

# Bojan Bujić, Arnold Schoenberg and Egon Wellesz: A Fraught Relationship

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# ARNOLD SCHOENBERG AND EGON WELLESZ

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Bojan Bujić, *Arnold Schoenberg and Egon Wellesz: A Fraught Relationship*

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Otto Fritz Beer (1910–2002) once called Egon Wellesz (1885–1974) the “fourth of the three,” referring to the core of the Viennese School comprised of Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), Alban Berg (1885–1935), and Anton Webern (1883–1945)—an assessment suggesting a certain proximity and distance at the same time.<sup>[1]</sup> Wellesz is widely known today as a musicologist and composer who studied with Schoenberg and published numerous studies on his former teacher throughout his life in order to promote his theories and works, culminating in the first biography of Schoenberg published in 1921.<sup>[2]</sup> This common picture, however, disguises the rather complicated relationship between the two Viennese composers, who—despite having a lot in common—did not get along very well most of the time and completely drifted apart in the end. Bojan Bujić, who has worked on both Wellesz and Schoenberg before,<sup>[3]</sup> thus takes on the timely task of outlining this complex relationship and revising the image of Wellesz as one of Schoenberg’s devoted pupils. Wellesz was an outspoken public advocate of Schoenberg and his work, but unlike Berg, Webern, and many other members of Schoenberg’s immediate orbit, he was not a blind follower, rather he remained more independent from the inner circle of the Viennese School. He did not want to feel constrained by Schoenberg’s demands, did not succumb to the dominance of his short-time teacher, and was sometimes even overtly critical of his work and methods. Schoenberg on the other hand seemed to feel mostly irritated by Wellesz and would later describe him as a cold intellectual without a grain of artistic talent, furthermore degrading his academic approach and achievements. This complex setting makes the book under review a particularly interesting read, because Bujić does not focus on Schoenberg’s already well-researched relationships with his strongest supporters, but on someone who was indeed deeply influenced by Schoenberg but kept his distance in order to act more freely and develop his own style. Schoenberg therefore represented, as Bujić specifies, “the messianic figure of a father whom he wished to acknowledge and against whom he felt he had to assert himself. Standing in awe of him, while refusing to be drawn into his embrace, emerges as an essential determinant of Wellesz’s sense of self” (198).





**Figure 1: Arnold Schoenberg, around 1910; by courtesy of Arnold Schönberg Center  
Wien, [PH1424](#)**

As Bujić recounts in his preface, he had initially planned to only edit the very few existing letters between Schoenberg and Wellesz, but soon realized that it was worth depicting and analyzing their relationship as a whole, because he wanted to discuss “two representatives of different ideological streams within Viennese Modernism” (xi). This is indeed a much-needed study because Schoenberg’s influence on Wellesz has so far only been examined in a very narrow

framework, primarily addressing certain compositional aspects.<sup>[4]</sup> The two men became acquainted in the very early days of both their careers and Schoenberg still exerted a significant draw on Wellesz up to his last years. Although their relationship broke off in 1924 (see below), Bujić chronicles the aftermath up to Wellesz's death in 1974. The fourteen items of their correspondence are thus only part of the early chapters, demonstrating how far Bujić's monograph ultimately surpasses the analytical framework he envisioned initially. He offers a careful English translation of the originally German letters, but unfortunately does not provide the original text. Whether this was an authorial or editorial decision, the original wording would have been a helpful addition for German-speaking readers. While most of the letters are available online via the database of the Arnold Schönberg Center,<sup>[5]</sup> having direct access to foreign-language material and providing the opportunity of comparing the translation to the original wording, including its subtleties and nuances, is a welcome addition to any book (within reason, or course). Bujić does, however, retain the original salutations such as "Lieber Herr," "Sehr geehrter Herr," etc., whose subtle, untranslatable differences in tone prove an important analytical tool in showing the different levels of familiarity between the two parties. (On a side note, the transcriptions of their correspondence are set off typographically in striking frames, which—though peculiar on first glance—allows them to stand out against other quotes and facilitates finding them by leafing through the book.)



**Figure 2: Egon Wellesz at a young age; by courtesy of Egon-Wellesz-Fonds, Vienna**  
Wellesz was one of Schoenberg's earliest students: they met briefly in 1904 while Wellesz was still attending *Gymnasium*, and he then joined Schoenberg's courses in 1905, only to quit the same year. Yet this one semester was all it took for Wellesz to stay in Schoenberg's orbit for life.



