

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Meriel Owen—2013 Churchill Fellow

The STUART and NORMA LESLIE Churchill Fellowship to study diverse repertoire and techniques for harp in orchestra and chamber music (Germany, Austria)

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Signed:

Dated: 2 March, 2014

(Meriel Owen)

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Introduction

In November, 2013 I travelled to Austria and Germany and met with outstanding harpists and musicians who are members of world-class European orchestras and ensembles, active exponents of chamber and new music, and are recognized master teachers. With the intent of gaining an improved understanding of harp technique and new insights regarding the quality and variety of sound production, I observed lessons and rehearsals and attended a number of inspiring concerts. I also had the opportunity to have some private lessons and discuss in detail the finer points of harp technique and explore strategies for effective harp pedagogy.

This invaluable experience simply would not have been possible without the generous support of Mrs Norma Leslie through the Stuart and Norma Leslie Churchill Fellowship for 2013, and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia. I am sincerely grateful for Mrs Leslie's and the Trust's invaluable assistance and encouragement, and particularly their ongoing support of Australian performing artists that is so essential to the continued development of musical life in this country.

Thank you to the many fantastic musicians I met on this trip that were so welcoming and happy to share their lives with generosity and enthusiasm. To my wonderful friends, mentors, colleagues and referees who inspired, encouraged and supported my application for a Churchill Fellowship and made crazy dreams a reality – I am deeply grateful and would be happy to return the favour any time! Thank you also to my amazing family (particularly my Mum!) who kept all things domestic running smoothly in my absence.

Executive Summary

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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Study diverse repertoire and techniques for harp in orchestra and chamber music with leading harpists in Vienna, Linz and Berlin. Explore aspects of harp technique, quality and variety of sound production and strategies for negotiating a range of ensemble situations.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Lessons and discussions with Volker Kempf, Solo Harp, Wiener Symphoniker
- Lessons and discussions with Gabriela Mossyrsch, Solo Harp, Orchester Volksooper Wien
- Attended harp classes at Konservatorium Wien, Privatuniversität der Stadt
- Meetings and rehearsals with Anneleen Lenaerts, Solo Harp, Wiener Philharmoniker
- Meetings with Werner Karlinger, Solo Harp, Bruckner Orchester, Linz
- Meetings with Virginie Tarrete, Harp, Klangforum Wien
- Meeting with Marie-Pierre Langlamet, Solo Harp, Berlin Philharmoniker

MAJOR LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

- This Fellowship has raised my awareness of a number of technical, musical and pedagogical ideas that have served to inform, challenge and reinforce my existing approach as a musician
- Exposure to the French school of harp technique has encouraged me to continue to develop a more relaxed approach to my own playing, with particular attention to a consistently beautiful, even and legato sound. Further exploration of this technique will be of benefit to my students.
- Great orchestral and ensemble musicians have the confidence to allow their own musical integrity to shape and enhance the musical personality of the ensemble as a whole.
- The opportunity to establish and maintain an international network of like-minded colleagues and also to be able to observe them in rehearsal and performance is essential to nurturing and reaffirming my own passion and enthusiasm for ensemble performance.

Program

Vienna (17 November – 23 November, 2013)		
18-21/11	VOLKER KEMPF	Meetings and lessons Attended harp class - Prayner Conservatory
19/11	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> (piano rehearsal)	
19/11	GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH	Volksoper Wien Verdi, <i>Il trovatore</i> (off-stage harp)
23/11	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> (dress rehearsal)
Linz (24 November, 2013)		
24/11	Bruckner Orchester, Linz: Meetings with Werner Karlinger (Soloharfenist), Heidi Reicher (Substitutin), Daniel Linton-France (Kapellmeister und Korreptitor), Daniel Spaw (Korrepetitor mid Dirigiervpflichtung), Henrik Nánási (Dirigent/General Musick Direktor, Komische Oper Berlin) Concert - Bruckner Orchester, Linz Brucknerhaus, Großer Saal Henrik Nánási, Dirigent Ilya Konovalov, Violine Sergej Roldugin, Violoncello Arkadi Zenzipér, Klavier Mozart, Overtüre zur Oper <i>Le nozze di Figaro</i> KV 492 Beethoven, Konzert für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello C-Dur op. 56 Strauss, <i>Ein Heldenleben</i> op. 40	
Vienna (25 November – 1 December, 2013)		
25/11	GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH	Attended harp class - Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität
26/11	VOLKER KEMPF	Wiener Symphoniker rehearsal (Wagner, Meistersinger excerpts)
26/11	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> Regie, Karl Dönch Ausstattung, Toni Businger Dirigent, Nicholas Milton Peter, Besenbinder, Martin Winkler Gertrud, sein Weib, Ursula Pfitzner Hänsel, Dorottya Láng Gretel, Anja-Nina Bahrmann Dir Knusperhexe, Jeffrey Treganza Sandmännchen, Manuela Leonhartsberger Taumännchen, Sera Gösch Lebkuchenkinder, Jungenchor der Volksoper Wien
27/11	GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH	Meeting and lesson. Attended harp class - Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität

28/11	VOLKER KEMPF	Concert - Wiener Symphoniker Großer Musikvereinsaal Philippe Jordan, Dirigent Robert Holl, Bass-baritone Wagner, Prelude to Act 1 <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> ; "Fliedermonolog", Prelude to Act 3; "Wahnmonolog" of Hans Sachs; Final Speech of Hans Sachs Schumann, Symphony No 2 in C major op. 61
29/11	ANNELEEN LENAERTS	Rehearsal - Wiener Philharmoniker Andrís Nelsons, Dirigent Volkhard Steude, Violine Haydn, Symphony No 9 in C major Hob I:90 Mendelssohn, Concerto for violin - e moll Strauss, <i>Also sprach Zarathustra</i> , Op. 30
29/11	LADISLAV PAPP	Wiener Staatsoper (sat in the pit) Britten, <i>Peter Grimes</i> Graeme Jenkins, Dirigent Christine Mielitz, Inszenierung Gottfried Pilz, Ausstattung Roland Giertz, Choreographie Herbert Lippert, Peter Grimes, ein Fischer Gun-Brit Barkmin, Ellen Orford, Witwe, Lehrerin Iain Paterson, Balstrode, Kapitän eines Handelsschiffes im Ruhestand Monika Bohinec, Auntie Simina Ivan, 1. Nichte Hyuna Ko, 2. Nichte Norbert Ernst, Bob Boles Wolfgang Bankl, Swallow Donna Ellen, Mrs Sedley Carlos Osuna, Reverend Horace Adams Gabriel Bermúdez, Ned Keene Andreas Hörl, Hobson
1/12	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> Regie, Karl Dönch Ausstattung, Toni Businger Dirigent, Nicholas Milton Peter, Besenbinder, Morten Frank Larsen Gertrud, sein Weib, Ursula Pfitzner Hänsel, Elvira Soukop Gretel, Andrea Bogner Dir Knusperhexe, Jeffrey Treganza Sandmännchen, Manuela Leonhartsberger Taumännchen, Claudia Goebel Lebkuchenkinder, Jungenchor der Volksoper Wien
Vienna (4 December - 10 December, 2013)		
4/12	VIRGINIE TARRETE	Klangforum Wien rehearsal Meeting with Virginie Tarrete and Andrew Jezek

4/12	ANNELEEN LENAERTS	Wiener Staatsoper (sat in the pit) Puccini, <i>La Bohème</i> Philippe Auguin, Dirigent Franco Zeffirelli, Regie Franco Zeffirelli, Bühnenbild Marcel Escoffier, Kostüme Vittorio Grigolo, Rodolfo Angela Gheorghiu, Mimi Gabriel Bermudez, Marcello Valentina Nafornta, Musetta Tae-Joong Yang, Schunard Dan Paul Dumitrescu, Colline Wolfgang Bankl, Benoit Wolfgang Bankl, Alcindoro Martin Müller, Parpignol Jaroslav Pehal, Sergeant Konrad Huber, Zollwächter Daniel Lökös, Obstverkäufer
5/12	VIRGINIE TARRETE	Klangforum Wien rehearsal Meeting with Andrew Jezek, Emma Black and Kerryn Coulter
6/12	VIRGINIE TARRETE	Klangforum dress rehearsal Wiener Konzerthaus, Mozart-Saal Eine komplexe Unordnung Enno Poppe – Speicher I-VI EA Dirigent: Enno Poppe Meeting with Virginie Tarrete and Enno Poppe (composer and conductor)
6/12	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Lehár, <i>Die lustige Witwe</i> Regie und Bühnenbild, Marco Arturo Marelli Kostüme, Dagmar Niefind Choreographie, Renato Zanella Dirigent, Michael Tomashek Baron Mirko Zeta, Andreas Daum Valencienne, Martina Dorak Hanna Glawari, Caroline Melzer Graf Danilo Danilowitsch, Daniel Schmutzhard Camille de Rosillon, Mehrzad Montazeri Vicomte Cascada, Thomas Zisterer Rauol de St. Brioche, David Stika Bogdanowitsch, Joachim Moser Sylviane, Manuela Leonhartsberger Kromow, Georg Wacks Olga, Susanne Litschauer Pritschitsche, Heinz Fitzka Praskowia, Sulie Girardi Njeus, Robert Meyer Tanzolisten, Una Zubović Tanzolisten, Gleb Shilov

