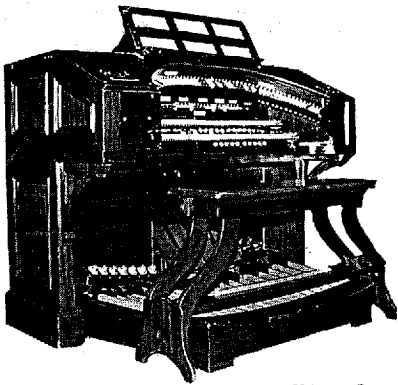
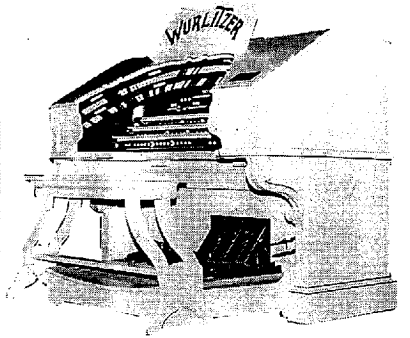


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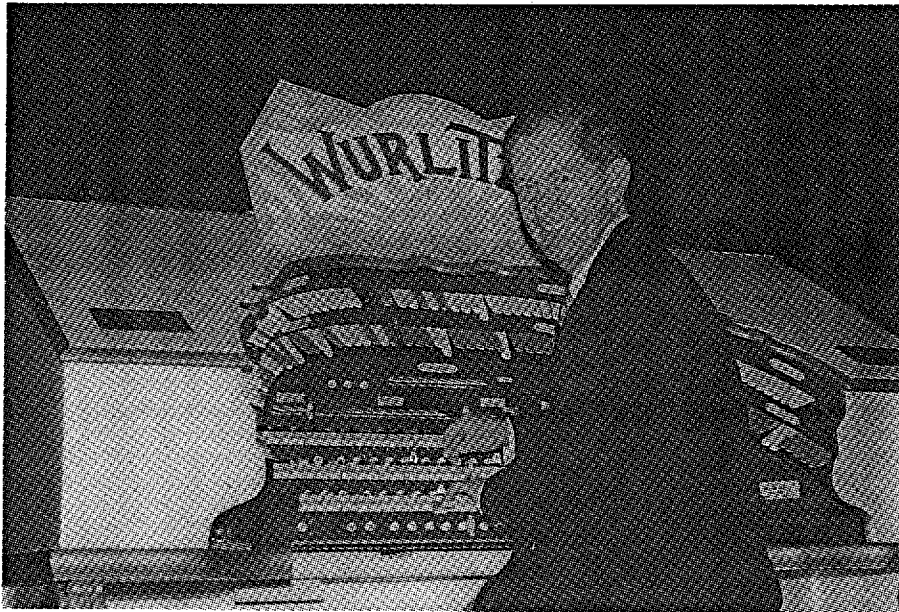
2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NEWS



3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

The One and Only TONY FENELON



MARRICKVILLE

TOWN HALL *WurliTzer*

Sunday, 31st May, at 2.00pm

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Issue 4
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TOSA NEWS

MAY, 1998

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

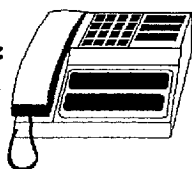
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MAY

Monday 4 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**

Sunday 31 at 2.00pm **Tony Fenelon Concert**
Marrickville Town Hall

JUNE

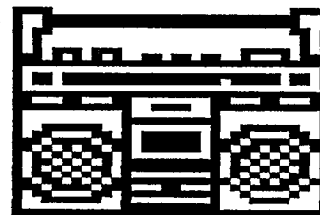
Monday 1 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**

Sunday 21 at 2.00pm **Margaret Hall Concert**
Orion Centre Campsie

JULY

Monday 6 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**

Sunday 19 at 2.00pm **Ken Double Concert**
Orion Centre Campsie



**REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA FM - 103.2**

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
Presented by Chris Styles

From The President

Elsewhere in this edition (on page 4) you will, see "The Courier" story. We would have rather heard directly from the **Canterbury Council**, but if there is any truth in the *Courier* report it is obvious we will not be getting any subsidy for the time being.

However, you will be pleased to know that despite increased **Orion** rental, and despite the lack of any **Council** subsidy, we appear to have made a small profit from the **Russell Holmes** concert, though final figures are not yet in. Thank you for your support - 411 people came. It shows we can survive. (Incidentally, the seats will be better spaced next concert!)

As for "....assuming the society could maintain the past two years' level of income..." as suggested in the *Courier* - our problem is that this is now absolutely impossible! As to whether "...TOSA's cash balance was adequate...", the figures presented at last November's **AGM** (and published in part in Jan/Feb *TOSA News*) do show that we are out of the red. But it wouldn't need much of a hiccup - or an organ transplant - to put us way behind. But things could be worse!

I would like to pass on **TOSA NSW's** appreciation of **Chris Styles'** work in presenting the program on **2CBA** each week (9pm Monday, 103.2FM). **Chris** has moved out of **Sydney** and has not been able to find anyone to take on the job. However, thanks to the co-operation of **2CBA** he has been able to arrange to use their studios to pre-record enough shows at a time to cut to a minimum the number of trips he has to make to **Sydney** each year. So he is willing to continue for now.



In this edition of *TOSA News* you should find a **RENEWAL FORM**. Yes, it's coming that time of year again, and if you are not already paid beyond 30th June 1998, then here is your chance to be the early bird.

Finally, a special offer. If you would like to invite one or two people to the next **Tony Fenelon** concert at **Marrickville**, then here is your chance. And it's free! But, as they say, "conditions apply", and the condition here is that the person(s) must not have been to a **TOSA** concert before. Just fill in and post the "Free Ticket Offer" on page 13 of this issue of *TOSA News*. As you see, we are looking to get more people interested in **TOSA**.

Regards,
Walter Pearce

Welcome To New Members

TOSA is pleased to welcome the following new members and to wish them many long years of entertainment and pleasure with us :

Veronica Dillon - Auckland
Norah & Roy Gillott - Thornleigh
Jill & Colin Parker - Burrawang
Christina Sippel - Bexley

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

What a fantastic concert **Russell Holmes** gave us in March! I'm sure that all present appreciated his efforts and would agree that it was a great occasion. He really has that magic **Theatre Organ** touch which makes each piece played so special and enjoyable. His comments between numbers were interesting and informative, and he kept them brief, to the point and humorous. A great talent, that we hope to hear more of in the future.

And what did you think of the **Orion's** redecoration? Happily, the changes doesn't seem to have in any way interfered with the sound of the **Wurlitzer**, which for us is the main thing. The decor is like "a cross between a **French boudoir** and a **Bedouin tent**" someone said. Still it is clean and fresh AND different. Also, the carpet allows the constant stream of toilet visitors to move around much more quietly!

