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# T.O.S.A. NEWS.

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of Australia, N.S.W. Division  
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**This is THE BIG ONE!**



**TONY FENELON    &    JOHN ATWELL**  
at the consoles of the  
**Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ and Piano**

**Sunday 27th. May at 2pm.**  
**Marrickville Town Hall    Marrickville**

**DIRECTORY****TOSA (N.S.W. Division)**

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 SYDNEY SOUTH. 2000.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to the following new members,  
 Stan West, Joyce Bourke, Bess & Neville Iffland, Mr. & Mrs. P. Olive,  
 Mr. R. Emson, Roy & Virginia Burling, Niki & Michael Katris, Daisy Katris.

A NEW EXCITING ORGAN

PADDINGTON RSL CLUB are now the proud owners of a new White & Gold  
 Rogers Theatre Organ and the INAUGURAL CONCERT will take place on:

FRIDAY NIGHT...20th July 1984 commencing at 7.30pm with TOSA Patron  
 IAN DAVIES at the Console.

ALL TOSA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE A PART OF THIS BIG NIGHT.

NOTE: Dinner can be obtained from either the Bistro Bar or the Dining Room  
 after 5.30pm.

(Paddington RSL is right opposite the Paddington Town Hall in Oxford Street)

A REMINDER

As previously notified in our NEWS, chamber inspections will not be  
 conducted after major concerts at Marrickville Town Hall owing to the time  
 factor and clearing down activities being delayed. Most of our members can  
 inspect the pipe chambers during Club Nights with more time to spare to  
 explore the workings. One possible exception to this policy rule is Country,  
 Interstate and Overseas visitors who can only inspect the chambers on concert  
 days and these will be catered for strictly at the President's discretion only.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



## May

MONDAY 7th at 7.30pm

COMMITTEE MEETING at 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.  
(Visitors are cordially invited)

SUNDAY 13th at 2pm

HOME ORGAN PARTY at Cec & Norm Paddy's residence, 58 George St., Penshurst. Anything can happen at the Paddy's and usually does! Bring your music and Ladies, a plate please. **ADMISSION: \$2.50 each.** Phone: 570 7525 immediately for bookings.

FRIDAY 18th at 7.30pm



INVITATION NIGHT from our Patron. IAN DAVIES, to attend a Concert Recital on the Rogers Organ at Bondi-Junction-Waverly RSL Club, featuring our Patron as the Guest Artist.

This will be the first of two Capitol Organ fund raising nights and Admission will be \$4 per person. The Bistro Bar will be open from 5.30pm if you should desire to have Dinner before the concert.

SUNDAY 27th at 2pm

PAID CONCERT at Marrickville Town Hall  
Featuring: TONY FENELON & JOHN ATWELL  
playing the Wurlitzer Theatre Organ and Grand Piano.  
**ADMISSION: Adults \$6, Members \$5, Concession \$3.**  
(Booking forms inside this issue)

## June

MONDAY 4th at 7.30pm

COMMITTEE MEETING at 120 Dennis St., Lakemba.  
(Visitors are cordially invited to attend)

SUNDAY 24th at 2pm

CONCERT AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

W A T C H   T H I S   S P A C E !!!



WEDNESDAY 9th MAY. (Sydney Town Hall)  
Solo organ recital by Stephen Darlington

## HOME ORGAN PARTY AT THE PORTERS.

(by John Clark)

If, at 10a.m. on the 24.3.84 you'd asked me to give odds on the weather for the afternoon, I'd have offered 100 to 1 that it would still be raining, but miraculously, fine weather prevailed as the capacity crowd of 40 arrived to enjoy an afternoon and evening of social nattering, fun, good food, a little drink and some piano, (sorry, player piano) organ and vocal music.

Noteworthy in the musical department was confident young (15 going on 16 she complains) Andrea Harrison, the apple of Daddy's eye, and at this tender age she already shows a good deal of ability, has a good repertoire, speaks beautifully and to top it all off she's a delightful young lady.

