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IFMA Boston attends an evening at Symphony Hall - by Annie McEvoy

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IFMA kicked off their event series at Boston Symphony Hall on September 27. Hosted by Symphony Hall Operations, Robert Barnes director of facilities and in attendance was also Peter Rossi, Symphony Hall facilities manager and members of his team.

Boston Symphony Hall was completed in 1900 for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and designed by architects McKim, Mead and White.

Barnes discussed the history and challenges throughout the years from before it was built to date and fun facts in between. The tour allowed attendees an opportunity to stand on the actual stage. Chairs, music stands as well as the harps, kettle drums and other larger instruments were still in their places. Small modern microphones hung cohesively throughout the area but the view from the stage was like looking back in time, the only thing missing was concert goers dressed in reminiscent dress. While on stage the organ was played intensifying a unique experience for all. Some even took turns playing conductor, bringing the inner child out, with smiles of amazement and curiosity in us all. Over the years very few design changes have been made since its completion. A new stage floor was not even installed until 2006 out of fear of changing the acoustics. Replicating an over 100 year old floor is impossible but due to safety reasons it had to be replaced. A vertical grain fir subfloor from 1899 was in excellent shape so it was left in place and the nails used in the new floor were hand cut using the same size and construction as the originals. The hall's leather seats are the original ones installed in 1900.

Boston Symphony Orchestra presents more than 250 concerts annually. Its first season was 1881-1882. In 1999 it was designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark. Symphony Hall remains, acoustically, among the top 3 concert halls in the world and the only musician's name that appears in the hall is Beethoven's inscribed over the stage.

For something completely different, a demonstration by Ben Houge, one of Berklee's finest college professors with a musical, technologically infused interlude with Apple iPads. The iPads had an app assuming the role of an orchestra. The intention is to use this in restaurants while dining for a unique experience.

Houge is also an award winning video game maker/inventor. Several attendees could not believe they were meeting the inventor of their favorite childhood video game. He has traveled the world and lived in several countries working, inventing and teaching.

You just never know who you are going to meet and the opportunities that arise when you attend an IFMA event. Well done by IFMA program team. This was an opportunity I never would have had if not for the IFMA members who volunteer and take part in the efforts for all members.

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