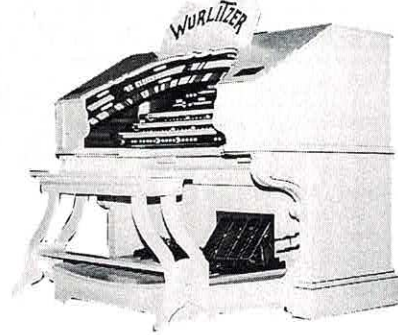
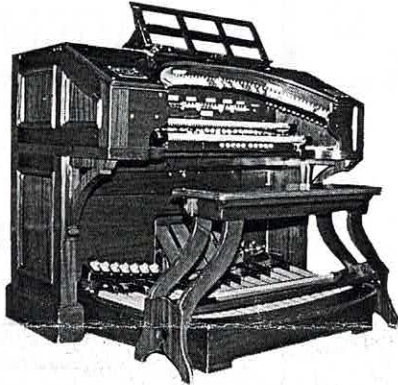


AUGUST, 1993

TOSA

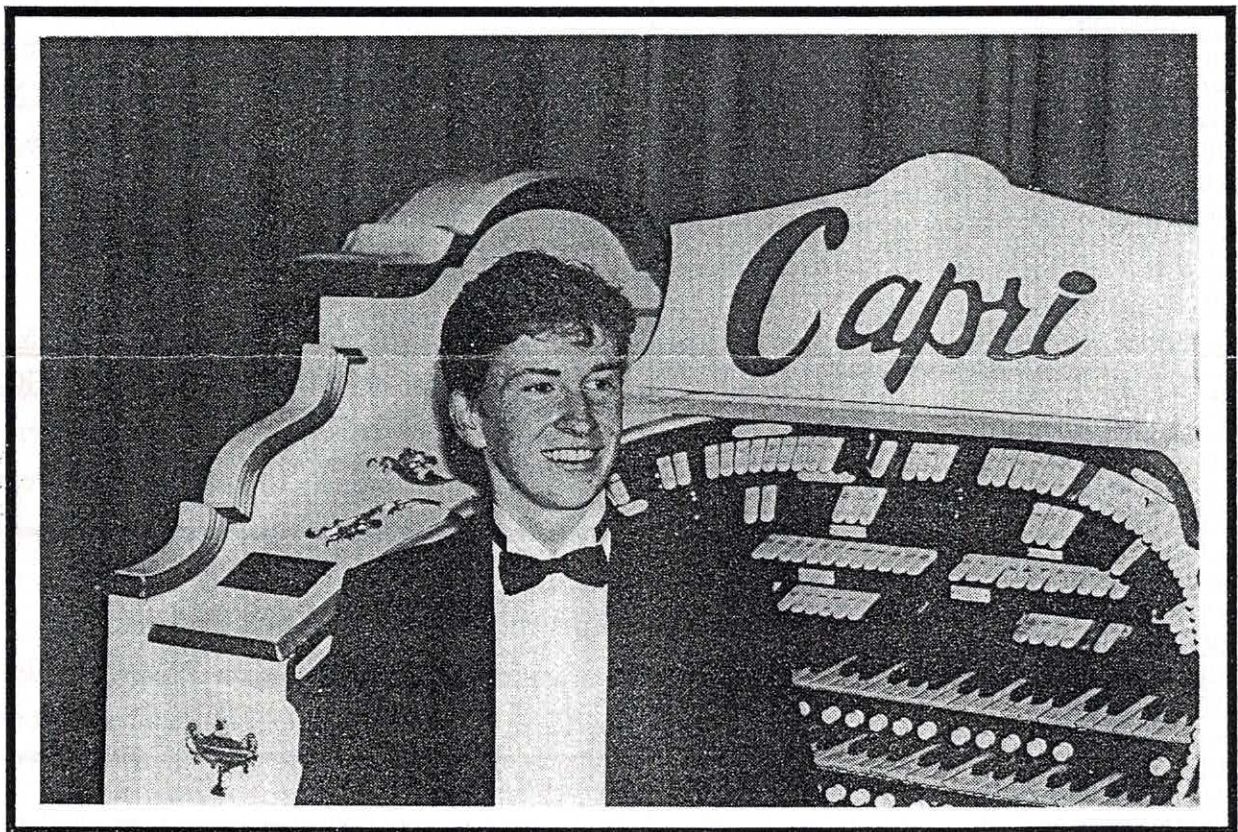
Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

NEWS

INTRODUCING Chris McPhee



**Overall Winner of the 1993 American Organ Society's Young
Theatre Organist Competition - See Page 12**

Volume 32
Issue 7
PRINTED BY TOSA

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.
G.P.O. Box 67, Sydney, NSW, 2001
Registered by Australia Post - Publication No. N.B.H. 1038

Price
\$1.00

TOSA NEWS

AUGUST, 1993

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

*** DIRECTORY ***



PATRONS:

Ian Davies

Mayor of Canterbury, Ald. John Gorrie

PRESIDENT:

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Frank Ellis 649 7011

John Shaw 759 5825

SECRETARY:

Mary Stewart 557 5045

G.P.O. Box 67, Sydney, 2001

ASSISTANT SECRETARY:

Robert Gliddon

TREASURER:

Jim Booker 644 5929

ASSISTANT TREASURER:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Jeffrey Clark 639 7208 (After 7 pm)

COMMITTEE:

Peter Harding 629 2257

Neil Palmer 798 6742

Ross Adams 639 6343

Barry Tooker 744 1535

Colin Groves 745 2417

PRACTICE CONVENOR:

TO BE APPOINTED

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048) 411 616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 745 2417

P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 2134

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon

CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer 798 6742

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

TO BE APPOINTED

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318

8 Wharf Rd, Brooklyn, 2083

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Kevin Rowland, noon - 8 pm

Mobile Phone (018) 44 2308 (STD rates apply)

Barry Tooker Home: 744 1535 Work: 550 5400

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318

PROMOTIONS OFFICER:

Kevin Rowland (018) 44 2308

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 759 5825

LIBRARIAN:

Mary Stewart 557 5045

TRANSPORT OFFICER:

Ritchie Willis 580 3581



COMING EVENTS

AUGUST

Sunday 1 at 2.00 pm NICHOLAS MARTIN
Concert
Orion Centre, Campsie

Monday 2 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

SEPTEMBER

Monday 6 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 12 at 2.00 pm RAY THORNLEY
Concert
Orion Centre, Campsie

Wednesday 15 at 7.30 pm Members' Night
Orion Centre, Campsie

OCTOBER

Monday 4 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 24 at 2.00 pm JIM RIGGS
Concert
Orion Centre, Campsie

Jim Riggs' Workshop

Tuesday 26 at 7.45 to 9.45 pm

Theatre Organ Workshop on Epping Baptist's Christie

See page 13 for more information



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

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm.