For the rest, take one Ron Smith, a John Clark, our host Barry Porter, his son Craig and Marie Stronach, mix them up in various forms of duets and solos and you have the musical complexion of the day. Marie also supplied the vocal content of the offerings.

The barbecues were put to good use and offered up the special aroma that enhances ones appetite and the Porters had made sure there was plenty of the extras to go with the meat.

Its quite remarkable just how many people you can accomodate at these functions especially when those behind the scene helpers arrange to pick up the extra chairs and transport them to and fro... well done behind the scene helpers....we were very comfortable and there was plenty of space as people spread through the house though no one spread so far as the pool which on a warmer day might have proved very inviting.

To finish off the evening long standing members Ritchie Willis and Norm Read turned on a Magic Lantern show, with slides of old Theatre Organs and even more interesting, slides of some of the well known players of today as they looked in days long gone.

The day was a great social success and its good to see some of the newer members making their homes available for these days for which Alan Misdale moved a vote of thanks and in response, Barry Porter said that the Porters had enjoyed the day and were keen to have another one soon.... Ron Smith was seen to take note of this in his diary for later this year. \$83.40 went to TOSA'S funds as a result of the admission and proceeds of the raffle which was won by Ritchie Willis and second prize went to Treasure, Edna Smith..... these committee members have had an uncanny run of luck lately, but then I guess it's only because they buy tickets and do all they can to support TOSA.... goodonya Edna.



# Home Organ Party

24TH MARCH 1984

AT THE HOME OF  
BARRY & ROSLYN PORTER



*Andrea Harrison and Barry Porter entertaining on organ and piano.*



*Barry pumps the player piano for the singers.*



*Marie Stronach on piano leading a singalong.*



*Ron Smith at the Wurlitzer keyboard.*



*Roslyn checking John Clark's cooking qualifications.*

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

NUMBER 4 OF A MONTHLY SERIES BY FRANK ELLIS

And so to December 1938 - another interesting month which saw the birth of Radio 2CH's theatre organ programme, "Masters of The Organ" which was broadcast four nights each week at 6.30 p.m. It was a bold and imaginative step for a radio station to take at that time, and organ lovers said that 2CH were catering better for their needs than any other radio station in the Country. The broadcasts were done "live" and the four organists engaged for the programme were:- Knight Barnett (Roxy, Parramatta), Paul Cullen (Savoy, Hurstville), Jim Williams (Arcadia, Chatswood), and Norman Robins (Palatial, Burwood). Later, Denis Palmistra replaced Norman Robins.

As the broadcasts went to air without the benefit of a sponsor, 2CH were indeed taking a very bold step. It was hoped that if a sponsor appeared, the programme would be extended to Friday nights also, and Les Waldron would then broadcast from the Vogue Theatre at Double Bay on the Hammond organ. To the best of my knowledge, this did not eventuate. Delighted organ lovers at the time said, "long live 2CH and "Masters of the Organ". The show did, in fact, have a very long run, and as it followed one of Sydney's most listened to programmes, namely, "Yes What" this ensured a large audience of listeners for this "live" theatre organ show.

It was reported that month that Perth's "Regent Theatre" had changed hands, and that the organ had been closed down. It was also rumoured that Ray Chaffer was leaving the Astra theatre management, and moving on to new pastures. Later of course, the Astra came under the Western Suburbs Cinemas banner, and of course, as we all know, Western Suburbs Cinemas itself later came under a new banner - that of Hoyts Theatres.

One of the best organ presentations that month was presented by Kurt Herweg at the Prince Edward when he played a selection of "Rhapsody in Blue", "Liebestraume", and Duke Ellington's "Caravan". High praise was also given to Owen Holland at the "Regent" where the film "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was screening. A critic of the time after attending the "Regent" said that it was Owen Holland who had really given him his "full two bobs worth" with his fine organ playing, which didn't say much for the film !! Owen was also praised for his "glorious work" accompanying the Mastersingers on the A.B.C.

