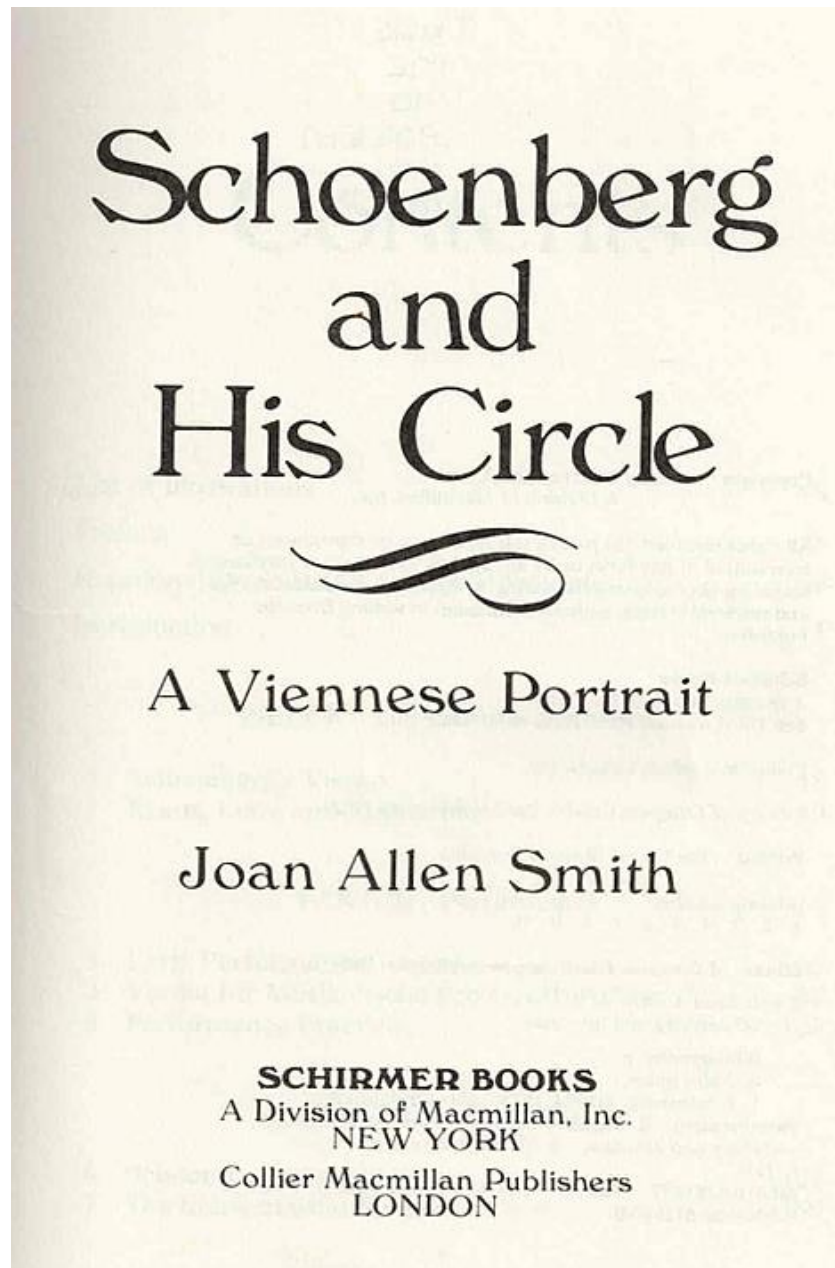


J. A. Smith interviewed 1972-1974 25 Persons who knew Schoenberg and his circle. One of them was Soma Morgenstern, who was interviewed in New York on 5 December 1973. An important part of the book "Schoenberg and his circle" contains parts of these interviews. The interviews with different persons are put together on the basis of the questions and the subject. On two pages answers of Morgenstern are shown. The book has been published in 1986.



SMITH: Did he have conversation with anyone on an equal level or was this true of everybody?

DICK: No, with everyone—with Webern, with Berg. . . . He acknowledged Webern and Berg as full-fledged composers of great importance, . . . but Berg and Webern did not feel that they can talk to the master as one would talk to you and you to me. They were always at a distance.

SMITH: Do you think that Berg was overly influenced by Schoenberg?

SOMA MORGENSTERN: I don't think that he was overly influenced by Schoenberg, I think that he was influenced by Mahler too. And I think that he loved and admired Mahler as much as Schoenberg, if not even more, because there was not this relation master-pupil with Mahler and Alban. Alban, he was an admiring young man—pupil of Schoenberg—who admired Mahler as Schoenberg himself. He had a great admiration of Mahler without any reserves. He was just in love with him. . . . Mahler was loved by Alban I think with all his heart. He talked about nobody with such love as he talked about Mahler. . . . With Schoenberg, it's a different story. Schoenberg wasn't as lovable a man as Mahler was. Schoenberg was a person which was, I would say—he was a little tyrannical! Schoenberg was very stubborn and he was the master, of course. All of them had the same relation to Schoenberg. The only one with whom I could talk about Schoenberg without risking something was Steuermann, rather. Because Steuermann was a very, very educated . . . man, and he was a strong character himself. Of course he admired Schoenberg as a composer and as his teacher, but . . . he was too tyrannical. Mahler wasn't a soft guy either, but it was a different thing in his being director of the opera. It's a different story.

DEUTSCH: So when you see also a big man like Schoenberg—a small guy but a big man, a tremendous man,

SMITH: So you think that Berg really didn't want to do twelve-tone composition?

STEFAN ASKENASE: He would never have invented it. That is sure, because Schoenberg was a very strong personality and he was very much influenced by him. If he had not been influenced—let's say even if he had been living in the same period and had not met Schoenberg, I don't think he would have become a twelve-tone composer. That's my feeling.

SMITH: Do you think that this relationship with Schoenberg was a bad thing for Berg?

ASKENASE: As I said, . . . he could see that it was—well, I can't say a bad thing, but something—etwas was ihn belastete. He had the feeling of a weight—something that [weighed] on him.

SOMA MORGENSTERN: Alban usually—all of his life, most of his works he did on vacation in the country. He composed—very few things composed in Vienna. The most of the work he did on vacation.

SMITH: What did he do when he was in Vienna?

MORGENSTERN: Oh, he was teaching, he was working continuously, but he didn't do the first version, you know. But he worked in Vienna. But the very first composition, he always made on vacation.

SMITH: When you first began to play twelve-tone works, did you approach the music in the same way more or less that you would have approached a tonal work?

KOLISCH: Yes.

SMITH: And when Schoenberg would rehearse you, did he rehearse in the same way that he had rehearsed tonal music?

KOLISCH: Ja. He even refused to let us in on the secrets, you know? You already knew that. . . .

SMITH: Why do you think he had this attitude?