

TOSA NEWS

Jan/Feb 2017
Volume 56 No.1

Price: \$2.00

**TOSA's World of Entertainment
brings you**

A Perfect musical Duo

Bill Schumacher

& Debbie Fitzsummons

playing

The Mighty Wurlitzer

Sunday 19th March 2017

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Rds., Marrickville

 Find us on
Facebook

/tosansw

2:00pm - 4:30pm

Directory

Patron

Dr John Atwell

President

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122 *president@tosa.net.au*

Vice Presidents

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)
John Weismantel 0402 810 137 *whitecoats@bigpond.com*

Secretary

Craig Keller *secretary@tosa.net.au* 0418 484 798
7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

Treasurer

John Wall *treasurer@tosa.net.au* 9528 9158

Membership Inquiries

David & Margaret Badman (02) 4776 2192
PO Box 589 RICHMOND NSW 2753

Committee

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

John Shaw 9543 3112

Robert Gliddon *christieorg@bigpond.com*

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

Simon Ellis 0403 548 354

TOSA NEWS Editor

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 *editor@tosa.net.au*
P.O. Box A2322, Sydney South, NSW, 1235

Marrickville Players Convenor

John Batts 0420 424 103
Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)

Orion Players Convenor

Craig Keller 0418 484 798 phone or SMS

Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings)

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 before 8:0pm

Artist Liaison Officers

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122, John Shaw 9543 3112

Photography Barry Tooker 9744 1535

Publicity Officer Ernie Vale 0415 626 064
Printing by Ernie Vale & Graeme Costin

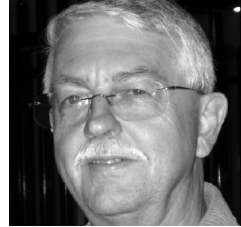
President



your friends and family at our 2017 concerts. Thanks for being a member and supporting TOSA NSW.

Craig Keller, Secretary

Editorial



From the Secretary

Hello everyone. With both Geoff and Neil off-channel caring for family members I have been asked to contribute for this month. I wish them all well.

2016 ended with a musical triumph as Dr John and Tony bade us Merry Christmas in their renowned melodic style. It was great to see such a large audience at Campsie for the afternoon – please try to get along to our concerts for this year in the same numbers.

As you will see, season tickets for this year's series are on sale now and will be available up to the start of our first concert with Aussie favourites Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons on 19 March at Marrickville. The majority of concerts this year are at MTH as we were able to lock-in the three dates required. It will be good to hear our 2/11 sing again.

We have an exciting USA artist coming in June – Justin Stahl. Debra and I saw him perform at the 2014 ATOS Convention in Indianapolis and were immediately impressed with his excellent arrangements and playing style. He covers a broad range of genres and impressed the discerning audience. His background as a full time choral teacher and Army Reserve band leader comes shining through.

Looking forward to seeing you and

Hello Members, I hope you enjoy the Christie report from project leader Rob Gliddon. Progress is ongoing with work on the new organ console thanks to David Badman and more planning has been undertaken about the design of the Solo chamber layout.

As you read the Report on the ASA Awards event I confirm that the opening with the Orion Wurlitzer had a rousing response from the 400 plus ASA members and friends present. The MC for the evening gave TOSA and the Wurlie a really comprehensive plug following the completion of "Strike up the band".

Chris Styles has done a great review of the December concert by Tony and Dr John.

Details of the 2017 concert program are included together with a Season Ticket booking form. We look forward to your attendance at the concerts and please help to spread the word to friends and family members.

Enjoy the music,

Ernie Vale

PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235
editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



Vale Phyl Wilson

See information over page

Christmas Concert at Orion

What a great start to Tony & John's Christmas concert at Campsie on 4 December! - at least four key changes, just in their opening "Santa Claus is Coming to Town", including a chorus in D flat, my favourite key. And it just got better. I note that Tony and John are scheduled to return in December 2017. We are witnessing the denouement of two fine parallel careers in niche Australian entertainment. We should all consciously value and cherish it.

From Member Kevin Eadie (Kevin brought along to the concert 10 members of his walking group. Many thanks Kevin for encouraging more people to experience and enjoy Theatre Organ. Editor)

The Heritage Council of NSW is considering the Roxy Theatre at Bingara for listing on the State Heritage Register.

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/NominationsOfStateHeritageRegister.aspx

From Kevin Eadie

Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in, telling us what you think.