With so many changes we, of course, had some teething difficulties with seating and foyer re-arrangements, but we hope to have learnt from the last concert and be able to make improvements for the coming concerts.

Our next concert is on our other fabulous **Wurlitzer**, with **Australia's** most famous and popular theatre organist, **Tony Fenelon**, playing in the **Marrickville Town Hall**, on Sunday, 31st May. A reminder that the ticket prices for **Marrickville** concerts have been kept at the previous level as the venue is less expensive for us to hire. Also, the security guards that we have always used at the **Orion** have been hired again to patrol the streets and car-parks near the **Marrickville Town Hall**. So you can rest easy during the concert knowing that your car is being protected.

Thanks again to the regular and one-off contributors to *TOSA News*, who fill the blank pages with a variety of interesting articles. Please remember *TOSA News* if you come across any items of interest to our members, and if you have opinions to express there is room for them in the *From The Mailbox* columns each month.



Orion Campsie

The following item appeared in the Monday, 6th April, 1998, issue of the suburban newspaper, *The Courier*. It seems that Canterbury Council expects TOSA to increase our fees and ticket prices to the maximum and even run Orion concerts unprofitably until we have no reserves left to achieve our objectives of saving and maintaining theatre organs. So much for promises!!

Discord over cost subsidy

CANTERBURY Council's Works and Services Committee has refused to subsidise costs of hiring the Orion Function Centre for the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (TOSA).

TOSA's application for a grant, at the council's discretion, was rejected at the committee meeting on Thursday night because of the society's current healthy financial position.

However, a grant in the future has not been ruled out.

A council report said TOSA had received subsidies worth almost \$20,000 since 1988.

Council negotiated a new lease for the Orion Function Centre last year and all future hiring fee negotiations must be held between the lessee and TOSA.

TOSA claims it has a good working relationship with the new lessee, but the costs of hiring the hall, where TOSA's grand wurlitzer organ was installed in 1983, have increased by 100 per cent.

TOSA vice-president John Shaw said it was vital that each concert made a profit to cover up to \$20,000 in maintenance fees on the organ.

The council report noted TOSA had increased concert ticket prices by up to 25 per cent and had also increased membership fees. TOSA's cash balance was adequate based on financial details supplied and assuming the society could maintain the past two years' level of income and expenditure.

"Any subsidy which council may decide to give would not serve any real purpose apart from adding to an already adequate cash balance," the report said.

WARRINGAH ORGAN SOCIETY

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Celebrated, Internationally-known Organist

Max Takano

featuring the all new Yamaha AR100 Organ
at
Long Reef Golf Club, Collaroy
on
Monday, 11th May at 7.30pm

Max has performed in 29 countries
His repertoire spans a wide variety of styles from
Standards to Classical to Jazz

Don't Miss This Outstanding Artist

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In Association with *Macron Music*

Max Takano

Born in 1961, Max Takano began studying music at an early age and to date he has given performances in 29 countries. He is also an active performer in his native Japan where his busy schedule of about 50 concerts a year has gained him recognition as a top performer in his field.

With two CD's performed entirely on the Yamaha Organ to his credit, Max has certainly earned his reputation.

He has the special ability to turn the Yamaha AR100 into an entire orchestra and gently unfold the ears of an audience in his warm sound. Max's performances are also known for his light-hearted conversation from the

stage and when playing abroad always speaks to the audience in their own language.

His repertoire spans a wide variety of styles from standards to classics to jazz and he likes to develop new arrangements to charm listeners of all ages.

In addition to his undoubted talents as a player he also has a fair proficiency for languages, being fluent in English and studying French and Spanish.



P

Del Castillo's

Alphabetical

Primer of

ORGAN STOPS

PICCOLO. Last month this column disposed of the **Ophicleide**, which is one of the biggest and loudest. So it's only fitting that this month we progress to the **Piccolo**, one of the smallest and tiniest. I can't really say softest, for the hysterical shriek of a piccolo can cut through the biggest fortissimo a composer can dream up.

Words are funny things. A word will start out one way, and wind up six different ways. Take the piano. **Piano** simply means soft, but try to tell that to any parent of a 7-year-old boy taking piano lessons. And for that matter piano is simply a truncated version of pianoforte, which means soft-loud. Kind of a dumb way to name a musical instrument, since most any instrument can be played soft-loud. And then there's the **Cello**, which again is half a name, cut down from its full patronym of *violoncello*, or cellar violin.

Piccolo is just such another abbreviated word. **Piccolo** simply means little, and its real name is *flauto piccolo*, or little flute. The **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, apparently believing that a grown man looks silly playing a **piccolo**, has taken to using feminine *piccoloistas*, if I may coin a word myself. Its previous *piccoloista*, by the way, was abducted by the **Boston Symphony**, where she is now piccoling under **Leinsdorf**, so we now have a new *piccoloista*.

Words do get tangled up. The old masters sometimes wrote their cello parts an octave higher in the treble clef, when the part then became known as a *violoncello piccolo*. How involved can you get? Then there is the sad case of the **English Horn**, which is a stretched-out **oboe** with a crook in the neck to take care of the added length. Originally called by the **French** the *cor angle*, or angled horn, it soon was corrupted to the **cor anglais**, or **English Horn**. Like the man who came before the judge and said he wanted to change his name from **Eddie Stanapopolous** and the judge said what to, and he said, "**Joe Stanapopolous**". And so it goes.

Last month the typist of this esteemed periodical took matters into his own hands and called the **Tuba** a Tube, which it literally is, though it didn't help to make much sense out of the sentence. **Tympani** simply means drums, not, you notice, one drum, as

they always show up in pairs or sets. A simple **tympani** is properly a **tympanum**, but who has the temerity to call it that. The **viola da gamba** is a violin played from the knee, whereas the **saxophone** is a sound invented by **Adolphe Sax**. A **graphophone**, though, is not a sound invented by **Graph** but a "written sound", i.e. a sound produced by printing grooves on a disc. All that needs to be added is that in today's electronic organs or "plug-ins," as the **ATOE** laughingly calls them, the **Piccolo** is a 2' **Tibia** (or lip), which makes it about 14" longer than its orchestral twin, or **Gemini**.

Q

QUINT (Kwint). All the fancy derivations of "**Quint**" translate into stops in which the 5th above the fundamental predominates or sounds alone. For "**quint**" simply means 5 in any language, whether you call it *cing*, *funf*, *cinque*, *cinco* or *V*. A basketball team is **Quints**. The **Dionnes** were **Quints**, or, if you will, **Quintuplets**. A flock of five instrumentalists is a **Quintet**. A **Quintillian** is more than stands thinking about - 1,000,000,000,000,000,000, to be exact. (Count those zeros, typist! All 18 of 'em). More years back than I care to remember I attended my college **Quinquennial** class reunion, years and years before I became a **Quinquagenarian**. I could, especially if I lived in **Quincy**, compose a **Quinary** suite of five pieces, meanwhile fortifying myself by eating a **Quince**, which should contain five seeds, but doesn't. And if I developed a **Quincy** sore throat, I could of course take **Quinine**, or, if desperate, **Quinacrine**.

