

COMPOSER SPOTLIGHT



BÉLA BARTÓK

1881-1945

Contemporary

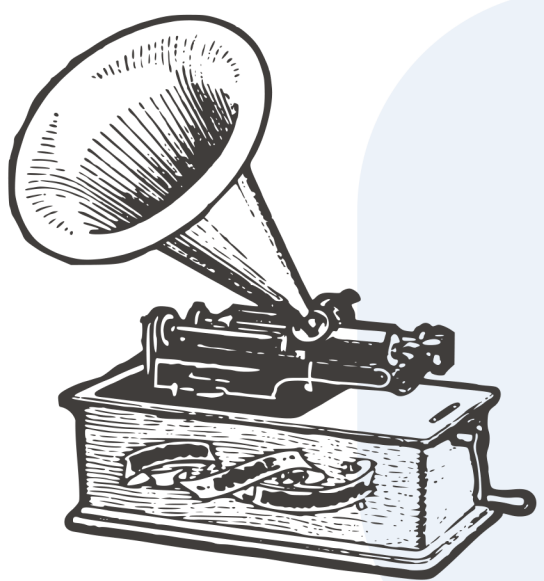


Early Life

According to his mother, Bartók showed early signs of musical talent. He could tell the difference between dance rhythms before he could fully form sentences. By age four, he could play 40 pieces on the piano. He gave his first recital at the age of 11 and studied with Istaván Thoman, a former student of Franz Liszt.

A Musical Partnership

At the Royal Academy of Music, Bartók met Zoltán Kodaly. They would later team up to collect old folk melodies from the Hungarian countryside. Many of these melodies became used in their own compositions. In *For Children*, Bartók wrote accompaniments for 80 folk tunes.



Why Folk Music?

While on vacation in 1904, Bartók overheard a nanny singing folk songs to children, and this inspired a lifelong commitment to preserving this music. He recorded these songs on hundreds of phonograph cylinders, many of which you can still listen to by searching online. He also collected folk music in Moldavia, Wallachia, and Algeria.

His Music and Legacy

Bartók's style is a combination of folk music, classicism, and modernism. He is known as one of the founders of comparative musicology which later became known as ethnomusicology, and he and Franz Liszt are often regarded as Hungary's greatest composers. In addition to his collections of folk music, he produced many notable works for piano, orchestra, and other ensembles.

Significant Works:

- Piano Sonata, Sz. 80, BB 88
- Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion Sz. 110, BB 115
- Mikrokosmos Sz. 107, BB 105
- Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, BB 68

András Szollosy (Sz.) and László Somfai (BB) are two well-known cataloguers of Bartók's works.

