

## JULIA WEDMAN'S GRAND TOUR: JOURNAL ENTRY 2

*Tafelmusik* violinist Julia Wedman is spending much of this season in Europe, exploring the cities and cultures in which musicians lived and worked, in the tradition of the baroque Grand Tour. Here's the second of her letters home – you can follow her travels on the Touring section of the *Tafelmusik* website ([www.tafelmusik.org/tour/blog](http://www.tafelmusik.org/tour/blog)).

IT'S MY LAST DAY OF A MAGICAL THREE WEEKS spent traipsing all over Germany. I have visited the homes and workplaces of some of my favourite people – the Bach family, Handel, Telemann, the Mozarts, Brahms, Mendelssohn, the Schumanns, even Goethe and Frederick the Great! Each place has been thrilling in its own way, bringing me closer to knowing my favourite composers as real people. I now understand how proud the small city of Halle must be that a kid from their unassuming town became a world-famous musician through a wonderful confluence of talent, perseverance and good timing. After walking the short distance from the Mendelssohn home to the Schumann's in Leipzig, I feel the kinship these two families must have had with each other, and how being part of such an amazing musical community must have immeasurably enriched their lives. From attending the Thomaskirche on Sunday morning, I feel like I have a better idea of the thrill Bach must have known as he heard the soaring voices of his choir singing the notes that he had just written, inspiring him to new heights of greatness. Seeing the ear trumpets and conversation books at Beethoven's house in Bonn, I am faced with the overwhelming grief and frustration Beethoven must have felt going deaf, desperately trying to hear his music and communicate with the world. These composers whose music has brought me such joy and comfort, I feel have now become friends. In fact, I felt such a sadness leaving Bach in Leipzig that I bought a little bust of him during my visit to the Cöthen Palace (where he wrote the *Brandenburg Concertos*) that will now accompany me on my travels.

The one thing that I have had to come to terms with here, which I wasn't expecting, is the mortality of my composer "friends." I feel like I have spent so much time trying to know and understand the lives of these people through reading about them, and playing and studying their music, that they truly have come alive for me. Upon being directly confronted with the fact that in addition to being people who lived rich, full lives, these are people who died, I am reduced to a snivelling heap of tears. I find the death masks, the tombstones and the crypts horrible, and I have decided that from now on, I shall only celebrate birth dates of my favourite composers.

Next stop – Austria.

*Julie, October 21, 2010*