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit any submitted comments and, as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of TOSA NSW Div.

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor editor@tosa.net.au

or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

Member News

Vale Barry Porter

Barry Porter passed away recently aged 80 years. Barry and his wife Roslyn were good supporters of TOSA some years ago by holding TOSA Home Parties where members could enjoy good music as well as a swim in their above ground pool. Members also put on some theatrical entertainment on occasions.

Advised by Ritchie Willis

To Watch Out for

Concerts for 2017

Your Executive and Committee have planned five concerts for this year. Bookings have been confirmed with Inner West Council where we propose three concerts at Marrickville Town Hall and two concerts are confirmed for the Orion Centre Theatre.

Seating at Marrickville Town Hall has been replaced by very comfortable and supportive seats thanks to the Inner West Council. You are assured of a comfortable and enjoyable afternoons entertainment by Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons. *see centre pages for program information.*

Season Ticket booking forms have been included as an insert in this issue or you can download a form from the TOSA web site www.tosa.net.au

As you will read in the Secretary's column we have secured a tour of Australia by American theatre organist, Justin Stahl, who promises to give us an interesting concert. He is from Indiana, USA and has been receiving rave reviews following a string of concerts in 2016.

Advertising

Rates in

TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

Members' Playing Dates The Orion Theatre Campsie 2nd Thursday Morning 10:30am to 1:30pm

February 9th

March 9th

Convenor is

Craig Keller on 0418484798

**Marrickville Town Hall
4th Monday afternoon/evening
at 2:20pm to 9:00pm**

February 27th

March 27th

**Under the Inner West Council
the time and dates may change
John Batts & Neil will keep
members informed**

Players and listeners welcome.

Please contact John Batts
0420424103 or Neil Palmer on
9798 6742 after 7:00pm

to confirm availability

Vale Phyl Wilson

Phyl and Ron Wilson started attending theatre organ concerts with their friends Leigh and Gwen O'Hanlon in the late 1960s or early '70s. At the same time Janice was having organ lessons and naturally they had an electronic organ and a player piano in their home at 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.

Never ones to stand back and "let someone else do it" they were soon actively involved with the Society. At our regular Sunday afternoon concerts Phyl became involved with the afternoon teas and soon afterwards took responsibility for organizing that essential aspect of our shows. The funds raised in selling teas over the years amounted to a very considerable sum. Phyl organized a fete at Marrickville Town Hall which was the centre of the Society's operations at that time. Ron was always there with his expert knowledge and access to machinery at his factory to make any specialist frames and fittings we needed.

Another method of fund raising was having "home organ parties" and as you would expect the Wilsons hosted many of these. Summer was the favourite time at Dennis Street and good use was made of the pool.

Ron & Phyl built a pool room at the bottom of the back yard and T.O.S.A. Committee were invited to hold their regular monthly meetings there. On retirement Ron took over the editorship, typing and printing of the Society's monthly newsletter. In addition keeping the aged, ailing printing press operational. Phyl, Ron and a few others used to collate and fold the publication for mailing.

In 1983 a trip to the West Coast of U.S.A. was organised and of course Phyl and Ron together with 15 others visited Honolulu, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Seattle, Portland & San Francisco. At every stopover except Las Vegas we were invited into people's homes to hear and play their home theatre pipe organs. The variety was beyond everyone's imagination from modest average sized homes to those of several multi-millionaires - what a great time we had being warmly welcomed wherever we went.

Phyl and Ron continued to be actively involved with the Theatre Organ Society and were awarded Life Membership in recognition of their enormous contribution to the Society over many years. Phyl served one term as President of the Society just prior to their move to Tweed Heads.

Correction re the Saxophone purchase for the Orion Wurlitzer

The rank purchased by the Society was from a British Wurlitzer (unsure which one) and was imported by the late Bill Glasson probably back in the 1960s. The original Sax from the "Capitol" Wurlitzer was traded for the Krumet which had been ordered for the Adelaide "Regent". The legend goes that Fred Scholl the opening organist at the "Capitol" preferred the Krumet to the Saxophone and did the exchange as both instruments were imported around the same time. Until both instruments were rebuilt they had the original stopkeys which proved the exchange. The Krumet is now on the Marrickville organ replacing the Kinura which is stored in a crate in the chamber. The Krumet has a sound more suitable for the live acoustics at Marrickville.

