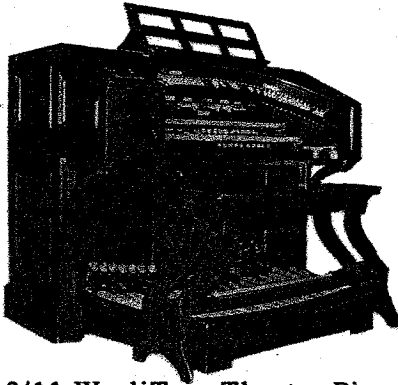
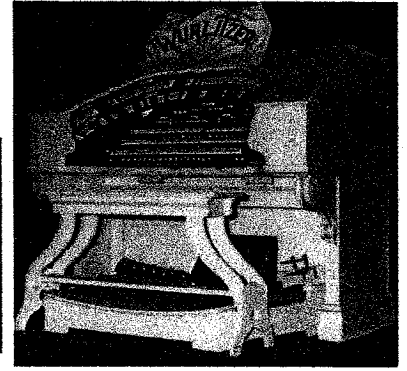


JULY, 2002



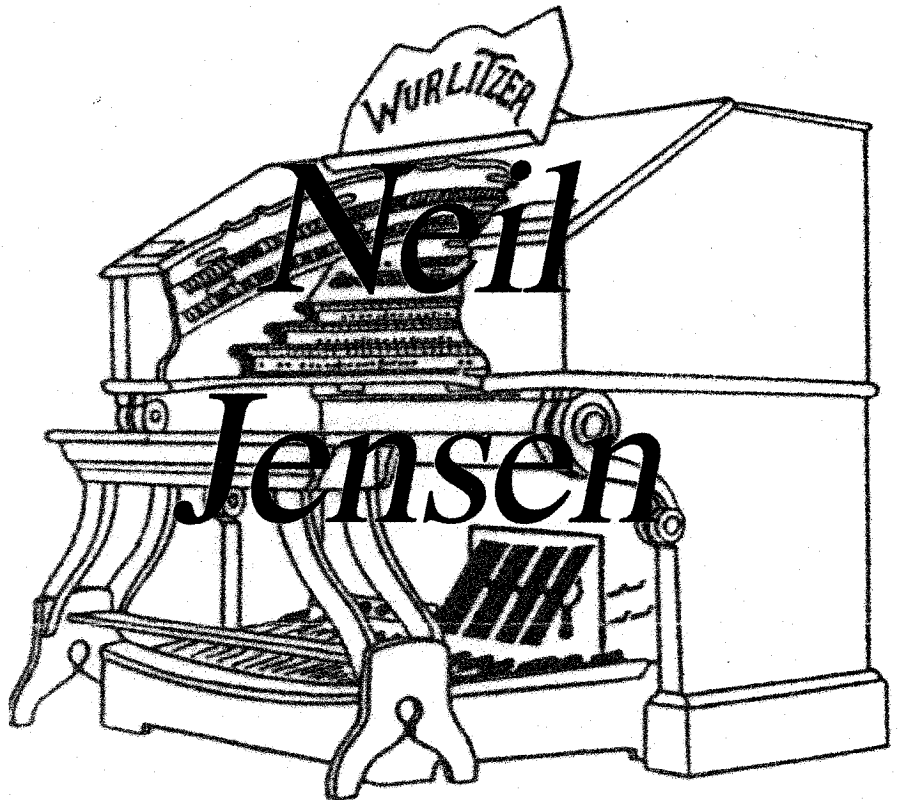
2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA



3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

The Sensational Entertainment and Playing Skills of Sydney's



Sunday, 14th July, at 2pm
Orion Centre Campsie
Parking Patrolled by Security Guards

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TOSA NEWS

JULY, 2002

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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

General Business - SECRETARY

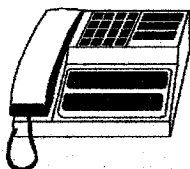
Ticket Bookings - TICKET SECRETARY

Membership, Renewals, Change of Address - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - EDITOR

All numbers use the prefix 02

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COMING EVENTS

JULY

- Monday 1 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Sunday 14 at 2.00pm Neil Jensen Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
- Thursday 25 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

AUGUST

- Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Thursday 8 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
- Sunday 18 at 2.00pm Chris Powell Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
- Thursday 22 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

SEPTEMBER

- Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Thursday 12 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
- Thursday 26 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

From The President

Last edition, I suggested you "Come and be surprised" at the Marrickville concert. Well, I wasn't exactly "surprised", because I expected a good show. But I, and I think almost everyone present, were delighted by the concert. As I said after interval, we were hearing a seriously excellent standard of musicianship - you would have to travel a long way to find better. The audience clearly agreed with me.

Owen Watkins with his "ragtime" Saxophone (he owns many other kinds) played a wide variety of music. And it was not so much Owen playing pieces while Margaret accompanied - it was more like a co-operative interweaving series of duets - excellent arrangements. Margaret was in top form and played solo for a good proportion of the concert. I'd best change the subject now or I'll be stepping on the reviewer's toes.

Thank you, Neil, for having the *Wurlitzer* in such good order. Among other things, Neil had specially installed thermostatically controlled heaters in the organ chambers so as to hold the pitch and tuning despite the cold weather. This was necessary to blend with the A440 Saxophone, which has very little adjustment.

Owen's wife Tamara (also an organist) was at the concert, with their tiny blonde daughter "Rhianwen" - who enthusiastically drew the raffle. Tamara is already a member of TOSA, but I notice that Owen has now also joined!

As I write, in mid-June, we have received over 65% of members' renewal payments, which is good going. If you haven't



sent yours yet, your TOSA News Mailing Label will read "SUBSCRIPTION DUE" - so use the renewal form that was inserted last month and let's have it in the post! If you sent your payment in the last 3 or 4 weeks, don't worry it will be processed before next month's TOSA News.

Now would be an excellent time to find new members. Make a photocopy if you need extra forms. How about making your spouse a member - it only costs 50% more, and this helps TOSA.

Don't miss Neil Jensen playing solo, at the Orion 14th July.

See you there!

Walter Pearce

Welcome To New Members

TOSA is delighted to welcome 4 new members and to wish them all a long and entertaining time among our ranks:

Noelene Turner - Penshurst
Owen Watkins - Epping
Ken Chesterton - Condell Park
Pat Bray - Wentworthville
John Moore - Brighton-le-Sands

Editorial

Margaret Hall's concert was a knock-out - very enjoyable music, and of course the organ and saxophone items were a real highlight - absolutely delightful. Thank you, Margaret, for your thorough preparation and your thoughtfully-planned, beautifully executed programme of great music.