For "Theatre Organ Highlights"

Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

Since Frank wrote his Vice-President's message to members there have been two new developments.

Firstly, the good news : we have been able to arrange a September concert to fill a rather large gap in our schedule - **Ray Thornley** will play at the **Orion** on **September 12th September** at 2.00pm.

The second development, however, is bad news indeed for the Society - **Ed Wharton**, our wonderful Ticket Secretary has finally been forced by poor health and impending hospitalisation to cease taking our advance bookings and must finish up on 1st August at the **Nicholas Martin** concert. **Ed** has been holding on, against doctor's orders, until a new volunteer came forward to take over his job, but now his health must take precedence and he can no longer delay his hospital treatment. We all wish him a speedy recovery and express, once again, our gratitude to him for his devotion to his task and to the Society in general. Very few people realise the amount of time and effort **Ed** has willing put into promoting TOSA and into making the concert bookings run so smoothly. He really is irreplaceable, although he always denies this!

Since we do not have a volunteer to continue the advance-booking scheme for the future concerts, we will be forced to sell our tickets only at the door, which will inevitably result in inconvenience for our best customers, the regular concert-goers. This is regrettable and our customers will no doubt dislike the delays and loss of time that will be caused by the "door-sales-only" system, which will continue until someone can be found to do our advance ticket selling.

Fortunately for the Society and the concert-goers in particular, **Karl Zipsin** has agreed to continue to sell tickets at the door and his experience and skill in handling this task will greatly facilitate this process.

If you know of someone who would be willing to become our Ticket Secretary, please contact one of the Executive Committee members, as the



need is quite great and extremely urgent.

Other bad news comes from **David Parsons** (see page 5) about the terrible condition of the **State Theatre's WurliTzer**. It is so sad to see this historic organ being neglected, whilst overseas and interstate organs are being restored and cherished as valuable assets. As with the theatre buildings themselves (another scandal that means Sydney-siders miss out on a lot of wonderful shows), Sydney will probably only realise the benefits of these great assets after they have all gone forever.

Best wishes,
Colin Groves

We have heard of three recent deaths affecting our society's members.

Long-time member, **Bill Waite**, of **Newcastle**, passed away on Monday, 14th June, aged 63, after a long battle with cancer.

Mildred Cotterell of **Bankstown** lost her husband, **John**, on 24th June. He was an enthusiastic concert-goer and enjoyed borrowing tapes of organ music from TOSA's Record Bar.

Our previous TOSA News editor, **Miriam Morris** lost her father early in July after a long illness.

We in TOSA express our sincere and heart-felt sympathy to the wives and families of these sadly-missed, loved ones.

From The Vice President

Hi there !!

As you will already have noticed there is no "From the President" column this month, and the reason, to put it simply, is that we have no President at this point in time.

On Sunday, 13th June, **Jack and Pearl Lawson** came to my home and handed me their written resignations from the Society. This left TOSA short one President and one Committee member.

At the Committee meeting held on Monday, 5th July, the 2 Vice-Presidents were asked to jointly share the responsibilities and work-load formerly carried out by the President. **John Shaw** and I agreed to this proposition from the Committee and so, until a new President takes office, we will jointly direct the Society's affairs with the loyal support of every member of the Executive and Committee.

When a friend of mine (not a TOSA member) learned from me that 2 Vice-Presidents were to share this task, he very tartly said, "Oh well, I suppose 2 heads are better than one!" I'm not sure whether he meant that as a compliment or whether he regarded **John** and myself as a 2-headed monster, and as he didn't elaborate, we may never know what he had in mind. Thank Gawd for my ever-present sense of humour! At the present time I need it.

You have probably noticed in the "Coming Events" column, that there is quite a long period of time between the **Nicholas Martin** concert and the **Jim Riggs** event. This came about because a planned concert fell through, but your Committee is working at arranging a replacement concert, and if this is achieved you will be advised in due course.

Well I guess that will be all from me this month - keep healthy, keep happy, and keep SUPPORTING your Society by your attendance at concerts and other events, and, as the great **Jack Davey** used to say, "Thanks for listening".

Frank Ellis

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 12 th of the month



ENCORE PERTH '94

TOSA (WA Inc) has announced the featured overseas artists for the forthcoming Convention in Perth, to be held over the Easter weekend (April 1st to 4th) in 1994.

They have been successful in acquiring the services of RONALD CURTIS whose name has become synonymous with the Compton organ. He owns a 4-manual Compton and has made many recordings on this fine instrument which is in the Paramount Organ Studios in Bolton, England. His name has become affectionately known wherever he goes as the "Compton King".

The second artist is an English organist who has previously played for Perth audiences and been very well received, PETER LISH. He is known particularly for his extensive repertoire and his very popular mixed medleys, and is also from Northern England, in this case from the eastern side. He at one time studied under former Blackpool Tower organist, Ernest Broadbent, a name well-known to all lovers of theatre organ music.

OPERA HOUSE

ATOS's Theatre Organ journal reports that "a Devtronix Multi Organ Control system has been ordered for the 5/112 pipe organ in Sydney Opera House. It will be installed by Australian organman Ron Sharp."

Remember, you can hear it when our own Cliff Bingham plays for a free lunchtime concert of cinema music at 1.10 pm, Monday 25th October (not the 15th, as stated in last month's TOSA News). There are also more classical lunchtime concerts on 23rd August and 27 September featuring Daniel Dries and Peter Kneeshaw.

YOUNG ORGANISTS

Congratulations to Sean Henderson

and Heath Whale, both aged 14 and from Victoria, who have been awarded ATOS scholarships.

The American Theatre Organ Society provides 10 scholarships a year, worth \$500 (US) each, to assist young organists with the cost of their pipe organ tuition.