Their relationship would come to be marked by misunderstandings on both sides, and in particular by Schoenberg's mistrust towards Wellesz. Wellesz's reasons for dropping out of the course have never really been questioned before. In retrospect, he unconvincingly attributed the decision to advice from Bruno Walter (1876–1962), whom he hardly knew.<sup>[6]</sup> Bujić gives several other, more plausible explanations, for instance that Wellesz, who at the time was still quite young, was not yet able to compete with older pupils such as Heinrich Jalowetz (1882–1946) and Anton Webern, who unfortunately for him would be considered among the best of all his students. Schoenberg later stated that Wellesz “worked very little and extremely poorly” (4) during that time, which sounds highly exaggerated, but could still hold a grain of truth because of Wellesz's various other interests, which might have given the appearance of a lack of focus, and possibly excessive demands on Schoenberg's part at the time. This recollection might thus have derived from the fact that Wellesz was too “thirsty for knowledge” (5) in multiple directions—he was, among other subjects, interested in literature, art history, and his academic career in general—which did not fit well with Schoenberg's expectation of loyalty to his cause—a loyalty requiring an “extraordinarily high degree of commitment” (5).

Apart from the biographical outline,<sup>[7]</sup> Bujić paints a broad picture of the historical, political, and socio-cultural context of Wellesz's and Schoenberg's relationship in the first chapters, paying special attention to the dynamics of fin-de-siècle Vienna. He describes in detail the social and economic differences between Schoenberg and Wellesz, which might have played an important role in the ultimate estrangement between the two men. Schoenberg came from a working-class environment, whereas Wellesz's well-situated family was involved in manufacturing and finance, providing a stable financial background as well as entrée to the upper class of the imperial capital. In addition, Wellesz and Schoenberg had different levels of formal education: Wellesz was able to attend the University of Vienna, from which he graduated with a doctorate in musicology (as did, for instance, Webern). In contrast, Schoenberg was only able to attend school until the age of sixteen, which impacted his academic options. The discrepancies of academic and social status were thus a factor that should not be dismissed when it comes to potential sources of friction in their relationship.

Wellesz began studying almost at the same time with Schoenberg and Guido Adler (1855–1941), founder of the Department for Musicology at the University of Vienna, where he went on to attain his doctorate in 1908 with a study on Giuseppe Bonno (1711–88) and pursued a successful career as a musicologist. Wellesz was determined to advance his academic career, becoming a *Privatdozent* (private lecturer) and later on an associate professor, which not only provided him with quite a steady income, but also bolstered his reputation and respectability. In general, the connections between Schoenberg and the Department for Musicology are supremely important because of the steady exchange of students between the university and the Schoenberg circle. Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)—a close friend of Adler—suggested to him that he should send his best students to Schoenberg, so many of them like Wellesz, Webern, Paul Amadeus Pisk (1893–1990), and Karl Horwitz (1884–1925) were pupils of both Adler and Schoenberg.<sup>[8]</sup> The influence of Adler not only on Wellesz's scientific outlook but also on his artistic career should not be underestimated and is in my opinion a key to the understanding of many different facets of Wellesz's aesthetics.<sup>[9]</sup> Bujić gives room to this aspect throughout his book, which is especially welcome since these questions have to date not been discussed sufficiently.





**Figure 3: Guido Adler in 1927, photograph by Georg Fayer; by courtesy of [Österreichische Nationalbibliothek](#)**

Guido Adler was without a doubt personally much closer to Wellesz and a stronger influence than Schoenberg (25). Here, Bujić rightly concludes that “Wellesz found in Guido Adler a teacher who represented an embodiment of his family’s ethical milieu” (10). Wellesz’s publications in his early career also show significant parallels to the Vienna School of Art History, where the foundations of modern methods of disciplines concerned with the arts were developed. When Adler founded the Department for Musicology—or, to be more exact, the “Wiener Musikhistorisches Institut” (Vienna Institute for Music History)—he modelled its structure on the older Institute for Art

History, which had been founded in 1852 by Rudolf Eitelberger (1817–85). Wellesz showed much interest in art history, especially in the work of Alois Riegl (1858–1905), Max Dvořák (1874–1921), and Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945). Furthermore, his wife Emmy was an art historian and student of Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941), whose keen interest in Byzantine art influenced Wellesz and in particular inspired his work on Byzantine music. During his student days, Wellesz also took extracurricular courses—a practice explicitly encouraged by Adler—with Strzygowski, Franz Wickhoff (1853–1909), and especially Dvořák, who the couple admired deeply.<sup>[10]</sup> This broad range of academic interests manifests itself in numerous publications by Wellesz, foremost his early essay “Renaissance und Barock” (1909),<sup>[11]</sup> which betrays ideas and methodological approaches initially developed in art history, like “definitions of style, division into historical periods, relationship of European art to the art of the Orient,” and so on (25–26). This affinity between musicology and art history in the early days of both disciplines was not out of the ordinary, as Adler, who readily adopted and transformed methodological approaches deriving from art history, demonstrated by example.<sup>[12]</sup> It also reflects a possible link between theory and practice, which was a main idea in art history—consider, for example, the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Austrian Museum for Art and Industry) and the Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst (Austrian Museum for Applied Art) founded by Eitelberger in 1864 and supplemented by the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) in 1868. Wellesz’s essay also considers the idea of style, which was highlighted by Wölfflin in his book *Renaissance und Barock* of 1888<sup>[13]</sup> (clearly referenced by Wellesz in the title of his essay), and was among others picked up by Adler in his concept of *Stilkritik* (stylistic investigation, to make use of Wellesz’s translation provided below), especially in his monograph *Der Stil in der Musik* of 1911.<sup>[14]</sup> For Wellesz the idea of a musical style constituted the foundation of his approach, which he maintained all his life.<sup>[15]</sup>

