CLARITY AND PRECISION
Arnold Schoenberg's concept of presenting new music to an audience

An essay about the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen*
(Society for Private Musical Performances)

On November 23 of 1918 the Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg founded a new society in Vienna, the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Musical Performances).

At the age of forty-four, Schoenberg was widely considered one of the most important and influential composers of his time. He had returned to Vienna in 1915 to continue to work there, after living in Berlin for two short periods of a few years. Despite many controversial reactions to his music he had also enjoyed increasing success with compositions like *Verklärte Nacht, Gurrelieder* and *Pierrot lunaire*.

After his experiences of conservative Viennese music life, culminating in the horrors of the infamous Scandal Concert of March 31, 1913, Schoenberg must have felt that the time had come to introduce a different way of presenting new music to an interested audience. In June 1918 he had witnessed the educational benefits of his experimental presentation of ten open rehearsals of his First Chamber Symphony, and this probably encouraged him to found the *Verein*.

With Schoenberg as president and with a board of nineteen friends and students an interesting format was developed: weekly concerts open only to members of the *Verein*, critics not allowed and audible approval or disapproval not permitted. The programs would remain secret until the evening of the concert. Compositions would be presented at the highest level of performance standards. They would be repeated preferably two to four times during the season, sometimes even twice during the same concert, in order for the music to be better understood.

Radio broadcasting was not introduced until 1923, and as gramophone records with this repertoire were not available, the repetition was very valuable; even in today's music life it can be helpful. The *Verein* was not intended as a vehicle for a specific type of music or for Schoenberg himself. Max Reger (of whom 23 compositions were performed) and Claude Debussy (16 compositions performed) were the composers most often heard, and it was not until the third season of the *Verein* that Schoenberg introduced some of his own music. By then he had programmed 64 concerts during which he presented music by a wide variety of composers, representing an almost similar variety of styles and tastes in music, like Reger, Debussy, Ravel, Dukas, Satie, Bartók, Kodaly, Berg, Webern, Zemlinsky, Stravinsky, Busoni, Mahler, Strauss, Schreker, Scriabin, Korngold, Pfitzner, Mussorgsky and Szymanowsky. These names and others not mentioned here show us how well-informed Schoenberg was about his fellow composers in other countries and how broadminded he was in his choices.

In the course of the 122 concerts the *Verein* gave of new music indeed most compositions were performed at least two times, often three or four times, and sometimes as many as eight times, as in the case of the Four Pieces for violin and piano Op. 7 by Anton Webern, who also enjoyed the opportunity to conduct five performances of his own chamber music arrangement of the Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 10 and six performances of the Six Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6 in his own version for chamber ensemble. (* Other examples of oft repeated repertoire were Berg's Four Pieces for clarinet and piano Op. 5 (six performances, including the world premiere) and Piano Sonata Op.1 (six performances), Busoni's Six Elegies for piano (seven performances), Schoenberg's Piano Pieces Op. 23 No.1 & 2 (six performances), Scriabin's Seventh Piano Sonata (six performances), Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* (seven performances), *Daphnis et Chloé* (six performances) and the String Quartet (five performances).

The main goal was ‘to provide artists and art lovers with a real and precise knowledge of modern music’. This was very likely the ideal of Arnold Schoenberg, but printed in the words of Alban Berg, who wrote the prospectus for the 1919-1920 season. The prospectus also stated that this was a society ‘not for the composers, but for the audience’. The estimated 300 members of the *Verein* consisted mainly of artists, musicians and students.

It is interesting to see how the membership prices were established. There were many categories, and the well-to-do audience members were asked to pay the highest prices in order to allow the less fortunate to participate for about 12% of the top-price. At the same time there were no privileges such as assigned seats. In sharp contrast to common rehearsal practice in Vienna during those days, the concerts of the *Verein* would be prepared aiming for the highest standards ‘with care and thoroughly’.