Thanks Rob Gliddon for this information - Editor,

Members Day at the Orion Theatre

A small but enthusiastic group of players and listeners were at the Orion Centre on 12 January to socialise and play the 3/17 Wurlitzer. While there some technical testing was undertaken too!

First task of the day was for John Weismantel to refit the sand block that ciphred during Martin Ellis's concert in October. While that happened I got things ready for the console to go up ready for playing. David and Margaret Badman and Tom Barber arrived about this time and soon we had things ready to go.

As soon as John gave the signal he was finished the blower ran up and the Uniflex computer was started up ready for the day.

Players for the day were David Badman, Tom Barber and a recent new member Doug Matthews (not the cricketer) plus yours truly. 15 minute playing slots were allocated and tunes flowed.

Listeners included listening stalwart Kevin Clancy, Margaret Badman and John Weismantel.

While some of us played John took the opportunity to investigate some of the stage lighting and control systems installed at Orion. This was a great learning experience for John and we are confident that future concerts at Orion will see better lighting of the console and maybe even some additional colour and movement. We wait with 'bated breath!

Special visitors for the day were my brother-in-law, Steve Robinson and his teenage daughter Rebecca. They were on a road trip together and were on their way from the Blue Mountains to my home in Gerringong for a visit. I invited them to drop by so that both of them could see and hear a theatre pipe organ for the first time. Both were fascinated and as Rebecca has an engineering and electronics interest and likes music she was especially interested. When I showed them the chambers the looks of amazement were great to see.

A good day was had by the small crew but we missed regulars John Batts, Graeme Costin and Simon Ellis. Next month maybe?

A reminder that the days at Orion Centre and Marrickville Town Hall are open for all members to come along – even if you don't wish to play. Its a social day and all TOSA members and their guests are welcome.

Craig Keller

Christie Organ Report January 2017

Rob Gliddon

CONSOLE The console has been positioned on the new dolly and bolted down to same. Wooden Stop Divisions are being made and the stop actions will be realigned to their final positions. Console sides and back have had their final coats of polish. Lid has yet to have its final few coats. Music rack fixings have been made and the rack finishing is progressing.

From David Badman following Rob Gliddon's Report:

Last night I finished assembling the console, sans music stand to be veneered and fitted this week.

Dimmer unit and under stop shelf lights have been installed and work with two spare channels available. Each channel is individually variable plus a master control. The remaining channels can be used for drawer lighting and original console lights. Horseshoe, traps, tremms and pedals are all individually adjustable for balance at this time.

*Original console lighting is still to be re-installed.
Pistons to be fitted.*

Swell and Crescendo interfaces to be decided on and fitted.

Drawers still to be completed.

Skirt for dolly to be made.

Special thanks to David Badman for his special skills and the many, many hours he has expended on the project.

MAIN CHAMBER All manual pipework has been racked as this is the safest place to store same.

Chest wiring is very close to completion.

Accompaniment non-tonals have been mounted and in most cases winded.

SOLO CHAMBER It has been decided to change the position of the Glockenspiel unit to adjacent to the Xylophone.

All the regulators which are stored in the Solo will be moved to the Main in order to commence mounting the Solo manual chests.

Show & Membership Prices

	All Artists
Non-members	\$35
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	\$30
Family 2 Adults incl 1 child up to 19 yrs age	\$65
TOSA Members	\$25

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status

All Children FREE accompanied by an Adult

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$22 per person

First time Adult \$15 cash by completed Voucher at Box Office

Annual Membership Fees post June 30th 2016:

\$40.00 for Full membership, Family \$60 and

\$30.00 for Pensioner Concession, Interstate or Overseas \$40.

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 membership@tosa.net.au

Associate Membership for a spouse/partner is an additional 50%

A Nutcracker Fun Fact *from Virtual Sheet Music*

Thanks to Graeme Costin for this news clip

I have a bit of a Nutcracker confession. Until doing some research for a Fun Fact about Tchaikovsky's beloved holiday masterpiece, I had always thought the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy featured a xylophone, when in fact, it is a celesta. Who knew! A celesta is a percussive instrument that resembles an upright piano, but functions similar to a glockenspiel. The sound produced is other-worldly and mystical, perfectly evoking the delicate droplets of glittering sweetness the Sugar Plum Fairy personifies.