TOSA South Australia has officially announced their 2003 Easter Festival, with the USA organist Lew Williams as their featured overseas artist. On page 6 of this TOSA News, you will find the provisional programme, and on page 5 there is an offer to young organists to apply for a spot in the Festival.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

Members' Playing Sessions

Members enjoyed the Members' Playing Evening at Marrickville on 23rd May last, with most of the regulars present.

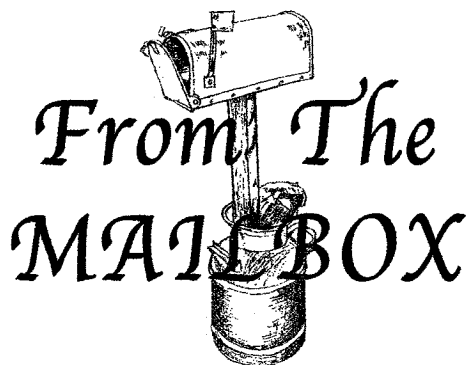
Then on 13th June at the Orion Afternoon we had a wide variety of music from well played "Widor" (you know, his spectacular one) right down to the President attempting *Hard-hearted Hannah*.

Players were (in order of appearance): Bruce Bisby, Andrew Graham, Ron Ivin, Paul Luci, Jack MacDonald, Wendy Hambly, Frank Lewis, Walter Pearce and John Batts. Listeners were John Atkins, Eric Frost, Harry Robertson, Don Fullerton, Ray and Edna Hambly and Jenny Pearce.

Thank you all for your donations toward running the *Wurlitzer*, and toward the afternoon tea - which always includes Edna's impeccable sandwiches.

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



Bettine Vallance of Burwood adds a brief word to the discussion about including non-organ items in TOSA concerts:

1/6/02

Apparently Mr Allan Brooker hasn't heard the saying "variety is the spice of life", for I found his criticism in very poor taste in regard to artists performing at our delightful concerts. He has a very narrow opinion. ...

I hope TOSA will continue to have many more associate artists or a return performance of some of those we have already heard.

As for David Smith, he is one of the most outstanding artists in our Society and I, for one, would be very delighted to see him come back and perform so wonderfully on both instruments.

So, Mr Brooker, your opinions are negative and mine are positive.

Bettine Vallance

Allan Brooker replies to the comments on his suggestions :

2/6/02

Re the continuing debate about the addition of "non-organ" events at TOSA concerts, I am relieved that Neil Palmer in his response to my letter (May TOSA News) is not concerned that the Wurlitzer he maintains, takes a back seat instead of being featured on its own. That's good, as it would be unfortunate to have a disenchanted organ technician as well as disenchanted concertgoers.

Mr Mills of Orange exaggerates when he said after seeing my letter he was upset "to read so many negative statements". I basically had one negative thing to say and that was my opposition to unnecessary "non-organ" artists. If he is happy to travel all that way for such events, then bully for him. He neglected to acknowledge that I had attended ALL concerts for over thirteen years, as Walter Pearce kindly did (through sickness and health I might add) with as many people

as I could bring along! This was rarely less than four people and occasionally up to ten, including some from interstate and overseas! I hardly find that a negative attitude and I have never, ever complained in all that time! I have always appreciated the hard work that the many volunteers put into TOSA concerts and I have enjoyed many memorable shows.

I say again, that I can go any day of the week to a club or similar venue to hear vocalists, players of electronic instruments and other performers, and usually for free. If people like singers, etc., then go to one of these venues. Why spoil for the very keen theatre organ enthusiast what would normally be a perfectly good afternoon of theatre organ music, with these intrusions. I do, in fact, like singers and instrumentalists, but not at Theatre Organ concerts. It is just not necessary! In the hands of a competent organist there are all the voices and sound you need at his or her disposal.

I appreciate the fact that the TOSA committee is trying to come up with ideas to stem the increasing falling concert attendances. This is not the way in my opinion! Concentrate on getting the best organist/s possible, instead. The Felon/Atwell duo concerts are a perfect example of adding variety. Look at the crowds they draw!

To attract a good audience you need a good organist to start with. Why do you think people come in their hundreds to hear the likes of Tony Felon? It's not rocket science! He attracts a quality audience because he is very good at demonstrating the instrument for which the Society was formed - the Theatre Organ. Tony does not need any "non-organ support artist" to put on a great show. He is always fresh and importantly innovative. I have heard him as well, in two other states and I can honestly say that I have never, ever been to two Tony Felon concerts that were exactly alike. He is always coming up with something fresh.

Look at some of the overseas artists such as Simon Gledhill, Phil Kelsall, Robert Wolfe and Barry Baker who all packed the halls, to mention just a few. There is a common denominator here. They are all very good with their different styles at the Theatre Organ. Plenty of variety there and they need no other help!

Now I realise we can't get the likes of Tony and these imports every concert, but there are still quite a few talented organists around in this country, which

ABC Classics

ABC Classic discs have been promoting a couple of recent discs which are of interest to pipe organ fans, more classical than theatre organ :

First is a CD called *Piracy* which is Baroque music "stolen" for the recorder, i.e. music written originally for other instruments, and here accompanied on 10 of the 18 tracks by a "chamber organ", and by a harpsichord on the other 8 tracks. The recorders are played by Genevieve Lacey, and the organ and harpsichords by Linda Kent.

The music played is mostly by Johann Sebastian Bach, but with items by Henry Purcell, Johann Schmelzer, Marin Marais, Arcangelo Corelli, Edward Finch and Francesco Geminiani.

The other is a CD called *Mendelssohn - The Complete Organ Sonatas*, and as the title implies contains Mendelssohn's 6 sonatas.

The organist is Michael Dudman and each sonata is played on a different Sydney suburban pipe organ, all recorded between November 1982 and May 1983. The organs are : the 1873 J.W. Walker & Sons in St Philip's Anglican Church, Church Hill; the 1884 Hill & Son in St Andrew's Scots' Presbyterian Church, Rose Bay; the 1882 Forster & Andrews in All Saints' Anglican Church, Woollahra; the 1887 Henry Bevington & Sons in All Saints' Anglican Church, Hunters Hill; the 1890 Hill & Son in Hunter Baillie Memorial Presbyterian Church, Annandale; the 1886 T.C.Lewis in Pymble Ladies' College Chapel, Pymble.

Further information from ABC Shops or on-line at abcshop.com.au.

with a bit of decent promotion can attract a good audience.

Co-Patron Ian Davies has always said, "Give the young ones a go!" He is right. That is where the future of Theatre Organ lies, not with these wretched non-organ "add-ons" at concerts. I have friends interstate who share my feelings as well, so I am not a lone voice in the wilderness!

