

# The Influence of Bartok on Crumb's "Music For A Summer Evening"

BY MICHAEL G. KINGAN

To demonstrate that one person influenced another it is necessary to show that the first person, either indirectly or intangibly, had the power to modify the path of the second. The evidence must show that the qualities and traits of the first person are, in some manner, present in his or her successor.

Although composers usually attempt to establish unique styles, hoping to create music set apart from their predecessors and peers, we often hear it said that a particular composer was influenced by some other composer. This is the case involving "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion" by Bela Bartok and "Music for a Summer Evening" by George Crumb. Written about four decades apart, these works are often compared, first, because of their unique instrumentation (both are composed for two pianos and two percussionists) and, second, because Crumb frequently comments in published articles about "the Bartok influence."<sup>1</sup>

## BACKGROUND

Bela Bartok (1881–1945) made strong use of symmetrical and asymmetrical rhythmical figures, as well as the modalities of Slavic folk music. His works have been described as basically tonal, expanded by polymodal structures and dissonance. Bartok regarded his analytic studies of popular music as his most important contribution.

George Crumb (b. 1929) studied with Ross Lee Finney and has received numerous commissions, grants, and awards including the 1968 Pulitzer Prize in Music for "Echoes of Time and the River." His "Makrokosmos" collection (1970–1979) consists of four major works that have external associations to both Bartok's "Mikrokosmos" and Debussy's "24 Preludes."

"Music for a Summer Evening" ("Makrokosmos III"), completed in 1973, is written for two amplified pianos and two percussionists. It is a large-scale "cosmic drama" in five movements. The first, third, and fifth movements are for the full ensemble, while the intermediate movements serve as intermezzos. The three main movements carry poetic quotations.

Crumb has frequently stated how much he admires the Bartok "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," and he has often wondered why more composers have not written for this instrumentation. Although "Music for a Summer Evening" does not sound like Bartok, and in no way was a direct attempt by Crumb to compose his version of "Sonata," there is a strong Bartokian influence on Crumb that is evident in his music and openly acknowledged by him.

## SYMMETRY IN PITCH

Regarding Bartok's influence, Crumb stated: "All through my fifties period, I felt the influence, in some student works of mine, by the Bartok sound...it was an influence among others...but a very important source, since I hadn't found my own style... I think, in terms of ["Music for a Summer

Evening"] itself that the influences would be in a much more general way... I think the idea of symmetry, generally, as applied to rhythm and certain pitch constructs [influenced me]."<sup>2</sup>

Analytical books on Bartok's music constantly use such terms as "interval cycles," "axis of symmetry," "symmetrical pitch collections," and "cells."<sup>3</sup> Crumb comments, "I don't quite know what they mean by 'interval cycles,' but I'm aware that for Bartok each interval had a very special value, almost an emblematic value. He was particularly fond of the minor third, melodically. And the tritone and the perfect fourth, all of these things occurred almost emblematically in Bartok. Sometimes they'll occur in combination, [he sings] *f-c-d* being so common. Or *f-d*, the [descending] minor third."<sup>4</sup>

Bartok's influence is seen in Crumb's music through symmetrical division of the octave and particular devices, such as arches and palindromes, which Crumb says permeate Bartok's music. Example A, from Movement III, is an arch event of five entrances. The arch is represented by the ascent and descent of the arpeggiation on C and G in the tubular bells and doubled by the quintuplet tremolo in the piano.

Example A: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. III

Musical score for Example A, showing Piano I, Piano II, Perc. I, and Perc. II parts. The score is in 7/8 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and arpeggiated figures. The Perc. I part includes tubular bells and a quintuplet tremolo. The Perc. II part includes tubular bells and a quintuplet tremolo. The score is marked "molto allarg." and includes a note: "(M) Source: Finney's over-the-wind of stone (a thick oval 'shell' over several inches of stone). Motion should be away from the stone.

Example B shows the pentatonic ostinato that is continually present during the "Song of Reconciliation," in Movement V. This ostinato can be reduced to a symmetric pitch formation. As you see, the inside intervals surrounding the A-flat are both major seconds, and the intervals extended from these notes are minor thirds.

Example B: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," "Song"

Musical score for Example B, showing a pentatonic ostinato. The score is in 7/8 time and features a pentatonic scale with intervals of 3, 2, 2, 3. The notes are A-flat, B-flat, C, D, E-flat.

