

The 2011 Ray Conniff International Fan Club Convention in Vienna



From September 16 to 18, 2011, 50 people from various continents and countries gathered to celebrate Ray Conniff's music in Vienna. Here is a list of all the participants by their countries in alphabetical order:

Austria	Walter and Andrea
Belgium	Claudine and Maria
England	Sheila, Mike, Len, Joan, Steve, Trevor, Sue and Brian
France	Francis, Ann, Marc, Bernadette and André
Germany	Christian, Heidi, Julia, Daniel, Irmgard, Ingo, Irmi, Clemens, Bernd, Barbara, Karin, Helga, Manfred and Otto
Russia	Igor and Oxana
Spain	Ramon, the two Marinas and Bernat
The Netherlands	Theo, Frans and Henk
Ukraine	Svetlana
USA	Don, Warren and Rick
Wales	The two Alans, Wendy and Carys

Unfortunately, Marianne, Karin, John and Jackie, Ros and Bob, and Patrick could not make it, but they sent their best regards. In addition, Serge sent his best wishes, but he could not participate in the convention this time because of his retirement in September.

Friday, September 16, 2011:

Most of us stayed at the *Hotel am Konzerthaus*, just around the corner of the concert hall, where Ray Conniff gave a concert in 1969. From 5 pm we had our welcome party in the "Belvedere" room. My welcome speech also included statistical information. Since the addition of a counter to my Ray Conniff website, I realised that fans from all over the world pay about 1,000 visits to it per month; and as for Ray Conniff videos on *YouTube*, "Brazil" will reach a million visits soon. It was interesting for most of us, that the top ten list of the videos is as follows: *Brazil* is No. 1, and is followed by *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, *Tico Tico* and *Hey* (with Julio Iglesias).

On this first get-together, everybody received their first souvenir CD whose repertoire includes recordings by Ray Conniff, which can be referred to as "*Vienna Classics*", i.e. compositions by Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt, Léhar etc.

We emptied a couple of bottles of Champagne and also drank to Clemens' health and happiness, as September 16 is his birthday.

After the welcome party, we all walked through the *Stadtspark*, passing the monument of Johann Strauss, where we rested for a little while and listened to Ray Conniff music that came from Otto's portable CD player.

After a short walk through the alleys of Vienna we enjoyed the evening in the Gothic-Romanesque vaults of "Twelve Apostles' Cellars". We had a room for ourselves deep down in the basement, where we had a wonderful evening with good food and drink, lots of Ray Conniff music. In addition, their "Heurigen" musicians enchanted us with live music, a couple of times. Around midnight, on our way home, we passed a renowned ice-cream parlour, and many of us could not resist a dessert.

Saturday, September 17, 2011:

Again, the weather was perfect. After breakfast we took a walk to the Hofburg. From 11 am there was to be a concert by the Hoch- und Deutschmeister band in a beautiful yard. Most of us enjoyed it sitting outside a café with a *Melange*. At 12 o'clock we were met by a guide who took us through historic Vienna on foot. This sightseeing tour was very informative. We visited places most of us otherwise probably would not have seen. This tour took almost three hours.

After a somewhat belated lunch we explored more of Vienna on our own or in groups. Some of us went to *Schönbrunn Castle* and its beautiful parks, others went to the world-famous amusement park, the *Prater*.

In the evening, we met for dinner in a Viennese restaurant, the *Gmoa Keller*, which is only a few metres distant to the *Hotel am Konzerthaus*. There, we were entertained by musician Charly and his electric piano. Of course, also Ray's music was played a couple of times during this evening. All participants received their second souvenir CD, which was titled "The Ray Conniff Singles Collection, Vol. 4".



Sunday, September 18, 2011:

After breakfast, some of us went to the *Hofreitschule*, others to *Schönbrunn Castle*, and some to the museums. In the evening, 18 of our group met for a trip to *Grinzing* by train and bus. Many of us had *Wiener Schnitzel* and *Radler* beer in a typical restaurant. What a perfect way to end a great convention.

Before I close, let me reveal that the next Ray Conniff International Fan Club Convention will be held in **Bruges, Belgium**, in 2013. I hope to see YOU there, then.

Manfred