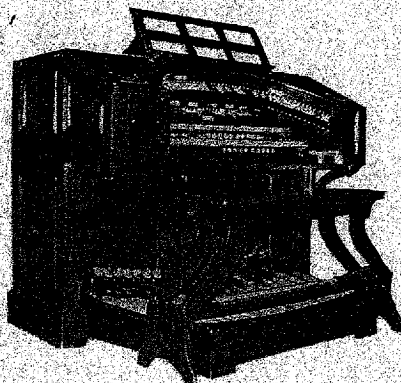


APRIL, 2003



2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA



3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Ian Davies and Friends

Bill Schumacher

and Wendy Hambly



Saturday, 29th *MARCH* at 1pm
Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL

1 Gray St, Bondi Junction

Volume 42
Issue 3
PRINTED BY TOSA

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083
Print Post Approved PP255003/01823

Price
\$1.50

TOSA NEWS

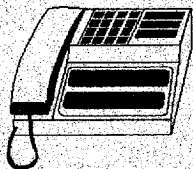
APRIL, 2003

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc

For the smooth running of TOSA, please contact the right person:

General Business - SECRETARY
Ticket Bookings - TICKET SECRETARY
Membership, Renewals, Change of Address -
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - EDITOR
All numbers use the prefix 02

* DIRECTORY *



PATRONS:

Ian Davies
Canterbury Councillor, Ald. John Gorrie

PRESIDENT:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151
pearceww@ozemail.com.au

VICE PRESIDENTS:

John Shaw 9759 5825
Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7 pm)
npalmer@compassnet.com.au

SECRETARY:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318
schuie@justinternet.com.au

P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

TREASURER:

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, 1805

COMMITTEE:

Peter Harding 9629 2257
Barry Tooker 9744 1535
Robert Gliddon christieorg@bigpond.com
Rick Marschall ram@hydrophones.com
Ron Mosman ronmosman@bigpond.com
Cliff Bingham 9482 1438

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron 4841 1616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 9745 2417 (phone or fax)
P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 1805
francoise@physiol.usyd.edu.au

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon christieorg@bigpond.com

CONCERT TAPE HIRING and MARRICKVILLE PRACTICE CONVENOR:

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7 pm)

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

Kath Harding 9629 2257

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 9759 5825

TRANSPORT OFFICER:

Ritchie Willis 9580 3581



COMING EVENTS

MARCH

Saturday 29 at 1.00pm Ian Davies and Friends
Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL
1 Gray Street, Bondi Junction
FREE CONCERT

APRIL

Monday 7 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Friday 18th - Tuesday 22nd
**TOSA's 30th National
Festival of Theatre
Organ Music
Adelaide, 2003**

MAY

Sunday 4 at 2.00pm Warren Lubich Concert
Marrickville Town Hall

Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 8 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie

Phone 9716 0151 to confirm

Thursday 22 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall

Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

From The President

Editorial

Hello folks !

Russell Holmes put on a first rate performance at Marrickville on 9th March. As we told the audience, Russell came to Australia with wife Suzie and quite a bit of luggage, but not a scrap of music to be seen. He said if it wasn't in his head already, it was too late!

Well the music was certainly there!

And it was a pleasure to have Russell and Suzie here in Sydney. We enjoyed their company.

By the way, did you see the bit on TV about the United Airlines plane that ran off the runway into the mud in Melbourne on the day of our concert? It was the Los Angeles to Melbourne via Sydney flight. And yes it was the one Russell and Suzie were on as far as Sydney! Just got them off in time we did!

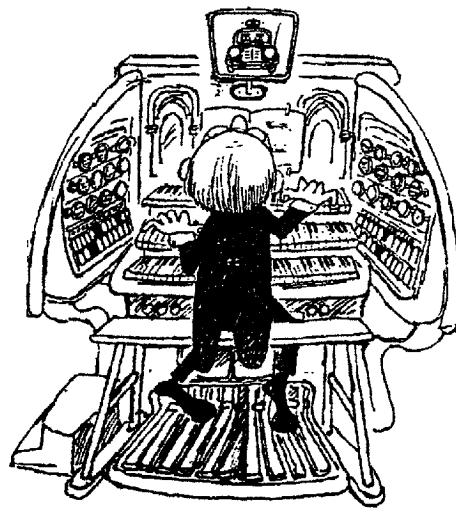
Last time Russell visited he played at the Orion. This time, playing our other instrument, he spoke very highly of the Marrickville Wurlitzer, and obviously enjoyed playing it. And, like he said, it's nice that "everything works".

The next month is a quiet time for TOSA Sydney - its Festival time in Adelaide. But don't miss the concert at Marrickville on Sunday 4th May - Warren Lubich is not to be missed.

Finally, If you are following the dates for Andrew Grahame's Theatre Organ program on 2MBS, (page 4 of March TOSA News) please note that Tuesday 13th May is changed to 6th, and June 10th is now on 3rd.

Watch this space -

Walter Pearce



Welcome To New Members

TOSA is pleased to welcome a new member to our ranks and to wish her an enjoyable time with us :

Joan Wilson - Yowie Bay

.....
STOP PRESS !!
.....

Late News from
Chatswood
.....

Here is news of the next Chatswood concert, which will be of interest if your TOSA News arrives in time:

Chatswood Town Hall's Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ will have its first concert for 2003 on Friday, 21st March at 8pm. The organist will be Paul Fitzgerald from Adelaide.

Paul, although not well known in Sydney, is an extremely talented musician, concert performer and teacher. Tenor Dean Sinclair will also be featured.

The admission price is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors, with children under 15 admitted free of charge.

Chatswood's second concert will be held on Friday, 9th May .

Reserved seating can be obtained by phoning 9417 2987.

We have hurried to get this issue to you a little earlier than usual to make sure you know about the Ian Davies special event at the Bondi Junction/Waverley RSL. This free concert is to be held on Saturday 29th March - the news of it did not reach me until Ian phoned after the last issue of TOSA News came out - hence the rush! Bill Schumacher and Wendy Hambly will also be playing the Club's Rodgers Trio Theatre Organ for the enjoyment of all. It starts at 1pm and lasts until 4pm, with drinks available at Club prices. A very enjoyable afternoon for all, with public transport close by to lessen the travelling time and burden.

