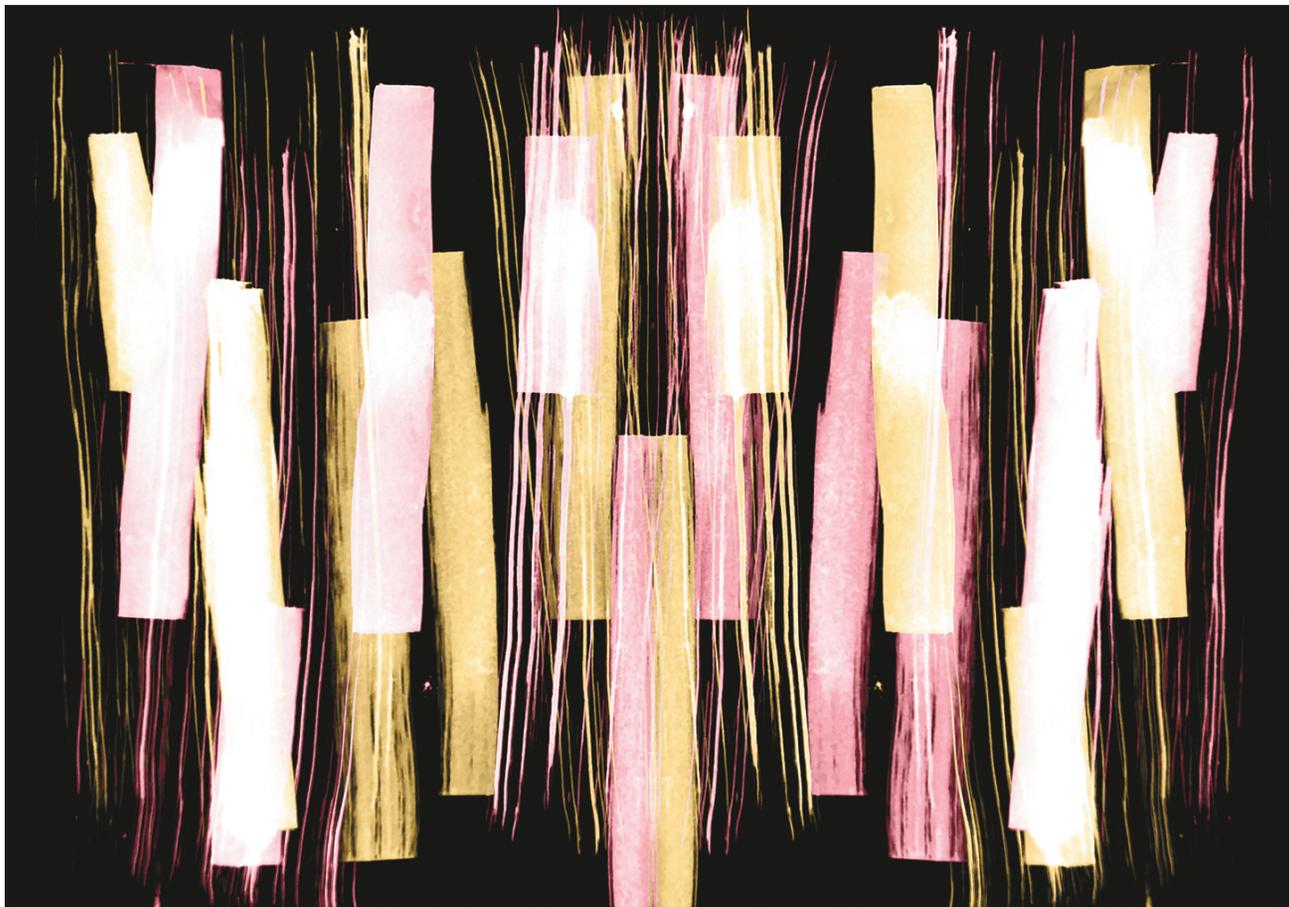


**BARTÓK**  
**Piano Sonata, Op. 19**  
**BARTÓK/RESCHOFSKY**  
**Zongoraiskola ('Piano Method')**  
**Goran Filipec, Piano**





	<i>Playing Chords</i>			
50	No. 114. Allegro (♩ = 66)	0:18	53	No. 117. Vivace (♩ = 80) 0:21
51	No. 115. Allegro moderato (♩ = 60)	0:24	54	No. 118. Allegro deciso (♩ = 84) 0:22
52	No. 116. Moderato (♩ = 96)	0:36	55	No. 119. Tempo di valse (♩ = 116) 0:37
			56	No. 120. Allegro moderato (♩ = 112) 0:35

Béla Bartók was born on 25 March 1881, in the town of Nagyszentmiklós (which is now in Romania). He studied piano and composition with László Erkel in Pozsony (now Bratislava), where contact with his older contemporary Ernő Dohnányi proved to be a decisive factor in his subsequent development as composer. The successful premiere in 1904 of his symphonic poem *Kossuth* [Naxos 8.573307] had already indicated his nationalist leanings, but it was not until he embarked on expeditions to collect folk music, initially in collaboration with Zoltán Kodály, that his ideal of a stylistic fusion between traditional and created music began to take hold. From the early 1920s, he made no attempt to differentiate between traditional melodies and those he himself wrote – so closely intertwined had these types of music by then become.

