

# qualitalk

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In later years we might remember 2020 as the „Quiet Year“ – the bigger the event the more noise created just because of the coming and going of so many people; but due to the coronavirus pandemic that year so many festivities and events had to be cancelled. The Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2021 were moved to the following year. Munich's Oktoberfest 2020 was cancelled, and nobody is sure what will happen in 2020 to the Christmas markets (including hot spiced wine) for which the Alpine countries are famous for. Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday festivities were extended to include September 2021.

We hope that it works out, my fervent wish

*Oliver Schuster*

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**Covering your mouth and nose** is one of the ways to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 infection. Until we succeed to implement vaccinations on a large-scale basis, putting on masks will have to become an everyday habit.

# Silent Autumn

## Coronavirus plays first fiddle

Hamburg's modern concert hall "Elbphilharmonie" built in 2016 has created an outstanding attraction for the city, not only for aficionados of music both classical and modern but also as an architectural gem providing the city with a splendour to its renowned historical port quarter. Munich, a city also well known for its cultural attractions, particularly concert performances, saw itself relegated to second place by the "Elphi" (el-fee) as the venue is called affectionally.

Such a need to increase a city's attractiveness is absent in Vienna. Vienna's theaters and concert halls are well established. But ticket purchases by foreign tourists for the 2020/2021 season decreased markedly because of international travel restrictions; and ever-changing regulations such as lockdowns and curfews put a damper on the local audience.

Additionally, the increase of COVID-19 cases in September led the Staatskapelle Dresden, founded in 1548, to cancel its planned guest performances in Vienna's Musikverein concert hall, as did the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia di Roma.

Travel warnings by German government authorities also prevented the SWR (Southwest German Broadcasting) Symphony Orchestra guest performances in Vienna. But Vienna is privileged to be home of some of the finest symphony orchestras worldwide: It's very likely that the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will take over the cancelled guest performances of the non-Austrian orchestras.

However, before relaxing the public has to be aware of what will be expected of them when they are going to attend a concert in one of the venues in Vienna. There are conditions lined out for attending performances such as: "For the time being only single tickets (no 'twosomes') will be issued online thereby guaranteeing a minimum safety distance. Under option 'ticket purchases' you may book tickets for up to four persons. No intermissions."

On another page there are more requirements listed in best legalese, or, if you prefer, the former imperial chancery's bureaucratise: "According



**Enjoying music since 1870**  
*Slightly over 2000 people fit into the Golden Hall of Vienna's Musikverein concert hall.*

*Picture taken during an intermission, with view of the podium and great organ.*

This may finally lead to get the construction of the new concert hall for the Bavarian State Orchestra moving. It is to be built on an abandoned industrial site close to Munich's Eastern Train Station. Groundbreaking was scheduled for 2020 but now delayed; it's not clear whether the coronavirus pandemic was the main reason for that.

to Government regulations the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna [the formal name of the Viennese Music Association] has to implement the following procedures for performances at their location:

- ✓ When entering the premises you have to have a face mask put on. A simple nose-mouth protection will suffice. Once you are installed in your seat, and during the concert this face mask may be removed. It is, however, recommended to keep your nose-mouth protection on even during the concert itself. During the applause at the end of the performance the nose-mouth protection has to be on.
- ✓ In the lobby, at the wardrobes and in the toilets an appropriate safety distance between persons has to be kept.
- ✓ You have to follow instructions given by the ushers.
- ✓ To cede tickets to other persons is not permitted.
- ✓ Changing your seat is permitted only if so instructed by an usher.
- ✓ There will be no standing room. Patrons who present tickets stamped with “free election of seat” will be assigned a numbered seat at the time of accessing the concert hall.
- ✓ In case of a coronavirus incident, the Society of the Friends of Music in Vienna is obligated to pass on patron’s data if so required by the authorities.
- ✓ The purchaser of ticket(s) agrees that when attending a concert he/she will furnish their name and contact information for him/herself and their companion(s).
- ✓ Arrangement of seating is done in a way to assure a minimum lateral distance of 1 meter [3.3 ft] to the next (group of) attendee(s).
- ✓ Tickets bought anonymously are inva-

lid, however, they can be exchanged with personalized tickets, free of charge.

- ✓ We ask you to refrain from attending a concert if you show symptoms of illness.

It is doubtful that those governmental regulations will be effective in outwitting a coronavirus. What really is missing is the reference: **If you want to be absolutely sure to be able to avoid an infection, stay home!** By the way, according to this new coronavirus etiquette in concert halls, only manual applause is permitted, no shouting bravos or catcalls.

These days it’s easier to enjoy art exhibitions; visits are less hemmed in by restrictions and government regulations that attendance of a theater play or a concert. Entering an exhibition hall one first has to disinfect one’s hands and put on a face mask. With tourists staying away museums are often quite empty of people. A case in point: LENTOS art museum in Linz, a provincial capital located about 200 km [124 miles] west of Vienna. Recently visiting that museum I coun-

## See-Art

### Inside like outside

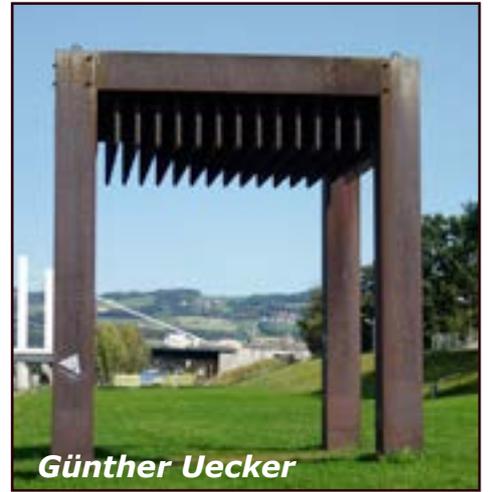
*Josef Bauer’s Installations on language using numbers and letters at LENTOS Kunstmuseum, Linz.*