Schoenberg and his *Vortragsmeister* (literally ‘performance masters’, functioning as ‘rehearsal-directors’) Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Erwin Stein, Eduard Steuermann and Benno Sachs were ensuring that the specific work could be properly presented in performance. Sometimes as many as thirty rehearsals were held, to obtain the ‘clarity and precision’ at which Schoenberg aimed. The performing musicians were carefully selected, and only those who were sincerely interested in the music were accepted. Any display of virtuosity for its own sake was not tolerated. Remarkable for those days was the high number of female performers. This included piano soloists (seven females versus eight males), violinists and an all-female string quartet.

Amongst the most prominent performers of the *Verein* were Rudolf Kolisch (violin), Eduard Steuermann (piano) and Rudolf Serkin (piano), who would soon become well-known musicians and educators. They continued to spread the artistic ethics and the spirit of the *Verein*, by coaching and inspiring many generations of musicians. During the course of the *Verein* the foundations of the later *Wiener Streichquartett* (Viennese String Quartet) were laid, with Kolisch as its leader. Around 1926 this ensemble, after a few personnel changes, became known as the Kolisch Quartet and soon rose to prominence as one of the most important string quartets of its time. It performed both the classics and an impressive amount of new music on the highest level, many of them being first

performances. The quartet's collaboration with composers such as Schoenberg, Webern, Berg and Bartók shows their commitment as advocates of new music. All these composers dedicated works to the Kolisch Quartet.

Documentation of rehearsals of the Kolisch Quartet (* Rehearsal diaries of Kolisch and of Felix Kuhner, second violinist, copies of the manuscripts in the possession of the author) shows that Schoenberg was very influential in many aspects of their performance practice, also with regard to the classical repertoire. Schoenberg took Beethoven's metronome markings seriously, which was quite unusual at that time, and he inspired Kolisch to experiment with the composer's extremely fast tempi. When the quartet started to perform classical music from memory it was Schoenberg who suggested that they should also perform new music in that manner. The fact that they not only played the entire Beethoven cycle from memory but also works such as Alban Berg's Lyric Suite or Schoenberg's Third Quartet certainly contributed to their reputation and helped convince their audiences that they took this new music as seriously as any older music. Some Kolisch Quartet performances were recorded and are available today. They present good examples of Schoenberg's credo 'to play old music as if it were new, and new music as if it were old'. Or in the words of Kolisch: 'If you cannot perform Webern, you cannot perform Mozart, and vice versa'.

The *Verein* was active in Vienna from 29 December 1918 until 5 December 1921, when the economic crisis in Austria made further activities impossible. The repertoire performed in those three years contained songs, piano pieces, chamber music (violin sonatas, cello sonatas, piano trios, string quartets etc.), smaller choral works, and orchestral compositions by mainly contemporary composers of different styles, from Mahler and Richard Strauss to the most recent music. The repertoire also included many composers whose works do not belong to the Central European tradition. The orchestral works were presented in arrangements for piano solo, piano four hands or two pianos (six hands or eight hands), again with 'the highest standards of concert performance'.

The *Verein* presented 127 concerts in six different concert venues in Vienna with a total of 171 compositions by 48 composers. (* These numbers include the special concerts of series B that will be discussed later.) After the *Verein* in Vienna had been disbanded, two seasons in Prague were presented with a total of twenty concerts, under presidency of Alexander Zemlinsky, from May 25, 1922, until May 31, 1924.

The repertoire in Prague consisted partly of compositions performed in the Viennese concerts (68 works) and partly of new compositions (42 works) while also adding younger composers to the already long Viennese list, such as Hanns Eisler, Paul Hindemith, Arthur Honegger, Ernst Krenek, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Arthur Schnabel, Erwin Schulhoff, Cyril Scott, Alexander Tansman and Viktor Ullmann.

As had been the case in Vienna, Reger and Debussy were performed most often, now followed by Schoenberg, whose compositions were programmed by Alexander Zemlinsky. The repertoire list of the *Verein* unfortunately does not mention local or

national first performances, but the programs do indicate numerous first performances in Vienna and Prague and probably several world premieres.