Although his cell structure is not always symmetrical by nature, there is a correlation between Crumb and Bartok. Crumb refers to Bartok's music as being "almost like a mosaic of little cells."<sup>5</sup> Robert Moevs describes the three fundamental cells, heard in the first sound items of "Summer Evening," which summarize Crumb's vocabulary: first is the three-note chromatic sound, conceived as a whole tone with an intermediate semitone, usually displaced by an octave; second is a three-note whole-tone sound; the third item combines the two figures and includes the disposition major third and minor ninth.

Also important is the grace-note cadenza figure. This sound, heard as a tritone plus a fourth, should be identified because of its specific exploitation. Often the figure is "completed" through the addition of another tritone. Regarding symmetry and harmonic structure, Crumb comments: "In terms of pitch, the symmetry might be certain chords that are built symmetrically, like the chord that is built by a central perfect fourth flanked by two tritones. This a favorite chord of mine, and was a favorite chord of Bartok's, which I borrowed."<sup>6</sup>

The chord to which Crumb refers is what Elliott Antokoletz calls a Z-Cell (G – C / C-sharp – F-sharp).<sup>7</sup> When the Z-Cell is examined in its normal position, two perfect fourths are found with a half step between them. Crumb's version, the tritone-fourth-tritone (C-sharp – G / C – F-sharp) appears to be a permutation. This symmetry can be located in the harmonic structure of Movement III (see Example A). The ostinato is an arpeggiation of F-sharp and C-sharp. Superimposed over this—the previously mentioned arch—is an arpeggiation of C and G. All four notes are played in a cluster during the fermata measure.

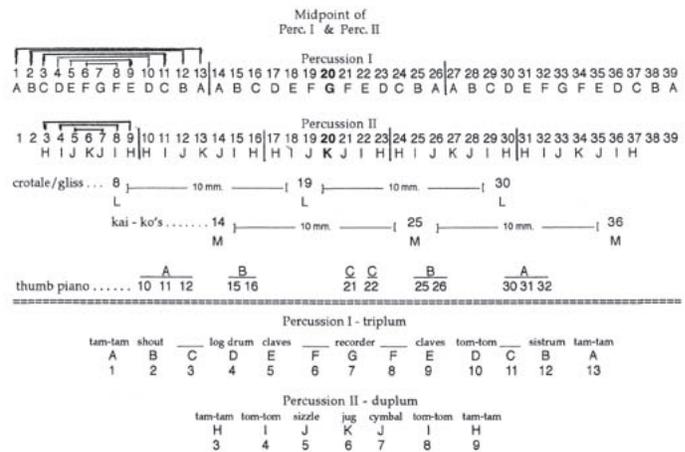
Regarding Bartok's concept of the axis of symmetry, Crumb, referring to the opening of Movement V, points out that, "there would be the juxtaposition of two dominant seventh chords a tritone apart by roots. Kind of a Mussorgsky 'Boris Godunov' sound. This was taken over by Bartok and by Debussy."<sup>8</sup>

The two dominant seventh chords are separated by a grace note and are in different inversions. The roots of the main chords follow the intervallic progression of down a fourth and up a second, with the total distance traveled being a minor third (A-flat – E-flat – F). Note that, as quoted earlier regarding interval cycles, Crumb sang this interval pattern as one of Bartok's favorites.

Bartok used the term "Bruckenform" (bridge form) to describe the palindromic structure of the third movement of his "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste." The essence of this form, which customarily follows the five-component scheme A-B-C-B1-A1, is that the fourth and fifth sections are not just variations on the second and first, but are recast to produce something aesthetically conclusive. Crumb was aware of this form and it appealed to him; however, "Summer Evening" does not reflect this symmetrical structure. Joseph DeBaise observes symmetrical thinking, in general terms, of the arrangement of three large movements (asymmetric in nature) separated by two smaller forms, both being symmetrical.

The symmetrical nature of Movement IV, "The Myth," is quite interesting. Robert Moevs says this "movement is cast as a fourteenth-century isorhythmic hoquetus with a double tenor."<sup>9</sup> The formal scheme (Figure 1) illustrates the observations that follow.

