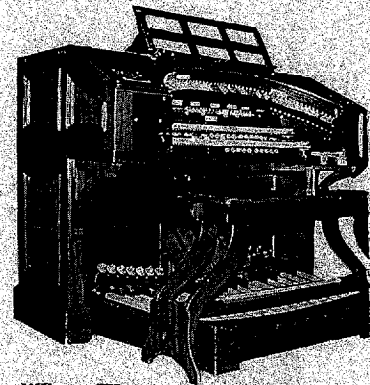




OCTOBER, 1997

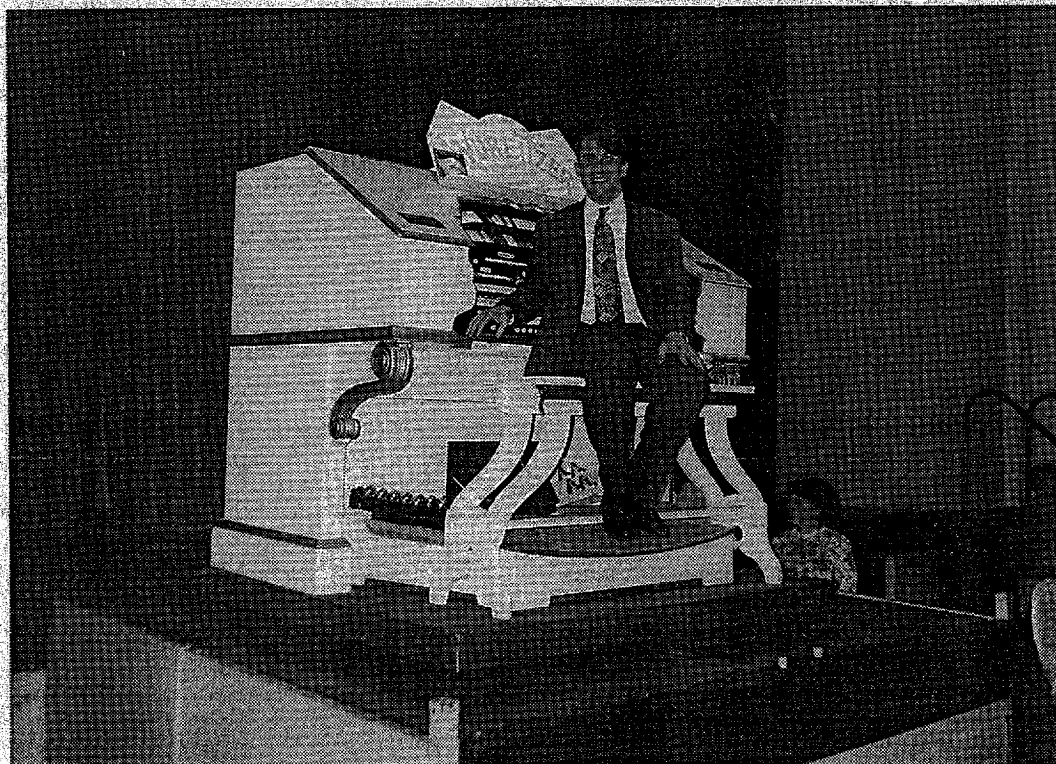
TOSA NEWS



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Welcome back to the Outstandingly Talented JOHN GIACCCHI



Sunday 26th October 1997 at 2pm Orion Centre Campsie

Volume 36
Issue 10
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TOSA NEWS

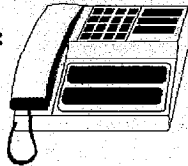
OCTOBER, 1997

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

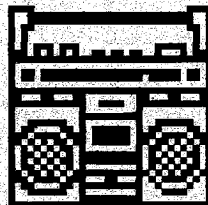
Tuesday	7	at 5.00pm	Nominations for Committee close
Monday	13	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
Sunday	26	at 2.00pm	John Giacchi Concert Orion Centre Campsie

NOVEMBER

Monday	3	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
Saturday	8	at 2.00pm	Chris Styles' Home Party
Tuesday	18	at 8.00pm	Annual General Meeting Orion Centre Campsie

DECEMBER

Monday	1	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
Sunday	7	at 2.00pm	Tony Fenelon's Christmas Concert Orion Centre Campsie



REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA FM - 103.2

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

Editorial

at least occasionally, provide the opportunity for members to play the Orion Wurlitzer.

One last reminder about nominating for committee positions before the 7th October - there was a form to cut out or photocopy in last month's issue.

Chris Styles has kindly offered to host a **TOSA Home Party** on Saturday, 8th November. There will be a fabulous garden to inspect and, for the players, an electronic **Wurlitzer** to try out. See page 11 of this issue for details and be sure to book with **Chris** as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

At last some good news this month in that it seems that, after protracted negotiations, we will shortly be able to resume practice sessions at the **Marrickville Wurlitzer** on Thursdays. See the announcement on this page and don't delay in writing to **Neil Palmer** if you wish to arrange a practice time of your own on the roster.

The **Members' Playing Nights** at the **Orion** have had to cease for this year due to heavy bookings towards the end of the year but we still hope to,

In my advancing years I have been finding easier ways of processing material sent in for publication, e.g. a scanning machine that can copy and convert any printed or typed material into text on the screen of my computer. However if the copy sent to me is very faint or poorly printed this system does not work and I am forced to go back to the time-consuming task of typing the whole item up again. So, please, if you can, make sure that the photocopy or typed material that you send in is fairly distinct and clear. Remember, too, that I can be reached by e-mail or fax.

Thank you to all the contributors who have so kindly supplied material for this month's issue, especially to those who wrote interesting pieces and sent them in without needing to be badgered by the editor! It is always a great pleasure to be surprised by the arrival in the mail of a totally unsolicited article.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves



Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is pleased to welcome the following new members and wish them a long and musical stay with our Society :

- Brett & Christine Freer - Mt Colah
- Des McNally - Liccombe
- Robert Nelson - Lugarno

HELP WANTED

Due to new arrangements at the **Orion Centre**, TOSA urgently needs able-bodied people to help to set up the seating (from 9am) and/or to put it away after the concert.

If you can help, please contact Vice-President, **John Shaw**, as soon as possible on **9759 5825**.

The **TOSA Committee** is pleased to announce that negotiations with **Marrickville Council** have allowed the establishment of **Members' Playing Sessions**.

We now need interested members to express their interest by writing to **Neil Palmer**, after which a roster of playing times will be established.

