

AUSTRIAN-CANADIANS FROM COAST TO COAST/LES AUSTRO-CANADIENS D'UN L'OcéAN À L'Autre

Special Supplement to CULTURE

Dear fellow Austrian-Canadian: It gives me great pleasure to announce the publication of the Newsletter of the ACC which is intended to help us share information about our clubs' and our members' activities. If you have entries for the next issue please send them to Dr. K. Fürst, c/o ACC, 1391 Cavendish Road, Ottawa, ON K1H 6B8.

Roland Pirker, President

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Johann Strauss Foundation, Victoria

The 13th fundraising event of the Johann Strauss Foundation, the Vienna Ball, was held on April 17, 1999 at the splendid Empress Hotel in Victoria. The



From left to right: Judy Woo, Dr. Claus Andress, Tyler Duncan, Erika Switzer, Catherine Wong, and Dr. Joseph Kandler.

guests were welcomed by President Dr. Joseph Kandler and entertained with piano stylings by Chris Gosper. Guests of honour were the Acting Mayor, Mr. Geoff Young, Mrs. Isobel Young representing the City of Victoria, and Consul Dr. Michael Pötscher for the Austrian Consulate General in Vancouver.

Scholarship Committee Chairman Dr. Claus Andress elaborated on the process which leads to the selection of the candidates and introduced the music scholarship winners for 1999. This year's recipients are the duo Tyler Duncan (baritone) and Erika Switzer (piano) who will receive a scholarship for attending the

Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien, and Catherine Wong (violin) and Judy Woo (piano), for attending two Master classes each at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. To date, the Foundation has awarded 34 scholarships valued in excess of \$125,000.

President Kandler recalled some significant aspects of the life of Johann Strauss Jr. on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his death. He then introduced the performers of "Melodies of Vienna" in which four scholarship winners, past and present, presented compositions by Kreisler, Lehar, Schubert, and Johann Strauss, closing their moving performance with "Vienna, city of my dreams" to warmly appreciative applause. A well-chosen selection of dances—Viennese, continental and modern—offered by the Vienna Ball Orchestra under the direction of Denis Jackson was enjoyed by all until midnight.

On October 2, 1999, the Foundation will present a public recital at the Art Centre in Ganges, Salt Spring Island, featuring the duo Tyler Duncan and Erika Switzer, followed by Judy Woo.

Dr. Joseph Kandler
President

ALBERTA

Austrian-Canadian Society Calgary

Max Rieberer was honoured by the Calgary Club at the Maxfest for his over 40



President Frank Meixner and "Ursteirer" Max Rieberer, June 5, 1999.

years of contribution to the Club, and especially to the Schuhplattler group of

which he was the founder.

The "Ursteirer" Max was born in Lassnitz, Styria. To this day, the original interpretations of his songs are a much sought-after commodity. His music has won him many friends who on June 5, 1999 surrounded the "Ursteirer" at the



From left to right: Canada's finest duo: Eduard Partl and Max Rieberer. September 1998

Club, not only to thank him but to honour him. President Meixner presented Mr. Rieberer with a special certificate of recognition.

As President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, I would like to join the well-wishers and wish Max many more happy evenings, surrounded by his friends at the beautiful Calgary Club. In September 1998, I and many "Easterners" had the pleasure to hear Max and Edi play, making this an unforgettable evening. Congratulations!

Roland K. Pirker
President, ACC

Club Austria Edmonton

This summer is an active one for the German and Austrian communities in Edmonton. From July 22 to 31, 1999 Edmonton's biggest summer event will be staged, the Klondike Days; the featured country this year is Germany. The German-Canadian Association of Alberta—of which Club Austria Edmonton is a supporting member—is organizing the various activities that will make up this ten-day extravaganza. Subsequently, the Heritage Days Festival will take place where Club Austria members are always out in full force as volunteers.

The next Club Austria event will be the annual summer barbeque at Rainer and Anne Hartl's Alpine Farm on August 15, 1999. The Alpine Farm is known throughout northern Alberta for its traditional Bavarian style buildings and food. Expected are around 100 members and their families.