Tchaikovsky discovered this brand new instrument when he visited Paris in 1891, and in hopes of being the first among his rival composers to use it in an orchestral piece, he asked his publisher to secretly transport a celesta back to Russia for the Nutcracker's premier in 1892. That Ernest Chausson was actually the first to use the celesta in his 1888 incidental music for *The Tempest* hardly seems to matter, as Tchaikovsky's Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy really put the celesta on the map, and succeeded in seamlessly blending the instrument's unique timbre with a beloved character who has stood the test of time and place.

The TOSA Christie at West Ryde has a celesta in it's repertoire so The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy should sound just as it was written by Tchaikovsky when played on the TOSA Christie at West Ryde. (Editor)

It is time to get organ-ised for 2017

Only a full orchestra can match the thrilling sounds of a theatre pipe organ in full voice.

The theatre organ is a pipe organ in the real sense, with row after row of pipes replicating the voices of brass, woodwind and strings together with various percussion instrument ranks including a toy counter with drums, cymbals, castanets, tambourine etc. Together these unified sounds make for a delicious blend of heartwarming music - powerful enough to lift the roof one minute, fading to whisper quietness the next.

Concert dates, Artists and Venues for 2017

- 1.Sunday 19th March - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall* -
Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons Qld
- 2.Sunday 18th June - 2:00pm at *Orion* – **Justin Stahl** USA
- 3.Sunday 10th September - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall*
- **Tony Fenelon** Melbourne
- 4.Sunday 5th November - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall* –
Nathan Avakian USA
- 5.Sunday 3rd December - 2:00pm at *Orion* -

Tony Fenelon and John Atwell both Melbourne

Booking of venues and artists are confirmed.

Season ticket prices

5 concerts for the price of 4

Members \$100; Conc \$120; Non Members \$140

Season tickets cannot be purchased on Trybooking

A Season Ticket Application form can be downloaded from TOSA Web Site www.tosa.net.au/events or complete the form enclosed in this TOSA News and post to:-

The Ticket Secretary, 14 Warrah Place, Greystanes 2145

TOSA Presents
Sunday 19th March 2016 – 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Talented Duo keyboard musicians

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons



Direct from the Gold Coast, Queensland

on a World Renowned Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads, Marrickville
Featuring music of the **"Stage & Screen Stars"**

Be swept away on a musical journey.....from Charlie Chaplin's "Smile" through the Great American Song Book, Monti's "Czardas" to ABBA, Jerome Kern's "The Way You Look Tonight" to the "Jalousie" tango, music from the "Muppet Movie" to Disney's "When You Wish Upon A Star".....and beyond!

This is a rare opportunity to hear Bill & Debbie play a genuine "Mighty Wurlitzer" in Sydney

Come and Join us - you won't be disappointed!

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons

Bill and **Debbie** are the driving force behind **TOSA Gold Coast**. Together they organize and play regular concerts there, with **Debbie** as President and **Bill** as Secretary & Patron. **Bill** is the proud owner of a *George Wright GW-319 Allen Theatre Organ* as well as a *Yamaha Grand Piano*. **Bill** and **Debbie** are also supporters of **TOSA QLD**, and perform in concert on their Christie Cinema Pipe Organ.

Bill Schumacher was one of the first members of **TOSA NSW** and has performed interstate concerts in **Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide** and **Perth**. During several visits to the **USA**, **Bill** played a recital for the Puget Sound Chapter of the **American Theatre Organ Society**, and has been guest artist at the Pizza and Pipes Restaurant in Seattle. **Bill** considers himself fortunate to have visited and played some major US theatre pipe organ installations including the **Seattle Paramount** and **Portland Paramount's** San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, the Kern Residence, **Detroit Fox** and Portland and Denver's **Organ Grinder** Restaurants.

Debbie Fitzsummons has a wealth of experience in all areas of entertainment. **Australian champion** organist at the age of 15, she was a concert organist & released a solo album at age 19. At 14yrs of age was the youngest organist to then be invited to play the **Christie cinema organ** in Brisbane. Debbie's musical career has been wide and varied, and she has been fortunate to be Musical Director and play for many great Australian and International performers such as **The Four Kinsmen** (including their USA and Las Vegas tours), **Wickety Wak, Simon Gallaher, Debra Byrne, Julie Anthony, Max Bygraves, Phyllis Diller, Joe Longthorne, Judy Stone, Johnny Tillotson, Rolf Harris, Kerri-Ann Kennerley & Gina Jefferies** to name a few.

