I flew to Vienna, Austria overnight (on KLM via Amsterdam, approximately 12 hours) on Saturday July 27, 2013 to attend a week-long international conference for music librarians at the University of Vienna, and presented a scholarly paper there. Most musicians desire to visit Vienna, home of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and dozens of other significant composers! I stayed one extra day for a long bus trip to Salzburg (Mozart’s birthplace and home of a festival which figures in the plot of the musical The Sound of Music).

The adventure was seriously threatened on Day 1, when somewhere between the airport’s train station and arriving at my hotel an hour later my wallet disappeared. A traveler’s nightmare. Drove me to my knees, if you know what I mean. To this day I don’t know if it was stolen by a pickpocket or whether I lost it in my bleary, jet-lagged condition (I had been up for about 30 hours without sleep). It never turned up. Fortunately the conference organization immediately fronted me a cash loan of 500 Euros for the week (which I repaid a week later). Even though I lost around $180, my Visa bank card, medical insurance card, driver’s license, etc., I was able to enjoy the week after all. (Fortunately I had my passport in a separate traveler’s wallet around my neck!)

I booked my flights and hotel as a package through Expedia. Here is the exterior of the very modern Star Inn Wien Schonbrunn, which has only been open for about a year. While nowhere near the Innere Stadt (Inner City or ‘old town’) and about 4 miles from my conference venue, it was conveniently across the street from a major subway station. Very nice place, with friendly and helpful front-desk staff (most of whom spoke English).
Looking into my hotel room, #201. Clean and plain, very bare-bones. One Spartan stiff-backed wooden chair. Blessedly air-conditioned (Vienna was enduring a scorching heat wave). Cable TV featured only one English-language channel, CNN-Euro. Didn’t watch much.

Ah, comfort and repose at the end of each of seven busy days. Got up around 6:45 a.m. most mornings. While the hotel did not have its own restaurant, it did have a large buffet breakfast for EUR12 each morning. I only partook twice; while quite good, this is very expensive (= $16).

The nearby subway station (Laengenfeldgasse) included this Turkish-Eastern Mediterranean fast food place. Picked up my supper here most nights for a reasonable EUR5. I do hope to have at least one typical Viennese meal at some point…
The U-Bahn (Untergrundbahn, or subway) system is easy to figure out, and one of the purchase options is a 72-hour ticket good for all rides on the U-Bahn, Strassenbahn (streetcar) or Autobus (bus) for three days. When entering the system, time-stamp your own ticket at a machine, then carry it with you. Subways, streetcars, and buses operate on an honor system— you don’t use the card to pass through turnstiles; rather, you must have one in case transit police asks to see it. If you don’t have a valid ticket, there is an expensive fine. Never saw a transit cop.

Here’s a shot of a U-Bahn train, stopped at the platform. Doors do not open automatically. The more modern trains have a large lighted button on the doors (both inside and outside) to push, while the older ones (like this) have a handle that requires a rather solid yank to pull open.

My daily trip to the conference involved a short ride on the U-Bahn (sixth stop along U-6, the Brown Line) and then a short ride, about a mile, on a streetcar like this one. This took about 15-25 minutes from leaving the hotel, depending on wait times.
There didn’t seem to be as much subway art in the Vienna U-Bahn as in New York City metro stations, but here is an example, part of a long, whimsical mural at the Praterstern station.

The University of Vienna does not occupy a single location in the city but several. Here is one of the unimposing and easily-missed entrances to the Alserstrasse campus where the musicology department (among others) is located. The compound is “walled” all the way around, enclosing several interior courtyards.

This map shows the layout of the Alserstrasse/Spitalgasse campus, comprising one very large Hof (courtyard) and nine smaller ones at the intersection of Alser Street and Spital Alley. Hof 1, the large one, was mostly green space: a tree-shaded park anchored by a small supermarket and a restaurant. My building was in Hof 2.
Here is Hof 2’s Hörsaalzentrum (Central Lecture Hall) in which most of the conference sessions were held. Mostly in English. Several in German, as expected. A few in French and Italian.

Fame! Here’s the title slide of my talk evaluating the usefulness of a particular software tool for analyzing and comparing library collections. This was my third European speaking engagement on music librarianship (I presented a paper in Amsterdam in 2009 and a keynote address in Oslo in 2011).