Best reported broadcast of that month was said to have been Des Tanner's when he collaborated with musical comedy star Evie Hayes in a terrific broadcast.

The December issue of a popular music magazine of those times carried Christmas Greetings from a dozen or more of Sydney's theatre organists including the following:- Les Waldron - Vogue Theatre, Double Bay; Stan Cummins - Plaza Theatre, Sydney; Reubert Hayes - Victory Theatre, Kogarah; Cyrus Tuckwell - Duke of York Theatre, Eastwood; Paul Cullen - Western Suburbs Cinemas; Owen Holland - Regent Theatre, Sydney; Jim Williams - Arcadia Theatre, Chatswood; Norman Robins - Palatial Theatre, Burwood; Kurt Herweg - Prince Edward Theatre, Sydney; Charles Tuckwell - Strathfield Cinema; Valda Kersey - Kings Theatre, Gordon and Knight Barnett - Western Suburbs Cinemas.

The above mentioned greetings to their fans each occupied a two inch by one inch space surrounded by a fancy border and looked very festive and impressive. However, the most eye-catching greeting of all was a two inch by four and a half inch one by Stanfield Holliday at the Hammond Organ of the Century Theatre, Sydney. Stanfield offered "his many friends and admirers the 'Complements of the Season'".

More bits and pieces next month for your amusement.

# Concert Review

...7

NEIL JENSEN CONCERT, Sunday 25th March 1984.

(By Peter Bidencope)

This was indeed a great concert as Neil continues to develop his organ proficiency in so many ways. Despite the fact he was suffering the ill effects of a virus and a temperature of 102, he appeared relaxed and confidently in command throughout the performance. His manner at the console seemed not in the least disturbed when confronted on two occasions by ciphers (fortunately rare events these days at Marrickville).

Neil's programme was obviously drawn from an extensive repertoire and included compositions of considerable variety. These ranged from a novelty item - "The Waltzing Cat" by Le Roy Anderson to a very sleazy mood piece "Blue Prelude", ballad items, a march "Oxford Street" from London Again Suite by Eric Coates and a variety of orchestral items such as "Csardas" by Monti.

The highlight of the concert was Neil's superb rendition of Peter Tsaichovsky's "Festival Overture 1812" complete with chimes and cannon (provided with aid of a tympani).

Throughout the programme, Neil ably demonstrated the wide capabilities of the organ with frequent and effective changes in registration to suit the piece being played as well as varying the dynamic range from delicate single notes and passages (sometimes accompanied by some wheezy squeaks from the swell shutters) to almost full organ.