Together, **Bill** and **Debbie** have performed Theatre Pipe Organ and Piano concerts in **Sydney, Perth & Brisbane** as well as the **Gold Coast**.

Tickets : \$ 35; Concession \$ 30; Members \$25

Family ie 2 Adults including 1 or more children \$65

Adult Group of 10 or more \$22/person;

First time patrons \$15 by Voucher at the Box Office

Students up to 25 years Free on confirmation of student status.

The Australian Songwriter Association (ASA) Awards Orion Centre Theatre December 2016

A few months ago, TOSA Video Operator, Russell Smith contacted me with an idea. For those that may not know, Russell is on the Board of Directors at West Tigers Leagues. The club usually hosts the Australian Songwriters Association annual awards event. However this year it was not possible due to ongoing renovations at the club which meant the event would not fit. Russell suggested the Orion Centre would be a great place – but he had a good reason for doing so.

Russell's idea was that the Wurlitzer could be used in some way at this event as there are many entertainment pieces during the evening performed by Australian music industry professionals. As Russell has worked with the awards operators he had good inroads to discuss the ideas.



Chairman of ASA, Denny Burgess (yes from Master's Apprentices) and his partner Clare came along to the end of the Tony Fenelon and Dr John Atwell concert a couple of Sundays prior so that we could show them what our Wurlitzer could do.

Prior to this though, there was some preparation work to happen. Russell originally thought that the end of a long Gershwin medley that Dave Wickerham played in 2012 could be used. The end piece being "Strike up the Band". He was going to use some

archival video from the day and run that vision through the event's multiple video screens while Uniflex played the organ back in synchronisation. I sent a message to Dave to seek his approval and received an immediate approval. Then we struck a hurdle... During research (aka asking questions on Facebook and emailing Dick Wilcox at Uniflex) I discovered that you cannot start a track playback at a certain point and you also cannot pause the track and have it commence playing again at the chosen point. Blast! Brain scratching was required.

The best option I could think of was to contact Tony Fenelon and ask him for his assistance prior to the concert on December 4th. A phone call and an explanation and Tony knew exactly what we wanted and agreed to record the piece for us prior to audience entry on concert day. Some early arrivals on the day may have heard the tune emanating from the auditorium and wondered what was going on. Now you know! On concert day Tony did two "takes" while Russell recorded the required video vision. Tony is such a master that both his runs were perfect and were exactly the same length 3:02 minutes.

After the concert we demonstrated to Denny and Clare how the console would rise on the lift and the music would play. They were amazed!

On the day of the awards event, TOSA personnel (Ernie Vale, Barry Tooker, Debra Keller and I) were on site at 2pm ready to set up for rehearsal of our piece. Russell was already there as part of the ASA/Club team.

We had everything ready to go at the appointed rehearsal time and did two run throughs of the ascent, play and descent of the organ including one run where the console was removed from the lift and the lift sent back to floor level. That all went fine. Organisers were very happy with our "bit". It was essential to rehearse the lift going back to floor level as the floor area was required later during the ASA event.

By 3:30 or so our rehearsal was complete so we all left for a while as the setup and rehearsals for other matters continued. Some cooling drinks were in order so Ernie, Deb and I went to the pub for a couple of squashes and air conditioning. We returned to the Orion about 5:30 to make sure we were back in plenty of time.

There was lots of interest from crew and performers about the Wurlitzer so a few "tours" were conducted. As we all know, until you open the chamber doors people have **no idea** of the extent of these instruments. They often think the console is "it".

Our communications setup was highly technical. During rehearsals and our piece, Deb and I had our phone headsets on and I phoned Deb. I brought along two handheld UHF two-ways and I communicated with Barry and Ernie in the basement via these.

Deb was the cable feeder as we still have to feed the power and communications cables up and down if the console is on the lift. Ernie and Barry were in the basement as lift drivers and console movers. I was at the computer backstage driving Uniflex and directing the team.



The theatre was laid out with 40 round tables and 10 seats per table and it was packed! It also looked quite fancy with large glass candelabra on each table, cloth napkins, wine glasses etc. The clear framed chairs with black cushions that were laid out for our last concert were also in use and looked quite decent - it's a pity the same cannot be said about their suitability for sitting on for long periods. During the afternoon Ernie also laid some TOSA business cards on each table so that if by chance someone was curious they could grab one.