There is a wealth of young talent in South Australia and some promising young people coming on in Victoria to name just two areas where we should be showing encouragement and many of them are ATOS young artist winners.

Up until recently I had been perfectly satisfied with the concerts put on by TOSA even though they seem to be getting fewer and fewer each year. Yes, I realise there are problems with the Orion venue, but I feel if you break the cycle of concert of approximately once a month, people tend to get out of the habit of attending on a regular basis.

I also have a feeling that the main drop-off in audiences is by the really keen theatre organ devotees who are getting fed up and those that remain are not too fussed about what they hear as long as it fills in a few hours on a Sunday afternoon. ...

I suppose I could have taken the typical Australian attitude of not complaining when they receive bad service at the time and just quietly vowing to never come back to the establishment, instead of speaking up at the time, like I am doing now, in the hope of nipping in the bud what in my opinion is a problem.

Walter Pearce in his response to my letter, said the organist "... ably showed another side of the Wurlitzer as an accompaniment to a singer ... Wasn't that one of the roles of the original Theatre Organ?" No, it wasn't! The original role of the Theatre Organ was to accompany, on its own, a silent movie. The only sounds you heard were those coming from the organ, generated by one person. There was no need for anyone else whatsoever, with the "unit orchestra" providing all the voices necessary!

My friends and I, after a democratic discussion, will not be attending the next Marrickville concert for the obvious reasons of another "add on" being present.

I can only hope that the upcoming Neil Jensen and Chris Powell concerts will be presented without interference.

Yours faithfully,
Allan Brooker

30th TOSA NATIONAL FESTIVAL, ADELAIDE, 18th - 21st APRIL 2003

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY FOR YOUNG ORGANISTS' FEATURE SPOTS

During the 2003 Festival in Adelaide we want to give young theatre organists an opportunity to show their skills to an audience who will encourage and appreciate their musical talent.

We would like every young organist to have a chance to be considered for inclusion in one of the selected concerts during the Festival. Musicians may have played for an audience before, but this is not a prerequisite.

Interested musicians are asked to submit a taped recording showing their talent. The people selected will be given opportunity to play either the 4/29 Capri organ on Friday 18th April 2003 or the 2/12 Wyatt Hall organ on Saturday 19th April 2003.

Those taking part will be asked to play for around 15 minutes. Each artist will be given a full festival package plus an honorarium of \$150.00 as an encouragement to continue with their theatre pipe organ studies.

The following guidelines should be followed when submitting an entry:

1. Entry will be by an audition tape to be sent to the Festival Secretary by 31st October 2002.
2. Musicians who wish to apply must be under 25 years as of Easter 2003.
3. Entries must be presented on a cassette tape.
4. The entry should be made on a theatre pipe organ.
5. The entry should include two different styles of music (e.g. bright opener, ballad or a selection from a musical) - and should run between 10 and 15 minutes in total length,
6. Entries should be accompanied by an application form (available from the Festival Secretary).
7. Artists who are selected should be able to be in Adelaide by Wednesday night 16th April 2003 to allow time for practice. Practice time is limited and will be restricted to mainly setting up registrations only.

Every effort will be made to assist artists. Request for application forms and any queries should be directed to the Festival Secretary.

Requests for Entry Forms are to be sent to :

Greg Doman
Festival Secretary
TOSA (SA Div) Inc
PO Box 3369
RUNDLE MALL SA 5000

FOR SALE

1. Hammond (*Concord* or *H Series*) twin 61 note keyboard, 25 note pedal board, full rhythm section, inbuilt Leslie, excellent condition inside and out - \$600.00
 2. Wurlitzer *Centura Spinnet*, rhythm section, excellent condition inside and out - \$400.00
 3. Hammond *RT3* Church organ, twin 61 note keyboard, 32 note pedal board, external Hammond speaker, this organ is in EXCELLENT condition and I am the 2nd owner since new, one for a collector - \$1800.00
- These organs are part of my private collection and are being sold for harmony in my home!
- Phone Phillip on 9771 4216 after 7.00 pm any evening.

Preliminary Programme for Next Year's

Easter Theatre Organ Music Festival 2003

PIPIN' HOT - COME AND GET IT!

30th National gathering of TOSA members.

25th Anniversary of TOSA (S.A.) owning the Capri Theatre.

20th Anniversary of the Opening Concert Capri Organ.

FRIDAY 18th

Noon Delegates Meeting
2.00pm **REGISTRATIONS** Capri Theatre
2.45pm **PIPE 'EM IN** Capri Theatre
Official Opening
David Johnston
Irish Dancing
Young Organist
Previous Convention Highlights
Michelle Nicole
Robert Wetherall
8.00pm **PIPES ... AN' ALL THAT JAZZ**
JC Jazz Capri Theatre
Ryan Heggie
Margaret Hall
Young Organist
Mathew Loeser

SATURDAY 19th

9.15am **POPEYEPS** Elder Park
(Full package ONLY)
River Cruise + Morning Tea
Festival Theatre - Organ Tour
(Artist TBC)
2.30pm **PIPES AT PULTENEY** Wyatt Hall
Scott Harrison
Young Organist
Cliff Bingham
Paul Fitzgerald
8.00pm **DUELLING PIPES** Capri Theatre
Tony Fenelon
Chris McPhee

SUNDAY 20th

9.30am **PIPE POURRI**
Visit Richard Larritt's home installation
Organ Component Display Wyatt Hall
Open Console Wyatt Hall
3.00pm **PIPIN' HOT - YA' GOT IT**
Lew Williams Capri Theatre
7.00pm **PIPE UP FOR A HOEDOWN**
Woolshed - West Beach
Dinner / Dance with Barry Hall,
Bush Band and invited Artists

MONDAY 21st

9.30am Open Console Capri Theatre
Open Console Wyatt Hall
11.00am **PIPEWORKS** Capri Theatre
(Full package ONLY)
A workshop with Lew Williams
2.30pm **PIPE REFLECTIONS** Capri Theatre
Capri Organ History
Slides by John Thiele.
3.00pm **PIPES AN' PIZZAZZ** Capri Theatre
Neil Jensen
Trad Jazz (TBC)
7.30pm **NOSTALGIC PIPES** Capri Theatre
Cartoons, Newsreels, a short Silent
Film accompanied by David Johnston
plus a Feature Film

TUESDAY 22nd

AFTER THE PIPES ARE OVER
Bus Trip to Victor Harbor

It is of note that five (5) Australian artists are recipients of ATOS prizes or scholarships. Please note that this is a preliminary programme, and therefore subject to change. Costings are being negotiated at present. When accommodation packages have been negotiated and artist's contracts finalised, brochures will be printed and distributed.