Russell Holmes' concert at Marrickville was well received by all those present - a really wonderfully talented player with an entertaining repertoire and all presented with a lot of genuine theatre organ registrations. Russell seemed to like and appreciate the quality of the Wurlitzer and would have happily packed into his bags and taken it home with him, or so he said.

The little programme handout with information about Russell that is usually given to all those attending the concert got lost somewhere, I know not where, in the system (apologies!). I prepared it but couldn't be found for the concert! Of course, all members were able to read Russell's biography in their copy of the March TOSA News. The other news the leaflet contained was that our next concert is also at Marrickville on Sunday 4th May with the well-respected American theatre organist Warren Lubich who has not visited our shores for many years - many will be looking forward to hearing this great player once again and renewing old acquaintances. More about Warren in next month's issue.

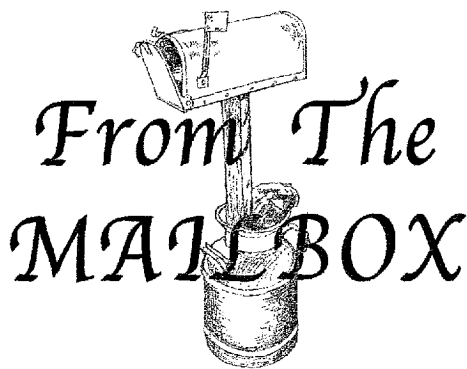
Thank you again to all the people who contribute to TOSA News, and this time especially to Bill Schumacher who provided pages 12 and 13 of this issue already set up, ready to go to print. It saved me a lot of time and effort, which is very much appreciated.

See you in Adelaide?

Best wishes,
Colin Groves

Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

The deadline for each edition of TOSA News is the 12th of the preceding month



From The MAILBOX

11/3/03

The new "TOSA Promotions Team" had its inaugural meeting on 3rd February, then met again on 10th. The Team had proposed its next meeting to be the second Monday in May, but challenges from the Membership are coming so thick and fast that it has become clear to me (writing 11th March) that the Team needs to meet much sooner.

Prompted by Merv Holland on Sunday, alerted to this fact, I've considered his suggestion and am requesting that the Team meet on Monday 17th March or 24th March at the usual venue that the TOSA General Committee use. This urgency is also necessary because Walter and I and others are unavailable in April.

TOSA IS ALIVE and VERY WELL. Your Promotions Team has people of integrity, passion for TOSA, tireless, busy business people both self-employed and otherwise, fully rounded people, musician/artists in their own right on keyboard, piano, organ and theatre organ, some on the mighty *Wurlitzers* themselves and some on electronic organs. They are all enthusiastic about TOSA's survival and have all been working behind the scenes promoting TOSA. The doom and gloom that we have all felt at times, not without reason, is not part of the Team's thinking.

A bright spot that keeps us all going is Marrickville. Didn't our dear *Wurlitzer* do us proud on Sunday 9th March? Not only did she sound great, but also responded with ease and grace in the hands of an expert organist. Thank you Ken Martin for tuning and Neil Palmer for caring for the organ.

No! Russell Holmes - you can't have our Marrickville organ - I'm afraid you shot yourself in the foot there. You presented her too well, playing not only Gershwin, but also music I love, from the 20s and 30s through to to-day.

May we request further concerts

featuring Russell, together with workshops for young Theatre Organists and for pianists interested in learning Theatre Organ.

The Team are over-the-moon at these possibilities and are also anxious to get a SCHOLARSHIP FUND up and running to encourage these people. The scholarship would cover costs of travel to and from Workshops, the Workshop itself, and lessons, in a similar way to one Russell has set up near home in England. Thank you Russell for your kind offer to help, available any time when we have a problem, and for your offer to help us source arrangements of modern music.

Ron Mosman informed me on Sunday that our resident Sydney Town Hall organist, Robert Ampt, already gives out free tickets to such people interested in Traditional Pipe Organs and follows up with FIVE FREE LESSONS.

Members, your Society owns a *Christie* organ, in storage. We need a home for it. And we need the challenge for members to use their talents to restore this old gal. We would have fun and fellowship like the members had when they restored the instruments that we now use.

Following our next meeting, the Promotions Team progress report will appear in the April *TOSA News*. We hope you will look forward to that, in anticipation of finding out where we are up to.

Jenny Pearce

(Member of Promotions Team)

ADELAIDE

From the Internet for US theatre organ enthusiasts :

Just a reminder that not all really great Theatre Organ Music is performed in the United States and England. The Theatre Organ Society of Australia (TOSA), South Australia division will be presenting a fabulous Theatre Organ Convention in Adelaide, Australia, on April 18 to 21, 2003.

You are all invited to join them for an exciting and enjoyable time with sensational entertainment and venues, together with delicious food provided by their professional caterers. In addition to splendid Australian organists including this year's ATOS Organist of the Year 2002, Tony Fenelon, and David Johnston, Margaret Hall, Neil Jensen, and others, they will be featuring Lew

Williams as the overseas artist.

A special attraction is the slate of young organists who have won the ATOS Young Organists competitions in recent years, such as Chris McPhee, Michelle Nicolle, Ryan Heggie, Mathew Loeser, and this year's senior winner, Robert Wetherall.

Many of the special events will center on the wonderful 4/29 Capri Theatre Organ — both Theatre and organ are owned by the local Theatre Organ Club. Also included are a dinner/dance, several bands, and a very special sightseeing afterglow. There are special TOSA rates at several hotels, and coaches are available for transportation to events.

More details can be found on the TOSA/SA website: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~roscol/>

.....
: 2MBS-FM 102.5 :
.....

Andrew Grahame writes:

2MBS has advised me of some changed broadcast dates for "*The Theatre Pipe Organ - Seriously*". Originally I was told the shows would all be on the second Tuesday of each month, but now I have been advised that some shows will be moved to the FIRST Tuesday. Also comes the very good news that this new series, initially being trialled up until June, has now been given the green light through until December. The full set of correct dates for 2003 are as follows:

Programme 3 (April 8) 12.30 pm
Programme 4 (May 6) 12.30 pm
Programme 5 (June 3) 12.30 pm
Programme 6 (July 1) 12.30pm
Programme 7 (August 12) 12.30pm
Programme 8 (September 9) 12.30pm
Programme 9 (October 14) 12.30pm
Programme 10 (November 8) 12.30pm
Programme 11 (December 13) 12.30pm

Andrew also presents a more traditional pipe organ programme called "*Colours of the King*" on 2MBS-FM (102.5). Details of coming programmes are as follows:

Saturday 12th April 5.00pm
Saturday 10th May 5.00pm
Saturday 14th June 5.00pm
Saturday 12th July 5.00pm
Saturday 9th August 5.0 pm
Saturday 13th September 5.00pm
Saturday 11th October 5.0 pm
Saturday 8th November 5.00pm
Saturday 13th December 5.00pm

Fox Special 4-manual Wurlitzer Found Crated in Sydney Warehouse !!