Our piece was the show opener and seconds past 7pm the signal was given for everything to commence. Seconds later as the puffs of smoke from smoke machines happened, the drums and music sounded and the console rose through the smoke there was enthusiastic applause from the audience.



“Strike up the band” played through with no incident and 15 seconds prior to the track ending I signalled for the lift to descend and once again the audience applauded as the Wurlitzer console disappeared slowly into the depths. During the playback live video taken by a cameraman was projected including glimpses into the lit chambers. Russell’s video of Tony playing was also synchronised for part of the playback. Post descent, Emcee, Mike Bailey, spoke about the organ and TOSA and gave it a great spiel. Thanks to Mike!

As soon as cables were detached, Deb guided them as I hauled them back to the stage. During this time, Barry and Ernie removed the console and I dashed downstairs. By the time I arrived Ernie was ready for the lift to ascend to floor level and he drove it back to floor and stopped it bang on the mark. Deb then closed the chamber doors and gates.

It was interesting to see the Orion in use in this way and we learned a little more about the house lighting that is there. Overall I think this was an excellent opportunity for exposure of TOSA NSW and theatre organ to an audience of 400 music industry professionals.



Thanks to Ernie, Barry and Deb for being essential parts of the team and to Russell for making it possible for TOSA NSW and theatre organs to be utilised in such an innovative manner. Further thanks to Tony Fenelon for his participation by recording the track for us prior to the Dec 4th concert.

*Craig Keller
Secretary*

TOSA NSW Inc Photos Craig Keller & Debra Keller

“Whether businessmen of the Twentieth Century, bankers of the Nineteenth, thinkers of the Eighteenth, princes of the Seventeenth - and even Adam and Eve - careworn people have always found succour in the natural rhythms of a vineyard. Each year the roots dig deeper to produce wines of increasing complexity which in bottle will mature for another generation, immune to all the madness which Man seems condemned to create for himself”

Peter Sichel

“The point of drinking wine is...to taste sunlight trapped in a bottle, and to remember some stony slope in Tuscany or a village by the Gironde.”

John Mortimer, b. 1923

**Review of the Christmas Concert 2016 –
Tony Fenelon and John Atwell
Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie, NSW
Sunday 4th December**

What a pleasant afternoon when Tony and John returned once again to the hallowed hall of the Orion Centre Theatre in Campsie to play our prize 3/17 Wurlitzer and the Grand Piano. A good sized crowd of TOSA members, fans and friends gathered for the varied programme and were not disappointed in any way, shape or form.



Tony Fenelon



John Atwell

I'm greatly enamoured of our professional organists (both theatre and classical) as to how they can re-present old favourites with a freshness that is most enjoyable. Of course this will always be the case with a Christmas music programme given that there is an inexhaustible list of Christmas music that we will hear many times throughout our lifetime, and so many musical items of a Christmassy nature are very familiar to us, but we are always happy to hear them again at this time of year.

Dear Tony was suffering somewhat health wise but this never showed (as we would always expect) in his playing at both piano and organ. John had the longer time at the Wurlie and they both presented a wide and varied programme of Yuletide music as well as other joyful melodies.

It was lovely to hear Tony acknowledge that we (his audiences) had supported him for over fifty years. The main reason of course is that Tony (and John) are such great talents that we can't but

help encourage them more. Their playing justifies their international reputations. They are world class.

I'm not going to go through all the items they both played as we know their talents so well.



Highlights for me were: Tony playing the music of Irving Berlin. Irving passed the 100 year mark before he left this mortal coil. Is this something we musicians can look forward to? Are we musician types in for a long stay in *Shady Pines*? (I am sure most of the readers of this review will have watched TV's *The Golden Girls* in a past life and know of *Shady Pines*).

I also enjoyed Cole Porter's *It's De Lovely* and recalled the movie of similar name with so many of Porter's lovely melodies, even though they were presented by current performing artists.

Having Julie Andrews in the country directing the latest production of *My Fair Lady* encouraged Tony to play the show's overture and later on John played from *Sound of Music* the song especially written for the movie - *Something Good*.

I enjoyed John's version of *Angels from the Realms of Glory*, a fanfare introduction, lots of straight organ and some fugue type sounds.

Who remembers Harry Belafonte and "Mary's Boy Child"? John obliged with memories of one of Belafonte's greatest hits. (*I remember Harry Belafonte's "Mary's Boy Child" very well as it was played every Christmas at the Jeldi Factory at Punchbowl where we visited friends. Editor*).

