Ray Conniff Fan Convention in Essen and Düsseldorf (September 4 – 6, 2015)

Participants: Warren, Rick (USA), Igor (Russia), Nimfa (Philippines), Sue, Trevor, Steve, Brian (England), Theo, Adelbert (The Netherlands), Claudine, Frank, Guy (Belgium), Otto, Irmi, Barbara, Bernd, Ingo, Irmgard, and Manfred (Germany)

Photographs taken by Claudine and Igor; a short report by Manfred

Friday, September 4, 2015

This is the hotel we stayed at:
The Mintrops Stadthotel “Margarethenhöhe” in Essen.
Great rooms, excellent service, wonderful facilities.

We started the 2015 Fan Convention with a reception at 4 pm. We had drinks and finger food, and watched a slide show of 45 minutes that featured photographs of all conventions. In the background you could hear songs by Ray Conniff which all dealt with the theme “Memories”.

This year’s “Conniff Quiz” was a crossword puzzle. All its solutions could be found on a 3 CD set, titled “Girls, Girls, Girls”, produced by Jürgen Klaus, who sadly passed away a week before the convention.

At 5:30 pm we left the assembly room for a short walk to a blacksmith shop (“Halbachhammer Ruhrmuseum”).

There we were shown how horseshoes were made. Here you can see Bernd as a helping hand to the smith. After that most interesting demonstration we walked back to the hotel.
At 7:45 pm we were taken by “maxi taxis” to a wonderful restaurant named “Villa Vue”, from where you had an impressive look at the city of Essen and a water reservoir nearby.

Barbara had the best room reserved for us (a year in advance!).

The food was unbelievably gorgeous, too.

Claudine and Manfred

Irmgard and Igor

Theo and his brother Adelbert

Guy and Frank

Barbara and Ingo

Steve and Nimfa

Warren and Brian

Sue and Rick
At 11:30 we were taken back by taxis to the hotel. It was raining cats and dogs. Other than that, the weather god was in a relatively good mood throughout the weekend. Some of us took a nightcap or two at the hotel bar. All I can say is, we had lots of fun.

**Saturday, September 5, 2015**

After a rich and tasty breakfast we were shown around the city of Essen by coach. Here you can see our driver with Trevor and Adelbert.

The tour included the famous “Villa Hügel”, which used to be the residence of the Krupp family / dynasty.

We also paid a visit to the “Gruga-Halle”, where Ray Conniff gave a concert in 1969. The big billboard showed “Conni – the Musical”. Some of us thought they had forgotten the double-f. (Quite an idea, right?) The tour revealed many faces of Essen. It was greener than most of us had thought.

Our guide explained the coat of arms.

A huge canary – one of many leading the way to the station. You know, miners used to carry canaries down into the mine tunnels. If dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide collected in the mine, the gases would kill the canary before killing the miners, thus providing a warning to exit the tunnels immediately.

The first part of the sightseeing tour ended at the café/restaurant “Die Kokerei”, where we had lunch.
It consisted of a typical miner’s meal, traditionally still served in that area, especially on Saturdays: Potato soup.
You could add sliced sausages or salmon, and croutons.

This was followed by another traditional dish, named “Kalte Schnauze” – meaning “cold snout”. (Don’t ask, why it is named this way!) It consists of layers of butter biscuits and chocolate, served with fresh fruit.

Next we had a guided tour through Zollverein with a geologist whose command of English was excellent. He showed us around this unique Unesco World Heritage Site. We learned a lot about coal mining, coal washing etc.
There are three parts in the Zollverein area: Coking Plant, Shaft 1/2/8 and Shaft XII.

Here you can see the old machinery used for taking miners deep down.

At 4:15 pm the coach took us back to our hotel, where we could relax for a little time.

In the evening we were taken to “Sportlertreff am Baldeneysee” by taxis. This is a beautifully located restaurant. Again, we had excellent food, a buffet this time. We watched some more videos, such as Laurel and Hardy dancing along Ray Conniff’s “Paradise” and a video collage of famous paintings (along with Ray’s rendition of “To All the Girls I’ve Loved Before”), titled “Girls, Girls, Girls”.

Otto gave Barbara a clock made of an LP copy of Ray Conniff’s “It Must Be Him”.

Again, great food ➔
Here you can see the happy couple, Barbara and Bernd. They had reason enough to be that way, because this convention was just fabulous due to their organization – and in spite of the fact that the number of participants was lower than usual.

Sunday, September 6, 2015

Some of us had to leave after breakfast, but others spent the day in Düsseldorf. Here you can see Bernd, Steve, Warren, Barbara, Nimfa, Rick, Trevor and Sue, waiting for their train.

Still in Essen on the way back from Zollverein to the hotel, Bernd asked the driver to stop the coach for a minute. Everybody got out and posed in front of this Coca Cola advertisement that originally showed a picture of Ray Charles. Well, thanks to Photoshop we came up with this souvenir photo of this wonderful get-together. Ray would have been pleased – like all of us.
THE RAY CONNIFF QUIZ
Would you have been able to fill in all boxes (see next page)?