Two of the members of Club Austria's executive, Frank Friesacher and Joe Niederleitner Jr., were in St. Paul, Minnesota during the July long weekend to participate in the 17th *Gaufest* of the *Gauverband* North America. Sixty-four Bavarian and Austrian *schuhplattler* and costume preservation groups (*Schuhplattler- und Trachtenerhaltungsvereine*) from all over Canada and the United States were in attendance. The event in-



From left to right: President Joe Niederleitner, Austrian Minister Dr. Casper Einem and H. E. Dr. Lichem. September 1998.

cluded folk dance workshops, competition *schuhplattling*, a wide assortment of traditional costumes, and lots of fun.

The current Club Austria Executive is composed of the following: Joe Niederleitner (President), Peter Jaras (Vice-President), Valerie Schirraier (Treasurer), Frank Friesacher (Secretary), Sharon Brosch, Melanie Friesacher, John Hebein, Joe Niederleitner Jr., and Walter Schachenhofer (Directors). The Club can be contacted by phone at (780) 455-8823.

Frank Friesacher
Secretary

**Johann Strauss Foundation,
Edmonton**

The Johann Strauss Foundation was established by Edmontonians of Austrian heritage on April 18, 1975 as a charitable organization. Its purpose is to support advanced musical education for Albertans by way of scholarships for

advanced study of music in Austria as well as for musical endeavours in the community. Candidates have to demonstrate excellent qualifications and financial need. To date, the Johann Strauss Scholarship Fund has supported over 70 young advanced music students, enabling them to go to Austria and widen their horizon at an international forum. They have brought back confidence, knowledge, and enthusiasm for their music.



From left to right: Front row: Jacky Preuss (scholarship winner), the Rt. Hon. Edward Schreyer (Governor General), Mrs. Lily Schreyer, and Monica Rist (scholarship winner). Back row: Dipl. Ing. Walter Leeb, Ing. Otto Werner, Dr. Joseph Kandler, Dr. Harald Schwarz (President), Rudi Swoboda, and Anny Leeb (Edmonton Ball 1981)

In addition, the originators of the Foundation intended to preserve the cultural heritage of their country of origin and to share it with the community at large in the course of the Foundation's activities. Accordingly, the Foundation's annual gala fund-raising event, called the Johann Strauss Ball as a tribute to the King of the Waltz, combines a charitable purpose with the cultural traditions of Vienna. In 1976 a bust of Johann Strauss, commissioned by the Foundation and created by Edmonton sculptor John Weaver, was unveiled in the Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. In 1978 the Baroness Maria von Trapp, the heroine of the "Sound of Music", attended the annual Ball and assumed the honorary patronage of the Foundation. In 1981 the Rt. Hon. Edward Schreyer, Governor General, and Mrs. Lily Schreyer attended the Ball. Several Austrian ambassadors have graced our head table with their presence.

The 25th Johann Strauss Ball will take place on February 12, 2000 at the Westin Hotel, Edmonton. For information please call well in advance (Tel/Fax: /481-9887).
Anne Leeb
Founding Director Nr. 2

MANITOBA

Friends of Austria, Winnipeg

On April 22, 1998 the Deputy Herald Chancellor of the Canadian Heraldic Authority and Deputy Secretary to His Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable Romeo LeBlanc, authorized and directed Robert Douglas Watt, Chief Herald of Canada, to grant and assign such arms, crest and motto as he deems fitting and appropriate to the Friends of Austria, Inc. This makes them the first Austrian group in Canada to be granted the honour of bearing a lawful and legal coat of arms. This honour is awarded by the Queen through the office of the Governor General of Canada and the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

The formal Coat of Arms document will be completed in late 1999 or early 2000. The main components will include the Lippizaner Stallions, gold maple leaves symbolizing Canada, and the Edelweiss from the Austrian Alps. The formal presentation of the Coat of Arms grant will take place on October 16, 1999 at the Johann Strauss Ball in Winnipeg. It will mark a very special moment in time for all Austrians in Canada and will be a memorable milestone for the Friends of Austria.