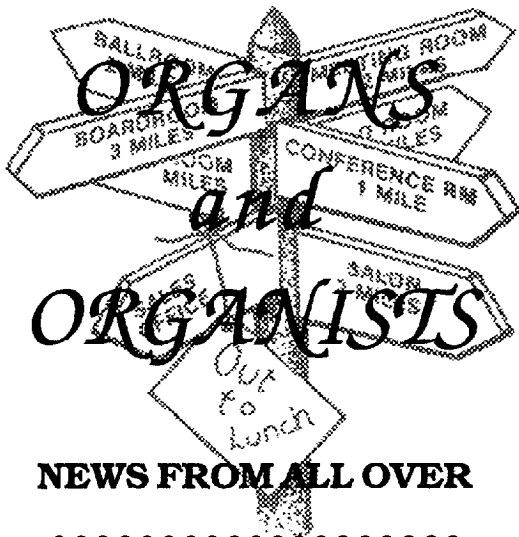
The times potentially available are on **Thursday afternoons and evenings**, unless the **Hall** is otherwise in use.

Please write as soon as possible to **Neil**, supplying your name, address and phone number. **Neil's address is :**

304 Parramatta Road, Ashfield, NSW, 2131

Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

The deadline for each edition of **TOSA News** is the 12th of the preceding month



WARRINGAH ORGAN SOCIETY

PRESENTS A MUSICAL EVENING
WITH RECORDING ARTIST

RICHARD BOYLE

FEATURING THE TECHNICS FAI CONSOLE ORGAN - THE ABSOLUTE LATEST IN
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
AT
THE LONG REEF GOLF CLUB - COLLAROY
ON MONDAY EVENING 3RD NOVEMBER 1997 AT 7.30PM
RICHARD WILL PRESENT A WIDE VARIETY OF MUSIC FROM GERSHWIN TO
POPULAR LIGHT CLASSICS

ENTRANCE \$6 PER PERSON - LIGHT SUPPER PROVIDED
ENQUIRIES 9451 1837

Richard Boyle

Richard Boyle, who is playing for the Warringah Organ Society advertised above, began his musical training at the age of 6, learning piano at the convent school at **Bangalow**. At age 11 he progressed to church organ. From there he soon discovered the versatility of the electronic organ, and has been playing that ever since. At an early age he realised that his playing would follow that of the **European** pop organ sound. He still bases a lot of his music around this sound, although he has also kept pace with technological advances in sound, and now sees the electronic organ as a full orchestra. Appreciating this sound, he doesn't restrict himself to the pop organ sound, but also includes light theatre organ style and orchestral style in his repertoire.

After leaving school he joined a national music company, learning all aspects of the music trade - covering retail sales, promotions, and was especially dedicated to pursuing the Home Organ Market. Over the years he has maintained a very good relationship with major organ companies. He has a very positive outlook as regards the future of the organ industry. Although

IF YOU WANT TO BUY OR SELL
A THEATRE, CONSOLE, OR
SPINET ORGAN OR EVEN
ANTIQUUE MODELS, CONTACT :
MANNING ORGAN SOCIETY
ORGAN SEARCH FIRST.
WE CAN HELP
Phone/Fax (065) 531 431
Manning Organ Society
15 Burdett Street,
Tinonee 2430

the popularity of the organ appeared to wane in recent years he believes that, as manufacturers gradually get back to making organs look and sound like organs, their popularity will return. This is already happening in **Europe** and **America**, and no doubt **Australia** will follow.

Richard has performed as a solo artist, worked with cabaret bands, and has recorded 6 albums. In 1991, **Australian** gospel singer/songwriter, **Peter Kearney**, heard some of **Richard's** work and was impressed by the sound and the versatility of the electronic organ. This led to **Richard** recording an album of **Peter's** best-known songs, *A House Full of Music*. This album was sold nationally and overseas. In recent years he has performed extensively, giving concerts, presentations and workshops. His current workload includes teaching electronic organs in schools and churches to primary and secondary students. This approach to introducing electronic organ to young people has proven to be very successful.

FOR SALE

Yamaha FX20 Organ
2 x 61 note Manuals and
37 note Solo Manual
25 note Pedals
Plus 7 Registration Memory
Packs
In Showroom Condition
Price : \$4,000
Phone : Gordon on
02 4476 2516 (Narooma)

Members' Night

On Wednesday, 20th August about 15 people came to the **Orion Centre** to hear 6 of our members play the **Wurlitzer**. The players were **Peter Held**, **Frank Lewis**, **Bruce Bisley**, **Walter Pearce**, **Wendy Hambly** and **Jack MacDonald**, who provided a variety of entertaining numbers and styles.



Allan Tassaker saw a advertisement in the newspaper about an organ sale at unbelievably low prices. He rang the shop to tell them he was coming right over.

"Don't do that - we'll come and pick you up," said the salesman over the phone.

"That's very nice of you," said **Allan**.

"No trouble at all," replied the salesman. "It's our pleasure. We'll be happy to take you for a ride!"

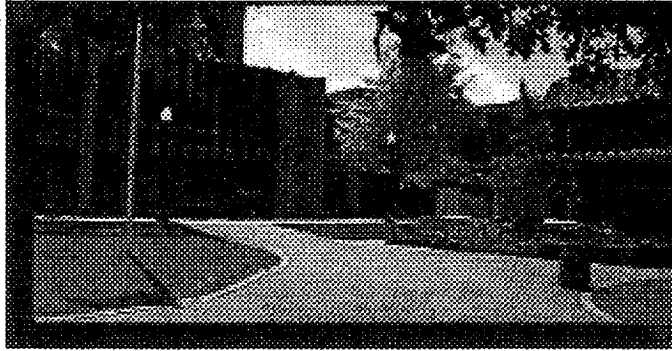
The New Rieger Organ in the Christchurch Town Hall FIRST IMPRESSIONS

After 25 years of planning and fund-raising (and being **Christchurch**, some controversy!!) the **Town Hall Organ** is now a reality at last - and what a stunning reality it is - it looks magnificent, even before you hear it sound a note. The excitement of the opening concerts from May 15 to 17 continued through the 3 weekly lunch-hour concert series - with unprecedented public response and enthusiasm - almost 2,000 people queuing up for **John Wells'** recital - absolutely unheard of before in **Christchurch!!** The new **Rieger** has attracted world-wide interest - yes, it has its own Website (<http://www.press.co.nz/nie/organpage/organ.htm>), if you're into the Internet thing. Every organist and their dog will be making a bee-line to **Christchurch** to play our **Rieger** - the dogs in particular will enjoy it, because **Bach** sounds so good on it!! (had to get that in).