Make a mark on your calendar / diary for this coming EASTER 2003. Tell your friends of the wonderful fellowship and musical times enjoyed at these Festivals.

Looking forward to your company during FESTIVAL 2003,

Bob Cornish,

Festival Convenor.

Lancastrian Trust Update

Don Hyde, the Chairman of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust noticed a small piece in *TOSA News'* first issue for this year which reported on the seemingly high cost of moving the Free Trade Hall's *Wurlitzer* to Stockport Town Hall, and he felt a little clarification of the details might be in order.

Don writes:

Just noticed the "*Costing of a Transplant*" item in the newsletter and, just to put it into perspective, thought I would like to qualify the cost of £200,000 for the re-installation in Stockport Town Hall.

It was because of the increasing maintenance required in its latter days in the Free Trade Hall that it was decided to completely rebuild the organ. That included -

A complete re-leathering of everything in the organ, including regulators all chests and pallets.

Removing all the old varnish/lacquer from the chests, and re-varnishing the chests with the same specification varnish as was originally used.

Replacing all the magnet coils, due to acid flux having been used by *Wurlitzer* in 1930 and this was causing an ongoing problem with many open circuits every time we did servicing.

Purchase and installation of a *Uniflex* computer system, there being insufficient room for the original relays in the Town Hall. (The relays have been placed in storage by Stockport Museum Service, so that the organ is still complete as supplied.)

Removing part of a tiered balcony at the rear of the Ballroom and building complete chambers, in accordance with heritage requirements in a grade 2-listed building.

Refurbishing and balancing of the discus blower.

Purchase of a lift capable of raising the console to a high of 16 feet from the basement of the Town Hall to stage level in the Ballroom. Incidentally we couldn't find a British manufacturer who could supply this item - we eventually used a modified

hydraulic mining drilling platform made in Sweden.

The console was stripped of some 7 layers of paint and was repainted in its original colour and livery. The gold work was done with real gold leaf as per the original console when it was opened in 1930. The French style caps were originally done in gold leaf but these were painted over within its first year at the Paramount, photographs taken just before the opening never showed this goldwork as the caps were never in position when photos were taken. It was only when the paint was stripped off that the gold became visible.

All the pipes were cleaned and repaired as necessary, then after installation were terraced and re-voiced again as required.

The cost also included a brand new *Wurlitzer*-style English Horn to the replace the one installed just after the war, which was more an overblown Clarinet and never too satisfactory. The new rank was made by Duncan Booth & Sons of Leeds and is based on the English Horn in our other *Wurlitzer* the Granada *Wurlitzer*.

Lastly, because the organ was in an important public building all the original cotton-covered wire had to be removed and replaced by cable with a flame retardant insulation. So everything was rewired to the latest standards.

When you list everything that was done, the cost starts to look small.

A Home for Another Historic *Wurlitzer*

Just before Christmas the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust got planning permission for a Heritage Centre in Eccles (that's about 10 miles west of Manchester, just within the M60 ring road).

It is proposed the convert an old Sunday School into a Theatre with projection gear to show silent movies, included is a small 2/6 *Wurlitzer* on an upper floor and a museum to Robert Hope-Jones with an archive store on

the lower floor.

We have just rescued the 13th *Wurlitzer* to come to UK in 1927. It is Opus 1664 and was installed in the Trocadero Liverpool for its first ten years, until 1937 when it was reinstalled in the Gaumont Dingle Liverpool. Of these first 13 *Wurlitzers* only 6 have survived.

We are hoping that the project will be complete in about 3 years - just in time for the anniversary of Hope-Jones emigrating to America and joining *Wurlitzer*.

On the money side we have already raised quite a bit towards the project but still are hoping to raise a further £60,000 to complete the project, which will cost an estimated £96,000.

For further information, have a look at www.voxlancastrina.org.uk

Regards,
Don Hyde
Chairman
of the Lancastrian
Theatre Organ Trust

The Total Number of Theatre Organs Produced in the USA.

Nick Grbac reports that according to the Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ, these are the top 10. The + signifies "within 100" (e.g. in Wurlitzer's case, between 2000 and 2100) :

- 1) Wurlitzer (2000+)
- 2) Rober Morton (800+)
- 3) Kimball (600+)
- 4) Moller (500+)
- 5) Barton (300+)
- 6) Marr & Colton (300+)
- 7) Wicks (200+)
- 8) Kilgen (200+)
- 9) Smith (just under 200)
- 10) Hillgreen-Lane (approx. 150)

Also: 11) Estey 12) Link
13) Austin 14) Page 15) Welte
16) United States 17) Balcom & Vaughn 18) Wangerin 19) Reuter
20) Hinners

The International Theatre Organ Scene :

The Organ at Coburg City Hall by Bill Worley

Coburg is a relatively old suburb of Melbourne, and is well known because of the notoriety of having Her Majesty's Pentridge Prison (1853-1997), commonly called the "Bluestone College", sited right next to the Town Hall complex. Fortunately, the prison site has now been sold for private housing development, although some of the historic buildings will remain. During the installation of the organ in the Town Hall it was not unusual to hear Public Address announcements made to the inmates. In fact, Tony Fenelon, at a fund raising concert held in 1993 heard such a message and quipped to the audience, "Now if you're not good, you know where you will go."

The main hall at Coburg is quite large (129' by 69') and has a wooden parquet floor, painted walls, and a very high 'barrel' ceiling. The only damping is the curtains over the fairly large 'slope' stage, so as may be expected, the acoustic is very 'live' indeed and suits this smallish organ wonderfully well. The Town Hall and associated buildings were built in 1922, in what could be described as Art Deco architecture.

When it was decided to install the *Blackett & Howden* organ at this location (back in 1992), we were dealing with the old Coburg City Council, with whom the official lease-agreement documentation was formulated and finally agreed to, in conjunction with the Victorian Division of TOSA. Shortly afterwards, the then State Government decided to amalgamate many of the Victorian local municipal councils, Coburg being among them. The old council was duly sacked, and a team of commissioners was moved in to pave the way for an amalgamation with what was the former Brunswick Council. The result of all this major change was the formation of a new and much larger municipality to be called Moreland. It was to be quite a few years however before a democratically elected Moreland City Council was to be formed. So, these were pretty hectic days for the volunteer installation team, and a number of significant

administrative aspects had to be dealt with even before the project was finally started in earnest in November 1995.