Bujić’s short chapter (2b) on parallels between art history and musicology in Vienna (25–29) is particularly interesting and important for the understanding of Wellesz’s academic output, his concept of style and (music-)historical periodization, his studies on Byzantine music, and especially the connection he establishes between theory and practice—conceiving of himself as a musicologist and composer to an equal degree. Although this chapter presents only a detour in the context of Bujić’s overall book design, it offers very important insights and outlines questions worthy of more detailed analysis in the future.

During his studies with Adler and after his graduation, Wellesz had little contact with Schoenberg until the publication of his first article on his former teacher in 1911.<sup>[16]</sup> This essay, which Bujić believes to mark a crucial point in their relationship, betrays a heavy influence of Adler’s theories. This is especially evident in the categorization of Schoenberg’s works into stylistic periods, leading to conclusions Bujić characterizes as “somewhat pedantic and schoolmasterish” (32) and an assessment which “suffered from the motion of a conceptual pendulum swinging between a staid academic position and truly incisive observations” (33). I fully agree with Bujić’s assumption that Schoenberg probably did not appreciate what he must have seen as a conservative attempt to compartmentalize his work. Wellesz’s essay might thus mark the beginning of his contempt for musicologists (or music historians and critics in general), and especially his aversion to what he perceived as dry intellectualism. Anecdotal evidence, invoked by Bujić in Appendix 4 and referring to a note by Schoenberg from 1944, further supports the assumption. Schoenberg describes how he once had invited Wellesz to give a short lecture on a work by Max Reger (1873–1916):

He was ridiculous. He had a score and would tell an audience of musicians and laymen—who had no score: “... the comes [*sic*] a Seitensatz in the oboe, after which the whole orchestra repeats ...” I was so angry about this stupid manner of failing to say anything that might give the audience an idea of this music, that I jumped on the stage and gave an improvised discourse.<sup>[17]</sup>

In the first surviving item of the correspondence between the two men from 1912 (Chapter 3), Wellesz reflects on his time with Schoenberg and explains his motivation for ending his studies with him. He writes that he found himself “in a state of great inner conflict” and wanted to keep his distance to not slip “into too great a dependency,” while at the same time still considering himself a pupil of Schoenberg (35).<sup>[18]</sup> Bujić concludes from these explanations, which seem to come somewhat out of the blue, that something must have happened around that time and that Schoenberg probably was not happy with Wellesz calling himself his pupil. The exact events are unknown, but it is possible that Wellesz did not show as much loyalty to Schoenberg as his more apologetic disciples, or that Schoenberg was just upset by some minor incident, so that Wellesz “soon became an apostate, a person not worthy of esteem” (37). During this time, Wellesz also established connections with various French musicians and musicologists, and published essays in French periodicals. One of these essays, from 1914, illustrates the standpoint he had already described in private. He stated that on the one hand he saw Schoenberg as a “visionary” but at the same time made clear that on the other hand he did not “share the opinion of those fanatical disciples of Schoenberg who do not see any salvation apart from the path along which the master ventures” (46).<sup>[19]</sup> Knowing Schoenberg’s temper and his demand for loyalty, Wellesz’s overt refusal to follow him unquestioningly must have come as an inexcusable insult. During the First World War, Wellesz then repeatedly published slightly critical essays about members of the Viennese School, but mostly limited himself to choosing foreign periodicals for this purpose (68). It is not clear whether these actions were the reason for the possible dispute between Wellesz and Schoenberg or already the result and expression of their mutual estrangement.

The outbreak of the First World War exposed a further rift between the two men’s worldviews (Chapter 4). While Schoenberg enlisted with alacrity, holding a grudge against the French throughout the war, Wellesz—exempt from military service for medical reasons—soon changed his mind after a short period of nationalistic enthusiasm. Debussy’s death in 1918 brought matters to a head: Wellesz admired Debussy’s music greatly, but anti-French sentiment in wartime Austria was at its height and Julius Korngold (1860–1945)—chief music critic for *Neue Freie Presse*—followed suit, pulling no punches in his [obituary of March 30](#). Wellesz wrote a short essay in defense of Debussy a few days later,<sup>[20]</sup> in which he refuted Korngold’s arguments in an objective manner, hence showing more signs of reconciliation towards France than Schoenberg and others were willing to accept. By the end of the war, the two men had also moved in different directions artistically: Schoenberg in developing his twelve-tone technique, while Wellesz turned to stage works, which formed his major interest up to the mid-1930s. Wellesz had met Hugo von Hofmannsthal a few years earlier, whose growing influence led to their collaboration on the ballet *Achilles auf Skyros* (1921) and the operas *Alkestis* (1923) and *Die Bakchantinnen* (1931).<sup>[21]</sup> In the wake of these events, Wellesz and Schoenberg not only drifted further apart artistically, but ultimately ended their personal relationship.