Amazing though it may seem, a complete mint condition *Wurlitzer* organ was discovered still in its factory crates by workmen clearing an old warehouse near the Homebush site of Sydney's 2000 Olympic Games.

The twin gold consoles gleamed, even though the keyboard ivories had yellowed over the years. The pipework, chests and other accoutrements glistened when unpacked, just as they would have done had *Wurlitzer's* agents installed the organ in 1930.

"It was like stepping into a time-warp", said Sydney organ identity Warren (Wazza) Burleta, a friend of the workmen, Jose Inocenton and Pesce Daprile, who had first opened one of the dozens of dusty crates piled high in the warehouse and found it packed with organ pipes.

Documentation that accompanied the instrument indicates it was initially intended for the Fox Theatre at Newark, NJ. However, it seems that project was abandoned and the theatre did not go ahead. As there was no market for the organ in the USA, and customs duties would have made its importation prohibitively costly in England, it was sent to Australia, where Hoyt's theatres had plans to install it in their last great Regent (to be known as the Fox-Regent, following the amalgamation in 1930), Darwin in the country's north. That 4,000-seat theatre was never completed, and the organ languished in the warehouse in Sydney, initially unwanted, then quietly forgotten, for 70 years.

It is also clear that the organ was paid for by a transfer of Fox stock rather than in cash, and this appears to be the reason why it never showed up in the *Wurlitzer* accounting records or the factory lists. Ironically, it would seem that an instrument which turned out to be worth nothing to Fox was paid for with shares that were soon worth nothing to *Wurlitzer*.

Close secrecy was maintained after the discovery of the organ, which Wazza acquired for a nominal \$1 (a moment's rummaging in his pockets produced the wherewithal), provided he cleared it all out of the warehouse. Then began the tedious process of

*Reported by Ian McIver
1st April, 2003*

transporting it, firstly one crate at a time, using his faithful old ute, then in an old double-decker bus he borrowed from the Sydney Bus Museum, to the family home at Mount Redfern.

As he finally sorted out all the many parts of the organ, he discovered it had a number of differences from the earlier 4/36 Fox Specials. It seems the organ has an additional ethereal chamber that is most peculiarly designed. It houses a 4-rank Vox Chorus (16,8,8,4) like those in three very early *Wurlitzers*, and a most unusual Fern Flute and Fern Flute Celeste (2 ranks), giving a total of 43 ranks. The documentation contains copies of correspondence showing that this was because Fox did not want the organ for its greatest of all theatres (at Newark) to be outranked by that in the Fox Theatre at Atlanta.

However, what is unique about this ethereal chamber is that it is airtight, with a sound-transparent membrane behind the shutters. The regulators actually suck air OUT of the top of the chamber, creating a partial vacuum equivalent to -6" wind, so that the pipes sound on negative pressure, thus creating a very special and ethereal sound. The chests on which the pipes stand are open underneath to the ambient air, and the partial vacuum in the chamber draws the air through the pallets and pipes, and causes the latter to speak. This arrangement was not repeated on any other organs; one significant drawback became apparent to Wazza when he first attempted to tune the pipes, as not only did his hat get sucked into the blower, but his cat, who slipped into the chamber with him, had a very narrow escape from a similar fate. The cat (and no doubt Wazza also) is lucky the pressure was not -30".

Other unusual or unique features of the organ include:

- A full 97 notes of tuned tympani, the upper octaves sounding like tuned cow bells - ideal for a pastoral mood.

- A very odd looking contraption of wheels, valves and a loudspeaker that might be some sort of prototype for what another builder later created as a

Melotone; or maybe it was just a wireless set that got packed in the crate by mistake. It seems to work, and like some early electronic organs, picks up police radio rather than generating music. However, as Wazza says, it's really handy to know where the radar speed traps are.

- A special stop labelled "Voix Framboise", which comprises 12 lengths of bicycle inner-tube connected to a high-pressure chest. Exactly what its function was is unclear, but its tone seems to be a forerunner of the bottom end of Posthorn ranks of the poorer sort that enjoyed a brief, but noisy, vogue, in the 1960s, when this flatulent sound became a *sine qua non* of theatre organs of six or more ranks.

The whole organ has not yet been assembled, but Wazza intends to install it in Queensland, at the Paramount, Thargomindah (main chamber), Roxy, Birdsville (solo chamber), Eureka, Camooweal (foundation chamber), Gaumont Palace, Weipa (orchestral chamber), Koala, Mooloolaba (ethereal chamber) and Flix, Goondiwindi (percussions, traps and 32ft diaphones).

Wazza acknowledges that installing each chamber in a different theatre over an area equivalent in size to most of Western Europe is probably not what *Wurlitzer* had intended when they built the instrument. But needs must, and that is all that can be accommodated in each of the theatres where he has negotiated to install it. Intermissions and concerts at all theatres will be synchronised, and all will be linked by satellite so that in each theatre one chamber will be heard "live" and all the others through a loudspeaker on the opposite side of the proscenium. It is not yet decided whether the two consoles will be installed in one theatre or two.

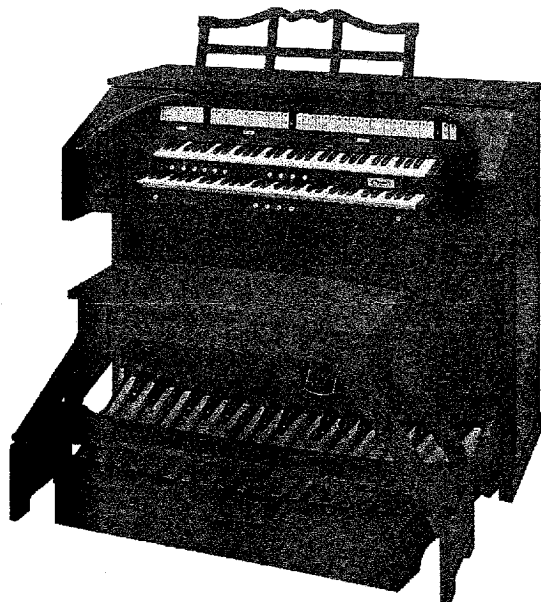
It is planned to hold a state-wide grand opening in exactly one year's time, on 1st April, 2004.