Also, see the item about Chris McPhee and his ATOS win on page 12.

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Another chance to hear the Grand Organ in the Town Hall is provided on Thursday, 12th August at 7.30pm, when the Sydney City Organist, Robert Ampt, is joined by Rosemary Blake, Bernard Kirkpatrick, David Kinsela and Mark Quarmby for a classical concert called "Four of the Best". Admission is \$10, or \$8 Concession.

HAMMOND ORGANS

The No. 1 Sydney Chapter of the Hammond Organ Society regularly sends their Newsletter to our society, telling about their past and future doings, mostly home organ visits. If any of our members would like to know more about the Hammond Organ Society, they could contact their Honorary Secretary / Treasurer, Vera Dusting, on 570 1296 or at 25 Walter Street, Mortdale, 2223.

ADELAIDE to PERTH

Rosemary McPhee of TOSA (SA) has sent details of an Adelaide - Perth return coach tour which could be of interest to NSW members.

For the 1994 Perth Convention, John Slater of their Society has put together a 16-day package tour through Spectrum Tours of Magill, SA, and they are inviting interstate people to join them. The tour departs Adelaide on Friday, 25th March and concludes in Adelaide on Sunday, 10th April, 1994.

They assure us that anyone who has been on John's previous TOSA tours will tell just how much fun they are, and this trip will be just as good, if not better!

Interested persons can contact Rosemary McPhee at 3 Gameau Road, Paradise, SA, 5075, or phone (08)3376631, before the end of August, to assist with the planning.

The cost is \$975.00 and includes all luxury coach travel and transfers, sightseeing, accommodation - bed and

breakfast only, on a twin/double share basis.

LOWREY CONCERT

Here's Something Different For You!

Vice-President, Frank Ellis, has advised TOSA News of a forthcoming event which is something of a return to TOSA's earlier days when this type of event occurred quite frequently.

Long-time members will recall that when an electronic organ dealership had a new model of electronic theatre organ being released, they would often bring out an organist from America to present concerts for both public and TOSA audiences (especially to TOSA members).

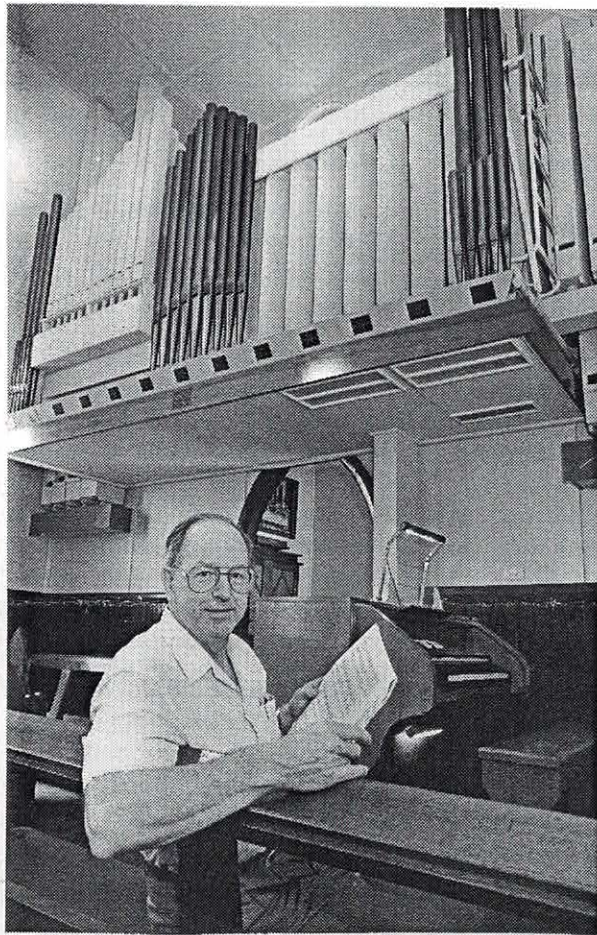
This happy situation sadly came to an end when electronic theatre organ sales declined and sales of keyboards boomed. Since then a number of manufacturers of electronic theatre organs have gone out of business. Not so with the well-known brand of Lowrey who are alive and well. Lowrey organs are being imported and distributed by Kawai, who have announced that they are bringing to Sydney Lowrey's own organist-demonstrator, Bil Curry. Bil will be playing the Lowrey MX2 in 2 concerts next month.

The venue is the Riverside Theatres in Church Street, Parramatta, in the Rafferty (named after Chips) auditorium on Tuesday, 10th August at 2pm and 7.30pm.

Former Newcastle organist, David Pitts, an organ dealer on the NSW Central Coast for about 18 years assured Frank that this model, which has a horseshoe console, really does have the "theatre organ sound". Many years ago David Pitts played one or two concerts on our Marrickville WurliTzer.

Admission is \$10 and bookings can be made by phoning the Riverside Theatres. HOWEVER THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT ... TOSA members can receive a 50% discount. To take advantage of this offer members should phone David Pitts personally on (043) 250851, instead of the Riverside Theatres.

Accommodation is restricted to 100 persons for each performance, so if you would like to attend Frank suggests you should phone right away, mentioning to David that you are a TOSA member.



David Parsons at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Bexhill

Queensland TOSA member, Grant Virtue, informs holidaying members of an event in September at a church in Bexhill, which they might like to attend.

Last year, well-known Sydney organist, **David Parsons**, accepted an invitation to give a concert on the pipe organ of the **Church of the Good Shepherd** in the rural village of **Bexhill**, near **Lismore** in northern NSW.

The **Bexhill** church is believed to be the smallest church in Australia to have a pipe organ. The normal seating for only 60 people was more than doubled for **David's** concert, but because of wide-spread media publicity a second concert was quickly arranged. The 2 performances were held at 5.30pm and 8.00pm, with well over 200 theatre organ lovers attending from a very wide-spread area including the **Gold Coast**. **David** was so delighted with the tonal quality of this small, 2-manual and pedal organ and because of the wonderful support his concerts attracted, he is returning to give further concerts this year. These will take place in September.