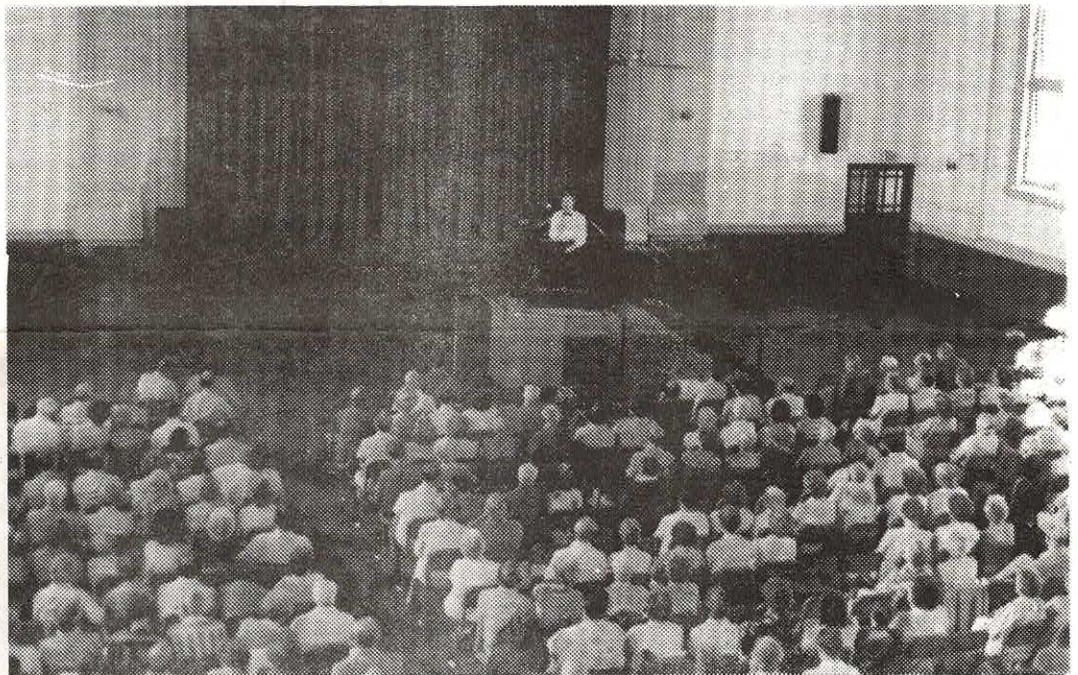
Following prolonged applause at the end of the concert, Frank Ellis remarked;

- "a fabulous afternoon!" - indeed it was.





*At left.  
Neil in a joyous mood  
after his successful  
concert at Marrickville  
Town Hall.*



*At right.  
A small section of the  
500 people as viewed  
from upstairs.*



*At left.  
Girls of the Y.O.A.  
who acted as ushers  
for the afternoon.*





## INDIANAPOLIS - VENUE FOR 1984 A.T.O.S. CONVENTION.

Richard Purvis has been signed to play the 5-manual 88-rank E.M. Skinner organ in the Indianapolis Scottish Rite Cathedral for the 1984 A.T.O.S. National Convention. This will be the first public concert appearance by this famous artist in several years.

Dennis James will play the Convention opening concert at Manual High School. Tom Hazleton is slated to play both the Long Center Wurlitzer and Purdue Hall of Music; Jonas Nordwall and Dwight Beacham are also inked to appear at Purdue.

Lin Lunde, an excellent theatre organist - he is now resident organist for the Byrd Theatre which reopens soon - will present a concert at the Hedback Theatre. Donna Parker and Bill Vlasak will hold concert court at Paramount Music Palace, and Lowell Ayars is set for the 3/8 Page organ at Anderson's Paramount Theatre.

Chris Elliott is under contract to perform at Cardinal Music Palace and Walt Strony will preside at the Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre Page organ. That same evening - Tuesday, July 10 - Lyn Larsen and Orchestra will appear at the Embassy.

Final convention day features Bill Tandy at Pipe Dream Restaurant in Kokomo, and the Young Artists' Concert at Manual High School. Information has not been posted on the Afterglow which will be held in Cincinnati.

It should be borne in mind the above events are listed in the tentative events schedule. Changes will be published if and when they occur.

Registration Cost. According to information published in the February issue of "Ciphers", official publication of Central Indiana Chapter, registration fee for the '84 Convention will be \$110 per person which includes admission to all concerts, some meals, all transportation (in air-conditioned buses). Bus fare to the Cincinnati Afterglow will be \$35 extra.

## L.A.T.O.S. BUYS LANSING WURLITZER.

Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society became the proud owners of one of the finest theatre organs on January 26 when L.A.T.O.S. President Ralph Sargent successfully bid \$43,000 to purchase the "Roaring Twenties" 3-manual 27-rank Wurlitzer in Lansing, Michigan. The instrument cost was listed around \$200,000 by the bank that sold it at auction. Sargent also bid \$1,500 and got the very expensive hydraulic scissors lift which elevated the console.