It is striking that the names of Erwin Schulhoff, Viktor Ullmann and particularly Alexander Zemlinsky appear on the programs of the *Verein*. Their output would disappear from public music life during the 1930's, due in part to the culture politics of the National Socialist regime, only to be re-discovered and saved from obscurity during the last quarter of the 20th century. And it is obvious that many other composers selected by the *Verein* have now disappeared through that mysterious filter of time and judgment.

When looking at the two most popular composers of the *Verein*, Max Reger and Claude Debussy, who not only were the most performed but who also were celebrated by concerts devoted exclusively to their music, it is remarkable that the *Verein* acknowledged certain qualities in both, and that our time appreciates only Debussy and seems to have forgotten about Reger. Can it be that our present musical life does not do justice to the music of Reger, considered a genius by Schoenberg?

The most prominent guest composer in the history of the *Verein* was Maurice Ravel, who not only attended the concert in his honour on October 23, 1920 but also participated as a performer. His works *Gaspard de la nuit*, *La Valse* (in his own version for two pianos), *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* (with the composer at the piano) and the String Quartet were performed, in combination with compositions by Schoenberg, Webern and Berg.

The appearance of six works by Gustav Mahler in the repertoire of the *Verein* is perhaps confusing to us today, as his compositions are now celebrated worldwide in countless performances and recordings. However, until the era of the *Verein* Mahler's compositions had been rarely performed in Vienna, which explains why Schoenberg—who had been so strongly supported by Mahler—programmed his Symphonies No. 4, 6 and 7 in arrangements for either piano 4 hands, or two pianos or for chamber ensemble (*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and Symphony No. 4). Mahler's Seventh Symphony appeared on the very first program on December 29 of 1918, combined with compositions for piano by Scriabin and Debussy.

Since the days of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven the use of piano reductions of orchestral music or even of string quartets had been a customary way of getting acquainted with new music. One could play the music at home and repeat it as much as desired. Before technical progress made sound reproduction possible this was not merely the standard way to become familiar with certain compositions. It also allowed their performance in concert in reduced format when the available funds would not allow the engagement of an orchestra. Even Bruckner's Seventh Symphony (which in 1921 would also be arranged for the *Verein*) was initially presented in 1884 in a performance for two pianos, before its first performance by an orchestra.

In Schoenberg's view one would always be able to understand the real content of the music in these piano arrangements, sometimes even better, as there would be no

distraction by an orchestration that might impress on its own. In the brochure of the *Verein* it reads: ‘In this manner it is namely possible to hear and judge modern orchestral works stripped of all sound effects that only an orchestra produces and of all of its sensory aids. Thereby invalidating the common reproach that this music owes its effect solely to its more or less rich and striking instrumentation and does not possess all of the features which formerly were characteristic of good music: melodies, richness of harmony, polyphony, perfect form, architecture, etc.’

For the second season of the *Verein* ambitious plans were made to arrange orchestral compositions for large chamber ensembles, still using the piano but including strings and winds, in order to preserve more of the original orchestral colours. The concept of arranging or even rewriting music for other, usually smaller ensembles, has a long history and it still exists today in many forms. Composers often arrange their own music or those of others, ranging from very literal transcriptions to very free versions, with additions and alterations. The arrangement can also be an enlargement of a more intimate original composition, like Schoenberg's version for large symphony orchestra of his Chamber Symphony Op. 9. Schoenberg also gave a splendid example of the art of reducing in shrinking the gigantic symphonic forces of his *Gurrelieder* by his arrangement of *Das Lied der Waldtaube* for only seventeen instruments.

Until the end of the 19th century composers rarely composed for larger combinations of winds and solo strings, with notable exceptions, which still are performed today, such as Joseph Haydn's Notturni, Wolfgang Mozart's Divertimenti, Ludwig van Beethoven's Septet, Franz Schubert's Octet, Louis Spohr’s Nonet, Johannes Brahms' First Serenade—in its original form for nonet—and Richard Wagner's Siegfried Idyll for 13 instruments. The last combination, though not labeled for solo instruments and later published for chamber orchestra with string groups, may have influenced Schoenberg who in 1906 used ten wind instruments and string quintet for his First Chamber Symphony Op. 9. This composition is the first large chamber ensemble piece in music history. Although the chamber ensemble is usually also led by a conductor, it differs from a chamber orchestra in that the chamber ensemble by definition features only one player per voice.