8/12	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> Regie, Karl Dönch Ausstattung, Toni Businger Dirigent, Nicholas Milton Peter, Besenbinder, Martin Winkler Gertrud, sein Weib, Ulrike Steinsky Hänsel, Dorottya Láng Gretel, Anja-Nina Bahrmann Dir Knusperhexe, Jeffrey Treganza Sandmännchen, Manuela Leonhartsberger Taumännchen, Sera Gösch Lebkuchenkinder, Jungenchor der Volksoper Wien
9/12	MARIAGRAZIA PISTAN-ZAND	Volksoper Wien Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> Regie, Karl Dönch Ausstattung, Toni Businger Dirigent, Nicholas Milton Peter, Besenbinder, Morten Frank Larsen Gertrud, sein Weib, Ursula Pfitzner Hänsel, Elvira Soukop Gretel, Andrea Bogner Dir Knusperhexe, Jeffrey Treganza Sandmännchen, Claudia Goebel Taumännchen, Sera Gösch Lebkuchenkinder, Jungenchor der Volksoper Wien
	GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH	Harp class - Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität Workshop on posture for harpists given by Mel Stein (Konservatorium Wien)
10/12	ANNELEEN LENAERTS	Rehearsal – Wiener Philharmoniker Musikverein Sir Simon Rattle, Dirigent Magdalena Kožená, Mezzo Soprano Michael Schade, Tenor Baritone, Simon Keenlyside Janáček, Two Scenes from the Opera, “The Cunning Little Vixen” Mahler, <i>Das Lied von der Erde</i>
Linz (11 December, 2013)		
11/12	WERNER KARLINGER	Meeting
	HEIDI REICHER	Observed rehearsal Strauss, <i>Die Fledermaus</i>
Vienna (12 December – 15 December, 2013)		
12/12	Concert - Music for tenor, harp and organ Reformierte Stadtkirche, Dorotheergasse 16 Alexander Kaimbacher, tenor Volker Kempf, harp Matthias Krampe, organ	

15/12	ANNELEEN LENAERTS	Concert – Wiener Philharmoniker Musikverein Sir Simon Rattle, Dirigent Magdalena Kožená, Mezzo Soprano Michael Schade, Tenor Baritone, Simon Keenlyside Janáček, Two Scenes from the Opera, “The Cunning Little Vixen” Mahler, <i>Das Lied von der Erde</i>
	GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH	Volksoper Wien (sat in the pit) Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> Regie, Karl Dönch Ausstattung, Toni Businger Dirigent, Elisabeth Attl Peter, Besenbinder, Sebastian Holecek Gertrud, sein Weib, Ulrike Steinsky Hänsel, Elvira Soukop Gretel, Andrea Bogner Die Knusperhexe, Jeffrey Treganza Sandmännchen, Sera Gösch Lebkuchenkinder, Jugendchor der Volksoper Wien
	SILVIA RADOBERSKY ANDRES OROZCO- ESTRADA	Musikverein Wien Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Dirigent Nikolaï Lugansky, Klavier Mozart, Konzert für Klavier und Orchester d Moll, KV466 Mahler, Symphony No 5
Berlin (16 December-22 December, 2014)		
18/12	CHRISTINE WÄTZIG	Komische Oper <i>Strauss, Die Fledermaus</i> Musikalische Leitung, Nicholas Milton Inszenierung, Andreas Homoki Bühnenbild und Kostüme, Wolfgang Gussmann Dramaturgie, Werner Hintze Chöre, David Cavelius Licht, Franck Evin Gabriel von Eisenstein, Tom Erik Lie Rosalinde, Nichole Chevalier Adele, Katharina Göres Frank, Carsten Sabrowski Prinz Orlofsky, Christiane Oertel Alfred, Christoph Späth Dr Falke, Günter Papendell Dr Blind, Peter Renz Frosch, Uwe Schönbeck Ida, Katarina Morfa

