

「2024年度ウィーン大学スプリングスクール派遣報告書」

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Through the 12-day experience of the University of Vienna spring program, I gained insights into the unique relationship between classical music and people in Vienna. I found the position of classical music in Vienna so interesting that I decided to focus on the topic of music in this essay.

My parents like classical music very much, and classical music always played in our house in my childhood. They have taken me to orchestra concerts and opera and ballet performances many times, and I truly enjoy it. When I was two years old, they took me to a trial lesson at a music school and asked me if I wanted to do it. I answered yes, so I started going to the school. At the age of 6, I started taking classical piano lessons. Thanks to such an environment I grew up, classical music has been familiar to me. However, in Japan and probably in many other countries as well, it is not the case for everyone. Many of my friends don't listen to classical music. It is likely regarded as something lofty and inaccessible.

Vienna is known as the world capital of classical music, in which many important classical musicians have gathered from the past to the present. The New Year concert of Wiener Philharmoniker at Großer Saal (golden hall) of Wiener Musikverein is one of the most famous orchestra concerts in the world and is broadcast live in many countries including Japan. I was curious how classical music gained importance in Vienna, and that was one of the reasons why I wanted to visit Vienna and applied for this program.

In the lecture "Music in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century" given by Professor Grassl, we learned how classical music developed in Vienna during that period. Wiener Staatsoper (state opera) and Wiener Musikverein were two important traditional venues for classical music in Vienna, whose audience was the aristocracy. Before World War I, classical music was popularized in Vienna, and many amateur orchestras and ensembles were founded. Demands for more musical venues and professional performers led to the foundation of Wiener Volksoper (people's opera), Wiener Konzerthaus, and, the second professional orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker. As a result of WWI, the Austria-Hungary monarchy was dissolved, and Austria lost its political and economic position in the world. According to Professor Grassl, interestingly, this led to the acquisition of Vienna's status in the field of classical music. To compensate for the losses, the country decided to promote itself as the country of music. Vienna becoming known as the world capital of music was not completely spontaneous, and there was an unignorable effect of the political situation at that time.

During my stay in Vienna, I went to a ballet performance at Staatsoper, a concert of Wiener Symphoniker at Großer Saal of Musikverein, and an operetta performance at Volksoper. I felt that the gap between traditional venues like Staatsoper and Musikverein and new venues like Volksoper has been narrowed in a good sense. Staatsoper offers the U27 ticket for some performances nowadays, which lets young people buy any seats for 20 euros. The youth ticket was offered for the performance I went to, and there were many more young people than I saw at classical music concerts in Japan. Musikverein does not have such an offer, but getting tickets online is much easier compared to the past and you can buy standing places for an affordable price. Yet, the dignity of the two traditional venues was maintained: the audience dressed up neatly, the staff was very professional, and the whole atmosphere was refined. Volksoper was much smaller than Staatsoper, and the foyer and the seats were compact. However, the hall was gorgeously decorated and people were dressing up more than I expected. It seemed like going out to Volksoper was a "small special event" in Viennese people's daily lives.

Vienna's success in establishing its position as the world capital of classical music was partly intentional due to the political situation, but at the same time, I suppose that Vienna successfully popularized classical music and integrated it into people's lives. If classical music keeps on being too special and inaccessible in Japan, it cannot gain popularity and may lead to a decline. I hope that the environment in which people can enjoy classical music more casually is set up in Japan too, and the

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culture of classical music continues to develop richer in the future.