



MUSIC MOVES

EUROPE:

The Evolution of the
Culture Of Music in
Europe

BY: JIM SANGSVANG



A Creative Works Project
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Center

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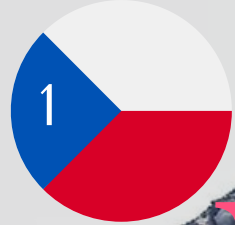
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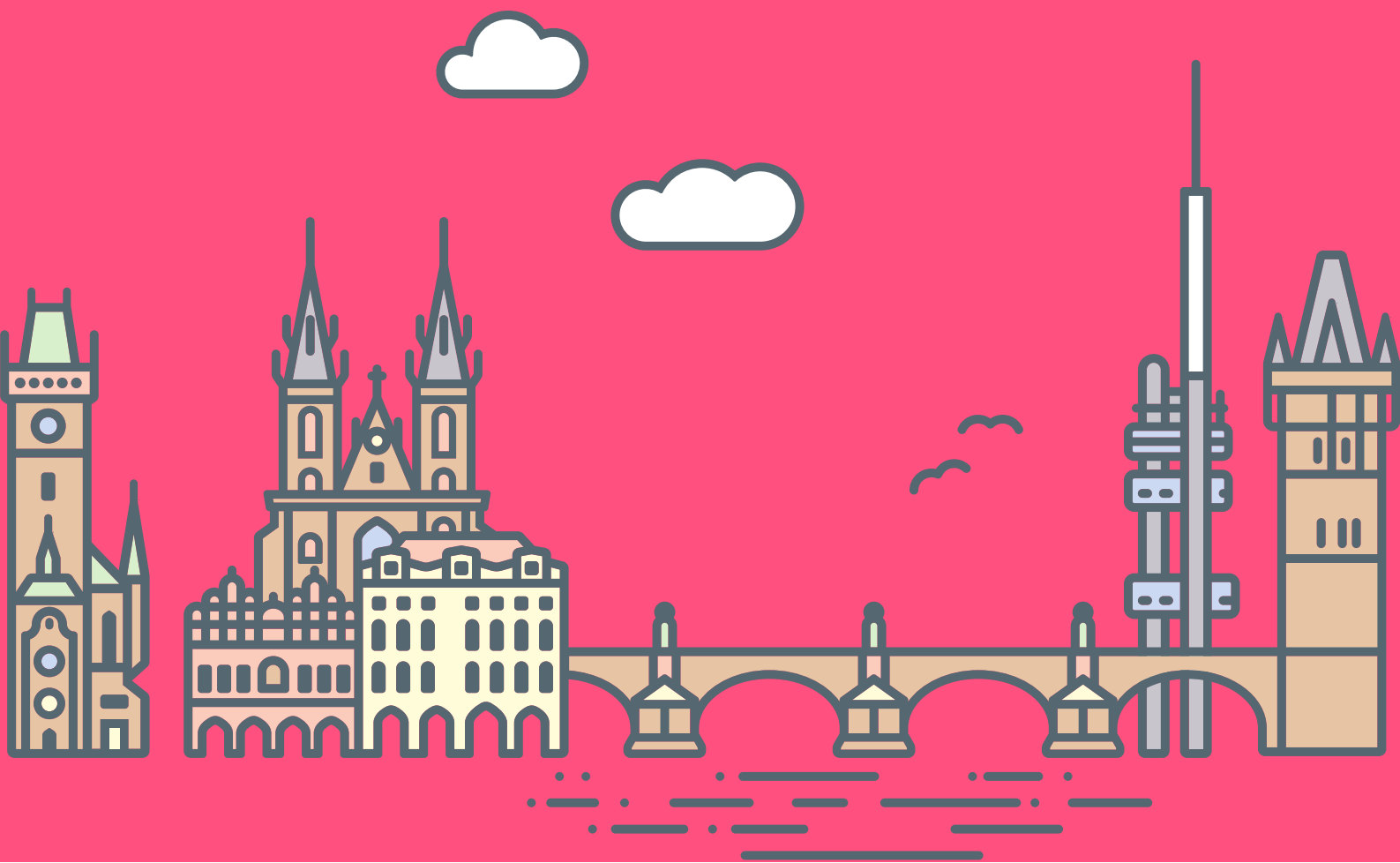
PRAGUE

PRAHA



CITY OF 1000 SPIRES

Prague in a nutshell was probably the most musically versatile city I have experienced. The prominent busking culture did not disappoint, even with the consistent rain during the 4 days I stayed there, and the Catholic influence embedded in the fabric of the city is reflected in all different ways. You can find music being used as a means of business, especially for less accepted forms of commerce, as well as a draw for tourism and a way to bring the city together.



CATHOLICISM

AND THE ORGANS OF PRAGUE

Prague is known as the City of a Hundred Spires, due to the massive amount of cathedral spires that pierce the city's skyline. Their true number, estimated at a whopping 500, serve as a testament to the city's rich Catholic heritage, and with the spires and cathedrals, come two things in the realm of music: the influence of hymnals and traditional music on the Czech culture, and more physically, the sheer number of pipe organs that exist throughout the city. Even the Czech Royal Palace contains a cathedral, which happens to be the biggest in the country and one of the largest in Europe. Czech styles of music are fascinating because they combine traditional catholic hymns with the folk tunes of Bohemia and the polka style.



During my time in Prague, I had the privilege of not only visiting some of these gorgeous cathedrals, including St. Vitus' Cathedral and St. George's Basilica, but I actually got to experience a baroque organ performance firsthand. The performance was in the baroque-era St. Salvator Church, and it featured works by composers such as Schubert, Händel, and Mozart, as well as native Czech composers like Dvořák and Černohorský. Each of the pieces were played on the organ, with a soprano singer and trumpet playing famous soloistic pieces that required organ accompaniment. Now, I grew up playing in my church choir with a pipe organ; however, being in a church completely engineered to complement the organ created a different atmosphere entirely. It was an out of body experience, because you could feel the organ vibrations in your body. I understood exactly why Catholicism was such a heavy musical influence, because in those churches the acoustics are ethereal and inspiring. Prague itself does a very good job of promoting these performances overall, and there is much pride throughout the city for its rich musical culture. The financial and public support alone is extremely enthusiastic, and these ideas continue to be passed down to younger generations.



BUSKING: BLESSING OR BLIGHT?

