar line and to account for the matching fall towards the triadic formations that conclude the second and sixth bars; meanwhile the separately accented arrival points include the suggestion of cadential close. It is the outcome of this motivic delineation, with its characteristic dynamic retreat from each succeeding downbeat arrival, that is in effect the rhythmic 'theme' of the piece, recognizable as such even as the intervals expand and then contract towards the close.

Dating from the same period, *Four Dirges* Op. 9a (1909–10), *Three Burlesques* Op. 8c (1908–11) and *Seven Sketches* Op. 9 (1908–10) seem both to presage the future of *Allegro barbaro* (in Op. 8c) and to effect a nostalgic reminiscence of octave-based chords and tolling melodies outlined in octaves (in Op. 8c and 9a respectively). The $\frac{2}{2}$ time signature and clearly marked bar-phrasing (4 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 1) of the third *Dirge* leave no doubt that the melodic impetus belongs to the bass, and that the synco-

Example 7.4 Four Dirges Op. 9a No. 3, bars 1–4



Example 7.5 Three Burlesques Op. 8c No.1, bars 1–5 and 9–10



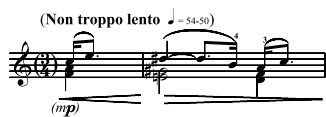
pated right-hand tolling develops a melodic feature only to stop short of the bar line (Ex. 7.4), later contracting to form an inverse (rising/falling) sequential relationship with the bass on approach to the climax. In the final Dirge, chords are initially placed either side of a central melody that limps from one downbeat to the next until the rhythmic emphasis is later reversed to direct the corresponding intervallic inversions across the bar from weak to strong.

Meanwhile, the leaner, insistently semitonal relationships of the Three Burlesques make extended play with sequence (in No. 1) and with conflicting, quasi-bitonal triadic or scalic elements (Nos. 2 and 3); throughout the triple-time rhythmic pulse of No. 1 ($\frac{3}{4}$) and No. 3 ($\frac{3}{8}$) articulation depends as much on the placing of old-fashioned phrasing slurs as – for the first time – on a range of accentuation evidently set up in advance of *Allegro barbaro* (see below). Moreover, the tapered, one-in-a-bar phrasing and unison repetitions of Burlesque No. 1 only gradually begin to reveal a sequential purpose that is as much harmonic as it is linear – in other words, essentially *not* the outcome of a three-in-a-bar stress that would expose successive tritones at the expense of the intervening major third (see Ex. 7.5). This contrary phrasing is reserved for two climactic points at which the metrical emphasis becomes a duple one, paced across the bar line – both where the second tritone successively becomes a perfect fifth and, later, where the separated identity of the major third doubles to support the twofold image of an augmented triad. It is only then that the tapered phrasing of the opening bars is understood specifically to focus on the diminished fifth while deliberately delaying the mirrored outcome central to the continuity or discontinuity of the bar-phrasing overall.

Of the Seven Sketches (1908–10), four announce themselves as

Example 7.6 Seven Sketches, Op. 9

(a) No. 4, bars 29/3–30 (RH)



(b) No. 7, bars 7–9 (RH)



based on folk material, the remainder pursue more abstract concerns. Particularly interesting in the present context is the considerable refinement of a motivic argument conducted almost entirely in terms of phrase accentuation in the most substantial central piece of the seven. Here, the main subject matter is the melodic relationship that unfolds between successive major/minor thirds, expressed in terms of the slurs that connect or (mostly) separate their downbeat emphases, no matter what the metrical placing (Ex. 7.6a). Likewise in the final piece, a marked emphasis on the downbeat character of the answering phrase dictates that beginnings should be heard as successive restarts, each caught up from beneath the end of the last (Ex. 7.6b).

Then, almost out of the blue, comes the explosive confidence of *Allegro barbaro*. Although dating from 1911, this was a piece that had no public performance until the composer himself played it at a concert in Budapest in February 1921. By then he had completed both the Suite Op. 14 (1916) and the Three Studies Op. 18 (1918), as well as giving the premieres of both in April 1919 (again in Budapest). Coming between *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* Op. 11 (1911) and the Four Pieces for Orchestra Op. 12 (1912), *Allegro barbaro* is one of Bartók's best-known and most successful concert pieces; yet, like increasing numbers of works dating from between 1904 and 1919, and all those written thereafter, it has no opus number. But while he seems to have decided quite early on to withhold opus numbers from works directly influenced by or even indirectly indebted to folk music, he was by no means consistent – especially as it gradually became less and less possible to draw a clear distinction between the two.

