

Book Review: *Musikwissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Hilfsmittel-TechnikenAufgaben* by Nicole Schwindt-Gross

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BOOK REVIEW

Schwindt-Gross, Nicole. *Musikwissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Hilfsmittel-Techniken-Aufgaben*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992. Vol. 1 of *Bärenreiter-Studienbücher Musik*. vi, 211 pp. ISBN 3-7618-1052-0.

It is well-known that as a graduate student in musicology at a Canadian University, one must sooner or later demonstrate one's knowledge of German since much significant research has been published in that language. Besides struggling with complicated musical idioms, North-American music students may also find the German "way" of working with primary and secondary sources challenging as well as their differing bibliographical styles (which, at times, vary considerably from the North-American citation rules) and their conception of what a scholarly paper should be. The handbook *Musikwissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Hilfsmittel-Techniken-Aufgaben* ("Doing Musicology: tools-techniques-assignments"), albeit in German, reveals numerous "secrets" of the various musicological procedures and methods which a German musicology student is expected to employ.

Schwindt-Gross's publication is a thorough and detailed guide through the musicological "jungle" which will face the novice scholar. It is, however, by no means a core text for a course in library science conceived especially for aspiring musicologists; instead it constitutes a "... [a chest of treasures] that one may use according to one's personal needs...."¹ Personal observations and forthright comments as well as valuable tips, useful hints, and quick shortcuts make this handbook a pleasure to read and use. Especially reassuring is the author's "learning-by-doing" approach which she applies to subjects such as learning how to work with various types of primary and secondary sources (for example, locating them in University or research libraries, listing them in a bibliography and using them when writing a scholarly paper). A great number of carefully thought out bibliographic exercises have been added at the end of each subsection, giving the reader the opportunity to review the presented material before proceeding to the next section.

Of particular interest are the English sources which Schwindt-Gross anticipates that German musicologists will want to include in their research. In the author's opinion, the three most important sources are *Music reference and research materials* by Vincent H. Duckles and Michael A. Keller,² *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*

¹"..., der von jedem nach seinen persönlichen Bedürfnissen genutzt werden kann...." See Schwindt-Gross, 14.

²The German version of Duckles and Vincent is Heinz Lanzke's *Wo finde ich Informationen über Musik, Noten, Tonträger, Musikliteratur*, vol. 1: *Musikdokumente und Musiksammlungen-Musiklexika-Musikgeschichte-Musikleben* (Berlin: Spitz, 1990), vol. 2a: *Musikbibliographie-Bibliographie der Bibliographien, Musikverzeichnisse (Musikalische Werke und ihre Ausgaben)*, in press; vol. 2b:

of *Musicians* (note that she uses the abbreviation "NGroveD" instead of the more conventional "NG"), and, in particular, the *Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale* (RILM). The author emphasizes that every German student must know how to use RILM because it is "... by far [the] most important bibliographical source..."³, with its comprehensiveness and user-friendliness making it the most effective international musicological source available at practically every German university and research library. In contrast, one of the most useful English sources in musicology, the *Music Index* (MI) can only be found at a small number of German university libraries and is virtually non-existent at *Institutsbibliotheken*. Consequently, the author dedicates only half a page (in fine print) to the MI, declaring that many of the 500 periodicals that are listed in the MI are too small and out of the way to become available in Europe (!).

An even worse scenario must be expected by the German musicology student when trying to acquire Ph.D. dissertations, especially those from outside Europe. The author claims that the quality of such foreign doctoral theses may "not necessarily warrant expenditures [i.e., the long waiting periods and high expenses]", unless it was prepared at a bigger or, in the case of North-America, at an ivy-league school. Schwindt-Gross also draws the student's attention to the term "maschinenschriftlich" ("in typescript"). It indicates that the dissertation was never published and that only a few xerox copies are available at the respective University library. In addition, it is likely that the dissertation will not be circulated to any other library, be it in Germany, Europe or anywhere else in the world.

The often outdated and almost always confusing cataloguing system that has been used in German university and research libraries is frustrating for both German and foreign musicologists. German *Bibliotheken* are known for their "unique", i.e., obscure way of organizing primary and secondary sources. Although there are specific rules for indexing material (the so-called RAK or "Regeln für die alphabetische Katalogisierung"⁴) which are employed by bigger German libraries, the smaller *Institutsbibliotheken* at which research students are likely to spend the majority of

Musikbibliographie-Tonträgerverzeichnisse, Verzeichnisse der Musikkultur, Musikzeitschriften; appendix: Überregionale Musiksammlungen, in preparation (Orientierungshilfen, 22/1, 2a, 2b).

³"... mit Abstand [die] wichtigste bibliographische Quelle...". Schwindt-Gross, 78. She also discusses the *National Union Catalogue* (NUC), *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales* (RISM), and Cecil Adkins's *Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology* as well as standard German dictionaries such as *Musikgeschichte in Geschichte in Gegenwart*, the *Riemann Lexikon*, the *Bibliographie des Musikschritftums* (BMS, RILM's German counterpart), and the *Zeitschriftendienst Musik* (ZDM), with the last index being the most current of all.

⁴RAK in English means "Rules for alphabetical indexing".

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their time use either the old cataloguing system ("PI" or "Preußische Instruktionen"), a combination of the PI and RAK, or have developed their very own system of indexing primary and secondary sources. The author's discussion of the two conventional systems (RAK and PI) is useful, detailed, and well-organized and displays her common sense. For example, for catalogue searches that seemingly go nowhere, Schwindt-Gross recommends that one "not give up too quickly, try all conceivable possibilities, and, if all else fails, to ask someone!"⁵ On-line research is still a relatively new concept to many German students and libraries (particularly to those in East Germany). *Institutsbibliotheken* or *Musikhochschulbibliotheken* hardly ever provide this service to students. If on-line research is available at all, it tends to be expensive (the author quotes a flat rate of 30 DM to 50 DM plus a fee of 1 DM per bibliographic entry), with access usually being restricted to library staff.

In summary, *Musikwissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Hilfsmittel-Techniken-Aufgaben* allows music students to gain insight into what German musicologists are expected to know about their "vocation", including carrying on research in libraries using primary and secondary sources as well as summarizing one's findings in scholarly documents. Despite the fact that at the first glance much of Schwindt-Gross's discussion will appear to be a review of what one was taught during one's undergraduate degree, her guide through the musicological "jungle" must be considered a valuable tool. Not only does it meet the needs of the more scholarly-inclined readers who insist on both astute deductions and a certain eloquence, but it will delight those readers who favour a lucid and more entertaining style of writing to the rather dry "Gelehrtendeutsch" which one encounters in so many academic publications.

Anyone who wishes to do or who will be doing research in Germany will benefit from Schwindt-Gross's discourse. I wish I had had the opportunity to read this book before spending the summer of 1993 at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, doing research for my dissertation. *Musikwissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Hilfsmittel-Techniken-Aufgaben* would not only have prepared me for doing research at the various musicological institutes and research libraries which I had to visit during my stay in Germany but would have given me an added advantage when attending musicology lectures offered by the German university.

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⁵ "... nicht zu schnell aufgeben, alle denkbaren Möglichkeiten ausprobieren, notfalls fragen!" Schwindt-Gross, 123.