The combination of several string and wind instruments with piano had thus far existed only in a few relatively insignificant works until Arnold Schoenberg in 1912 composed his *Pierrot lunaire* Op. 21 for *Sprechgesang* and the unprecedented combination of flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass-clarinet, violin/viola, violoncello and piano. This ensemble enabled numerous combinations of instrumentation within its unique quintet. The formations of the Chamber Symphony, the Pierrot ensemble and the *Verein* chamber ensemble became models for many chamber music groups and one can easily see the similarity between the *Verein* ensemble and the new music ensembles of today. This model emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as a smaller and more individual version of the symphony orchestra. Many composers gladly compose for these ensembles, as their musicians are usually strongly committed to the performance of new music and use their rehearsals to obtain the same goal of clarity and precision as the *Verein* was striving for.

Of course the use of arrangements or reductions of large orchestrations for smaller combinations often had (and sometimes still has) to do with a lack of funding, as was the case in Vienna around 1920 when the established symphony orchestras would not perform the works programmed by the *Verein*, and the funds of the *Verein* were not sufficient to hire an orchestra. This situation led Schoenberg to use the *Verein* chamber ensemble, with its forces numbering between the original orchestra version and the piano reduction.

Such a reduction obviously means that one loses the possibility of the massive sound of the orchestra, and also the many colours of the full orchestration, but on the other hand one gains the individual expression of the solo strings and the different energy of a chamber ensemble. And in some cases it gave the arranger a chance to refine certain balance issues, for instance in Reger's Violin Concerto. Another advantage of the format of the chamber ensemble is its suitability for the acoustics of the rented venues of the *Verein*. These arrangements could perhaps also serve as an example of the famous phrase from Goethe: *in der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister* (in limitation mastery is displayed), or in today's language: less is more.

Schoenberg started the use of a new and richer type of arrangement for the *Verein* with his own 1920 arrangement of Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* for what would soon become the standard ensemble: flute, clarinet, five string instruments (string quartet and double bass), piano and harmonium, in this case with the exceptional addition of percussion. (* The harmonium, a reed-organ with wind-pressure or wind-suction, was invented around 1840, and in addition to being used in Salon-Orchestra type of arrangements it already had been used as a solo instrument, in chamber music, or in orchestral compositions by composers such as Giacomo Rossini, Antonín Dvořák, César Franck, Franz Liszt, Gustav Mahler, Alexander Zemlinsky, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Arnold Schoenberg and Max Reger. The harmonium is an extremely useful instrument for these arrangements because of its very flexible tone production, including percussive effects, and its characteristic ability to blend with all kinds of other instruments, thus broadening the ensemble sound and creating new timbres.)

The main principle of Schoenberg's model of arranging was to leave as much as possible from the original orchestration untouched, not only string parts but also two or more wind parts. The remaining woodwind parts and additional string parts were given to the harmonium, and the piano was predominantly used for brass, harp and percussion parts. In 1920, the same year that Schoenberg made his initial arrangement for the *Verein*, Anton Webern arranged his own Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 10. He reduced his colours from about 25 instruments (including many percussion instruments, harp, celeste, guitar and mandolin) even more drastically to only five instruments: violin, viola, violoncello, piano and harmonium. The harmonium also was used in the original composition. (* Unfortunately Webern's Op. 10 is the only *Verein* ensemble arrangement that still is considered lost.)