Figure 1: Goter—Formal Scheme of Mvt. IV



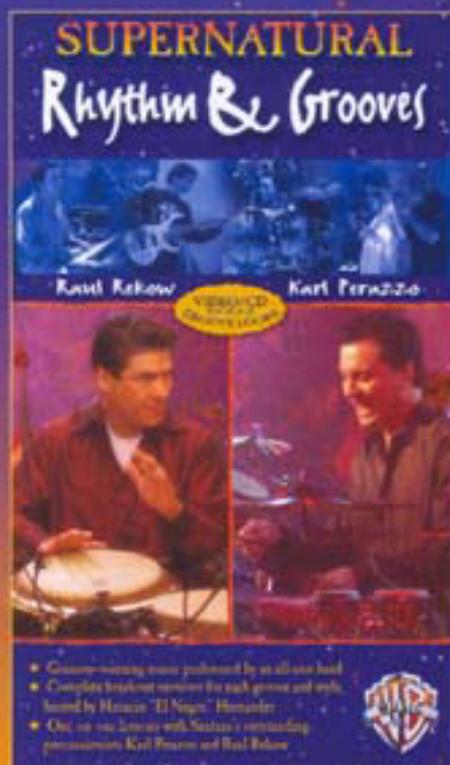
This isorhythmic movement is made up of a "triplum" (Percussion I) of thirteen measures (played three times), a "duplum" (Percussion II), which is seven measures long (played five times), and two tenors (Piano I and II). The first "tenor" consists of two elements. Each is repeated three times in a talea, or rhythmic pattern, of eleven measures. The second "tenor" uses an African thumb piano to play three cadenza-like figures. The symmetry of these figures is not exact because the length of the rests varies in the second half of the movement. This permits the thumb piano to overlap with the elements of the first tenor. The "macrocosmic design" of this movement demonstrates the symmetrical nature of all four voices.

Both of the percussion parts are palindromes. The center point of the piece, measure 20, is the midpoint of both percussion voices. The rhythmical arrangement of each percussion event is such that they seldom coincide, more often interrupting each other in hocket-like fashion. The isorhythmic plan is much more concealed to the ear because the two piano parts do not line up exactly symmetrical with the percussion parts.

An additional general influence of Bartok's, not involving symmetry, is the combining of different tonal systems. Crumb explains: "Bartok might use some kind of tonality...and include atonality, pentatonics, or other modal sort of things. He might use whole-tone configurations, just like Debussy did. The turn-of-the-century composers interested me because they were into combining all kinds of systems. Here we are approaching another turn-of-the-century, and I think these composers are relevant to today."<sup>10</sup>

Bartok often created melodic structures by immediately following one scale type, or interval structure, with another. Crumb does something similar to this in the "Song of Reconciliation" from Movement V. He places the rising part of the vibraphone melody in B-flat minor, while the descending part is based on the whole-tone scale. Examples C and D illustrate how Crumb combines several systems and trends. The piano is "prepared" to the extent that a sheet of paper is placed on the strings. The diatonic dominant seventh chords are juxtaposed around the tritone axis. The grace notes to the accelerando effects in the piano are both whole-tone sets in clusters. The event after this is what Crumb refers to as a "complex of ten

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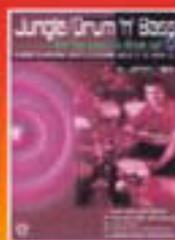
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notes.” The five notes in the left hand repeat their pattern, while the rhythm and the order of the right hand are varied. There is also a quote from a Bach fugue with a canonic echo in the vibraphone to distort its clarity.

Example C: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. V, combination of systems

Example D: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. V, Quote from Bach

**SYMMETRY IN PROPORTIONS**

Erno Lendvai analyzes portions of the “Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion” in regard to the Golden Section,<sup>11</sup> which is a geometrical proportion in which the larger part of a length corresponds to the geometric mean of the whole length and the smaller length. Although this proportion is not truly symmetrical, it demonstrates Bartok’s intuitive concern for a natural sense of balance in his music. Lendvai cites how this concept is expressed in the formal plan and the phrase structure on a large and small scale. Numerically, the larger part is .618 of the whole. He also points out Bartok’s interest in the Fibonacci series, which is a mathematical progression in which every number is equal to the sum of the previous two numbers. He uses this sequence to explain interval content of chords and melodies.<sup>12</sup> Although Lendvai’s theoretical speculations are interesting, some consider his observations as not being intentional by Bartok, but fortuitous.<sup>13</sup>

Crumb says, “Bartok’s early interest in metrical patterns like sevens, fives, and nines, are symmetrical divisions of the measure in a way that fours and eights are not.”<sup>14</sup> These numbers are considered symmetrical because their center point falls

clearly on a beat, rather than in between two beats. The predominant time signature of the first movement of the “Sonata” is 9/8, and within this time element the only true symmetrical beat grouping Bartok uses is 3 + 3 + 3. However, he also exploits several asymmetrical groupings such as 2 + 2 + 2 + 3.