The conference included two evening concerts. One was held at the historic Musikverein (Music Union) seen here, a superb concert hall built in 1870 as the new home for the much-older Vienna Philharmonic. Besides a main orchestra hall seating 1,800, there are four smaller auditoriums inside.
Our concert took place in the Musikverein’s Brahmsaal (Brahms Hall), a 600-seat recital auditorium for smaller ensembles. This shows our eager audience of music librarians on the main floor.

Here is some of the elaborate decoration of the upper balcony level and ceiling of the Brahmsaal.

This concert consisted of mostly early music and little-known items of classical and romantic repertoire from manuscripts or antiquarian editions in the Vienna State Library, played on replica instruments. At half-time the audience mobbed the stage to talk to the performers about their instruments. This fellow plays a baryton, a seven-stringed bowed instrument that also has interior wires that vibrate sympathetically and can be plucked from behind the peg-box. It was popular from about 1680 to 1780.
Another concert was held in the Schonbrunn Schlosstheater, a Baroque court opera built in 1747 on the grounds of Schonbrunn Palace, the residential complex of the imperial court. It only seats about 300 people—this was not a public opera house, but one originally for the emperor and the imperial court’s aristocrats exclusively. One of Mozart’s operas was premiered here.

A closeup of the ceiling of the Schlosstheater. We heard performances of early 20th-century piano quintets by Anton Webern, Arnold Schoenberg, and Bruno Walter.

Here is one of the landmarks of Vienna’s inner city— the spire of the neo-Gothic Rathaus (City Council Building or Townhall), which has a huge park in front. Vienna has a surprisingly large amount of dedicated green space for parks and squares.
While the university was founded in the 14th century (oldest in the German-speaking lands), none of its current buildings date from that era. This is the gate to the main building of the main campus in the inner city, displaying 19th-century neo-Renaissance architectural style. Much more impressive than the nondescript entrance to my “walled” campus.

This is the Wiener Staatsoper (Vienna State Opera House), another majestic example of 19th-century monumental architecture. As a landmark surrounded by broad streets and avenues it is a typical place to meet and board a tour bus (which I did at 7:10 am on my last day, for a motorcoach trip to Salzburg… made it with 5 minutes to spare before departure).

We’re now in the inside courtyard of the apartment house where Franz Schubert was born (1797) and lived with dad, step-mom, brothers, and sisters until he became a Vienna choirboy and moved into the dorm of the choirboy school at St. Stephen’s Cathedral. His family occupied a TWO-ROOM apartment on the upper floor, as did most of the other families in the building, and this was not unusual for lower-middle-class folks. His father was a schoolteacher who taught separate morning and afternoon classes to neighborhood children in a large room on the ground level.
The small museum at the Schubert house encompasses the two Schubert family rooms and exhibit space in several adjoining rooms that were once other apartments. Here is Schubert’s guitar. I didn’t know he played guitar, but this makes sense for a composer of over 600 songs—guitar accompaniment was almost as prevalent as piano accompaniment. And a guitar is easier to carry around.

I also went to the MUCH larger apartment occupied by the ‘Waltz King,’ Johann Strauss Jr., in the 1860s during his mature years as a successful and celebrated composer. Here is the manuscript to his most famous composition, ‘An der Schönen Blauen Donau (‘To the Beautiful Blue Danube’)’ as originally written for 4-part male choir with piano. The subsequent solo piano arrangement became the top-selling piece of sheet music in the 19th century, and a hundred years later in its symphonic dressing it opened the film *2001 A Space Odyssey.*
This is the writing desk upon which Strauss probably wrote that Blue Danube waltz. One must stand up to write, it is too high to sit at (which is not unusual for work desks for copyists, bookkeepers, drafters, etc.)

There are many, many monuments to Vienna's composers sprinkled throughout the city- this one to Johannes Brahms is in Karlsplatz (St. Charles Place), near St. Charles Church and the Musikverein.
This statue of Ludwig van Beethoven is found in the woods of Heiligenstadt, during his time a winemaking village outside the city, now a residential suburb. He spent summers here when the heat and humidity of the densely populated walled city of Vienna became unbearable. It is in these woods that he came up with tunes used in his ‘Pastoral’ Sixth Symphony, and it was in this village that he later wrote, but did not send, a letter confessing (and conquering) suicidal thoughts when his deafness almost overwhelmed him.

