

Editorial

In the last month of the year I direct the interest of PT Readers towards Vienna, Austria. I usually focus this interest in various places of the globe, because of the important scientific events that happen in these places. This time, just before the end of the first decade of the third millennium the reason will be slightly different. But about this in a few moments ...

Vienna is the capital of the Republic of Austria and Austria's primary city, with a population of about 1.7 million, and is cultural, economic, and political centre in Austria. It is the 10th largest city by population in the European Union. Details concerning this wonderful place can be found easily in Wikipedia – Free Encyclopaedia. In 2001, the city centre was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In a 2005 study of 127 world cities, the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked the city first (in a tie with Vancouver, British Columbia) for quality of life. This assessment was mirrored by the Mercer Survey in 2009 and 2010. Analytically, the city was ranked 1st globally for a culture of innovation in 2007 and 2008, and 2nd globally after Boston in 2009 from 256 cities on an analysis of 162 indicators in the Innovation Cities Index on a 3-factor score covering culture, infrastructure and markets. The city rates highly in popular opinion-based journalistic rankings from magazines such as *Monocle*, where it is rated 8th among the "Top 25 Liveable Cities" in 2010. Vienna is a host to many major international organisations such as the United Nations and OPEC. The English name of Vienna probably is thought to be derived from the Celtic word "findu", meaning bright or fair – as in the Irish "fiann" – because evidence of continuous habitation has been found since 500 BC, when the site of Vienna on the Danube River was settled by the Celts. In 15 BC, the Romans fortified the frontier city they called *Vindobona*, to guard the empire against Germanic tribes to the north. In the 13th century, Vienna came under threat from the Mongolian Empire.

Due to the death of their leader Ogedei Khan, the Mongolian armies retreated from the European frontier and did not return. During the Middle Ages, Vienna was home to the Babenberg dynasty; in 1440, it became the resident city of the Habsburg dynasties. It eventually grew to become the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Hungary occupied the city between 1485-1490. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman armies were stopped twice outside Vienna in 1529 in Siege of Vienna and on 12th September 1683 in the Battle of Vienna, when the combined forces of the Polish-Austrian-German, numbering a total of 67,000 soldiers (including 31,000 horse riding) under the command of the Polish King John III Sobieski defeated the Turkish army, led by the Vizier Kara Mustafa. In 1679 the bubonic plague struck the city, killing nearly a third of its population. In 1804, during the Napoleonic wars, Vienna became the capital of the Austrian Empire and continued to play a major role in European and world politics, including hosting the 1814 Congress of Vienna. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Vienna remained the capital of what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1918, after World War I, Vienna became a capital of the First Austrian Republic. In 1938 Germany included Austria (*Anschluss*). On 2nd April 1945, the Soviets launched the Vienna Offensive against the Germans holding the city and besieging it. British and American air raids, and artillery duels between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, crippled infrastructure, such as tram services and water and power distribution, and destroyed or damaged thousands of public and private buildings. Vienna fell two weeks later. Austria was separated from Germany, and Vienna was restored as the republic's capital city. After the war, Vienna was surrounded by the Soviet occupied zone. As in Berlin, Vienna was divided into sectors by the four powers and supervised by an Allied Commission. The four-power control of Vienna lasted until the Austrian State Treaty was signed in 1955. In 1955, the Russians pulled out of Austria. The Russians agreed to relinquish their occupation zones in Eastern Austria, and their sectors in Vienna. In exchange they required a permanent neutrality clause to be enshrined into the new Austrian State Treaty. The State Treaty ensured that modern Austria would align with neither NATO nor the Soviet block. It is considered one of the reasons for Austria's late entry into the European Union. Vienna belongs for many centuries to one of the world centres of science, art and culture. Art and culture have a long tradition in Vienna, including a theatre, an opera, classical music and fine arts. Vienna is home to a number of opera houses, including the Theater an der Wien, the Staatsoper and the Volksoper, the latter being devoted to the typical Viennese operetta. Classical concerts are performed at well-known venues such as the Wiener Konzerthaus and first of all in the Wiener Musikverein, home of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring popular highlights of Viennese music, particularly the works of Johann Strauss. And for that reason I decided to go along with the PT readers to Vienna in Austria.