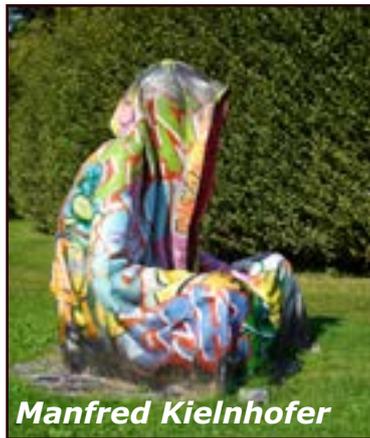
*Visual Arts bear fewer risks of becoming infected  
particularly if the art objects are located outdoors*



*Pöstlingberg mit Basilika*



*Günther Uecker*



*Manfred Kielnhofer*



*Industrial*



*Industrial*



*Mathias Goeritz*



*Amadeo Gabino*

ted exactly three visitors in its 2 500 square meter [27 000 sq.ft.] exhibition halls. Therefore the installations of Josef Bauer, born 1934 in Wels, a city close to Linz, leaves a formidable impression. Entering the hall his objects in the distance are flooded with light, without any people disturbing the vista. Getting close one feels like being part of the artist's room concept of art.

A contrast in room perception is offered when looking outside of one of the large windows of the museum, with a look at the river Danube where at this time three large river cruise vessels were moored one next to the other to the shore in front of the museum. I guess the passengers of the vessels lying outside would have to pass to the vessel right at the shore. Whatever, none of them seemed to make it into museum just a few steps away. It appears that despite the coronavirus pandemic river cruises with their fixed shore visits are still popular.

Slightly downstream from the LENTOS museum one can stroll along the river park "Donaupark Linz" with its sculptures. Spread over a distance of about one kilometer [0.6 miles] one

can admire ten large sculptures made out of steel, among them also a work by Günther Uecker — done with nails of a different kind. This permanent open-air exhibition also demonstrates and honors the connection of Linz with its traditional iron and steel industry. Walking along the art works one also has a good view of the proliferation of new high-rises on the other side of the river which eventually will block the view at one of the more famous pilgrimage places along the Danube valley, the church to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, at the top of Pöstlingberg hill.

**A** pity that national borders have become again prevalent: Europe's nation states seem to be convinced that only with a mostly uncoordinated way of border closings for most, if not all kinds of travel, the coronavirus pandemic can be contained

The small border crossings used so often by cyclists as well as hikers were unceremoniously and brutally barricaded in spring of 2020. On the main border crossings left, for trains and

## metropa for Europe

### A superspeed train system

**Europe-Dome:** open talk on European traffic systems





**metropa means**  
*fast connections entirely*  
*without frontiers in Europe*

cars, rigorous controls led to traffic jams and delays. Travellers in trains were subjected to controls to the extent that even passengers in sleeping cars of night trains were aroused from their sleep and asked for personal details. Commercial air traffic didn't have those problems on their way to foreign destinations; only at arrival, the passengers faced similar problems. But then, due to lack of flight passengers many flights were cancelled.

In such a situation a transnational traffic network between metro-

politan areas in Europe would have been helpful. With the keen sense of timeliness Andreas Scheuer (CDU), Germany's minister for Transportation, reminded us that until 1987, Trans-Europ-Express (TEE) trains moved passengers already in those days across European borders. The minister is now pushing for a new edition of it and thereby make train travel more attractive. TEE trains had only first-class seating, a dining car, and

*Trans Europ Express*



*First class train service of*  
*Europe in former times*

an office section with phones. That at each window a small desk lamp was installed gave the impression of luxurious travel, as did the porter with peaked cap would help the lady in her mink coat into the carriage and carry her leather suitcase, as well as her little dog, to her seat. Ah, tempi passati ...

The civil societal organization "Pulse of Europe" promotes the coalescence of the individual EU countries. The filigree Europe-dome serves as a distinctive meeting point.

There, on the occasion of Vienna's NEUBAU ("new constructions") festival on 20 September 2020 Stefan Franckenberger presented his "mobility plan" **metropa**: Instead of borderlines Europe is defined as a system of connections, even beyond the EU. Ultrarapid trains operate on a uniform traffic system between metropolitan regions; changing trains between long distance trains and local trains would be accomplished in short intervals. A "European pass" should guarantee

booking all trips easily and securely. So much for the vision!

Reality still looks different at present: if one wanted to book a trip from Vienna main station to Overath, a local train station near Cologne, Germany, one can acquire a ticket only to Cologne and has to buy a ticket for the connection hurriedly at a vending machines at one of Cologne station's platforms.

Even though the internet makes things easier it still requires a lot of patience to, say, succeed to book a trip from Budapest, Hungary, to Barcelona, Spain. Realizing the problem Elias Bohun, a young Viennese entrepreneur, created a train-travel only agency, "Traivelling". Bohun wants to encourage travellers concerned about sustainability and climate change to switch from travelling by air to do so by train.

That we hope will further the vision of a high-speed train network metropa in Europe. □



**Black lives matter** on the occasion of Vienna's Neubau-Festival for Pulse of Europe.

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## Imprint

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