Surprisingly, the definitive rupture was preceded by a brief period of reconciliation shortly after the war (Chapters 5 and 6). In this case it is even more puzzling, since despite Wellesz’s exceedingly critical statements on Schoenberg during the war, they now found themselves in closer contact than ever before. Some of Wellesz’s compositions were performed in Schoenberg’s

newly founded *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Musical Performances). The most significant thaw, however, was initiated in 1920 by Wellesz's biography of Schoenberg. Schoenberg originally recommended Berg to the publisher, who declined the project for lack of time. Following the 1920 Mahler festival in Amsterdam, at which Wellesz re-joined Schoenberg's circle, he frequently visited his subject in Mödling and began to prepare the book, which was finished in August 1920. Their correspondence from this time became more frequent and shows a much more cordial and familiar tone. Judging from these letters, Wellesz also seems to have been more intimately included into Schoenberg's life and daily affairs. In the book, Wellesz expresses awareness of his outsider position and his self-imposed distance but repeats his gratitude for Schoenberg's continuing influence (80).<sup>[22]</sup>



Dr. Egon Wellesz

He still calls himself a pupil of mine - or at least never protested against being called one - though he never should have pretended it.

The truth is that he was during 1 (one single) year together with another young musician - Rudolf Weirich - counterpoint, elementary counterpoint and nothing else. He worked very little and extremely poorly, while Weirich was brilliant.

After this one year he did not continue studying - at least not with me.

At this time - it was probably 1905 or 6 - he was a great admirer of Mahler the composer. He composed also symphonies and had the ability to imitate the aspect of a score in such a manner that it looked as if it ~~was~~ <sup>would</sup> have a meaning. But if one ~~read~~ <sup>reads</sup> it really one saw that it was utterly senseless. - He ~~lost~~ preserved this capacity. - I don't know whether for life or not - but in 1920

(1)

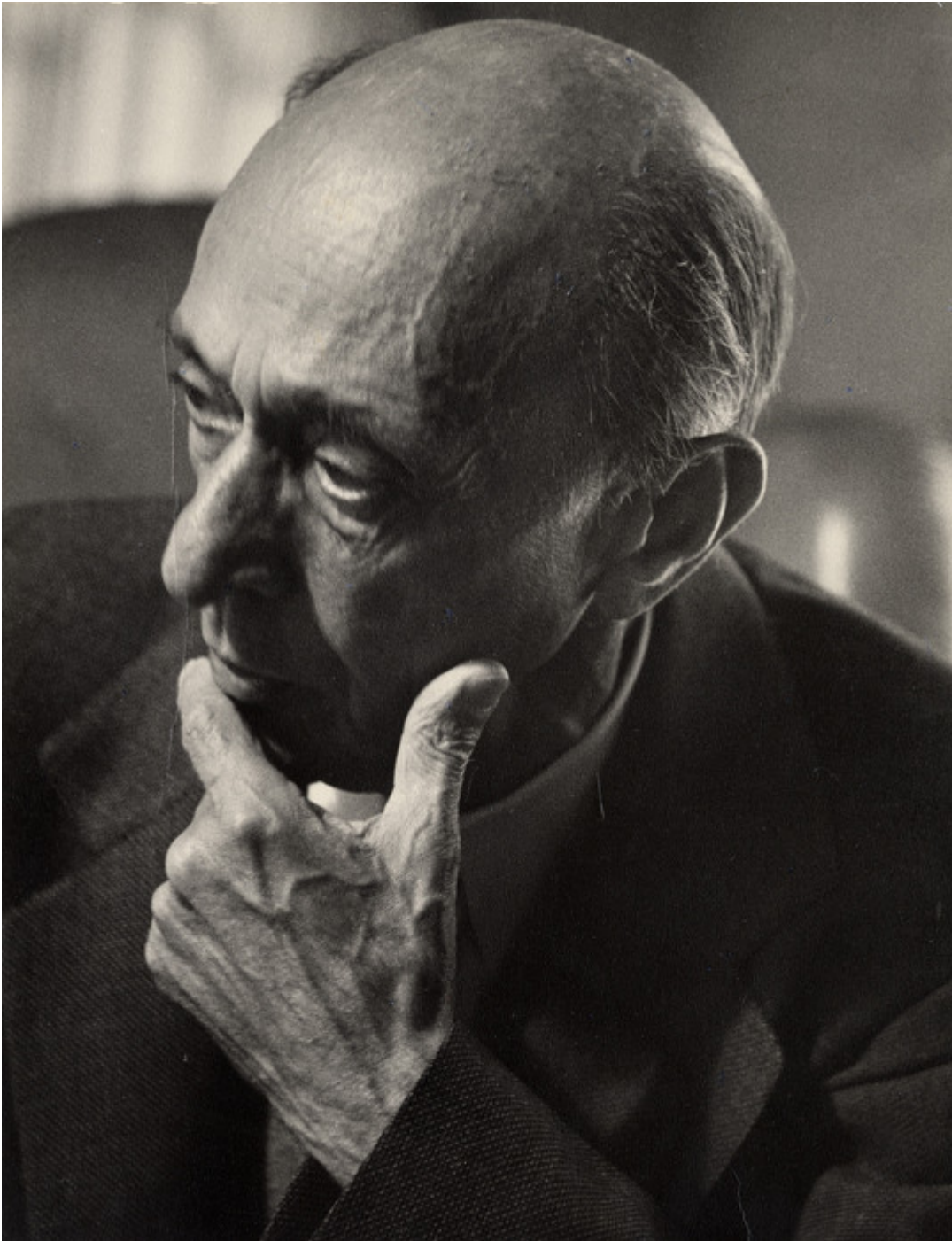
Figure 4: Schoenberg on Wellesz, 10 April 1944, manuscript; by courtesy of Arnold Schönberg Center Wien, [T42.03](#)