19/12	MARIE PIERRE LANGLAMET	Attended rehearsal Berliner Philharmoniker Andris Nelsons, Dirigent Barbara Hannigan, Sopran Pēteris Vasks, Cantabile für Streicher Hans Abrahamsen, Let me tell you für Sopran und Orchester Johannes Brahms, Symphonie Nr 4 e-Moll Op 98
		Concert - Konzerthaus Berlin Konzerthausorchester Berlin Nicholas Milton, Dirigent Martin Helmchen, Klavier Brahms, Konzert für Klavier und Orchester Nr 2 B-Dur op 83 Shostakowitsch, Sinfonie Nr 9 Es-Dur op 70
20/12	MARIE PIERRE LANGLAMET	Concert - Berliner Philharmoniker Philharmonie Andris Nelsons, Dirigent Barbara Hannigan, Sopran Pēteris Vasks, Cantabile für Streicher Hans Abrahamsen, Let me tell you für Sopran und Orchester Johannes Brahms, Symphonie Nr 4 e-Moll Op 98
21/12	MARIE PIERRE LANGLAMET	Concert – Berliner Philharmoniker Philharmonie “Late Night” Katia und Marielle Labèque, Klavier Andreas Ottensamer, Klarinette Raphaël Seguinier, Schlagzeug Gonzalo Grau, Schlagzeug Sir Simon Rattle, Dirigent Igor Strawinsky, Ebony Concerto Oswaldo Golijov/Gonzalo Grau, Nazareno Leonard Bernstein, Prelude, Fugue and Riffs

Main Body

VOLKER KEMPF

I was really excited to have the opportunity to work with Volker Kempf, Solo Harpist with the Wiener Symphoniker. Having heard him perform with the Symphoniker in a concert the previous year, I was extremely impressed with his sound and approach to orchestral playing. He has a warm, even tone that both projects clearly, and also melds effectively within the orchestral soundscape when required, rather than functioning purely as a decorative addition to the texture. Additionally, Mr Kempf has a lively interest in music for harp and other instruments and is eager to demonstrate the versatility of the instrument. During my time in Vienna I was able to have some lessons with Mr Kempf, discuss harp technique and repertoire at length, attend his harp class for students of the Prayner Conservatory, observe him in rehearsals and concerts with the Wiener Symphoniker and attend a recital of music for tenor, harp and organ.

Mr Kempf's approach to playing and teaching the harp is grounded in the French method – probably the more commonly utilized technique in Europe. In Australia both the Salzedo method and French method are commonly taught. As a student I had been introduced to both schools, but over the years have had more experience with the Salzedo method. The French method of playing the harp is fundamental to Mr Kempf's sound production, so lessons with him concentrated on an introduction to his approach to this technique, which is quite different in terms of hand and arm position from the Salzedo method.

Fundamental to the Salzedo school is the belief that movement and sound are related, with the result that a Salzedo harpist uses a series of expressive gestures to create and enhance particular sounds and effects and to assist with projection. This style of playing aims for a big, clean sound which is both elegant and polished. Additionally there is a great emphasis on physical and mental relaxation.

The French method also relies heavily on relaxation originating in the hand and arm position – slightly lower elbows, flexible wrists and the right hand

resting lightly on the soundboard. Gesture is less dramatically employed and melodic playing with a full, warm sound is emphasized.

Mr Kempf uses *Méthode Complète de Harpe* (1946) by Henriette Renie, a harp virtuoso, composer and master teacher. This method is one of the earliest comprehensive collections of technical exercises and studies for the harp. We worked progressively through the early exercises emphasizing hand and finger position. The production of sound as described by Mr Kempf is controlled by “impulse” when plucking the string, followed immediately by relaxing the finger. In general the hands are always close to the strings, the same movements and position being utilized by both the right and left hands. The arms, elbows and shoulders are relaxed and “heavy.” When working on this method with students, Mr Kempf emphasizes slow, patient practice, always listening for quality of sound – warmth rather than an overly loud, clear, percussive sound. Absolute relaxation is absolutely crucial and also extremely difficult to maintain!

Observing the Wiener Symphoniker rehearsal of excerpts from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was an opportunity to discuss approaches for creating the effect of a wire-strung chromatic lute-harp, commissioned by Wagner to accompany Beckmesser’s serenade. It became common practice for harpists in opera orchestras to thread paper or cloth strips through the harp strings in an attempt to achieve the desired effect. However, on this occasion Mr Kempf adopted a particularly light and slightly brittle technique to create a lute-like accompaniment figure.

