Introduction

Friedemann Sallis and Patricia Hall

Over the past quarter-century, the scholarly study of autograph sources has exploded and nowhere is this more true than in the field of twentieth-century music. A cursory examination of the list of institutions devoted to the promotion and study of the work of twentieth-century composers (found at the end of this book) shows that their number increased dramatically during this period. Whereas only a handful of such institutions were established in the decades following the Second World War, between 1990 and 2000 no less than fifteen opened their doors and many of these contain massive manuscript collections.

The study of manuscript material is not a recent phenomenon. Western culture has been collecting, conserving and scrutinising these documents since at least the fourteenth century. During the Renaissance, the working manuscript of writers and visual artists gradually obtained a permanent position as the step before the finished work, attesting to five centuries of remarkable continuity in terms of tools and procedures.[1] Some of the oldest surviving examples are those of humanists such as Petrarch and Leonardo da Vinci. Indeed, the very idea that a sketch or a draft has some value and should be conserved is intimately linked with the emergence of our modern concept of the work of art. Not surprisingly, our current interest for the composer's sketches can be traced back to the beginning of the Romantic period, a time when the musical work of art finally came into its own.[2]

In North America, the annual summer trek to archives and foundations housing manuscript collections has now become a standard feature of academic calendars and in some quarters these excursions have acquired the status of a 'rite of passage' for doctoral candidates. And yet, most students and many colleagues are ill-prepared to deal with the tasks and challenges facing them as they embark on a study of sketch material. Few if any courses or seminars broach the subject of sketch studies and the skills required to examine manuscripts, creating what one astute observer has called a 'methodological black hole'. The result is lost time and frustrating experiences for the visiting researcher, the archivist and the host institution. This book seeks to address this problem by providing useful information, which is intended to make the work of both colleagues and students more efficient and rewarding.

The first chapter presents a survey of themes related to the study of the sketch material of twentieth-century composers. Giselher Schubert and Friedemann Sallis ask to what extent sketches should be seen as preliminary documents and thus tributary to a work or work project (no matter how ill-defined), or whether they can be understood as texts in their own

right. These opposing view-points have been part of sketch studies throughout the twentieth century and they continue to shape how we think about them to this day.

The following chapters can be roughly divided into two sections. The first (chapters 2–6) deals with the knowledge and skills necessary to work efficiently in archives or other institutions housing manuscript material. Some of the most critical work of research projects involving autographs is completed before leaving home. Benefiting from years of experience as a musicologist at the Paul Sacher Foundation, Ulrich Mosch presents invaluable advice for those preparing for a prolonged period of work in an archive. The conservation of original documents is of course the primary responsibility of every archive and library. In chapter 3 Therese Muxeneder looks at the impact this vocation can have on the researcher's work. She examines the composition of paper and how it ages, as well as providing advice on how to handle fragile autographs. The terminology we use to describe and classify the composer's working manuscripts is discussed in chapter 4. Friedemann Sallis also looks at the concepts underlying this terminology and how these concepts have changed as they passed from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Erika Schaller carefully walks the reader through the complexities of cataloguing sketch material and highlights the advantages of using database technology for this purpose. Equipment and supplies required for the digital preservation of information contained in manuscript source material is now both readily available and affordable, though still not widely used. William Koseluk's essay presents photographic methods and an analysis of various computer scanning options as well as a survey of graphic software and various distribution methods.

The second half of the book (chapters 7–14) is devoted to issues and techniques pertinent to the study of sketch material. Each chapter focuses on a work or a selection of works by one or two composers. Using two sketches by Anton Webern, Regina Busch begins this section with a detailed examination of theoretical and practical aspects of transcription. Researchers are frequently confronted with the tasks of reconstructing sketchbooks and deciphering a composer's hastily written annotations. Patricia Hall's essay presents pragmatic techniques for overcoming these difficulties, which all scholars will find useful. Putting his renowned knowledge of Béla Bartók's autographs to good use, László Somfai examines the problem of establishing a chronology of undated sketches. In chapter 10, Tomi Mäkelä takes a fresh look at the importance of sound colour and instrumentation in twentieth-century music and proposes a method for the systematic study of this aspect of Igor Stravinsky's music. Pascal Decroupet exhaustively analyses the evolution of serial technique in the 1950s and 1960s and demonstrates how the sketch material of Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen provides us with new perspectives on their work. In chapter 12, Denis Vermaelen discusses the significance of Elliott Carter's pre-compositional strategies and their impact on the completed work. In the penultimate chapter, Ross Feller assesses the impact of music-writing software on the working methods of Brian Ferneyhough. Finally, Larry Austin reports on

his recomposition of John Cage's *Williams Mix* using the composer's manuscript material and computer technology.

