

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

3-6-2007

Jessica Nelson '03 studies music in Brazil

University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news

Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Jessica Nelson '03 studies music in Brazil" (2007). *Campus News Archive*. 953.
https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/953

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Jessica Nelson '03 studies music in Brazil

Summary: Nelson studies at a Sao Paulo conservatory, teaches bassoon lessons, and plays at every opportunity that presents itself.

(March 6, 2007)-Two themes run through University of Minnesota, Morris alumna Jessica Nelson's decision to study in Brazil—music and people. Nelson '03, a music major, lives in Sao Paulo, a multicultural metropolis, the world's second largest city. The experience has enriched her life, professionally and personally.

Nelson's introduction to Brazil came in 2001 during a cultural exchange between the UMM Band and the Conservatorio de Tatui in Tatui, a smaller city in rural Sao Paulo state. At the time, conversations with her Portuguese-speaking counterparts were difficult, but the bassoonist communicated through bits of Spanish, hand gestures, drawings, and—of course—the international language of music. "I got to know so many people," recalls Nelson, "and felt the warmth of the Brazilian people and culture."

Back at UMM, Nelson enrolled in a beginning Portuguese course but the real communication transformation occurred when she returned for extended study in Tatui, where very few knew English. "The best thing that I did to improve my Portuguese was to teach English. I had five classes of five to 10 students, ages 14-65," shares Nelson. "If my students didn't understand me in English, I had to know the words in Portuguese. Now, my friends here tell me that they hardly know that I'm an American because I speak Portuguese so well!"

As language skills developed, so too did Nelson's musical accomplishments. During her three years studying at the Conservatory in Tatui, she played in several ensembles including Symphonic Wind Band. She is first bassoonist for the Symphonic Band in Cubatao. After several auditions, Nelson was selected to play with the Orquestra Experimental de Repertorio, one of the best pre-professional orchestras in Brazil. "The conductor is great, and the repertoire is challenging. A section 'monitor' acts like a teacher throughout every rehearsal," she shares. "Our concerts are in Sao Paulo's historic city theater."

In 2004, Nelson was chosen to participate in a music festival in Campos do Jordao. "Famous musicians from all over the world attended," remembers Nelson. Festival participation is demanding, but the rewards are great: "A usual day includes orchestra rehearsal in the morning, individual lessons and chamber music in the afternoon, and concerts at night. After three weeks of this rigorous schedule, everyone needs a break! But it's an excellent opportunity to learn more about music, your instrument, and yourself."

Nelson's network of musician friends also affords her interesting opportunities like serving as a substitute in a variety of ensembles. "The best subbing job I've had was for the Symphonic Jazz Orchestra, a professional group that plays only jazz and Brazilian music."

Nelson loves living in Sao Paulo, although she notes that safety precautions are necessary. "That's one thing I miss about Morris," she says, remembering her hometown.

In the city that “never sleeps,” Nelson and friends attend concerts, visit museums, enjoy music and dance in clubs, and frequent street fairs. “One of my favorite street fairs is in Liberdade, a neighborhood with the largest concentration of Japanese outside of Japan,” says Nelson. “Another favorite neighborhood is Beixiga, home to Italian immigrants where you’ll find the best Italian restaurants in the world! It’s fun to watch the samba schools’ rehearsals before carnival time.” In downtown Sao Paulo where Nelson works, she is surrounded by ancient buildings as old as 500 years, a historical aspect she enjoys.

While Sao Paulo itself could provide endless exploration, Nelson also ventures beyond the city. “Brazil is a great place to travel!” she says. “Every state is like visiting a new country. One of the best places is Salvador, Bahia, one of the oldest cities in Brazil.” When Nelson’s family visited, the group traveled to Rio de Janeiro and Foz do Iguacu, an amazing natural wonder of 270 waterfalls on the Iguacu River.

This year, before she returns to the United States, Nelson is studying at a Sao Paulo conservatory, teaching bassoon lessons, and playing at every opportunity that presents itself. She will miss the beautiful country, the energy of a cosmopolitan city, and her friends in Brazil, but graduate school plans may still hold connections to the country she loves. She has applied at the University of Iowa where the professor of music who teaches bassoon pedagogy is a musician from Tatui, the city where her Brazilian journey began.

Photo above:

Snorkeling with boyfriend Fábio near Parati, Rio de Janeiro state

Nelson (center) and friends on New Years Eve

Nelson and sister Jenny on Jessica’s apartment balcony in Sao Paulo

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.