

The Kiltie Times²⁰⁰⁷

SINCE A REALLY, REALLY LONG TIME AGO

A Kiltie Travelogue

This 4th of July, known as Independence Day to those of you in the US, found me relaxing in sunny Barcelona, well into my third week of traveling Europe. You might think I'd get a job after graduation, like most CMUers, but I have avoided the problem entirely and am currently touring lots of great places only available across an ocean. However, try as I might to forget about the past 4 years, I can't help but think that my Kiltie consciousness has been deepened by all that's happened so far.

Instead of heading to Scotland, as any good Kiltie pilgrim should, I initially found myself in Dublin, Ireland. My travel partner Herb* and I expected to hang out in some pubs, imbibing fresh Guinness, but found that there was much, much more. There, we checked out the street performance world championships, where people did things like blind unicycle fire juggling and provoking an entire crowd to belt out Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody within seconds – all acts requiring much more finesse than precision standing. We were impressed. Herb and I also hit up the Guinness Storehouse tour for a free pint taken in a bar with a name that was nerdy enough even for us – the Gravity Bar, perched atop the 8-floor storehouse for which the beer tycoon bought a 3000 year lease. I suspect he and dear old Andrew Carnegie may have a few things in common. Even considering the pleasant feelings brought on by a midday pint, the pubs of Temple Bar provided ample lure for nighttime activities – far better than the sad scene provided by PHI and Hemingway's back in the 'burgh.

Dublin also taught me another lesson more relevant than how to accelerate to my declining liver health, and it is thus: fellow Kilties

without future employment prospects have nothing to fear, because you can always be a street performer in an awesome city. We saw many street musicians, and none looked particularly homeless or in need of a shower; some were even quite good! I'm talking Kiltie concert solo quality, folks (OK, maybe that's not that good). Some of their instruments were pretty out there too, but maybe alternative instruments do need more recognition – the band could take the lead on that, what with all of its "alternative" musicians. What about a concert didgeridoo? Or marching accordion? I'm sure we already have some Kilties fit to play them, and if they can be played on the street, I'm sure they can be marched in a straight line too.

London was also a good place for Kilties. At the Victoria and Albert museum, their collection of rare and wonderful musical instruments introduced me to the virtues of the Serpentine, a long clarinet-ish woodwind that undulates like a snake. There were also several surprising lightweight instruments that I'm sure the K.B. would benefit from – I've always dreamed of a mini, marching piano! (And you thought I was passionate about the triangle).

I could go on at length, making all kinds of worldly suggestions, such as the addition of a Carmen-style flamenco act to accompany our Spanish marches, or the purging of the Donner ditch a la the infectious moat around Tower of London, but I don't want anyone to get too jealous. Just remember -- travel is worth every penny (more if someone else foots the bill). Did somebody say band field trip?

-CMW

*Name changed to protect privacy.

Director's Note:

Hello Everybody,

I hope you are enjoying a summer filled with work, study, relaxation, and no small amount of time practicing your instrument in preparation for another grueling year of Kiltie Band. Back in the 'Burgh, demands for my time on the marching band lecture circuit have been surprisingly meager. Perhaps the complexities of our no marching/standing, loud/louder, not serious/not at all serious approach are too much for some people! Or is it my exorbitant fee that has left me more time to hit golf balls? At any rate, I hope you'll check your schedules and leave plenty of time to be part of this most "unique" band. We are coming off a record setting year and look forward to even greater success. I'll see you on August 27.

XOXOX,

Paul Gerlach

PS - If you want to borrow ANY school instrument, claim it in the band room BEFORE 4:30 PM on Aug. 27. After that time the freshmen will be there to make requests. If you can't make it by then contact me (Mr. Gerlach) well in advance.

And Speaking of Freshmen!

Ensure a strong future for the Kiltie Band by mingling and talking with the freshpersons, especially at the first rehearsal. Jesse did, and now they're dating! Also, remember to tell them how great Mr. Gerlach is.

By The Way, Don't Forget To...

...take care of repairs
...buy reeds, valve oil, etc.
...send a generous donation to the "Paul Gerlach Mercedes Fund"!

WHAT A CRAZY, CRAZY YEAR WE'VE HAD!