Notwithstanding the division of the book into two sections, the essays presented here also relate to one another in multiple ways forming a network of interconnections within which the reader will discover a number of possible links. For instance, profiting from his long experience with Paul Hindemith's autographs, Giselher Schubert presents the advantages and disadvantages of publishing sketch material in facsimile and in transcription. These points are then taken up and examined in great detail by Regina Busch. The chapters dealing with the impact of computer technology on archival practice (chapters 5 and 6) and on the working methods of composers (chapters 13 and 14) constitute another obvious example. An important thread running through much of the book are questions concerning the interpretation of sketch material and how knowledge gained from the study of sketches can enhance our understanding of a given composer's music.

In preparing this book we made a conscious effort to overstep disciplinary, cultural and linguistic boundaries. Sketch studies are best situated in that space where the history and theory of music overlap. Problems of analysis and context are inseparably bound up in the composer's working documents: examining them usually requires a broadly based, holistic approach.[3] The musicological and theoretical perspectives brought to this project by the editors reflect this belief. To be sure, the book presents neither a history nor a theory of sketch studies, though we do hope that it will be considered an important step in both of these directions.

Seven of the book's chapters were initially submitted in German and French. Walter Benjamin observed that fidelity and freedom are built into the very nature of translation.[4] He was referring to the translation of poetry; however his point is well taken here. During the past three years we have attempted to set the content of the original versions in clear, readable English and are grateful for the patient collaboration of our foreign-language contributors during this long and at times arduous process. We would also note, together with Benjamin, 'that no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change.'[5]

We remind the reader that, notwithstanding the traditional practice of most major publishing houses, the translations included in this book should be considered as unnecessary crutches. As Ulrich Mosch and Patricia Hall underline in their respective chapters, sketch studies require a thorough knowledge of the composer's first language, no matter how little known it may be outside of the area in which it is spoken. We would stress that an adequate knowledge of important regional and minority languages (for instance German in Central Europe, French in Canada and Spanish in the USA) is also absolutely necessary. Foreign-language competence is essential not only to be able to understand the remarks,

words and abbreviations which normally accompany the composer's musical notation, but also because sketches constitute a highly idiosyncratic system of signs, which must be deciphered as though one were learning a new language. Thus the acquisition of a second or a third language provides the scholar with a broad range of aptitudes and capabilities which will prove indispensable in the course of the research project. If the problem of second- and third-language competence is not exclusively North American, it is nonetheless particularly acute on that continent. Though North American universities habitually require a second language in their doctoral programs, real competence is often sorely lacking.

Sketch studies have been and will no doubt remain a locus for controversy. The benefits of studying the composer's working documents have been both wildly exaggerated[6] and summarily dismissed.[7] Douglas Johnson's old argument concerning their relevance for analysis now seems tinged with that naivety we often attribute to ideas from another age.[8] Sketches, like the works or work projects to which they may pertain, are deeply contextualised phenomena and it is wistful thinking to assume that either a sketch or a published score can simply be read or analysed at face value. We believe that it is time to put this argument to rest. The question is not whether sketch material will be used for analysis, but rather how this should be done. Sketch studies have become and will no doubt remain a permanent fixture of both the history and analysis of music for the foreseeable future and it is within this perspective that the book was conceived.

CHAPTER I

Sketches and sketching

Giselher Schubert and Friedemann Sallis

SKETCHES AND THE WORK

In the visual arts, the sketch possesses a completely autonomous aesthetic value, which can neither be attained nor overtaken by the completed work. The precarious balance between content and expressive means in Paul Cézanne's sketches and studies of the *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (1902–6) allows them to be apprehended as works in their own right without necessarily referring to other, more complete, versions of the same painting.[1] Traditionally, no such claim can be made for the composer's preliminary working documents. As a rule, they are understood to be unfinished, open and provisional: the first unsure attempts to notate ideas, the significance of which remains uncertain. As opposed to sketches in the visual arts, the content of musical sketches is normally projected towards a completed composition, even in those cases where the work is missing because it has not survived, was not completed or was never written down in the first place. There are of course compositions whose titles include the term 'sketch'. From a thematic, melodic, rhythmic and formal point of view, Claude Debussy's *D'un Cahier d'Esquisse* for piano (1903) is an extraordinarily subtle work. In this case, however, the term 'sketch' refers to a compositional principle, which the composer controls and forms technically. It has nothing to do with the working documents used to compose the work.