In a few weeks, as every year for many years, millions of people around the world will hear the music including waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, and marches. The complete duration of the event is around two and a half hours. The New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic takes place each year in the morning of 1st January in Vienna's golden Musikverein, Austria. The concert was first time performed in 1939 with the simple title of "Special Concert" and was conducted by Clemens Krauss. For the first and only time, the concert was not given on New Year's Day, but instead on 31st December of that year. Johann Strauss II was the only composer performed. The first true "New Year's Concert" took place on 1st January 1941, also under the baton of Krauss, who led these "Johann Strauss Concerts" until the end of the 2nd World War in 1941-1945. Even in the worst of times, in January of 1945, the orchestra carried on

this Austrian tradition, repeating the concert on 2nd January as well. The title "New Year's Concert" was used officially for the first time in 1946. Josef Krips conducted the Vienna New Year's concerts in 1946-1947, and after this Clemens Krauss conducted it in 1948-1954, and Willi

Boskovsky, a concertmaster of the orchestra in 1936-1979, conducted the Vienna New Year's concerts from 1955-1979. In 1980, Lorin Maazel became the first non-Austrian conductor of the concert for 1980-1986. The practice of choosing a different star conductor every year began in 1987 after seven appearances in a row by Lorin Maazel who was invited many times in 1994, 1996, 1999, 2005. Members of the orchestra voted to rotate conductors. The first of these rotating stars in 1987 was legendary Herbert von Karajan, an Austrian, then 78 and in frail health. The next invited conductors, including to an elite group belonged: Claudio Abbado (1988, 1991), Carlos Kleiber (1989, 1992), Zubin Mehta (1990, 1995, 1998, 2007), Riccardo Muti (1993, 1997, 2000, 2004), Nikolaus Harnoncourt (2001, 2003), Seiji Ozawa (2002), Mariss Jansons (2006, 2012), Georges Prêtre w 2008 and Daniel Barenboim in 2009. Last Vienna's traditional New 2010 Year's concert, led once again by the dynamic French conductor Georges Prêtre, reached out to an widest audience, broadcasting to 72 countries around the globe. It was broadcast for the first time in Mongolia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Trinidad, and reached an audience of 50 million. "It is an opportunity, via radio and television, to deliver a message of love and peace to the World. For two hours, everyone can forget their worries", the 85-year-old French conductor Georges Prêtre told journalists in 1st January 2010. Of the encores, the first is often a fast polka. The second is Johann Strauss II's waltz "The Blue Danube", whose introduction is interrupted by applause of recognition and a New Year greetings from the musicians to the audience.

That is when the participants of the concert and the million audience of the concert around the world will hear the Vienna Philharmonic Conductor paragraph once again the traditional: "Happy New Year". The music always includes pieces from the Strauss family – Johann Strauss I, Johann Strauss II, Josef Strauss and Eduard Strauss - with occasional additional music from other mostly Austrian composers, including Joseph Hellmesberger, Jr., Joseph Lanner, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Otto Nicolai (the Vienna Philharmonic's founder), Emil von Reznicek, Franz Schubert, Franz von Suppé, and Karl Michael Ziehrer. The last one is Johann Strauss I's "Radetzky March", during which the audience claps along under the conductor's wry direction. The waltz "The Blue Danube" was not performed until 1945, and then as an encore. "The Radetzky March" was first performed in 1946, as an encore. Until 1958 these last two pieces were often but not always given as encores. Since that year their position as twin encores has been inviolable tradition, with two exceptions: in 1967 Willi Boskovsky made "The Blue Danube" part of his concert programme and in 2005 Lorin Maazel concluded the programme with "The Blue Danube", omitting "The Radetzky March" as a mark of respect to the victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

In a few weeks the next 2011 New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonics will be led by Franz Welser-Möst. Attaching oneself to the traditional New Year's wishes that will be delivered by him on the first day of 2011, I wish all PT Authors and PT Readers a Happy New Year and the prosperity and success in professional career in this coming year already today. We deliver to you the next issue of our journal with a large collection of monographs and invited papers, which, as usual, we publish annually in the last issues. I wish, therefore, a nice reading and invite to present their own scientific achievements in our journal.

Gliwice, in November 2010



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