The standard *Verein* ensemble, as established by Schoenberg with his first Mahler arrangement, was soon used again, sometimes with the addition of a few wind players,

more percussion, or more hands at the keyboards. First came, also in 1920, the arrangement by Schoenberg of his Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16, and of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde,* which remained an unfinished project, and then Webern arranged his Six Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6, in a very free way. (* In the very special case of Webern's arrangement of his Op. 6 it is highly interesting to see that he departs from his original version of 1909/1913 and improves certain elements, to finally revise the work in 1928 in a new orchestration. The *Verein* version from 1920 in my view deserves its own place in the repertoire next to the 1928 orchestra version, as it is Webern's own very free version of his music set for only thirteen musicians. However, I am convinced that one should accept the final changes of the 1928 version and apply them to the 1920 version.)

Schoenberg's method of arranging also served as a model for all other later *Verein* ensemble arrangements by his students Erwin Stein, Karl Rankl, Hanns Eisler, Benno Sachs and Rudolf Kolisch. The arranging probably took place under Schoenberg's guidance. Sometimes the arrangers cooperated, sometimes it is clear that Schoenberg also participated, and sometimes it is not quite clear who exactly had arranged certain pieces, as the initial planned distribution of projects differed from the actual results. The *Verein* ensemble appeared in eighteen concerts, performing only six of the total of seventeen orchestral compositions that were arranged (* See appendix): Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (arr. Schoenberg), Mahler's Fourth Symphony (arr. Stein), Reger's *Romantische Suite* Op. 125 (arr. Schoenberg and Kolisch) Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16 (arr. Schoenberg), Webern's Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 10 (arr. Webern) and Webern's Six Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6 (arr. Webern).

The other eleven arrangements remained unperformed until the revival of this particular *Verein* enterprise much later at the end of the 20th century, a phenomenon that will be discussed later on in this essay. Two scores were lost: Webern's Op. 10 version for quintet so far has not come to light, and Schoenberg's manuscript score of his arrangement of the *Lagunenwalzer* by Johann Strauss is considered lost, but in 2005 performance materials for the Strauss were discovered; they have been published by Belmont Music Publishers in the same year.

In November 1921—just a few weeks before the final collapse—a prospectus of the *Verein* announced more substantial plans concerning the *Verein* ensemble and presenting more 'classical' music in a special series of concerts labeled B. Once again this was very clearly outlined: 'Also here we will not, as this usually goes, stick to a previously made rehearsal plan, but we will have as many rehearsals as necessary to fulfill our wishes concerning clarity, sound and form of the interpretation.' Besides arrangements of Schoenberg's Four Orchestral Songs Op. 22 and Berg's *Altenberg Songs* Op. 4, the plans mentioned theatrical performances of orchestral ballet pieces by Berg, Bartók, Debussy, Webern and Egon Wellesz, and *Die glückliche Hand* by Schoenberg, all in arrangements for the *Verein* ensemble. (* See appendix) It had been decided that a *Kammerorchester* (chamber orchestra) would be set up so it could cooperate on two to four concerts per month. An extensive repertoire list accompanied this plan. (* See appendix)

Even more ambitious was the plan to perform eventually 'the entire classical repertoire,'

including several solo concertos in arrangements for the *Verein* ensemble, ‘aiming at a respectable standard of performing, achieved by rehearsing as much as is required to obtain the true collaboration between soloists and orchestra’. Projects were to include performances of chamber ensemble versions of all of Beethoven's concertos for piano and his Violin Concerto, Reger's Violin Concerto and Piano Concerto, Mozart's Piano Concerto in C minor KV 491, Brahms's Violin Concerto and Second Piano Concerto, plus Bruckner's Seventh Symphony.

Rudolf Kolisch and Eduard Steuermann would be the soloists and arrangers of the violin concertos and piano concertos. Concerning Bruckner's Symphony the prospectus mentions that it would be artistically necessary to remove the usual cuts, and since this would then lead to the performance of seldom-heard music the *Verein* felt that this work actually deserved to be performed in series A. Of all these works mentioned only the Reger Violin Concerto and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony were arranged, but not performed. Except for the custom arrangements for large ensemble, the *Verein* used chamber groups larger than a string quartet or piano quintet on only five occasions: for the performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, for Stravinsky's *Pribaoutki* for voice and eight instruments, both works conducted by Schoenberg, and at one of the Prague concerts, when works for chamber orchestra by Krenek, Hanns Schimmerling and Ullmann were performed.