This is now becoming ridiculous, so let's go on to the organ stops, which range from the **Quintadena** to the

Quintaton, with way stations at the **Quint Flute**, the **Quint Mixture**, the **Quint Diapason** and the **Quint Bass**. Of these my favourite is the **Quintadena**. This seductive little stop features the 3rd harmonic or Twelfth (the 5th in the second octave) so piquantly, or should I say **piquintly**, that it comes through as an acceptable substitute for the **Clarinet**, which does the same thing. This characteristic need not detain us unduly, as the electronic organ designers always include the **Clarinet**, even if they only whip it up by combining the 8', 2 2/3' and 1 3/5' **Tibias**, before they even consider including a **Quintadena**, which, come to think of it, I can't remember ever seeing on a plug-in organ.

Now I'm sorry but I have to get technical. The **Tibia** lay-out on electronics appears on the stop-rail at 16', 8', 5 1/3', 4', 2 2/3', 2', 1 3/5' and 1'. Now the natural harmonic series runs 8', 4', 2 2/3' and so on. In other words, the **quint** harmonic first appears an octave and a fifth above the fundamental. What, then, of the little stranger of 5 1/3' pitch which pokes its head in where it doesn't belong, only a fifth above the fundamental, under the name of **Quint**. Obviously this must be the 3rd harmonic of the 16' sub-fundamental and should be used as such. If you doubt me, try this experiment. Set yourself a light 8' and 4' registration. Now add the 5 1/3' **Quint**. What do you hear? If you will be honest with yourself, and me, and if you don't have a tin ear, you will hear a light bassoon-like tone of 16' pitch, proving that the 5 1/3' is actually an overtone belonging to the 16' harmonic series. Pretty weird, huh?

This isn't all. In large pipe organs there sometimes appears a **Bas Quint** of 10 2/3' pitch, which is a 5th above the 16' Pedal, or a 4th below the 8' fundamental. By the same logic that got so messy in the last paragraph, this 10 2/3' stop is actually the third overtone of a 32' pitch, and thus becomes the vital element of the **Resultant**, which is the organ designer's sneaky way of getting you to hear a 32' pitch without having to install a 32' pipe which there wasn't room for in the building anyway.

Just hold tight to the thought that any stop sounding a 5th higher than a fundamental is properly an overtone of a fundamental an octave lower. Aw, how confused can you get? Even I don't understand it. All I know is I have now talked myself out of using the **Resultant** for the letter **R**, so.

The Melbourne *REGENT*

In the December 1997 issue of *American Theatre Organ Society's Pipes & Personalities international newsletter* the following report appeared :

MELBOURNE REGENT ORGAN

The 4/36 **Wurlitzer** in the **Melbourne Regent Theatre** was heard by the general public for the first time on Thursday 13th November, 1997, and again on Friday, and at 2.00 and 7.30 on Saturday in conjunction with a screening of the 70mm restored print of *My Fair Lady*.

In the supporting programme, the console rose out of the pit under the expert control of **Tony Fenelon**. The show band then ascended on the adjacent orchestra lift, and there were solo organ and organ/band items to bring back the atmosphere of the glorious days of the twenties, thirties and forties, when the attitude was "Ain't we got fun?" instead of the all too prevalent mood of today - "We dare you to amuse us".

This was the first film screened at the **Regent** for over 27 years, and the organ, originally from the **San Francisco Granada/Paramount**, via the **Vollum** residence, is the third large **Wurlitzer** to have been installed in that magnificent theatre, which is almost identical, except for its warmer colour scheme, to the now defunct and much lamented **New York Capitol**.

The organ was carefully (one could say lovingly) installed by **Julien** and **Mark Arnold**, assisted by a team of volunteer friends before the re-opening of the theatre with a stage performance of *Sunset Boulevard*, but has been heard now. Reports have it that work has been done in tonal balancing, tremulant adjusting, and general finishing of the ensemble. The instrument has always sounded fine in its new home, but with somewhat muffled egress of the sound from the chambers. It is now speaking with a new and glorious authority.

The clapping and cheering, the fifteen-deep crowd who strained to be near the console during the fifteen minute playout after the movie, were proof, if ever it were needed, that organ music which aims to please, DOES please. Perhaps the majority of those present had never really heard a theatre pipe organ before, and had the impression that organ music is for long-hairs. Well, they know differently now. And don't think that **Tony** played down to them. They got quality music, played by a master of orchestration.

Then in the March, 1998, issue of *Victoria's Vox* came this full report from **Julien Arnold** himself :

November 1997 was an historic month in **Australian** theatre and theatre organ circles, as movies returned to the **Melbourne Regent** for the first time in 37 years. Not only movies, but theatre organ and theatre orchestra as well. It was a re-creation of what going to some of the larger movie theatres in this country was like in the 1930's, 40's and early 50's.

The program began at 7.30 with **Dennis Farrington's Regent Stage Band**, comprising 14 musicians playing music of those past decades. After several items, a hush fell over the theatre as unusual sounds began - the low bass notes of the **Wurlitzer** signalling the entry of **Tony Fenelon** playing the introduction to *Chatanooga Choo Choo*, complete with steam train grunts, hisses and bells. Once the gleaming console came into view, the crowd of some 1,800 erupted, and with the organ in full voice the band joined in.

Certainly those members of the organ crew present were affected with goose bumps and moist eyes at the reception **Tony** and the **Wurlitzer** were getting. All the hard work was paying off, and **Tony** was having the time of his life with the fantastic audience reaction. The reaction of the **Regent** management was "ecstatic" to the reception, and to the sound of the organ, which most had not heard, save for a few blasts occasionally if they happened to be in the theatre when we were working on the organ and it was playing.

After the Band and Organ duets, **Tony** was left to accompany a silent film dating from 1928, which included a clip showing the **Regent Theatre** being completed. **Tony** then played the intro to the feature film for the evening, the restored print of *My Fair Lady*.

At interval, for the first ten minutes, there was no music, but then the band came back into the orchestra pit and played a few items before the re-appearance of **Tony**. By this time, there was a large crowd down at the orchestra pit, not looking at the band but awaiting the appearance of **Tony** at the rich mahogany console. The band could have gone home and I am sure no one

would have noticed, as all eyes were on the **Wurlitzer**, which **Tony** played brilliantly right into the second half of the film.

At the end of the film, and after the credits, **Tony** re-appeared and the audience stayed put for the ten minute solo, giving him rousing applause.

The completed size of the **Regent Wurlitzer** will be 4/36, but at the moment it has 4 manuals and 34 ranks playing. We have had trouble with a borrowed **Compton** pipe chest on which was installed the **Gottfried French Trumpet** on 15" pressure, so this has been removed for a rework to make it more reliable. The 36th rank is the third *Tibia Clausa*, a 10" pressure set which will be shortly installed in the Solo Chamber.