And here's a backwards look through the Kiltie Times archives:

10 Years ago - The Kiltie Band surprised the Gerlachs with a gigantic 30th birthday cake for Mrs. Gerlach. "Actually, I'm a bit put off," complained Mrs. Gerlach. "I won't be thirty until next year!" Student senate cut the Kiltie Cake Budget that spring, effectively destroying all plans to fix the mistake.

20 Years ago - Five Kiltie Alumni are driven to UPMC after suffering minor heart attacks at the 1987 homecoming game. Authorities blamed Director For Life Paul Gerlach's ambitious attempt at choreographing a Cadet style marching show. "It was ridiculous," said one victim's daughter. "They should have known how shocking the backwards marching would be to my father." While this publication politely questioned Gerlach's sanity and wondered whether he would be allowed to continue as director or be executed, no fatalities were reported and the Kilties returned to their regular chaos the following week.

50 Years Ago - The Kiltie donuts regularly eaten before practice on Saturday mornings may have contained laxatives. An hour after practice began, 50 Kiltie band members simultaneously rushed off the field towards the bathrooms. "There was Phenolphthalein in my donut, I tell you!" said one chemistry student in the band. "What a great prank! I never would have thought of it. It has simply never been done before!" Due to the indisposed nature of most of the band, Director for Life Paul Gerlach called off the show. "We had to cancel the game as well," joked then President John C. Warner. "Without the band, it just didn't hold any more entertainment value." -DKL

OÙ ÉTAIT ESTRAGON?

There are three kinds of people in the world: Kilties, Russians, and others. I'm going to talk about the Russians. Once upon a time, there was a guy named Vladimir, and he liked to impale people, or otherwise maim or kill them. He was actually Romanian, but whatever. People figured that he liked hurting people so much that they were ok with calling him Vlad the Impaler. I mean, if you're an Impaler, then that's just simply what you do. It's your thing. So Vlad was one of these guys. He was also the inspiration for the story of Dracula, in case you care.

Then along in the history books came this other man, whom we'll call Dmitri. And let's call the year "1460", just for kicks. You see, Dmitri was a farmer in Siberia, and one day he had the near-misfortune to meet Vlad. On his way between Romania and Puck-knows-where via Siberia, or what I like to call "the long way", Vlad happened to stop at Dmitri's potato farm, and he wanted something to drink. So Dmitri gave him some water, so as not to be impaled. But Vlad was not happy with just water, so he started impaling various things, whilst demanding something else to drink. He impaled pots and plants, cats and rats, and even potatoes in the ground. It was at this that Dmitri got an idea.

He squeezed out some fine potato juice for Vlad and handed it to him. Vlad was only slightly less displeased than he had been with the water. So Dmitri asked him to be patient and set to work trying to find various spices to make it better.

While working, however, Dmitri actually forgot about the potato juice, and Vlad stayed patient for a whole three weeks. At that time, Dmitri suddenly realized that he had forgotten all about the Impaler sitting in his living room, and he rushed back with the jug of potato juice, apologizing profusely. But something had gone wrong! It smelled funky, and half of it was frozen from being outside in the Siberian cold. Disheartened, and thoroughly berated and threatened by Vlad, Dmitri poured the unfrozen mess into an unused jug and set it out to thaw by the fire.

By this time, Vlad was completely out of patience. He grabbed the jug of runoff liquid and drank the whole thing. And what did he find? Drunken delight! That's right, kids; Dmitri had invented vodka. Vlad was at this point so surprisingly delighted that he commissioned for Dmitri to mass market this new drink all over the world, including in the as-yet-undiscovered United States, in the most amazingly far-sighted marketing campaign ever. Thanks to Dmitri's hard accidental work, we now have the foul cheap drink known as Vladimir. And now you know why Kilties can no longer march in a straight line after their junior year. -RXR

Save The Dates!

Aug. 27 – First Rehearsal (PIZZA!)
Sept. 8 – Grove City 1:00pm
Sept. 22 – Allegheny 7:00pm
Oct. 13 – Case Western 12:00pm
Oct. 27 – Washington 12:30pm
Nov. 10 – Washington + Lee 1:00pm

All games are home games.

Nov. 29 – Holiday Concert
Nov. 30 – Day after Holiday Concert
Nov. 31 – Doesn't Exist

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