When I was doing my preliminary research on my destinations for this project, a surprising thing that I stumbled upon was the presence and prominence of busking in Prague. Not only were buskers everywhere, but the makeup of instruments and genres they played were unique and unexpected. For example, one guy I saw was switching between 90s pop and Czech folk songs on the steel drums. Yes, steel drums, like the ones originating in the Caribbean. Hearing a polka played on an accordion (which I experienced) is one thing; Hearing it on a tin whistle and electric bass is another thing entirely. I found musicians everywhere I went: in malls, on streets and bridges, at bus stops and train stations, and each one was playing with their own unique style.



Each of these things created an incredibly comfortable, fun atmosphere, but the prominence of busking also causes some tensions. For instance, busking is a competitive undertaking. Musicians stake out their territory, but when two musicians fight over a space by trying to play over each other, it just creates cacophony. While this isn't an issue in the most touristy places, such as on the Charles bridge, it still creates issues. Another issue that arises is the presence of too much sound. Sometimes, people don't want to constantly hear street performances, and this can lead to dismissiveness and hostility towards the musicians themselves.

Finally, buskers take up space. Some instruments are much larger than others, and when you add in a speaker and an open case, a lot of space can be taken up on busy and/or narrow streets, disrupting the flow of traffic and creating logistical hazards. However, although busking has its downsides, it serves as a staple of the Prager culture, and will not be stopping any time soon.



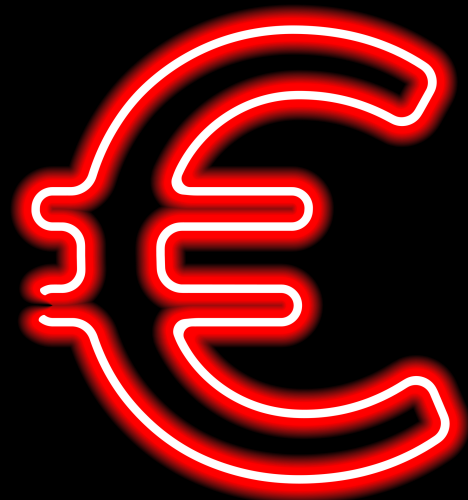
NIGHTLIFE AND THE **RED LIGHT:** TOURISM AND THE MUSIC OF PRAGUE

My first night in this city, I very quickly realized that Prague does not sleep. At ALL. Most businesses do not open until 11 am, and bars and nightclubs don't shut down until the sun begins to rise. This focus on nightlife, combined with a culture of tolerance, creates a unique niche that Prague is famed for: the Red Light district. While not as obvious as Amsterdam, the Prague Red Light district is a very real thing that I experienced firsthand (No solicitation happened - I don't lean that way). There are a suspicious amount of Thai massage places connected to apartments, and suggestive clothing stores that have erotic names and sparse clothing. Many of the British men that I met were quite excited about this aspect of Prague as well, highlighting the fact that it does serve a draw for tourism for the country.





However, a tool that these businesses use to draw in customers to let them know the status of these businesses is music. A blend of house and erotic pop can be heard coming from these businesses, with heavy bass and percussive rhythms being used as a signal. Some escorts would play these types of songs out loud on speakers to let people know they were available as well, and once they had a customer the music would go off and they would disappear into a massage parlor. The Czech government has an interesting outlook on this, choosing to turn the other way and allow these businesses to operate, as long as they are subtle. The additional generation of tourism and revenue creates a unique situation, and the government has just decided to turn it to their advantage. It is just an interesting hallmark of Czech culture, and an unexpected application of music.





WIENNA

WIEN



WIENER
STAATSOPER



Wiener Staatsoper, Opernring 1, 1010 Wien
www.wiener-staatsoper.at

Wiener Staatsoper
CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA / PAGLIACCI

Mascagni / Leoncavallo

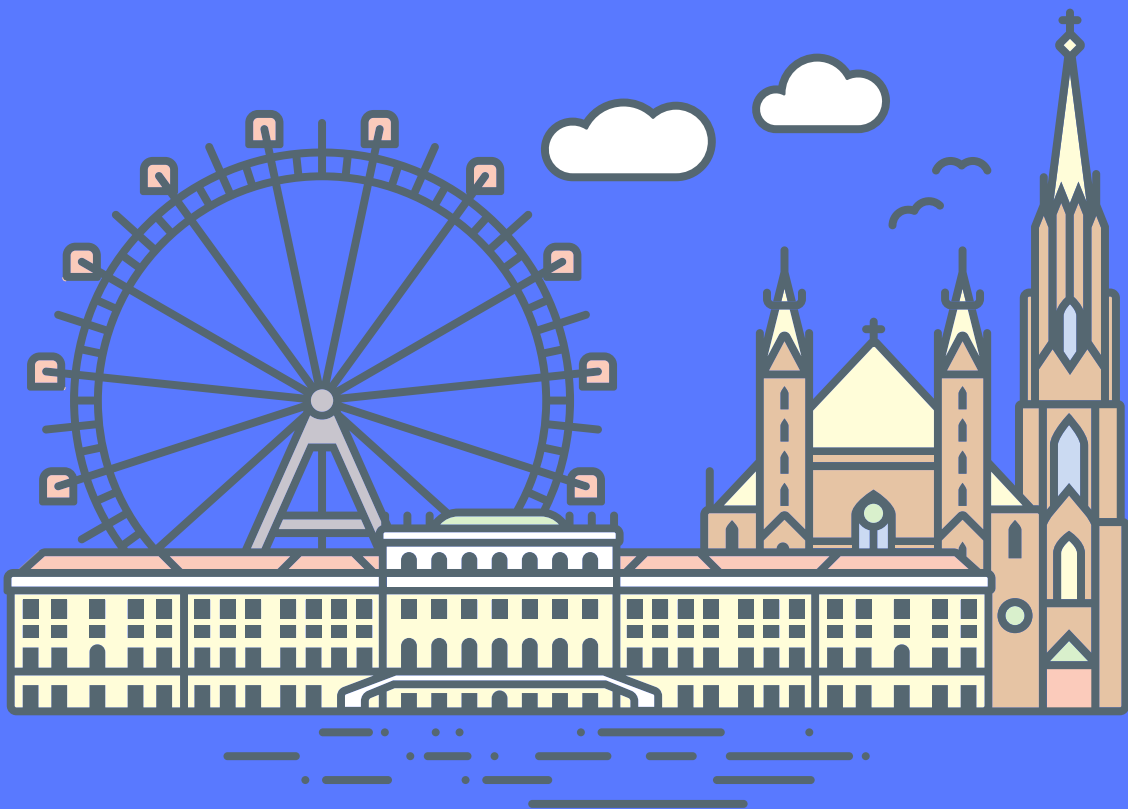
Donnerstag, 15. Juni 2023

19:00 Uhr



The City of Music

When the conversation of which cities have been the most influential in classical music arises, Vienna is always center stage. The combination of famed native composers, numerous daily musical performances and even unique musical sound have all helped to bestow Vienna with the title, 'the Music Capital of the World'. On my visit to the city, I was privileged enough to experience each of these things, not once, but twice, and I will proceed to tell you about each of the different things that made me fall in love with Vienna, as well as how the Viennese continue to inspire their younger generations with their wealth of musical knowledge and culture.