The most obvious symmetrical subdivision of a beat is the quintuplet motive from the second movement (Example E). Crumb specifically sang, and cited, this section as one he felt to be “an inspiring Bartokian moment,”<sup>15</sup> stating, “the five is special... A four wouldn’t sound the same, and a six wouldn’t sound the same... He used [this] proportion a lot.”<sup>16</sup>

Example E: Bartok, “Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion,” Mvt. II

The entire second movement of “Music for a Summer Evening” is an example of Crumb’s fondness for the symmetrical number five. Example F illustrates the implied time signature of 5/16. The grouping of the eighth notes in the left hand of Piano I suggests a secondary time of 5/8, while the pizzicati of Piano II play an arch of five notes, suggesting a third overlapping time signature of a slower pulse, five over a quarter note tied to a sixteenth.

Example F: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. II

Examples G1, G2, and G3, from the second main section of Movement I, are typical Crumb figures. The predominant “noc-

tural call” of the imitative counterpoint in Example G1 is the sixteenth-note quintuplet figure, which omits the second note and is then followed by a sextuplet. The second half of this motive is written as two partial quintuplets, where each of the seven notes that are played are subdivided into triplets. Example G2 illustrates how the imitation includes percussion timbres, and G3 demonstrates how the figures are developed into compound polyrhythms.

Example G1: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. I

Example G2: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. I

Example G3: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. I

The opening two motives of the final movement recur several times and are rich in symmetrical numbers (Example H). Following the triplet of the juxtaposed seventh chords is a cascading motive. This composed ritard consists of the polyrhythms 5 against 3, 4 against 3, 3 against 2, and a quintuplet, which create an interesting rhythmic dissonance.<sup>17</sup>

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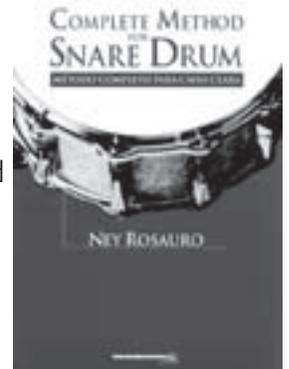
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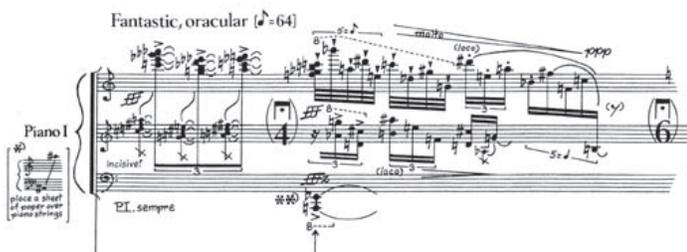
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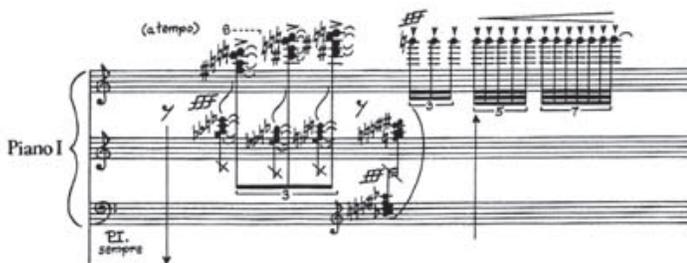
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Example H: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. V



Examples I1, I2, and I3 make an obvious comparison between Crumb and Bartok. Following the second juxtaposed chords in Movement V, there is an accelerando on a high B-natural using the numbers three, five, and seven (Example I1). This figure resembles the one found in "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste" by Bartok (Example I2). Crumb takes this idea one step further in Example I3. As Movement V progresses to its powerful climax, he writes a rhythmical figure answering the accelerando, still using sevens and fives. The entrances of these pentatonic figures are dovetailed between the two pianos and the xylophone.