Peter Strausz
President

ONTARIO

Burgenländer Club Toronto, Inc.



From left to right: Otto Novakovics (President), Helmut Jandrisits (Secretary), and Frank Jandrisits (Vice-President). (1994)



From left to right: Joe Walner, Helmut Jandrisits, D. Jutta Szep Kroath (Consul), Karl Gyaki, and Dr. Walther Lichem (1994)

Canadian-Austrian Society of Toronto

The annual Johann Strauss Ball of the Canadian-Austrian Society of Toronto was held on February 27, 1999 under the motto "Johann Strauss, 1825-1899". This annual Gala Ball of the Canadian-Austrian Society of Toronto is known as the most important event for Austrian people and their friends in Toronto. It enjoys the patronage of His Excellency, Dr. Walther Lichem, Ambassador of Austria to Canada, and is always conducted in the well-known style of Viennese balls.



Inge Bibersteiner and Georg Bibersteiner

It was held in the glorious rooms of the Royal York Hotel in Toronto where style and decor fit the traditional way of Austrian balls very well. Decorations and center pieces at each table were hand-made in *Biedermeier* style (after the Ball the patrons drew lots to determine who would take them home). The Champagne Reception started at 6.30 p.m. to allow

everybody to mingle, to greet old friends, and to be introduced to new ones. At 7.30 p.m., a gala dinner consisting of anti-pasto, *Fritattensuppe*, *Wiener Schnitzel*, and *Strawberry Roulade* was served, which was enjoyed by all. During the reception and dinner, the Emperor String Quartett entertained with serenades by Strauss and other Viennese composers. Matt Lebar's Ballroom Dance Band has been providing dance music at the Viennese Ball for years, and this year they again got everybody up to dance.

It was a pleasure to observe the many ladies in their elegant evening robes and the gentlemen in tuxedos in the wonderful atmosphere of an evening in "Imperial" Vienna. Mrs. Frank Stronach, wife of the Consul General of Austria in Toronto, Dr. Abromeit, the previous Consul General, and members of the diplomatic corps, well-known business people, and representatives of other Austrian organisations from other parts of Canada make it a point to participate every year, and 1999 was no exception.

Mr. Herbert Wolf, General Manager of Austrian Airlines, acted as Master of Ceremonies and presided over the draw of valuable prizes donated by many firms, such as Austrian Airlines, Swarovsky, and Riedel Glas.

The evening was a tremendous success and demonstrated to the many guests the Austrian way of celebrating a charming and elegant Ball.

Hans Raschke
President

The Ottawa Schrammel Quartett

Schrammelmusik today is synonymous with Vienna, the wine-growing villages in the outskirts of Vienna, Viennese folksongs, good food and naturally good wine and conversations: in short, *Schrammelmusik* is *Gemütlichkeit*. It started with the brothers Johann and Joseph Schrammel who brought a new kind of music to Vienna in the middle of the 19th century.

Four friends, who came to Canada in the early 1950s from Austria, discovered by accident that they had once played the instruments needed for a "Schrammel Quartett": 2 violins, a contra-guitar, and an

accordion. After much practicing and re-acquainting themselves with the instruments, they started to entertain members of the Austrian Society Ottawa at social gatherings and started the *Schrammel-Nachmittage* which are still very popular. It was not very long afterwards that other German-speaking organizations asked the quartet to perform at their functions.

Since that time the quartet has played at church services—together with the Alpentrio, they performed the "Deutsche Bauernmesse" and many other folkloric masses—and they have participated in numerous multicultural festivals. For example, they appeared on local as well as national television and participated at the Festival de Music Viennoise des Laurentides. They were asked to play at the Austrian and German Embassies and were invited to play in Vienna at the annual meeting of Austrians Abroad. Their participation at the annual Viennese *Winterball* in Ottawa has become a tradition.