THE PROUD SONS

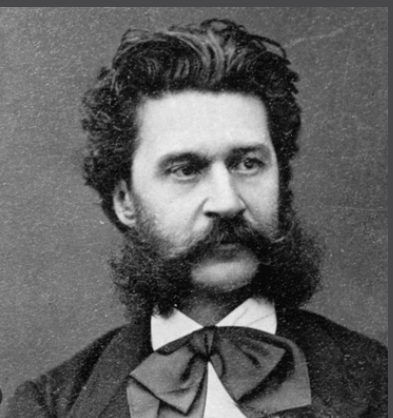
OF VIENNA



Mozart

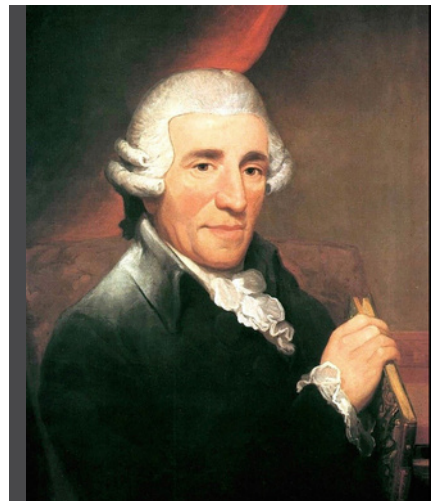


Beethoven



Strauss

Mozart, Strauss, Beethoven, Haydn, Mahler, Schubert, Schoenberg, the list goes on and on. Vienna is famed for its composers, both producing and drawing in some of the greatest classical musicians the world has ever seen. And the Viennese are extremely proud of them. Whereas in New York and Los Angeles we have people impersonating superheroes and Disney characters, Vienna had people impersonating Mozart, Beethoven and Strauss. Entire storefronts were devoted to Mozart and the other composers, selling themed souvenirs and trinkets. Street names and districts were named after these composers as well, and their music could be heard throughout the city in stores, on streets, and even in bathrooms. The composers, although gone for centuries, remain a steady source of inspiration and pride for the Viennese, continuing to support the city financially and touristically.



Haydn



Schoenberg



Mahler

SCHÖNNBRUNN PALACE

A NIGHT OF AUSTRIAN COMPOSERS



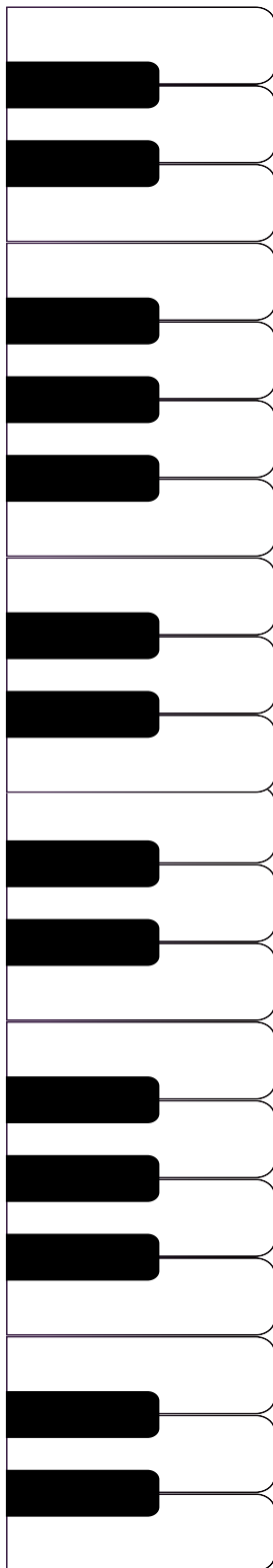
A hallmark of Vienna that I mentioned earlier is the plethora of performances that take place in the city every night. One of these is a nightly concert of Mozart and Strauss at the Schönbrunn Palace, played by the Palace's own Schönbrunn Palace Orchestra. Since I planned on getting affordable standing tickets to the Vienna State Opera, I had the privilege of attending this concert, and the night I went, the concert was actually relocated to the Grand Ballroom. I got to listen to the music of Vienna in the ballroom of one of its most historic landmarks, and it was beautiful.



The house of music:

preserving musical culture and educating the new generation

While I explored the center of Vienna, I stumbled upon a museum called the House of Music. Intrigued, I decided to go in and get a ticket, as that day I just had plans to watch the Vienna State Opera in the evening, and I ended up very glad that I did. The museum, founded to both preserve cultural heritage as well as showcase sound and musical innovation was fascinating, broken down into 3 distinct floors which were each like a different museum themselves. The museum starts before you even get to the exhibit floors, with the stairs leading up to the second floor being a functioning keyboard, each step sounding a different note and ascending chromatically.



The second floor, where the museum officially started, was a collection of artifacts from the Vienna Philharmonic, as well as a detailed account of its history of and that of the opera and ballet. Some of its relics included original scores and annotations made by some of the most prolific conductors of the Philharmonic and its preceding ensembles, such as Mahler and Bernstein. The museum included parts of original works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Strauss among many others. The most fascinating thing, however, was the fact that this museum was where the Vienna Philharmonic was founded, albeit long before it was a museum. Originally a palace, the Haus der Musik was later owned by Otto Nicolai, who then founded the philharmonic in the 1840s.

After this floor, I moved up to the next one, which was called the Sonotopia. This floor was easily the most innovative, as it was all about the physics of sound. The first room was perplexing, as it was a collection of light spots in a room lit dark blue. Each light spot was big enough for one person to stand in, and upon further examination, I found out just what the spots were for. You see, the room was completely silent until you stepped into one of these spaces. Once you step into them, however, you are surrounded by sound; whether it be birds chirping, a crowd cheering at a sports event, a rocket launch, or a variety of other unique sounds. It's a great introduction to sound physics, and definitely serves to draw interest as you enter the floor.

