

The Recorder speaks an International Language

By Deborah Dressell Southard

Recorders speak an international language, which **The Recorder Consort from Hathaway Brown School** in Shaker Heights, OH, learned for themselves during spring break 2013. The ARS awarded the group an **Educational Outreach Grant**, which assisted in plans for a tour to Germany and Austria to perform music in the places where it was composed.

For two years, 13 eighth-grade girls prepared for this tour, building their repertoire, studying the culture and history, and becoming familiar with the German language. The first performance was in Munich, Germany, busking on Marienplatz in the center of town, raising \$100 for UNICEF. Moving on to Salzburg, Austria, we played *Andante, K.331*, in front of Mozart's birth house. Although we had rehearsed and performed this piece for months, it took on new life as we played it on the very cobblestones where Mozart walked as a boy.

We played for children and their families at Salzburg's Orff-Institute, sharing our musical background. For the first time, we realized that we were Americans performing for Austrians.

As we moved on to Vienna, we stopped at the Esterhazy Palace, where Haydn composed *Chorale to St. Antoni*, which happens to be the music for



Hathaway Brown's school *alma mater*. Performing our *alma mater* in the place it was first heard gave a completely new understanding of this piece.

While there, we collaborated with a Musikschule in the Döbling region of Vienna. I had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with **Johanna Valencia**, who is a professional recorder and gamba player as well as the music director of the recorder ensemble at the school. Her students hosted us for three nights in a homestay. We also played together, creating an incredible cultural exchange for our students to connect with each other through recorder, creating their own musical language.

Both groups performed a combined concert, sharing music between the ensembles, playing in full consort, with gamba and percussion. It was a thrill to perform *Spanish Pavan* by Praetorius and *Battle Pavan* by Susato in the resonant space of the Musikschule, which was adjacent to the building where Beethoven composed his *Eroica* symphony. It was the first time my students had ever seen a great bass recorder made of wood! The friendships forged and the music we shared made for lasting memories.

We continued our Austrian tour to Mauthausen, which is a World War II

concentration camp memorial on the outskirts of Linz. It was a sobering experience to tour the pastoral setting of this concentration camp memorial, high on a hill overlooking the Danube River, knowing what atrocities took place there. We performed a beautiful piece of Jewish music, called *Oifn Pripetchik*, which was used in the movie *Schindler's List*. We felt as if we had left a little bit of peace and a breath of healing in this dreadful place.

We learned so much about history, culture and people, through the vehicle of sharing recorder music. It was a powerful experience for all of us to expand the possibilities of our learning, cherish the educational value, and honor the place music has as a universal language. We are so grateful to ARS for their encouragement and assistance.

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