Regarding the slow lift, this was a problem I discussed with the architects very early in the rebuild of the theatre, as it was intended to replace the old water powered lifts with electric-motor driven screws. The architects were made aware that the speed of the organ lift should be in the order of 30 seconds, but unfortunately the screw lift was decided upon and the time taken to rise is 1 min 7 seconds, slightly faster than the **Moorabbin** lift which used to be at 1 min 20 seconds.

Since a screw lift can't be driven any faster (as it is a direct driven gearbox), we are stuck with the slow organ lift speed, unless sometime in the future it is replaced with an hydraulic cylinder and pump system.

The fastest organ lift I remember seeing was the **Capitol Sydney**, which propelled the organ and the organist upward at such speed, that when it stopped, the organist was airborne until he landed back on the bench, gravity having taken over.

It is true that the organ should not be at stage level for a silent film, but unfortunately **Tony** did not have control of the organ lift - this was controlled by the Stage Manager backstage via a two-way radio to a "button pusher" understage. The console lift buttons had not been connected for the show, and have now been removed from the console as they are far too large and

cumbersome. They are more suitable for raising the **Titanic**!

The live show, **Sisterella**, is currently at the **Regent**, and the organ console is on the lift beneath the stage extension which covers the organ pit entirely. Some of the set is built over this area, so the console cannot be brought up on the lift until **Sisterella** has departed in around 3 months time.

As a result, we cannot work on some necessary regulation of the pipework until after this season. **Fiddler On The Roof** is opening at the theatre in late July, with **Ragtime** now opening early 1999.

Meanwhile, we are working at replacing the 2,500 magnet armatures throughout the organ with new ones imported from the US, as well as

washing pipes and rack boards, removing the building dust which got into the chambers during the installation period despite all attempts to keep it out!

The 32' **Diaphones** are being slowly brought up to power and tune, with low E moving the balcony rather nicely now! They are sitting on 23" of pressure.

Simon Gledhill Takes a Break

John Leeming, in an long article entitled "A YEAR AWAY FROM IT ALL" in COS's CINEMA ORGAN journal of Winter 1997, writes of his unusual interview with Simon who explains, amongst other interesting things, why he has decided to take a year off from the theatre organ:

When **Simon Gledhill** announced that he was not intending to give any public performances during 1998, many promoters were disappointed, including the organisers of the forthcoming **1998 San Francisco Convention**. The rationale behind **Simon's** decision is revealed in this article.

One possible reason for **Simon Gledhill's** surprise announcement became clear when I asked if I could interview him for the **Journal** about his decision - the clue was the difficulty in actually finding a slot where we both had the time chat for an hour or two. This may seem surprising to those readers who are aware that both **Simon** and I are on the **COS General Committee** - one might expect there to be ample opportunity to converse. The trouble is that when we do meet, it tends to be in connection with some project - a concert, a sub-committee discussion, or whatever, and there's never the chance for an in-depth chat.

"Well," said **Simon** on the phone one day, "why don't you join me on a weekend trip to **Germany** I'm making soon - there's a five-hour train journey involved, and that seems like a splendid opportunity to conduct an interview."

So it was that I found myself standing on **Potsdam Town** station on a cold but bright Sunday morning in October, waiting for the 09.17 Inter-City Express to **Mannheim**. Along with **Simon** were **Thomas Klose** and **Willi Wiesinger**, both stalwarts of the theatre organ scene in **Germany**, who were acting as guides and chaperones for the weekend.

I had already begun to realise another part of the background to **Simon's** decision. The frustrations of an earlier three-hour flight delay, resulting in a 2 am bedtime, followed by a full day's preparation, rehearsal and recording, prior to an evening

concert were enough to make me sit back and think - and I wasn't the one doing the work!

In came the train, and we settled down in our reserved seats. Out came the pen and paper and **Simon** began to explain to me the reasons for his decision - a decision which he admits will make a huge difference to his life in the year ahead. He had come to the conclusion that theatre organ concertizing was simply taking up too much of his life - he wanted to find the time to do other things in his spare time as well, like taking a holiday!

Simon first realised that something would have to be done about four weeks before the **Pasadena Convention** in 1996. His busy work schedule had made it very difficult to select, prepare and learn the new material he wanted to include in his programme.

"People expect new material," he told me, "and I found myself working flat out in every spare moment before the **Convention** - three weeks of detailed preparation and practice till 2 o'clock every morning. The net result was that I felt stressed for the most of the **Convention** itself; I didn't sleep properly, and as a result I didn't enjoy the event as much as I should have done."

Simon told me that his work in corporate banking had also become more demanding of late, giving him even less time to work out new musical arrangements. I wondered whether he had considered some lower-key, less demanding items in his performances as a way out of the situation.

Not for a moment. I have always tried to set myself high standards. People have come to expect high standards, and they expect them to be maintained."

Simon doesn't find it easy to find

new material for his programmes. It's not that the choice is limited, nor that the learning process is difficult for him.

"The thing is I've got to like the music, and feel comfortable playing it. If I just prepared a random selection of tunes that didn't do much for me, I'm sure it would be reflected in my performance, because the music wouldn't be inspiring me at the time," he explained. "I enjoyed tremendously playing the selection from **The Planets** I prepared for the 1996 **Convention**, and I hope that my enjoyment came over in the music. It took me two solid weeks of damned hard work to learn it, though!"

As the train sped through the **East German** countryside, I reflected on the consequences of **Simon's** year off on theatre organ concert diaries throughout the world, and wondered if he had considered settling for a half measure by, for example, limiting his concert performances to one a month.

"I tried something of the sort a few years ago, but it didn't work too well. It's very difficult, to say 'No' to someone who is a friend as well as a concert organiser - and that is the inevitable consequence of taking bookings on a first-come-first-served basis. You find yourself declining offers from venues where you enjoy playing, and are left, perhaps, with some where you don't!"

By now we had passed **Magdeburg**, and were crossing the old east-west frontier near **Marienborn**. I was beginning to speculate on another scenario - that **Simon** would enjoy his new-found freedom so much that he wouldn't want to go back to the theatre organ in 1999. This possibility has occurred to him, but he feels it is unlikely. He intends to continue playing for his own enjoyment, as well as possibly making a new recording, but

he does foresee the need to adopt a less hectic theatre organ lifestyle when he picks up the threads again.

"One way to reduce the pressure might be to be more selective about the instruments I play - there may be some that I wouldn't wish to play again."

I tried to find out a little more about forthcoming recordings, but here **Simon** was non-committal.

"There's constant pressure to make new recordings, and I like having recordings available. However, I do find the whole business of making them very tiresome and stressful. I need to be absolutely sure that each track is the very best performance that I can give, and this may mean many, many retakes. What this break will do is to give me the chance to listen, and to research new material. Lots of music played at theatre organ concerts is, in my opinion, either over-done or just not worthwhile, and I don't want to do promulgate either, if I can possibly avoid it!"

