

# A Waltz Viennese

*by* Sheila Luecht

It was in the early 1980's and I had spent myself in Austria, doing what most young people do. Upon a return trip I had gone with an old lover to a place where you could dance. I remember the setting it was kind of dark and different, but yet a wide expanse. I wanted to waltz. The other people in our group were a collection of his friends, some I knew, but in reality it was just he and I alone on the dance floor. When he spun me around I was in my delight. I had taken dance lessons in college and pretty much could do anything, but this kind of Viennese spin was breathtaking. I remember saying to him upon it's conclusion, "If I had known you could dance like this, I would have never left you."

Somewhere lost in time this came forward to me today, but before that little scrap was another memory from around the same time. It was an old high school friend who was standing on the train platform in the city. I worked downtown and so did he. I looked over and recognized him from his days with me in speech and theater. He was a year or so younger, and he had been very short and full of baby fat at the time. He was a sprite of energy and mischief. Here he presented as a grown man. I had almost gasped at the change. I was the lithesome beauty and had many admirers at the time of high school, but never anyone in school who was truly special. I just didn't get the whole "love" thing and that made me, I think much more attractive, but distant. Anyway. There he was Peter in the flesh. Our eyes met and we chatted. He was happy to see me. He still lived at home after college with his mother and sister. I had returned home and was living with my parents too, so we were actually quite near, just like in the old days.

We made a plan to see each other to chat more and so we did. I went to his little house in the neighboring town and walked in to a kind of time warp. It was a large living room, made so by it's emptiness. It

was stark in the vastness it seemed, but dark. There was a light hanging in the dining room portion and a large old table and chairs. There were no rugs. I felt like the people were the highlights of the room, not the decoration. As an artist, I rather liked that. As I moved through the room, I became aware that I was also a piece of art. I was dressed in something feminine but comfortable.

Peter introduced me to his older sister Trina. I was amazed to find someone who seemed so ordinary, yet pretty and welcoming to me. The next thing I remember was really what started this whole separate memory. I was offered some tea. I accepted and sat at the antique table and looked closely.

The table setting was not ordinary. There were not mugs, but delicate china cups and saucers, cups with wide openings and slim bases. I was entranced. Into these cups fragrant tea, Earl Grey with it's heady scent of bergamot wafting to my senses. There were sugar cubes and real cream. Everything was laid out and I was offered it. There were some sweets but the tea to me was the star. It was perfectly brewed, more like a symphony of taste. I was reeling. I had never had such a perfect drop of sugar and fresh tasting cream in such a cup of tea.

His mother puttered out and I was a bit surprised. She had a cloth tied under her chin and tied directly on the top of her head. I had only seen such a thing in a cartoon before. Her daughter quickly told me she had a terrible toothache and I said, in my usual direct manner, something about should she go to a dentist? It was then that I realized, and had actually known before, that Peter was a Christian Scientist and apparently his family was too. They had attended Principia College. I was a little chuffed to be able to see this bit of their faith, but at the same time awkward. It was then that it was suggested that we listen to some music. Which I immediately responded to in affirmation. His mother departed and it was just Peter and his sister with me again.

The music was classical. It was actually a waltz melody, and I was again taken well off guard. I love to hear this kind of music and I especially love to dance to it. I have never danced to it enough in this life. So I must have lit up like a firecracker and Peter in his infinite ability to capture the moment asked me if I would like to dance. He might have been thinking of all the times he wanted to dance in the past, or maybe he was just thinking about dancing with me, but I could hardly believe my ears. I stood up to his hand and we were off! On that wooden floor dancing in that massive space and in another world. He was taller than me, strong, and could dance so effectively, that I had to do nothing but follow. For a moment I thought of that adage, beautiful dancer, beautiful lover. It was all over too briefly and I was still trying to understand what era I had stepped in when I walked through that door. As the moments went on and the evening waned, I had to leave. I was confused about things and I guess, I was giving off that radar.

His sister talked to me and we made plans to meet and we did. I got to know her better and we even had an adventure together, but Peter and I somehow did not connect in the same way again. Maybe this was his fantasy and he had just lived it out.

It was a few years later that I met and married my dear husband, and a year after that that I took him back to Austria. In Vienna we were at Strauss Waltzes in the Stadtpark Park where live waltz music was performed and dancers dressed in competition grandeur danced. My heart was dancing with them. This no longer happens from what I understand. It is now done differently. I suspect the times changed, but there was really nothing like this, great music in the beautiful fresh air, costumes of dancers sparkling in the sun and a sense of love heavily in the air. Life as we know it with a beautiful bit of confection. We are such a sum of our experiences and today, waking in the comfort of my home, enveloped by a sense of security

and love, I experience the music, the dance, all swirling in my brain.  
It is only in memory that some things exist, but what a place to visit!

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FYI : What is the difference between Waltz and Viennese Waltz?  
The main **difference between Slow Waltz and Viennese Waltz** is speed. Footwork and patterns are also **different**, but the main **difference** is speed. **Viennese Waltz** can be up to four times faster than the slow version. A true **Viennese waltz** consists only of turns - that is why it is also known as the Rotary **Waltz**.

