In order to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Béla Bartók (1881-1945), the University of Pittsburgh sponsored a Bartók Conference on 14-16 October 1975. The program coordinator for the conference was Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Music Denes R. Bartha, University of Pittsburgh. Participants included the curators of the Bartok Archives in Cedarhurst, New York (Benjamin Suchoff) and in Budapest (László Somfai), Professor Halsey Stevens¹, Professor George Perle², and Mr. John Vinton.³

During the first day of the conference, lectures and discussions focused on the analytic methods to be applied to Bartók's music. In a lecture on "Béla Bartók and the Twelve-Tone System," Professor Perle argued that strict inversional complementation of pitches and pitch-classes plays an important and sometimes fundamental role in much of Bartók's music. This can be traced back as far as 1908 (Bagatelles, No. 2) and reaches fullest expression in the Fourth Quartet (1928). One of the principal "tonalities" of the first movement of this Quartet is represented in the collection of dyads generated by the following alignment of diverging semi-tonal scales:

\[
\begin{align*}
F & \quad F^\# & \quad G & \quad G^\# & \quad A & \quad A^\# & \quad B & \quad C & \quad C^\# & \quad D & \quad D^\# & \quad E \\
E & \quad D^\# & \quad D C & \quad C B & \quad B^b & \quad A & \quad G & \quad G^b & \quad F & \quad F^b
\end{align*}
\]

The concept of literal inversional complementation is, according to Perle, also a basic assumption of Schönberg's twelve-tone system. The principal P and I set-forms of Schönberg's Fourth Quartet are generated by permuting the above pair of diverging semi-tonal scales as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
D C & \quad A & \quad A^b & \quad F & \quad E & \quad F & \quad E & \quad C & \quad G & \quad F & \quad B \\
G G & \quad C & \quad B & \quad E & \quad F & \quad F & \quad A & \quad D & \quad D & \quad E & \quad B ^b
\end{align*}
\]

¹. Author of the most competent monograph on Bartok in English, The Life and Music of Béla Bartók (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953).
². Author of Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972).
Complementary relations are the same in both instances. Inversional complementation is more significant and far-reaching in its implications than the other basic axioms of the twelve-tone system. Bartók's musical language in the Fourth and Fifth Quartets and other works is thus seen to have a most important connection with twelve-tone music, in spite of the fact that many (extrinsic) stylistic features of his music are obviously different.

In subsequent discussion, Perle's thesis was challenged by Bartha, Somfai, Stevens, and Vinton. Nowhere in Bartók's statements concerning his music is there any hint that he was aware of such intricate speculations; moreover, his attitude toward Schönberg's theories was generally negative. Indeed, Bartók always emphasized his indebtedness to folkloristic inspirations and models, not only in his transcriptions, but also in his original works (e.g., the quartets). In this connection, the interview Bartók gave in 1937 to the Belgian musicologist Denijs Dille is particularly relevant. In reply to Dille's questions, Bartók acknowledged that his "harmonic idiom is markedly different from that of other European composers," based as it was on folk melodies. He insisted, however, that this "harmonic idiom remained diametrically different [from that of Schönberg]. Whoever cannot realize this, misunderstands my music."

In sum, it was the consensus of the conference participants that Bartók was a partisan of tonally contoured and conceived music—including the frequent modal switches and turns to be found in East European folk music.

At this point in the proceedings, the theories of the outstanding Bartók scholar Ernő Lendvai moved to the forefront of the discussion. Although Lendvai was unable to attend the conference, his views were reported by Bartha, Somfai, and Vinton. For Bartók's "diatonic" and "chromatic" styles, Lendvai has built an elaborate analytic system that claims not only clearly defined tonal centers for most of Bartók's music, but, in addition, attempts to define functional relations (tonic, dominant, subdominant) in Bartók's intricate melodic and harmonic style.

Lendvai's theories concerning "golden section" dimensional proportions were also discussed. Stevens, Vinton, and Somfai, all of whom had had access to substantial material from Bartók's hand, maintained that Bartók often added and deleted measures or groups of measures at will—a fact which would

4. The best discussion of Bartók's views on his music may be found in John Vinton's pioneering article, "Bartók On His Own Music," JAMS, 19 (1966), 232, and in the dissertation of Peter Petersen, Die Tonalität im Instrumentalschaffen von Béla Bartók (Hamburg: Universität, 1971).

5. Having been published in Flemish, this important source is little known in the United States.

6. Most of Lendvai's work has been published in Hungarian only. An English version of his pioneering method may be found in his Béla Bartók: An Analysis of His Music (London: Kahn & Averill, 1971).

7. This aspect of Lendvai's analytic theory is controversial.