Simon explained that the importance of what he meant by 'good' music depends very much on one's views on the balance between musical enlightenment and entertainment. He felt that some theatre organists underestimate the potential for audiences to enjoy something worthwhile.

"Of course, most audiences know what to expect from different organists, and tend to go to hear the ones they like, so it's very difficult to judge this effect in practice. Nevertheless, when I have given concerts to 'new' audiences, who have previously not been familiar with my style, they seem to have enjoyed what I've done."

I suggested to **Simon** that although this may be so, probably 90% of these same audiences would have enjoyed what he had done just as much even if he hadn't spent so long in meticulous preparation.

"The 10% who *do* notice are very important. In any case I would be bored by my own performance, and I wouldn't enjoy playing. I'm sure all the hard work is worth it!"

So, the main reasons for **Simon's** current course of action are to give himself the breathing space to take stock and prepare for the next phase in his concert playing, to devote more mental resources to his 'real' job, and to take the occasional holiday.

"I just don't think I can keep up what I have been doing lately. I need a break, because I'd rather not play at all than lower my sights. I do expect to be back in 1999, but we'll see how it goes."

There may seem to be a rather uncertain note in that last statement, but I do happen to know that **Simon** has accepted at least two bookings already for 1999, and I, for one, am sure that we shall continue to enjoy his performances for many years to come.

The conversation then drifted towards more general matters. **Simon** had already referred to the pressure brought by his professional work in the City, which led me to ask him how he felt about something which is uncommon in the real musical world - that of amateur and professional musicians sharing the same concert platforms.

"Yes, I become very uneasy about this situation at times. There are those who play the theatre organ for a living, and I sometimes feel that they may be wondering what right I have to be on the circuit, not playing for a living and possibly even looking down my nose at some of those who do. That certainly isn't the case. I wish I had more time to go to other organists' concerts. I enjoy listening to the professionals play, and furthermore I don't really mind what style different organists have, as long as they are giving of their best. I like to feel that the organist is connected with the music."

Simon went on to admit that he didn't have a lot of time for those organists who did not appear to try. There are some, he felt, who seem bored with what they are doing. "You can't hear any commitment or involvement," he added. "Of course, I've never been in the position of having to perform every day, so I shouldn't really comment on the apparent boredom of some who do. Having said that, there were organists in times past who played publicly several times a day, and still managed to play interestingly, so it can be done!"

Simon did tell me, though, that most of the playing inspiration he got these days came from outside the UK.

"There's no shortage of worthy instruments in **Britain**," he went on, "but most of the potential is unrealised, and there's a shortage of people on the technical side who are prepared to admit their limitations and bring in the experts (and I don't mean me, either!). I don't like playing organs that are giving only 50% or 60% of what they could, with the right help, but unfortunately most of the instruments in this country fall into that category. There are, of course, many people striving to improve matters all the time, but it's the ones who don't have that awareness and have a 'there it is - take it or leave it' attitude which concern me. Personally I'd be

inclined to leave it!"

Simon indicated that one of the reasons for this state of affairs may be a reluctance to accept that the experience and expertise is largely in the USA, and some people maybe feeling that if they move down that path they'll end up with what have been referred to as '**American WurliTzers**'.

"That's nonsense, of course - all **WurliTzers** are **American** anyway! What I really object to is the apparent attitude of being proud to be mediocre, and being unwilling to accept constructive criticism."

I asked **Simon** if he thought that these areas of concern, as he sees them, would ever change for the better. He thought that they would, but only in small pockets. In many cases he felt that the will was there, but not the resources, and in other cases just the opposite. He didn't just mean financial resources, either.

"Human resources are the most important aspect. They are what is required to keep an existing organ in good mechanical condition, well tuned and with tremulation which works properly. The last one - tremulation - is the single biggest problem, especially in the UK."

I observed that on this particular point - tremulation - it was surely very much a matter of personal choice rather than an absolute right or wrong. He felt that this was only the case up to a point. "Examples can be drawn from the use of vibrato in other musical instruments. If you listen to the speed, depth and quality of the vibrato used by a violinist, for example, there isn't a huge variation from one performer to another - there is general acceptance of what makes a violin sound musical. If these same parameters are applied to the tremulation of a theatre organ, then a musical result is likely. After all, jagged, fluttery or jerky vibrato or tremolo never appears elsewhere in music."

I reminded **Simon** that some organ custodians were in charge of historical instruments, and felt it their duty to preserve the instrument as it always had been, even if that meant that it didn't tremulate too well. "No instrument has followed preservation to the absolute letter," he responded, "and even if that is the intention, it is still right to correct something which someone else had got wrong in the past. After all, these are musical instruments, and that must never be forgotten."

Simon drew a comparison with the

preservation of classic cars. "If you were restoring a car in which engine had not been tuned correctly in the past, that wouldn't stop you putting it right now, would it?"

By now it was nearly time to go to the buffet car to investigate lunch, so I thought we should draw the discussion to a close. I wanted to finish by getting Simon's thoughts on the future of the theatre organ in Britain. He drew a comparison with his own professional life.

"In the banking industry a consolidation is taking place - fewer outlets, but with higher quality services - and this is generally seen as necessary for survival. I think the same should happen to the theatre organ. There are too many venues, too many organists who are less than good, and in most places audiences are getting thinner all the time."

But how can this change be brought

about?

"Does every venue really need monthly concerts?" Simon asked. "I believe there are too many concerts at present, and we just haven't got the infrastructure to produce a really uplifting experience every month. Fewer concerts, with bigger audiences and higher-paid, less-tired organists, and organ custodians with more time to devote to their instruments would surely lead to greater satisfaction all round."

I admitted that the idea sounded good in theory, but I wondered how one could convince the nation's concert promoters that it could work.

"I think that the best thing that could happen would be the lavish restoration of a really fine old theatre, maybe as a performing arts centre, with a first-rate organ, and a quality organ show presented occasionally. People would then see how it is meant to be. It's

happened in the States, so it could happen here."

At that moment the train was gliding past the **Wilhelmshöhe Park** in **Kassel**. **Hercules** was presiding over his Sunday afternoon cascades, gushing purposefully from the top of the hill, thence to spread outwards through a maze of channels and raise the level of ponds, gullies and aqueducts all over the place. It was a timely analogy, I thought, and significant that **Simon** should have made his observations at that very moment.

So, **Simon**, enjoy your year off. The theatre organ public has derived great pleasure from your music during the past 15 years, and we wish you well during 1998, whatever you choose to do.

We look forward to your return to the concert stage in 1999 - in the words of the old **Horlicks** advertisement - "revived, alert and refreshed".