There will be a twilight concert on Wednesday, 15th September at 5.30pm, followed by a further concert at 8.00pm. On Thursday, 16th September there will be a special matinee concert at 1.00pm, which will be attended by over 100 music lovers from **Grafton**. This group, known as "The Happy Wanderers", will make the 130 km. trip in 2 special coaches.

Admission to each concert is by programme - \$8.00, students - \$5.00, family - \$20.00, and this includes a light lunch prior to the matinee performance or supper following each evening concert.

For those travelling long distances, seats may be reserved by phoning the organist of **Bexhill** church, **Grant Virtue**, on (066) 25 1241, all hours.

Organ Club Inspects Orion WurliTzer

On Saturday, 26th June, the north-side based **Organ Enthusiasts Association** were **TOSA's** guests at **Campsie's Orion Centre**, to inspect our **WurliTzer**. Their visit had been arranged last May, and their President, **John Griffiths**, led a party of about 20 of their members into the **Orion Centre** at the appointed time of 9.00am.

Vice-President, **Frank Ellis**, and organ-builder, **John Parker**, were on hand to receive them and take them on a conducted tour of the chambers and the below-stage facilities. **John Parker** explained things to our visitors in his usual friendly and professional manner, and he was kept busy answering their many questions.

Among those in their party was their Patron, **Tom Barber**, who recently became a **TOSA** member, and also an

organ teacher, **Maree Holden**. Our visitors were more than impressed with all they had seen (stunned, in fact), and a number of them were given the opportunity of having a few minutes at the console.

They showed their appreciation to **TOSA** by making arrangements to book 2 or 3 tables for our **Blackpool Supper Dance Night** with English organist, **Nicholas Martin**. It was an enjoyable morning indeed and one which helped to spread the "Gospel according to **WurliTzer**" and thus gain new fans for our pride and joy - the **WurliTzer** organ.

A Tragic STATE

A really depressing letter from David Parsons about the condition of the only Australian Theatre Pipe Organ still its original site - the wonderful but long neglected, 4/22 WurliTzer in Sydney's State Theatre. That this organ can be allowed to deteriorate into a pile of rubble, even though it is an integral part of a Heritage-listed, historical building, breaks my heart. But what can we do when the building and organ are owned by a private company whose sole aim seems only to be to make money for apparently uncaring share-holders? A national treasure is being lost by neglect. David writes :

I'm feeling rather sad at the moment because the **WurliTzer** in the **State Theatre** may never be heard again. The **Sydney Film Festival** has just completed its season at this magnificent movie palace and I was contracted to play the **WurliTzer** for 21 intermissions. This was wonderful exposure for the **WurliTzer**, as thousands and thousands of people from all walks of life experienced the thrill of the big theatre organ sound, with the white console rising out of the pit and rotating under the spotlight from the projection box.

However, after 11 sessions, the organ blower refused to start, and the next day, the **State** electrician found the circuit breaker on the distribution board had dropped out. Sparks flew when he closed it, but it stayed in and I was able to play 2 more sessions. However, on Thursday, 24th June it failed to start again and I was told the next day that nothing more could be done to get it working.

It appears that I have the dubious honour of being the last person to play the **State Theatre WurliTzer**, and that makes me sad. Can't we as a theatre organ society do something?

David Parsons (O.A.M.)

JOHN ATWELL and TONY FENELON Concert Report

by John Shaw, Vice-President - Orion Centre, 20 th June, 1993

It was surprising that out of 175 extra chairs hired there was actually ONE left vacant! This concert attracted the largest audience seen for a few years and it is evident that the now-famous duo are gaining ever-increasing popularity.

After an introduction by compere Frank Ellis, the concert opened with a snappy arrangement of Richard Rodgers' song, *Lover*, played in 3/4 time as written, and then repeated in a jazzy 2/4 tempo. Most of the musical arrangements on this occasion were written by John, and the terribly-talented two added further creative ideas which resulted in a presentation of some older, standard tunes sounding as fresh as tomorrow.

Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody* was borrowed and changed into Liszt's *Hungarian Rag in C sharp minor*, without any apology to Liszt being necessary - I am sure he (Liszt) would have approved. The music menu included *Czardas* (Monti) and a very haunting tune from Disney's *Beauty*

and *the Beast*. John's organ solos included *Just One of Those Things* played in swingtime with a bluesy feel and some uptempo improvisation. A Spanish-sounding number called *Rio Shambero* was followed by another duet, *You Can't Take That Away From Me*, played in a jazzy style, followed by some Mozart variations with much competition between piano and organ. This was a fun, send-up arrangement with Tony trying to "steal the limelight" by a virtuoso, pianistic performance with exaggerated, repeated trills that went on and on, while the poor organist was wondering when it would ever end. It finally did, with a crashing finish.

A lovely song by Spiro, *Salt Water*, which could be termed environmental and has a Spanish influence, was greatly appreciated, judging by the applause. An Irving Berlin medley was another of John's outstanding arrangements.

In the second half we were treated to the *Blue Danube*, *Makin' Whoopee*, *Softly Awakes My Heart* and a brilliantly executed *First Waltz*

(Durand) and *On Wings of Song* (Mendelssohn).

The organ sounded at its best with all theatre-sounding registrations and many variations of softer and solo voices.

Just when we thought we had heard it all, along came a selection from Gershwin's *Girl Crazy* (currently playing on Broadway under the name *Crazy For You*). The selection included *I've Got Rhythm*, *Embraceable You*, *But Not For Me* and *Biding' My Time*. These new arrangements were also as fresh as tomorrow, and perhaps served as a rich dessert to Gershwin lovers.

The concert closed with a familiar encore, *Dream of Olwyn*. The audience's response was more than enough to ensure the continuance of the duo's ever-increasing popularity.

This report would not be complete without mentioning the magnificent visual effects supplied by our lighting engineer, Miles Perry.

JOHN ATWELL
and
TONY FENELON
at the console of the
Orion Centre's
WurliTzer



PHOTOGRAPHS
by
BARRY TOOKER

NOREEN HENNESSY

Earlier this year, in the 24th March edition of the **NORTHERN DISTRICT TIMES** there was this interesting article about the grand old lady of the Sydney Theatre Organ scene, which I'm sure will be of interest to many of our readers who either know Noreen or who have heard her play over the years. The **Prince Edward Theatre's Wurlitzer** has, of course, now found a new home, proudly installed by **TOSA** in the **Marrickville Town Hall**.