The prospectus also mentioned the possibility of presenting the complete Beethoven quartet cycle with the ‘*Vereinsquartett*’ (Society Quartet). This must have been a combination of Schoenberg's ideas about the performance practice of classical music and Rudolf Kolisch's growing interest in forming a permanent string quartet. (* Even though this did not materialize at that time, it would not take long before the Kolisch Quartet presented the very first complete Beethoven quartet cycle in Paris, honouring Beethoven's metronome markings and including the *Grosse Fuge* as finale of Op. 130. Kolisch's article ‘Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music’, published in 1943 in The Musical Quarterly, has influenced many later performers to this day.)

To conclude the list of plans, the *Verein* announced to strive for ‘a correct relationship with the accompaniment in the vocal music so that a cumulative effect will be achieved which is an artistic necessity.’ This probably refers to the apparently unequal role of both performers of Lieder. Apart from the regular *Verein* concerts there had been occasional *ausserordentliche Vereinsabende* (extraordinary *Verein* evenings) in the regular series (A) with special projects, such as three performances of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* in April and May of 1921, and in series B later that same month a reading by the actor Wilhelm Klitsch of Schoenberg's own libretto of his oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter.* Also from the first season on there had been a few benefit concerts per year, to attract more members and in order to raise more money for the activities of the *Verein,* which became ever more necessary with increasing inflation.

On May 27 of 1921 a very special fundraising concert took place. For this program four waltzes by Johann Strauss Jr. had been arranged by Schoenberg (*Rosen aus dem Süden* Op. 388 *and Lagunenwalzer* Op. 411), Berg (*Wein, Weib und Gesang,* Op. 333) and

Webern (*Schatzwalzer* Op. 418, from *Der Zigeunerbaron*) for string quartet, piano and harmonium. Performers were Rudolf Kolisch and Arnold Schoenberg (first violin), Karl Rankl (second violin), Othmar Steinbauer (viola), Anton Webern (cello), Eduard Steuermann (cello) and Alban Berg (harmonium). After the concert the manuscripts were auctioned, again to raise funds for the *Verein*.

In accordance with the direction announced in the prospectus from early November 1921 Rudolf Kolisch and Eduard Steuermann had already performed on November 1 a recital with sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. Two more scheduled performances with classical music were to take place: a recital by Wilhelm Winkler (cello) and Olga Novacovic (piano) with compositions by Brahms and Beethoven, and a song recital by Stella Eisner (soprano) and Olga Novacovic with songs by Hugo Wolf and Robert Schumann. A scheduled piano trio evening with works by Beethoven and Schubert, a Brahms tribute with the clarinet sonatas plus the clarinet trio, and a special concert called *Bruckner-Fest* with the String Quintet and the Seventh Symphony, all announced for series B in November and December of 1921, were cancelled due to rapidly increasing financial problems.

Post-*Verein*

Since 1918 the *Verein* has had a lasting influence on the presentation of new music, and it became the source of inspiration for many organizations for new music from the early 1920s until our present time; it has served as model for concert societies and festivals after the Second World War, and it still is influencing serious music presenters all over the world.

Renewed interest in the arrangements of the *Verein*'s repertoire started in the late 1970s. The value of these arrangements or transcriptions in present-day music life has many facets. They still can be valuable when symphony orchestras do not pay enough attention to this repertoire, or to present this specific repertoire to audiences in places where a symphony orchestra is not available, or to play for chamber music audiences, which nowadays tend to be specialized—and sometimes quite segregated—and thus unfamiliar with this music.

After the Viennese *Verein* had been disbanded Arnold Schoenberg kept the majority of the archives, including quite a few parts and scores of the arrangements. Schoenberg lived in Berlin from 1926 until the Nazis chased him into exile in 1933; then he moved to the United States, first to the East Coast before finally settling in Los Angeles, where he lived and worked until his death in 1951. In his legacy the archives of the *Verein* are still preserved. They are first mentioned in Josef Rufer's *Das Werk Arnold Schoenbergs* (published 1959). When in 1974 the Arnold Schoenberg Institute was created in Los Angeles it housed not only the almost complete legacy of Schoenberg, but also the archives of the *Verein*.