Murwillumbah Pipe Organ is Refurbished

TOSA Member, Ron Wilson of Tweed Heads, has sent in the following pipe organ item from the Daily News of Monday, 10th November, 1997 :

NEWS

Life's more than a pipe dream for Simon

By LUIS FELIU

THE art of pipe-organ building and restoration is alive and well in Murwillumbah.

Brisbane-based pipe organ builder Simon Pierce has been busy in the past three months restoring the old Charles Leggo organ in the All Saints Anglican Church - and he's only halfway through.

The highly-specialised work on the custom-built organ made in 1926 will ensure the enormous instrument continues playing rich sounds for at least 50 to 100 years.

The last time the organ was restored was in the 1970s when a marine engineer electrified the then pneumatic organ.

This time around, a new electro-pneumatic action is being fitted to make the organ's action quieter and faster.

The church organ's sound-board has seven stops each with 61 pipes.

Part of the restoration involves cleaning and regulating the pipes, balancing and tuning.

"I've had to design a new underaction," he said, explaining the technical term as "the tappets and valves which operate the pallet which allows wind to pass through the pipes".

Simon's business, which employs four full-time and occasional casuals, is much sought after in the pipe-organ world.

Recent work included main-

taining and tuning large organs such as those in Brisbane City Hall, the Queensland Performing Arts Complex and the Queensland Conservatorium.

The first two, he said, would have trouble fitting into the Murwillumbah church.

Simon says that pipe organs in the long run are cheaper to run than electronic ones and his firm has replaced many churches' electronic organs with pipe ones.

The firm specialises in rebuilds along the guidelines issued by the Organ Historical Trust of Australia.

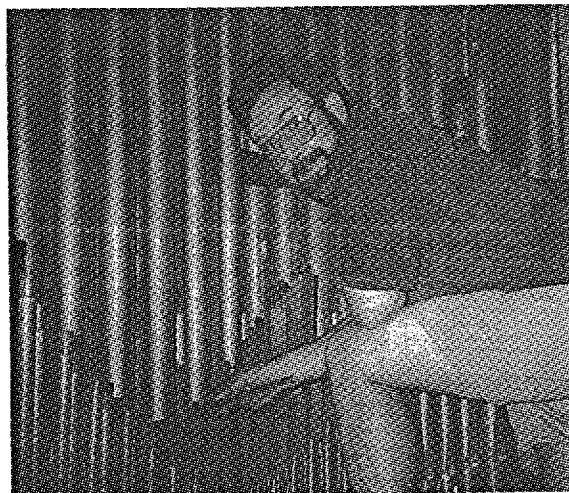
One problem Simon has encountered in Murwillumbah is the notorious "black snow", residue from seasonal sugarcane burning, which gets into the \$200,000-plus organ and affects its sound.

"Though it's not as bad as some places ... imagine what the Bundaberg church organs are like - they all get cleaned every five years. A pipe-organ builder's work covers a host of sins," he quipped, saying it was a slow process.

The Murwillumbah church organ is, he says, Edwardian or romantic style and built during the height of the British Empire, so his job also entails keeping the same style of sound.

"The new classical ones are not quite the same, it's like the difference between an electric guitar and an acoustic one.

"These old organs can still teach us quite a lot with their lovely rich and full sound."



□ BRISBANE-BASED pipe organ builder Simon Pierce at work restoring the Charles Leggo organ in the All Saints Anglican Church in Murwillumbah.

Simon has followed the fine tradition in the footsteps of his father, who was cathedral organist at Newcastle, St John's Launceston and St Thomas More, Sydney among others.

His father's (Scottish) side

of the family, however, were all instrument makers dealing with pianos and violins rather than organs.

Simon has been in the business for 10 of his 37 years, having done his apprenticeship with the famous J. W.

Walker's in Britain, a firm established in 1838.

His father, he said, preferred him not to enter the organ trade.

"Church work is not a lucrative living but it's in the blood," he said.

Ian Davies And Friends

Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL by Barry Tooker Saturday 28th February, 1998

With an early start at 1.00 pm, **Ian Davies** walked on to the stage and welcomed members and guests, including former TOSA President **Tom Halloran** and wife **Ann**, to the club.

He then introduced the first artist, a regular at these functions, **Bill Schumacher**. For an opener **Bill** played that old **Gershwin** classic, *Swanee*. The cordless microphone was playing up so it was exchanged for a wired one.

Bill continued with some selections from the pen of **Anthony Newley** including *Consider Yourself*, *Whenever He Needs Me* and *The Candy Man*. A change of pace to a bright rendition of *Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White* followed by **Cole Porter's** *You The Night And The Music*. **Bill** finished with a back to the 50's *Theme From A Summer Place*.

Wendy Hambly was the next artist to take the console and she opened with a bright, little *Cheek To Cheek*. A medley from *The Student Prince* was next and **Wendy** concluded her part of the program with *The Highway March*.

Now it was time for resident organist **Maestro Ian Davies** to entertain us. He said he was going to follow the advice of his old music teacher and, "play like he'd never played before - play good".

This he proceeded to do, playing such old stalwarts as *Way Beyond The Hills In Idaho*, *The Glory Of Love*, *Keep Your Sunny Side Up*, *Cool Clear Water*, *This Old House*, *La Golondrina* and *Riding On A Rainbow*. He finished up with a poignant *Poinciana*.

Intermission gave us a chance to seek refreshments from the bar and visit the engine room.

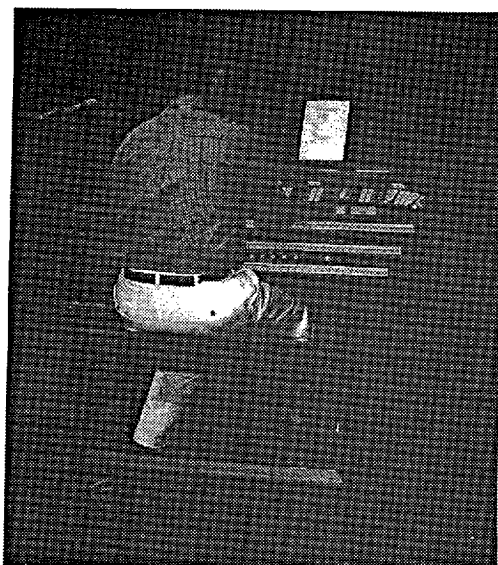
After the short break **Ian** re-introduced **Bill** who opened with *It's A*



Lovely Day Today, from *Call Me Madam*. He remarked that a friend said that every day starts off as a lovely day till some bugger spoils it for you.

Moonlight In Vermont is often requested and this was followed by four **Rodgers and Hammerstein** pieces - *June Is Bustin' Out All Over*, *March Of The Siamese Children*, *You'll Never Walk Alone* and *Surrey With The Fringe On Top*.

Bill now moved across to the grand



piano with **Ian** at the console while they played duets for a good old fashioned sing-a-long.