Past that, you can visualize sound waves with light, as well as playing around with frequency and shape of waves. The next big exhibition room contained a set of headphones, and each pair lined up with a different application of sound physics. One allowed you to listen to different types of music and sounds through the hearing abilities of different organisms, such as carp, turtles, or monkeys. Another allows you to hear sounds as a fetus through the progression of pregnancy with a slider, allowing you to understand how hearing develops in the womb. Displays like this are excellent for cultivating interest, especially in younger children, as it allows for tangible examples and engagement with science. This floor specifically was a hallmark of education, and I thoroughly enjoyed each of its many scientific exhibitions

The final floor was perhaps the best for me as a musician, because it was completely devoted to Austria's most prolific composers, each of them having been born or living in Vienna at some point in their lives. Entire rooms were devoted to the most famous of these, and I walked through capsules of the lives of Mozart, Strauss, Beethoven, Schubert, Haydn, and Mahler. Each room was a biography, containing artifacts from both their professional and personal lives. There were interactive displays for each musician as well, providing insight into their compositions, quirks and overall lifestyles. Past that was an homage to all the past conductors and composers of Vienna, and the next after that was a memorial for Jewish composers and those who have been marginalized and subjugated throughout Austrian history.

The final room on this floor was a low-noise room, allowing for your ears to reset (a well needed room because I was beginning to get a headache from the amount of sound I was exposed to). Overall, this museum was an amazing experience and served as a great testament to the culture and pride of Vienna.

STANDING AT THE OPERA:

The most unique idea that truly showcases the love that the Viennese have for music comes in the form of accessibility offered to the Wiener Staatsoper, or the Vienna State Opera. The Wiener Staatsoper offers extremely affordable standing tickets, or stehplätz, in the Balkon, Galerie, and Parterre areas, priced at €13, €16, and €18, respectively. The views and acoustics get better as the price increases, but overall these standing spaces are an extremely affordable option, especially for getting to witness the most esteemed operas in the world. Also, the process to buy these tickets is incredibly fair, as the tickets do not go on sale until 2 hours before the performance starts at 7. This allows anyone who shows up early to the ticketing office a fair shot at seeing the opera, at a time when people are getting off of work.

Creating Affordable Experiences for All



For my experience, I arrived an hour before the tickets went on sale, because the operas I went to see, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, are incredibly famous operas that sell out fast. I had been worried that I would be way too early, and waste time sitting at the corner of the opera house when I could still be exploring Vienna, but I very quickly realized I had made the right choice. As soon as I got to the ticketing area, I saw that a line was already forming, about 20 people or so already there. I lined up behind an older Spanish couple (of whom neither spoke English or German, so I ended up walking them through the entire purchasing process) and patiently waited to see where I would end up sitting. I was lucky enough to snag a Parterre spot, which is on the ground floor, where the actual seats go for at least €150.

Not only did I get the Parterre, but I actually got to stand right in the middle, where I had a perfect view of the full stage. There I stood, the first hour and 15 minutes, watching *Cavalleria Rusticana* and marveling at the prowess of the singers. You see, I had never seen a live opera before, at least formally in a theater, and this exceeded my expectations. Of course, I was watching the world-renowned Vienna Opera, so I was anticipating great things, but not at the caliber with which they performed. It was a completely different league of performance, as these artists not only sang, but danced, acted, and arranged the stage effortlessly. Also, the sheer talent of the orchestra was unimaginable, as the musicians of the Vienna State Opera pit orchestra are those of the Vienna Philharmonic.



I thoroughly enjoyed that first opera, but as soon as intermission hit I went and found a place to sit. The only downside of the standing spots is, well, the standing. Everyone around me did the same thing, with some people even leaving because of discomfort. But even with the podiatric pains, I was ready to stay for the next opera, Pagliacci, which was just as excellent as the one before, and incredibly nostalgic for me since I played a part of Pagliacci in marching band my freshman year of high school. I got to experience one of the pinnacles of human artistry in the cradle of which it was born, for the price of a dinner. This practice allows for anyone to experience the opera themselves, destigmatizing the exclusivity surrounding the fine arts and modernizing the idea of opera, inviting in younger and disadvantaged audiences in the process.