Behind the breathless pulse of its rhythmic ostinati, *Allegro barbaro* discovers a quasi-diatonic use for major/minor chords whereby the paced-out repetitions between one (generally root-position) chord and the next are in themselves indicative of phrase-creating periods. Phrasing slurs of a kind inherited from the nineteenth-century masters clearly have no func-

tion in a context defined by block chording and where supplementary motivic emphases derive from the kind of articulation scale first used in *Three Burlesques No. 1*; this ranges from zero (no accent at all), regardless of dynamic, to the sparingly used extreme: $\cdot - > \succ \geq \wedge \wedge \triangle$ *sfsff*. Bartók is moreover meticulous in marking the emphases appropriate only to right or left hand as well as the silences (rests) that aerate the surrounding (harmonic) continuity; it is this aerated continuity which of itself releases two, later three, notes to stamp out a coded motivic message.

Bartók was at the height of his folk-inspired creativity during the years separating the composition of *Allegro barbaro* in 1911 and the two World War I piano works, the *Suite Op. 14* (1916) and *Three Studies Op. 18* (1918). Perhaps not wholly coincidentally, the ending of the war in 1918 was to mark the beginning of an upturn in Bartók's musical fortunes as well as the auspicious start of his long association with Universal Edition – an arrangement that lasted until, in March 1938, he reluctantly agreed to assign all future works to Hawkes and Son (later Boosey and Hawkes) in London. Meanwhile, 1914–18 travel restrictions had meant the indefinite postponement of plans for further ethnomusicological research, a postponement which in turn led him to take a close look at his compositional purpose: just in the nick of a time which could have led him to resume the dedicated work of ethnomusicological recording and transcription, he retreated from the brink of a future that could otherwise have been devoid of three piano concertos, the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, *Mikrokosmos*, *Contrasts*, and all the wealth of chamber and orchestral works that were to occupy the last twenty years or so of his life.

In any case, the folk material already to hand was more than enough to occupy the war years, especially since he additionally set to work on his one-act ballet, *The Wooden Prince* (1914–17), following this with the four-movement *Suite Op. 14*. The alternating-hands layout of the chord that sets the momentum for its *Allegretto* first movement is evidently not so remote in kind from the opening of *Allegro barbaro*. But here the three-note motif is immediately extended in melodic sequence coupled with a repeating rhythmic motif designed to throw the weight of the phrase towards the middle of each second and the downbeat of every fourth bar; meanwhile, the staccato offbeat chording shifts in line with the inflected melody while remaining dynamically independent of it.

The very different character of the one-in-a-bar Scherzo needs only the springboard arrival on/off every fourth bar for the phrasing of its descent through a sequence of augmented triads to take care of itself. The corresponding ascent has no cut-off point; instead, the dynamic rise across 4 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 2 bars serves an equally explicit purpose – just as the one-in-a-bar slurs of the ensuing section, coupled with heavy or reduced emphasis,

Example 7.7 Suite, Op. 14 No. 3, bars 29–30, 33–4

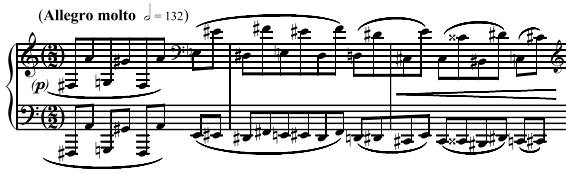
Example 7.8 Brahms, Fifty-one Exercises, No. 7, bar 1

mark the divisions of an eight-bar phrase into 1 + 1 + 2 + 4 bar beats. Dynamics are used to similar effect at the start of the *Allegro molto* third movement, later projecting a phrase that seems momentarily to shift the bar line, then abruptly to detach the final quaver of each bar, lifting it into upbeat mode so as to draw attention to the fleeting cadential close as an outcome of the ruling ostinato (Ex. 7.7). Dynamics again take charge of phrasing in the concluding *Sostenuto*, where a sequence of two-note melodic rotations gradually expands its intervallic horizons to reach a small dynamic peak at each half bar.

If *Allegro barbaro* and the 1916 Suite were to point Bartók towards a more sinewy style of keyboard writing – devoid of the cimbalom-like arpeggiations so characteristic of the 1904 Rhapsody and heard still to propel an essentially fragmented melodic line even in the *Elegies* of 1909 – this was nonetheless a style as yet dependent on diatonic chords, even though the chords had by now assumed a role that was rhythm-provoking rather than merely decorative. Two years on, the *Three Studies* Op. 18 (1918) move into darkly expressionist realms of an uncompromising harmonic uniformity.