First inkling that the instrument was available was relayed to Sargent by Ken Crome, Los Angeles organ builder. He informed the L.A.T.O.S. official the instrument was to be auctioned off with the rest of the assets of Ron Walls' "Roaring Twenties Pizza Parlour" in Lansing by the bank that held the mortgage on the popular food emporium.

Crome originally sold the instrument to Walls. It had been his personal Wurlitzer, made up of very choice ranks he had been collecting for a number of years with the idea in mind to erect it in his own residence. The organ is considered to be better than the famed Kearns' Wurlitzer, which was also purchased by Ron Walls from Russ Nelson of Santa Ana. Walls last year went bankrupt and lost all his pizza and organ properties. Realizing that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity for L.A.T.O.S. Sargent hastily called a telephonic board meeting and was given clearance to go to Lansing and bid on the organ. He flew there on January 25 and was present for the auction the next day.

OVERSEAS NEWS ... cont.

He noted the auction was in full swing very early. The event had been well publicized and a large crowd was on hand along with television crews from several local stations. "Precisely at noon, Scott Smith, Lansing theatre organist brought up the console in a rousing manner and the entire crowd immediately quieted down to hear the Wurlitzer." Sargent said. "This was what most of them apparently were there for."

"There was an enormous amount of publicity over the sale." Sargent said. "Reporters crowded around to ask who L.A.T.O.S. was and where money came from to purchase such a costly instrument. I explained that money came from the Wurlitzer Fund which had been donated by Mrs. John Brown Cook and added to by Robert Power and several other members of the Society. I also informed them the Wurlitzer is now in public trust and no longer will be used in commercial enterprise." He also noted that television people asked to be notified when the Society starts removal of the Wurlitzer. After he had purchased the organ, the Society President also successfully bid on the hydraulic scissors lift which elevated the console to solo position in the pizza parlour. Original cost fo the lift was far in excess of the \$1,500 that was paid for it at the auction.

At their monthly meeting, February 1, L.A.T.O.S. Board of Directors discussed initial plans and ideas for the instrument. It was fairly well decided that owning an organ of this size and quality means the Society must plan to have their own clubhouse/concert hall in which to install it. It now looks as though big things are in the works for Society buffs.

MT. BAKER THEATRE TO BECOME ARTS CENTRE.

Another operating movie palace will cease operation March 1. Its Wurlitzer pipe organ will no longer be heard in daily evening pre-show recitals - but it will continue to be heard whenever the theatre is open. And it will be open as a performing arts centre. The Mount Baker Theatre in Bellingham, Washington is slated to undergo a rehabilitation project to begin in 1985.

The drive to acquire and restore the theatre received help during late January from the National Endowment for the Arts with a grant of \$20,000. This will be matched by local cash and volunteer work on the theatre to help finance design and planning for general rehabilitation and restoration of the theatre along with technical upgrading of lighting and sound systems. Owners of the building will receive \$500,000 for it.

Films and some non-performing arts events are being lined up for the fall. Jim Zervas, a local architect, has been spearheading the drive to keep the theatre standing. Fortunately, according to Jeffrey Fox, who has been playing the Wurlitzer, the present Canadian owners have maintained the theatre - installing a new roof, new boiler, new carpet etc. They also had some of the original lobby furniture refinished and restored the concession stand.

The organ, a style 215, 2m/10r, is kept in excellent condition by Bob White of Seattle. The Peace Arch Organ Society has voted to purchase heaters for the chambers and donate them to the theatre. "We hope to have the water powered Otis elevator which the console rides to overture position repaired sometime this year." he added.

# Great British Theatre Organs

ST, MARY'S CHURCH, HORNCHURCH, ESSEX.

- Ian R. McIver.

Father Gerard Kerr is a familiar and much-loved figure in the theatre organ world both in Britain and America. In the wake of a large, curling pipe walks a kindly man endowed with a generous measure of Irish humour who has been responsible for rescuing from almost certain destruction two Compton theatre organs and installing them in churches. This month we are looking at the second of these two instruments.