The pre-war years proved difficult ones for Bartók, caught as he was between Austro-German conformity and an insular Hungarian nationalism. Not until 1917–18, following the successful premieres of his ballet *The Wooden Prince* [8.570534] and his opera *Bluebeard's Castle* [8.660928], did he belatedly become established as a leading composer within an imminently independent Hungary; only for his pantomime, *The Miraculous Mandarin* [8.557433], to be rejected on account of its explicit scenario. During those interwar years, Bartók consolidated his reputation notably through performances via the International Society for Contemporary Music, while his burgeoning career as a concert pianist (in a repertoire by no means limited to his own music) increasingly took him to North America as well as across Western Europe.

It was to the United States that he immigrated in 1940, having already banned performances of his music in Hungary in protest at the increasingly fascistic orientation of Miklós Horthy's military government. Ill health and financial worries dogged his last years, but the works he did manage to complete, notably the *Concerto for Orchestra* [8.572486] and the *Third Piano Concerto* [8.550771], demonstrate a new musical directness that assured them an immediate place in the repertoire. Bartók died of leukaemia in New York City on 26 September 1945.

Although the six string quartets [8.557543-44] and the orchestral works written in the 1930s and 1940s constitute the highpoint of Bartók's creative achievement, his substantial output of piano music traverses his whole career and provided a means for the composer to try out new stylistic developments at first hand. Ranging from juvenilia of the 1890s, in which procedures of earlier composers are absorbed or rejected, to mature works of the 1920s, it culminates in the 1930s with the encyclopaedic six-volume keyboard manual *Mikrokosmos* [8.557821-22].

In common with his exact contemporary, the Romanian George Enescu, Bartók had begun to compose at a young age with his earliest surviving pieces dating from his ninth year. Those of the 1890s mainly fall into two lists that superseded each other before being rejected outright. In fact, the *Piano Sonata* featured here was preceded by three such works (*Nos. 1, 3 and 6* on the second list) from 1894–95, while its appearance as *No. 19* on that second list is less notable than its designation as 'Op. 1' on the autograph. Bartók was to replace this with the *Rhapsody* for piano [8.574340] on his third and final such list begun seven years later, but it remains a substantial and ambitious undertaking which, whatever its reliance on a late-Romantic idiom he soon abandoned, is vital for deeper understanding of his creativity at this formative stage.

The opening *Allegro* begins with an eloquent and very Brahmsian theme which rapidly gains in ardour as it extends across the keyboard, soon to be followed by a taciturn and emotionally ambivalent melody that is more obliquely redolent of Chopin. Its terse ending precipitates an eventful and often virtuosic development of both themes, which are duly reprised in modified guise with ever more elaborate passagework. This time, however, the first theme is given the last words in a fervent coda. Surprisingly short, the *Adagio* is akin to a 'song without words' as it unfolds an expressive, though at times

sombre, melody that rapidly builds towards a climax of no mean impulsiveness and which, in turn, subsides into its earlier understatement.

This is curtailed, however, by the *Presto*, which ensues without a break – its lively main theme complemented by one as sensuous as it is ingratiating, before the earlier theme returns to bring about a decisive close. The finale commences with an expectant, rather Beethovenian *Adagio* introduction that flows directly into the main *Allegro*, whose agitated main theme pervades all that follows. Not least the tense central development whose considerable virtuosity is only allayed by a more elaborate restatement of the second theme – after which, the introduction briefly returns to point up contrast with a coda that brings the work to its forceful conclusion.

The following four pieces included here date from even earlier in Bartók's output and offer due insight into his development as a composer in tandem with that as a pianist. In fact, the so-called *Changing Piece*, its robust dancing gait both assertive and humorous, is almost his earliest extant composition – having been written in 1890 and designated *No. 2* on that first list. Next in terms of chronology comes the *Gabi Polka* from 1891 – *No. 12* on this list and a more substantial miniature, which unfolds as a sequence of variants on the insouciant theme heard at its outset. It is followed by a *Ländler* – *No. 18* on this list and the second of three such pieces written during 1891–92, which inhabits the realm of Schubert with its lightly tripping elegance. Finally, the *Lajos Waltz* – *No. 28* on this list and dating from 1893 – is a deft and disarming piece, exuding as it does an engaging charm with some notably dextrous pianism.

The remainder of this selection comprises Bartók's contribution to what became known as the *Bartók-Reschöfsky Piano Method*. Commissioned by the music publisher Rózsavölgyi & Co and first published in 1913, this was devised in collaboration with Sándor Reschöfsky (1887–1972) – composer, pianist and teacher who taught piano at the Ernő Fodor Music School during the 1920s then, from 1946 to 1958, at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. While he left a sizable output across all the major genres, including two operas for which he wrote his own libretti, Reschöfsky is now remembered chiefly through the present manual – for which he devised the overall framework and contributed the exercises, leaving Bartók to write the 48 original pieces that render such pedagogical thinking from a more creative and personal perspective.