Although he could not refrain from pointing out inaccuracies and weaknesses, Schoenberg

initially was very pleased with the book—a verdict he not only communicated to the author but also others like Alban Berg. Wellesz took great relish in Schoenberg's reaction, but their cordial friendship soon began to show cracks again and subsequently came to a halt altogether (Chapter 7). Some anti-French sentiments resurfaced, when Wellesz, who intended to promote Schoenberg's music in France, tried to act as a mediator between Schoenberg and Henry Prunières (1886–1942), who had asked Schoenberg for a favor, but was ignored. Additionally, Wellesz had invited Schoenberg to write an essay on *Erwartung* for *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, which he declined with an unapologetic “no.” The correspondence and personal relationship ended shortly thereafter (around 1923), whose precise reasons remain unclear. But there are several clues from Schoenberg's point of view: In a private note from 1926, which Bujić transcribes in the original German and translates into English, Schoenberg among other things accuses Wellesz of being a “plagiarist” (“Plagiator”). He states that Wellesz copied the ending of his *Erwartung* in the *Persisches Ballett*, composed in 1920 and dedicated to Schoenberg (105–106). In a later note from 1944, he proceeded to insult Wellesz's skills as a student, composer, and scientist and finally called him his “enemy” and a “crook” (235).<sup>[23]</sup> Bujić summarizes Schoenberg's specific grievances along the following lines: 1) “Wellesz liked to call himself Schoenberg's pupil though he studied with him for a very short time” (106); 2) he apparently plagiarized from *Erwartung*; and 3) Wellesz was part of a jury at a festival conducted by the Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (International Society for Contemporary Music), where he allegedly voted for an undeserving composition out of self-interest (106). Bujić gives context to Schoenberg's allegations and reconstructs the events from as impartial a perspective as possible:

The first point, as Bujić states, is largely “a matter of perception” (107), furthermore emphasizing that Wellesz “never misrepresented the nature of his study with Schoenberg.” While this is certainly correct, in my opinion Schoenberg's point still holds a grain of truth. Not only did Wellesz write a monograph on Schoenberg but dozens of studies over several decades, so that one cannot help but get the impression that he did not solely act out of admiration for his former teacher, but probably also out of self-interest. Wellesz most likely wanted to stay within the orbit of the Viennese School and to establish a certain reputation for himself as a former student of the “infamous” Schoenberg. The second and third points, however, presumably derive from unfortunate misunderstandings: Wellesz's *Persisches Ballett* premiered in Donaueschingen in 1924, with Schoenberg in attendance. On this occasion he noticed similarities to his *Erwartung*, but, then unaware of the ballet's dedication, apparently did not consider the possibility that they were an homage. Nevertheless, Schoenberg did not change his mind and continuously interpreted the passage as plagiarism (107). He also stated that soon after the incident in Donaueschingen, Wellesz now wrote “unfavourable criticism” of Schoenberg's music (110). Bujić did not find any evidence for this assertion, and it is also in my opinion highly unlikely that Wellesz would have published overtly negative reviews of Schoenberg's compositions, because his countless other publications suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, one has to bear in mind that we do not have a complete bibliography of Wellesz's writings, who besides his monographs also published hundreds of essays, reviews, and reports all over Europe.<sup>[24]</sup> So, there still is a slight chance that Wellesz published an as-yet undiscovered review to which Schoenberg was referring in this case. It moreover remains unclear, however, if Schoenberg had any objective reasons to dislike Wellesz. Here, Bujić suggests it was probably an accumulation of minor misunderstandings and differences of opinion that shaped Schoenberg's unfavorable opinion of Wellesz over the years.