Only three *Verein* arrangements were published in the period between 1921 and 1977: Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16, in an arrangement by his son-in-law Felix

Greissle (Peters 1925) (* this arrangement mainly added a horn to the existing *Verein* arrangement by Schoenberg), Busoni's *Berceuse élégiaque* Op. 42 (Breitkopf & Härtel 1973), and Webern's Six Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6 (Universal Edition 1977).

Of any post-*Verein* performances of the unperformed arrangements only Busoni's *Berceuse élégiaque* was heard in Hamburg in 1923. A possible performance of Reger's Violin Concerto by Rudolf Kolisch in 1922 in Frankfurt cannot be confirmed, but he did perform it in March 1922 in Vienna. The date of the first performance of the Greissle version of Schoenberg's Op. 16 is not known, but theoretically it could have happened any time after 1925. Of all others the only trace is of Webern's 1920 arrangement of the Six Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6, which was performed in 1970 by ensemble *die reihe* under the direction of Friedrich Cerha, with reconstructions of the cello and double-bass parts.

It was not until 1977 that the first recordings of *Verein* arrangements were made, notably Johann Strauss's *Rosen aus dem Süden* and Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune,* by the Boston Symphony Chamber Players for Deutsche Gramophon (*see appendix). Very likely this group was also the first ensemble ever to perform the Debussy.

Most of the rediscovery and presentation of the arrangements of the *Verein* can be attributed to the Schoenberg Ensemble. The Schoenberg Ensemble, founded by the present writer in 1974, emerged from an ensemble of students at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, the Netherlands. I was the ensemble's violist and artistic leader and as such responsible until 1988 for the development of the repertoire. When I visited for the first time in 1978 the newly built Arnold Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles as part of my research regarding performance practice questions and was able to study the manuscripts of Arnold Schoenberg, I found in the archives besides some interesting manuscripts of Schoenberg's early compositions also many *Verein* arrangements. There were actually a lot more than I had been aware of: Mahler's Fourth Symphony, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen,* and *Das Lied von der Erde* (unfinished arrangement), Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Zemlinsky's Maeterlinck Songs Op. 13, No. 2 & 5, Zemlinsky's Psalm XXIII, and Schoenberg's Six Orchestral Songs Op. 8, No. 1, 2 & 5.

With help of the staff of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute (* Director Leonard Stein and archivist Clara Steuermann, both former students of Schoenberg) I was able to locate the manuscript of Reger's *Romantische Suite* Op. 125 in Vancouver, Canada, of which manuscript score and parts we received photocopies. Almost ten years later I found in Kolisch's legacy in Boston (kept in the Houghton Library) the manuscript and parts of Kolisch's arrangement of Reger's Violin Concerto, given its world premiere in 1990 by Rainer Kussmaul and the Schoenberg Ensemble. The Schoenberg Ensemble started performing and recording most of these arrangements, and between the years 1978 and 1990 we gave probably the first performance, or at least the second performance after the Viennese *Verein,* of many of the *Verein* arrangements. Contrary to a claim in the preface of the recent publication of the arrangement of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony that the chamber ensemble version was revived in 1988 by a performance of the first movement

in New York, precedence should be given to the Schoenberg Ensemble, who performed the Adagio already in 1983 in the Main Hall of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, as is documented by radiobroadcast. The Schoenberg Ensemble's studio recording of the Adagio has not been released so far, but their first *Verein*-arrangement recordings for Philips and Koch-Schwann were released between 1979 and 1988 (some at that time still on vinyl): Schoenberg's Six Orchestral Songs Op. 8 No.1, 2 & 5, Busoni's *Berceuse élégiaque*, Zemlinsky's Psalm 23, Zemlinsky's Maeterlinck Songs Op. 13 No. 2 and 5, Reger's *Romantische Suite* and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.* The 1990 recording of Reger's Violin Concerto with soloist Rainer Kussmaul unfortunately has not yet been released, for reasons unknown.