Sidney Bernstein's expanding circuit of cinemas reached double figures when he opened the Rialto at Leytonstone. It was not a new building, having first been a skating rink, then the Rink Cinema. The reconstructed 2000-seat Rialto opened in January, 1927, without an organ, but in May of that year a Compton "Kinestra" (the eighth built) was opened there by the coloured organist Bruce James. It was a two-manual instrument, with the pipe chambers installed over the stage roof, the sound being conveyed downwards into the auditorium through a duct, thus, it was said, eliminating grilles in the side walls of the proscenium and allowing the organ's sound to mingle with that of the orchestra in the pit. More likely, this was making a virtue of necessity, as this acoustically very unsatisfactory arrangement represented the only feasible solution.

The precise size of the organ at this time is not certain. It has been variously suggested that it had between seven and ten ranks of pipes. My own feeling (and it is nothing more) is that it probably had the ten ranks it possessed after the 1931 rebuild. Its console was rather spectacular, decorated with red dragons in Japanese lacquer, a feature peculiar to Bernstein's organs of that time, but this would not have been seen to best advantage as at that stage the organ console was not provided with a lift.

In June, 1931, Derek Ronald opened a "new organ" at the Rialto. How much of it was new is not known. It certainly had new relays, and it would seem that a new two-manual console was provided, on a lift, to which a third (coupler) manual was added at a later stage. The pipework may well not have been altered, but I have heard suggestions that it was physically resited within the chambers, into an even worse position acoustically than before. The new console was closely, but not precisely, modelled on Wurlitzer's "French" style, and initially was most likely finished in varnished wood - it was later painted, with rather more enthusiasm than artistic taste, cream, lined in salmon pink.

Over 50 organists played at the Rialto until the final occasion on which the instrument was featured, with Bernard Worster at the console, in March, 1956. It had only been used sporadically in latter years, and even in the 1940's it was never used for more than 28 weeks in any year. Both it and the theatre were out of action for a period in 1940, following bomb damage, and again in 1945, this time for several months, after a V2 rocket blast.

It was never a happy installation. Organists never liked it, and Bernstein ordered no further Compton organs, so we can deduce that right from the start it was not an unqualified success. It has often been said that the acoustics of its installation resulted in it sounding better and louder on Leytonstone Underground Station than in many parts of the auditorium. However good the building may have been as a skating rink, as an environment for a pipe organ it left a lot to be desired. I did visit it, in about 1970, when the organ was showing the signs of many years of neglect, and was also horribly out of tune, so I heard it at far from its best.

ST. MARY'S, HORNCURCH - COMPTON ... cont.

