Collection Summary

Title: Rudolf Kolisch Collection
Span Dates: 1921-1943
Call No.: ML31.K63
Creator: Kolisch, Rudolf, 1896-1978
Extent: 31 items
Extent: 1 container
Extent: 1 linear foot
Language: Collection material in German.
Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2010561022
Summary: Rudolf Kolisch was a Viennese-American violinist and string quartet player. The collection contains thirty-one items, principally holograph manuscript correspondence, that provide insight into the professional relationship between Kolisch and composers Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern. Included among these are two Berg manuscripts that present analysis and musical examples from his Lyric suite and String quartet, op. 3.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 1770-1827--Criticism and interpretation.
Berg, Alban, 1885-1935--Correspondence.
Berg, Alban, 1885-1935--Criticism and interpretation.
Berg, Alban, 1885-1935--Performances.
Berg, Alban, 1885-1935. Quartet, strings, op. 3.
Kolisch, Rudolf, 1896-1978--Correspondence.
Schoenberg, Arnold, 1874-1951--Correspondence.
Schoenberg, Arnold, 1874-1951--Criticism and interpretation.
Schoenberg, Arnold, 1874-1951--Performances.
Webern, Anton, 1883-1945--Correspondence.
Webern, Anton, 1883-1945--Criticism and interpretation.
Webern, Anton, 1883-1945--Performances.

Form/Genre
Correspondence.

Provenance
Gift, Lorna Kolisch, 1983.

Accruals
No further accruals are expected.

Processing History
Juliette Appold processed the Rudolf Kolisch Collection in 2010 and Christopher Hartten encoded the finding aid.
Other Repositories


Copyright Status

The status of copyright on the materials of the Rudolf Kolisch Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Rudolf Kolisch Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Performing Arts Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: container number, Rudolf Kolisch Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Rudolf Kolisch (1896-1978) was a prominent Viennese-American violinist and string quartet player who played his instrument left-handed as a result of a childhood injury. His Kolisch Quartet gave seminal performances and premieres of chamber music that included compositions by Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern. In the late 1930s Kolisch immigrated to the United States, where he became the leader of the Pro Arte Quartet (1944-1967) and professor of music at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, the New England Conservatory of Music, and other institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896 July 20</td>
<td>Born in Klamm, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Graduated from Vienna Music Academy and Vienna University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-1921</td>
<td>Played a leading role in Schoenberg's &quot;Verein für Musikalische Privataufführungen&quot; (Society for Private Musical Performances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Formed the Neue Wiener Streichquartett (Rudolf Kolisch, Fritz Rothschild, Marcel Dick, Joachim Stutschewsky)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Arnold Schoenberg married Kolisch's sister Gertrud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Formed the Kolisch Quartet (Rudolf Kolisch, Felix Khuner, Eugene Lehner, Benar Heifetz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 April</td>
<td>Kolisch Quartet made its American debut performance at the Library of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>The Kolisch Quartet was on tour in the United States and did not return to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 1941</td>
<td>Began teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Published his best known article, <em>Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1967</td>
<td>Served as first violinist of Pro Arte Quartet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1967</td>
<td>Taught at the University of Wisconsin in Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-1958</td>
<td>Taught at the Akademie für Tonkunst and Ferienkurse für neue Musik in Darmstadt, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Began teaching at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1977</td>
<td>Taught chamber music performance at the annual Schoenberg Seminars in Mödling, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978 August 1</td>
<td>Died in Watertown, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The Rudolf Kolisch Collection contains thirty-one items, principally manuscript correspondence, that provide insight into the professional relationship between Kolisch and composers Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern, from 1921 to 1943. The Musical Analysis and Examples series includes materials related to Berg's Lyric suite and String quartet, op. 3. The Correspondence series consists of postcards and letters, chiefly from Webern to Kolisch, that discuss compositional progress and upcoming performances. Among the works mentioned are Webern's String trio, op. 20, String quartet, op. 28, Six bagatelles, op. 9, Fünf Sätze, op. 5, Symphony, op. 21, and Variations for piano, op. 27, as well as various compositions by Schoenberg, Berg, and Beethoven.

Organization of the Rudolf Kolisch Collection

The Rudolf Kolisch Collection is organized in 3 series:

• Musical Analysis and Examples
• Correspondence
• Miscellaneous
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Musical Analysis and Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Musical Analysis and Examples</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Berg, Alban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/1</td>
<td>Analysis of Lyric suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principally tone rows and scales from movements nos. 1-6 with analytical commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/2</td>
<td>Fragebogen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 measures for String quartet, op. 3, (including an &quot;ossia&quot; line for violoncello) and 6 additional measures for one unspecified instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both pages contain questions and comments concerning performance practice and playability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/3</td>
<td>Arnold Schoenberg to RK, 1943 Dec. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: expresses thanks for a gift; mentions work on &quot;Counterpoint&quot;; discusses RK's essay on tempo markings in Beethoven; asks if RK considered performing his &quot;Ode&quot;; asks for the source of a Beethoven quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1921 July 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: expresses thanks for a gift; mentions Schoenberg and his [AW's] orchestration of Schoenberg's &quot;Glückliche Hand&quot; for chamber orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1927 Aug. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: mentions sending his music for printing to Universal Edition; references &quot;Trio&quot; premiere on Oct. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1927 Aug. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: references &quot;Trio&quot; premiere on Oct. 1 and Universal Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1927 Sept. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: references &quot;Trio&quot; performance on Oct. 1; responds to RK's concern of not being able to play; asks RK to return the original score if possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1927 Sept. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: mentions &quot;Bagatellen&quot; and performance suggestions for the work; references &quot;Trio&quot; performance in Cologne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1928 July 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: mentions &quot;Trio&quot; performance in Siena; RK's pleurisy; Fr. Herlinger; performance of an evening song recital in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</td>
<td>Anton Webern to RK, 1928 July 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holograph manuscript postcard blue-purple pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents: mentions possible meeting with RK in Aussee