MILAN

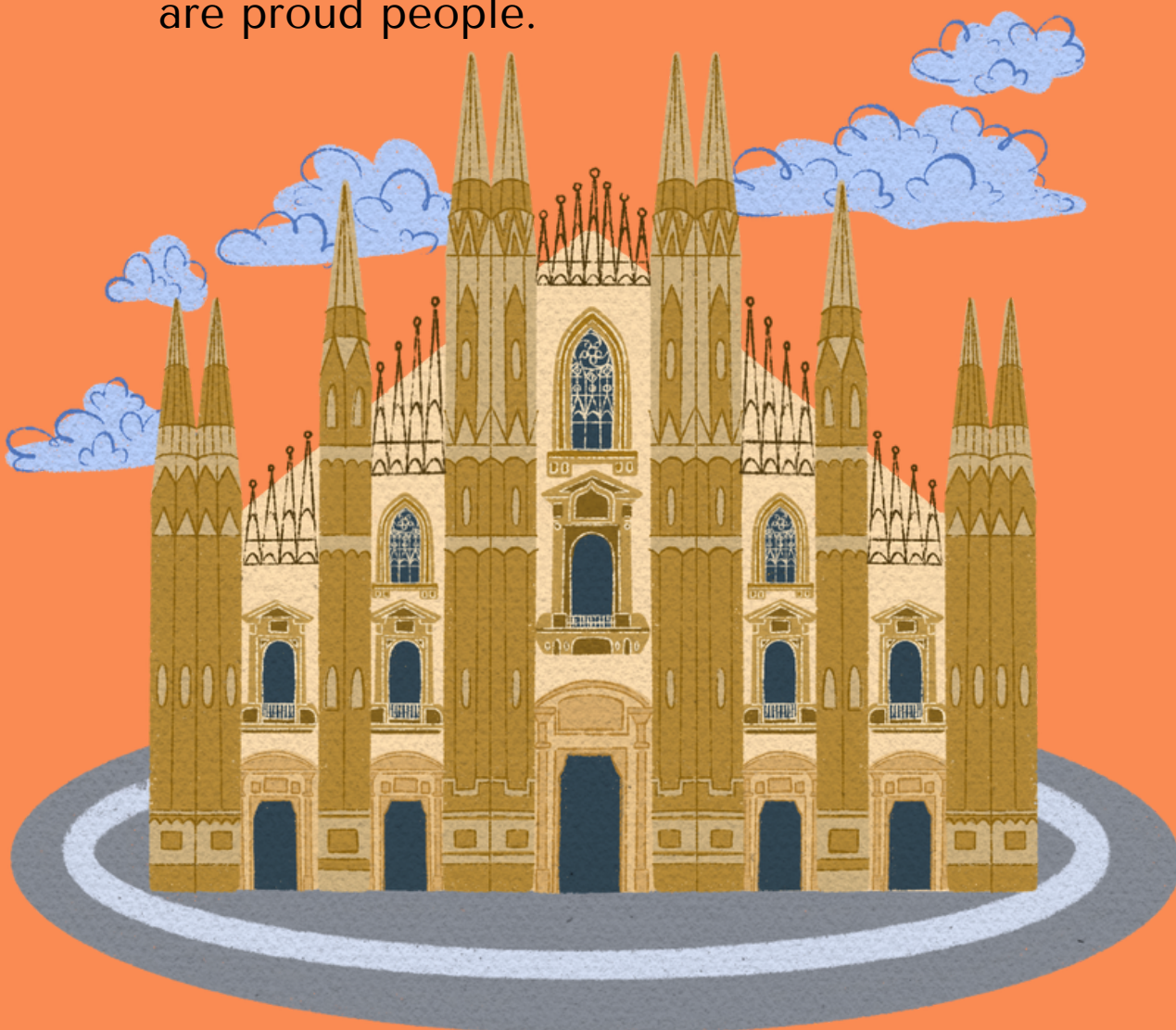
MILANO





Fashion's Favorite City

Although my phone was pickpocketed in Milan, causing me to lose a lot of time and panic, I truly loved this city. I learned that it earns its title as a fashion capital handily, but even more, that the city values their pride immensely. From the cuisine to the architecture to the murals, each and every one were created with painstaking attention to detail, and the Milanese create things that they can be proud of, because they are proud people.



Milan is globally known as a leader in fashion. As a fan of fashion and clothing myself, I wanted to explore the interconnectivity between the two, especially since fashion is so heavily ingrained into Milanese society. I found that there was indeed a link between fashion and the arts, having to do with respecting the craft of the artists. In Milan, the expectation is that you dress to convey your attitude and respect towards something, as there are appropriate things to wear to any number of things.

Now I know you might be thinking, "Isn't it like that everywhere?". While it may seem that way, in Milan it is a much more personal thing. Where an American may dress formally for a symphony orchestra concert because society tells them to, the Milanese dress formally because it represents their respect and excitement for the event itself. They are taught from a very young age to appreciate and pay attention to their appearance and presentation, and when others do not put effort into their presentation, they take it as a slight.

PRESENTATION IS RESPECT

That is why, when I attended the ballet, not only was each and every attendee dressed in their best formal attire, but the audience members themselves were well maintained. Suits were ironed and pressed, dresses hemmed, hair was styled, and posture was impressively uniform. I gained a lot of respect for the Milanese once I figured this out, completely slashing the preconceived notions I had about the people of the city.

They inspired me to pay more attention to my presentation as a result, and I began to understand decorum and societal expectations at large in a new way. By realizing this, I allowed myself to look introspectively and understand the biases that I hold myself, which in turn helped me better understand why societies and populations think and believe the way they do. It inspired me to explore anthropology more, and was the deciding factor for undertaking a dual major in ethnomusicology.

THE MANY FACES OF MILAN: ²²

Racial and Class Diversity in Italy's Proud Fashion Capital - and What it Means for Music:

When you look at statistics, Italy as a country is one of the least ethnically diverse in Europe. Over 90% of the population is ethnically Italian, and society itself adheres to very homogeneous expectations, alienating the sparse non-Italian populations as a result. However, in Milan, this is far from the truth. Milan is a surprisingly diverse city, with massive Filipino, Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, and Chinese populations (I actually ended up in Milan's Chinatown by accident, and had amazing Chinese Italian fusion, but that's a story for later). Especially around Milano Centrale, Milan's main train station that I stayed near, I discovered an unprecedented amount of ethnic and racial diversity.



Similarly, I always associated Milan with a very high standard of living. After all, it is the richest city in Italy and one of the richest in Europe. I was quickly disproven as soon as I began to explore though, because every building was in a different condition, and different sectors of the city looked extremely different from one another. This left me pleasantly surprised all around, and was the beginning of my massive change in understanding of Milanese society.



Now, what does this mean for music? For starters, the urban Italian music that I heard was infused with afrobeats, arabic chords, and eastern scalar patterns. Ethiopian, Moroccan, and Mexican artists were prominent on the radio station and inside of bodegas and restaurants, and many hip hop dancers were busking around the train stations to African-American artists. Even when I attended the ballet at La Scala, racial diversity was present on the stage, which shocked me because ballet itself is heavily dominated by white Europeans in general, but in a country as homogeneous as Italy, I was not expecting to see anything other than ethnically Italian ballerini. Although the diversity in the cast was only two East Asian ballerinas, I was nevertheless delighted to see underrepresented minorities in one of the most esteemed ballet companies in the world

Old Stories, New Perspectives:²⁴

The Youth Ballet of 'Romeo and Juliet' in La Scala

The reason I chose Milan as a destination for my project this summer is solely because of La Scala and its prestigious reputation. La Scala, or the Teatro alla Scala, is one of the oldest and most well known opera and ballet houses in the world. It has premiered countless works, and the world's greatest classically trained artists have graced its stage. However, the thing that drew me most to this theater was their youth programs and educational opportunities. La Scala has an extensive artistic education network, as well as three different ballet levels for those of different ages, those being: the Under 30 ballet, the 30-35 ballet, and the 35+ ballet, with the 35+ ballet being the most esteemed, but each containing some of the best ballerini of their respective generations. This summer, the repertoire of La Scala happened to include Romeo and Juliet, the ballet adaptation of the play by the same name by William Shakespeare.