**Figure 5: Arnold Schoenberg in Los Angeles, 1948; by courtesy of Arnold Schoenberg Center Wien, [PH1811](#)**

After the break between the two men, the second part of the book (from Chapter 8 onwards) does not contain any further correspondence or other biographical documents, but proceeds to describe the different paths taken by Schoenberg and Wellesz, including occasionally overlapping influences, and to portray their respective circles. From this point on, the book leans considerably more towards Wellesz. This apparently one-sided focus is quite understandable since, in contrast to Schoenberg's life and work, Wellesz's artistic and scientific contributions have hardly been investigated thoroughly in twentieth- and twenty-first-century musicology. In this vein, Bujčić focuses especially on the relationship between Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Wellesz, which proved crucial for developing his stage works. While Hofmannsthal was greatly admired by Wellesz, he was rather despised by Schoenberg and his circle, especially by the sharp-tongued author Karl Kraus (1874–1936), whose aversion added to the hardening of artistic frontlines in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Wellesz's ballets and operas were built on very different aesthetic, artistic, and

historic ideas compared to Schoenberg's stage works, because Wellesz mainly relied on Hofmannsthal's modern classicistic approach, which Schoenberg rejected. Chapters 8 to 10 essentially discuss Wellesz's operas *Alkestis* and *Die Bakchantinnen* in great detail and appear more like a detour, given the biographical character of Bujić's study. This digression, however, is welcome to any reader interested in Wellesz more generally, since his operas have so far attracted so little scholarship and analysis. In these chapters, Bujić therefore provides much-needed insights and context to these works.





**Figure 6: Egon Wellesz in later years; by courtesy of Egon-Wellesz-Fonds, Vienna**

In the final part of the book (Chapters 12 and 13), Bujić reflects on Schoenberg's and Wellesz's subsequent exiles in California and Oxford, how both of them dealt with their new surroundings and cultural settings, as well as both men's last reminiscences of each other. Schoenberg in 1944 planned to produce his autobiography *Lebensgeschichte in Begegnungen* (Life Story in Encounters), for which he mostly assembled notes on people against whom he held a grudge.

The aforementioned very unpleasant comments on Wellesz date from this endeavor, even though they had not been in contact for several years. In a number of letters, Schoenberg and others like Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980) made nasty remarks about Wellesz, who, as Bujić states, “never allowed himself to be provoked” by this calumny (194). This holds true for Schoenberg’s lifetime, though it seems that after Schoenberg’s death Wellesz dared to speak more freely about his former teacher. In a talk given at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden in 1965, which is not mentioned in Bujić’s book, he paints a personal picture of Schoenberg’s character, which on the one hand oozes with glowing admiration in recalling his “great sense of humour and a sharp wit” as well as a “very quick mind,” but on the other hand does not shy away from remarking that Schoenberg “could behave with the greatest rudeness and arrogance when he felt that people tried to oppose his views, or—even worse—to patronise him.”<sup>[25]</sup> In my opinion, this short statement reflects *in nuce* the torn relations and mixed feelings that Wellesz held for Schoenberg even after his death and sixty years after he took lessons with him. The book’s epilogue closes with Wellesz’s last years in Oxford as a scholar and composer, where he still sensed the echo of Schoenberg’s personality and paid his respects by defending his compositions and publishing several studies on him.

When dealing with this kind of topic—the personal relationship between two individuals—it is clear that many a detail regarding certain subjective motivations, Schoenberg’s feelings towards Wellesz in general, particular reasons why in some cases he spoke favorably of Wellesz only to later despise him, etc., can never be fully resolved and have to remain speculative to a certain extent. Bujić meets these necessary limitations of biographical investigation by always giving a broad context to these kinds of assumptions and painting a nuanced picture of Wellesz’s and Schoenberg’s characters, so that his interpretations all seem plausible and justified. He describes two antipodes, who—although having a lot in common—could not manage to bridge the divide between their personal and artistic discrepancies. While not every single episode described in this book—such as the fact that Wellesz got married at the same time the affair between Mathilde Schoenberg and Richard Gerstl (1883–1908) took place—can be taken as the decisive reason for Schoenberg’s estrangement from Wellesz, they all form part of a whole picture filled with diverse situations and dynamics, which might also have roots in the described difference of social and financial status in early twentieth-century Vienna.

