Early Twentieth-Century Performance Practice of Anton Bruckner’s Symphonies: The Clemens Krauss Archive at the Austrian National Library

The Austrian composer Anton Bruckner (1824-96) belongs to a small group of composers who continued to excel in the symphonic tradition in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His eleven symphonies (Study Symphony, Symphony nos. 0-9) and their various versions, which have been a constant source of research among musicologists, reveal not only his development as a composer but also the evolution of the symphonic form. Although a wide range of topics pertaining to Bruckner’s symphonies appears in the literature, more needs to be done in regard to their performance practice from an analytical perspective.

This study, therefore, investigates the approach to performance of the monumental Eighth Symphony and other German masterpieces by the Austrian conductor Clemens Krauss (1893-1954). Through detailed examinations of digital copies of the conductor’s annotated scores of these works currently housed in the Austrian National Library, I intend to uncover information about Krauss’s personal style of interpreting Bruckner’s music in particular and the symphonic repertoire in general, as well as its relationship to the conducting culture of orchestral music in Germany and Austria during the first half of the twentieth century.