Opening with *So What's New*, they continued with *Red Red Robin*, *Sunny Side Of The Street*, *Ma He's Making*

Eyes At Me, finishing with *Side By Side*

As **Bill** had to leave early for another engagement, **Ian** thanked him on behalf of everyone and **Mary** made a presentation to him.

Wendy returned to the organ. The *March From The River Kwai* was followed by a tune she remembers from the **Tom and Jerry** cartoons, *The Waltzing Cat I Won't Send You Roses* led us

to a demonstration of a bagpipe effect while she played a **Scottish** tune. In strict dance tempo she played a bouncy *Quando Quando Quando* finishing up with a brassy *Seventy Six Trombones* from *The Music Man*.

Wendy now received a thank you from **Ian** and a presentation from **Mary** and also one on behalf of TOSA.

Ian now returned for his final segment. Opening with a spaced out *Telstar*, he followed up with a request for *Quiet Village* made famous by **George Wright**. Grand organ style was shown off in the *Hymn Of Joy*.

Four more numbers *Turkey In The Straw*, *Banjo On My Knee*, *Campdown Races*, *Backbay Shuffle* concluding with his theme tune, *Cruising Down The River*, finished the afternoon's concert.

Have you noticed yet that **Ian** didn't play any of the **Fats Waller** tunes for which he is famous? Did he forget, run out of time, or did no one request them?

Wendy returned to the stage to congratulate **Ian** on a fine afternoon's entertainment and to thank him and the club on behalf of TOSA.

A packed auditorium gave their approval. This was the first official TOSA function for 1998. **Ian** has promised us more of the same. Thank you, **Maestro Ian Davies**.

Margaret Hall in Concert

Willoughby Civic Centre

by Barry Tooker

Friday, 27th February 1998

The queues were long and a large crowd was flowing into the Civic Centre when I arrived. Margaret's popularity certainly shows.

With a voice-over announcement she entered from a door on stage left, climbed straight to the console and started playing the introductory number *A Shine On Your Shoes* from *Bandwagon*. A good opening number sets the pace for a good show.

From *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* Margaret played that lovely tune *Spring Spring Spring*. The everlasting music from *George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess* followed, and this included such numbers as *I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'*, *Summertime* and *It Ain't Necessarily So*.

Now it was time to introduce the popular operatic singing duo, **Leslie Martin** and **Dean Sinclair** accompanied by **Ron Sinclair** at the *Wurlitzer* organ.

Their opening song was a beautifully performed *Indian Love Call*. I say beautifully performed because **Dean** and **Leslie** could use the whole stage to perform their duet with not a microphone in sight, and yet their voices could be heard clearly from any point. The secret was that they were wearing radio microphones. What a difference it makes, being freed from a wired microphone and dragging a cable all over the place.

Their second song was **Sigmund Romberg's Song Of Love** which naturally suggested finishing up with *Wanting You*, also from **Romberg**.

Margaret now returned to the console to play a delightful *Delicado*, followed by a tune made famous by **Barbra Streisand**, *I'd Rather Be Blue*

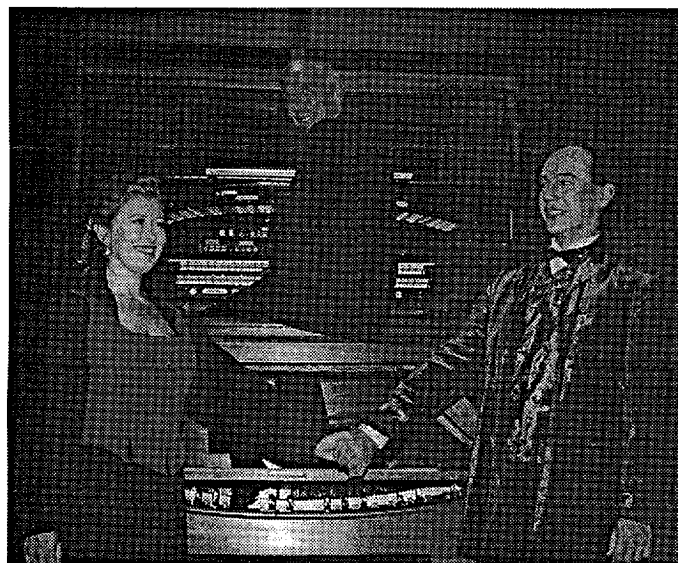


Over You, then *Midnight In Mayfair*.

A **Rodgers and Hart** double, *Isn't It Romantic* and *My Romance*, went well together and the first half of the program concluded with a tune from Italian composer **Luigi Arditi** *Il Bacio* the kiss.

Time out for some welcome refreshment.

After this short intermission **Margaret** was once again welcomed to the console when she played *All Over The Place*. This was followed by a **Bing**



Crosby selection, which included *Swingin' On A Star*, *Some Sunny Day*, *Did You Ever See A Dream Walking*, *Please, Dream A Little Dream* and his signature tune *When The Blue Of The Night*. *The Lady In Red* and *The*

Masquerade Is Over concluded that part of her program.

Remarking on how she enjoyed the artistry of **Dean** and **Leslie**, **Margaret** introduced them back to the stage, with **Ron** supplying a very capable accompaniment at the *Wurlitzer*. They opened with **Franz Léhar's Blue As The Summer Sky Above** followed by *Nobody Could Love You More*. Their final song was *Will You Remember*.

The art of accompaniment is not an easy task and **Ron** seems to be there, never intruding or overpowering, but always supporting and blending with his singers.

It was now **Margaret's** turn to entertain us again and this she did with a solemn *Bless This House* followed by a medley from **Irving Berlin's** popular *Easter Parade*. This included *Fella With An Umbrella*, *Shakin' The Blues Away*, *Couple Of Swells* and of course *Easter Parade*. The concert finished with the *Dambusters' March*.

But the audience was so appreciative that they called the artists back for an encore. As a finale we were treated to **Dean** and **Leslie** singing *Ah Sweet Mystery Of Life*, accompanied by **Ron** on grand piano and **Margaret** on organ.

Judging from the applause and the size of the audience I am sure that the concert series will be come a popular part of **Willoughby's** entertainment scene.

The console was thrown open for close inspection and a disc was played through the **Devtronics** computer to demonstrate its capabilities after the show.

Congratulations to the organisers for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Review of Russell Holmes' Concert

Orion Centre Campsie

by Chris Styles

Sunday 29th March, 1998

A pleasant one hour drive from my new home in the Southern Highlands brought my friends Tony, Doreen and myself to Campsie for our first concert of the year. A chat to TOSA friends on arrival and then a peek at the renovated auditorium. A word with one or two members who had heard the organ in rehearsal about the new acoustic, with carpet on the floor and the walls and ceiling draped in various ways. There seemed no real concern from those I asked about how the organ sounded. In fact, the majority opinion was that it probably sounded better, with the post horn in particular a little less strident.