Bujić is fully aware of and openly discloses his lack of distance towards Wellesz, whom he knew for several years. It is therefore not surprising that his comprehensive study leans heavily towards Wellesz—which, given the lopsidedness of scholarly attention, comes as a welcome corrective. Dedicating a large number of chapters exclusively to Wellesz’s operas and his time in England, however, is the only sensible option when studying their relations, since Wellesz and his work were obviously more influenced by Schoenberg than the other way around. Finally, Bujić’s study is of high value precisely because of the limited amount of scholarship devoted to Wellesz thus far. Besides being few and far between, most monographs on Wellesz are largely outdated, for example the biographies by Robert Schollum (1963),<sup>[26]</sup> Caroline Cepin Benser (1985),<sup>[27]</sup> and the unpublished dissertation by Gunther Schneider (1981).<sup>[28]</sup> Apart from the monograph on *Die Bakchantinnen* by Lorenz Wedl (1992),<sup>[29]</sup> other more recent studies by David Symons (1996)<sup>[30]</sup> and Nina Maria Wanek (2010)<sup>[31]</sup> are of a rather general nature and do not go deeper into analysis of selected works or exploration of more specific questions. Wellesz has still a lot to offer. Wanek gives an overview of Wellesz’s correspondence but, given the large scale of Wellesz’s estate, is only able to address certain biographical aspects in a study which remains largely documentary. These books seldom do more than scratch the surface of Wellesz’s life and work, giving merely

an overview of his artistic and scholarly activities. In contrast, Bujić concentrates on a different angle, in the process providing rich and convincing new insights in portraying two lives that sometimes collided, sometimes loosely ran parallel to each other, but were still connected for decades.

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2. Egon Wellesz, *Arnold Schönberg* (Vienna: E. P. Tal & Co., 1921); English translation: *Arnold Schönberg*, trans. W. H. Kerridge (London: Dent, 1925); reprint (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969); another reprint was published as *Arnold Schoenberg: The Formative Years* (London: Galliard, 1971), with a new preface by Wellesz. ↑
3. Bojan Bujic, *Arnold Schoenberg* (London: Phaidon, 2011); "Shipwrecked on the Island of the Blessed: Egon Wellesz's New Beginnings in Wartime Oxford," in *Ark of Civilization: Refugee Scholars and Oxford University, 1930–1945*, ed. Sally Crawford, Katharina Ulmschneider, and Jaś Elsner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 313–26; and "Egon Wellesz über das Problem der Moderne in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Egon Wellesz*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1986), 31–41. ↑
4. Hannes Heher outlines the relationship between Schoenberg and Wellesz in his dissertation "Kompositorische 'Ästhetiken' bei Schülern Arnold Schönbergs, insbesondere bei Egon Wellesz" (PhD diss., University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, 2017). In addition to several monographs on Wellesz (see notes 26–30), which mostly date back to the second half of the twentieth century, see, for instance, Peter Revers, "Die Schönberg Rezeption in den frühen Symphonien von Egon Wellesz," *Musicologica Austriaca* 18 (1999): 257–67; and Hartmut Krones, "Gustav Mahler – Arnold Schönberg – Egon Wellesz: Zur Entwicklung der Harmonik im frühen 20. Jahrhundert," *Nachrichten zur Mahler-Forschung* 43 (2000): 12–22. ↑
5. <http://archive.schoenberg.at/letters/letters.php>, accessed July 26, 2021. The letters can be found in the database, but a digital copy or transcript is not available for all of them. ↑
6. Egon Wellesz, "Erinnerungen an Bruno Walter," broadcast manuscript, studio Vienna, n.d., A-Wn, F13.Wellesz.267. ↑
7. Besides a number of essays he wrote about his own life and work, Wellesz's autobiography is still the most important source for biographical considerations. Egon Wellesz and Emmy Wellesz, *Egon Wellesz: Leben und Werk*, ed. Franz Endler (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1981). ↑
8. See, for example, Monika Kröpfl, "Schönbergs Studenten bei Guido Adler: Alte Musik in der Lehre und als musikwissenschaftliches Betätigungsfeld," *Wiener Schule und Alte Musik: Viennese School and Early Music; Bericht zum Symposium – Report of the Symposium, 8.–10. Oktober 2009*, ed. Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp, special issue *Journal of the Arnold Schönberg Center* 11 (2015): 252–65. ↑
9. On these points, see Meike Wilfing-Albrecht and Alexander Wilfing, "Egon Wellesz: *Die Grundlagen der musikgeschichtlichen Forschung*," in *Konzepte der Musikwissenschaft: Grundlagentexte aus zwei Jahrhunderten*, ed. Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, Spektrum Fachgeschichte Musikwissenschaft 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter; Stuttgart: Metzler, forthcoming). ↑
10. On Wellesz's reception of art-historical research, see my dissertation "Das barocke Festspiel als modernes Gesamtkunstwerk: Die Opernästhetik von Egon Wellesz" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2022), esp. chap. 3. ↑
11. Egon Wellesz, "Renaissance und Barock: Ein kulturgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Frage der Stilperioden,"