So I feel particularly privileged to have been one of the first local organists to have the opportunity of playing the **Rieger** in public so soon after its inauguration. This came about through my work as pianist/keyboard player with the **Christchurch Symphony Orchestra** in a seven-concert series of music from popular musical shows which we toured through **South Island** provincial centres recently. Included in the programme was a segment from **Phantom of the Opera** and of course the score called for an organ, didn't it? (In smaller centres, I had to play an electronic keyboard, but in **Dunedin** and **Christchurch**, we had real **Town Hall Organs**, didn't we?) The organ part in **Phantom** is not particularly demanding, so I was able to use some private practice time in really getting to know the instrument and having a good "go" at some serious organ repertoire.

I probably need say no more than "I doubt if Heaven could have anything more to

by **Barry Brinson**



offer organists" (assuming some of us make it there) to sum up my impressions of this wonderful instrument, but readers of an organ magazine will want some specifics - so hence this article.

Firstly - the organ has been well worth waiting for. If an instrument had been designed and installed in the **Town Hall** when it was built in 1972, it would have been a very different organ - and would by now almost certainly be "old hat". So in 1997, we have a truly "traditional" instrument of **European** design and philosophy, tonally extremely versatile - albeit a quite modest specification - but every pipe of every rank is important - and technologically "state-of-the-art" - more about that later.

The visual effect when you first enter the auditorium is absolutely stunning - gleaming polished silver pipework, and the striking red-polished woodwork of the case - complementing the decor and design of the **Town Hall** - it really looks like it belongs there - and has been there all along. The feeling



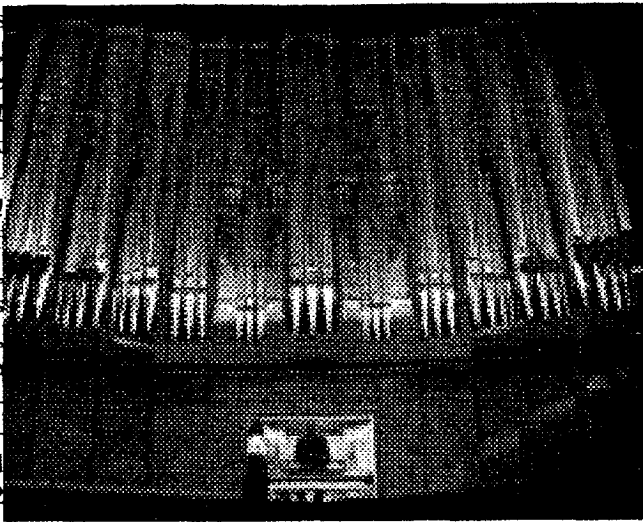
when you first sit at the console is of quality craftsmanship. The beauty of the woodwork, decorative, inlaid panels on the keyboard end-cheeks, the soft honey-colour of the stopjambbs, the black wood (grenadill) of the stop-knobs, and red padouk of the couplers, on which the lettering is engraved in white, make for considerable "eye appeal" and clarity. The manual keyboards (white "white-notes" and black "black-notes" - no trendy reverse-colours here!!) are beautifully faced in bone - not plasticky imitation-ivory) and feel "just right" under the fingers. The mechanical "tracker" action is a delight - positive, and with the right amount of resistance to encourage good phrasing and fingering habits. It is surprisingly light - the components being made of state-of-the-art modern materials, beautifully balanced and engineered like a **Swiss** watch.

Although I play an old 2-manual tracker organ fairly regularly (with an action that clatters away like two skeletons fighting in a bathtub), I had not fully appreciated the extent to which one's fingers can control the precise rate at which the pipes speak, thus giving complete control over phrasing not possible with an electric action (in effect, switches which recognise only two positions - "On" and "Off") Not that I am knocking electric actions - by far the greatest majority of organs in **N.Z.** are so equipped - but one becomes increasingly aware of the finer gradations of touch (almost "velocity sensitivity" to use a contemporary electronic keyboard term) possible on a modern mechanical action organ.

Although the **Rieger** has three manuals (keyboards to the uninitiated), it is effectively a 2 manual organ, with the 3rd (uppermost) keyboard controlling a **Bombarde** division, containing

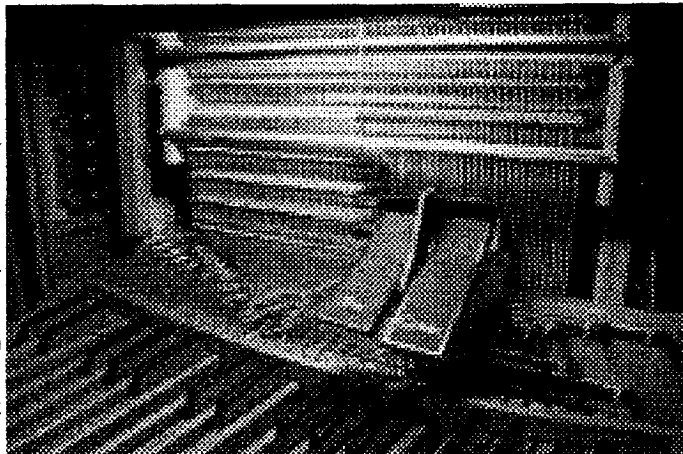
brilliant Solo reed stops (Bombardes) at 16, 8 and 4' pitches, plus a V-rank Cornet. Now the Bombardes are something else! (Theatre organist readers, think "Post Horns" - but what perfectly-voiced Post Horns they are!! You've never heard the likes of them on any *Wurlitzer*!!) So, unlike the English 3-manual jobs with which most of us are familiar, the divisions, from the lowest up are: I - Hauptwerk (or Great); II - Schwellwerk (Swell); and III - Bombarde (or Solo). The total specification - covering just 42 speaking stops has been very, very carefully thought out, and voiced to suit the acoustic of the auditorium. Every stop is important - and different - whether used singly, or in various ensemble combinations. The possibilities are seemingly endless, and full of surprises. The most ravishing effects and contrasts can be obtained by using very few stops - "less" is very often "better" - making for more careful registration than on a larger instrument, where there is often a temptation to "pile more on".