Mr Kempf’s has a great commitment to exploring the versatility of the harp, particularly in the area of chamber music. His interests are varied ranging from music for the historical lever harp c.1800 (including combinations such as soprano and harp, baroque trio of violin, cello, harp, Viennese folk music for tenor, soprano, violin and harp) through to music for modern harp (tenor/harp; flute/viola/harp, string quartet/harp, etc.). Out of necessity, much of the repertoire has been arranged for harp by Mr Kempf. I attended a recital of music for tenor (Alexander Kaimbacher), harp (Volker Kempf) and organ (Matthias Krampe). This program included original works such as Benjamin Britten’s *A Birthday Hansel*, Op 92 (tenor and harp) and Richard Dünser’s *Geh unter, schöne Sonne* (tenor, harp, organ). Challenges for a program such as this includes the

necessity to explore the full extent of the harp's dynamic range, as well as employing huge variety in articulation in order to best support the singer in terms of phrasing and diction. An imaginative approach is needed with full understanding of, and commitment to, the text to ensure a musically satisfying performance. Additionally, great ensemble skills are necessary when dealing with the combination of voice, harp and organ. Other musical selections included in the program were arrangements of Mozart's beautiful song, *Abendempfindung* and Wagner's "Lied an den Abendstern" from *Tannhäuser*.

GABRIELA MOSSYRSCH

Gabriela Mossyrsch was a revelation – akin to meeting a musical soul mate whose approach to the harp is similar to my own aspirations. She has tremendous energy and enthusiasm and quite simply loves what she does without question. Her approach to performing and teaching is one of complete openness to new possibilities. The opportunity to observe her working with her harp class at the Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität was without question one of the best lessons in effective music pedagogy that I have encountered. She injects a sense of urgency into her students, coupled with unquestioning belief in their ability to play well. As a result she appears to have a studio of happy and dedicated students. I believe that a sense of confidence and well-being in a student has a positive impact on their technique, enabling a relaxed approach to playing an otherwise unwieldy and sometimes difficult instrument.

Ms Mossyrsch was educated in the French method of playing the harp and bases her pedagogy on this approach. She pays great attention to the way the fingers come into contact with the string, referring to the necessity to snap the fingers past the string. One of the teaching techniques that I found particular interesting is the way Ms Mossyrsch encourages a student to "play" a particular passage or sequence of fingers directly on the soundboard, tapping the fingers loosely to discover the sensation of dropping the fingers in a relaxed fashion. Ultimately the more relaxed the hand and fingers, the more resonant the sound will be, whether this be tapping the soundboard or the impulse to move the finger past the harp string and then immediately relaxing. This exercise was used both to assist the student to relax and play "into" the string and also to

assist with learning more complex passages, something like the art of practicing away from the instrument to aid learning the notes, fingering and finger coordination.

Also impressive is Ms Mossyrsch's insistence on rhythmic vitality and accuracy at all levels of musical development. To this end she encourages her students to articulate a complex rhythmic passage or articulation either verbally or by tapping on the soundboard. This technique also proves useful when learning how to control or shape a phrase. In general she seems to subscribe to a belief that if you can enunciate either verbally or artificially how a piece of music should sound within a given time frame (ie the rhythm, shape of the phrase, etc) then it follows that if your technique is in place, you will be able to play the music with more control and accuracy. Essentially, giving thought to the specifics of how you wish to play a musical passage really helps, as opposed to learning the notes and hoping for the best. Listening with honesty to the sound of what you are playing is essential. Often, as harpists, we are so concerned with the physical logistics of playing a complex instrument that we forget to listen.

As a member of Trio Partout and also performing regularly with ensembles such as Klangforum Wien and Ensemble Modern Frankfurt, Ms Mossyrsch has developed an extensive range of harp music, both solo and ensemble. She is particularly interested in exploring music by lesser known composers as well as contemporary repertoire. During one of the harp classes she coached Carter's Triology for Oboe and Harp. During informative and highly entertaining meetings we discussed her upcoming project – a performance of Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's Cathedrale 2 for 2, 3, 4, 8 or 16 harps. Music for further exploration includes Amr Okba's Utopia for solo harp (2012) and Villanelle for violin and harp by Garrett Byrnes.