Brahms knew all about the finer points of piano-playing technique, and his *Fifty-one Exercises* are second to none when it comes to finding imaginative solutions to such problems as contracting the hand within the space of a minor third (Ex. 7.8) or of extending it beyond the octave; with his early admiration for Brahms, Bartók would surely have known and admired the compositorial quality of these exercises and may even have had them in mind as he came to write his own studies. To display the one in terms of the other is for instance not only to appreciate the similarities but to begin to feel the broad harmonic sweep of the underlying chromaticism and implied melodic momentum in the first of the *Three Studies* (Ex. 7.9).

Example 7.9 Bartók, Three Studies Op. 18 No. 1, bars 31–33

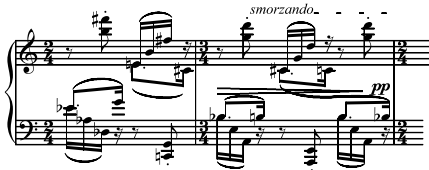


Example 7.10 Three Studies Op. 18 No. 3

(a) bars 10–11



(b) bars 41–42



Later, the dynamic accentuation of a Chopinesque cadenza ends up against the grain of both the motivic phrasing and the rhythmic groupings. In the final Study a similarly graded accentuation is expressed in terms of duration rather than dynamics, while the ongoing semiquavers reveal themselves not just as the accompanimental figure they had seemed at the outset but as a foreground thread with speech-like implications of its own (Ex. 7.10a). The motivic syncopations that emerge as an initially fragmented *sostenuto* eventually develop a more extended pairing, *leggierissimo*, (Ex. 7.10b), and with a skeletal harmony likewise paired in octave transposition on either side.

The Three Studies were by far the most exploratory piano pieces of a decade that had begun with the *Allegro barbaro* and ended with its first performance (along with Eight Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs Op. 20) in February 1921; the Studies, premiered in April that same year, touch on quasi-Schoenbergian areas of a harmony by now inseparable from melody, bass from treble, vertical from horizontal, and vice versa. Yet it was not until eight years on – with his early pieces (Opp. 1–9, 1904–10) beginning to be overshadowed by more recent developments in

other areas – heard to notable effect in the Second String Quartet Op. 17 (1915–17) – that Bartók began to think of filling the gap in his pianistic output. Scarcely pausing to draw compositional breath between June and October 1926, he wrote the Sonata, the folk-based suite *Out of Doors*, and Nine Little Piano Pieces (sketches for other works of the period, but none the less striking on their own account), then gave the premières of all three on 8 December in Budapest (although Halsey Stevens seems uncertain, since in the text he cites Baden-Baden, July 1927⁴); he had meanwhile completed his first Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, begun in August and finished in November, for performance in July the following year. (When *did* he find time to practise?)

At first sight, the Sonata appears characterized solely by a relentless rhythmic energy whose textures initially resist coherence, seeming almost wilfully to distance themselves high from low, vertical from horizontal; the richly doubled chord-voicings of *Allegro barbaro* have gone, sacrificing harmonic resonance to a punched-out rhythm whose intervallically cramped articulation often seems designed to emphasize rather than to fill the musical space between high treble and low bass. And since these rhythmic ostinati are given little opportunity to escape the unison, harmonic underpinning has to be teased out from within the ongoing pulse of a chorded linearity. In the context of a generally thematic rhythm, coupled with pedal-point insistence on block pitch repetition, octave doublings take on a quasi-harmonic role, and it soon begins to seem as if finding a balance between the non-virtuoso aspect of these various doublings may of itself serve to substantiate a harmonic continuity too often obliterated in a welter of uniform loudness. In this respect it should by now be clear that Bartók uses dynamic markings not only to increase or diminish long-term sound levels, but as short-term indicators of an expressive surging (see Exx. 7.11a and 7.11b below, and also Ex. 7.5 from the opening of Burlesque No. 1). Such instances of successive falls or rises in dynamic energy are evidently no more cumulative than are the isolated *sforzandi* (Ex. 7.11c) here attached to single notes or chords, particularly since these *sf* (seldom *fff*) accents are placed well clear of the dynamically independent central ostinati.