The way that ballet showings work is that the three age designations switch off performances so the main group is able to rest and they are still able to put on a show every night. The quality of each of these shows is nearly equal, and the prices are uniform across each as well. Because of this, I decided to get tickets to the youth ballet, or the Under 30 group, because of the increased pertinence that this ballet would have to my specific project about youth outreach and diversification of the arts. I decided to purchase expensive tickets, because of said pertinence as well. Upon arriving at La Scala, I learned just how good my seats were, being 10 rows back and near the middle of the theater, because I had a perfect, full view of each and every performer.

The ballet was magnificent. Although this was the youth ballet, they performed as a world class troupe, capturing emotion and impeccable technique with grace in their dance. They truly told the story of Romeo and Juliet, but the way they framed their emotions fit the fabric of society today. For me, though, the even more incredible thing was the diversity of age in the audience. On one side of me a couple in their early to mid thirties was seated, and on the other side, two girls around my age. A few seats down from the couple were two girls in their mid teens, while in front of me there was a young family. I was not expecting the sheer amount of young people present at the ballet. I was fully ready to be seated in a sea of older attendees, but I was quickly proved wrong. Nearly half of the audience appeared to be under 30, reflecting the ballet itself. I was pleasantly surprised by this, just like I was with the rest of Europe because there just seems to be more appreciation for the arts overall. To see a theatre packed with young adults seemed impossible to me, but there were dozens of young people present. And they were attending with diverse groups of people as well.

They didn't just come because their families dragged them there. Some came with a group of friends, or with their partners on dates. Others came by themselves to enjoy a night at the ballet, or possibly to even support their friends in the performance. Whatever their reasons may have been, it still demonstrates that ballet and opera are respected and appreciated in the popular culture, and are continuing to be innovated and reinvented by the artists partaking in them.



BRUSSELS

BRUXELLES





DOUBLE TROUBLE

Brussels may be the most confusing city I have ever been to. Aesthetically, the traditional 'Belgian' style seems to be a clash of traditional Flemish (Dutch) and Walloon (French) styles, seemingly a love child of the cities of Lille and Amsterdam. Lingually, the city is the most diverse I have been to in Europe, with French, Dutch, English and German being present in nearly all businesses together, and this linguistic distinction creates some very interesting outlets for expression.



Ahem, it's Bruxelles – A Victim to French Egoism

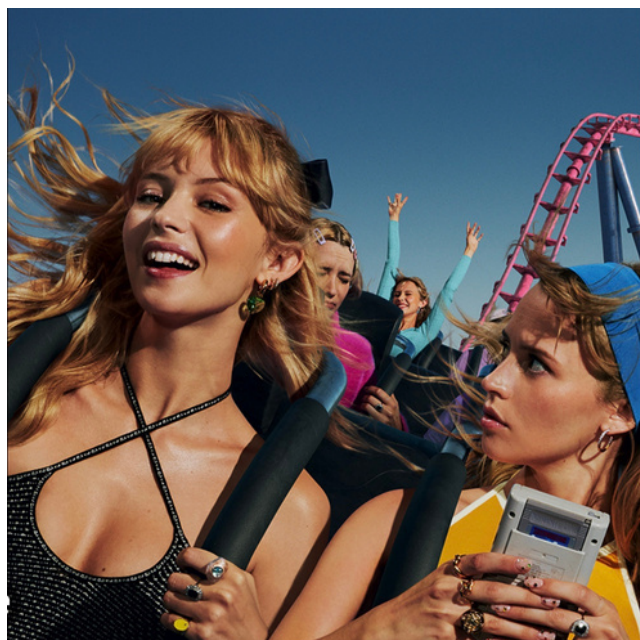


While I may not be an aggressively anti-French guy, I do believe that the hype surrounding the language is a bit too large for one that sounds like you are constantly hawking spit. Although Brussels is linguistically diverse, there is a very large skew in art and cultural products towards the French language. Nearly all the music I heard on the radio was French, if not English. In fact, French speaking Belgians are dominant in the realm of music, with big names like Stromae making huge impacts in domestic and international markets. Museum titles were presented in French first, and Dutch second. Same with the metro and bus stations, announcements of festivals and celebrations, and every other manifestation of government correspondence.

This phenomenon is important in the context of this project because of the rejection of Flemish in the popular culture of Brussels. Although more than half of the population are Flemish and Dutch speaking, less and less Brusselian children are learning Flemish, instead embracing French and English. This interesting interplay between Dutch and French displays a long held bias of how French is a superior language, showing how even in the modern day we hold prejudices and preconceived notions about language in our societies.

Bruxelles, Je T'aime

Angèle and Progressiveness in Belgium



Now I must admit, this article was not one I had imagined when I first conceived this project. However, as Angèle (full name, Angèle van Laeken) is one of the most successful Belgian artists in the world, a vehement activist for women and the LGBTQ+ community (and my most streamed artist on Spotify 3 years in a row) I believe she most certainly belongs in this comprehensive overview of musical culture of Brussels.

For starters, one of her most streamed songs - *Bruxelles, Je T'aime* - is an ode to her home city. To say she is famous in Brussels would be an understatement. She is their pride and joy, appearing on taxis, billboards, in graffiti, and a slew of other things. You can find her not just in the French speaking provinces of Brussels and Wallonia, but also in the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders.



Similarly, she has written songs about the LGBTQ+ experience and what it means for her. As a pansexual woman, she sings about the difficulties of loving women, as well as the restrictions placed on society through gender norms. The song 'Ta Reine' perfectly encompasses a key part of the LGBTQ+ experience, where she sings about falling in love with a woman who would look at her with disgust and disdain if she ever found out about Angele's feelings.

She's shattered countless records in Belgium and the Francophonic world, and she is quickly crossing over into mainstream, with help from collaborations with global powerhouses Dua Lipa and Damso. This past year, she even had an American portion of her tour, selling out multiple venues and performing at both weekends of Coachella 2023, which, as time has told, is incredibly difficult for any non-English or -Spanish speaking artists. She has expanded modern Belgian influence significantly, and represents a politically active and motivated Belgian youth, amplifying the already heavily political culture of Brussels, and pushing for progress and acceptance in the francophone world.

Furthermore, she is always involved with activism and the youth. She puts feminism, anti-racism and LGBTQ+ rights at the forefront of both her music and public image, using her massive platform to show support and bring attention to gender and racial inequalities, and consistently appearing in interviews talking further about how she wishes to affect and change the world. Some of her most streamed songs, including 'Balance Ton Quoi' and 'Tempête' are about gender inequalities present within Belgian society, with the former being about the French 'Me Too' Movement and the latter being a powerful message against domestic violence. In fact, she pledged half of the proceeds from that song to domestic violence shelters.