Shortly after 2pm we were all to find out. The opinions seemed all to be that the organ sounds a little more intimate, even - dare I say it? - as if it were in a movie theatre, though not as "dead" in sound as I have heard some organs in theatres in other states! I found the sound very acceptable and there really seems no need to be concerned from an acoustic point of view at this time. In any case we had a very good "tester" in Russell Holmes and in my opinion he passed with flying colours.

The organ as usual got top reports from the organist and rightly so as its sounds were as we always expect and get at Campsie.

Russell's programme reminded me of a comment of one of Australia's

leading radio programmers on ABC-FM who, when asked how he provided music to please the listener, stated that he kept to the familiar, with surprises thrown in every now and then for good measure. This I felt Russell did and the audience very much appreciated it. Old favourites like *Granada*, the *South Pacific* medley, *Jealousy* and *Ketelby's Sanctuary of the Heart* were played with vigour, and with registrations that showed the organist's versatility, and they were never of the "not that tired old warhorse again" variety.

Russell brought the console up with *Hallelujah* from *Hit the Deck* - I think I mentioned before that I inherited a seven inch "78" from my father with that number on it - and this was an appropriate bright opener that gave us exceeding confidence that Russell knew what was what on the Wurli and was going to give us a pleasant afternoon.

I'm not going into each number or bracket, suffice to say that marches, ballads and medleys were played with registrations that showed great talent on Russell's part.

For special note : *Radetsky March* - played with oomph and "gutsy" sound, just like the last night at the Proms; *Teddy Bears' Picnic* - they were big bears! *Granada* - what an introduction to shake the foundations of the Orion Centre! Also this piece was played in TOSA's transport officer, *Ritchie Willis of Mortdale*, writes :

5th April, 1998

Just a short note on behalf of my Selwyn Theatre Group. Thirty-five of them went to your recent Russell Holmes concert at the Orion Centre, Campsie, and all agreed this was one of the best concerts they had attended. This young man has all the makings of a great theatre organist of the future and we hope that if he ever comes to Australia again TOSA will be sure to have him at the Orion.

Thank you for a wonderful afternoon of great music on that fabulous WurliTzer organ that we love so much.
Yours sincerely,
Ritchie Willis

a refreshing style.

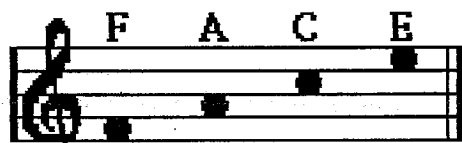
Russell's patter was delightful with many insights into various music and composers. He was able to give us copious dates of music and composers, all helpful to this here radio presenter in any case.

Piano talents : Russell's Gershwin medley, though of very familiar tunes, was performed delightfully and with much feeling and showed a deft pianistic talent. I also liked the piano interlude in *Paddlin' Madeleine Home* - hardly any organ and lots of WurliTzer piano!

To those who wish to know - Russell was able to go home to the UK with a lighter suitcase. Thanks to you all there, the forty cassettes he brought with him were all sold at our record bar by interval's end. Russell thanks you from the bottom of his suitcase!

Russell has graciously allowed us to present his concert on a future *Theatre Organ Highlights* on 2CBA (FM-103.2) and I am sure those who were at the concert will want to relive that delightful two and a half hours of great music making. If you missed it - stay tuned for details!

Thanks again, Russell, and I hope the rest of your stay in Australia was as enjoyable as you made our Sunday afternoon.

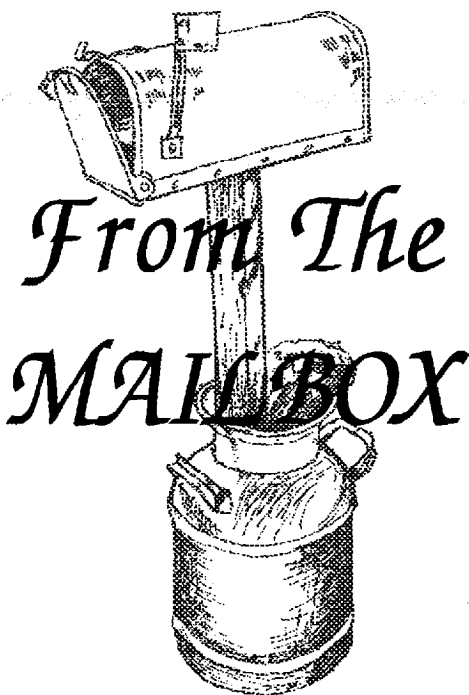


THE MUSIC
With Allan Tassaker

"When I gave my very first concert," says Allan, "I charged twenty dollars a ticket. I played for four hours non-stop, so they got their money's worth."

"What did you get out of it?" asked his friend.

"A sore behind!" groaned Allan.



OUR NEXT ARTIST

Tony Fenelon

Tony was born in **Melbourne** and commenced his piano tuition at the age of 7, playing competently in Eisteddfods and local festivals when he was 8. He completed a **Bachelor of Science** degree at the **University of Melbourne** in 1963 and a high scoring **Licentiate Diploma** at **Melbourne's Conservatorium of Music**, under famed pianist and teacher, **Roy Shepherd**.

In 1964, **Tony** was invited to perform a feature spot in a special programme being presented at **Melbourne's Regent Theatre**. As a result of his outstanding performance, he became the resident organist at the **Regent** until it closed down in 1969.

During this early period he started playing for the growing number of **Theatre Organ Societies** throughout **Australia**. His first **USA** tour came in 1969 and he has since toured there many times - one highlight being a highly-acclaimed duo tour with famed US artist, **Lyn Larsen**. He has also toured several times in the **UK**. He has released 15 record albums in various countries, including "**Interval at the Regent**" (now on CD).

In everyday life **Tony** is a Bio-medical scientist, designing and maintaining the highly sophisticated life-support systems and complicated equipment of modern hospitals.

A man of great versatility, **Tony's** dedication, energy, musical genius and warm personality have made him **Australia's** leading theatre organist and an artist in constant demand throughout the world. **TOSA (NSW)** is honoured to have such a busy and talented man to play for us again.

FREE TICKET OFFER !!!

Invitation

If you have never been to a **TOSA Theatre Organ Concert** before, here is your chance to hear one of **Australia's** outstanding Theatre Organists, **Tony Fenelon**.

The time: **2pm on Sunday 31st May** The place: **Marrickville Town Hall**

Cut out and post this form, enclosing a self-addressed envelope, to :-

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*An official numbered ticket **must** be obtained from our Ticket Secretary **by mail** in advance.
This invitation will **not** be accepted to gain entry at the door of the concert.*

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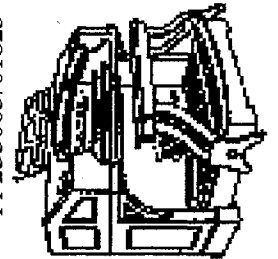
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MAY, 1998

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