Contradicting this more traditional view is the position that all sketch material, no matter how preliminary, should be accorded an independent status, which is lost when this material is uncritically subsumed within the bounds of a work or work project. This position understands sketching as a relatively autonomous process, not necessarily limited to demands or contingencies existing outside of the process itself. In this light, sketching represents the utopia of unhindered musical imagination developing on its own terms. Over the past half-century, this latter position has been indirectly reinforced by attempts to create innovative forms based on open work-concepts and more recently by the emergence of so-called post-modern approaches to the understanding of art and culture. Be that as it may, these contradictory positions are built into the very foundation of sketch studies. In the following pages we shall examine how we use sketch material to better understand music and how these contradictory positions affect this usage.

SKETCHES, ANALYSIS AND HERMENEUTICS

The scientific basis for the study of sketches first emerged during the early twentieth century and is intimately bound up with an important paradigm shift in aesthetics. While some scholars took Friedrich Nietzsche's position – that the completeness of a work of art cannot be accounted for in the information contained in the composer's working documents – others fixed their attention on the multitude of potentialities always present in the creative process and of which only a small portion emerge in the finished work. From this latter perspective, the isolated, self-contained work, which Walter Benjamin described as 'the supreme reality in art',[2] appears as a betrayal of those multiple possibilities, or to quote Benjamin again, as the death-mask of the artist's initial conception.[3]

To the extent that a given work is perceived as an aesthetic object of some value, the idea that it exists as a distinct and wholly separate entity became widespread during the early twentieth century. Sobered by this reinforcement of the notion of aesthetic autonomy, the study of a given composition now focused less on the idea of the work as a representation of the composer's struggle to create and more on an imminent analysis of compositional technique. In the influential work of Heinrich Schenker (1867–1935), August Halm (1869–1929) and Ernst Kurth (1886–1946), the essence of a musical work's contents can only be grasped through a minute examination of the procedures used to bring it into existence. In this context the composer's manuscript material enabled a better understanding of the specificity of a given work. In attempting to reconstruct the compositional process, scholars hoped to differentiate between the genesis and the value of a composition. The value of musical relationships was to be precisely and above all 'authentically' determined through a reliable description of how motives, themes and forms are developed and modified within the creative process. The close reading of Ludwig van Beethoven's sketches by Paul Mies (1889–1976) demonstrated how such a thorough examination of this material can lead to a better understanding of the composer's style.[4]

Compositions now acquired their own 'biographies', which sought to underscore their unmistakable individuality. Generic categories were avoided, ignored or simply forgotten. Identifying and understanding the individual and specific aspects of a given work, a task which could no longer be done using traditional compositional categories, became an analytic problem. In the case of the Viennese School, the following questions came to the fore. Is the twelve-tone row developed as a thematic entity or after such an entity has been conceived? Which twelve-tone criteria constitute a given composer's conscious act of composition? How are inconsistencies and discrepancies in row technique to be understood? When dealing with the individualised works of the Viennese School, fundamental questions such as these can only be dealt with by going back to the surviving sketch material.

From the study of Arnold Schoenberg's sketches we know that thematic inspiration preceded the development of twelve-tone rows. The manuscript material also shows that

Schoenberg subdivided his rows into segments, the significance of which had an important influence on the analysis of his dodecaphonic works. On the contrary, in Alban Berg's twelve-tone works, the development of thematic material follows the establishment of row structures, which constitute a substrate of pitch relationships that are axiomatic for a given work. Berg's sketches also had a stimulating impact on the analysis of his works. Very often he would note the exact number of bars making up a section or a movement. These numbers are then applied to other musical dimensions and can acquire a specific sense within the work's structure. The sketches also contain explanatory notes referring to the fact that Berg related certain musical gestures to extra-musical phenomena. This new information has radically changed our apprehension of compositions such as the *Lyric Suite*. Sketches have thus provided access to levels of meaning which cannot be directly extracted from the published score. In this case, the study of sketch material provided a basis not only for the technical revision of previous analyses, but also for the development of new hermeneutic approaches, some of which led to surprising and unpredictable knowledge. The study of sketches (and not just those of Berg) reveals that almost any musical building-block (melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) can acquire and contain meaning over and above its purely structural significance, and that this meaning may have nothing to do with the way in which the material was initially conceived.

COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUE AND THE STUDY OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

The study of a composer's compositional techniques is a complex endeavour that cannot be read directly out of the surviving documents. First of all, the comments a composer makes on his own work cannot be taken at face value. In letters to friends, Max Reger made misleading statements on the nature of his compositional technique. Whereas he maintained that his works were completely thought out before he wrote them down, his sketches show that, when he began composing, he often had no clear conception of the work he would finally write. Indeed, his concept of the work usually became manifest as he sketched. Reger's creative process was stimulated less by flashes of thematic inspiration than by suggestions from friends, the methodical study of contemporary and historical models, and was even influenced by such extra-musical considerations as the size and format of his staff paper. Hans Pfitzner also insisted on the primacy of inspiration. His sketches demonstrate that only themes and thematic configurations were the product of spontaneous imagination. Most of his compositional activity was based on the careful working out of freely associated musical ideas. On the contrary, Paul Hindemith described musical inspiration as a kind of 'vision', which he compared to the flash of lightning on a night landscape. His sketches demonstrate that on occasion he actually did write out complete drafts of works as though seized by such a vision.

Increased knowledge of the creative process has greatly stimulated research. Composers themselves have often attempted to better understand their own compositional methods and

habits so as not to find themselves at the mercy of their 'mood'. Neither Schoenberg nor Hindemith composed with instruments. However, whereas Hindemith always sketched out a work to the end and only then wrote the fair copy, Schoenberg often wrote out sketched sections in fair copy, which is why the latter left behind so many fragments. Hindemith left almost none. As is well known, Igor Stravinsky, who claimed he preferred composing to the finished composition, developed much of his new material by improvising at the piano. This was then quickly written down on any available scrap of paper. Later, in a second phase, he would organise these spontaneously developed ideas. Though Berg composed at the piano, he simultaneously drafted specific formal plans, developed ideas for movements and structured musical building-blocks. He then formed themes, motives, harmonic progressions and tone configurations from this material and used them to fill out the formal plans. Though the various aspects of Berg's working procedures can be distinguished, they cannot be separated from one another. Béla Bartók also used the piano to put himself in a compositional frame of mind, which was then followed by the sketching of thematic ideas. As a rule, he produced continuity sketches of the planned work and supplemented these with sketches concerning particular compositional problems. Occasionally Pfitzner and Richard Strauss sketched out their ideas of complete compositions in words, without musical notation. These verbalised musical developments should not be confused with the programmes or the content description of symphonic poems.

Over the past half-century, the emergence of new compositional techniques (serial, moment form, aleatory, minimalist, etc.) has led to an increased production of sketches concerned with the preparation of material and general principles. These types of sketches often have little or no direct relationship with the resulting composition. Rather they offer information concerning the musical axioms which govern the development of general structural principles covering any number of musical dimensions (pitch, rhythm, sound-colour, dynamics, phrasing, texture, periodicity and form). More often than not, sketches such as these appear as lists, tables and schemata to which the composer refers during the compositional process. The serial techniques developed by Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen immediately spring to mind. However, one could just as easily refer to John Cage's systematic organisation of his chance operations or to Elliot Carter's Harmony Book in which he presents an exhaustive repertoire of harmonic combinations derived from the chromatic scale.

Over time, the mastering of technique and increased knowledge of the creative process can allow the composer to dispense with 'pre-compositional' sketches and to directly compose large sections of a projected work. Missing in these documents are what the composer does not feel obliged to notate because they constitute part of his taste, style, handiwork: in a word, his compositional routine (tempo indications, instrumentation, voice-leading, phrasing, dynamics, the text setting in vocal music, etc.). This does not mean that these aspects have no aesthetic significance, or that they became part of the creative process at a later date. On the contrary, composers do not normally notate what for them is self-evident. However, as obvious as they may be to the composer, these aspects cannot be divined by

those outside of the composer's inner circle. In sketches such as these, structural principles are applied directly to the material of the primary musical dimensions, and to the extent that, say, phrasing, dynamics or tempo indications are or become part of this primary dimension, they will then appear in the sketching process. Accordingly, the study of sketches can allow one to define the primary and secondary aspects of a completed work from the composer's point of view.