Vienna’s most visited tourist attraction is Schloss Schonbrunn, or Schonbrunn (‘beautiful spring’) Palace, home of Austria’s emperors and empresses and the retinue of 1,500 aristocrats, servants, guards, and bureaucrats who made governing the Austrian empire happen. In addition to the 1,400-room palace building and outbuildings (including the Schlosstheater court opera where I attended a concert), the grounds include several additional attractions—a zoo, a hedge maze, a forest park (once the hunting grounds), flower gardens, pavilions, fish ponds, a puppet theater, children’s museum, many restaurants, carriage rides, etc. I took the cheapest 21-room, 45-minute tour, but one could spend two days here to see everything.
Here’s one of the four picturesque Baroque/Rococo fountains in the large open area (about two blocks square) in front of the palace. In high times such as weddings, the square would be filled to overflowing with the carriages of Europe’s visiting elite.

No photography of any kind is allowed in the palace. I did buy a book of souvenir photo postcards. I have appropriated from the web this image of Schonbrunn’s Great Hall of Mirrors, where six-year-old prodigy Wolfini Mozart and big sister Nannerl played for Empress Maria Theresa in 1762, kicking off their European tour. There is also a story that he played in her smaller visiting room, after which he jumped into her lap and gave her a kiss. What a precocious little masher!
Here’s my chance to sample authentic cuisine! One of the restaurants on the castle grounds featured Wienerschnitzel, breaded veal cutlets, as a ‘typical Viennese meal’ …which is just what I enjoyed for a mid-afternoon lunch. EUR19.5 is a little expensive, but I did have enough takeaway leftovers to munch on for supper later that night. Very tasty.

The city streets outside the Schonbrunn compound feature several ‘living statues’ like this marbleized pair depicting courtiers or servants, not sure which. What a way to make a living. There was also a golden Mozart, but my photo of him didn’t turn out well.
Being a history buff, I visited the Vienna City Historical Museum in Karlsplatz, on the former site of a large train station (Sudbahnhof) demolished about 15 years ago. There are three levels of exhibits and interpretation dating from the Roman era (Vienna originated in 15 BC as a frontier fortress called Vindobona) up to the post-WWII reconstruction years.

Each of the three floors included a large (20-ft) scale model of the city in a different era- this is how Vienna looked as a medieval walled city. The central, tallest structure is Stephensdom (St. Stephen’s Cathedral).

I find medieval times fascinating because they are so near, yet so far! I mean, here are the origins of western European culture but the worldview is radically different. I long ago read a radical simplification of medieval society into three groups: in Latin, the bellatores (‘warriors’), oratores (‘prayers’) and laboratores (‘workers’). Here’s some armor worn by the bellatores.
Here are some of the statues—inspiration for those oratores—from one or other of the Gothic cathedrals or Romanesque churches built in medieval times (sometimes, like St. Stephen’s Cathedral in the inner city, taking a couple hundred years). Many of the statues, especially on the outside facades of the buildings, were removed and replaced with replicas so that the originals could be preserved/conserved from the ravages of time and weather.

One of the many parks in Vienna is the Johann Strauss City Park, constructed in 1862 on what had been an imperial hunting preserve near the Danube, and rebuilt ca. 1903. This shows one of the entrance gates. The park also includes a huge salon which nightly features an expensive dinner with symphony concert of “light” classics and which concludes with dancing (to Strauss waltzes, of course).

As expected, Strauss Park must have a memorial to Strauss! Here it is- a marble monument with Strauss’s statue covered with gold.
Have you seen the 1949 mystery movie, *The Third Man*, set in post-war Vienna? It features a scene in one of the compartments of the Riesenrad (Giant Wheel) in the Prater amusement park. With Schönbrunn, it was one of Vienna’s must-see attractions for me. Not usually a fan of amusement parks, I do like ferris wheels, and this one is over a hundred years old (the original cabins burnt during WWII, but the structure itself was not destroyed).

Each enclosed cabin can hold about ten people. Some cabins have nicely laid tables for romantic candlelight dinners. Maybe someday I can return with my wife and do this! On the other hand, ferris wheels make her nervous.

Here’s the cabin above us…we are almost to the top. The entire circuit takes about 20 minutes; it moves quite slowly and stops a lot. I assume night-time diners go around three or four times as waiters quickly bring in and remove meal courses at the stop at the bottom.
A view northwest-ward over the city from the very top of the Riesenrad, 212 feet above the ground!

