

Thursday, February 4, 2010 a noon concert at the Ecole de Musique followed by an early dinner with cousin Louise.

After breakfast Ernie went to the Post Office to inquire about the return receipt for the reimbursement request he sent to British Airline. They said there is nothing they can do but wait for it. They explained it takes a long time. But I could check with the other post office (near the Sorbonne) from where I sent the request for reimbursement for costs due to the cancelled flight with return receipt requested.

We didn't leave in time to miss the couple from the south of France who came to visit the apartment with Matthias.

I suggested we take the 94 bus to the School of Music for the concert at 12:30 p.m. So we took our usual 91 bus from rue Berthollet to the Montparnasse train station, which is also a center for one group of buses. We had a hard time finding the bus stop going in the right direction but finally found it. We asked directions but got answers like "la bas" or "a gauche" with vague hand signals so it took some bumbling and going in circles. In time we will learn where to catch particular buses.

Ernie was worried that we wouldn't get to the location in time for the 12:30 concert, but we did. Yesterday there was a work stoppage/slowdown by one of the unions that control transportation and we ended up sitting on a metro for nearly an hour and I was nervous that if we took the Metro we would be late.

The concert at the Ecole de la Musique was by one of the professors Guigla Katsarava who played Bridge, Prokofiev, Chopin, and Wagner. Brilliant playing. The audience demanded an encore, which he performed, also beautifully.

The announcer explained that toward the end of March and April we will have the opportunity to hear the students who will be performing their end of term exams and that it will be very exciting. These concerts are free and at the end there is a basket for donations.

On the way back, I realized that the bus was taking us right through the middle of Paris and I started to take pictures whenever the bus stayed still for a minute or two at a stoplight. That explains the bars in one picture and the reflection in another one. I am surprised at how well the pictures turned out.

This one is of the Place de la Concorde. It is about 2 p.m. and there is plenty of traffic.



The next was taken as we crossed over the Seine. In the distance is the Eiffel Tower. Note the beautiful cobblestone surface of the road over the bridge.



This is of the front of the building of the National Assembly with a grand statue of someone named Sully. I don't know Paris or European history enough to know who he was.



The 94 bus dropped us at the Montparnasse Train station where we stopped for some tea and shared an apple pastry and watched the pigeons and sparrows competing for crumbs. With everyone eating crunchy bread, there are lots of crumbs.

We had an appointment with Louise Vincent, Ernie's cousin at 3 p.m. We arrived a little early and she came down to fetch us and take us to her charming apartment. On Thursdays her cleaning lady comes so we got to greet her.

We discussed what to do. Louise said she was not up for a movie and listened to us talk about the concert we had just heard. She said she loves concerts and just never seems to make the time to attend them. We will invite her to concerts we plan to attend.

We decided to go for an early dinner. And walked outside and to the Taverne de la Forge where we ate last week. They were closed until 5 p.m. We tried the next two places and they also were closed. They suggested we try the brasserie across from the train station that serves continuously. We walked along the street until we came to Bistro 15 directly across from her apartment building and they were serving.

Louise and I ended up having Salade Paysanne (greens, tomato, a fried egg on top of blue cheese from Auvergne and little pieces of bacon.) The dressing was quite sharp. I think they put horse radish or wasabi in the dressing. Ernie had a Planche Auvergne, which consisted of a board with a terrine, ham,

prosciutto a piece of hard cheese, and slices of two kinds of salami. We had a bottle of the wine of the month and one glass of Cotes du Rhone (that we thought was given, but we were billed for it.) and coffee. With great bread, it was a feast.

We talked about movies, about our children, about Erika, their other cousin, daughter of Anne, their deceased aunt. It was a lovely, warm experience.

I remembered this time to take photos of the two cousins. They are the same age.



We parted and walked to Blvd Montparnasse to catch the 91 bus home – along with about 50 other people since it was after 5 p.m. We were impressed with how well people can squeeze into a too-small space. People are very polite and gentle with each other, very civilized.

The entire day was sunny with clouds. It must have been between 40 and 50 degrees F and no rain. It was a lovely day. At the train station I bought a black scarf that claims to be 100% wool.

We came home and determined that we had had enough. It was another rich day. Ernest Hemmingway wrote a book titled Paris is a Moveable Feast about his younger, turbulent days spent in Paris. I feel as though we are gorging on the Feast that is Paris.