

Student Research Conference/URECA! Presentation Abstract

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Title: *American in Vienna: A History of Music and Creative Writing Project*

Abstract: Though it's impossible to invite Strauss or Mozart to Vermont, one can still get in touch with their music, their personalities, and their lives by visiting Vienna, Austria. The URECA! award funded my opportunity to do this over Summer 2013. My main goal was to find ways in which an author could write descriptively, effectively, and successfully about music – a form of art which usually is said to 'speak where words fail'. The most necessary part of the ability to write about music is complete immersion in the topic; for my project, this entailed listening to music, visiting the concert venues, opera halls, and houses in Vienna where composers spent time, and reading biographies, letters, accounts of performances and shows (by visiting the many museums and historic apartments in Vienna as well as pursuing external research). I researched composers, visited the relevant sites, and then, when possible, attend a live performance of a piece by the composer. Then, I wrote creative responses—short stories, blogs, and poems—that reflected research and personal experiences based on the music. After returning from Austria I wrote a retrospective essay about the importance of 'immersion' in musical history, and the value of studying not just history or music composition or writing, but the integrated study of all three. This essay explores my conclusions and thoughts around music as a 'written' genre. Both my critical essay and excerpts of my creative work will be available for viewing/reading on my poster, and I will also be presenting a comprehensive scrapbook as a visual aid.