Perhaps the first thing you notice when seeing the console for the first time, is the lack of rows and rows of white buttons (pistons, they are called) between the manuals. Usually, a large organ will have about 10 to 12 pistons between each manual, controlling "divisional" stop combinations, or overall "general" combinations, plus "reversible" couplers, and other controls. The *Rieger* console is relatively uncluttered - there being only twelve combination pistons, with a few other controls which I'll mention later. They are not round pistons, but square touch-buttons, which light up when they are "on". Readers familiar with the *Yamaha* electronic instruments in the HX, EL, EL-X series will know what they are. They look and feel exactly the same!! These are "general" combination controls, and are preset from the setter "computer", which has 16 channels of memory. So, 16 times 12 = 192 instant

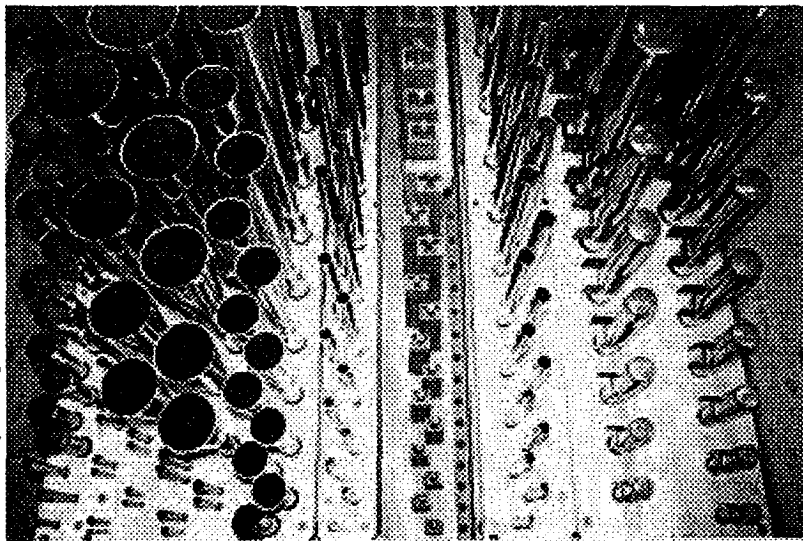


stop-change combinations which can be preset and loaded into the organ's internal memory. (so who needs rows and rows of pistons?)

Furthermore, the *Rieger* has a "registration sequencer" into which any number of sequential, consecutive stop-



changes can be stored - ready for accessing whilst playing, merely at the press of a "Next" button - of which there are several strategically placed around the console, accessible by either toe or thumb controls. Thus, multiple



stop changes for a long or demanding work, or a complete recital are a breeze. Even if you mess up a change, you can easily get back by pressing the "Seq.Back" button!!

The other touch-buttons around the console are :- reversible inter-divisional couplers; the sequencer controls; a "tutti" button; General Cancel; and other useful things. All touch buttons are duplicated by toe-studs, and there are sequencer "Next" buttons at each side of the console, for operation by an assistant if required.

The "dashboard" under the music desk contains an illuminated digital read-out of Memory / Setting number, a Digital read-out of the position of the Swell shutters, enabling precise balances to be set and controlled while playing, and a Digital read-out of the Crescendo-pedal setting; and selector switches. There are four levels of programmable crescendo settings!!

Players of "state-of-the-art" electronic instruments such as *Yamaha EL*, etc. and "serious" organs like *Rodgers* (with which I have an affinity) will know that, although considerable preparatory work has to be done, working out, saving, and loading registrations into memory, the end result, in terms of stress-free performance, is well worth the effort. Of course, if you still want to change stops the old-fashioned way, you can! As I said, the stop-jams are beautifully set out, clear, and within easy reach. Hand-registering, and minor adjustments while playing, are a breeze. Now all you've got to do is sit down and actually PLAY the organ!!!! That's the bit that requires years and years of study and practice!!

If you live in **Christchurch**, you are indeed fortunate. The **Town Hall's Rieger** is now undoubtedly the brightest jewel in this city's musical crown. Many people have worked hard - planning and fund-raising for it. It is a wonderful community asset. Get to know it - hear it as often as you can - enjoy it.

Overseas Travellers' Reports

David and Beverley Parsons :

Whilst on our recent overseas holiday to **England, Scotland, Wales** and the **Continent**, I was fortunate to play three **Wurlitzer** organs, and thought you might like to hear about them.

During our visit to **Loughborough**, our friends **Elsie** and **John New** took us to **Stanford Hall**, a theatre housing an original **2/5 Wurlitzer** installation complete with its own hoist. Although the tremulants took a while to start up, it was in very good condition and sounded lovely. I played it for two hours.

We then met **Don Hyde**, the chairman of the **Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust**, who in his very hospitable and engaging manner, took us to the **Granada Film Studios**, where they have installed a magnificent **4/14 Wurlitzer** which came from the **Gaumont Cinema** in **Manchester**. I met the head of the technical team, **Eric Halsall**, and the organist **Peter Hutson**, who very kindly invited me to play for about three hours. The general public is constantly exposed to this wonderful sound as they tour through the studios and are able to see the workings of the organ through glass panels and even glass swell shutters. It was a memorable experience for me and I was delighted to hear that our own **Tony Fenelon** played the opening concert in November, 1992.

The next day, **Don** and **Eric** took us to the **Manchester Free Trade Hall** to play the big **4/21 Wurlitzer**, which is a sister to our **State Theatre** organ. What a thrilling sound that was, in an enormous, empty hall. I was in raptures, and reluctantly stopped after two and a half hours of wonderful **Wurlitzer** sounds. My sincere thanks to **Don** and **Eric** for making it possible.

Don then pointed us in the direction of **Blackpool** and the famous **Tower Ballroom**, where we spent about two hours listening to the **Wurlitzer** and an electronic organ alternating every thirty minutes. That **Wurlitzer** seems to have a sound all of its own - somehow brighter, particularly in the top register. **Mr. Bowdler** was the organist and it sounded beautiful.

There is a plaque on the front of the stage to **Reginald Dixon**, along with his photo, paying tribute to "**Mr. Blackpool**".

Both **Beverley** and I really enjoyed this musical segment of our trip of a lifetime.

Roy and Iris Walkley :

1997 seems to have been a good year for **TOSA** members travelling overseas, particularly to **Great Britain** and to the Mecca of **Wurlitzer** organ enthusiasts, **Blackpool**. The **Walkley's (Iris and Roy)** of **Kiama** have also been to **England** and they too had a memorable evening at the **Blackpool Tower**, listening to **Phil Kelsall** and **John Bowdler** playing for dance-time.

But we would like to tell members of our visit to another **Wurlitzer** installation which is not as well known as others. Our arrival to stay with relatives was greeted with the news that they had been able to obtain tickets for a **Wurlitzer** organ concert - is that alright? What can one say? So, on the appointed evening we drove to the little village of **Howden-le-Wear**, to the **New Victoria Centre**, the home of the **North East Theatre Organ Association**.

The building, which used to be a **Methodist Chapel**, has been attractively refurbished with a raked floor and comfortable cinema-type seating for about 150 people. Adjoining is a hall with a small dance floor, electronic organ and catering facilities.