The highlight for the quartet came in 1996 when the members of the quartet received the *Silbernes Verdienstzeichen des Landes Wien* (Vienna's Silver Medal of Merit) for their promotion of Viennese music in Canada.

Here are the members of the Quartet:



From left to right: Edi Wyslouzil, Hans Wyslouzil, Dr. Lichem, Hermann Griesseier and Alois Platzer, receiving "Vienna's Silver Medal of Merit" from Ambassador Dr. Walther Lichem (1996)

Hans Wyslouzil (second violin) was born in Kitzbühel (Tyrol), and when he was 7 years old his family moved to Innsbruck. After the war, he enrolled in the *Hotelfachschule* in Bad Gastein. After working in hotels in Alt-Aussee, Bad Gastein and in his parents' hotel-pension near Innsbruck, he and his brother Dagobert emigrated to Canada in November 1951. After working for a short time in restaurants, he worked at Loblaw's Groceries until 1963. At this time he has become involved in the insurance

business as an independent agent. He is still working in this profession as a broker. He is married to Gretl and has one son, one daughter, and four grandchildren.

Alois Platzer (first violin) was born in St. Marein near Graz. His father was a master tailor, his mother a seamstress. After public school he learned the trade of book binding in St. Gabriel, Mödling near Vienna. In Graz he was driver for Weihbischof Leo Pitsch for seven years. In 1965 he came to Canada where he



The Ottawa Schrammel Quartet are playing their "Third Ottawa Viennese Winter Ball 1999"

trained in orthopedics and prosthetics. Mr. Platzer is currently employed by a rehabilitation center. He is married to Hannelore, has one daughter and one grandchild.

Hermann Griesseier (contraguitar) was born in Feldbach, Styria, and went to public school in Fehring and to high school in Leibnitz. In the Technical High School Wien-Mödling he trained to become an aircraft motor mechanic and earned the journeyman's certificate. In 1947 he joined the Austrian *Gendarmerie* in Judendorf-Strassengel, Übelbach, and Tobelbad. In 1951 he came to Canada. From 1951 to 1959 he worked for Spartan Air Service. From 1959 to 1988 he was employed by the Department of Transport as an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, Flight Engineer, and finally up to his retirement in 1988 as Chief of Overhaul of Government Aircraft. He is married to Trautl, has three daughters, one son, and five grandchildren.

Edi Wyslouzil (accordion) was born in Kitzbühel, Tirol, went to highschool in Kufstein and Innsbruck. Subsequently he graduated from the Architectural Engineering School. From 1946 to 1954 he worked at different construction companies in Innsbruck. In May 1954 he came to Canada where he joined his parents and three brothers who had come to Ottawa a

few years earlier. He worked at different residential construction companies as architectural draftsman, estimator and construction coordinator until his retirement in 1989. He is married to Maria, has two sons, one daughter, and three grandchildren.

The Austrian Alpine Singers

The Austrian Alpine Singers is a unique mixed choir which under the direction of its accomplished choir master, Willi Platzer, has joined together to promote awareness of Austrian culture and heritage through music, song, and folk dancing. Their repertoire of musical selections includes traditional folksongs originating from the various provinces of Austria, orchestral compositions written by great masters from the concert halls in Vienna, as well as well-known choral pieces. Traditional folk dances are performed with some of these selections. *Stub'nmusi'*, with various instruments is also part of their program.

The Alpine Singers will celebrate the pre-Christmas season with "Advent in Rural Austria", a mixed musical program that will present old and new songs, a string ensemble and an extremely rare mountain instrument from Austria: a hammer dulcimer (*Hackbrett*) which is played in a quintet. They will also sing the original version of "Silent Night" rendered by two Austrians, accompanied by a guitar, just as was the case when it was first sung more than 180 years ago. This warm and joyous program has been performed for more than a decade.

The choir will perform on Sunday, November 28, 1999 at 2:30 pm at Our Lady of Fatima in Scarborough, Ontario, and on Saturday, December 11, 1999 at 7:30pm at St. Mary's Church in Kitchener, Ontario.

