

Fall in Paris Journal

Saturday, October 2 – renting a room for Eli

After breakfast we went to the Hotel Delambre to rent a room for the 3 nights Eli Lauchli will visit us October 27, 28 and 29. She asked us to get her a simple room but on a high floor so she could look out on Paris.

Over several days we had looked at several hotels in our area and finally found this one, which has lower rates than the ones on our rue de la Grande Chaumière. They are all 3 star hotels. A plus is that there is a plaque on the entry to the Hotel that says that Paul Gauguin lived here in 1891. That cinched it for us. Eli, being an artist and an incurable romantic, will like that.



Unfortunately, by insisting on a view of Paris, vs. a view of the courtyard (which would have included the Tour de Montparnasse), the room cost 20 euros more.

In our explorations we learned that at the intersection of Rue de Depart and Blvd Edgar Quinet, there is a Saturday outdoor market. I thought that market was for art. Maybe it is an Art Market on Sundays, because today when we walked by there was a lively market doing business. We went in because I was interested in the purses I saw displayed. We ended up buying another small coin purse for all those pennies, nickels, dimes and 20 centimes that accumulate very quickly. I will only carry those in my purse on special occasions.

We stopped also at the cheese vendor and bought a nice looking Brie, and we bought flowers for the apartment.

Later today we will go to Cité de la Musique for a concert. Today there will be demonstrations against the pension reform but no strikes or slowdowns. However, we had already planned our day assuming

the Metros would be slow, so we are leaving here about 2 pm. to take the 45 minute Metro ride to La Villette. We plan to take in the museum slowly and this time take the head sets and listen to the various offerings. When it closes, we plan to go across the street for a long, slow dinner before the 8 p.m. concert.

As we made our way through town, there seemed to be more than usual number of people milling around. It was a warm Indian summer Saturday. At Chatelet there was a small band playing so I stopped and took a picture. Later I remembered that October 2nd was something called Nuit Blanche or White Night. For the past several years, it has become a tradition where there is live performance art on the streets, for free. The crowd was mostly young.



I talked Ernie into taking the 75 bus which goes to the Cité. We took the Metro to Chatelet then walked to Pont Neuf, on the 75 bus route. We waited for 30-40 minutes, but no #75. Other people who were waiting also gave up. We ended up taking the Metro, and making connections. We never did find out what happened to the #75. There were demonstrations happening all over the city so it might have been mired in such a stoppage. However, the other bus lines that had stops at Pont Neuf were running frequently. Who knows?

When we made connections at Gare du Nord. We walked a long way to make the connection and in a place where three corridors come together, there was a large Russian or Ukrainian band playing. They were all men and the music was very lively. I just had to take some photos. You can see an arm on the right side of the photo. There were two men there who were singing and bouncing to the music. I expected one to jump out and begin to do a wild Cossack dance. My friend Barbara told me on the phone that she has seen them various times around the City. I'd love to hear them do a full performance. We were en route so we only heard the end of one song and the beginning of another before moving on. I gave them a euro.



We still arrived at the Museum before 4 p.m. and had time to visit the museum and listen to the audio portions. I found the Rite of Spring dance performance that I saw on my last visit but since I didn't have the audio gadget at that time, I couldn't hear the music. So this time I found it and listened to the presentation and watched the wild dance that was choreographed by Nijinsky and performed in 1910 to an audience in Paris who threw tomatoes at Stravinsky. It was fun for me to finally see and hear the entire presentation. Unfortunately, since this was a reproduction of only one of the dances, I didn't get to see the audience riot.

Here is an example of a kiosk at La Cité de la Musique. This one was of chamber music performed in a home.



These instruments are called Serpents. One of the kiosks showed a man playing church music on a serpent. It had the same mellow sound of an English horn. That's probably what it turned into. Some of the instruments shown at the museum were experimental and didn't survive but are still haunting and beautiful.

I continue to be impressed with the building itself. Here is a picture of a wall between two rooms where the cutaways allow a view of the stringed instruments in the next room.



We left the museum and walked around the Parc of La Villette. There were many interesting sights and lots of little children “wunning awound” and lots of things for them to do. There were large and interesting art installations as well as a photographic exhibition posted all over the Parc. The gigantic sculpture of bicycle parts was unique!





See what I mean? It was fun. The sphere in the background is part of the Museum of Science, which is huge and chock full of exhibits.

We decided to go for an early dinner and get to the box office early to pick up our tickets. There was a little uncertainty about them so we got there about 7. There was no problem; our tickets were waiting. We had dinner at the usual place, a bar brasserie with bicycle and American 50's themes, across the street from the Cité.

The performance was riveting! It was a re-creation of a concert that was performed on June 4, 1910 at the Paris Opera House. Ernie got us first balcony tickets and they were on the side directly above the bass section of the orchestra so we got to see the action and there was plenty of it. Here they are setting up and getting ready.



The featured piece we went to see was the Oiseau de Feu (The Firebird) by Igor Stravinsky. This piece is another case where I heard the music when I was a little whipper snapper. It was an animation that I

saw on television when I was in the third or fourth grade. I was so impressed then that I have always remembered it and have wanted to see it performed live.

Here is a link to the story and a photo similar to what I saw on TV. Of course, in those days, our TV was black and white, but the music painted the colors in my imagination.

<http://www.phoenixmoon.org/firebird.html>

The first part of the concert was also wonderful. It was bunch of short pieces by various composers with an oriental cast to the music. The final one before the intermission was a full piece by Borodine. I know this music because Kismet was made using the music. I know words to this music. Do you remember "Stranger in Paradise"?

The music was wild and played by an orchestra of more than 70 musicians. The percussion section played constantly. A small Asian woman (I'm sure she is French) played the tambourine practically with her body. When she hit it her body would bounce. I can see why she became a percussionist. There was a glockenspiel, timpani, a bass drum, snares, a gong, a xylophone, cymbals and a triangle used abundantly. Where we sat I could see their faces. Usually that section is hidden from the audience.

I had a wonderful time at this concert. I kept thinking of my little Ava, how she would be moving her body to the music. I've got to find it on a CD and play it for her.

We took advantage of the free bus home offered by the Cité de la Musique. We stopped at the last stop, in front of the Metro stop of Denfert Rochereau. It is on the corner where Blvd. Raspail begins. So once we got oriented and found which of the 6 streets was Raspail, it was a short walk home. It was nearly midnight and the streets were still full of young people milling around.

The next day, I was exhausted and asked to stay home the next day and let my feet recover.