When we arrived, the crowd almost filled the available seating, and it was obvious that procuring seats for another 4 people must have been difficult. We subsequently found that this night's concert would be repeated on the following (Sunday) afternoon. Concerts are held monthly, and the list of artists for the year was displayed in the supper room. The only name we recognised was **Simon Gledhill**,

who had played here a couple of months before. The organ is a **3/12** with the console in a shallow pit, so that before the show you can just see the top of the artist's head.

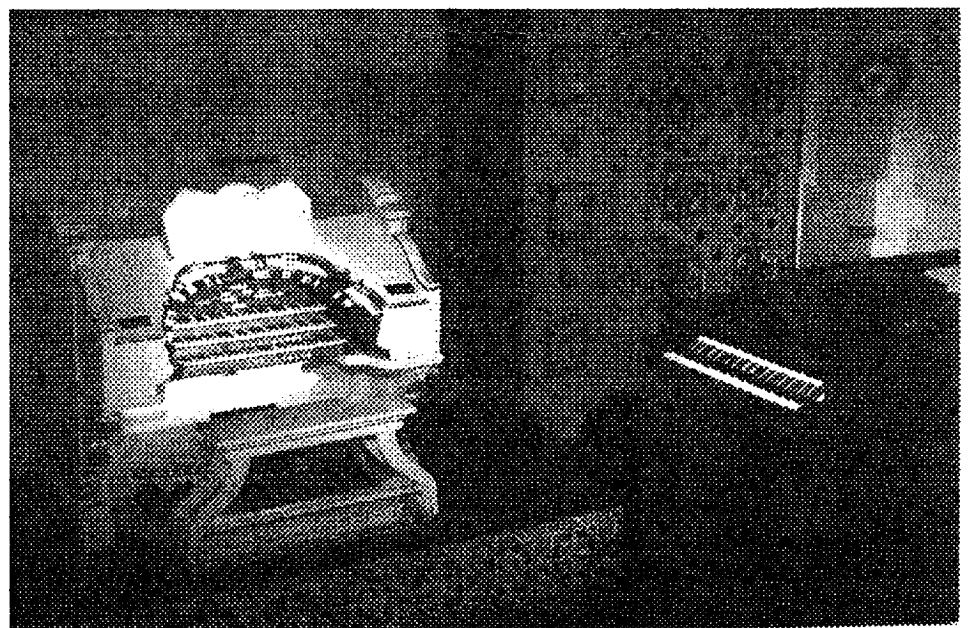
The **Australian** visitors were given a very warm welcome by the the President in his introduction, and it was then on with the show. Our artist this evening was **Keith Beckingham**, who had travelled up from **London** way for this week-end. He had prepared a varied programme, with selections from *The Dancing Years*, *Oklahoma*, *My Fair Lady*, a collection of songs about "Rain", together with popular ballads and standards.

After the show, we were invited to have a tour of the organ chambers, but that was deferred when the artist suddenly appeared. **Keith** was quite happy to say hello to a couple of **Australians**, wondered if we were having any difficulty standing the right way up, and spoke briefly of his time in **Australia** some years back when he was a Regional Manager with the **Hammond Organ Company**.

He remembered meeting and hearing **Neil Jensen** and, when told that **Barry Baker** was to be our next artist in **Sydney**, said that he had heard **Barry** quite recently in **London**, and been very impressed with his talent and artistry.

We thoroughly enjoyed our evening with this **Wurlitzer** in a rather quiet, but delightful corner of **England**.

Below : the 3/12 Wurlitzer organ in the New Victoria Centre in Howden-Le-Wear, England.



Overseas Travellers' Reports (cont'd)

Peter Held :

Having been told by some current inhabitants of my native city, that **Dublin** usually has "summery" weather during June, I elected, during the first month of this year, to arrive in **Dublin** on about the 4th of that month.

I stayed with a friend, who was organist of a couple of local churches, who needed some-one who was willing, and able, to improve the condition of 2 electronic organs in his own home. I found, that the promised good weather, had arrived in May (!) and for the next 2 weeks or more the weather was like the usual **Sydney** winter with wind, and rain!

Having "met" the **Compton "Electone"** on last year's visit, I elected to work on that firstly. I found, to my annoyance, that I not only had to deal with disturbing faults occasioned by ageing of components, but, worse, twenty four of these, were of the **WRONG** value, right from manufacture!! Clearly, without knowing for certain (which he didn't) of the availability of someone like myself to maintain an instrument of

this unique design, my friend should never have bought it - even for "home practice".

June 26th saw me on a flight to **LHR (London Heath Row to you!)** to be very gratefully met by **Mr Bill Walker**, Chairman of the society which runs the **St Albans Organ Museum**. Its strongest point is the collection of mechanical, musical instruments, which were owned and operated in the parks around **St Albans** in the pre- and post-World War II era by **Mr Charles Hart** who ran a house building business. Many or most of the 2 storey semi-detached houses in the area were built by him. He founded the **Trust** which owns and runs the present museum. It is built into the former workshops-cum-storage area of his firm.

The museum has on long-term loan the only **Spurden-Rutt** cinema organ left playing. It has a **VERY** effective, illuminated console. It was, I think, a **3c/5** or **6** ranks, with a **Coupler Manual**, between the other two!! The original relays, were replaced a few years ago, and this has made it possible to juxtapose the **Solo** and **Coupler** manuals by activating one toggle switch at the

console. It was put into the **Regal, Highams Park, a North London** outer suburb, in 1935. The **Rutt's** blower was never found, so it is blown by, and shares a **Solo** chamber with, the **3/10 WurliTzer**, which was put into the **Granada, Edmonton, N. London**, in 1933. The console (cream) has been beautifully restored, with recovered naturals on the manuals. The final voicing and regulation, appropriate to a rectangular building with a low flat roof and which seats only 120, remains to be done!!

The museum opens to the public every Sunday, from 2pm, to 4.30pm (with the obvious exception of Christmas). Demonstration of the instruments begins at 2.15pm, with a 10-min. break for a **FREE** cup of tea in the foyer at 3.25pm. Naturally, I was pleased to "play for the troops", using the **Rutt** in the first half, and a slightly bigger helping of the **WurliTzer** in the second half. This happened on 4 Sundays in June/July, 1997.

On two occasions during July I got the chance to visit and hear the "**Duchess**", in the **Odeon, Leicester Square**.