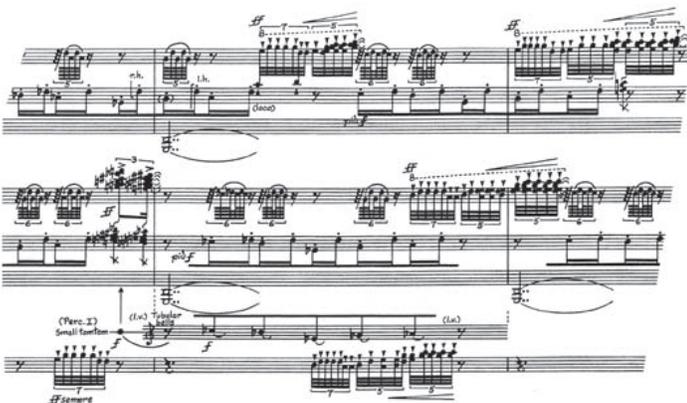
Example I1: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. V



Example I2: Bartok, "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste," Mvt. III



Example I3: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. V



## INSTRUMENTATION

When writing on the "remarkable phenomena of recent music," Crumb lists "many contributing factors." Among them is "the liberation of percussion instruments, a development for which Bartok is especially important."<sup>18</sup>

Bartok's use of orchestral percussion instruments was both traditional and developmental. Although he used standard scoring choices in his symphonic works, creative use of percussion regarding rhythmic support, sonority, and color, and soloistic prominence can be found in the "Miraculous Mandarin," the "Concerto for Orchestra," and "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste." Although Bartok was not the first to use the glissando on timpani,<sup>19</sup> he exploited it in his vocabulary of expressive percussive sounds, using this technique nearly one fifth of the time that the timpani is played.<sup>20</sup> He also created a unique cymbal sonority that has become known as the "Bartok roll." Found in "Miraculous Mandarin" and "Music for Strings," this roll is produced by swirling two crash cymbals together in a circular motion.

Bartok often used the timpani's capability of rapid tuning changes during the "Sonata," either in a solo capacity or to support the harmony. Consider the timpani part starting just before the "Allegro Molto" (Example J). During the accelerando, the timpanist is alternating between an F and a B on the two lowest drums. Preceding the solo of measure 32, the F becomes F-sharp, and the B changes to a C. The pitch on the low drum now has to change every two measures for the first nine bars of the Allegro, while playing on the middle drum. During this passage, the percussion part plays the main rhythmic motive in dialogue between the two timbres of snares-on and snares-off, while the color of the one-handed bass drum roll underlines the harmonically and rhythmically supportive timpani part.

Example J: Bartok, "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," Mvt. I, mm. 28–50.



Imitative passages are expanded to include percussion instruments. At one point in Movement I, the interval of a minor sixth is passed from register to register descending from the xylophone, down through each octave of the piano, then finally into the timpani in an imitative fashion. This type of imitation is found in Crumb's music with a much greater frequency. Also in the first movement, Bartok writes a twenty-eight measure roll-glissando effect as an ostinato. While most of Crumb's writ-

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ing for timpani is quite different from Bartok's, the extended glissando is one technique he utilizes.

The opening eight measures of the second movement (Example K) are significant for several reasons. The first four measures of percussion serve as a *sol* introduction. When the pianos enter in measure five, the percussion becomes a colorful accompaniment. The notation of the snare drum with snares off calls for two tone colors from one drum, created by striking it in the center when the note is written on the line, and at the edge when the note falls below the line. The cymbal part has three different indications: it is to be struck "with a thin wooden stick on the extreme edge," "on the dome," and "with a soft headed stick." Altogether, there is a total of six different percussion colors. Note how the "suspended cymbal with soft headed stick" always accompanies the lowest chord of each phrase. This idea of a percussion sonority accompanying a particular chord color is found in Crumb's "Music for a Summer Evening."

Example K: Bartok, "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," Mvt. II, mm. 1–8

The score for Example K shows two percussion parts. Percussion I includes Cymbal and Side Drum e.c. (edge center). Percussion II includes Side Drum s.c. (center). The score is in 4/4 time and features various dynamic markings and articulations. A legend at the bottom indicates that a note on the line means 'in the centre' and a note below the line means 'on the extreme edge of the skin'.

About seventy measures from the end of the piece, the snare drum begins a rhythmic motive that resembles rhythms of melodies heard earlier. The drum is accompanied at different times by timpani, cymbal with soft-headed stick, triangle with wooden stick, two cymbals clashed, and finally—as the snare rhythm dissipates into nothing—by a suspended cymbal played "with the fingernail, or the blade of a pocket knife, on the very edge." Although the snare drum is important in this last section, it is heard purely as a solo instrument only in the final ten measures.

