

March 20, 2023

Hello, eurobrass 2023!

I've been reading a lot of Paul lately—every Bible study I'm in seems to have converged on his letters at the same time. I've read the Pauline epistles before, but this time, I've been particularly struck by Paul's deep affection for the fellow believers to whom he's writing. It's as though his love for God's people and his thankfulness for their brother- and sisterhood in Christ overflow onto the page. As I've watched this year's eurobrass team come together, I can kind of understand the feeling. 😊 I'm thankful to our God for each of you: for your faith, for your willingness to put your gifts into the service of God's kingdom, and for your desire to see God glorified through the ministry of eurobrass. At the same time, I'm praying that you'll continue to grow in wisdom and understanding of God and flourish in good works—particularly during our time together. I can't wait to play with y'all in just a few months!

This letter is intended to be your one-stop source of information about the tour this summer. It contains general information that you can read anytime as you prepare, but I'd recommend at least one read-through before you zip your suitcase for the final time.

Music:

1. This year's program is almost complete, with just a couple of pieces left to be written; we'll try to send parts in May.
2. The entire ensemble plays standing, including horns and tuba.
3. Since we're playing in air-conditioned buildings in the US this summer, we'll tune to A=440 Hz. If you're used to tuning higher (or lower!), please take some time before rehearsal week to retune your ears to A=440.
4. eurobrass will bring music stands, folders, music, and a tuba stand. Please bring anything else you need, including instruments, mutes, and instrument stands.

Travel

1. We're working as quickly as we can to finalize the itinerary; we'll let you know as soon as that happens.
2. We will meet at Philadelphia International Airport on Saturday, July 8 by 2:00 PM. We'll have more specifics on this a couple of weeks before we arrive.
3. We'd love for everybody flying home on July 31 to book from Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. However, if some folks find better deals out of John Glenn Columbus International Airport, we'll send a van there as well. Regardless of airport, please book a flight that leaves at noon or later—this will make for a considerably more relaxed Monday morning.
4. Once you've booked a flight, please keep your receipt. Our practice since we began offering travel reimbursement in 201 has been to reimburse those traveling internationally, but not those traveling within the country. That said, we realize that the US is larger than Germany, and that traveling to Philadelphia/from Cleveland is a long trip for many of us. We'd like to offer some sort of travel reimbursement, but won't know if that's possible until after the tour. So for now: we can't promise anything, but hang on to those receipts just in case.
5. Please e-mail Chris (chris.woods@greenville.edu) with your flight information, including airport you're flying from, flight number, and day and time.

6. Keep receipts for any extra baggage fees you have to pay for instrument cases—eurobrass will reimburse those.

Packing

1. It's helpful to have a smallish overnight bag to take to host homes, so that you can leave your big suitcase at the church.
2. Most of the places we'll be traveling are pretty uniformly hot and humid in July. However, most of them are also very aggressively air-conditioned, so you may want a light jacket for indoors. A rain jacket or small umbrella might also come in handy.
3. A small iron will be set up in the ladies' changing room before the concert each evening.
4. Host families (and teammates!) love to see pictures of your families. Kathryn especially loves to see photos of your pets.
5. Please bring your own minor medical supplies: band-aids, ibuprofen, etc.
6. Earplugs—usually not terribly expensive, often terribly useful.
7. If you enjoy walking outside, particularly in the evening, you might enjoy it a lot more with insect repellent.