BOX-FOLDER 1/4
Anton Webern to RK, 1928 Sept. 22
Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink
Contents: mentions performance of "Trio" in Siena and possible meeting in Aussee

BOX-FOLDER 1/4
Anton Webern to RK, 1929 Apr. 1
Holograph manuscript postcard in black ink
Contents: mentions rescheduled choir rehearsal and possible meeting

BOX-FOLDER 1/5
Anton Webern to RK, 1921 Aug. 8
Contents: encourages RK to stay with the theater; mentions Schoenberg

BOX-FOLDER 1/5
Anton Webern to RK, 1924 Mar. 4
Contents: mentions performance opportunity mediated by Loos, suggesting the first
"Quartet" and "Violinstücke"

BOX-FOLDER 1/5
Anton Webern to RK, 1927 June 13
Contents: mentions accompanying letter of recommendation for Fr. Rosanska to
Koussevitzki [missing]; discusses possible rehearsal date of Schoenberg's "Suite"

BOX-FOLDER 1/6
Anton Webern to RK, 1927 Oct. 9
Contents: mentions possible premiere of "Trio" at the end of Nov.; references "Bagatellen"
and Schoenberg

BOX-FOLDER 1/6
Anton Webern to RK, 1928 Jan. 20
Contents: expresses thanks to RK, Mr. Khuner, and Heifetz for a great first performance of
"Trio"

BOX-FOLDER 1/6
Anton Webern to RK, 1928 Mar. 11
Contents: mentions "Trio" and issues with A.D.M.V. and city of Schwerin concerning an
upcoming performance

BOX-FOLDER 1/7
Anton Webern to RK, 1928 Mar. 17
Contents: summarizes aforementioned issue with Schwerin/A.D.M.V.; references
accompanying response letter [missing]

BOX-FOLDER 1/7
Anton Webern to RK, 1929 July 1
Contents: mentions his involvement with the radio station Ravag and invites RK to perform
a cycle of contemporary chamber music, specifically quartets by Schoenberg

BOX-FOLDER 1/7
Anton Webern to RK, 1931 Mar. 21
Contents: mentions "5 Sätze" and "Quartet"; references to Schoenberg, Beethoven, Ast, Ms.
Herlinger, Fr. Michalski, and Frl. Rozanska

BOX-FOLDER 1/8
Anton Webern to RK, 1934 Oct. 4
Contents: mentions gala event for Schoenberg ("Schoenberg-Feier") in the "Verein für neue
Musik"; references to Jalowetz, Steuermann, and Stein; asks if RK can play "Quartet I
and III" for the occasion

BOX-FOLDER 1/8
Anton Webern to RK, 1936 Nov. 7
Correspondence

Container Contents

Contents: mentions success of RK's quartet in the U.S.; talks about "Verein für neue Musik" and Schoenberg gala event that will feature his latest "Quartet" and "Waldtaube", with Klemperer conducting "Streicher-Suite"; references to Berg's violin concerto, his own symphony; completion of a variation composition for piano and work on a string quartet; mentions Peter and Steuermann

BOX-FOLDER 1/8 Anton Webern to RK, 1937 Mar. 31
Contents: references messages from London and discusses public performance of his "Quartet IV" by RK in Vienna; suggests Berg's "Quartet" for performance and mentions possibility of Steuermann playing his "Variationen"; asks for possible dates for performances

BOX-FOLDER 1/9 Anton Webern to RK, 1937 May 31
Contents: mentions possible meeting the following Monday in Vienna and RK's quartet performance of his "5 Stücke"

BOX-FOLDER 1/9 Anton Webern to RK, 1937 Dec. 22
Contents: mentions "Wind quintet" and "Quartet"; references to RK's performance of the "5 Sätze" in New York, E.S. Coolidge, and Schoenberg

BOX-FOLDER 1/9 Anton Webern to RK, 1938 Apr. 19
Contents: description and analysis of his String quartet, op. 28 in folder entitled: "Analyse Streichquartett"

BOX-FOLDER 1/10 Anton Webern to RK, 1938 Dec. 1
Contents: mentions Schoenberg, E. S. Coolidge, Boosey and Hawkes, Steuermann, daughter Christl and grand-daughter; discussion of first performance of "Quartet" (Sept. 22) and a later performance in NY (Nov. 1); talks about possibly recording the "Quartet"

BOX-FOLDER 1/10 Anton Webern to RK, 1938 Aug. 17
Contents: mentions his "Quartet", work on a symphony, Greissle, Steuermann, and financial matters

BOX-FOLDER 1/10 Anton Webern to RK, 1939 Mar. 30
Contents: mentions Coolidge Medal, Schoenberg, an upcoming performance of his [AW's] "Quartet" in Warsaw, and work on a symphony with text by Hildegard Jone [op. 29]

BOX 1 Miscellaneous

BOX-FOLDER 1/11 [Unidentified drawing of a stage?]
[2] boards