The organ in the meantime had to be moved a number of times, using furniture vans and finally a 40' shipping container, (which believe me is not the ideal place to store such a delicate piece of machinery for lengthy periods). This was all prior to the organ being finally delivered to Coburg for the subsequent installation of the organ in two chambers and a pit that had been built during the commissioners' reign, (and rather begrudgingly at that).

I was once at a gathering of organ enthusiasts and was engaged in a conversation with one of our regular American visitors and asked him if he had heard of *Blackett & Howden*, to which he duly replied, "Yes, I think it was some sort of antique car." Oh dear, how easy it is for an ego to be dented!

This organ is of course quite unique, being the only 'unit' cinema organ built in 1928 by the long established firm of *Blackett & Howden* of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, in the north of England. *B&H* had made a considerable number of very highly-regarded church organs (some of which remain) but only made eight organs specifically for theatres, mostly in the north of England and Scotland, some being quite large. They were however straight, non-unified instruments fitted with some percussions and traps to make them more suitable for the cinema-type environment. The last of these was the instrument described here, which was originally installed in the Prince's Theatre, North Shields, (as a 3/8, but having a 'dummy' top manual). It was opened in 1929 and remained there until the late '60s when it was purchased and shipped out to Australia by two TOSA members who were holidaying in the region.

Unfortunately, the console, and the relays/switches had to be left in the theatre, so a new console and other equipment had to be purchased in Australia to complete the subsequent installations, firstly at Cinema North, in another northern Melbourne suburb, where it opened in 1975 but

then had to be subsequently removed in June 1991 due to the cinema being sold for commercial development. In that venue the organ could perhaps best be described as having been 'just adequate,' the extensive damping resulting in very little if any natural reverberation, with the organ being just a little too small for this situation. It nevertheless acquitted itself well in other respects and was quite popular in the 18 or so years in which it was there. (Sean Henderson 'cut his teeth' on this instrument before heading to the States.)

The installation in the Coburg City Hall, (now part of a completely revamped Moreland Civic Centre complex), is an entirely different situation, great attention having been paid in the early planning stages to ensure that the instrument was winded properly, and that the chambers were designed so that wind-chest layouts were optimised, with adequate space being provided for maintenance and tuning activities. Cinema North was a split organ with chambers on either side of the screen (with most percussions and traps being behind it). The Coburg installation however uses vertically-oriented, brick chambers on the right side of the proscenium, the Solo being above the Main. Such a layout was very much favoured by *Christie* who did not like their organs split, and this configuration was used to good advantage in the famous Sidney Torch organs at Edmonton and Marble Arch in London. Shutters at Coburg comprise the original *B&H* units (horizontal) in the Solo, and a set of *Wurlitzer* (vertical) shutters in the Main, each measuring some 56 square feet in area, so expression is quite good on this instrument.

Unfortunately although over \$11 million was spent on the new Civic Centre at Moreland including new mayoral chambers, administration areas, and a restored foyer and conference centre, the money finally ran out (as it always seems to do), and the main hall remains very much circa 1922. Since the alterations did not include heating or cooling, the result is patrons fanning themselves with their

programs in the summer months and wearing overcoats and scarves during the very cold winter months. We are patiently waiting for additional funds to become available so that these things may be rectified. The hall holds about 750 in concert format, with a further 200 or so in a balcony, which is currently out of bounds, awaiting reconstruction and the replacement of seating.

The organ remains essentially *Blackett & Howden*, comprising the original pipe-work for eight ranks including all wind-chests, with *B&H* magnets, regulators, tremulants, and most of the percussions and traps. These are all as they were in the initial Prince's Theatre organ in North Shields. Some additions have been made however - the Open Diapason is extended to 16' with 12 metal Diaphones made by Hill, Norman & Beard; the 4' Flute uses 12 wooden stopped pipes to take it to 8'; and the Tibia Clausa by *Wurlitzer* is extended at the bottom with a set of six very large scale *Compton* Tibia basses (two notes per pipe), and at the top with a small chest containing the 2' and 1' octaves.

The basic organ is on low pressure by comparison with most other theatre organs - all flues are voiced on 6"WG, with the Tuba and metal Tibia on 8", these pressures conforming to the original specification as used in the UK (The Cinema North organ however did not - wind pressures were raised there to obtain more output with the inevitable result, overblowing and coarseness of tone.) The Tibia Clausa at Coburg operates quite nicely on 10"WG. Original *B&H* tremulants are used on all ranks except for the two Tibias, where considerably larger *Christie* units are employed. The strings, (VDO and Celeste) utilise the only 'electronic' tremulant, and this has proved to be very successful being easy to



adjust for speed and depth without being affected in any way by the wind supply.

As mentioned earlier, the winding of the instrument was very carefully planned; eleven regulators are used including the original five *B&H*, with four *Compton* units which feed the Tibia Clausa, the *Compton* Bass Tibia and Diaphones, the Bourdon and Tuba 16' basses, the last supplying the Solo shutters and some of the percussions and traps. Smaller locally-made regulators are used for the Clarinet rank and the console, (which still retains its original electro-pneumatic combination action). It is thus a very well regulated organ.

PVC ducting, of sufficient size to guarantee an adequate wind supply is used throughout the installation, with all wiring being in colour-coded PVC, insulated and sheathed communications-type cables that are

plug-ended at the console and wind-chests. The large "umbilical" cable connecting the relays to the switches was left intact on removal from Cinema North - both units then remaining coupled together for their move into the Main chamber at Coburg, a death-defying operation in a regular gale on the day they were moved out of the container.

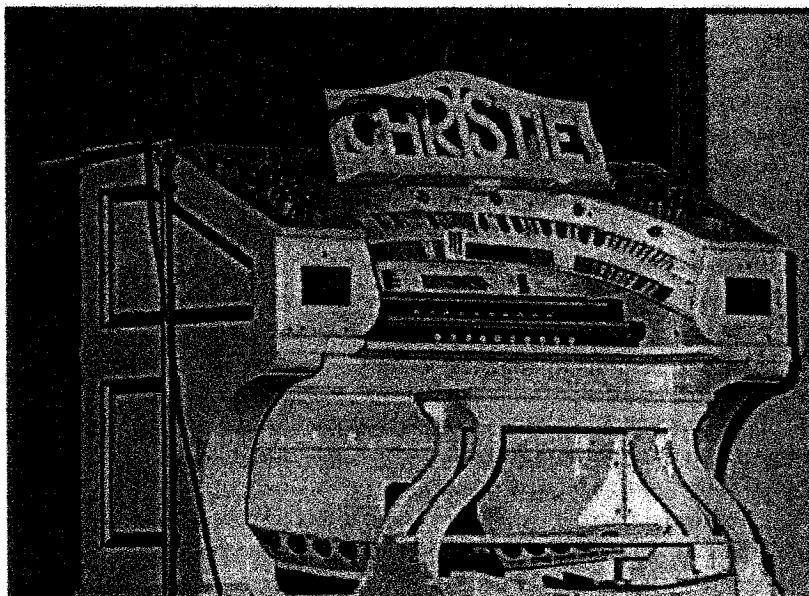
The decision was also made quite early in the planning process to re-utilise the *Christie*