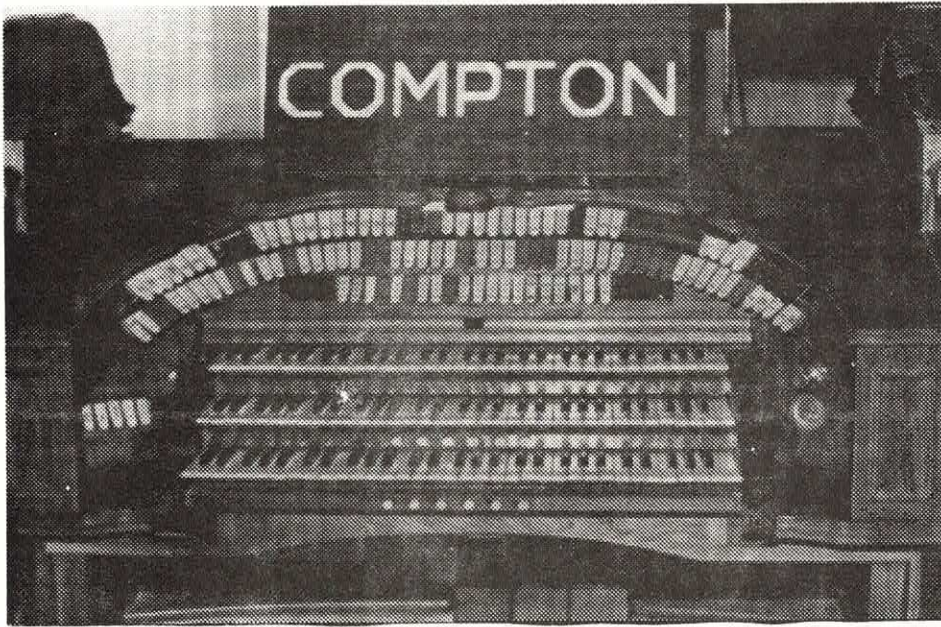
I was warned by the "Chief" that some years had passed since the organ had been serviced, or even played, and thus was not in the best of order. I sat at the console (itself a dicey procedure, since the seat, bent under the weight of an obese organist or as a result of a past entanglement with the lift cage, tipped forward sharply), right foot firmly planted on the swell pedals to wedge me into position, set up some stops and started to play. I've never claimed to be the world's greatest organist, but I froze in horror as there came from the ceiling the sound of half a dozen particularly malevolent alley cats settling differences of opinion in their traditional way. I tried again, with marginally more success, using a different combination of stops, but the summer weather had put the organ so out of tune that it was virtually impossible to use more than two or three stops at a time.

Individually, although the organ was so grossly out of tune, some of the ranks showed some promise, but the poor acoustics of the theatre and the organ's installation just did not give them a chance. The Vox Humana rank suffered more, perhaps than the others. This rank is intended to give the impression of an invisible choir of angelic voices. In this instance, the sound which emerged was a curious slurping gurgle, rather more suggestive of a gathering of demons noisily devouring hot soup; comical, perhaps, but in a sinister sort of way. It has been said of many organs that their best stop is the building itself - here the reverse applied.

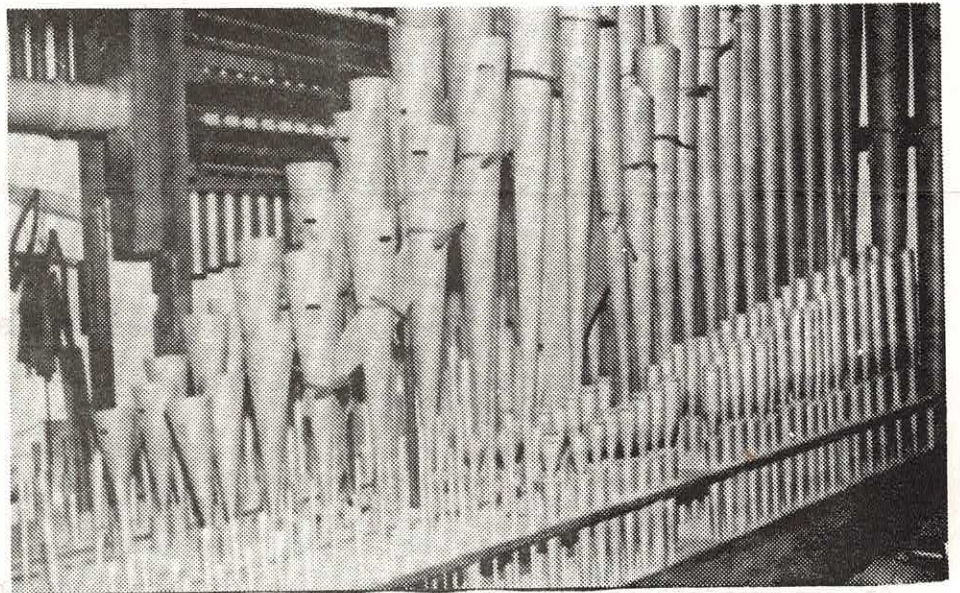
Nonetheless, Father Kerr and his team performed what I can only regard as a minor miracle in turning this decrepit organ into a splendid musical instrument. It is one of the intrinsic requirements for a priest that he must believe that there is some spark of goodness in all men, so in this case did he, with the able technical expertise of Dennis Hunt, seek out, as in a wayward parishioner, what good there was in this instrument, carefully nurturing it and causing it to grow and blossom forth like a neglected flower which has been watered.