A Christmas concert wouldn't be complete without John and Tony's duet "Sleigh Ride". Also included was an annual airing of those mysterious Wurli sleigh bells.

More mention of Julie Andrews and her starring role in the Gertrude Lawrence bio "Star". I recall this movie was a box office flop. I managed to collect some of the sheet music from the show though and John's interpretation of the show's title song was a pleasure to hear.

Tony gave us an *Abba* medley. That group has sure had a long run and their music is still around after all these years.

I did enjoy Tony's playing of three Australian Christmas carols - "The Three Drovers", "The Silver Stars are in the Sky" and "Christmas Day" (the North wind is tossing the leaves). In my organ playing for Christmas Eve Christmas carols here in the Southern Highlands we had "The Three Drovers" and my other favourite Australian carol is "Our Lady of December" which Jonas Nordwall recorded some years ago.

After the above Tony and John returned to duets to complete the programme and we were treated to some wonderful Chopin, Harry Warren's composition "An Affair to Remember", the traditional carol "O Holy Night", and to finish the concert the most well known music of the British composer and conductor Charles Williams from the movie *While I live* - "Dream of Olwen". How delightful to hear all these beautiful melodies played orchestrally - piano and the Wurli orchestra. As always, thanks to Tony and John's massive efforts over many years in transcribing these for piano and organ.

The audience cried - Encore, encore - and our artists sent us off with their wonderful arrangement of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

As always, our deep thanks to Tony and John again for gracing the stage of the Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie for our Christmas concert and also to Simon Ellis for stepping up to the microphone to introduce the artists.

Chris Styles Review, Barry Tooker photos

TOSA needs to grow our audiences

What a great audience came to the Christmas concert at the Orion Centre Theatre last December with Tony Fenelon and John Atwell at the Mighty Wurlitzer and Grand Piano. There were many new faces along with some TOSA members we had not seen for a while. Some of the new faces were a result of the promotion through advertising.

Good audiences for local artists have been achieved when there is a promise in their promotion and program of something more than a solo performance. It could be a dual bill of top artists and instruments, an appealing support group, or a theme that promises interest and engagement.

This indicates that contemporary audiences are wanting more than just 'organ' or 'organist' no matter how pre-eminent they may be. The days of the 'theater organ Johnnie' devoted to the sound are dying with those who knew and loved the era of "The Best Remaining Seats." The contemporary audience, for better or for worse, demands 'entertainment' which is about more than the skill of the artist or the grandeur of the instrument, even less about the sensationalism of the offer.

It is about the ability of the promotion and program to reach some internal motivator and/or interest in potential respondents which may have little to do with the theatre organ as an instrument. It is something in a potential attendee's life experience that is triggered by the promise in the promotion. The program and performance must of course live up to its promise which involves top playing and great sound. But it must have something more, that sends people home 'with a song in their hearts' and a lilt in their steps. It will be something in the audience member more than in the artist or instrument.

It is time to leave aside introspection about the glories of the past and think like the next generation if TOSA is to survive. Let it be the norm rather than the exception.

Come along to Marrickville Town Hall and be entertained by Bill and Debbie and please bring a friend, and/or family Member.

Members Diary

Next Committee Meeting

Monday February 6th at 7:00pm

West Ryde Anglican Church

Sunday 19th March 2017

2:00pm - 4:30pm

Marrickville Town Hall

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons

see centre pages for details

**Book your reserved seats through the TOSA web site
www.tosa.net.au/Events**

or

by contacting

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 Before 8:00pm please

Season Tickets for 2017 can be booked now

**Download the Season Ticket form
from TOSA web site or complete the form enclosed in
this issue of TOSA News**

Radio FINE MUSIC 102.5 "Colours of the King" 2nd Saturday of each month,
6pm till 7pm.

***Theatre Organ Magic* on RNB - FM from Sydney, NSW, Australia.**

88.7 FM and 90.3 FM 12 noon first Sunday of the month for one hour

Web Sites of Interest: <https://www.facebook.com/tosansw>

www.theatreorgansaust.info (history of cinema organ installations in
Australasia)

www.omss.org.au (our sister society, Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)

www.ATOS.org American Theatre Organ Society

TOSA NEWS

Jan/Feb 2017
Volume 56 No.1

**PRINT
POST
100004836**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

Official Publication of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

If undeliverable please return to :

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235 **www.tosa.net.au**

