

# HOH EXPERIENCE 2006

BY Anthony (acozz333)

Bob Lane asked me to provide some insights into Home Organ Holiday, which I attended last week. This was my 4th one, as I started going in 2002. I will first answer some specifics to questions Bob had.

Transportation: If you can get yourself to Chicago's O'Hare, the rest is easy. You walk over to the Shuttle Bus Area and wait for the Burgundy "Crowne Royal" van to come. Hop on board and it takes you to the hotel. The van runs every 15 minutes during the day, then every half hour at night. It will also get you back to whatever terminal you need to go to when you leave.

The Hotel accommodations: Very Nice. It is not a Ritz Carlton, but it is also not a Days Inn. The Crowne Royal (an up scaled version of the Holiday Inn chain) has nice comfortable rooms, is very clean, beautiful outdoor spaces, an indoor pool, a top rate restaurant (really, though you will be fed in the main dining room for HOH, you can pay to eat at the restaurant), a super bar/game room/ lounge and a small cafe. There are computers available, and a gym, but you will probably be so busy you will not want to bother. The ballrooms and conference rooms used are great. Lowrey takes over the hotel for this event. I will post of picture of the main ballroom.

The nature of the performances: Do you love GREAT organ music? If so, this is the place for you. 3 nights of amazing concerts. Night 1 was Jim Wieda (a long time player, now a Lowrey rep), Bil Curry (you all know him, the genius behind the Lowrey rhythms and presets), Brad Bryan (the broadcaster of Lowrey Organ Radio on [www.live365.com](http://www.live365.com)- Brad is now also a Lowrey rep and I understand owns 12 Lowrey organs, many vintage), and then Jim Vogelmann- who is truly a gifted performer. On night 2 it was-Paul Shaub a Lowrey Artist, Bob Ashworth a smooth performer and Lowrey rep (Bob introduced the Sensation), Catherine Oldman from England- all I can say is WOW- gorgeous and talented, and finally Glenn Derringer (some may remember him from his days as a child prodigy from Philadelphia who went on to perform for Wurlitzer- and at one point he owned Lowrey with some investors (1984-1989). He also worked for Baldwin and Hammond. This was his first organ concert in 16 years, but you'd never know it. Finally on Night 3- Joanie Manero (she plays with all she's got- not to miss- a talented organist and the woman who wrote the Lowrey Magic Course), Oliver Clark- another Brit with top-rate skills, Tony Adams (arranged with Henry Mancini, he is a friend of Dennis Awe), and finally "Mr. Lowrey", Dennis Awe- who is really Awe-some! I came home wanting to put an axe to my new Stardust and consider learning the guitar, as I sound nothing like these performers!

Food: There is LOTS of it. First when you arrive there is a cocktail party (you get 2 free drinks) then dinner! All meals are buffet style- though it is all smoothly managed. Breakfast is at 8:30- 10:00 AM, Lunch is from 12:00-1:00, Dinner is 5:30-6:30, Hot Cocoa and Cookies along with dancing is at 10:00 pm. The last night there was an Ice Cream Social- very fun. It is like a cruise, the food is traditional midwestern fare. Bacon, eggs, sausage, French toast, cereal, fruit, pastry, juices coffee for breakfast. Lunch was hamburgers, brats, and fries, deserts one day and then sandwiches with sides, and of course deserts the next (there is always fruit for desert too). For dinner there was chicken, fish, pasta- it changed by night and I can't remember it all. This is not a place to worry about your weight, and they joke saying you can go on the B.B.P. diet afterwards (Buy Bigger Pants).

Is there a Factory tour: No- there are over 600 people there, the factory is not very big it is a smallish military type "hut". It would be impossible with this attendance to show the factory. Lowrey sells a video tour, but naturally if you are passing through Chicago any other time and you contact them I am sure they would try to arrange a tour for you. I would say the factory is the size of a medium sized supermarket. Lowrey organs are made by hand- mostly women, mostly women of polish decent- hence the abundance of "Polkas". I like that American workers design and make these. Lowrey makes ALL their organs in this factory.

During the day there are workshops. Here were some: Model specific workshops for LX, LC, SE and SU organs (all at different times- Bil Curry did most); Old songs, new styles; Understanding the different types of presets; Restyling the Rhythms; Sound like a million bucks- for free; Holiday for Strings; a bit on the side (FX); Dennis Awe does a "Look at the past" at the Lowrey museum- this year there was a 1959 Lincolnwood (which was owned by Arnold 'Arnie' Berlin, the CEO of Chicago Musical Instruments, the manufacturer that brought the Lowrey name to the market), and 1970's Symphonic Theatre Console with Brass and String Symphonizer, a Genius G-100, a Genius portable, and an MX-1. There are also displays with circuitry, parts, and collateral; photos- it is a lot of fun. Every year they have different organs- Dennis always talks about what was unique to an instrument; There was a 'fun with flutes' workshop; chord fun for a rainy day; timing...you're in control; secrets of intros and endings; the fabulous 50's; Orchestral Arranging.

Music is played during all meals. There is a Lowrey store set up next to the museum that sells all "Lowrey" merchandise like disks/ music/ presets/ mugs, etc. For an extra fee you can stay one more day and do a side tour. This year went to an artist studio, an historic cemetery with amazing sculpture, the Union Club for lunch, then the King Tut exhibit at the Field Museum. They avoid the factory as there is no one available to show you around as they pack up the event at the hotel.

The event was around \$550 per person double occupancy and around \$750 if you went solo- as I did. Included all meals- but not the flight there which was only \$160 round trip. Next year is the 10th year, and they are planning a very special HOH. You can find information on the Lowrey web site or call Sue Kolar at Lowrey to attend. There are practice rooms where you can try out the organs with headphones (open from 7 am to 7 pm). No one can sell there, so it is a very low-key enjoyable event. There is something called "Friends Playing For Friends" where normal folk like us can play for each other. There are some great players out there! I just love it, in a day where it becomes increasing harder to find good organ music with skilled players, this event holds me for a year. We all know where we can find church music, but pop is king here. I will be back next year. Plus, I get to see some friends from around the country that I have met over the years- it is like a homecoming of sorts. Hope this is helpful to all of you.