ANNELEEN LENAERTS

Over the course of two weeks I gained insight into life as a harpist with the Wiener Philharmoniker. This orchestra works incredibly hard, both as an orchestra in its own right and an opera orchestra for the Wiener Staatsoper. In any given week, the harpist may be required to perform at least one orchestral program, sometimes two different programs, and up to four different operas or

ballets. Anneleen Lenaerts has been one of two solo harpists with the Wiener Philharmoniker for two years and says she has learned a lot of repertoire during that time. She is a young musician with a natural affinity for ensemble playing, often describing the necessity to “play like a chamber musician,” particularly in the Staatsoper pit. I was able to sit next to her in the pit for a performance of Puccini’s *La Bohème*, an opera I am very familiar with. While, of course, the orchestra has played this opera many times, this was the first performance for this particular season, with a new conductor and cast, and with no rehearsal. The orchestra demonstrated impressive cohesion as an ensemble as well as realizing the beauty of Puccini’s score. Of course they worked with the conductor, who brought his own interpretation to the performance, but first and foremost, as an ensemble they supported the singers. Ms Lenaerts spoke of the necessity of always listening to the singers and adjusting accordingly where the harp worked closely with the vocal line. There are many parts in *La Bohème* where the harp part serves to anchor the other instrumental parts and experienced orchestral players will be listening to the harp part and how it interacts with the voices. So the harp becomes very important in maintaining the ensemble, particularly where the conductor is unknown. Essentially observing this performance from the pit was a great lesson in how important it is for an orchestra to work together firstly, and then with the conductor. Additionally, instrumentalists need to present a convincing musical interpretation of their own part, rather than giving all interpretive responsibility to the conductor.

Having the opportunity to sit next to the harpist in the pit of the Staatsoper was fantastic in that I had a great view of the stage, could see the conductor, the harpist and follow the score. Ms Leanarts approach to the overall texture of *La Bohème* was very lush and romantic – huge chords, fantastic legato, spacious phrases. Her approach to phrasing in general was focused on melody and line. This was particularly evident in the potentially treacherous solo at the beginning of Act 3, where she played the top note of the chords as a legato melody in the right hand, and took the remaining notes of each chord in the left hand, emulating where possible the off-stage chorus.

La Bohème was just one night out for Ms Leanarts. During the course of the week of performances for the Wiener Staatsoper she also played Tchaikovsky's *Der Nussknacker* (all those great harp cadenzas!) and Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*. During the days she was often rehearsing with the Wiener Philharmoniker. Programs included Strauss, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde* and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Ms Leanarts also maintains a busy solo and chamber music career both in Europe and the United States. Detailed and careful preparation is needed for all the orchestral, opera and ballet scores she presents. Typically there is not much rehearsal time and the expectation is that she will be performance ready from the first rehearsal. Much of the repertoire is new for Ms Leanarts, who took up the position of solo harp with the Philharmoniker with relatively little orchestral experience.

VIRGINIE TARRETE

Klangforum Wien – described in their website biography as “a force to improve the world,” is an ensemble of 24 musicians from 10 different countries. Their credo is “to restore to their art something that seems to have been lost – gradually, almost inadvertently – during the course of the 20th century, which gives their music a place in the present and in the midst of the community for which it was written and for whom it is crying out to be heard.” To this end they have premiered hundreds of new works and developed strong connections with a range of composers, conductors, soloists, directors and programmers.

Virginie Tarrete studied with, amongst others, Marie-Claire Jamet and Ursula Holliger. She is a devotee of new music, performing with Ensemble l'itinéraire, MusikFabrik Köln, Ensemble Modern Frankfurt, in addition to Klangforum Wien. Her playing is incredibly clean, precise and understated. Her approach tends towards blending in with the larger ensemble, shaping her sound and colour to melt into the surrounding acoustic texture. I met with a group of musicians – members of Klangforum and other freelancers based in Vienna, who reminded me that in general orchestral and often chamber music sound in Europe focuses very much on a warm blend of textures. This had certainly become apparent to me in the rehearsals and concerts I had attended.

I had the opportunity to observe a series of rehearsals with the composer/conductor Enno Poppe. The scoring for the work, *Speicher*, (Memory) a substantial (80 minute) multi-movement work for large ensemble which occupied the entire program, included strings (2221), accordion, harp, piano, 2 flutes/2 alto flutes/2 bass flutes, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon/contrabassoon, trumpet, french horn, trombone, percussion and marimba. Poppe conducted the rehearsal in a mixture of German, French and English with tremendous attention to dynamics, articulation, note lengths, matching sound between instruments (ie strings and accordion). This is a dramatic and rhythmically dynamic piece with a variety of textures, sounds and sophisticated rhythmic patterns and is described by Poppe as a “complex network of variations and repetitions.” In addition to being an accomplished composer Poppe proved to be an incredibly precise and idiosyncratic conductor who directed and maintained the multi-faceted, rhythmically vibrant activities within an incredibly complex, gargantuan work. Klangforum provided an eminently satisfying and impressively focused performance that was an absolutely arresting *tour de force*.