*Zeitschrift der internationalen Musikgesellschaft Leipzig* 11, no. 2 (1909): 37–45. ↑

12. See, for example, Wolfgang Dömling, “Musikgeschichte als Stilgeschichte: Bemerkungen zum musikhistorischen Konzept Guido Adlers,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 4, no. 1 (1973): 35–50. ↑
13. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1888). ↑
14. Guido Adler, *Der Stil in der Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911). ↑
15. He wrote a review on the book in 1914—“*Der Stil in der Musik von Guido Adler. I. Buch* (Breitkopf & Härtel),” *Der Merker* 5, no. 2 (1914): 438–39—and still referenced it in entries he wrote for *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*: “Style is the sum-total of the characteristics of a work which, apart from technical questions, determine its character. The great virtue of Adler’s research lies in the examination of stylistic hallmarks and the building up of a method of stylistic investigation (*Stilkritik*).” Egon Wellesz, s.v. “Musicology,” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4th ed., ed. H. C. Colles (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 462. Also see the fifth edition of 1954, 1027. ↑
16. Egon Wellesz, “Arnold Schönberg,” *Zeitschrift der internationalen Musikgesellschaft Leipzig* 12 (1910/11): 342–48. ↑
17. Schoenberg on Wellesz, 10 April 1944, manuscript, Arnold Schönberg Center Wien, [ASC T42.03](#), p. 2. Cf. Bujić, *Schoenberg and Wellesz*, 234. ↑
18. Handwritten letter, undated (1912). [ASC ID 18329](#), 2–3. Original wording: “Sie wissen ja, daß ich mich früher immer abseits gehalten habe, weil ich eben um diese Zeit in großen inneren Konflikten war, die sich erst ausarbeiten mussten. Dann fühlte ich um diese Zeit die Gefahr für mich in meiner Komposition in eine zu große Abhängigkeit von Ihnen zu geraten. ... Wenn ich aber nur ein Jahr bei Ihnen gelernt habe, so bin ich doch Ihr Schüler, weil ich durch Sie die Methode musikalisch zu denken gelernt habe.” ↑
19. Egon Wellesz, “Arnold Schoenberg,” *Les Cahiers d’aujourd’hui* 10 (1914): 528. Original wording: “Je ne partage pas l’opinion des disciples exaltés de Schoenberg, qui ne voient point de salut hors des chemins où s’aventure de maître. Mais ces chemins sont bien à lui, et il est le visionnaire, le Hoffmann de la musique moderne.” ↑
20. Egon Wellesz, “Claude Debussy,” *Daimon* 2 (1918): 118–19. Bujić translates both texts in appendix no. 1 of his book (223–25). ↑
21. The collaboration between Hofmannsthal and Wellesz is addressed in most monographs on Wellesz (see notes 26–30). See especially Lorenz Wedl, *Die Bakchantinnen von Egon Wellesz oder Das göttliche Wunder* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992). ↑
22. Egon Wellesz, *Arnold Schönberg*, 12: “Without being able to count myself among the inner circle of friends and students, who had lived with him in closest contact for years—such as *Anton von Webern* and *Alban Berg*—I nevertheless enjoyed theoretical lessons with him during this crucial period and received impressions that were decisive for the future.” Original wording: “Ohne mich zum engeren Kreis der Freunde und Schüler zählen zu können, die jahrelang in engstem Kontakt mit ihm lebten—wie *Anton von Webern* und *Alban Berg*—habe ich doch in der entscheidenden Zeit theoretischen Unterricht bei ihm genossen und Eindrücke empfangen, die bestimmend für die Zukunft waren.” ↑
23. [ASC, T42.03](#). ↑
24. I provide an updated bibliography in my dissertation “Das barocke Festspiel als Gesamtkunstwerk.” ↑
25. Egon Wellesz, “Recollections of Schoenberg,” *Composer* 17 (1965): 8. ↑
26. Robert Schollum, *Egon Wellesz, Österreichische Komponisten des XX. Jahrhunderts* 2 (Vienna: Österreichische Musikzeitschrift, 1963). ↑
27. Caroline Cepin Benser, *Egon Wellesz (1885–1974): Chronicle of a Twentieth-Century Musician* (New York:



Peter Lang, 1985). [↑](#)

28. Gunter Schneider, "Egon Wellesz: Studien zur Theorie und Praxis seiner Musik; dargestellt am Beispiel seiner musikdramatischen Kompositionen" (PhD diss., University of Innsbruck, 1981). [↑](#)
29. Wedl, *Die Bakchantinnen*. [↑](#)
30. David Symons, *Egon Wellesz: Composer* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel, 1996). [↑](#)
31. Nina-Maria Wanek, *Egon Wellesz in Selbstzeugnissen: Der Briefnachlaß in der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010). [↑](#)