The triangle and tam-tam are Bartok's most economically used instruments. These sounds are effective as either a rhythmic accent, aligned with another player, or as a supportive roll, accompanying the ensemble. In Movement I Bartok uses different colors and functions for the triangle. The darker tone of a series of strokes marked "col legno" (with wood stick) articulates the downbeats of each measure. But, when the pianos have a rest on the downbeat, Bartok asks for "ordinary means, with a metal beater" for a brighter, shimmery sound.

Conversely, the xylophone is a very active instrument. Its functions included melodic doubling, interactive counterpoint,

addition of color, and solo responsibilities. Example L shows the only true solo the xylophone has, which is at the opening of the final movement.

Example L: Bartok, "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," Mvt. III, mm. 5–9

The score for Example L shows a solo xylophone part in 2/4 time. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and consists of a melodic line with various intervals and articulations.

These soloistic examples show how Bartok elevated the importance of percussion instruments to equal status with the pianos. Crumb uses drums, cymbals, and mallet instruments to a greater extent than Bartok. But—in respect to rhythm, color, sonority, expressive sounds and innovations, specific performance directions, and the soloistic nature of percussion effects—observations can be made to show a correspondence to Bartok's method and an influence on Crumb's ideas regarding his percussion instruments.

Note how specific Crumb's indications are about details regarding the instruments. Compare Example M from Movement I, "Nocturnal Sounds," to Bartok's suggestion of using different beaters on the suspended cymbal in Example K. Crumb not only suggests a particular vibraphone mallet, but he clearly indicates when the vibrato should enter the texture.

Example M: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. I

The score for Example M shows two percussion parts. Percussion I is Claves and Percussion II is Vibraphone. The score includes detailed performance instructions such as "glissando over all plates with 2 soft mallets" and "switch on vibrato precisely with claves!". The score is in 4/4 time and features various dynamic markings and articulations.

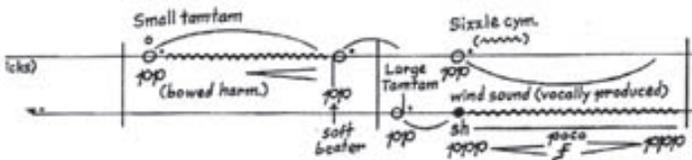
The traditional instruments used by Crumb are typical of an orchestral section. He asks the performers to play these instruments in their normal manner and also with what he calls "extended techniques." Tam-tams and cymbals are traditional sound effects, whose soft punctuations create a wash of sound that blends with the colors of the other instruments, while in louder situations they serve as a powerful rhythmical accent. Crumb carries the power of the tam-tam to an extreme when he calls for three of them to be played simultaneously at the end of two phrases in Movement III (see Example A).

He also uses tam-tams and cymbals in association with other sonorities and colors (see Example I3). Referring to this example from Movement V, one sees that the pianos play whole-tone clusters at several points. When Piano I performs them,

they are accompanied by a cymbal stroke. When performed by Piano II, a tam-tam note is played. Compare this to Bartok's use of suspended cymbal in the opening of Movement II.

An extended technique involving the tam-tam is found in the fourth movement of the Crumb work. The first event in the duplum of Percussion II is a tam-tam sound produced, first by striking the instrument softly, then bowing it to create a harmonic. This technique is used throughout the movement. In Example N, Crumb reverses the order of striking and bowing, and then combines the sonority with other sound effects.

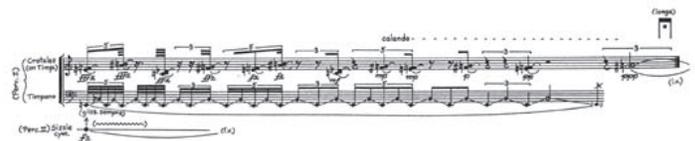
Example N: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," Mvt. IV



Crumb rarely uses timpani in the traditional orchestral sense, but he continually uses some of the extended techniques that Bartok initiated. In "Music for a Summer Evening," a forty-minute piece, a single timpano is used only twice. For one of these places, the percussionist rolls gently on an inverted cymbal placed on the membrane while producing a glissando with the foot pedal. Example O shows another effective moment using eight different crotales on the timpani. The crotales are

struck while moving the foot pedal. As a result, the pitches of the crotales bend. This very eerie effect reminded Crumb of "Banshees...one of the most incredible sounds."<sup>21</sup> The first movement fades with this solo percussion effect, similar to how the final movement of Bartok's "Sonata" ends.