Sweet memories of note **Noreen still strikes chord**

by **SUZANNE HARRIS**

REMEMBER Noreen Hennessy? If you were a film-goer in Sydney during the mid-forties to mid-sixties her name will almost certainly ring a bell.

The glamorous Noreen was resident organist at the Prince Edward Theatre Beautiful, and renowned for her musical repertoire, movie star looks and stunning gowns.

It is a measure of the mesmeric affect she had on theatre-goers and radio listeners that 30 years later so many remember her with affection.

Today Noreen is confined to a wheelchair following two strokes, and a patient in an Eastwood Nursing Home. She is no longer able to play the organ but that doesn't stop her from reminiscing on the glamorous, heady, post-war years when she was the toast of Sydney.

Her only regret is the demolition of her "beautiful theatre" nearly 30 years ago.

Despite her physical infirmities Noreen retains a quick dry wit and an independent spirit.

Sitting in the autumn sunlight on the nursing home veranda Noreen chainsmokes her way through endless cigarettes as she talks nostalgically of that bygone era.

From 1944 to 1964 Prince Edward patrons were ushered to their seats as she played the Wurlitzer organ — the first of its kind in Australia.

Not only was the organ the first of its kind, but Noreen, when she opened at the Prince Edward on August 18, 1944, was the youngest organist ever appointed to a major city cinema in Australia.

Her face lights up as she remembers the lavish gowns she wore: "I had two full-time dressmakers working on them, one for daytime and one for evening," she says with a measure of pride. Noreen also broadcast live every Sunday morning over 2GB and at regular intervals for 2BL for about 12 years. Born in Brisbane, Noreen became something of a child prodigy there. She began piano lessons when she was three under her mother's tutelage. At six she started to study violin, and appeared as a guest artist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra at seven.

Over the next 10 years she studied the cello and the church organ, and started to study singing at the NSW Conservatorium of Music.

Her audience may be smaller today, but it's no less appreciative. On Wednesday afternoons she occasionally plays for other nursing home patients, transporting them back to those halycon postwar days.



Noreen Hennessy... wowed cinema goers for 20 years. PHOTO Jeff Darmanin

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members. May your time with us be a happy and entertaining one. Thank you for joining our Society.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Joyce Pate - Bexley | Cathleen Flavin - Loftus |
| Margorie Pollard - Croydon | Ilya Lovell - Bexley |
| John Dornan - Blakehurst | Patricia Myles - Riverwood |
| Gordon Readett - Croydon | Bill Peatman - Sans Souci |

HORACE WEBER - THEATRE ORGAN PIONEER

In Australia there were 2 organists who specially qualified for the title of "grand old man of theatre organ". They were both revered by their many fans, and both played major parts in the birth of the Australian theatre organ. They were Horace Weber and Manny Aarons, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, not only for the countless hours of pleasure they gave, but also for the handing down of their knowledge and skills, through the many pupils they taught. This, then, is the story of Horace Weber.

Starting as a choirboy at St Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide, it was not long before he began to study the organ under Mr John Dunn, the Cathedral organist. Later he studied piano at the Elder Conservatorium with Mr Brycesen Treharne. At the age of 14 years, he passed his senior organ and piano grades with flying colours, and was appointed assistant organist at the Cathedral, no mean feat for one so young. At the age of 17, he journeyed to New Zealand to take up an appointment as organist and choirmaster at St John's Cathedral in Napier. Later he was recalled to South Australia as organist and choirmaster at the Baptist Church, North Adelaide. It was at this church he gave his 200th recital. In those 200 recitals Horace Weber played 624 numbers, representing the works of 114 different composers.

He then entered the field of theatre organ playing, and became organist of the Grand Theatre in Rundle St, Adelaide. After 3 years in this theatre he was engaged by the De-Luxe Theatre in Bourke St, Melbourne, to

play the Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra, built by the WurliTzer Company, which was installed in this house. In 1924, when Melbourne's spectacular and newest theatre, the Capitol, was nearing completion, Horace was selected from 15 applicants, to be the opening organist in this most lavish house. The organ was a 3/15 WurliTzer, and the first really modern theatre pipe organ to arrive in Melbourne.

For the next 5 years, Horace played accompaniments to silent films and, of course, his famous featured organ spot at every performance. In 1927 he gave a private-invitation recital of straight organ music. After leaving the Capitol he came to the State Theatre in Sydney for a season. This was followed by a long and successful season at the Victory Theatre in suburban Kogarah, at the end of which he appeared at the beautiful Spanish-style Roxy Theatre, Parramatta, on the 3-manual Christie theatre organ which was acknowledged to be one of the best installations of this make in the country. He then returned to his beloved Capitol Theatre in Melbourne. This was followed by seasons at the Regent and Plaza Theatres in Collins St, Melbourne, and he then travelled to Western Australia to play the Perth Ambassador's Theatre.

Horace gave recitals on the organs of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Town Halls, and was equally at home on theatre, church or concert organs. Among the many students taught by Horace Weber was Les Waldron, whom Horace considered to be one of his most brilliant pupils. Les Waldron

went on to become organist of Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre, and also of the Ambassador's Theatre, Perth.

Horace was the first organist to play the WurliTzer of Melbourne's Capitol Theatre, and also the last to play it in the theatre before its removal by TOSA members in Victoria. He played the historic final recital at the organ for the Victorian Division of TOSA, which was recorded and released as an LP record. When the organ was opened at its new home in the Dendy Cinema at Brighton Beach on 27th April, 1967, the Society was able to once again unite the organ with its former master, Horace Weber, who played the first bracket of numbers before handing over to English theatre organist, George Blackmore, who had been flown out especially to fulfil a 3 week engagement at the Dendy. Few theatre organists can claim to have opened, closed and then re-opened the same organ in two different theatres. From 1924 to 1967 is indeed a long time for any organist to have been associated with the same organ.

In later life, Horace was the organist of the Armadale Baptist Church, Victoria, and gave monthly recitals at the church on a Sunday afternoon for 14 years. These recitals featured the works of Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, Elgar, Lemare, Smart and Harwood.

A pioneer of the theatre organ in Australia, a brilliant musician, and a charming gentleman with a host of interesting memories of theatres and organs of the golden days, was Horace Weber.