WERNER KARLINGER

I visited Linz twice during my trip. The first occasion was to attend a concert given by the Bruckner Orchester Linz in their new concert hall. Like many European orchestras, the Bruckner Orchester has a venerable history, with this 110-member orchestra spanning 200 years of tradition. As the name would suggest, the orchestra has a reputation, amongst other things, for performances of the music of Anton Bruckner. Today’s program included Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben* and I was interested to hear a somewhat speedy interpretation under the baton of the Dirigent/General Musik Direktor, Komische Oper, Berlin – Henrik Nánási – and felt extreme sympathy for the two harpists. On this visit I met Werner Karlinger (solo harp) and Heidi Reicher (substitute harp) and was unexpectedly introduced to a line of concert pedal harps made by an Italian maker completely unknown to me. Unfortunately the highly prized Liuteria Artigiana harps (made by Lucia Bellani – formerly of Salvi Harps) are no longer in production, so will quickly become something of a collector’s item. They are

indeed impressive instruments and it was interesting to discover how little I really know about European harp makers and to realize how much Lyon & Healy (USA) and Salvi (Italy) dominate the Australian harp market.

On my second visit to Linz I spent the day with Werner Karlinger, who is an impressive and highly entertaining character and a welcome addition to the international harp scene. A native of Linz he studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and has been solo harp of the Bruckner Orchester Linz since 1989. His wry sense of humour and enthusiasm for the harp translates into his playing and also his devotion to creatively and fearlessly arranging music for harps in a variety of combinations. As a member of the long-standing Duo Fresacher (harp and clarinet) Mr Karlinger has presented many highly imaginative programs of works both originally for this unusual combination, as well as music that he has effectively arranged. Additionally he has many arrangements of works for harp duo and combinations such as 2 flutes and 2 harps, or 2 harps and organ. While creative, Mr Karlinger is completely at home with some of the great harpist/composers such as Felix Godfroid, Elias Parish-Alvars and John Thomas. As a huge fan of 19th century salon music, Mr Karlinger was able to remind me of the wealth of repertoire for solo and duo harp by these composers. Works discussed during our meeting included:

Godefroid, Carnaval de Venise
Godefroid, 2 Mosaïques pour la harpe sur Norma de Bellini
Godefroid, Three Characteristic Studies for the Harp: La Melancholie; Le Rêve; La Danse de Sylphes
Godefroid, Grand Fantasia Originale for two harps or harp and piano
Pleyel, Clarinet Concerto (arranged for clarinet and harp)
Bartok, Rumanian Dances (arranged for clarinet and harp)
Weber, Concertino in E flat (arranged for clarinet and harp)
John Thomas, Lucia for 2 harps
Parish-Alvars, Linda di Chamounix (duet) for harp and piano (or two harps)
Sergiu Natra, Prayer for harp (1970)

Further investigation led me to the following website resources devoted to the publication of somewhat obscure or otherwise lost harp repertoire:

<http://www.morleyharps.co.uk/harp-resources/free-harp-sheet-music/>
www.harpiana.com
www.harpebudin.com/Store/

Our visit concluded with a trip to St Florian's Collegiate Basilica, an exquisite church containing, among others, the Bruckner Organ. Quite by chance someone was practicing so I actually managed to hear the instrument in all its glory.

MARIE-PIERRE LANGLAMET

Marie-Pierre Langlamet has held the position of principal harpist with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra since 1993. A major prize-winner in various competitions, including first prize at the 1992 Israel Harp Competition, she has an active career as a soloist and chamber musician and is a highly respected teacher. At Ms Langlamet's invitation I was able to attend a rehearsal and two concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic. The rehearsal and first concert was conducted by Andris Nelsons. Of particular interest on the program was the premiere of Hans Abrahamsen's orchestral song cycle, "Let me tell you" – based on the novella by Paul Griffiths and dedicated to Barbara Hannigan, who was the soprano soloist for this performance. Abrahamsen's evocative work reveals the character of Ophelia from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which Griffiths explores from the point of view of a character allowed to develop out of the collective experience of over half a millennium. Barbara Hannigan explains, Ophelia has had "all this time to think about what happened: if she really did go mad; what effect Hamlet had on her; why she was so fragile. Of course what we receive is the perspective of history and time; of women in history and time." ("Soprano of our time: Barbara Hannigan," *Gramophone*). The orchestration is sparse and ethereal, with moments of brooding brass. The soprano line juxtaposes highly complex compound meters with floating high-pitched textures evoking absolute stillness.

