

TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHENKERIAN STUDIES IN JAPAN: A CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS FROM INTRODUCTION TO EXPANSION

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Abstract

This study examines the development of Schenkerian studies in Japan through a chronological analysis, tracing its introduction to the present. It explores the initial reception, key figures in its dissemination, major scholarly contributions, and periods of heightened research activity. Through comprehensive literature review of major Japanese academic databases, four distinct developmental stages are identified: initial exposure (1920s–1930s), characterized by brief mentions in translated works and academic publications; growing references (1940s–1950s), marked by increased citations in music periodicals; increasing academic engagement (1960s–1980s), evidenced by the emergence of university research bulletins and the first conference presentations focused on examinations of Schenkerian concepts; and expansion and diversification (1990s–present), distinguished by growth in publications of Schenkerian research and translation of Schenker's works. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a distinctive characteristic: the spreading of Schenkerian theory in Japan has been closely linked to Beethoven studies. This connection is evident in multiple sources, including Tamura's 1924 publication, Futami Kohei's 1948 article, and a series of Japanese translations and studies of Schenker's analyses of Beethoven's works (2000, 2010, 2012, etc.). The Beethoven connection suggests a bidirectional relationship: Japanese scholars employed his works as familiar entry points through which Schenker's complex theoretical concepts could be made more accessible to local audiences. Conversely, the adoption of Schenkerian methods has enriched Japanese Beethoven scholarship by providing a rigorous analytical framework that yields deeper insights into Beethoven's compositional structure and technique. Further research will examine additional sources and contexts to deepen the understanding of this interrelation.

Keywords

Heinrich Schenker, Schenkerian studies in Japan, Dissemination and reception of Schenkerian theory, Chronological analysis, Beethoven connection

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