Schoenberg’s Sketchbooks as Witnesses and Tools of the Creative Process

Mittwoch, 16. November 2022, 14:15 – 15:45 Uhr
Warburgstraße 26, 20354 Hamburg, Raum 0001 und online

Abstract: Arnold Schoenberg was one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. Although his name is commonly associated with atonality and the twelve-tone method developed in the early 1920s, his compositions tie in with the works of the ‘classical’ masters and encompass a wide array of styles and genres, ranging from his early programmatic string sextet ‘Verklärte Nacht’ to the politically engaged music of the 1940s such as the cantata ‘A Survivor from Warsaw’. For Schoenberg, sketching was an essential and indispensable stage within his creative process. Accordingly, a great number of sketches and drafts has come down to us, including those transmitted in 13 mostly hand-made sketchbooks, which Schoenberg used throughout much of his career as a composer, at times even on a daily basis. After a brief introduction to Schoenberg’s life and development as a composer, the lecture focusses on the question of how the sketchbooks helped him to organise his artistic work. It is divided into three sections, starting with an overview of the existing sketchbooks and a discussion of their appearance, making, and contents. The second part examines in some detail one of the most extensive sketchbooks which contains both musical notations and verbal notes, mostly related to the never-completed oratorio ‘Die Jakobsleiter’. The third section is intended as a conclusion by discussing some of Schoenberg’s comments that reflect his own attitude towards sketching and sketches.

Eine Anmeldung unter folgendem Link ist erforderlich: https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/en/register-lecture26 (der Zoom-Link für die Online-Teilnahme wird Ihnen nach der Registrierung zugesandt)