

Manfred's report of the 2009 Ray Conniff Fan Convention in Paris:

Friday, September 11:

From 5pm the fans from various countries gathered in the bar of Hotel Mercure. It was like a family reunion. Everybody got his/her name tag, such as this one for Claudine:



I held a little welcome speech, and distributed some giveaways, such as a compilation CD produced for the participants, titled "Ray Conniff's French Album", featuring 27 songs from France, including "Moulin Rouge", "April in Paris" etc.



Our organiser Francis had brought his own TV set and a DVD player, and we watched some video clips by Ray most of us had not seen before, such as the "Continental" clip from the early sixties, which shows Ray directing an invisible orchestra and chorus.

We also had a little quiz: I played a couple of bars of a recording in Ray's style and asked the participants to decide whether this was Ray or not. The first one was easy, it was from Dalida's recording of "Besame Mucho", but the second one wasn't. It was from a recording by Pat Boone in German, titled "Rosmarie". The winner was Don. His prize was a copy of the DVD with all the clips we had watched previously.



At 8 pm we went to the Brasserie Terminus Nord for dinner. The Brasserie features the atmosphere which most of us would have expected when thinking of a French restaurant. The food was delicious, and after the main course, the first surprise was presented: A huge cake, on which "Convention Ray Conniff à Paris 09/09" was written. It did not only look fantastic!



Thanks, Francis, I am sure everybody enjoyed this evening very much.

Saturday, September 12:

Our train for Chantilly left at 9:30 am. And less than half an hour later we arrived in Chantilly. Opposite the station we saw Francis' now closed record store, "Écouté". A coach took us to the Cha-



teau de Chantilly, which we found amazing. We had a very nice guide who gave us a lot of information both in English and French. From the Chateau we walked to the village of Chantilly, where we had excellent lunch in a very nice restaurant. Only few of us knew that Chantilly is for the French what Ascot is for the British. There is a race track, and well-worth seeing is a horse show, which we visited from 2:30 at the Grand Stables. Our Itinerary said that at 4 pm there would be a surprise, and this entry left room for

speculation. What we did not know was that the highlight of the Convention was advertised throughout Chantilly: A free concert by the orchestra in which Francis plays trombone. It



MUSIQUE MUNICIPALE de CHANTILLY	
Direction : Luc VALCKENAERE	
Concert du 12 Septembre 2009	
Espace BOUTEILLER	
CHANTILLY	
HOMMAGE à RAY CONNIFF	
Programme	
Orchestre d'Harmonie	
Fanfare for Conniff fans	Perry La Marca
Stardust	H. Carmichael
Frank Sinatra hits medley	arr. Naohiro Iwai
Orchestre Variety Club Cantilien	
Where or When	R. Rodgers
Stranger in Paradise	R. Wright d'après Borodine
April in Paris	V. Duke
Visit to G. Gershwin	G. Gershwin
<u>Jazz@pic</u>	
Basin street blues	S. Williams
Hello Dolly	J. Herman
Tin Roof blues	N.O. Rhythm Kings
Washington and Lee swing	C.A. Robbins
Orchestre Variety Club Cantilien	
Yesterdays	J. Kern
La mer (Beyond the sea)	C. Trenet
Mack the knife	K. Keill
Orchestre d'Harmonie	
Moment for Morricone	E. Morricone
Tiger rag	O.D.J.B.
Glenn Miller medley	G. Miller

was titled "Hommage à Ray Conniff", and featured many songs Ray had recorded, such as "Basin Street Blues", "Stardust" and "Mack the Knife". The concert, however, began with a huge surprise: A song composed by Perry La Marca, titled "Fanfare for Conniff fans", which made use of various Conniff-ish elements, like a tinkling piano and certain recurring sound patterns. "La Mer" was not performed, and there was no time for an encore (which the orchestra and its conductor would have deserved), because we had to catch the train back to Paris at 18:13. I tried to express my gratitude for this wonderful surprise in my little thank-you-speech after the concert, and also praised the members of the orchestra for their enthusiasm. Later I learned that Francis was not too pleased with the concert (and especially with his performances on the trombone). Anyway, I am sure everybody enjoyed the surprise concert very, very much. By the way, it was an honour to be greeted by the mayor of Chantilly, Mr Eric

Woerth, who is also the Budget Minister of France. As for the opening track, "Fanfare for Conniff fans", Francis told us the story how he had approached Perry and had asked for a contribution to the concert. Thanks to both of you, Francis and Perry!



At 8 pm we all met in front of the hotel and Francis took us by Metro to Champ de Mars / Tour Eiffel, which was beautifully illuminated. At 9 o'clock thousands of flashlights lit the Eiffel Tower, which was an incredible view. From there, we took a walk along the river Seine and went onboard a dinner cruise boat. The views were magnificent and I am sure everybody enjoyed the atmosphere, the food, and each other's company.

Sunday, September 13:

After breakfast we all gathered on the first floor of the hotel. Over night, Francis had the idea of recording Perry's composition with all of us singing. We rehearsed it a couple of times, and it seemed we all enjoyed it.



After that, we spent the day in groups. Some of us went to Montmartre, which could be reached within a few minutes on foot, others went to flower markets, theatre performances, concerts, etc. etc. The weather was beautiful, and I am sure everybody enjoyed this Sunday in Paris. The only regret by a couple of people was that there was no chance to say goodbye to each other in the evening.

Before I close this short report of the 2009 Convention, I would like to come back to the concert. There was a song in it, titled "Where or When", and when asked about the next Convention in 2011, I always quote a line from this song: "Who knows where or when?". We will have to wait and see...

Francis, on behalf of all participants of this Convention, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude again for everything you and Anne have done for us. Your organisation was perfect, and we all appreciate all your efforts you invested.

Thank you, danke, gracias, MERCI!

Manfred