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My beloved family and friends,

It is now springtime in Germany! The flowers are starting to bloom, the birds are singing wildly, and the days are noticeably longer. The last month and a half have been full of events! I cannot possibly describe everything in this newsletter. For more stories from the month, visit my blog: <http://musickfamily.net/jill/blog/>.

Budapest

In March I had the opportunity to attend the ACSI Honor Choir and Strings festival in Budapest, Hungary. BFA was unable to send students because the festival happened at the same time as BFA's high school retreat. To make up for the lack of students, I played cello, Peggy (BFA's former string teacher) played violin and viola, and Katie (flute/clarinet teacher at BFA) played flute. BFA has the largest string program of all the European ACSI schools, which meant that the orchestra would have been severely lacking in numbers if we had not gone.

The Budapest trip was an eye-opener for me. I had not realized how few Christian schools in Europe have instrumental music programs. Choirs abound, but the turnover rate in these schools prevents most from having a band or orchestra teacher long enough to have a band or orchestra program.

Music Festival

Partway through March, BFA had its own music festival. The music department brought in adjudicators for voice, guitar, piano, strings, and woodwinds. Private lesson students performed 2 solo pieces for the judge, who then gave comments and suggestions for making the piece better. At the end of the week, the adjudicators selected the best performances to play in an honors recital.



A.P explains why he was gripping his bow so hard: "My hands were moisty!"

My students rose to the occasion. Many practiced more than ever before to be ready for the festival! It was fun to see them polishing their solos and performing well on stage. I only hope that they will find the motivation somewhere within them to practice through the end of the semester.

ICEC

BFA hosted the International Christian Educators' Conference this year. Teachers and administrators from schools all around the world came to our little town in Germany. There were seminars, workshops, and sessions designed to improve our teaching, develop our professional skills, and refresh us spiritually.

One of the benefits of a conference like ICEC is that we are able to interact with many other teachers who are facing similar challenges. We had "job-alike" sessions in which all the teachers of each subject area met together to discuss subject-specific issues. Yet again, I was impressed with the fact that BFA has a comparatively well-developed music program. Compared to public schools in the states, however, it is tiny! Conferences like ICEC give fresh perspective.

Spring Break

I went from the conference at BFA directly to a WorldVenture Europe conference in Austria. There were workers from Germany, Austria, and Slovenia.



WorldVenture workers during a message on John 17

We had prayer times, opportunities to share about our various ministries, messages from John 17, worship times, and free time for games and hiking. It was a very refreshing time. I loved hearing stories of what God is doing in other parts of Europe.

Festivals and conferences abound. Why do we like to gather into big groups? Is it that we want to be a part of something bigger than ourselves? I enjoy getting together with other members of the Body of Christ, especially when they point me to the Head, Jesus. I love it even more when I get to meet with people from all around the world; I can see a glimpse of how God is using the small parts of each ministry for His overarching plan.

What's Up Ahead

April 30-May 2 – Orchestra trip to Berlin
May 12 – Nursing Home concert
May 15 – Parents sign up for beginning band/orchestra for next year

I ask that you pray for the following:

- **Praise** God for conferences that allow me to get a fresh perspective and connect with other workers around the world.
- **Praise** God for times of rest and relaxation, preparing me for the stressful push to the end of the school year!
- **Pray** for direction with instrumental music programs in Christian international schools, specifically the beginning orchestra and band that Katie and I are starting at BFA.
- **Pray** that God would give me wisdom in planning the orchestra field trip to Berlin. I am still looking for a place for our group to perform.

God bless you all!
~Jill Musick