electro-pneumatic relays and switches as they had worked well in the 18 years the instrument was at its former location, and have proven to be just as fast and reliable at Coburg. The only concession was the modification of the *Christie* switches to replace the wooden backing-blocks which contained embedded copper strips (which used to lift, thus causing faults) with more modern fibreglass, printed circuit-boards. The chest actions remain very fast and are quite reliable, except when the chamber temperatures exceed 35°C which happens regularly in Melbourne's blistering summer, where ciphers and tuning problems become almost inevitable.

The two-manual *Christie* console (ex-Lyceum Theatre in Sydney) is painted in white enamel with gold trim, and is mounted on a 'screw'-type lift, enabling the console to be lowered into the pit for security reasons and to be

raised (to any level needed) for concert or accompaniment purposes. The hoist is however quite slow, taking over a minute to ascend to its full height (or descend again, since it must be 'driven' down as well as up).

When in the pit the console is protected with four plywood sheathed, lightweight aluminum covers over two large support beams that retract under the stage when the organ is being used. This is all on a 'wing stage' (someone once described



it as a 'thrust stage', situated forward of the main stage and on the right of the proscenium. As such, the organist is in direct line of sight of both the stage activities and the chambers, so there is no problem at all in hearing and seeing what is going on. Some of our other installations have the console occupying part of the stage thus compromising its use for other entertainment purposes.

How does the organ sound? Quite obviously, not at all like the traditional American theatre organ, nor indeed is it like its English contemporaries *Christie* and *Compton*. The tonality may best be described as 'distinct.' English organist Len Rawle played the *B&H* just before it was tonally finished and commented, "The organ is just ideal for this size of hall whose acoustics are superb. As in its former home, the percussion section remains something other organ groups would give their right arms for. It certainly compliments Malvern, the Dendy, Moorabbin, and the Regent by not attempting to be like any of them. It has its own delightful musical signature which I sincerely hope many will enjoy over the years ahead."

The pipework is very 'orchestral' with a brilliant Tuba, highly imitative Clarinet, keen Strings, a delightful metal Stopped Flute, and large-scale Diapason. The metal *B&H* Tibia (which breaks into stopped wooden pipes at tenor F#) is quite unusual, but blends and contrasts beautifully with its larger scaled American brother. This is the only TOSA organ having such a stop, although a large-scale version is fitted to the Dallas Brooks *Compton* organ in East Melbourne. The Vox at Coburg is typical, and mixes with almost anything! The organ has the usual great English sound when played "straight", testimony to its classical builders.

As Len Rawle mentioned, the percussions are formidable and comprise Cathedral Chimes, Glockenspiel, a bright 37-note Xylophone, together with a whopping, big *Christie* 49-note re-iterating master Xylophone that really knocks

| CHAMBER LAYOUTS (Ranks, Compass and Pressure) | | | |
|--|---------------|---|-------------------|
| SOLO CHAMBER | | MAIN CHAMBER | |
| Vox Diapason 8' B&H | 61 Pipes (6") | Stopped Flute 8' 4" B&H | 73 Pipes (6") |
| Clarinets 8' B&H | 61 Pipes (6") | Open Diapason 16' 2" B&H | 73 Pipes (6") |
| Tibia (Metal) 16' 16' 2" | 97 Pipes (8") | Glockenspiel 8' B&H | 61 Pipes (6") |
| Tuba 16' 4" B&H | 65 Pipes (8") | Vox 8' 4" B&H | 73 Pipes (6") |
| Relay - Christie (Electro-pneumatic) | | Tibia Clavia 16' 2" Wuritzer | 89 Pipes (10" WG) |
| String Stack - Christie (Electro-pneumatic) | | Chrysoglott - 37 Notes | |
| Percussions | | Console | |
| Cathedral Chimes - 17 Notes | | Christie - 2 Manual - White and Gold (On screw Hoist - Wing Stage) | |
| Glockenspiel - 37 Notes, Compton | | Pedal Board 30 Notes, Concrete/Radiating | |
| Xylophone 1 - 37 Notes | | Piston Action - Electro-pneumatic | |
| Xylophone 2 - 49 Notes (Christie) | | 10 Presets under each manual | |
| (Re-iterating) | | Couplers - Nine | |
| Tolling Bell | | Total stop keys - 120 | |
| | | Toe Stubs - 4 Pedal, 7 Traps/Effects | |
| | | Cancel Bar over each Division | |
| Unenclosed | | | |
| Organ Harp - 61 Notes Aeolian | | | |

your socks off. The same type of instrument was fitted to the two *Christie* organs used by Sidney Torch so successfully at Edmonton and Marble Arch, sadly though we do not have the 18 tuned bird whistles! These percussions are all located in the upper (Solo) chamber together with the Traps. A 37-note Chrysoglott is mounted very close to the shutters in the lower (Main) chamber, with a five octave Aeolian Harp being fixed high up on the brick wall at the rear of the main stage where it gives the organ a definite 'stereo' effect when played. A 10hp three-phase motor drives the *Discus* blower, which provides about 20" WG static pressure, amply sufficient for this instrument.

The combined blower room and workshop (about 7'6" by 6') also contains the two rectifier sets supplying the 15V DC action current, one a back-up. This room is at the rear of the Main chamber and is isolated by brick walls and a metal clad door, so noise is not a problem in the main auditorium.

The large main wind ducts to both chambers are very short, as indeed they should be for optimum winding requirements for the whole organ. A huge area with limited height is available under the main stage and was extensively used to temporarily store equipment for the project, although most of the larger equipment remained in the shipping container until it was progressively moved into the chambers (up 38 steep wooden stairs to gain access to the Solo chamber, all components having to be carried up those stairs by some very dedicated volunteers - whew!)

Although there were some 10 or 12 regular volunteers who ably carried out the various overhaul and reconditioning

tasks, which took place some years prior to the organ installation being commenced, many of those people then began assisting with the installation proper once the chambers and pit eventually became available. Most however have now gradually drifted away, (age and ill-health being major contributing factors), leaving only three or four key members to continue to look after the necessary organ maintenance, fault-finding, and essential tuning. This story will I'm sure be quite familiar to most other organ teams who are trying to get younger people to take over such duties.