As might be anticipated, these pieces are predominantly brief with all of them lasting under one minute and over half of them under 30 seconds, yet each feels perfectly formed in terms of an ongoing sequence which makes increasing demands not only on the player's technique but also their musicianship by appealing to their creative instincts. Many feature melodies or at least motifs devised by the composer, while others draw on existing folk tunes – indicating just how closely aligned these had become in terms of Bartók's thinking. Two of them stand out for their more developed content or expressive focus – *Nos. 68* and *77* (tracks [32](#) and [34](#) respectively), whose limpid melodic writing and deftly intricate accompaniment make them worth considering as encores in a recital that might not necessarily feature other music by Bartók.

Although 18 of the pieces reappeared in *First Term at the Piano* [8.572376] then were largely superseded with the much more inclusive *Mikrokosmos*, '*Bartók-Reschöfsky*' has remained in print throughout those 110 years since its first publication. Its virtues were fairly summarised in a review on 1 November 1913 for the journal *Occident* by the musicologist Antal Molnár, who concluded: 'We can see that a piece for beginners could also be alive and vibrant. It can stir the soul and move the mind. By its very existence it marks the end of lifeless, mechanical piano literature. Not only can these pieces be played with real devotion, because they are so charming, but they themselves can make you develop. They can teach you refined simplicity or sophisticated naivety, and you can do honour to eternal or genuine musicality with them.'

**Richard Whitehouse**

### **A note on the *Piano Sonata, Op. 19***

Preparing a recording of a work inexistent in standard piano repertoire, with a score available only in manuscript, is adventurous and exciting in many aspects. It implies at the one hand textual corrections and adjustments, assuming that the composer's intentions have been correctly identified, and a search for an adequate interpretative perspective at the other. The *Sonata* from 1898, written by the young Bartók before his studies in Budapest, is a piece that does not announce in any way

the composer's later style. Although a coherent composition, it is a document of Bartók's early artistic views and his evolution from 18th- and 19th-century aesthetics, somewhat conservative for his time. It is a curiosity of the piano repertoire whose freshness evokes enthusiasm, and it will surely remain as such for a while, until further recordings and performances appear.

**Goran Filipec**

### **Goran Filipec**

Goran Filipec is renowned for his exceptional interpretations of the works of Franz Liszt and the high virtuosity of his Classical and Romantic repertoire. His recordings for Naxos have received significant critical acclaim, and his album *Paganini Studies* (8.573458) was awarded the International 'Grand Prix du Disque F. Liszt' by the Ferenc Liszt Society of Budapest. Born in Rijeka in 1981, Filipec studied at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, the Oxana Yablonskaya Piano Institute in Italy and the Royal Conservatoire The Hague. He also holds a PhD in music from the Sorbonne University in Paris. A laureate of several international piano competitions, Filipec has appeared internationally as a recitalist and soloist with symphony orchestras across Europe, the Americas and Japan. He has been invited on multiple occasions to the Mariinsky Theatre Contemporary Piano Faces festival, Progetto Martha Argerich and Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Filipec is co-founder and president of the Société Franz Liszt de Genève, which is devoted to the appreciation and study of the Hungarian composer's *oeuvre*. [www.goran-filipec.com](http://www.goran-filipec.com)



*Photo of Goran Filipec © Fundación Juan March*

Two important works dominate volume nine of this series. The first is Bartók's substantial and ambitious late-Romantic *Piano Sonata, Op. 19*, a very early work, composed when he was around 17 before his studies in Budapest. It was long considered lost and is heard in Goran Filipec's performing edition, prepared from the manuscript. *Zongoraiskola* or 'Piano Method' was devised in collaboration with composer, pianist and teacher Sándor Reschofsky who contributed the exercises. Bartók's 48 original pieces are perfectly formed and charmingly refined, allowing him an opportunity to explore his ideas of piano pedagogy.

Béla  
**BARTÓK**  
(1881–1945)

**Piano Music • 9**

<b>1–4</b>	<b>Piano Sonata, Op. 19, BB 12/DD 51 (1898)</b>	<b>25:14</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>'Lajos' valczer ('Lajos Waltz'), BB 1/DD 28 (1893)</b>	<b>1:33</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>'Gabi' Polka, BB 1/DD 12 (1891)</b>	<b>3:13</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Ländler No. 2, BB 1/DD 18 (1891)</b>	<b>0:46</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Változó darab ('Changing Piece'), BB 1/DD 2 (1890)</b>	<b>0:51</b>
	<b>Béla Bartók / Sándor Reschofsky (1887–1972)</b>	
<b>9–56</b>	<b>Zongoraiskola ('Piano Method') (1913)</b>	<b>23:07</b>

**A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet**

**Goran Filipec, Piano**

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