The source material for Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 6 consists of a short score and a fair copy. The former document contains precisely notated thematic material and numerous verbal descriptions as well as general indications concerning pitch content, register, rhythmic figures and instrumentation. Despite the fragmentary nature of this information, the finished work is unmistakably present. Indeed, Ulrich Mosch has pointed out that the short score provides an exceptionally clear presentation of the overall formal conception of the work.[5] In cases such as this, sketching coincides with the first complete draft, meaning that the work was largely thought through before being written down. Hindemith was of the opinion that, for 'real' composers, such an imagined (but not yet written out) work has the same existential status as a notated composition. In the case of his duo sonatas for melody instrument with piano accompaniment, Hindemith's idea of the work was so secure that he would dispense with a complete draft of the full score and successively write out each of the parts to control their specific effects.

PHILOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The broadening of the field of sketch studies to include work analysis and the research on the creative process has resulted in opening up a labyrinthine network of philological problems.

1. Whether or to what extent a given corpus of sketch material is complete, or if parts have been lost or destroyed, will necessarily remain an open question. The genesis of a composition can stretch over a number of years, during which the composer's living and working habits can change drastically. Normally, composers do not scrupulously save and conserve every scrap of their working documents as though they were historians of their own work. Also, they will tend to discard the material which refers to what they see as preliminary or out-dated stages of their compositional technique. This is particularly true of those twentieth-century composers who conceived their work as being part of the 'progressive thrust' of history. Thus the loss of at least part of the composer's sketch material should be considered a rule rather than an exception.
2. The problem of dating sketches and their chronology is intimately bound up with the writing habits of composers. Sketches written on loose-leaf sheets can hardly be dated with any precision and even a general chronology is difficult to establish. The philological tools developed for the purpose of establishing chronologies (watermarks, paper types, writing utensils and the deduction of dates with the help of secondary sources) are frequently

inefficient because the useful dating of sketches usually focuses on identifying the day on which a document was written. Even the composer's own dating must be cross-checked whenever possible. Schoenberg accused Webern of falsely dating his works in order to reinforce his claim of paternity for certain compositional techniques.[6] Finally the date appearing on a page of sketches does not necessarily refer to everything written on that page. Undated modifications are sometimes added long after the sketch was initially written.

3. Sketches must be comprehensible for the composer, but not necessarily for anyone else. Consequently, the decoding and interpretation of sketch material is often extraordinarily problematic. The notation of pitch and rhythm is often equivocal and verbal explications are sometimes illegible for those outside of the composer's inner circle. The graphical disposition of sketches as well as the individual signs used to create them can be puzzling and frustrating. On many of Reger's sketches one finds short lines, perpendicular to the staff and disposed unsystematically among sketched music. A careful study of the sketches revealed that they have no musical significance.[7] Rather, they appear to have occurred inadvertently as Reger quickly put his writing utensil aside, suggesting that many of his sketches are transcriptions of improvisation done at the piano.
4. Establishing the extent, chronology and interpretation of a corpus of manuscript material is also problematic because a given sketch cannot necessarily be related to one specific composition. Furthermore, if one sketch can be related to different compositions, it can also be used in different ways, acquiring new and divergent meanings in the process. The recycling of previously written material is in fact widespread and often underestimated because for the past 200 years composers, performers and the public have insisted on viewing works, particularly those of the classical canon, as isolated, self-contained entities. The manuscript material of twentieth-century composers, now being made available for public scrutiny in unprecedented quantities, reveals that this practice is pervasive among composers from Charles Ives to György Kurtág.[8] The latter's third string quartet, *Officium breve in memoriam Andreæ Szervánsky*, Op. 28 (1989) is an interesting case in point. Of the fifteen movements making up the work, only four were composed specifically for the string quartet in 1988–9. The other eleven movements are either quotations of music by Anton Webern and Endre Szervánszky or adaptations of music previously composed by Kurtág himself, some of which can be traced back to sketches and drafts written up to fifteen years before he began work on *Officium breve*.

PUBLISHING SKETCH MATERIAL

The paradigm shift in aesthetics described above contributed to the institutionalisation of sketch studies in the 1920s. Though initially carried out as part of philological research undertaken to prepare the critical edition of complete works, the examination of the composer's