

Paris 2011 Journal

Wednesday, March 9 concert at the Carnavalet Museum

Ernie got directions and we walked about 9 blocks to the Carnavalet Museum for a 3 p.m. free concert. Before we turned the corner to the entrance, I stopped to take a photo of forsythia in the garden. On the right of the photo you can also see the blue and gold of flowering petunias on the ground. It is March 9 and there are definite signs of spring.



The address is 23, rue de Sévigné. The street is named after a woman who inhabited the Hôtel de Carnavalet starting in 1677. The name Carnavalet is a distortion of the name Kernevenoy, one of the families that occupied the house. By the time Madame Sévigné moved in, it already was called Carnavalet. Through Madame Sévigné's vivacious life she made the Marais into the place to be.

The entrance is free to this museum dedicated to the history of Paris. At the reception we were told the concert was at 4 p.m. and that it was a small hall so we should plan to arrive at least half an hour in advance to insure a seat. Since it wasn't yet 3 p.m., we made a quick walk around the museum.

It is a fairly large museum with different levels. In fact, we only toured half of it. It consists of two "hotels" (mansions) that share a garden and are connected by an annex. The other part, the Hôtel Le Peletier Saint-Fargeau, houses the galleries on the French Revolution.

There are lots of paintings depicting important events in the history of the city including those of St. Geneviève, patron saint of Paris. Rooms have been transported from other hotels in the city and set up here. Many are taken from hotels that were torn down. The entire room, wallpaper, moldings, paintings, furnishings, fire places are presented. It is lovingly cared for, parquet floors and all. The effect is charming.

Then, following the advice of the reception, we found the room for the concert and took a seat outside. The doors were still closed and we could hear the musicians warming up. At 3:50 a man peeked out and asked our indulgence of 5 more minutes, please. There was more frantic warming up.

Finally, about 2 minutes before 4:00 he opened the doors and the audience streamed in. It was less than a full house. The man who talked to us was from the Conservatoire de Mozart Centre. This is a music conservatory for students from the 1, 2 3 and 3rd arrondissements. Does that mean there are other conservatories for students from the rest of the 20 arrondissements?



These photos give a sense for the charm of the rooms. Here is a close up of the set up.



The concert was interesting and consisted of music we have not heard. There was a Spanish piece by M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco using a Guitar plus a string quartet, then a trio by S. Taneiev using two violins and a cello. The third and last piece was by M. Moszkovsky for two violins and piano.

The musicians were lovely young people. I would guess they ranged from 18-19 years old. They seemed less self-assured to me than many of the professional musicians we have been hearing. However, the quality was just about as good.

As we left, we passed through the Signs Gallery. I loved it and took a bunch of photos. The signs are examples of signs posted outside of establishments indicating the business there. Many customers were illiterate so merchants depended on the symbols on the signs to communicate their wares and services.

The Black Cat is famous and symbolizes the nightlife of Montmartre.



The next picture is blurry but I include it because it shows the extent and layout the second room of the Sign gallery.



We left the museum, music ringing in our brains, vowing to return on a day when we can do the museum justice.

On the way back to the apartment, I was charmed by the curved line of the buildings on the street.