MIM: The Music Instrument Museum of Brussels

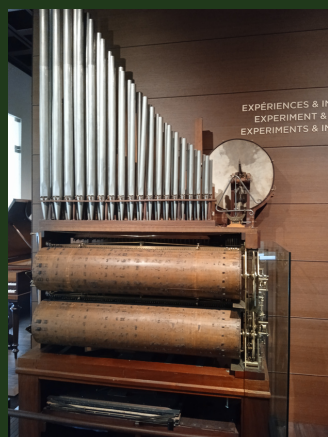
My hidden gem of Brussels had to be the Music Instrument Museum. I had no expectations going in, only that it contained a massive collection of instruments and would be a great resource for the music education aspect of my project. I did not expect to enjoy it as much as I did, however. The museum itself was four floors, with each floor containing a different genre or theme of instruments. The second floor, where the museum started, had dozens of different types of keyboards. Grand pianos, harpsichords, celestinas, organs, and an entire slew of rare and unique keyboard instruments were present, organized by time period and date of invention. They had instruments ranging from the baroque period to the modern day, and with most instruments came a feature where you could literally listen to a sample of music being played on said instruments, in order to know what they sounded like.



Early Accordions, 18th-19th c.



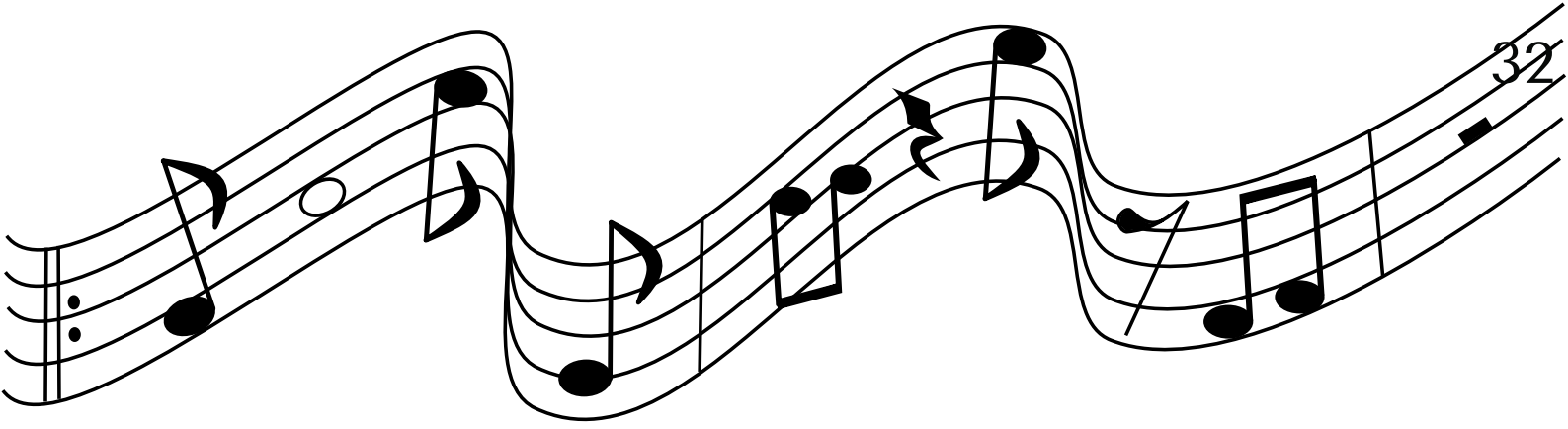
Baroque Harpsichord, 17th c.



Self-Playing Organ, 20th c.



Double Clarinet - Keyboard hybrid, 18th c.



This feature continued on throughout the museum, with the next floor being traditional western instruments and their variations. The entire floor was devoted to instruments that you could find in an orchestra or wind ensemble, as well as each of the instruments that were created to mimic or modify the originals. This is what truly made the museum stand out from others I have been to. Although the museum occupied a niche by solely containing rare musical instruments, the interactive experience that it created as a result was exemplary.

Early Clarinets, 18th c.



Serpent, Late 16th c.





Indonesian Gamelan Ensemble, 18th c.



Various Sitars, 17th-19th c.

Bianqing, early 20th c.



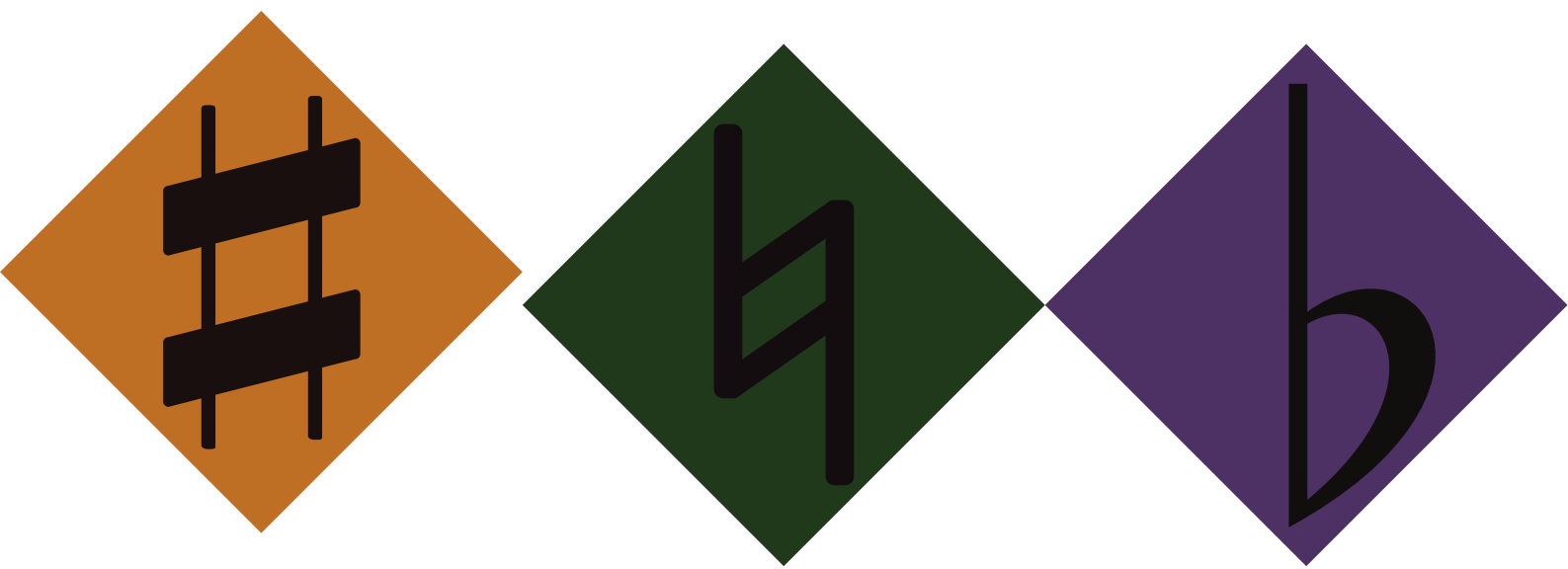
Various Slit Drums, 16th c.