Dr. Kurt Fürst

The Austria-Canada Hockey Link

A team of AAA players, aged 15 to 16, from the Klagenfurt Athletic Club (KAC) visited North America from March 25 to April 5, 1999 to play seven games in Canada and the United States. In Buffalo, N.Y. they had the opportunity to watch one of their favourite NHL teams, the Buffalo

Sabres, a team which had their training camp in Klagenfurt last year.

In Dundas, Ontario, a special surprise was waiting for them. A former Canadian hockey star, Tom Lemon, who played in Klagenfurt with the KAC from 1959 to 1963, visited the team. Mr. Lemon is credited with having taken the standard of Austrian hockey to world recognition level. Just to mention his name—even to today's youth—produces an immediate smile of recognition.



From left to right: Josef Ferrara, Lisa Lemon, Hans Sulzer, Petty and Tom Lemon, Harald Lange, and Roland Pirker

His attendance brought the best out in the team: they won 8:4. After the game, Mrs. Betty Lemon gave the team a compliment by observing that "these young players of the KAC are playing the style of my husband—very good stick handling, beautiful passing, and overall they use their head".

The guest of honour at the game in Ottawa was His Excellency, Dr. Walther Lichem, who himself is a big hockey fan. After the game he spoke to many parents and *Schlachtenbummler* who had come with the team from Austria, exchanging memories from his youth in Klagenfurt where he had seen many KAC games.

Roland Pirker

First Austrian Music Workshop

On the weekend of June 24 to 27, 1999 the Perez Building at the University of Ottawa was filled with music. Wherever you went there were groups of young musicians practising. You could have sworn that you were somewhere in Austria because all the music had this unmistakable Austrian sound. There was a *Schrammelquartett* playing Viennese

melodies, and over there was a *Stub'n-musi* group practising the alpine melodies on the zither, *hackbrett*, guitar, and double bass. You could hear the clear voices of a ladies' trio singing authentic folk songs and a men's quintet learning a Carinthian song. There were recorders, flutes, and accordions in many different configurations hard at work. Who were these young musicians and how did they come together in Ottawa?

Four Austrian-Canadians living in Ottawa (Hans Wyslouzil, Edmund Wyslouzil, Hermann Griesseier and Alois Platzer) formed the Ottawa Schrammelquartett in 1975. They entertained not only in the German-speaking organizations, but introduced many others to Viennese music, in particular to *Schrammelmusik*. As time went on, it became apparent that it was necessary to recruit young musicians to continue the work of the Ottawa Schrammelquartett. On the initiative of the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Walther Lichem, the President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, Roland Pirker, actively started to search for young people who were interested in this type of music.

When a group of very talented and dedicated young musicians was located in Toronto, the council brought them and their parents to Ottawa. The Council also engaged—besides the members of the Ottawa Schrammelquartett—the services of a teacher from Montreal who is very involved with Viennese music, Mr. Jean Deschênes.

The enthusiasm and eagerness of these young people, who were divided into two groups, made it a pleasure for the instructors to work with them. One group under the direction of Jean Deschênes and his wife Anne concentrated on Viennese music, while the other group concentrated on *Stub'n-musi* and other forms of *Volksmusik*. It is surprising what can be accomplished in a very short time with a group of eager students! This was apparent at the final concert of the workshop. It was an overwhelming experience not only for the audience, but for all the musicians as well.

It is hoped that this dedication will carry on and that this is the beginning of many other such workshops. Austrian music will then be in good hands and will be heard in all parts of Canada.

The Second Austrian Music Workshop is planned for the week-end from July 24 to 27, 2000. We are looking for young musicians between the ages 12 to 20 who are interested in learning and continuing with *Schrammel*, *Stub'n-*, and *Volksmusik*. We are looking for violin, guitar, accordeon, double bass or cello, zither, *hackbrett*, flute, and re-corder players; they should have several years of experience. What we have in mind is a *Schrammelquartett* (2 violins, guitar and accordeon) or *Stub'n-musi-Quartett* group (zither, *hackbrett*, guitar, and double bass) from the same region in Canada who could form their own group. The Austrian-Canadian Council would cover the cost of housing, meals, and instruction during the four-day stay. The cost of travel to Ottawa and back will be the participants' responsibility.