Example O: Crumb, "Music For A Summer Evening," ending of Mvt. I



Contemporary instruments and techniques include those that have gained more prominence since Bartok's time, such as vibraphone and crotales. "Music for a Summer Evening" is rich with beautiful and expressive vibraphone writing, using both conventional and creative techniques. Its most important solo passage is saved for the last movement, as is the xylophone solo of the "Sonata." Crumb instructs the player to whistle the melody in unison with the xylophone. This creates a more connected, legato effect, and also adds an elegant, haunting quality to the theme.

Also in Movement V, there is a quote from J.S. Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier." Putting paper on the strings of the piano, while the vibraphone echoes the fugue melody a quarter note

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behind the piano, Crumb creates the eerie quality of a “ghostly-surreal harpsichord.”<sup>22</sup> Sometimes, both percussionists play on the same instrument, as seen earlier in Example D.

Crumb uses bowing, an extended technique, in the first percussion event of the work, which consists of a symmetric chord structure. The player strikes a major second with mallets and then bows the pitch in the middle. This semi-tone cluster foreshadows much of the music to come in this movement. As a matter of fact, every aspect of page nine from the first movement can be traced to Bartok.

Example P illustrates the following: (1) the vibraphone is now playing a trill based on the semi-tone cluster. By following the movement of the main (or middle) note, one observes the notes of Bartok’s tritone axis: F-sharp–D-sharp (E-flat)–A–C; (2) Piano I (and later Piano II when they exchange roles) opposes the hands on white and black keys. The hands moving two different speeds create a blurred effect, which resembles moments in Bartok’s piano writing; (3) in Piano II, Crumb adds whole-tone clusters to this mix. The grace note in the triplet is one whole-tone scale, while the main note is the other; and (4) the interactive dialogue between the pianos and the xylophone is comparable to Bartok’s use of the pianos, timpani, and xylophone in excerpts from the “Sonata.”

Example P: Crumb, “Music For A Summer Evening,” Mvt. I

The image displays a complex musical score for percussion, divided into two main sections: Percussion I and Percussion II. Each section contains multiple staves for different instruments, including vibraphone, xylophone, and maracas. The score is annotated with various performance instructions such as 'a tempo', 'ritardando', 'crescendo', and 'piano'. It also includes dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'mf'. The notation includes rhythmic patterns, accidentals, and articulation marks, illustrating the intricate and layered nature of Crumb's percussion writing.

Crumb incorporates exotic or ethnic instruments into “Summer Evening,” not for reference or cliché, but as an expressive sonority, similar to how Bartok used his “newer” sounds, such as the “pop” of a side drum without snares or the darker sound of a triangle struck with a wooden beater. Each is used in a soloistic setting, and is sometimes accompanied by specific performance instructions. The temple blocks and woodblocks originate in the Orient, and the bongos belong to the family of Latin-American instruments. When Crumb writes for these instruments, as shown in Examples G2 and G3, he uses them in small motivic cells that interact with the ensemble. For the bongos, he writes symmetrical rhythms, which are manipulated by inverting the high to low notes, slight rhythmic variation, and repetition.

The maracas, quijada, guiro, and claves are Latin-American instruments, which Crumb uses economically. There are only

two occurrences of maracas, which are not played in the typical alternating-shaking style. Instead, a swirling motion followed by three or five snaps brings the image of wind in trees and twigs breaking.

The substitute instrument for the quijada is the modern vibraslap. Crumb uses this sound in the triplum of Percussion I in the isorhythmic movement. The rattly sound is an extension of the percussive vocalization. Crumb would call this “cross-fertilization,” which is combining vocal sounds with percussive sounds in an imitative way.<sup>23</sup>

The guiro is also used in combination with vocal sounds. Like several of Bartok’s sound effects, this one comes with special performance instructions: “The guiro is to be held firmly against the crossbeam of the piano for magnification of the sound.” The length of the event and the dynamic indications create an image of something approaching, and then passing by the listener’s ear. The claves produce a resonant, penetrating sound. Crumb uses the sound by itself and in conjunction with the bass drum. In Movement IV, the percussionist is instructed to “hold the clave against the bass drum membrane, and strike that clave with the other one.” This extended technique combines the high frequencies of the claves with the low resonance of the bass drum, creating an unusual sonority.