*Slightly modified from Ian McIver's wonderful website
<http://theatreorgans.com/southerncross/index.htm>*

(N.B. the dates mentioned are highly significant!) Ed.

Allen organs

Builders of the world's 1st digital musical instrument



C-19c

Experience the thrill of playing
the C-19c for yourself.
Phone Jim or Carmen on
07-3841-0153
to make an appointment
for a personal demonstration of
the C-19c

From only \$33,000.00 including GST

Featuring:

Traditional layout, Note-by-note voicing, Virtual Acoustics,
User configurable presets, Multiple memory levels, Smart MIDI
Wooden key keyboards with reed switch keying, (2nd touch on 3 & 4 manual models)
Timber console with timber veneer finish.

Ten Year Parts/Labour warranty

The New Protégé Theatre Spinnet

Allen quality, Allen sound
Smart MIDI with Console Controller
Same voices and sound as the
C-19c

In a compact spinnet.

Only \$22,000.00 inc GST

5 Year (limited) Parts/Labour warranty



For more information about the range of 2, 3, & 4 manual theatre or classical organs or to
arrange a demonstration please contact

All Organs Australia – 07-3841-0153

“Bill and Friends” Concert at the Orion Centre, Campsie on Sunday February 2, 2003

Reporter: Ron Mosman

Photographer: Barry Tooker
 theme from the cartoon TV series.

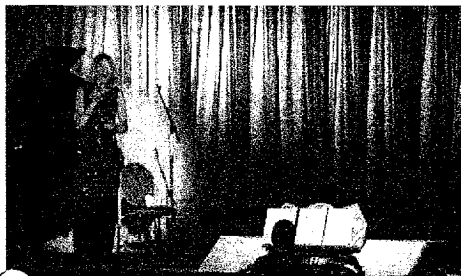
It was a very hot and sunny Summer's day. Just as well the Orion is air-conditioned!

The show kicked off with a fanfare on the *Wurlli* as Bill Schumacher sat down at the piano to play *Another*



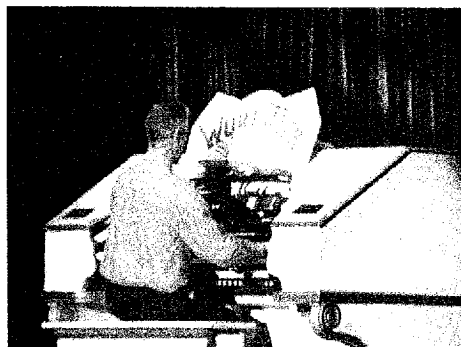
Opening, *Another Show* as a duet with himself, and then moved to the console to play a Spanish medley, *Lady Of Spain/Spanish Eyes*.

Bill then played a very 'bluesy' old jazz number, *Blue Prelude*, before introducing soprano Jan Pringle who



sang Romberg's *Lover, Come Back To Me* to Bill's organ accompaniment. Moving to the piano, Bill accompanied Jan as she sang *The Man I Love* by Gershwin, followed by *So In Love* by Cole Porter.

Next, David Smith brought up the console with a fanfare, and then played *On With The Show, This Is It!* the *Bugs Bunny Show* theme moving straight into *Meet The Flintstones*, the



Crossing to the piano, David then played a beautiful rendition of *Misty*, the famous Errol Garner tune, and



back to the console again to give us a fabulous *12-bar Blues* on the organ. Judging by the applause, that was much appreciated!

Once again going to the piano, David treated us to a duet with himself on organ, playing the lovely Hoagy Carmichael tune *Georgia On My Mind*, following which he introduced Wendy Hambly, and with David on piano and Wendy on organ they played for us as a duet, a very beautiful tune called *A Love Until The End Of Time*.

Leaving Wendy to play solo now on the organ, we heard *Cheek To Cheek* from *Top Hat*, a quirky little tune *Sally On Sunday*, then *Amazing Grace*, followed by *San Francisco* and the first half finished with Wendy playing *On A Wonderful Day Like Today*.



After interval, David Smith brought the console up playing a medley from Leonard Bernstein's musical *West Side Story*, and then a great rendition of one of his own compositions, in the style of Billy Joel, which David calls *Billy Can!*

David then played the hauntingly beautiful theme from *Ice Castles* and then another of his own compositions, a

6/8 March, which was first performed on the Sydney Town Hall Grand Organ, and left us (wanting more!) playing the *On With The Show* fanfare as he rode the console down.

Re-introducing Jan Pringle, Bill seated himself at the piano to



accompany her as she sang the Rodgers and Hart numbers *My Heart Stood Still* and *This Can't Be Love*. Bill then moved over to the console to accompany Jan on the organ as she sang for us *Can't Help Lovin' That Man Of Mine* from *Showboat*, and then *You'll Never Walk Alone* from *Carousel*.

