
More Memories of the Hotel Manchester

My partner booked me into the Hotel Manchester in the early 1970's as I frequently have to go to Paris on business and he thought it the perfect epitome of an 18th Century *hotel* with its *cour d'honneur* etc. When I arrived, I was told that the proprietor was 'away' and that the staff was seriously depleted. My bag was taken by a gnarled dwarf and I was conducted to a lift which swayed like a metronome until we reached the top floor - and I *suffer from vertigo!*

My room was quite filthy, the yellow stains in the shower being particularly memorable. After coming back late from the Opéra I failed dismally to make the key in the lock work and awoke everyone on the landing, the usual French mix of hotel guests ranging from the respectable *bourgeoisie* to the odd commercial traveller with his 'lady of the night'.

After a great deal of commotion, the door suddenly opened and I fell rather gracelessly into my room. But the ladies of the hotel were kind and took my business messages, and when I left, I bought some cat-food for *Mr Beekee* (phonetic spelling), the enormous cat, only to be told '*Dont waste your money on him - he has to work hard for his keep!*'

Shortly afterwards, I found the Donizetti connection and also discussed the hotel with an Australian friend who is really a business associate. He had been booked into the Manchester by a travel agency in Melbourne and had a somewhat bizarre time there. When he went back to Australia he asked them to investigate, only to find that the owner was apparently serving time for keeping a disorderly house - I am sure that Donizetti would not have minded!

Paris seems full of musical hotels, as I have stayed at The Bedford, the long-time home of Villa Lobos. I have often passed the Manchester since and actually had a meal there last year. I am very sorry to see it go.

Richard Jeffree

Note: Since this article was written the Manchester has been demolished.