

3rd April 2016 Culture Vultures

Hi all,

Me again!!! Now a qualified PRINCE2 foundation person!

After completing last times missive I realised how long it took and also what a month of culture we were just about to plunge into. This inspired me into a quick follow up minor missive around the New Zealand Festival – a biannual international bit of everything.

The brochure has been on the coffee table since October and Pauline inspired me to actual book things as she asked if we wanted to go and see ‘La Verita’. Now being Wellington – coolest little capital in the world – it gives us the luxury of being able to get tickets for event 2 weeks before they are about to happen!!!

‘La Verita’ are a Swiz version of Cirque De Soleil – but one act at a time rather than the grand all encompassing production. It was magical, whimsical, engrossing and presented amazing feats of human physical ability. For me favourites were the man who did the splits and then went to standing, without pushing up with his arms. They had produced a huge open sphere that three people flowed/danced around and counter-balanced each other as it rolled



around the stage.

A sunny weekend full of outdoor activities. A sculpture park, with everything on sale. Derek most loved the white frog sat by the stream and I was entranced by flowers made out of glass. The pink knitting, so big it draped over a tree, has to get a mention. Made out of plastic bags and had some knitting needles made out of walking sticks.

Then a fabulous use of summer for an indulgence in free activities. The American ‘Sila: The Breath of the World’. The orchestra were scattered around the civic square, vying for shade. The score was related to the time on their phones. Each instrument/singer played notes for the length of one breath. The voices were amplified by a black paper cone. They walked around and we could walk among them. A delight to teach children what instruments looked like, their size and their versatility. A unique and eerie sound. Derek and I got told off by two very small children. We had found grass, in the shade, to listen –they were quite vocal that this was not grass, this was their play area!!!!

Then onto the ‘Fly me up to where you are New Zealand’ – each flag has a child's dream AND the Catalonian funfair “Arquitectura



De Feria'. Everything was made out of recycled material and hand cranked. The ferris wheel, made of toilets seats was mezmerising. No child over 45kgs. They were weighed and had a board with that on around their neck. When they sat on their seat, weights were added so all seat/person combinations were 45kg. The shooting gallery caused adult amusements as the kids had to each and olive to get the stone to shoot at piano strings, the look on some of the kids faces as they ate the olive!!!



Then back to paid entertainment – at the St James theatre. A beautifully renovated space we had not been to before.



Now we arrived there 3 times in two weeks! The Australians, dance/drama/ multimedia presentation 'Complexity of Belonging'. My favourite of all we went to. It investigated the reason for belonging. Exposed me to concepts that

were new to me – white Australians are concerned that Asians will disenfranchise them they as they have Aboriginals. At one point a single lady was listing the 147 characteristic she wanted in a



man. One of them was ‘must look good on a horse’. Part way through a list a man came on stage and started dancing with her – she kept going with the list, without getting breathless or getting distracted. This dancing included throwing her around. It related to her list.

An interlude for straight forward, very slick music. As Derek classed them, wayward ‘x’ brass band player, OR New Orleans Jazz.

Our final outing was something we did not realise was famous – Pina Bausch’s ‘the Rite of Spring’. The whole evening became a cultural experience. We were in the God’s and sandwiched by generations. Behind us 16 year old trainee dancers. The boys clutched their chests and were lyrical about how much the piece had ‘moved’ them. They discussed if they would ‘steal’ sections to put in their own work! In front of us, two ladies over 70. They arrived later and sat with their mobile phones, texting. Then one got out their computer, tablet and started to look about an-

other event in the festival. They did put it all away before the performance started – but then got it all out in the interval.

As for the modern dance. Well they had a half hour interval so



they could cover the stage with soil. I did not think it would make a difference, but it did. The piece was very visceral, around the drive between the sexes as we come to spring. There were Busby Berkeley – patterns of dance that are best seen from above. In fact with that and the front of the stage being covering in chairs in the first half, the high cost stalls seats had disadvantages! You did have to wonder at their cleaning bill, having rolled in all that soil AND the fact our new Health & Safety Act came into force a week later and if that would mean they would need new soil each performance!!!

I do have an odd mind, and hopefully you can tell enjoyed the experiences we had. I do wonder how much it translates and is needed as a missive?

The final cultural experience was over Easter, when I had an unexpectedly delightful experience – a girlie crochet a hat out of a plastic bag afternoon. I said yes as the company is wonderful, but then gained a wonderful activity. Nay 2 activities as some people decided a recorder recital was more fun than the crocheting. Only problem for

me is with study, CV's, applying for new jobs and machine knitting all take priority over finishing my hat! All I can think at the moment is that this is another "great example of my ability to prioritise a busy portfolio". The only question is "Is completing a missive" an avoidance activity of study!!!!

On that love to all – Derek will be back for the next missive.

Love Steph

