

George Rahi Residency Report

The following report outlines my experiments during the AIR program in Krems. This residency provided a valuable opportunity to immerse myself in a new setting and gain new perspectives on my practice. Over the course of the residency, I engaged in various activities, including artist talks, performances, and recording sessions which unfolded in relation to the people, places, and cultural activities in Krems.

The framework of the residency proved to be an ideal conduit for my compositional process, enabling me to explore the possibilities of organ music beyond its traditional confines. The month-long period allowed for an immersive experience in Krems, enabling me to fully delve into my artistic practice. By providing the necessary resources, in person support (thank you Klaus and Lisa), and uninterrupted time, the residency program facilitated the development and realization of new ideas that will inform my future projects.

Highlights of the Residency:

1. **Artist Talk at the Tangible Music Lab:** On May 17, I had the privilege of giving an artist talk at the Tangible Music Lab in Linz. This platform allowed me to share my creative process, inspirations, and vision with fellow artists and scholars working in the lab under the theme of 'Post-digital Lutherie'.
2. **Multi-Channel Sound Performance with the OTTOsonics Project:** The concert with OTTOsonics on May 19 was an opportunity to reimagine recordings I've made with various organs in Europe and Canada. The organ recordings were deconstructed into an abstract and imaginative realm inspired by the acousmatic aspects of the instrument, establishing a parallel between the analog and digital spaces of instruments and speakers. The concert used the newly designed multi-channel sound created by the OTTOsonics team, and the work was presented alongside a performance by Vienna-based artist Isabella Forticini.
3. **Recording Sessions with the St Veit Organ:** Supported by organist Ronald Peter, I had the opportunity to conduct two recording sessions with the St Veit organ. These sessions allowed me to experiment with different compositional approaches and explore the full range of the instrument. Furthermore, I assisted Ronald during a tuning session to learn more about the process of how the organ is tuned in response to seasonal and temperature changes.

In various ways, these projects moved to break free from the traditional constraints that have confined organ music to small circles of experts, enthusiasts, and congregations. Aiming to open up these instruments and spaces to new audiences, my activities in Krems and lower

Austria can hopefully contribute to a wave of new music that reframes both the organ as well as its historical relationship to the birth of electronic music. That said, getting access to rehearse with instrument took time and effort, and I extend my thanks to Paula Haslinger for her persistence in contacting a number of churches to make the necessary arrangements and approvals.

While I was in Krems I also had the privilege to experience many concerts programmed as part of Danau festival as well as to experience the Felix Blume sound installation in the Klangraum. The repurposing of this old monastery and church as a venue was very interesting to experience given its well-established history of presenting sound art in the town (for example works by Canadian artist Janet Cardiff). Part of my artistic interest in the space was the way that the architecture and interior acoustics of these monumental spaces are put into dialogue with the contemporary artworks experienced in them. Additionally, the way these spaces frame a specific kind of close listening was evident in the presentation of contemporary art and new music being presented. Whether these spaces promote a conceptual or aesthetic borrowing of the elements of liturgical art forms was something I am still curious to explore more and discuss with the curatorial team at the Klangraum and the Museum Krems.

The residency program proved to be an invaluable opportunity for me to further my artistic goals and was also positively shaped by interdisciplinary exchanges with fellow AIR artists. Through artist talks, performances, and recording sessions, I not only pushed the boundaries of my own artistic process, but left Krems with new friends and contacts in my artistic field that provide a strong foundation for my future endeavors in Austria and elsewhere.