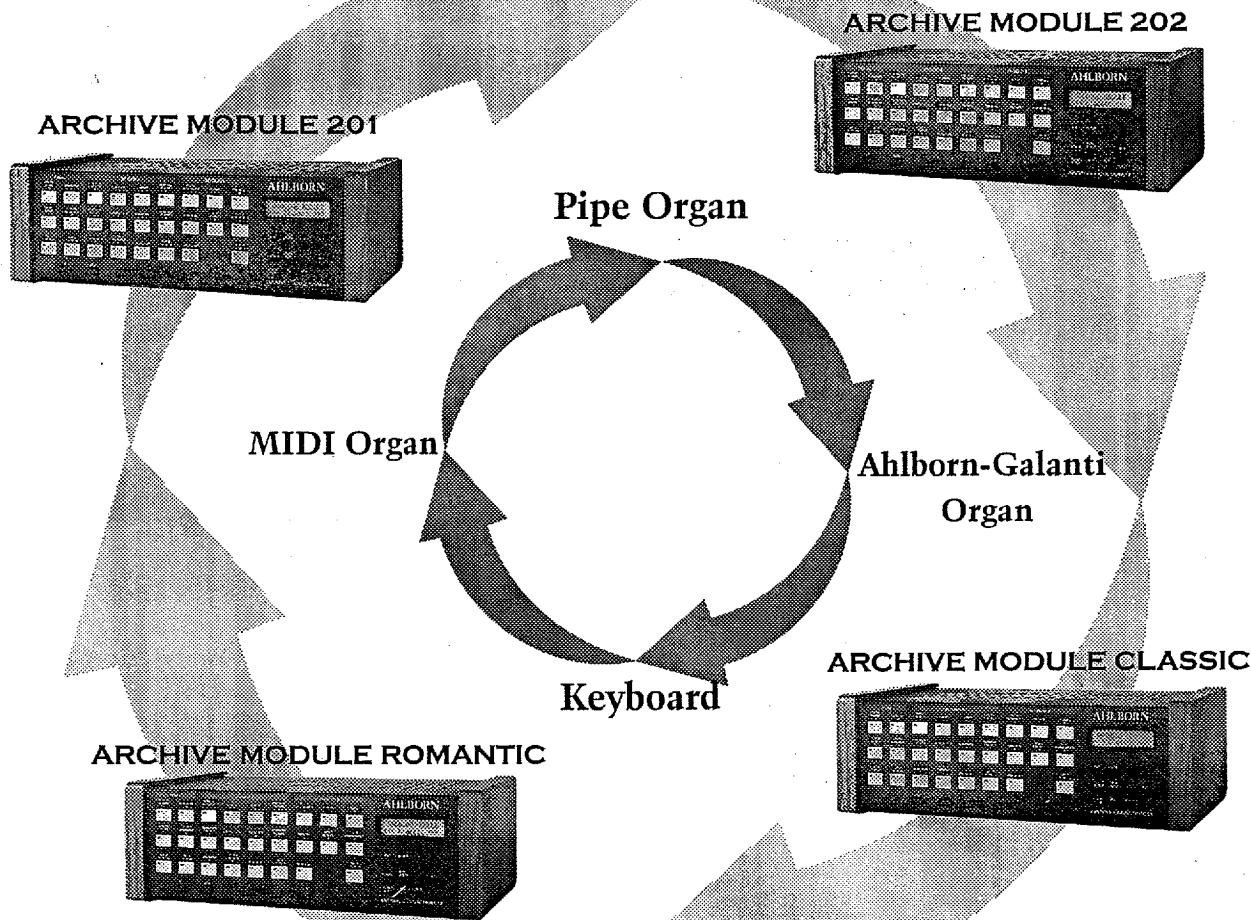
Then came a surprise treat. Our young guest artist Paul Young, who is studying piano at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, played for us two Chopin works, *Scherzo in Bb minor*, and the 'Revolutionary' *Etude*. Superb! We all want to hear more from this young man!

Bill then played a medley of tunes written by his favourite composer, George Gershwin, *Strike Up The Band/Our Love Is Here To Stay/Fascinatin' Rhythm/Love Walked In/Swonderful* before calling it a day with another Gershwin tune, *Swanee*, and played the console down for the last time that day. "That's All, Folks!"

I didn't hear one word of criticism from anyone present that afternoon. It would seem that it was a concert thoroughly enjoyed by all who came, so we may have more 'Variety' concerts like this in the future. Watch out for these, and come along. I'm sure you won't be disappointed!

Creative possibilities...

and for a short time, buy an Ahlborn module and get a factory saving of \$230.



The creative possibilities for additional high quality pipe organ sound with Ahlborn-Galanti Archive Modules are endless. The *four individual modules* each of 20 stops of rich pipe organ sound may be connected together, connected to a pipe organ, Ahlborn-Galanti organ, MIDI keyboard or other MIDI organ. Imagine, having access to a 32' Soubasse and 32' Contrebombarde to fill out the pedal division of your pipe organ and at the same time playing on the swell with 8' Corno di Bassetto whilst the patented Ahlborn Auto-Pipe Tracking™ feature automatically adjusts the modules 20 readily available stops in tune with the pipe organ.

Imagine, finally having a proper organ available on your MIDI keyboard, increasing the flexibility of your MIDI organ or supplementing the already superb pipe sounds on your Ahlborn-Galanti instrument. All can be achieved with the unique Ahlborn-Galanti Archive Modules. And until 30th. May 2003, if you invest in an Archive Module between now and end of May, you will receive a **FACTORY BONUS of \$230**. Stocks are limited and this offer must end Friday 30th. May.

Call (02) 9571-4477 or email now for more details...

Discover the Possibilities!

Pipeless
PipeOrgan Co.



AHLBORN-GALANTI ORGANS

Authentic Pipe Organ Sound at a Much Less than Pipe Organ Price

www.pipelesspipeorgan.com.au • PO BOX 155 GLEBE NSW 2037 AUSTRALIA (02) 9571-4477 • david@pipelesspipeorgan.com.au

Wonderland, Wurlitzers and War

The Story of the Bill McNally Collection.