The sistrum, belltree, and sleighbells are all shimmery, metallic instruments. Instead of using the sleighbells rhythmically, Crumb creates a sustained coruscating pedal that builds with the chromatic clusters of the first movement. The belltree produces a beautiful, sparkling glissando. It is usually present as an additional color with the cascading motive throughout the fifth movement.

The Japanese temple bells, African log drum, Tibetan prayer stones, Appalachian-type jug, and Mbira are multi-cultural instruments. The Japanese temple bells help unify the entire work because they are heard only at the beginning and the very ending of the piece. In Movement IV, the African log drum uses a symmetrical palindrome figure that is inverted like those found in the drums and bongos. The Tibetan prayer stones produce a unique cracking sound, which can be varied by the degree to which they are cupped in the hand. The three jug blows, or the alternative vocal sounds, include the qualifying directions “eerie and uncanny.” The African thumb piano, or Mbira, is to be held against the crossbeam of the piano in the same manner as the guiro. There are two performance styles, either random plucking or *accelerando/ritardando* effects in the style of the Bartok xylophone.

Bartok never used these sounds in his vocabulary, but the seeds of Crumb’s imagination lie in Bartok’s music, and he continued in the same direction with an eclectic arsenal of effects. When asked if he was primarily trying to achieve unusual sounds when writing these passages in his music, Crumb replied: “Not just for the sake of being unusual but for their particular value as a sonority that heightens the effect of the music.”<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Crumb remembers the impact of Bartok on his compositions during his student years: “I quickly realized, then, that I was getting too much like it and I was really rewriting Bartok. I recognized, already, the danger of doing that. I was swayed by his music. I was reproducing it.” By catching on to this in time, he

deviated from copying Bartok's style and moved toward developing his own.

Percussion has continued to develop numerous techniques and instruments during the last half-century and Crumb has taken advantage of these new expressive sounds. Traditional instruments now have extended techniques and sonorities are now combined. Bartok's timpani glissando became Crumb's idea of bending the pitch of crotales. Bartok's use of the wash of a soft tam-tam stroke to blend with the orchestra evolved into an eerie, harmonic overtone when bowed as instructed by Crumb. Bartok wrote a somber motive involving a quintuplet. Crumb continued with many ideas involving symmetrical numbers and rhythms. Finally, Bartok based much of his music on a scale divided into equal parts. Crumb employed the pitch structures Bartok favored and combined these with many other systems of tonality.

Clearly, George Crumb did not attempt to write his version of Bartok's "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion" when he composed "Music for a Summer Evening." Instead, he utilized Bartok's concepts, and the examples included here demonstrate that the qualities and traits of the first composer are present in the second. Regarding the definition of "influence" that opened this article, among the powers, either indirectly or intangibly, that swayed the development of George Crumb's style was the music of Bela Bartok.

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#### END NOTES

1. George Crumb, liner notes for "Music for a Summer Evening" (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 79149-2, 1975).
2. George Crumb interview with Michael Kingan, "The Influence of Bela Bartok on Symmetry and Instrumentation in George Crumb's Music for a Summer Evening" (D.M.A. dissertation, The University of North Texas, 1993).
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4. Kingan, op. cit.
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9. Robert Moevs, "Reviews of Records," *Musical Quarterly* LXII/2 (April 1976), 297.
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16. Kingan, op. cit. (sentence order rearranged).
17. Maury Yeston, *The Stratification of Rhythm* (New Haven: Yale, 1976), 76.
18. George Crumb, "Music: Does It Have a Future?" from Don Gillespie, *George Crumb: Profile of a Composer* (N.Y.: C.F. Peters, 1986), 17.
19. That credit goes to Wallingford Davis in "Conversation for Piano and Orchestra" (1914)—from Robert Schietroma and J. B. Smith. *Introduction to Percussion Literature*, (Denton, Texas: North Texas Percussion Press, 1990), 196.
20. Duke Hopkins Stephenson, *Bela Bartok's Use of Percussion Instruments* (Masters Thesis, North Texas State University, 1961), 83.
21. George Crumb interview with Robert Ledbetter, "Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death" (D.M.A. dissertation, The University of North Texas, 1993), 113—Banshee: a female spirit believed to presage a death in the family by wailing; Gaelic folklore.
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