The *B&H* was presented for first time in a demonstration to delegates at the TOSA Annual Convention held in Victoria on 3rd May, 1999. At this time the building alterations for the Civic Centre precinct had not yet been completed so the hall was somewhat untidy to say the least. However the 300 or so delegates were treated to some great music, many going away quite surprised at what a 'big' sound this organ had. Someone once said, "The best stop on any organ is the building into which it speaks." This certainly has proven to be the case at Coburg where the lack of drapes, a wooden floor and painted walls, and above all, that wonderful barrel ceiling give spaciousness to the sound which is terrific to experience.

The organ was officially commissioned by the Society and the City of Moreland on Sunday, 20th February, 2000, which over 500 people attended, and yes, the acoustics in the hall were still marvellous, not that the temperature was anything to write home about. It was perhaps unfortunate that at this stage the professional voicing, regulation, and tonal finishing had not yet been started, indeed it was to be another few months before this was finally completed, which resulted in a far smoother and better balanced organ.

TOSA concerts have been held regularly since the opening and it is hoped to stage some Club Meetings (open days, etc.) and Member Workshops in the near future. The organ is to be used in March/April 2002, as part of the annual Brunswick

Music Festival - a massed choir with organ accompaniment has been planned, together with a separate Theatre Organ concert, which will be jointly sponsored by the Festival in conjunction with TOSA Victorian Division.

The Theatre Organ of March/April 2002 carried the following sad footnote to the Coburg article :

In the January/February 2002 edition of the *ATOS Journal* you ran a feature article entitled "The International Theatre Organ Scene: The Organ at Coburg City Hall" which

was written by my father, Bill Worley. I thought you (and perhaps your readers) might be interested to know that Dad passed away peacefully, aged 73, on New Year's Day 2002 after a long illness.

Dad spent some 30 years of his life working on this *Blackett & Howden* organ and coordinated its installation in Australia on two occasions - firstly at Cinema North Theatre in Reservoir, Victoria, and latterly at Coburg City Hall. He truly loved the organ as an instrument and, in his own inimitable way, spent much time studying (and discovering in practical ways) the organ's technical intricacies. It was his pleasure to pass on his considerable knowledge to others and

he had a real passion for this unique instrument to continue to be used (and loved) by younger people. Indeed he spent many long hours during my teen years driving me to organ lessons (classical) and sitting in the choir stalls listening to me being taught to play this magnificent instrument. And so his legacy has been passed on.

I know Dad would have been absolutely delighted that the article he wrote about the Coburg City Hall organ was printed as a feature in your journal. Thank you very much for printing it and for your interest in what is going on "down under".

With kind regards,
Anne Arden

"AUSTRALIA FELIX"

An occasional column in ATOS' Theatre Organ magazine carries a report about the Australian chapter of ATOS, known as Australia Felix. It is currently written by Brian Pearson who outlines some of the major events of the Australian theatre organ world for an international readership. The May/June issue had this report which started with a tribute to Bill Worley :

Those who read and enjoyed his article about the Coburg Town Hall *Blackett and Howden* organ in the January/February issue of *THEATRE ORGAN* will be saddened to learn of the death of Bill Worley. For long a dedicated and very active 'hands on' member of the Victorian division of TOSA, with a particular interest in that instrument, Bill was aware of his (roaching death from cancer as he wrote the article. The organ, and the article about it, will remain as fitting testaments to one ordinary man's wish to leave this world the better for his having sojourned here. Bill was one of the myriad volunteers the world over who, eschewing praise and publicity, simply get on with the job.

The Capri 4/29 organ in Adelaide has undergone a complete refurbishment of its console together with improvements to the instrument itself. At least Paul Fitzgerald, Graham Ward and John Thiele, all of them professionally qualified for their various roles in the organ maintenance team, assisted by other members of the South Australian division of TOSA, did 400 hours of unpaid work. This had to occur outside film screening hours and involved a great deal of very late night and early

morning effort.

Under the team leadership of Ray Holland, extensive improvements to the instrument's winding and the replacement of the Solo Tibia regulator with a fully reconditioned *Wurlitzer* one have greatly improved its tremulation and the organ's overall ensemble. It operates on the Uniflex 2000 switching system.

Ray is widely recognized as a consultant in the restoration of classical instruments, including that of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, and several other cathedral and church organs. He is also the consultant for the virtual rebuilding of the Style 270 4/21 *Wurlitzer* in Sydney's State Theatre, which has long been unplayable after many years of neglect and water damage.

It is the last theatre organ in Australia still to be in its original home, and is one of just four Style 270s ever built. One was destroyed in a disastrous fire in the Melbourne Regent, which now has the 4/36 from the Granada, San Francisco, in its restored auditorium. The second, from the Ebersson atmospheric State Theatre in Melbourne, is now in the Kingston City Hall in suburban

Moorabbin, and the third is the South Bank *Wurlitzer* (ex-Trocadero, Elephant and Castle) in London.

As such, and as an integral part of the truly magnificent heritage listed Empire-style State Theatre, this organ is of world importance. Unfortunately the restoration will be very gradual as and when finances allow, but at least the process is underway, and the intention of all concerned is to keep the organ as close as is humanly possible to its original specifications.

Eighteen-year-old Robert Wetherall has relocated to Adelaide, 1280 miles from his home in Brisbane, Queensland, to be near his teacher, Paul Fitzgerald. He joins a select group of very talented young organists, which includes Chris McPhee, Ryan Heggie, Michelle Nicolle, Mathew Loesser and Kylie Mallett (all born in Adelaide) who are available as session organists in the Capri Theatre and for concerts. Robert has been appointed to the organ maintenance team as Paul's assistant in the office of chamber technician, and is keen to match his expertise at the console with a comprehensive knowledge of the mechanisms of the theatre organ.

Organ Events



WHAT'S ON



IN THE ORGAN WORLD AROUND AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

BALLARAT

Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat, 3/9 Compton Theatre Organ.
Sunday 14 July "Travelling Thru' Time" - Bruce Ardley accompanying silent comedy films on the Compton with supporting artists featuring music of the last century. 2.00 pm. Followed by Club Night on the Compton.
Friday 23 August Theatre Organ Sections, Royal South Street Competitions.