CORN CORNER



Allan Tassaker reckons the bloke who wrote the first waltz must have been a lousy counter... couldn't even count more than three!
1-2-3! 1-2-3 !! 1-2-3 !!!

FOR SALE

THOMAS
COLOR-GLO ORGAN
"PARAMOUNT"
RECENTLY SERVICED
IN EXCELLENT
WORKING CONDITION
\$500
PHONE : 4773298

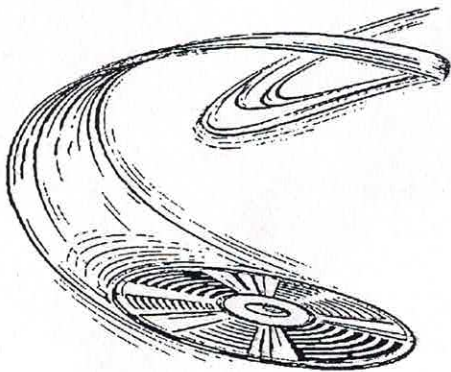
WANTED

CONN 3-manual
Theatre Organ
Model - 650, 651 or 652
Contact : Tom Barber
Phone 629 3105

Our National Convention in Adelaide at Easter this year rated this photo and small item in the International News sections of the American Theatre Organ Society's Theatre Organ journal, May /June edition.



JUST LISTENERS—Organists Sean Henderson, Clark Wilson and Tony Fenelon, with California Disneyland chef Tim Kopaceski, pictured in the lobby of the Capri Theatre, Adelaide, attending a concert by another convention artist. Wilson played the main convention concert April 11 for the Theatre Organ Society's 'Sizzlin' Pipes' conclave April 9 through 12 in Australia and then enjoyed the other programs.



Record Bar News

from Neil Palmer

SALE

As an extra special for members attending the Tony Fenelon - John Atwell concert, Hector Olivera's double cassette, recorded on TOSA's Marrickville WurliTzer and entitled :

"Hector Olivera Live From Sydney, Australia"

was offered for sale at only \$10 (usually \$15). For those members who were unable to attend the concert we now extend this offer to mail order customers who can obtain a copy by applying to the address opposite :

In the Good Weekend Magazine of 17 th April, the Sydney Morning Herald carried this brief mention of our kind of music and TOSA's radio programme.

HITS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

Had an earful of Whitney Houston's ubiquitous lament of love gone wrong? Fast Foreword surveyed the alternative hit records on some of our lesser-known radio stations.

Calypso/Soca (a successor style to Calypso) Top Five, by Paul Robinson, presenter of *Cool Runnings* on Sydney's 2RES-FM, Tuesdays at 6 pm.

1. *Lorraine*. Explainer.
2. *Pussycat*. Shadow.
3. *Rally Round the West Indies*. David Rudder.
4. *Hot, Hot, Hot*. Arrow.
5. *Mystery Band*. Lord Kitchener.

(Calypso and Soca recordings are available mainly from import record stores.)

*The Theatre Organ Top Five, by Chris Styles, presenter of *Theatre Organ Highlights* on Sydney's 2CBA-FM, Mondays at 9 pm.

1. *Ray Nobel Remembered*. Simon Gledhill at the Castro Theatre WurliTzer. (Clout CD)
2. *La Cage aux Folles Medley*. Lyn Larsen at the former Paramount, New York, WurliTzer. (Pro-Arte CD)
3. *Try a Little Tenderness*. Tony Fenelon at the former Regent Theatre, Melbourne,

Wurlitzer. (Festival CD)

4. *Slow Poke*. Everett Nourse at the San Francisco Fox WurliTzer. (Doric LP)

5. *Roller Coaster*. George Wright. (Banda Records) (Theatre Organ music is available through the Theatre Organ Society of Australia and some specialty record stores.)

The Post-Industrial Top Five, by Michelle Home, presenter of *Since the Accident* on Melbourne's 3PBS-FM, Wednesdays at 7.30 pm.

1. *The Mind is a Terrible Thing to Taste*. Ministry. (Sire/Warner, 1989)
2. *1/2 Mensch*. Einstürzende Neubauten. (Some Bizarre, 1985)
3. *Horse Rotorvator*. Coil. (Some Bizarre, 1988)
4. *Macbeth*. Laibach. (Restless/Mute, 1988)
5. *Buried Dreams*. Clock DVA. (Wax Trax, 1989) (Industrial music is available from import record stores specialising in dance music.)



Koori Top Five, by Bradley Brown (far left) presenter of *The Koori Music Show*, 3CR Melbourne, Thursdays, 2 pm.

1. *Took the Children Away*. Archie Roach. (Mushroom)
2. *Thou Shalt Not Steal*. Kev Carmody. (Larrikin)
3. *Inside My Kitchen*. Tiddas. (Black Heart)
4. *Young and Old*. Bart Willoughby. (Live-Triple J)
5. *Broken Down Man*. Scrap Metal. (ABC/Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association)

James Cockington

Available by Mail Order from :
TOSA (NSW Division) Inc.
304 Parramatta Rd
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

Postage : \$ 2.80

Earlier this year Theatre Organ, the magazine of the American Theatre Organ Society, carried this interesting article on home-installation Wurlitzers. The Japanese installation in a Tokyo department store was an especially surprising feature.

The J.J. Murdock Wurlitzer

Story and Photos by Tom DeLay

In the 1920s, Wurlitzer, like Morton, Aeolian, Skinner, Welte, and others, built many residence organs. In the case of the Wurlitzer, there were many standard styles just as there were in their theatre organ line. It is fairly safe to say, most Wurlitzer residence organs were small affairs from four ranks to 9 or 10 ranks.

Wurlitzer had examples of "special" residence installations. The 3/10 in the Wurlitzer residence in Cincinnati, had a most unusual console to say the least. A 2/10 special was also installed in the Leon Douglas home in Menlo Park, California. The Cincinnati Wurlitzer was installed in 1924, while the Douglas organ saw the first light of day in the spring of 1928.