In rehearsal Andris Nelsons spent a lot of time working on fine details such as exact micro-tones in the double basses, and fabulous pianissimo colours in the strings. He was concerned with achieving the perfect balance between instruments to best realize the composer's intentions regarding texture. Abrahamsen was in attendance and much time was devoted to consultation and experimenting to achieve just the right sound or effect. Much of the harp part involved isolated harmonics that needed to blend as part of the larger texture with the celeste. More rhythmic sections utilized dry pizzicato sounds that were

embedded within the strings and percussion (mostly wooden mallet instruments). Where required Ms Langlamet worked to match the percussion in timbre, attack and also choreography – the movements she used to strike the strings. There was some discussion around the use of glissandi, both in the harp and the celeste. The composer seemed to be less interested in a more traditional glissando sound, looking for the more brittle, subtler sound of fingernails on the keys (for the celeste) or strings (harp). Other interesting effects required of the orchestra included the use of paper rubbed on the skin of the bass drum – creating an incredibly still, rather spooky effect that permeated the final movement of this work.

The second concert I attended was a Philharmonie “Late Night” (beginning at 10:30pm) conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. This program included works by Igor Stravinsky, Oswaldo Golijov/Gonzalo Grau and Leonard Bernstein. Harp was used in Stravinsky’s *Ebony Concerto* for Solo Clarinet and Jazz Ensemble. Written in 1945 after he had acquired US citizenship, Stravinsky described this piece as his contribution to the blues. On first hearing, the opening movement of the *Ebony Concerto* in particular seems to evoke ragtime more than any other genre. The harp part is made up of moving quavers and repeated chords, played in a dry, exacting, rhythmic fashion and is situated within the overall ensemble, presenting a distinctive colour within the overall blend without dominating.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The opportunity to spend an extended period of time in Vienna and Berlin enabled me to meet a number of harpists and other musicians associated with producing music in groups ranging from chamber and new music groups to orchestras and opera houses. An important, and all too often neglected, part of a musician's continued professional development includes time to practice, examine and discuss technique, sound and musical approach, and to observe the rehearsal process and performances of other musicians. This Fellowship allowed me to do this, a process that has been both challenging and inspiring. Some outcomes include an improved understanding of the French school of harp playing. There are some subtle, and not so subtle, differences in the technique that I believe can be incorporated into my own approach and also included in my teaching. Of particular importance as a teacher is the need to be flexible, imaginative, inspirational and encouraging.

Attending rehearsals of world-class orchestras and ensembles, particularly when sitting next to the harpist and surrounded by amazing musicianship was absolutely inspiring and I believe an excellent pedagogical tool when teaching orchestral and chamber music skills. I was able to focus not only on the harp part and how it would be played, but how it fitted into the overall score, specific techniques for achieving effective ensemble and blend, how different conductors work with ensembles, as well as specific approaches to interpretation. During the course of the Fellowship I was also able to experience some of the rehearsal and performance process of an opera, including insight into the way a European opera house functions, where musicians in the orchestra are often dealing with numbers of performances with alternating casts/conductors/orchestra members.

Because of the acoustic nature of music, the best way to learn about creating beautiful sound is to hear it. All too often musicians can be overwhelmed by the technical aspects, of their instruments, sometimes at the expense of actually listening to the sound that is being created. Hearing, and being surrounded by great performers in rehearsal and concert is the most effective method of imparting techniques for creating a beautiful sound and good ensemble. I was able to hear performances of, discuss with colleagues, and

practice repertoire that was entirely new to me, as well as music that I had performed previously.

This Fellowship has been an extremely valuable development opportunity and is positively impacting my professional life, both as a performer and teacher, since returning from Europe. In addition to improved skills for playing in ensemble, I have also discovered a wealth of new and interesting repertoire that I hope to perform over the course of the next year. Ultimately the chance to engage with gifted, enthusiastic and inspirational musicians has exposed me to new musical approaches, enabled me to reexamine and reaffirm existing practices and reminded me of the importance of working as an artist within the Australian community.