

March 17, 2011 Thursday concert at the Mairie du 9ème

Barbara told us of a free mid-day concert at the Mairie of the 9th Arrondissement. She intended to attend...

Ernie looked it up on the map and decided it was only a 30-minute walk. On the way we passed this interesting detail on one of the buildings on Blvd. Montmartre.



Many of the mairies hold events for the people of their arrondissements. This mairie is in an historic home but the music hall, Salle Rossini, is a new building with excellent acoustics.



The featured pianist was another fairly young man, Victorien Vanoosten (Denis Pascal was one of his teachers.) He played Debussy, prélude to the Afternoon of a Fawn; Ravel, sentimental and noble waltzes; Duruflé, Three Dances; Stravinsky, a transcription by him of a piece from the Fire Bird; and Saint-Saëns, the Dance Macabre transcribed by Liszt.

The curtains are made of metal. They looked like bronze but I didn't go to touch them.



Barbara joined us at the concert and then the three of us had a wonderful lunch at "Le Petite Riche."

Ernie and Barbara each had a quenelle, which I have decided I don't like. Barbara explained how it is made and in principle, I should like it. It involves straining the tiny bones from a river fish and then mixing the flesh into puff pastry and making it into a roll. It is then steamed. I wondered how they achieved the soft texture. The puff pastry explains it. It reminds me of dumpling, as in chicken and dumplings, but with a definite flavor of fish.

I had a bar, a fish with a wonderful sauce. For starters Ernie and I each had 6 fresh oysters. Barbara, who sometimes is allergic to oysters, had a terrine of boiled beef that tasted wonderful. She gave me a taste. We ordered a Muscadet at Barbara's urging and it turned out to be lovely.

The restaurant is made of a converted stable from long ago and has wonderful decorations of rich dark wood, mosaic on the walls and ceiling and the floor is mosaic tile. She took me on a tour upstairs to the many small dining rooms for small parties and told me the story of a film of Yves Montand in which he is searching the various rooms looking for his girlfriend. It was clear that it would be a challenge to find one person in such a place.

Before lunch we went to the library in the main auction house. There is a rule in Paris, that when a building goes up, it must include something for the community. Some include a "crèche" (day care center), or as in this building, a library.

Ernie had all of his paperwork to apply for a library card. While we were there, he successfully applied for it. All he had to do was show his Palmes Académiques member card and he was in. So now, Ernie is the proud member of the library system in Paris.

There were many appraisal houses around the street serving the needs of people bringing items to be auctioned. It was quite a lively street.

We returned to the apartment and had "dinner"