

AIR Niederösterreich Report; Kyle Gann

*How was the residency? Advantages and disadvantages of AIR Niederösterreich.*

I had never been to an artists' colony before (except once as a teacher, without much chance to concentrate on my own work), so I don't have much basis for comparison. The apartments are absolutely lovely and convenient to live in. The piano was certainly adequate for my purposes, and had been well tuned, thank you for taking care of that. I have visited friends in residence at other artist colonies, and it seemed that their meals were taken care of so they could devote themselves entirely to their work, so I was a little surprised that this isn't the case here. Still, I can see how the facilities aren't set up for it, and the town is convenient.

*What did you realize during your residency period?*

One of the organization's stated aims is to have artists from other countries learn more about culture in Lower Austria. I certainly did that. One thing that made a big impression on me was the (sometimes former) wealth and size of the monasteries. We Americans think of monasteries as ascetic environments for poor scholars, but I became aware of how the nobility gave money and vast land holdings to them to populate and civilize the area. This has a lot to do with the history of music I teach; for instance, I had always thought of Anton Bruckner as a humble country organist with a modest job at the local monastery, but seeing the astonishing grandeur of St. Florian made me realize in what high regard he must have been held to have such a visible position there – and to be given pride of place in his burial. My understanding of the forces of history that shaped the European culture I've been educationally immersed in was greatly deepened and in some cases turned upside down. Visiting the Musikverein and Esterhazy Palace also made places I discuss in my teaching come to life.

*What did you miss at the residency?*

I very much enjoyed getting to know the other artists. I wish there had been more structured attempt to bring us together socially at the beginning of the month, as it took more than a week before I had any extended conversation with them. I would have enjoyed getting to know them, and to know about their work, sooner. I'm told that in the past there was some chance for each artist to give a presentation of his or her work to the others, and that sounds like a nice tradition, and one I've seen at other residency events.

*What do you appreciate at AIR Niederösterreich?*

As said before: the convenient apartment; the scintillating conversation with the other artists; the staff are extremely personable and helpful; Krems itself, which is a delightfully livable town with amazing churches and excellent restaurants.

*List all projects, workshops, concerts, exhibitions, events etc. that you realized or participated in during your residency. Please add all data (title, date, time, place).*

I completed and edited my Second Piano Concerto, which had been commissioned by pianist Emanuele Arciuli.

I wrote a trio for cello, vibraphone, and piano entitled *Trieste*, commissioned by a Los Angeles group called House on Fire; I had written some sketches for it before I came, but nearly every section I had worked on earlier was completely rewritten.

I wrote the tenth in a series of nocturnes for piano, this one titled *Am Grab von Bruckner*, inspired by my visit to Bruckner's organ and grave at St. Florian (really a powerful experience for me, as Bruckner is a composer I'm rather obsessed with).

I had a public (electronic) performance of a large chunk of my three-and-a-half-hour work *Hyperchromatica* at the Ursula Chapel; this was Oct. 1, just before the residency started, arranged by Martin Gut, and it was my initial reason for coming to Krems.

I attended a wonderful concert at the Musikverein in Vienna on October 22, of Bartok's early Four Pieces for Orchestra, Dvorak's *The Wood Dove*, and Janacek's thrilling Glagolitic Mass, played by the ORF RSO Wien conducted by Karina Canellakis. This was a chance to experience the hall in which Mahler, Wagner, Brahms, and others had performed.

I took a train to Brno, Czech Republic, for a concert by my pianist associate Emanuele Arciuli; with the Brno Philharmonic, he played the Second Concerto of my countryman William Bolcom, and there was also Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Afterward I met with the conductor, Dennis Russell Davies, whom Emanuele is attempting to convince to program the Second Concerto I wrote for him. This was a very important connection for me, and if it bears fruit in the future, that will have been an excellent payoff for the trip.

On Oct. 25 I gave a talk on my music at the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Wien, invited to do so by professor Stefan Jena. The students were inquisitive and articulate, and I was happy with how it went.

On Oct. 20 I attended the opening of the Alicja Karska and Aleksandra Went exhibit at Galerie Stadtpark.

On Oct. 6 I observed the first pressing of the grapes at Nikolaihof Wachau, which was quite colorful.

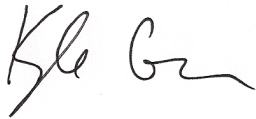
On Oct. 11 I visited Franz Schubert's Geburtshaus in Vienna.

On Oct. 3 I visited Esterhazy Palace, where Franz Joseph Haydn worked from 1762 to 1791. I mention the place frequently in my teaching, and it is good to have a distinct sense of it.

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Thank you very much for this wonderful opportunity to work intensively while immersing myself in such a convivial environment.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Gann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kyle Gann