A bird’s-eye view of part of the Prater midway. There are a couple of other ferris wheels, at least three roller coasters, many bumper car rides, games of chance, fun houses, restaurants, etc. but this is what I came for. Mission accomplished.
I also bought a ticket on the Lilliputbahn (miniature railway) that runs three miles through the Prater, past the amusement park and into the green space and back. Self-portrait! I look HOT. I later found that the temperature was 37 degrees Celsius, which translates to 99 degrees Fahrenheit, with a heat index near 105. During the afternoon and evening expedition that ended here, I consumed not one, not two, but three ice cream cones.

After the conference I took an all-day bus trip to Salzburg in the Austrian Alps near the Swiss border, about 200 miles west of Vienna. We made a breakfast stop along the way, and also made a short side trip to the alpine village of St. Gilgents on the Wolfgangsee (Lake St. Wolfgang). This view looks across part of this lake toward the mountains.

St. Gilgents am Wolfgangsee was the home town of Mozart’s mother, whose own father was the Burgermeister. Most of the buildings in the town retain a characteristic, centuries-old alpine construction style. This is the Rathaus, or city hall.
Here’s another of the picturesque buildings in St. Gilgens. This one is a 250-year-old Gasthof, a combination inn and restaurant with ivy covering the ground level outside walls, folk painting covering the next level, and flowers cascading off the third floor balconies.

Finally made it to Salzburg around 11:45 am. Our tour group first visited the manicured gardens of the Mirabell Palace, a sumptuous residence built in the early 1600s by the rich and politically powerful Archbishop of Salzburg for his mistress and mother of his 15 children (so much for vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience!). The Salzburg Music Festival was in full swing (well, at night, anyway) and a random soprano was singing arias under the trees in this park, accompanied by a violinist and cellist (Puccini’s “O mio babbino caro” and Mozart’s “Queen of the Night” aria).

Salzburg (“Salt Town”) is built on a river and next to very steep hillsides; it was founded by Romans (upon much older Celtic settlements) who profitably mined the hills for salt and silver and turned it into a prosperous fortified town by 45 AD. This pedestrian overpass is a more contemporary “lockbridge” where love-struck young people pledge their undying devotion by securing small padlocks, upon which their names are painted, to the bridge, and then throwing the keys into the river.
After crossing the river we enter the oldest parts of Salzburg, which include pre-
Constantine era Christian catacombs dug into the sheer sides of the mountain. This
narrow alley dates from the medieval era, but the architecture is generally Baroque;
all the structures on this street were built upon earlier, one-story structures dating
from before 1000 AD. Some of the buildings have a pair of dates painted at the
top, often a 13\textsuperscript{th} century year corresponding to when the second story was added to the
oldest foundation, and a 20\textsuperscript{th} century year of the most recent remodeling, renovation, or preservation.

Here are some of the medieval fortifications on the cliffside. Didn’t have time to get up here to look
around, unfortunately (there is a steep incline railway transporting visitors to the top).
The largest church structure in Salzburg is the Peterdom, or St. Peter’s Cathedral, with its associated monastery and administrative buildings. Here is a shot into the interior. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, like his father Leopold before him, was employed by the Archbishop as Kapellmeister (music director) but they did not get along; Mozart quit this steady job and was unceremoniously kicked out of Salzburg; he made his way to Vienna and partially due to his poor money management was unable to succeed financially as a freelance keyboard virtuoso and composer.

This interesting sign above the entrance to a below-grade restaurant built on a medieval foundation gives the year 803 and the crossed keys of St. Peter- it was the Stiftskeller or refectory of Salzburg’s Peterdom abbey, built in 803 AD, and is now the oldest continuously-operating restaurant in Europe.
Our group saw, but did not enter, both Mozart’s birthplace and the building where he later lived as a young married musician, the nunnery where Maria in the *Sound of Music* was a novice until she was let out to govern the von Trapp children, the cathedral cemetery where the von Trapps met at night to make their getaway from the Nazis after winning the festival competition, the Mozarteum (a university music conservatory), etc. I did eat a couple of grilled Käsekrainer (cheese-sausages) in the open-air market. There was music here and there, even in the intense heat and bright sunlight. Wished I could have stayed the night to see an evening performance of *Die Zauberflote*. My travelogue’s parting shot here shows three Russian musicians—an accordionist, treble balalaika player, and contrabass balalaika player—on a cobblestone sidewalk in Salzburg, performing their unique trio-arrangements of Mozart opera overtures. Auf Wiedersehen, Oesterreich!