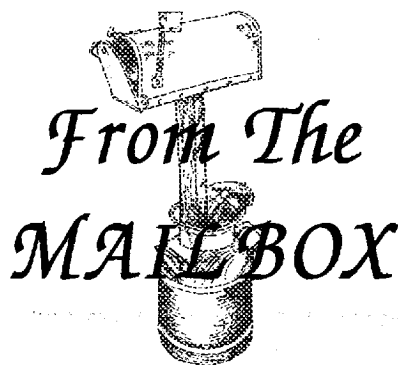
& **Son Pipe Organ**, together with a **Yamaha** keyboard for orchestral effects.

The programme consisted of:

Stars and Stripes Forever - bright and breezy rendition; **Minuet** from **Handel's Water Music Suite** - a change of pace and sweet flute sounds; **Saint Saen's Symphony No.3** (featured in the film **Babe**)- nice selection of stops on the Great; **A Whole New World** from **Aladdin** - played with excellent toning and expression; **Theme from Star Wars** - used the keyboard to orchestrate the highs and lows of this piece; **Panus Angelicus** - excellent pipe organ rendition; **Pedro The Fisherman** - had the audience toe-tapping; **Music of the Night** - again used the pipes to good advantage; **The Radesky March** - concluded his performance as he started, "bright and breezy".

Overall, an excellent organ recital by this young man, played with enthusiasm and obvious love of pipe organ music.

Regards,
Ted Hale



Allan Brooker of Belfield has sent along this item about our next artist, **John Giacchi**, and his recent playing at the **1997 ATOS Convention** :

25/8/97

I thought you and **TOSA** members would be interested to hear the comments of my good friend, **John Bromley**, of **Oceanside, California** who, knowing I was unable to attend this year's **ATOS Convention** in **Indianapolis**, e-mailed his thoughts on **John Giacchi's** well received concert.

"**John Giacchi**, in my opinion, has

opened the door to a different category of music played on the theatre organ. It's hard to explain in words, but I think he was making: music from the depths of his soul.- the sounds were kind of aimed at the heart! One chap said he got tingles down the spine as he listened!"

With **John's** upcoming concert on October 26, at the **Orion Centre**, I thought it most appropriate to share my **American** friend's unbiased views with our members. We can all give our greatest support to **John** and his wonderful talent by turning up in large numbers for his October concert.

Yours faithfully,
Allan Brooker

Ted Hale writes about a *lunchtime recital he attended in Parramatta* :

On Wednesday the 9th July I attended a "lunchtime" concert at the **St John's Cathedral Parramatta** given by our **TOSA** member, **Colin Adamson**, on the historic **J.W.Walker**

Sydney's State Theatre Wurlitzer

During August an interesting series of messages appeared on the Internet concerning the Wurlitzer in the State Theatre in Sydney. I have reproduced these items as they appeared (with their minor inaccuracies), starting with the following item from Phil Housh in the USA:

Subject: damaged console

A couple friends have just returned from a vacation in Australia. During this trip, they had the pleasure of touring the State Theatre, in Sidney.

While they were there, the theatre manager informed them that the organ (Wurlitzer?) was unplayable because someone had turned on the lift without lifting the stage floor. Evidently the console was smashed to bits.

The theatre manager would like to find someone to help evaluate the condition of this organ (either in the US or Australia). He doesn't have access to e-mail, so I'll give out his snail-mail address. His name is Greg Khoury. State Theatre, 49 Market Street, Sidney, N.S.W., 2000, Australia

This was followed by a message from Dudley Gregory :

Subject: Wurlitzer Organ, State Theatre Sydney

The State Theatre in Sydney still retains its Wurlitzer Pipe Organ albeit in virtually a derelict state. The console is indeed damaged but the chambers were badly damaged quite some years ago and although the roof was repaired and the theatre itself made to look like new in the 80's, nothing was done about the organ as the theatre owners were just not interested.

This organ was one of four Wurlitzer Organs being a model 270, three coming to Australia and the best known going to the Trocadero Theatre, Elephant & Castle, London and now owned by the Cinema Organ Society.

I have spoken to Greg Khoury, the Theatre Manager this morning, and he tells me that the owners do wish to get the organ up and running again with the aid of grants, etc.

The organ is in a deplorable state, and the owners have had some ridiculous quotes over the years to put the organ back into service when the

obvious way to go is to replace those ranks, chests, regulators etc., that are beyond obvious repair. I have promised Mr Khoury that I will put on paper some ideas of what may be done to minimise the cost of the whole operation and to get this organ up and running once again.

The House Organist for some years was Alan Tranter and he did confirm what a state the organ had been allowed to fall into. In later years there were very few ranks actually playing and I believe the last time the organ was used it just gave up the ghost whilst actually being played.

The State Theatre is a listed building, therefore the organ cannot be got rid of, but it is nice to know that after so many years of neglect and indifference by the owners, they have now decided that they are prepared to do something. Will keep you all informed of any developments.

A few more details were added as follows by "J. E. Schmidt":

Subject: SQUISH!!

Noting from recent posting about the poor ol' State Theatre's Wurlitzer, this is what will happen if you don't idiot-proof organ lifts & associated machinery. The accident might have been prevented with a bit of additional wiring and an interlock switch associated with the stage floor. Suppose an intoxicated organist had sat down on the bench and pushed the button..... (remainder of mental imagery censored.)

The specifications of the organ were given by Larry Chace with the following comments :

Subject: Wurlitzer Style 270 (specs) (was: State Theatre Sydney)

Wurlitzer built only 4 of this style, basically an enlarged version of the popular Style 260, the additions being the fourth manual and the following ranks: Tuba Mirabilis, Gamba and Gamba Celeste, Dulciana and Unda Maris, with the deletion of the Oboe Horn, the Piano, and the 32' octave of the Diaphonic Diapason.

The four instruments were: Opus 1987, State Theatre, Melbourne,; Opus 2005, State Theatre, Sydney, (a "special"); Opus 2009, Regent Theatre, Melbourne; Opus 2139,

Trocadero Theatre, London.

Since all four instruments had different "wiring schedules", it is likely that they were all slightly different; from those schedules - it appears that the Sydney instrument included the 32' Diaphone. The Trocadero instrument had a Pedal 4' Flute but no Accompaniment to Pedal coupler.

Here's hoping that the Sydney instrument can be returned to good condition!

Other 4-manual 21-rank Wurlitzers were built for theaters in the USA, but they were all "specials" and did not follow the Style 270 specifications. Some examples are opus 1825 (Loew's Theatre, Syracuse, New York, 21st rank left empty), opus 1951 (Palace Theatre, Rochester, New York), and opus 1960 (Paramount Theatre studio, New York). There were probably others as well.