Part Two, continued from Spring Vox

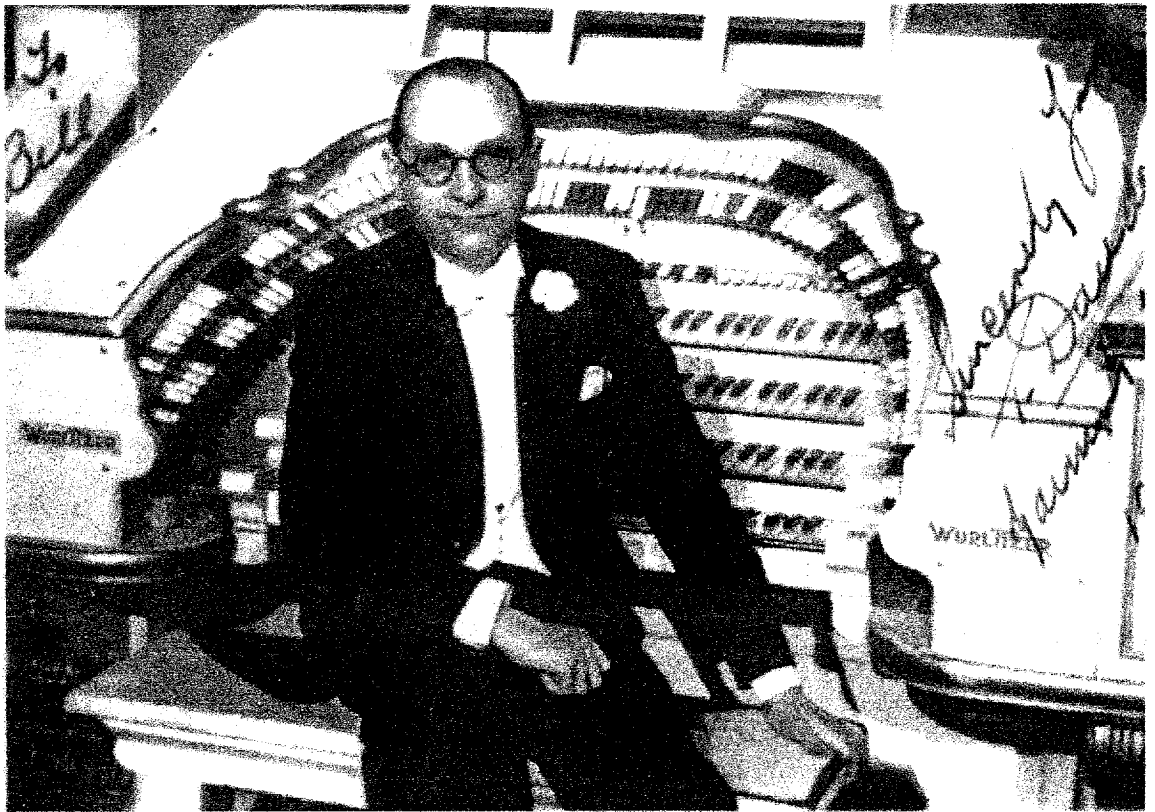
Before Sunday films were allowed in Manchester the Odeon ran a series of Sunday concerts. These events starred all the big names of the day, singers and comics, and though the organ was not a great feature of the shows it was used a fair amount. Gordon Banner rarely took part in these concerts but a name new to me was a regular. Jess Yates was in the Pay Corps stationed in Radcliffe and it was easy for him to get into Manchester on Sunday. His flair for production was also evident even then and he was very popular at the shows he gave. Our cycling was now extended to cover Radcliffe where Jess also acted as organist at a local church. His billet was just opposite the church and on more than one occasion we had a rehearsal for his Sunday show on the church organ. Little did we think that he would become so well known and under what strange circumstances. The last time I actually saw him was some years later when I stayed at the Deganwy Castle Hotel, which he then owned, before his association with Yorkshire TV and "Stars on Sunday". Another serving organist was Ronnie Wood who was in the RAF at Bowlee. Ronnie was no stranger to the Manchester organ scene having worked with Henry Croudson at the Paramount for a long time. He was by now to all intents and purposes the resident organist, if one may use that phrase about a serving airman, at the Apollo. My picture collection now took on a new dimension. If the organist didn't have a photo of himself the way round it was to take one. The first of the few of these was of Ronnie at the Compton and it was turned into a slide and used for a long time to introduce his shows. I was certainly no photographer and with a borrowed camera and what film one could get I managed just a few. Taking pictures in a dark theatre with only house lights meant that the organist had to sit still for a long time and the camera had to be steady, and as these two things rarely happened the pictures were not of the best. Nevertheless, they did produce, so far as I know, the only picture of Banner at the Odeon console and most certainly of him at the Gaumont. Though dark and a bit out of focus one of the Banner shots did grace the opening programme of Stockport Town Hall. This particular photograph was taken late one night when Gordon had a broadcast the next day and stayed overnight at the theatre rather than risk going to home to Altrincham and

being stuck in an air raid. (Gordon was always worried to death about time when broadcasting, because of the event being live. One clock on the console was not enough, he invariably had two or more.) The mention of air raids takes us back to the Apollo, where on the occasion of the second blitz on Manchester Robbie Cleaver was doing a guest week, and a greater contrast with Gordon and his worrying couldn't be imagined. He had a broadcast at 8.30 on the Sunday morning and as the representative of the club I was present with a few BBC engineers who were all extremely worried by a missing organist. However, with just a few minutes to spare Robbie made it, entering the theatre in golfing rig and nonchalantly casting his clubs into a corner on his way to the console. The broadcast went off without a hitch. I recall that Robbie was far more concerned at possibly having to miss his golf because of the raids. The Apollo Theatre was in fact damaged that night, when the small cinema which then stood at the corner of Hyde Road, and Stockport Road was obliterated. Banner and Esgate were

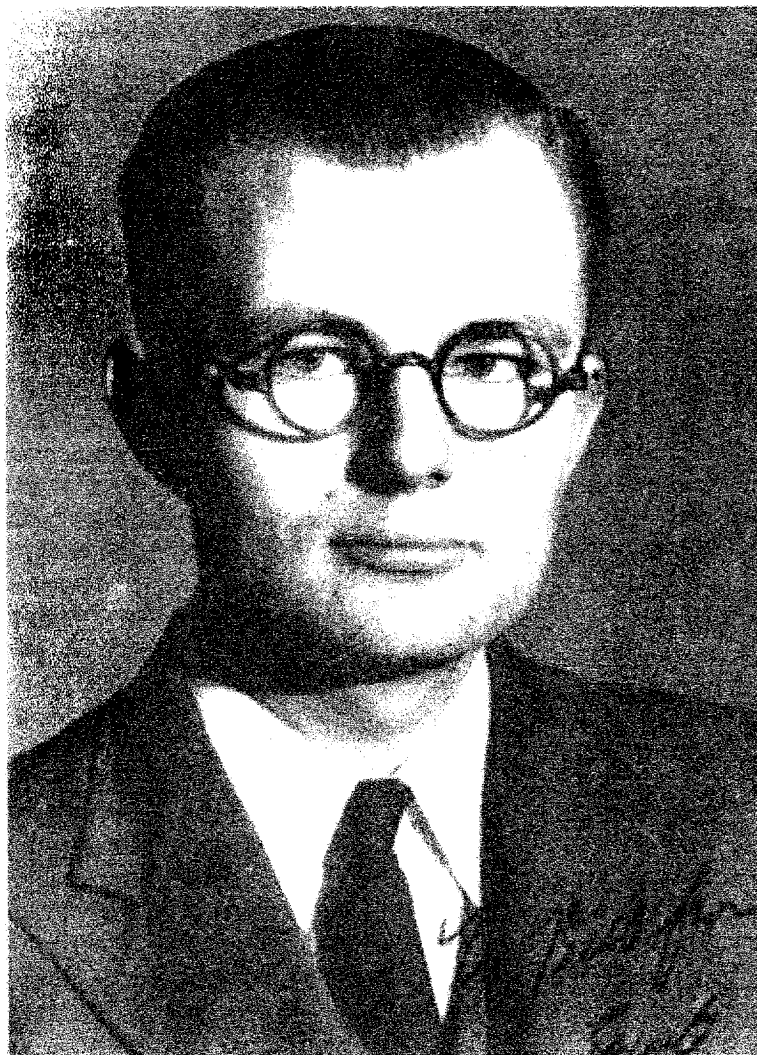


Gordon Banner

great practical jokers and during the time they were both in Manchester many pranks were played. Perhaps the one which went a bit too far started by accident and got out of hand. For reasons which were not too clear a discussion between the two of them about pianos resulted in a grand being ordered on loan from Forsyth's music shop on Deansgate. This was ordered in the name of Banner and it was to be