If you are interested in participating in such a workshop please send your inquiries to Mr. Roland K. Pirker at the Austrian-Canadian Council, 1391 Cavendish Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6B8, or phone (613) 521-3603.

Hans Wyslouzil

Austrian Society Ottawa

30th Anniversary Celebrations of the Austrian Society Ottawa at the Sheraton Hotel Ottawa on October 22, 1995



Final concert at the Perez Building on June 27, 1999. Participants from left to right: Front row, the students: Annie Scully (16), Rachel Seilern (15), Rebecca Szauter (18), Alisha Szauter (17), Anouk Deschênes (9), Holli Richards (14), Megan Adams (15), Natasha Szauter (13), Timothy Seilern (16), Mathias Seilern (18) and Samuel Scully (18). Back row: Ed Wyslouzil (teacher), Hans Wyslouzil (teacher), Willi Platzer (choirmaster), Anne Lauzon (teacher), Roland K. Pirker (workshop organizer), H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem (Ambassador of Austria), Jean Deschênes (instructor), Hermann Griesseier (teacher), and Alois Platzer (teacher)



President Roland K. Pirker honours the past presidents of the Society with a plaque: Hermann Griesseier, Franz (Frank) Marth, Melitta van Cleeff, Hans Rant, Leo Janecka and Josef (Joe) Seidl on behalf of Willi Nassau. Foreground: Dr. Walther Lichem



President R. K. Pirker honours the founding members of the Society: Karl-Franz Hafner, Kurt Ortner and Josef Seidl. Seated in the foreground: Mrs. T. Lichem, H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem, Helli Heberlein; in the background Ingrid Feil.



Karl and Hanni Schmid, Christa Jachan, Hans Körner, Walter Jachan, Jim Burgess, Helmut Seemann and Helen Pelcis



Veronica Riml, Elfriede Stryzel, Mathilde and Franz Jerabeck, Madelene Hammerschmid, Barbara Hörman (staff member at the Austrian Embassy), Ottfried Riml and Dr. Wera Zelenka (Press and Cultural Counsellor, Austrian Embassy). Standing: Leo Hammerschmid



Marianne and Erich Spatzierer, Karin Fürst, Ludwig and Edith Kuntz, Edith and Kurt Ortner, Willi Welward, Horst and Sylvia Tobien



Theresa Palisek, Annie Sheddler, Pino and Regina Parato, Herma Pundleider, Margaret Mrak, Barbara Sauter, Josef (Pepi) Frühwirth and Maria Wolters



Walter and Josefina Ott, Margit and Siegfried Langer, Fred and Paula Krasny, Hermann Franke, Heidi and Bernd Doneit, and Mariese Halleman.



Karl-Franz and Gertraude Hafner, Frank Marth, Maria Seidl, Adele Kulesza, Lotte Kletter, Martha Dölle and Josef Seidl



Adults: Ingrid Feil, Margaret Upton, Adele Loustit, Kenneth Upton and Ken Gibbins; children: M. Poppeller and Sylvia Gibbons



H. Jursitzka, Gisela and Emanuel Köhl, Heidi Temelie, Joe and Dr. Barbara Brintnell, Dr. Hans and Sylvia Bänziger

Interview with Jill LaForty, Music Producer for CBC Radio Two

Hello. My name is Jill LaForty. I have been a music producer for CBC Radio Two in Ottawa for the past 16 years. Before joining CBC I spent two years of post-university study at the Vienna Conservatory. What I do at CBC mostly involves organizing and recording classical music concerts plus doing short on-air educational items about music. In recent years I have also branched out into making radio documentaries on musical subjects. Past projects have included features on Austrian composer Viktor Ullmann and former child prodigies Corey and Katja Cerovsek.

Thanks to the generosity of the Austrian-Canadian Council and the Austrian Society of Ottawa, I have just returned from Vienna where I gathered tape for three documentary profiles that CBC

Radio Two will broadcast during the course of the next season.