Under the direction of Les Rawle, the gentlemen of the parish removed the instrument from the theatre and took it into store at the church. In the gallery of the church there was a rather elderly "straight" organ, which occupied space needed at services. Two windows were therefore removed from a side chapel and new chambers, designed by Dennis Hunt, were built alongside the church to house the new organ, which was completely reconstructed as it was installed. Skilled hands and not a little faith were applied by Father Kerr, Dennis, George Harrison and other parishioners as it was slowly rebuilt, revoiced and re-regulated. The console was stripped of its ghastly coats of by now very grubby paint, revealing the beauty of the wood beneath, just as the ravages of years were removed from the pipework. The results, visual in one case, audible in the other, were revealed at the opening recital, by Andrew Fenner, attended by a safari of 200 ATOS members from America, on August 1, 1976, some three years after the church bought the organ. Everything in the instrument was retained, even the syren, so it is equally suitable for theatre and liturgical use. There are plans to enlarge it, adding ranks from the earlier organ at St. Mary's, and already a 2nd Diapason, from that instrument, has been wired in. Theatre organ concerts are held from time to time, and the Christmas carol service can be especially recommended.

Below are details of the chamber contents. A glance at these will reveal the organ's orchestral design; it was, after all, originally named "Kinestra". Of note is the provision of two ranks of Harmonics, from which are derived Baryphone and Krumhorn synthetic stops. These are metal flue pipes tuned to perfect intervals, used in conjunction with the flute rank.



St. Mary's church organ,  
Hornchurch, Essex.



ST. MARY'S, HORNCHURCH - COMPTON ... cont.

The theatre's uncompromising acoustics made these rather ineffective - they gave a hollow sound like a cat choking on a fishbone - but the more sympathetic ambiance in the church allows the syntheses to work. The mutation effect of these ranks is also useful in playing classical music. For some reason, there is a 16ft. Baryphone on the Pedal, derived from these ranks, but at this pitch the individual components are too readily discernible. The organ initially lacked sufficient 16ft. tone on the pedals, but the flute rank has now been extended down to this pitch with the addition of 12 Diaphonic Bourdon pipes from the Savoy, Leyton, another early Compton organ. This now augments the Tibia and Tuba basses to give the organ an adequate bass.

SPECIFICATION SUMMARY.Main Chamber.

Diapason	16TC	8	4				
Diapason II		8					
Violin	16TC	8	4				
Strings (2 ranks)		8	4				
Flute	16	8	4	2 2/3	2	1 3/5	
Harmonics **	1 3/5	1	1/7				

Chrysoglott/Vibraphone

Traps and Effects

Solo Chamber

Tuba	16	8	4				
Tibia (wood)	16	8	4	2 2/3	2	+ Acoustic Bass.	
Vox Humana	16TC	8	4				
Glockenspiel							
Xylophone							
Chimes							

\*\* (2 independent ranks, available only via Baryphone/Krumhorn stopkeys, which also draw the Flute rank).

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## For Sale

FOR SALE.... LOWREY HOLIDAY ORGAN----- Beautiful classical instrument to suit professional or amateur, featuring leslie speaker (slow and tremelo), excellent flutes and many suporting voices giving superb tones. The organ has "Genie" rhythm section and comprehensive range of effects. Unit is in immaculate condition. Included are three (3) teaching tapes with fifteen (15) respective music books.

PRICE..... \$1350 negotiable --- Turramurra --- phone 407 2223 or 487 2246 (Evenings or weekends).