Across:
3  The female form of the Spanish name Ramón
5  Last track on “Siempre Latino”
7  Ray’s recording features Tamara’s giggling at the end
8  A four-letter Dixieland lady
10 This married lady seduced Dustin Hoffman in 1967
12 This lady is called that way because she looks pretty in it
14 Weather-wise always on the bright side
15 Pet name for Germany’s chancellor
16 Before they break down the door, forgive me!
18 French for an unmarried and innocent (?) girl
19 Long Disco number on Ray’s album “Fantastico”
20 A type of fungus that can cause an infection, e.g. in the mouth
22 She can be found on “Hollywood in Rhythm”
24 Not the one from Gone with the Wind, whose name is spelled with a double-t
26 The name Judith would not have fit the rhythm of the song
28 Barbra Streisand played this role in her second movie
30 Name of Ray’s wife
32 Not a tribute song to Ms Allen but to a blue lady
34 Name of one of Ray’s wives
35 Cole Porter wrote this song, Ray recorded it twice
37 Name of Ray’s second daughter
39 This girl is swinging down the street so fancy free
40 Tamara’s pet name

Down:
1  This lady gets too hungry for dinner at eight
2  This girl is sweet
4  A film and now a musical, too
6  This may be a girl’s name, but in Gone with the Wind it’s the name of the plantation
8  A Spanish girlfriend
11 Simply by Starlight
12 Short form of Emanuela
13 Spanish for lady
15 A girl’s name as well as an album title and a song
18 French name given by the Fab Four
20 Second track on Ray’s “Latinisimo”-album
21 The president’s wife
22 This lady can make you tipsy
23 Title of an unusual Conniff recording, using a harpsicord
25 Name of Ray’s first daughter
26 The first name of the president of the first fanchub in French
27 Billy and Ray commonly played a song with this name
29 This lady can be found on “Rhapsody in Rhythm”
31 Not a song written for Ms Fitzgerald, but part of a title in Spanish meaning “for ‘her’”
32 The name of Vera’s mother
36 Beethoven wrote this short piece for her
37 Most women are like that – or?
41 Can be both a girl’s or a boy’s name – not suitable for the president

GOOD LUCK!
Girls, Girls, Girls... The Ray Conniff Convention-Crossword Puzzle (Essen, 2015)
SOLUTIONS:

Rosalie / Cole Porter wrote this song, Ray recorded it twice
Mane / A four-letter Dixieland lady
Manuela / Short form of Emanuela
Rosa / The name of Vera’s mother
Jean / A girl’s name as well as an album title
Louise / The English version of this name belonged to the president of the first fanclub
Ramona / The female form of the Spanish name Ramón
Tammy / Tamara’s pet name
Marianne / The president’s wife
Delilah / Before they break down the door, forgive me!
Sunny / Weatherwise always on the bright side
Michelle / French name given by the Fab Four
Gigi / A film and now a musical, too
Popsy / Title of an unusual Conniff recording, using a harpsicord
Brandy / This lady can make you tipsy
Laura / She can be found on Hollywood in Rhythm
Clair / Ray’s recording features Tamara’s giggling at the end
Magdalena / Second track on Ray’s “Latinisimo” album
Gloria / Long Disco number on Ray’s album “Fantastico”
Mandy / Can be both a girl’s or a boy’s name
Scarlet / Not the one from Gone With the Wind, whose name is spelled with a double-t
Candida / A type of fungus that can cause an infection, e.g. in the mouth
Adelita / Last track on “Siempre Latino”
Tamara / Name of Ray’s second daughter
Angie / Pet name for Germany’s chancellor
Caroline / This girl is sweet
Sue / Billy and Ray commonly played a song with this name
Dolly / Barbra Streisand played this role in her second movie
Georgy / This girl is swinging down the street so fancy free
Jude / The name Judith would not have fit the rhythm of the song
Robinson / This married lady seduced Dustin Hoffman in 1967
Jackie / Not a tribute song to Ms Allen but a blue lady
Stella / By Starlight
Mamselle / French for an unmarried and innocent (?) girl
Vera / Ray’s wife
Ann / one of Ray’s wives
Tara / This may be a girl’s name, but in Gone With the Wind it’s the name of the plantation
Elise / Beethoven wrote this short piece for her
Patricia / Name of Ray’s first daughter
Senora / Spanish for lady
Ella / Not a song written for Ms Fitzgerald, but part of a title in Spanish meaning “for ‘her’”
Pretty / Most women are like that – or?
Amiga / A Spanish girlfriend
Tramp / This lady gets too hungry for dinner at eight
Moonlight / This lady is called that way because she looks pretty in it
Spain / This lady can be found on “Rhapsody in Rhythm”

Ah yes, the winner was:

The first prize was a musical toy, which plays “Somewhere My Love” when you turn the handle.