Concert Clothes

Men:

- Black dress pants—no jeans
- Long-sleeved black dress shirt (you'll probably want to bring several).
- Black socks
- Black shoes
- eurobrass will provide a blue tie

Women:

- Black skirt or dress pants. Please choose something that covers the knees: pants, a long skirt/dress, or a shorter skirt/dress paired with thick black nylons/leggings
- Black dress shirt, long or short sleeved (not sleeveless—shoulders should be covered. We recommend bringing several).
- Black shoes or nice sandals—no flip-flops
- eurobrass will provide a blue scarf

We'll be spending one day at Salvation Army Camp Rappahannock (about an hour south of DC), playing a concert and possibly doing some workshops with the brass band kids at the camp. We'll dress a little more casually that day:

- black eurobrass polo (If you have one, bring it; if not, we'll provide one for you)
- neutral-colored pants or skirt (no blue jeans, track pants, or sweatpants)
- appropriate shoes

Staying Connected

1. WiFi access can sometimes be hit or miss on tour—we anticipate having WiFi at Cairn, but after that it may vary from church to church (and host home to host home). We'll do our best to provide Wi-Fi passwords at any churches that have networks, and you're welcome to ask your hosts if they have a network and can give you the password. That said, unless your host sends you to your room with a bottle of water and the password, please take a few minutes to chat with them before taking off to check email.

2. If you've got folks you particularly wish to stay in regular touch with, you may want to make sure you've got enough mobile data to bridge a day or two without WiFi if necessary.

Other Preparations

1. At each concert, a member of the ensemble gives a brief testimony. This doesn't have to be the story of how you first came to Jesus (although it can be)—any story about what God is doing or has done in your life, or something he's taught you lately, is fine. These should be God-focused (should include scripture), personal, and short (4 minutes maximum). We'd love to have a chance to read or hear your testimony before you give it publicly—while we trust you to tell your own story, we also find that these testimonies often benefit from a read-through before they're spoken publicly. If you finish your testimony before tour (highly recommended!), feel free to send it to Kathryn (KCheney@eurobrass.de) and/or Angie (AHunter@eurobrass.de).
2. In early July we'll activate the eurobrass prayer blog on Facebook and by email. At that time you'll receive information about how your family and friends can sign up for regular updates during the tour.
3. You've already sent us your health insurance information in case of emergency. While we of course hope everything will run smoothly and this will be a moot point, please be aware that any medical expenses you incur on tour will be your responsibility.

COVID-19

Boy, do I wish we could have skipped this paragraph. However, the virus remains prevalent enough that we can't ignore it. We're trying to balance multiple concerns wisely—the earnest desire to complete the tour as scheduled, the desire to limit the spread of illness if anyone does get sick, and our responsibility to our concert hosts and host families. So here's the plan: As long as everybody stays healthy, no precautions necessary. If someone begins to show potential COVID symptoms, that person will take a rapid antigen test. If the test is positive, it will be repeated to confirm the result. In that case...

1. We will reserve a nearby hotel room for that individual (unless a host family specifically says a COVID-positive person is welcome in their home).
2. The length of that hotel stay will be determined by the musician and ensemble leaders, based on the severity of the symptoms.
3. The COVID-positive person should wear a mask as long as the symptoms persist. Other ensemble members are free to mask as well, but this won't be required.
4. If symptoms are mild and the musician feels well enough to travel, rehearse, and perform, we will attempt to find a formation that will allow for 4.5 ft. between that person and other ensemble members. We'll make every effort to maintain that distance for all other team activities.
5. If the musician does not feel well enough to travel, rehearse, and perform, we'll make arrangements for them to stay in their hotel until symptoms subside. At that point, we'll figure out the best way for that musician to rejoin the team, whether it's sending a vehicle to pick them up or organizing a rental car for that individual to drive to where we are.
6. Masks and tests will be provided by eurobrass. Hotel/meal costs during isolation and if necessary, a rental car to return to the team will also be covered by eurobrass.

That's the policy—please join me in earnestly praying that we don't need it.

Other Prayer Requests

- That we find and confirm the final concert locations soon.
- That God will use our work and our time together for his glory.
- That we grow together spiritually and musically while living well together.
- That God will use us to reach the people with whom we interact.
- That the final logistical details for the tour come together smoothly and well.

Grace and peace,

Your eurobrass Leadership Team

Kathryn

Angie

Ben

Chris