

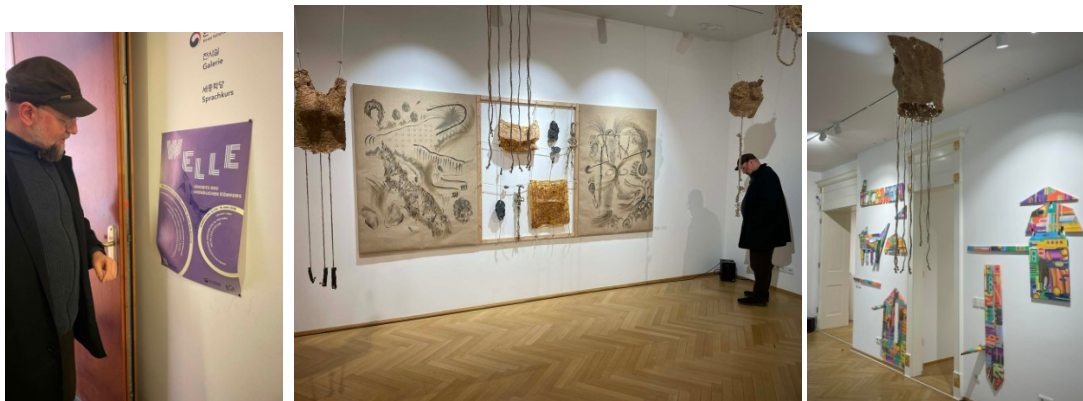
MuPATH and Spymonkey

Marta Schermann

In March 2026, I participated in a five-day professional study trip in Vienna. During the trip, I visited the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, where I gained insight into the institution's educational approach. I also had the opportunity to meet members of the MuPATH Collective and explore possibilities for future professional collaborations. As part of the program, I attended a performance by the Spymonkey company at the Volksoper, took part in a presentation at the Spanish Riding School, and visited several exhibitions and historical sites related to circus arts, as well as other permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien and MuPATH

During my visit to the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, I encountered an especially inspiring and liberating creative atmosphere. The relationship between students and teachers is characterized by a collaborative methodology. Through my mentor's mediation, the focus was primarily on contemporary composition, particularly musical thinking related to media art. I had the opportunity to explore the work of three composition students at the exhibition space of the **Korea Kulturzentrum Wien**. At the exhibition, artists from the fields of visual art, dance, and music examined the body as a complex medium capable of connecting movement, sound, and memory. In addition, I was able to engage informally with local composers and musicians.



Spymonkey

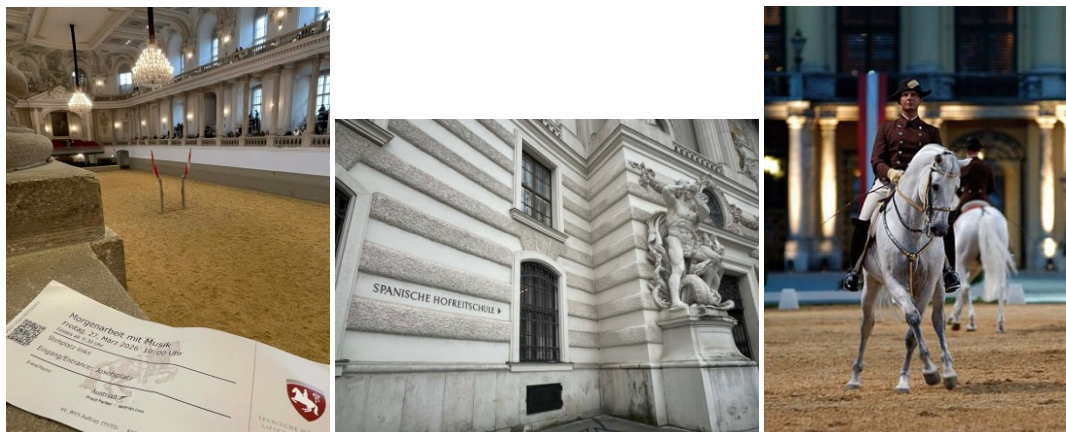
At the **Volksoper**, I attended a performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* by Arthur Sullivan and W. S. Gilbert, in an adaptation by Vienna-based writer and dramaturg Jennifer Gisela Weiss. The production was directed by Toby Park and Aitor Basauri, with visual design by Julian Crouch and choreography by Gail Skrela. The performance created a richly layered visual and musical world. Humor, absurdity, and spectacular stage solutions all played an important role: underwater policemen, skull-and-crossbones-

adorned pirates (both men and women dressed as men), long and charmingly squealing yearning maidens, a blunt-speaking nurse, misfiring cannons, playful chaos, and figures with shells, jellyfish, and crab heads... The large-scale, dynamic production provided a memorable experience. In retrospect, I feel it would have been particularly valuable from a professional perspective to process and analyze the performance together with another student working in a similar field.



Spanish Riding School Vienna

Another highlight of the trip was the presentation at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. With a tradition spanning more than 450 years, the institution is one of the most important guardians of classical horsemanship. The Lipizzaner horses are trained in the imperial riding hall of the Hofburg, where riders spend many years mastering the elements of Renaissance “high school” riding. The exercises performed in traditional attire—such as the levade, courbette, and capriole—reflect extraordinary discipline and harmony between horse and rider. Experiencing this live was particularly inspiring, especially as in the previous year we had repeatedly studied the appearance of horses in circus arts at the university (János Greinfenstein / circus history).



Exhibitions and Historical Sites

During the study trip, I also visited several exhibitions and historical locations. First, I explored the **Prater** area, which has been a popular entertainment center since the 18th–19th centuries. However, the weather was unfavorable—snowfall, strong winds, and cold rain made outdoor activities difficult—so I was able to spend less time there than planned and desired. At the **Prater Museum**, however, I gained valuable experiences: I encountered several circus characters, tools, and forms that were already familiar from my previous studies (Szandra Szondy / circus terminology). I learned that the giant whale that had “floated in the air” above the Prater’s famous restaurant for years is now located in the **Wien Museum**, so my next destination was there, where I explored this fantastic exhibition space.



Due to the unfavorable weather, I spent more time in museums, which gave me the opportunity to visit the **Batliner Collection exhibition From Monet to Picasso**, as well as the **Verbund Collection exhibition Caring Matters**. The latter presented particularly powerful works infused with humor and self-irony from a feminist perspective.

Unfortunately, I was not able to visit the Vienna Circus and Clown Museum, as it was closed during my stay.



Overall, the study trip provided a highly diverse and inspiring range of experiences. I gained numerous new professional impulses and encountered remarkable creators, works, and historical artifacts. I hope that in the future I will be able to share these experiences and insights with the students and faculty of BCDC, and that these shared professional dialogues will prove beneficial for all participants.