Already in the early 1980s the Schoenberg Ensemble decided to continue the *Verein* tradition by commissioning composers/arrangers to create additional repertoire by using the *Verein* model of arranging. In this way song cycles by Schoenberg (* Six Orchestral Songs Op. 8 No. 3 arranged by Leonard Stein, No. 4 & 6 arranged by Reinbert de Leeuw (the Schoenberg Ensemble's conductor) and Zemlinsky (* Six Maeterlinck Songs Op. 13, No. 3 & 4 arranged by Leonard Stein, No. 1 & 6 by Reinbert de Leeuw) were completed and the wish of the *Verein* to arrange Alban Berg's *Altenberg Songs* Op. 4 could also be realized (* by Diderik Wagenaar in 1985).

Inspired by this new medium for orchestral compositions and by the success of the *Verein* arrangements, the repertoire was again expanded with De Leeuw's arrangements of Berg's *Sieben Frühe Lieder*, Webern's Passacaglia Op. 1, Richard Wagner's *Vorspiel und Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde,* Franz Liszt's *Von der Wiege bis zum Grabe,* and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*.

The value of performing these *Verein* and post-*Verein* arrangements in today's music life still lies in presenting underexposed repertoire, with the obvious exceptions of composers such as Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler. The fact that the Schoenberg Ensemble performed and recorded works by Busoni and Zemlinsky has very likely led to more interest in these compositions and their composers. In the case of the various song cycles such arrangements offer singers and audiences 'in-between orchestra and piano' versions, which present more colors than the piano versions and allow more subtlety and less volume than the versions with full orchestra.

In the past thirty years many ensembles worldwide have performed and recorded *Verein* arrangements, often to great acclaim. Our initiative to create new *Verein* arrangements has also been followed increasingly by many ensembles and composers/arrangers. Two chamber ensemble versions of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* exist (* This idea was inspired by Anton Webern, who pointed out that much of this score is reminiscent of chamber music.), two arrangers have completed Schoenberg's arrangement of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*, Mahler's Fourth Symphony has been rearranged, Mahler's Ninth Symphony exists in a chamber ensemble version, Schoenberg's *Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene* Op. 34, *Erwartung* and *Die Glückliche Hand*, Alban Berg's operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* have been arranged, as well as his Violin Concerto, this last composition even in several versions.

When looking at the *Verein* 'wish-list' from 1921 (* See appendix) it seems to me that of the projects mentioned one still could look at the value and benefit of commissioning ensemble arrangements of Schoenberg's Songs Op. 22, Reger's Hiller Variations, Reger's Piano Concerto, Debussy's *Jeux* and *Khamma*, Bartók's *The Wooden Prince* and Berg's Three Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6, as I consider the majority of these compositions still underexposed. (* I deliberately leave out Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel*, which in 1921 was a proposition of Rudolf Kolisch, as this piece is in my opinion often enough performed, although one could of course argue, with Gunther Schuller (see his fascinating book *The Compleat Conductor*), that the music still is waiting for a decent interpretation.)

During the past thirty years I have conducted most of the *Verein* arrangements, remaining basically true to the original arrangement while comparing it with the original orchestral score and correcting obvious mistakes. Until 2011, when I started revising many of the arrangements, I had restricted myself to minor changes in instrumentation, but closer inspection of the arrangements in comparison with the original instrumentation led me to the conviction that it would be in the spirit of the *Verein* to improve the instrumentation choices during rehearsal, thus keeping it a lively art, and this I did often in cooperation with the musicians. It felt even more justified because many of the pieces were not performed during the days of the *Verein* and so actually never even rehearsed. This has led me in certain cases to add instruments, and exchange voices, particularly in the keyboards. I have found it very inspiring to commission young composers to write music for the *Verein* ensemble, including the harmonium, and to combine their compositions with these arrangements of music of the past.

Henk Guittart 2023