GIPPSLAND

West Gippsland Masonic Centre, Conn Martinique Electronic
Saturday 10 August Chris Powell (UK) Concert 2.00 pm

MELBOURNE

Coburg City Hall, 2/9 Christie / Blackett & Howden Theatre Organ
Sunday 9 June Carole Wyatt and Leith Ewart Concert 2.00 pm
Sunday 20 October Cliff Bingham (NSW) and Craig Schneider (SA) pianist 2.00 pm

Malvern Town Hall, 3/17 Compton Theatre Organ
Sunday 29 September Dan Bellomy (USA), Hammond organ and Ian Pearce on percussion. 2pm

Dendy Theatre Brighton, 3/15 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Sunday 11 August Chris Powell (UK) Concert 1.30 pm

Kingston City Hall, 4/21 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Sunday 21 July John Atwell and Melbourne Welsh Male Voice Choir, 2.00 pm
Sunday 17 November John Atwell and Craig Schneider (SA) pianist, 2.00 pm

SYDNEY

Marrickville Town Hall, 2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Sunday 16 June Margaret Hall Concert 2.00 pm
Sunday 18 August Chris Powell (UK) 2.00 pm

Orion Centre, Campsie, 3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Sunday 14 July Neil Jensen Concert 2.00 pm.

Orpheum Picture Palace, Cremorne, 3/14 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Most Friday & Saturday nights Neil Jensen plays "in" evening film shows.

GOLD COAST

Maier Hall, Burleigh Heads, Rodgers Olympic Electronic Theatre Organ
Sunday 30 June David Parsons Concert, 2.00 pm

BRISBANE

Kelvin Grove High School, 3/11 Christie Theatre Organ
(date to be confirmed) Len Rawle (UK), Concert

ADELAIDE

Capri Theatre, Goodwood, 4/29 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
'Music from Stage & Screen' Concert Series
Saturday 15 June Capri Showcase Cavalcade (in aid Capri Theatre Fire & Safety upgrade).
7.30 pm
Sunday 4 August Chris Powell (UK) 1.45 pm
Sunday 22 September Dan Bellomy (USA) 1.45 pm
Sunday 27 October Chris McPhee (SA) and Ryan Heggie (SA) 1.45 pm
Sunday 1 December Special Christmas Concert 1.45 pm
Easter 2003. Friday 18 April to Monday 21 April National TOSA Festival of Theatre Organ Music
with Lew Williams (USA) featured artist. Afterglow on Tuesday 22 April.

PERTH

John Leckle Music Centre. 3/10 Compton
Sunday 18 August Scott Harrison (Melbourne) 2.00 pm
Sunday 20 October Dave Parker (Perth) with local artists 2.00 pm
Sunday 1 December Len Rawle (UK) Concert 2.00 pm

HOBART

Linnor Hall, St. Michaels Collegiate School, 3/9 Wurlitzer
Wednesday 7 August Chris Powell (UK) Concert 7.30 pm
Wednesday 2 October Dan Bellomy (USA) Concert 8.00 pm

AUCKLAND

Hollywood Cinema, 3/12 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Sunday 25 August Chris Powell (UK) "Blackpool to Hollywood" Concert, 2pm.
Sunday 13 October Dan Bellomy (USA) and Bruce King on drums. 2.00 pm
Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 November Neil Jensen Wurlitzer Weekend with the 1932 Jazz Orchestra.

OUR NEXT ARTIST: Neil Jensen

Neil Jensen made his first professional appearance as an organist in the Brisbane in 1973. He first studied classical piano, then turned his creative talents to the organ, becoming especially fascinated by the Theatre Pipe Organ.

In 1983, Neil toured New Zealand, Canada and the United States -he performed a whirlwind concert tour of more than thirty cities. The release of his debut commercial album - *Neil Jensen Australiawide* - coincided with this tour.

He returned to the USA in 1985, and today Neil is recognized as one of the world's premier theatre organists. During his career, he has performed many international concert tours and has produced several albums, which are marketed internationally.

In 1987, Neil was offered the position of Musical Director at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace

at Cremorne, which was being restored to its original Art Déco opulence. This restoration included the installation of a 1924 *Wurlitzer* Theatre Organ, formerly installed in the Wilson Theatre in Fresno, California.

Neil has become an icon at the Orpheum where he performs film preludes at selected weekly film presentations and presents silent film classics to 'sell-out' audiences in which he has skilfully composed, arranged and performed the live accompaniment score.

Neil frequently appears with celebrity entertainers as a soloist and accompanist, e.g. he appeared at the launch of the Fox Studios with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (May 1998) and with Lorrae Desmond (*Country Practice*) at the Orpheum.

Neil also regularly performs with the legendary Australian 1930s period orchestra - *The New Trocadero*

Dance Orchestra. This dynamic and distinctive combination of Theatre Organ and Orchestra has become a popular sell out attraction. The organ and orchestra combination has become such an incredible hit, that many locations around Australia and New Zealand are presenting Neil with period-style orchestras in his show *The Organ, The Dance Band and Me*.

Recently, Neil has directed and designed the re-installation, tonal finishing and expansion of the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace 3/13 *Wurlitzer* Pipe Organ. The state-of-the-art concept of this redesign incorporates MIDI and a computerized PC-based relay system

A gifted, all-round musician, Neil Jensen has an innovative approach to keyboard styling. His knowledge and application of the latest music computer technology combine with his traditional talent to produce a creative, individual and stylistic trademark.

FREE TICKET OFFER !!!

*Do you have friends who have never been to TOSA Concert?
This invitation is for them :*

Invitation

If you have never been to a TOSA Theatre Organ Concert before, here is your chance to hear one of Sydney's finest Theatre Organists, Neil Jensen.

The time: 2pm on Sunday 14th July. The place: Orion Centre Campsie

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

The TOSA Ticket Secretary,
18 Acres Road,
Kellyville, 2155

*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.*

I/we (one or two people only) have not been to a TOSA concert before:

Name : _____ Phone : _____

Name : _____ Phone : _____

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NSW 2155

Seats cannot be reserved unless payment is received in advance. If your booking and payment are received too late for tickets to be posted, they will be held at the Box Office - but we ask your help in booking early

NEIL JENSEN CONCERT
ORION CENTRE CAMPSIE
Sunday, 14th JULY, 2002, at 2.00pm

Phone Enquiries & Bookings:
Mrs Kath Harding : (02) 9629 2257

Please send me:

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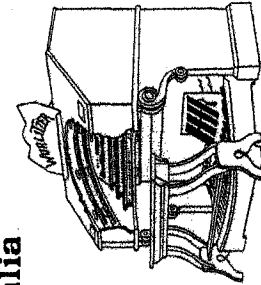
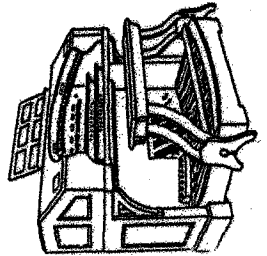
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