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Maria Harmon

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Riordan '19 to study in Austria as 2022-23 Fulbright Scholar

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Kelly Riordan '19 will travel to Vienna, Austria, in September to study the music of composers who were silenced by the Nazis as a 2022-23 Fulbright Scholar.

She will spend nine months working with the [Exilarte: Center for Banned Music](#) at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien.

Exilarte's mission is to "operate as a centre for the reception, preservation, research and presentation of composers, performers, musical academics and theatre artists who were branded as 'degenerate' during the years of the 'Third Reich.'"

Specifically, Riordan's work will be to study and perform recitals of the previously banned compositions of Jewish composer, [Robert Fürstenthal](#), who was forced to flee Europe under the Nazi regime.

"(Fürstenthal) was banned entrance to the MdW (University of Music and Performing Arts), one of the top music schools in Vienna, on account of being Jewish. He fled Vienna on one of the last trains out of Austria and moved to California where he lived for many years. When he left Europe, he also had to leave behind a woman that he loved," said Riordan, adding she looks forward to learning more about Fürstenthal soon.

During her junior year at Illinois Wesleyan University, Riordan spent a semester studying abroad in Vienna where she met music theory professor Gerold Grüber, who founded Exilarte. There, she learned about "entartete musik" or "degenerate music" which was music condemned by the Nazis.

"To those in the industry, it's no secret that discrimination exists in the world of classical music. No doubt, it is present in most, if not all, industries in our society. I'm interested in the ways that we can all take steps towards equity in our own little parts of the world. My current world is western classical singing," Riordan said.

Riordan studied [vocal performance at IWU](#) and graduated with a master's of music in vocal performance and pedagogy from Colorado University, Boulder, in 2021. She has been praised by critics for her "exuberant honesty" onstage as well as her "beautiful vibrancy and warmth" of tone.

After graduating from CU Boulder, Riordan joined the Contemporary Alexander Technique school, a learning community dedicated to furthering the work of actor F.M. Alexander, which seeks to overcome limitations in movement and thinking.

Riordan plans to continue her training internationally, taking weekend classes in Germany and Switzerland.

[Fulbright Scholarships](#) are awarded by the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Program. This year, 25 scholarships were awarded for people to work in Austria.



Kelly Riordan '19