



Musick Notes

February 2009
Belgium and Beyond

Issue at a glance:

- Life in Brussels: weather, daily life, sights, tastes, community
- Student teaching: rewarding responsibility

- Black Forest update!
- Wales

Hi friends,

Thank you so very much for keeping me in your thoughts and prayers! It is an immense encouragement to me to know that you are supporting me across the miles.

“So, how’s the weather over there?”

The weather here has been interesting. It started out just like Chicago: the week I arrived, we had a big snowstorm followed by a cold snap. School was almost cancelled, but fortunately for me it was not. For my first week of student teaching, I walked to school in the snow.



After that first cold week, the weather has returned to typical Belgian weather: rain. For the most part, it is cloudy and

gray, but I really can’t complain when my family and friends in Wheaton have been suffering through negative temperatures!

Home, Sweet Home

Here in Brussels, I live in the home of Christine, a 6th grade teacher at ISB. She lives here with her two cats and often rents out rooms to people such as myself. It is a 3-story row-house; we share 2 walls with the neighbors. It is a very nice, cozy place, complete with a cello and 2 guitars for my enjoyment (her sons used to play cello and bass, so I get to enjoy the discarded instruments!)

Christine’s house is in Boitsfort (pronounced bwa-FOR), which is a section of Brussels. I can take a tram or a bus to any of the major sights downtown.

Musical Instrument Museum

The first place on my list to visit was the MIM. It is filled with thousands of fascinating instruments. Each person gets a pair of headphones to wear, so as visitors stand in front of a display, they

can hear a recording of the instruments playing. As much as I liked listening to them, I was really itching to try them, but all the signs said “ne touché pas” – Don’t touch!



Someone decided to combine brass and string instruments. Is it possible?

Belgian Chocolate

Chocolate here is not seen as dessert or a special treat. It is seen as a normal part of everyday life. Christine buys bars of Cote d’Or chocolate for me. She has also given me Pierre Marcolini chocolates and Jacques Callebaut bars. My favorite so far is the Cote d’Or Mousse Intense – a dark chocolate coating with a light, creamy mousse interior. If your mouth isn’t watering right now, you’re crazy!

Church

I have been attending the International Protestant Church (IPC), which meets on the campus of ISB. It is a convenient location, but also a good opportunity for parents to see that another ISB teacher attends their church. My cooperating teacher Janet also attends IPC. It has been a little difficult to fit into the community there since the church consists primarily of parents and children. God provided me with a friend,

though! He is always faithful. In addition, I started attending the Bible study that meets before the main service, which provided me with a bit more personal community at the church.

Student Teaching

My first week of student teaching was mostly observation, along with small ensemble coaching and general help in the rehearsals of bigger groups. My responsibilities have gradually increased, so I am now teaching for full class periods in some of the orchestras. At ISB, there are several orchestras: Fifth Grade, Sixth Grade, Intermediate Middle School, Advanced Middle School, and High School orchestras, and a small ensemble called the Select Strings. It was difficult at first to get used to the schedule, since classes meet on a 2-week rotating schedule.



Above: 5th grade orchestra

The Hague

Student teaching has been rewarding and challenging so far, but the most challenging event was the Solo & Ensemble festival at the American School of the Hague in the Netherlands. After working with many small ensembles the past month, it was exciting to see the progress they had

made and their accomplishments at the festival. The difficult part, though, was the preparation for the trip. Janet could not go on the trip because she was leaving that day for the Honor Orchestra trip to Singapore. The band director found out the week before that she also could not go, so I was left with a lot of responsibility on the trip. Janet was very good about giving me what I needed to know, but she left most of the preparation up to me. It was an excellent experience for me as a teacher, since I will no doubt be taking my future students on field trips!



Above: A 5th grade violin/cello duet

Black Forest Academy

Here is the big news: Black Forest Academy has officially approved my application and invited me to join BFA staff for next school year. I have accepted their invitation. Now, I am waiting for official approval from World Venture to finalize my appointment to teach at Black Forest Academy!

Wales

Many of you know that I was unable to get a visa to stay in Belgium for my entire student teaching time. This means that I can only be in Belgium and the nearby countries for a total of 90 days

within a 6-month period of time. In order to make this work, I have to go to the UK for 23 days, then return to Belgium. This is where I am now. God has blessed my family with a network of missionaries around the world. My parents know the Pickett family, and the Picketts happen to live in Wales. When Mr. Pickett picked me up at the train station, he recognized me right away, even though I had only been in 6th grade the last time he saw me! It must be the blond hair. Mr. Pickett is a lecturer at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology, so he was able to secure accommodation for me there. It turns out that this is an incredible blessing for me, because I am able to be with college students again, and in a strong community of believers.

Here in Wales, I will be reading books for my Senior Seminar class, writing lesson/rehearsal plans for ISB, and grading a few recorded assignments over the internet.

I ask that you pray for the following:

- **Praise** God that He brought me safely to this supportive community in Wales
- **Pray** that God would continue to guide me in the process of preparation for teaching at BFA
- **Pray** that I would grow closer to God during this time of rest in Wales
- **Pray** that I would transition well between my different roles: student and teacher
- **Pray** that the rest of my student teaching would be a good time of growth and learning for me.

~Jill Musick