After finishing the Sonata in a few short weeks during the early summer of 1926, Bartók carried straight on with the suite of five pieces which, for obviously rustic reasons, he called *Out of Doors*. The largely one-dimensional settings of these five technically daunting pieces are obsessively close-positioned even when reaching beyond the octave; yet the sound must evidently escape constraint, especially in the nocturnal surroundings of the fourth piece. Here, unfolding clusters, whether on or before the beat, are placed and articulated with the same exquisite precision as in an

Example 7.11 Sonata, I

(a) bars 1–4

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 120-126$

(b) bars 7–11

(c) four-part layout of opening (compressed)

earlier and less complex incarnation as the ‘tonic’ (opening and closing) chord of *Improvisations* Op. 20 No. 3 (see Exx. 7.12a and 7.12b); later, the simplest diatonic contours of the middle section (of *Out of Doors*, No. 4) are minutely varied not only in pitch and rhythm, but in a range of motivic articulation on a par with the most sophisticated of developmental techniques, whether classically notated or folk-improvised.

Compared to the generally unyielding percussiveness of the suite, the unmistakably harmonic underpinning of the Sonata gives it an almost indigestible richness, so that Constant Lambert’s oft-quoted disapprobation reads all the more peculiarly. The ‘dangerous split’ he observes ‘between melody and harmony’⁵ undoubtedly stems from diatonic expectations that would have us seek out consonant verticalities from within the linear cast of a movement which is in effect a series of unresolved harmonic suspensions. It may be interesting to ponder upon the ease with which Lambert’s perceived objections could be overcome, if only by the somewhat negative expedient of transposing the topmost pitches of the

Example 7.12

(a) Improvisations Op. 20 No. 3, opening (non-chronological example)

(b) *Out of Doors* No. 3, bars 1–2

right-hand part (those attached to up-facing stems) a degree or so in either direction in the search for a harmonic consequence sufficiently bland to have satisfied Lambert, but which would at a stroke have obliterated Bartók's compellingly semitonal argument. Simplistic maybe, but because it focuses on vertical relationships, this little experiment could prove significant in alerting the ear to the fact that the linear progress from point to point within each ostinato phrase is supported by the harmonic concerns of a bass line (the down-facing stems) which, if heard to connect through the rests, serves equally to suggest a lighter, essentially propulsive purpose for the intervening (alto/tenor register) middleground (see Ex. 7.11c).

The mostly contrapuntal focus of *Nine Little Piano Pieces* (1926) offers rewards of a gentler kind with regard to stylistic emphasis. The first four are particularly revealing of Bartók's simpler, if no less subtle, approach to articulation both as a means of indicating character and of circumscribing motivic events, each one being punctuated by means which serve to enhance its own particular style; the fourth, without a single slur in sight, relies entirely on metre (whether variable bar lengths or note groupings) and dynamics (including just two different accents) for its phrasing.⁶

Twelve years on from the spate of piano music characteristic of the essentially 'percussive' 1920s, a commission from Benny Goodman and Joseph Szigeti was to result in *Contrasts* for violin, clarinet and piano; unique in Bartók's output as his only piece of chamber music to include a wind instrument, the piano is here allocated an intermediary role between two more evidently virtuoso contrasts. Drawing throughout on the particular rhythmic character of much Hungarian folk music, all three movements project the resolutely downbeat emphasis of motivic beginnings,

Example 7.13 *Contrasts*, I, bars 3–13

(Moderato, ben ritmato)
 ♩ = ca. 100-94

Cl. in A

p

♩ = 94

cresc. *f*

dim. *mf*

regardless of their placing within the metrical bar – which, conversely, is often correspondingly de-accented (see Ex. 7.13). As if to risk no misunderstanding in such contexts, the vertical stroke observed in the first of Nine Little Piano Pieces to indicate the release of one sequential element prior to the start of another recurs here but, oddly, only in the clarinet part: had Bartók by then discovered that wind players were especially prone to overlook the structural implications of such motivic articulation? (Or were they in this instance inserted by Goodman himself as a form of aide-memoire, later to be perpetuated in the Hawkes and Son copyright score of 1942?)

In any case, since these marks serve only to reinforce the punctuating purpose of the printed slurs, they are no more ‘optional’ than is an articulation designed to emphasize departure; to disregard a downbeat succession responsible for the remarkable buoyancy of a phrasing devoid of cumulative arrival points would indeed be (*pace* Stravinsky) to ‘sin against the spirit of the work’.