

The Compositional Process and Background of Arnold Schoenberg's *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* Op. 34:

His Unpublished Memo and Film Music in the Twenties

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Arnold Schoenberg's *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* Op. 34 (1930) indicates the close relation between Schoenberg's work and film music. Although Schoenberg did not contribute to any films in his career, he had planned to accompany the performance of his work *Die glückliche Hand* (1913) with a silent film. He emphasized the importance of sound film in the 1920s in texts such as "Der sprechende Film," 1927 ("The Talkie"). His relationship with Guido Bagier, the head of the department in charge of sound films department of Universum Film AG (UFA), also indicates Schoenberg's interest in films during that time.

This paper explores *Begleitungsmusik* both in terms of its musical structure and with reference to the praxis of musical accompaniment of silent films. First, the musical character of *Begleitungsmusik* is analyzed from the perspective of its structure and the process of its composition. Discussion of an unpublished memo indicating the programmatic content of this piece and a detailed analysis of Schoenberg's musical manuscripts show that his revisions emphasized a dramaturgical structure, partly corresponding to the unpublished memo. Second, the relation between the film and Schoenberg's activities, based on the examination of related preliminary material including the diary of his second wife Gertrud and the unpublished autobiography of Guido Bagier, will be surveyed. Finally, the contemporary situation and the aesthetics of musical accompaniment of silent film are discussed, focusing on the relation of the three subtitles Schoenberg used in his *Begleitungsmusik*, "threatening danger," "anxiety," and "catastrophe." Musical scenarios published in *Film-Ton-Kunst*, a magazine that specialized in the film music praxis in the 1920s, are systematically explored. Consequently, this paper recontextualizes *Begleitungsmusik* within Schoenberg's own development and the historical background to clarify that although Schoenberg and contemporary praxis of musical accompaniment attached great importance to dramaturgical construction, nevertheless, their musical languages and attitudes toward the excerpting of musical pieces differed.