Wurlitzer probably reached its zenith of residence organs in November/December of 1929 with what is casually mentioned as opus 2082 purchased by Mr. J. J. Murdock of Beverly Hills, California. It was simply listed as an R20PL which would mean a standard 12-rank R-20 with a roll player. Five or six R-20 organs were built, depending on one's view of the Wurlitzer shipment list; opus 2044 was sent to the New York World's Fair in 1939. Once the fair was over, the organ appears to have been sent back to the factory and assigned a new opus of 2234 and last saw its days of use in the Santa Clara Capn's Galley Restaurant. It is not known what has happened to this organ. One R-20 remains in its original location in the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Tokyo, Japan. Opus 2105 built for the McGinley Residence in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, still exists, and is now located in the Calvary Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan.

The largest of the R-20 organs appears to be the 3/16 sent to Murdock's home in Beverly Hills. Mr. Murdock was a movie mogul on the Hollywood scene, and very likely desired a Wurlitzer organ of a capacity such as could then be found in many of the larger Los Angeles theatres.

It differed greatly from the standard R-20. At the right is a quick list of comparisons of the standard R-20 and the Special for Murdock.

As a result of these differences, the Murdock organ was truly a special. It had two "style R" roll players. It can be assumed that the reason this opus was on higher than average residence wind pressure was due to its very unorthodox installation in the Murdock mansion.



Paul Quarino at the 3/17 R-20 Special in Visalia Grace Lutheran Church.



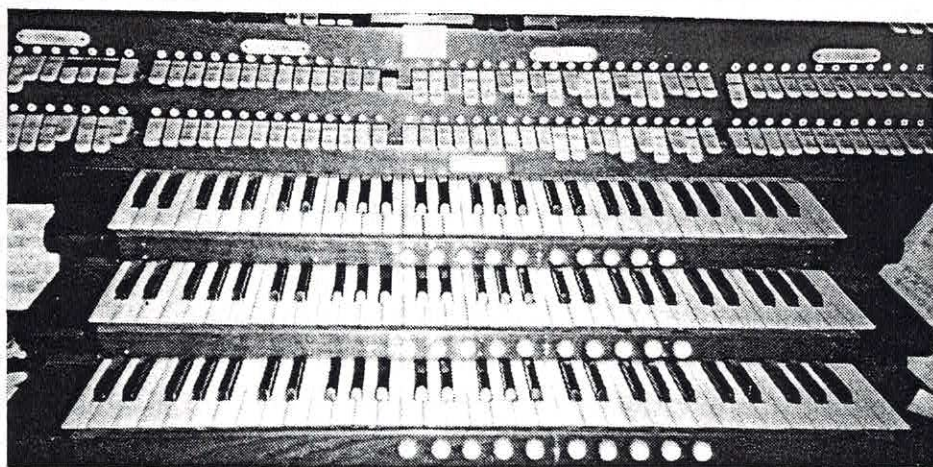
Opus 2099 with Hiroshi Matsuzawa at the R-20. This is the only Wurlitzer originally installed in Japan. It is still used in the Mitsukoshi Main store in Tokyo. Ed Mullins photo

R-20
 5 pistons per manual
 No traps
 Chrysoglott-Harp, Chimes
 Except Vox, wind pressure is 8"
 No second touch
 No 16' Tibia Clausa

R-20PL (Special)
 10 double touch pistons per manual
 Complete set of traps (no movie effects)
 Vibraphone, Chimes, Glockenspiel, Xylophone
 Excepting Vox, pipework is voiced on 10" wind pressure
 Second touch on Accompaniment and Great
 Small Scale 16' Tibia



Tom Hazleton tried out the R-20 Special in October 1991.



This may be the only straight Wurlitzer console to have three stop bolsters. Couplers, tremulants, and second touch stops are on the top bolster. All manual pistons have independent second touch pedal piston settings available.

One might imagine the Wurlitzer architects ducking in horror at the methods required in this installation. First, Murdock required the organ to speak into two separate areas of the home. Second, the shutters had to be placed on the ends of the chambers, perpendicular to the main manual chests. At least three of the four shutter openings into the house were blocked by bass offset chests and associated pipework. How anyone over 75 pounds and 3 feet of height could fit into the chambers to service the organ is beyond being humane.

In spite of the cramped quarters, the refinement and regulation of the pipework is superb. It has a small scale Clarinet and a full length Orchestral Oboe. The Brass Trumpet and Tuba are each smoothly voiced with not a hint of poor regulation or buzz from poor voicing or servicing techniques. In fact, refinement describes very well the ensemble and finishing of the organ.

As hinted at earlier, the pipework is of fairly standard design. However, the Clarinet is considerably softer while the full length Orchestral Oboe is drastically changed from the sound one would expect from a typical Wurlitzer set. It, too, is very refined with more fundamental than the usual smaller scale sets. The various balances within the organ never seem to have been altered and are a good example of tonal balance and setting for residence instruments. It is very good, though it is less Tibia dominated than what we hear from today's Wurlitzer installations.

The organ was serviced for many years in its Beverly Hills location by the late veteran organ serviceman Frank Rogers. Frank was to be instrumental in its transfer years later to the Grace Lutheran Church in Visalia, California. It would seem Mr. Murdock was a big enthusiast of Jesse Crawford. A large selection of Wurlitzer organ rolls were stored in the roll player cabinets. When Rogers moved the organ to the church in 1960, his co-installer Richard S. Villemin purchased one of the players and the large selection

of Crawford rolls. A long out-of-print recording featuring these rolls and player could be found in the Doric Record listings in the early 1970s. Richard had the style R player wired into his house Wurlitzer in Porterville, California. Many an organ buff can recall being ushered into Richard's "inner sanctum" and hearing Crawford playing "live." Upon Richard's death in 1987, his sister Ruth acquired the roll player for her Malibu home 4/22 Wurlitzer.