This was only then amplified by the next floor, which was all traditional and contemporary instruments of other world cultures. Each continent was represented by numerous instruments, whether it be by the unique percussive instruments of western Africa, the bagpipes of the Celts, the steel drums of the Caribbean, or the string creations of China and Indonesia. Not only were these instruments present, but yet again, you could hear them being played on, either solo or in the context of a piece of music.

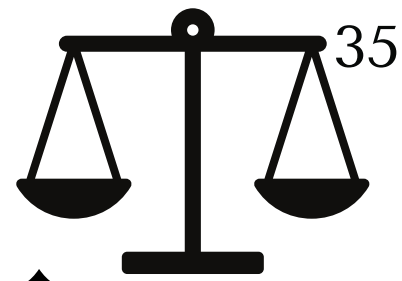




The final floor was all completely automated instruments. In other words, they were self-playing. At this point in my museum trip I needed to head back to get ready for my interview at the EU, so I didn't spend as much time on this floor. However, overall the museum was perfect, and one of the many offerings for music education that Brussels had to offer.



CULTURE AS



GOVERNANCE:

AN INTERVIEW AT THE EU HEADQUARTERS IN BRUSSELS

The main reason that I traveled to Brussels this summer was because of its status as the capital of the EU, and its political importance on the main stage. While Belgium has incredible cultural uniqueness, the role that it plays in global politics is unavoidable, and I wanted to explore how the EU deals with culture and diversity in a system where each country has a distinct and prominent culture, and pride that comes with it. I reached out to a connection of mine, who is a director in the European Commission, and she put me in touch with the entire team that works on Music Moves Europe in the arts and culture department of the EU. I communicated with them throughout my time in Europe and I actually was able to schedule an interview with a member of the team, who wishes to remain anonymous in this piece.



We discussed a great deal about the powers of the European Union, and the mission of the Music Moves Europe (MME) initiative, including the politics surrounding it and the limitations it faces in regards to sovereignty and the countries of the EU. The very first thing we addressed was the power imbalances that exist within the structure of the EU. The EU is split into different institutions much like the US, all falling under one of three branches, those being the legislative, executive and judicial. Music Moves Europe itself was created as a joint experimental venture between the European Parliament (legislative) and the European Commission, where the European Parliament funded the European Commission to create the MME program. Each of these institutions have roles uniquely suited to their respective branches, but not all roles are equal. For example, when dealing with trade, the European Commission has immense legislative power; the way the EU is set up, states have much less sovereignty over their trade as members of the EU.

However, with cultural artifacts, which is the umbrella that MME falls under, power is much more limited because each of the members vehemently defend their creativity and culture for fear of it getting washed out and diminished by other influential nations. Because of these limitations, the role of the Music Moves Europe program is largely preparatory and wide reaching, serving primarily as a conduit for preparatory funding, while other segments of the EU and the Creative Europe program - the umbrella that MME falls under - of the European Commission fill in duties of market regulation, structural dialogue and policy action.



Funding is the primary function of MME, because this segment of the initiative is dedicated to funding various musical projects throughout Europe, specifically focusing on funding live music and European artists. Cities or organizations directly apply for funding, and MME coordinates with them to help their events succeed. In fact, when this program was first launched, it primarily focused on funding upcoming artists and protecting individual musical interests and ventures, and it was so successful that MME was born.

Market regulation comes into play in a very interesting way, because its primary focus is to make sure that European musicians are being paid and making money. A huge factor that I had never even considered is the prominence of streaming platforms and radio play in other countries. In Europe, the EU passed a law that required all artists to be justly compensated if their music or creative products are played anywhere publicly in Europe, even if the musicians themselves are not European. This means that American musicians are protected under European law and are justly paid for the use of their music. Across the EU, countries are required to compensate any musician the full amount for which they are owed, and Creative Europe plays a large role in enforcing this.



In regards to policy action, Creative Europe and agencies it works closely with fund studies to see what issue are most heavily impacting the music ecosystems of Europe. Past studies include the effectiveness of current music exporting strategies of the EU, piloting European electronic music in an effort to penetrate the Mexican market, and mental and muscular health challenges appearing as a result of performing music. Overall, these help the European Parliament to legislate effectively for music.

Finally, the function of structural dialogue is to help maintain rapport and open communication not only between countries and musicians, but also between countries who have different cultural laws. France, for instance, has very strict laws to maintain and promote French music. There is a quota that exists for how much French music must be played, and similar laws exist throughout the EU in order to fight off the encroachment of American and British music.

In fact, the EU's music initiatives each support the common goal of preserving and maintaining European music. Anglophone cultural dominance is a threat to European artists, and each of these functions seek to both protect European artists and also attempt to break into world markets. The existence of Schengen is already a massive benefit to European musicians, as they are able to freely travel around and perform in 27 countries, but now the EU wants to support their own artists on a global stage to rival the US, Britain, and newcomer South Korea.



This interview was the most amazing for me when thinking about my career, because this is the exact field I would love to work in. We talked a great length about politics within the EU, such as the battle for a new official language in the wake of Brexit, and countries complaining about sovereignty and encroachment by other nations. I learned about a rising issue that is being hashed out in the courts regarding streaming and the digital market, where the EU, along with Britain and the US, are fighting with corporations like Apple music and Spotify for remuneration and appropriate compensation. We even discussed the legal battles with abusive ticket pricing and the exploitation of live performances for financial gain.

It truly was the best way for me to finish my project, as in the weeks before I had explored the unique practices and quirks of musical culture in different cities, as well as the expectations and promotion that existed. With this interview, I was able to then explore my International Relations major intricately, exploring how an intragovernmental organization is able to juggle and maintain individual sovereignty while still benefiting all members of the union.

