

Vroni has set off on her European tour

Musician Vroni Holzman has just embarked upon her European tour.

It will last for a month and she will not be back in Edinburgh until July.

Vroni's luggage is pretty heavy – it includes her street piano which she plans to play in various cities all over Europe, and she has to load and unload it into her little van.

Vroni wrote to us from the road: "After an exciting start to the year for my little streetpiano, being featured on National Television, I am now setting off on a tour of Europe again. I want to play in June this year, and the weather was so difficult in July and August last year. It was either very hot or rainy and stormy, playing became such complicated activity. We had to literally watch out for flood warnings while getting sunburnt.

"On my way from Scotland I first played the city of Rotterdam. I was lucky to have the help of friends who are staying in the Netherlands for their studies. My piano playing was well-received, with children dancing and cyclists stopping to listen. After our stint my friend Emma had an idea and said: "We could go and play another town nearby. Schiedam is lovely and maybe easier to navigate."

So off we went, as my nephew Robert didn't mind seeing a little more of the Netherlands. It really was an adorable

place, windmills and canals and such friendly people. We played their little market square, surrounded by cafés and with plenty of folk listening and clapping.

“After this we drove to Bavaria, where I have my base. Robert kept me company so I wouldn’t get too sleepy on the night-time drive, we set off at 8pm and arrived at 10am the next morning.

“This year I will set off on an adventure to Switzerland, France and the Czech Republic. My friend from nursery is going to join me on this leg of the tour, although she has a sore throat at the moment so I hope she can make it.

“The plan is to visit the little town of Winterthur for which I have acquired police permission. They sent me lovely emails and in the end a long document stating EXACTLY where I am meant to play. Be careful not to bend any rules in Switzerland, they don’t like it, and punishment for street musicians can be up to 100 euros or a complete ban on busking in that city.

“We will stay stay in Constance with my friend Thilo, who I met when he set up the German Christmas Market in Edinburgh. We were in the pub during the pandemic and had to sit at a table together, those were the rules, although we didn’t know each other. From this we now have a wonderful friendship and he is joining me as a tour buddy.

“My next busk will happen in Colmar, a French town. Permission for this is difficult to get, and I actually haven’t got it yet, even after many phone calls and emails. But I am very hopeful. From there we will drive to Luxembourg and there we have to hit an office before noon to collect our permission to play.

“These are long drives and I hope they will all go well. I will then spend a couple days at my base and play my home town, and some adjacent places. It’s nice to honour your home places and visit them with your art whenever you can.

"Next my friend Stina will join me and we'll go to Bayreuth. This is a special place. My piano was born here. Manufactured in 1937 it is 87 years old now and needs a lot of tender care. This is why the company that made it, Steingraeber, said to pop by with it, they can do a little fixing and some tuning.

"I played Bayreuth last year and they sent a journalist to write a huge article, my piano was even mentioned on the front page. They are very proud of this little travelling piano in this town. Yay.

"From there we will head to Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic which is a beautiful place, and allegedly I am allowed to busk if I stick to all the rules. I shall print them out and have them with me so we don't go wrong. Although I always play as long as I can in one place, even if you are meant to switch every half hour these days, I just try and get away with it. The authorities see my piano and tend to leave me alone. They enjoy my playing so it's usually okay. Moving this beast is something that is best avoided if not absolutely necessary.

"We will return to base one more time and then I'll begin my journey back to Scotland, not without busking on the way of course. Hopefully Leipzig will be happy to see a busking piano player, certainly they have written out rules where they seem to welcome buskers in general. It was a balm to my soul to read this, as most cities are so complicated about it.

"I actually once drove to Leipzig, piano in the back of the van, ready to play. This was in the early 2000s I believe. We went there, our spirits high, but when we arrived it started raining and we had to give up before we even started. So let's pray for a sunny day in Leipzig this year.

"Once I arrive back in Scotland it will be time to go to Kelburn Festival, the biggest fun event of the year for artists and those who love music, and in August I shall play piano in the Meadows again as I have done for more than 20

years. What a joy to play amongst the trees and people hanging out having fun.”

The photos below show Vroni playing in Rotterdam this year.