This summer Vienna has been more alive than usual with the music of the waltz king, Johann Strauss Jr. That's because 1999 marks the 100th anniversary of his death as well as the 150th anniversary of the death of his father, Johann Sr. The statue of Strauss Jr. in the *Stadtpark* is apparently the most photographed monument in the world. Judging from the number of tourists I saw flocking around the flamboyant Strauss, violin in hand, complete with his new gold-plated facelift, I can't argue with that!

As well as having a Viennese Waltz lesson at the renowned Elmayer Dance School in the heart of the city, I had the chance to interview many fascinating people. Dr. Eduard Strauss is the great-grand-nephew of Johann Strauss Jr., the son of a Strauss conductor and the oldest (at a mere 43) living name-bearer of the Strauss family. His apartment in the 6th district contains intriguing Strauss memorabilia, including a full-size bust and an original cartoon of Johann Jr. that dates from the time of the composer's life. Eduard Strauss is dedicated to going beyond the sentimentality of the Strauss legend and getting the correct facts out about his family. One of the points he made is that he believes Johann Strauss Jr. wrote for that particular moment in history and that he would be astonished to learn that his music still lives on in the hearts of almost all who hear it 100 years later.

I also spoke with Otto Brusatti who is the curator of "Johann Strauss. Unter Donner und Blitz". It's a marvelous exhibit on the waltz king currently on display at the *Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien*. He commented that Strauss was a vastly complex person who would have been a prime subject for Sigmund Freud. Yet after analysis, would the melodies that the world loves have flowed so effortlessly from his pen?

Conductors and musicians spoke about the infinite variety in the waltzes and the special elastic and seamless style required to make the most of this music. Everyone I talked with, including many tourists from all over the world, agreed that they never tire of the uplifting music by this Viennese master.

The second radio piece I worked on

while in Vienna was about the Vienna Philharmonic. This orchestra is arguably the best in the world and has the privilege of performing in one of the most ideal concert halls ever built: the *Goldener Saal* in the *Musikverein*. The orchestra is unique for its sound. Its players perform on many instruments that differ from those that musicians play in our North American orchestras. For instance, members of the woodwind sections from the Toronto or Vancouver symphonies wouldn't have much luck playing the instruments that the oboists or clarinetists of the Vienna Philharmonic use, and vice versa, mostly because of a difference in the fingering system and the reed set-up. The Vienna horn only can be found in the Vienna Philharmonic and contributes to the richness of its justly famous brass sound, particularly in the works of the Romantic masters.



Jill LaForty interviews Heidi Fedorcuk, a Vienna tour guide, at J. Strauss Sr.'s grave in Vienna

I also discovered first-hand just how busy these musicians are. That's one of the reasons why they are so good: they play all the time!! In some ways you could call the Vienna Philharmonic position a sideline to their regular positions as members of the Vienna State Opera Orchestra, which gives six performances a week from September to June. If that's not enough, several of the players also are members of the *Hofmusikkapelle* and belong to various chamber ensembles. All this in addition to their Philharmonic schedule which includes concerts, recording and touring. The musicians were always rushing to or

coming from another performance or rehearsal. This made getting interviews tricky.

Clemens Hellsberg, the president of the Philharmonic and a member of the first violin section, found an hour and a half to talk with me. He spoke frankly, elegantly and sometimes emotionally about the issues confronting the orchestra in recent years, including the controversy about allowing women to join the ranks. Mr. Hellsberg feels that one of the biggest challenges facing the orchestra as it heads into the 21st century is its ability to uphold its over 150-year long tradition.

Apart from conducting interviews, I attended a concert and rehearsals with Seiji Ozawa in the role of guest conductor. At the invitation of one of the musicians I took off my shoes and crouched silently behind the percussion section at one of the rehearsals so that I could tape the interaction between the Maestro and the orchestra without intruding. It was a unique experience and a privilege to be among such gifted and dedicated musicians.