(Information is from *The Cinema and Theatre Organ* by Reginald Whitworth, published in London in 1932, from the Judd Walton book of Wurlitzer specifications, and from Peter Beames' wonderful Web page containing the Wurlitzer opus list: [http://wcbi.com/organs/AU/opus/.](http://wcbi.com/organs/AU/opus/))

Dudley Gregory further commented:

Subject: State Theatre, Wurlitzer.

The State Theatre in Sydney is owned by a very well known Australian theatre chain who own and maintain many modern theatres, so I believe money is not a problem. The plain fact of the matter is that they do not wish to spend a lot of money on this organ. The theatre is now used mostly for stage shows although not a major theatre, as the owners are unable to enlarge the stage area probably because the theatre is listed which normally means that alterations cannot be made.

I understand that Lyn Larsen advised that certain ranks of the San Sylmar Wurlitzer be replaced after the earthquake as it was more economical to replace than repair. This organ is in a far worse state than the San Sylmar instrument and amounts of money that have been mentioned are in the region of \$250,000 upwards to repair and replace those parts that need replacing.

Now I am not advocating that the whole organ be replaced, only those parts that an organ builder would replace anyway. My point being that replacement parts be bought and an organ builder engaged to do the work as required. To do this and possibly replace the relays would not cost anything like \$250,000 upwards. After all the **Wurlitzer** organ that is going into the **Regent Theatre, Melbourne** (ex-**Music Palace**) cost much less. Therefore the **Regent Theatre, Melbourne** will have a 32-rank **Wurlitzer** at a cost of well below \$250,000, or so I am told by those who know better than me.

The facts are that the organ has been in this state for many years, and the owners will not put up the money that organ builders are asking for, therefore if we wish to have this organ back in action we have to economise. However, having said that, I am well aware of the limited use that the organ will be put to, as I am sure that an organist would be only used infrequently.

Finally from NSW TOSA's Secretary Bill Schumacher came this more reliable information from John Parker, organ builder :

Subject: **State Theatre Sydney Wurlitzer**

Greetings from **Sydney**. The following report on the **State Theatre Sydney Wurlitzer** has been written by **Sydney Organ Builder, John Parker**. I will pass on any comments to **John**.

During the month of August there has been frequent comment regarding the **Wurlitzer Organ** located in the **State Theatre, Sydney, Australia**.

As the pipe organ builder requested to research and provide a detailed report on the condition and future restoration of the instrument, I believe it is time the subject was put in perspective and the facts known.

The 4 manual 21 rank organ has been totally unusable since 1994, when I recommended it to be shut down due to the continued failing of the electrical gear required to start the blower. Until that time, there were only 4 ranks of pipes that were playable of the 21 - and with numerous "dead" notes throughout the compass. Basically the organ was a musical embarrassment, though short-sighted enthusiasts continued to broadcast that the organ sounded

"wonderful".

Shortly after the organ was decommissioned, the console was damaged when it was sent up on its hoist, only to rip its way through a brand new stage extension installed for a stage show to begin. As to one of your subscribers describing the console as being "smashed to bits", this is rather exaggerated. The console certainly did suffer considerable damage, but in truth the new steel-framed wooden stage came off second best. The console chassis sustained some stress, with cosmetic damage to the outer cabinet and music desk which was squashed flat. The carved caps, and horseshoe lid were also either broken or split.

An insurance assessment was provided and eventually a good figure was forthcoming from the **State Theatre's** insurers. I am informed that was put aside to put towards the future restoration of the organ.

At the time (1994) I suggested to the **State's** General Manager that funds be sought, in addition to the insurance payout, to totally restore the 'French' style console retaining its original electro-pneumatic stop actions, but including a solid state combination capture action. The idea was that the restored console could be put on show somewhere in the theatre and aid a restoration appeal. The thought was to endeavour to fund the project from the corporate sector, as grants for organ work from the **NSW Heritage Council** were not substantial enough for a project of this size.

Mr D. Gregory has contributed recently with information regarding the **State Wurlitzer** and his "personal opinion" of how it can be restored. His comment that "ridiculous" quotes have been provided over the years and the simple solution is to "replace" items that are missing or damaged, and that this will prove a more economical solution to the problem is unfathomable to me.....?

1/. The whole organ is worn out. Regulators are blown out and primary & secondary motor leather has perished through the entire instrument.

2/. Although the Main chamber is virtually intact, the Solo is a complete disaster! A four rank chest has been stripped down and most parts lost. Pipes have been stored badly in the chambers causing breakages and damage. The Tuba Mirabilis has been removed from

its chest, the topboard having been put through a circular saw to divide the top plate from the grooving. This, due to water damage, was obviously a repair job, started but never completed. The Mirabilis pipes cannot be found within the organ chambers! All Solo chamber reeds have had the tongues, shallots & wedges removed and placed in loose envelopes, scattered all over the chamber. Everything in the Solo chamber has sustained major water damage.

3/. The wiring throughout the organ has had its day and requires complete replacement. The relays have been "butchered" - cables cut and some entire sections removed to places unknown. Some of the "buss Bar" switches - they cannot be found! The console to relayroom cable has been immersed in water on many occasions and is full of cable breaks due to corrosion. In reality there is no part of the organ that can sustain a "quick fix" to get it up and running. It requires the attention and expertise of fully trained craftsmen who know their job is to restore the organ properly. Certainly there will be parts that will have to be sought overseas to replace those that are beyond economical repair, and these naturally will be of **Wurlitzer** manufacture.

Since I became involved with the **State** organ some four years ago, I requested members of **TOSA New South Wales Division** to bare (a horrible spectacle!! - *Ed.*) with the **Greater Union Organisation** and allow them to formulate a plan without the interference of "well meaning amateurs" who, to that date, had totally confused the issue. Although there has been a lull in communication between myself and the **GU Organisation** until recently (due to the departing of the General Manager I had always dealt with). I would ask that all interested parties please respect the fact that the **State Theatre** is in the business to present high class "lyric" programmes and that the **Wurlitzer** organ is certainly low on the list as far as aiding the theatre's profit margins.

Greater Union do want to see the organ restored to full use in the future. At this stage, I am not sure when in the future this will come about. Certainly while nothing is happening, the overall cost of the project continues to rise - and NOT as a ridiculous outlay, but more an example of what both neglect and the attempts of careless amateur

and the attempts of careless amateur attention can have on an instrument.