Tommy Dando at the Gaumont Manchester



Arthur Esgate

delivered to the Odeon. Needless to say he had not ordered it, but as it arrived he guessed who had and told the delivery men it was a mistake and was intended for the Gaumont. From the Odeon to the Gaumont was not a long way, except for the one-way system, which means it is a messy journey. On its arrival Esgate was taken aback because it was the last thing he expected. The bitter bit one may say! Nobody ever owned up to anything but the Manchester Evening News ran a story under the heading of "The Piano that Nobody Wanted." I had by this time collected a number of magnificent display photos from the Oxford Street studio of Carl Cloud and I was pleased to get these signed by the organists concerned, including the standard issue photograph of Henry Croudson. Ralph had obtained a number of shots for me from Granada in Golden Square and my collection had grown substantially by the time my own call up came in 1943. My friend did not wish to continue as Northern Secretary and so all the documents were handed over to Mr. Roy Perry of Sale who became the third northern representative. (Apologies if I have the name incorrect, but it is a long time ago.) Before going abroad my army service took me to Wakefield in Yorkshire and as fate would have it Arthur Esgate had transferred to the Leeds Odeon. He had married before leaving Manchester and he and Irene were setting up home in Leeds, so I was glad to be able to spend the weekends at the Odeon and stay in touch. It was here I acquired a very large publicity picture of

Reginald Foort which was the pride and joy of my collection for many years, but when I moved house a few years ago I had to part with some items and this I passed on to Frank Hare, who I knew would give it a good home. So to Chester, my last station before the boat and the scene of a few happy evenings with Norman Shann at the Regal. He complained that he never was offered a broadcast from there though he was very popular with the troops, so I got up a petition to the BBC and, lo and behold, he got a broadcast. I happened to go on leave about that time and on visiting the Odeon I was met by a very crestfallen Gordon. "What do you think?" he said. "I've lost a broadcast because they have given it to somebody in Chester who is very popular with the troops there." I said sympathetically, "Oh dear, what a shame," and left it at that! During my time abroad, spent in the Far East, I had as a fellow soldier Don Hickling who I soon discovered was an organ nut, and as we met in Deolali, it all seemed very appropriate. We met after demob a couple of times but in the way of wartime friendships we drifted apart. Many years later he saw my name in the COS Newsletter and contacted me, and a couple of years ago, after some correspondence and an interval of 50 years we finally met at Chorley Town Hall when Don was attending an LTOT Organ Weekend. Although it was not until 1947 that I returned from overseas service I had been kept informed by letters from Paul and Arthur. A couple of Air Letters were reproduced in part one to illustrate the type of rumours which seemed to abound during the war. Not all the organs mentioned had "had it" and Gordon Banner was very much alive and kicking! "Dando's Boxes" are mentioned in one of the letters and here we have another example of Arthur's humour, which was always near the surface. After Tommy Dando departed from Manchester he left a few boxes of personal possessions which were to be forwarded and this was done by the Gaumont management. In rummaging about backstage I found a room full of ancient boxes, tea chests and the like, which contained a wealth of old front-of-house publicity material and Arthur suggested these should also be sent to Dando as a joke. These treasure chests were then christened "Dando's Boxes" and the name stuck, and yes, they contained photographs of Stanley Tudor amongst other things. The material was not wanted, and in due course I got Stan to autograph them for me. Amongst this stuff was an old slide of Tudor and I borrowed it and had it printed. The resultant print has baffled a lot of people because whilst it is obviously Tudor at a 4 manual Wurlitzer everything is the wrong way round and the Gaumont organ stop-tab arrangement looks extremely funny. Apart from organ material the boxes contained lots of interesting things and many an hour was whiled away going through them. On my return from abroad I found the organ scene was bucking up with more and more players returning, but it seemed that the glory days were already over. My friend Esgate was at the Astoria Brixton but was soon to give it up when he purchased a radio and television shop in

Balham. He had no great wish to return to the organ scene as he thought there was no long term future in it. In fact, the only time that I ever heard him play again was on a Hammond in a pub in Stockport where we had called for a drink. Banner was still at the Odeon but destined for the Ritz Birkenhead and thereafter, apart from one occasion, I heard him only on electronic, first in Failsworth when he was playing for dancing and some years later when I spent a few days in Clacton. Since leaving Manchester Gordon, having married, was running the Argyle Hotel with his wife, and he played a small Hammond in the lounge there and did the odd session at Butlin's. The exception mentioned above was when he returned to Manchester for a brief spell at the Theatre Royal: they revived "Gone with the Wind" and Gordon played a spot during the interval. The photo collection continued after the war but only in a minor way. I had renewed my membership of the club and despite having corresponded with Ralph for many years we had never actually met. This was remedied in 1949 when we both had business in Birmingham and stayed there for a few days. A considerable time was spent during those few days at the Gaumont Palace where George Blackmore was in residence, and the pictures of George in the collection he gave to me on that visit, though they are in fact of the Rochester Compton. This also was the only occasion that I heard the Odeon Compton, and now it is on our doorstep, give or take a hill or two. As the organ situation deteriorated my interest gradually lapsed with it and the collection came to an end. I found it depressing to go to the cinema and hear not a sound from the chambers. I was concerned with getting going again in my job and I suppose when the renewal notice for the club came I probably didn't bother with it and so my membership lapsed. The introduction of "The Organist Entertains" sparked off my interest again and though I did not know about the formation of the LTOT at the time it happened I did attend all the Manchester Sunday morning concerts. Silly me, I thought the idea of saving the "Queen" was a good one but stood no chance, because I could not see Rank parting with such a magnificent beast. How wrong I was, and what a good job they did! Of recent years my interest in collecting pictures has been renewed, though now I like to take them myself. I have assembled a new collection of shots at Granada, Bolton, Chorley, Blackpool, not to mention Stockport at the Plaza and Davenport and, now, of course the Town Hall. Of recent months I have also been able to take some of the Penistone Compton. I would not wish these notes to end without thanking David at Chorley, Everson at Bolton, Kevin at Penistone and of course the LTOT committee for their help at Granada and Stockport, in obtaining these pictures. Who knows, in another sixty years' time they may become just as interesting as the old lot!