Finally, while in Vienna I was hot on the trail of the legacy of Robert Stolz. The year 2000 marks both the 120th anniversary of the birth and the 25th anniversary of the death of this so-called "last waltz king". Marcel Prawy, a distinguished producer with the Vienna State Opera and a celebrity broadcaster (he lives in the Sacher Hotel), told me over a piece of *Sachertorte* that Stolz' genius lay in his ability to create psychological dramas as complex in his three-minute songs as Schnitzler achieved in his two-hour plays.

I spent a morning with Einzi Stolz, the composer's widow. She is as devoted to keeping alive the memory and music of her husband as she was supportive of him during his life. She told me remarkable stories about how he helped Jewish friends and colleagues during the war and, equally importantly, how in the early 60's he succeeded in reintroducing the German language to Israel during a concert of his music in Jerusalem.

So it was a thrilling nine days of soaking up the cultural ambiance of Vienna to report on three Austrian icons. If you would like to hear the radio documentaries, CBC Radio Two will broadcast them on the program "In Perfor-

mance" which is heard week nights at 8:00 in each time zone, 8:30 in Newfoundland, after the usual concert segment.

The tentative Wednesday night broadcast dates on CBC Two are:

**Strauss on November 24, 1999;
the Vienna Philharmonic on
March 29, 2000; and
Robert Stolz on June 21, 2000.**

Establishment of a Broadened Training Exchange Program between Canada and Austria

In October 1998, the governments of Canada and Austria signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Canada-Austria Young Workers Exchange program. While this was a most welcome step forward in creating training experiences for young Canadians and Austrians in the other country, the program was considered by many to be of only limited usefulness because it does not cover all branches of industry of interest to the two countries; in particular, the program was restricted to training in forestry, agriculture and tourism.

One of the most active organizations to lobby for changes in the exchange program has been the Austrian-Canadian Business Club (ACBC). It is the business branch of the Austrian-Canadian Council, a duly registered national charitable organization headquartered in Ottawa, whose mission is to promote Austrian culture in Canada and to strengthen cultural ties and friendship between the two countries. As a constituent organization of the Council, the ACBC has the mission to create and promote strong trade, business and cultural links between the two countries and among the Austrian-Canadians themselves.

The objectives of the Austrian-Canadian Business Club have included the following:

1. to organize and support an on-the-job training exchange program for young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 30 in Austrian firms and for young Austrians in Canadian firms. The industries in which the companies are active should be broadly defined and include tourism, the environment, forestry, mining and metals, automobile and other vehicle manufactur-

ing, and high technology;

2. to manage the program by, for example, finding accommodation for young Austrians coming to Canada in the framework of the Program; examining the potential and the likelihood that a target firm offering to give training is indeed able and willing to do so; ensuring that the young person obtains valuable immersion in the culture and accurate knowledge of the host country; and by identifying Austrian organizations which can act as ACBC's counterparts in Austria, such as the Austria Canada Business Club, to assist and support the Program in Austria; and

3. to assist in building strong, beneficial cultural ties and in developing increased business between Austrians and Canadians.

The efforts of the ACBC were successful: On the occasion of Prime Minister Chretien's visit to Austria in June 1999, the Austrian Federal Minister for Labor, Health and Social Welfare announced that up to 50 work permits without restriction to specified industries will now be available annually for young Canadians wanting to obtain work experience in Austria in the framework of the Exchange Program.

There will be numerous benefits of the broadened Young People Training Exchange Program. It will prepare young people to be trained in the use of tools, methods and procedures which may be different and in some cases more advanced than what is available in their own country. Consequently, it is likely that these young workers will find it easier to secure jobs in their home country. Moreover, the work opportunities will familiarize trainees with new tools and procedures that may assist them to establish new companies at home. Bilateral trade between the two countries should therefore be enhanced. And what is at least as important is the fact that the young Austrians or Canadians will get to know the host country, its people, geography and culture; the Exchange Program will therefore forge strong personal links and friendships between the people of the two countries.

Franz Plangger
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