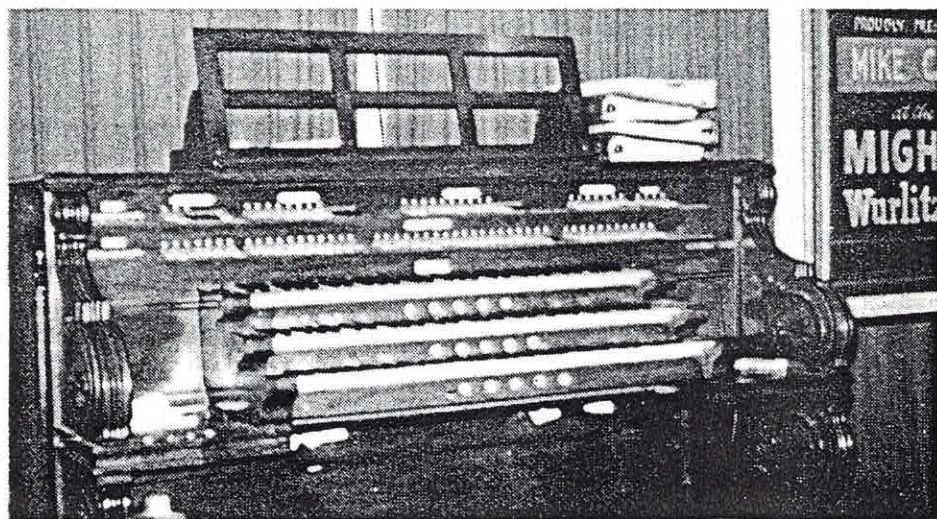
When installed in the church, the players were removed as were the traps, xylophone, and glockenspiel. However, the organ remained intact in all other respects. In the mid to late 1960s Felix Schoenstein and Sons of San Francisco added a 2' Principal to the organ. This has since been replaced by a Dulciana Celeste from R-20 opus 2234. As it is very similarly voiced to the original Dulciana, this now gives the organ a quiet, purely accompanimental pair of voices.

Members of Sequoia Chapter ATOS are helping to restore the organ. Being a late model organ, the organ had many black-cap magnet failures. Several dozen have been replaced to date. All the combination action is restored, with the chests

now dead-note free. Yet to be accomplished will be the restoration of the five-tremulants, installing their windlines according to the original design. As the tremulants are presently placed, the organ has an ugly shudder to it when the tremulants are in use; it is a most novel sound and has no use where music is concerned. The organ should be stunning again, once the last number of items are restored.

The organ is extremely refined in the church setting, with two pairs of the most beautiful strings imaginable. The organ is very powerful in the 400-seat church. Luckily, the church is fairly "live" with the organ mixing very well in the high ceiling. All of the original swell shutters are installed, with some restoration still required to get them all functioning properly.

Fortunately, this instrument has survived fairly intact and can continue as an example of the Wurlitzer product. The church knows exactly what form of instrument they have and they are very proud of this R-20 special. Once restoration of the organ is complete, the Sequoia Chapter will be allowed to present programs on this rare instrument.



Opus 2234 as seen in Cap'n Galley restaurant in Santa Clara, California. This is a fairly typical R-20 console. The organ was a 3/12.

CHRIS McPHEE

Chris McPhee was a sensation at the Adelaide Convention this year and all of the various State TOSA's reviews of the Convention included high praise for this young Adelaide performer. Now the thrilling news has arrived that he has won ATOS's international competition for best overall young organist of the year - a high honour indeed, but very well-deserved by all reports. We hope to hear him soon in Sydney. Further news of these appearances will be published in TOSA News when details have been sorted out and firm dates arranged. This is what John Atwell had to say in the Victorian TOSA's VOX about this rising star of the Australian theatre organ world :

Chris McPhee Wins 1993 ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition - Senior Section and Overall Winner

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Chris McPhee, one of the rising young stars of the theatre organ scene in Australia has scored a double whammy in the 1993 Young Theatre Organist Competition conducted by the American Theatre Organ Society. Not only did he win the Senior Section (19-21 years) in which he entered, but he was also declared overall winner of the whole competition. The other sections are Junior (13-15) and Intermediate (16-18).

Congratulations, Chris, from the theatre organ community in Australia. Anyone who heard Chris's presentation at the 1993 Convention in Adelaide at Easter will be in no doubt that the competition could not have had a more worthy winner.

Chris is 19, and is a resident of Adelaide, and is soon to spread his wings in Australia, having been signed by Victoria, NSW and Stirling Productions in WA to present concerts later this year. He began learning the electronic organ at age 9, studying through the Australian Guild of Music and Speech. His natural ability combined with hard work and enthusiasm led to his gaining the Associate Diploma of Electronic Organ with Honours. In 1990 he achieved full marks for Matriculation Music Performance and Theory and in 1992 was the winner of the Royal School of Church Music Scholarship.

Chris is in the enviable position of having the organ at the Capri Theatre, Goodwood as his homebase instrument. It could be said without doubt that the availability of such an instrument, and the opportunity to play

such an instrument in public for film shows, (an opportunity shared by a number of South Aussie organists) has done much to aid Chris's development as a theatre organist.

Chris's immediate plans involve the reorganisation of the next couple of months to enable him to fly to the ATOS Convention in Chicago in July, where on Monday morning July 5th he will take part in a concert at the 3/17 Barton in the Patio Theatre, Chicago and be presented with his award. Rich Lewis, the overall winner of the competition from last year will be the featured artist at the concert.

There appears to be a trend where the overall winner of the previous year's competition then has the opportunity to present a full concert at the next Convention. If such a trend is followed, it could mean that Chris may be involved in the 1994 Convention in Seattle! Not that Chris has not played in this neck of the woods already. During their Australian tour, Seattle residents Russ and JoAnne Evans recognised Chris's musical ability and engaged him to play a concert for the Puget Sound Chapter of ATOS, when they learned that he would be spending time in Portland in January of 1993 for some tuition with Jonas Nordwall. And now it seems that Chris's talents are to be recognised by a wider cross section of the American theatre organ audience.

It is worth noting that out of the last four year's of the competition, Australian entrants in the competition have secured winning places on no less than three occasions - John Giacchi in 1990, Sean Henderson in



Chris McPhee

1992, and now Chris in 1993. That is certainly a great achievement considering the competition that is out there, and appearing to get stronger by the year. The UK has had a strong representation in the winning department over the years, and so the Americans can not be accused of being parochial. It is certainly a good sign for the long term future of the theatre organ in both countries.

Congratulations to Chris for his achievements, to his teachers, and to those who have guided and encouraged his development as an exponent of the theatre organ.

HELP WANTED

Two ladies need transport to our concerts. One lives in PUNCHBOWL and the other in ASHFIELD.

If you could help either of them, would you please contact our transport officer,
RITCHIE WILLIS,
on 580 3581