To be continued in the next issue

TONY FENELON

American Theatre Organ Society ORGANIST OF THE YEAR 2002

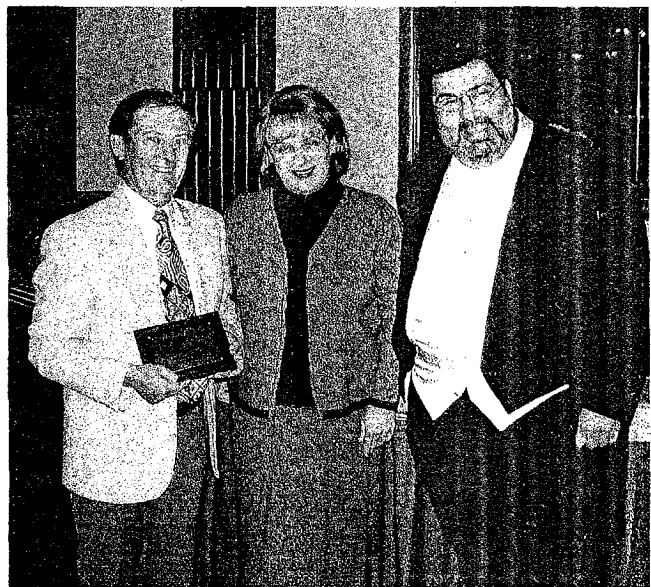
The ATOS Board of Directors proudly announces the selection of Tony Fenelon as the 2002 Organist of the Year. Tony was presented his award during the Awards Banquet at the 2002 ATOS Annual Convention held in San Diego, California.



Tony proudly displays his award with Donna Parker



Tony's acceptance speech



Tony, Donna Parker & Nelson Page (ATOS President)

TONY FENELON – A.T.O.S. Organist of the Year 2002

It was inevitable from an early age that music would play a significantly major role in Tony Fenelon's life. As a child, he showed astounding talent as a pianist. At the end of his secondary schooling, Tony faced an enviable dilemma. With a talent for music and a passion for electronics, he had to finally decide between the two. So he enrolled in a Science Degree program at Melbourne University and, not surprisingly, found it almost impossible to keep music in the background!

Much to the consternation of the Science Faculty, he studied part time at the Conservatorium of Music, in what little spare time was available, under famed teacher Mr. Roy Shepherd. His early successes included winning the Victorian Final of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Concerto and Vocal Competition, and the Open and Bach sections at the National Eisteddfod in Canberra. In the same year, he obtained the highest marks ever awarded for his Licentiate Diploma in Performing Piano at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.

Tony Fenelon is no stranger to the Australian Pops and Australian Philharmonic Orchestras concert audiences, having appeared with the orchestra over many years since its inception. As a solo pianist, Tony has an unusually wide taste in musical repertoire, having performed works with the orchestra ranging from Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff to light classics and pops. Tony has been regularly featured in the New Year's Eve and Best of British concert seasons at the Melbourne Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival Theatre and Geelong Art Centre.

Tony's insatiable interest in lighter music and a love of the majestic sound of the theatre pipe organ led to his "other" career, leading to his appointment in 1965 as the resident organist at Melbourne's then prestigious Regent Theatre. Tony made his first theatre pipe organ tour of the United States back in 1969, and has returned at least 16 times to perform both on theatre organ and piano, as well as on Roland's Atelier range of organs. He has performed at some of the most prestigious theatre organ venues in the U.S. including, the Oakland Paramount, the Ohio Theatre, Columbus, San Sylmar, the Sanfillipo residence, the Orpheum Phoenix and the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, to mention a few.

In 1999, Tony returned to his old stamping ground to be featured in the Inaugural Concert of the Regent Theatre's new Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. The concert was an overwhelming success, drawing an unprecedented record attendance since the reopening of the Regent. In February this year, by popular demand, Tony was invited back to do a repeat concert.

After completing his Bachelor of Science degree at Melbourne University, he commenced full time work as a medical electronics engineer at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, a career that culminated in his appointment of the Department of Biomedical Engineering in October 1991. During his employment, his achievements included jointly designing Australia's first implantable cardiac pacemaker, the design and development of equipment for cardiac arrhythmia mapping, the measurement of neurological visual evoked responses, and the publication of many papers worldwide.

With increasing overseas and local requests for Tony's performances, he reached the milestone decision in June 1998 to relinquish his biomedical career in favour of a full time involvement in music. Now an internationally acclaimed artist, Tony has completed over twenty major concert tours overseas, performing on pipe organ and piano. Since 1995, Tony's association with the Roland group of companies has seen him performing concerts throughout Australia, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Hong Kong and Taiwan on Roland's extensive range of contemporary keyboard instruments. He has been invited three times to represent Australia in Roland's Organ Power Concert at the Karen and Richard Carpenter Auditorium at Anaheim, U.S.A. Tony has to his credit 22 recordings and 4 Gold records.

In his concerts, Tony strives to provide a tasteful balance between popular tunes and light classics and includes music from films, stage shows, jazz, and great standards. As the piano has always been his first love, his extensive repertoire of piano classics now forms an increasingly large proportion of his concerts—a feature widely appreciated by his audiences and captured in his recently recorded CD "Collections".

Since 1986, Tony and his wife Noella have been able to enjoy the more exotic fruits of music as Tony entertains guests on board luxury cruise ships at some of the world's most exciting locations. Their travels have taken them from Alaska to French Polynesia, Norway, the British Isles, Bali and the South Pacific, Italy, Spain and Africa, with Tony as a featured artist on piano and orchestral keyboards.

A man with an insatiable appetite for music, Tony's dedication and energy are the drive behind his constant quest for new ideas and musical horizons.

Donna Parker