Don't get me wrong ... I am the first to praise the work of a number of very fine theatre organ groups who have proved to the world that their dedication is first to none! It is to those who profess knowledge without practical experience and training that I blame for the present situation of a number of theatre organs around the world - such

■ THEATRE

A new player on stage at the State

By KELLY BURKE

BRIAN Barnes was just a starry-eyed adolescent when he encountered the gilded splendour of the State Theatre for the first time. The year was 1970, the bill of fare - black American jazz and blues singer Nina Simone. She was three-quarters of an hour late, he recalls. And she was fabulous.

At 44, Barnes has walked through the State's double doors again as its new general manager. Little of that original awe inspired by the interior's sheer opulence has been lost in the 27-year interim.

"It's a great thrill for me - it's one of Sydney's two great buildings, with some similarities," he says, comparing the State to the Opera House. "They both have their problems and they're both unique."

Managing something as tangible as a building marks a substantial change for Barnes, who began his professional life at the then Australian Opera as a stage manager, after graduating from NIDA in the early '70s. For the past five years he has served as The Really Useful Company's Australian general

as the State Wurlitzer.

The simple and plain fact that this is the last model 270 Wurlitzer organ still in its original location in the world, is good reason to see proper and professional restoration carried out. This is not an instrument where we should tolerate a half-hearted "patch up". Only the very best is worthy of this important icon of theatre organ history.

JOHN W. PARKER



Seeking the next Harry M. Miller... new general manager Brian Barnes at the State Theatre. Photograph by SAHLAN HAYES

manager, overseeing the antipodean arm of Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber's declining musical empire.

"I felt that the future for RUC and me was fewer productions and I didn't see any new productions on the horizon," Barnes says

of his decision to move on. In his new role, Barnes sees his job as part talent scout, part market speculator.

He plans to concentrate his energy on fostering relationships with new producers - identifying the future Harry M. Millers,

as he calls it - and refining a talent for sniffing out hot show-business property ahead of the competition.

Major redevelopment is also on the cards for the State in the next three years. It was listed as a high priority short-term initiative in a recent cultural facilities report commissioned by the Premier, Bob Carr, and the Lord Mayor, Frank Sartor, and the venue looks likely to be converted to a full lyric theatre before 2000.

But the proposal, which has been tossed around since refurbishment of the theatre's interior began back in the early '80s, relies upon the acquisition of surrounding properties. All Barnes is prepared to say on the matter at present is that the State's proprietor, Greater Union, is in "continual dialogue" with nearby landowners.

"It begs to be turned into a lyric theatre," he says. "But we also have to look at the issue of do we need another one, now we've got the Capitol and the Lyric [at the Star City casino]?"

The auditorium is not the only area slated for an overhaul within the theatre. The State Ballroom is also heading for a revamp, although Barnes is

declining to make an announcement on the matter yet. But talk of its conversion into a permanent performance space for Sydney's growing community of cabaret artists just won't go away, despite a recent mushrooming of small-scale ventures along similar lines, prompted by the demise of the Tilbury Hotel and encouraged by the enormous success of the inaugural Cabaret Convention at the Town Hall.

Surry Hills' Kirk Gallery, Cabaret in the Bay at Double Bay and the Stables Theatre series of Sunday shows have all taken off in the past 12 months. On September 10, another boutique cabaret venue opens, at Pitt Street Mall's 135 Bar & Grill.

Barnes promises an announcement soon on Greater Union's grand plan for the ballroom. A bar and restaurant is a definite - the cabaret rumours he neither denies nor confirms.

"All I can say at this stage is that, in broad terms, the ballroom will be integrated into an evening at the State," he says. "It will provide another entertainment opportunity - with a totally fresh look."

Special Invitation

Chris Styles invites you to his home at
11 Goodlet Street, Ashfield
on Saturday, 8th November, at 2.00pm

to enjoy an afternoon in his garden and around the *Wurlitzer* (electronic) organ.

Bring your music and play the Wurlitzer and

also enjoy an afternoon in our **Garden Room** and walk through this award winning garden.

Chris's friend **Dominic** (who is totally responsible for the garden) will be happy to talk to you about the large variety of plants and flowers in this **English** cottage style garden. (You may even be lucky enough to take home a cutting!)

The garden is in the **Australian Open Garden Scheme** and was featured on **Burke's Backyard** earlier this year.

Numbers are limited and you can book by telephoning 9798 7547 (preferably in the evening).

Cost is \$6 for men and \$4 for ladies - it would be greatly appreciated if ladies could bring a plate - and all proceeds are for **TOSA**.

We look forward to seeing you on the 8th November.

A Review of Jelani Eddington's Concert

Orion Centre Campsie

by Chris Styles

Sunday, 17th August, 1997

How does one review a concert given by one of the best in the business? Answer: With great difficulty, given my scant knowledge of how **Jelani Eddington** managed our *Wurlitzer* on this beautiful Sunday afternoon.

I asked **Wendy Hambly** at interval where I could get the superlatives to describe **Jelani's** talents. She suggested the dictionary, but I've gone to my super-duper word-processing programme's thesaurus and come up with the following: brilliant, dazzling, bright, gleaming, scintillating, sparkling - that will do for starters!

I have decided not to list all the music **Jelani** played so superbly for us but just make general comments that I, and friends of mine at the concert, felt about this supremely talented twenty-three year old. As **Doug Grant** said, "How dare he have so much talent at that age!" What feeling, what registrations, with what supreme ease he handled the most rapid registration changes. We sometimes say, "Why does the artist change registrations so many times during a number?" Just take a listen to **Jelani Eddington** some time and you'll see the effects a true professional can create by regular colour changes.

We were indeed privileged to have **Jelani** on his only **Australian** concert whilst he is "down under" in **New Zealand** for a few months. The organ sounded great as always and we were indeed treated to a very fine afternoon's playing.

One of the joys of a theatre pipe organ concert is the opener and I am sure I have commented before on originality at this time. **Jelani's Wunderbar** was different, played in an unhurried style and with quite different registrations to that I have heard on other occasions. I suppose that just proves the fact that the opening number doesn't always have to be "boom-tra-la".

I liked **Jelani's** use of the percussion on the organ during several numbers. *Steppin' Out With My Baby* was one such title. **Jelani** played

some of the numbers that **Tony Fenelon** does so well. *Here's That Rainy Day* and the encore **Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu** were two that I recall. I've always enjoyed **Tony's** style and interpretation and **Jelani** did them quite differently from **Tony** but again with much feeling and exceptional musicianship to make them very enjoyable.

Jelani played the organ from very soft to very loud but never "swamped" us with sound to the exclusion of the music. This takes great musicianship given that the organist at **Campsie** sits almost above the chambers and what he hears is different to the audience.

I also took delight in **Jelani's** up-tempo numbers, e.g. *Baby's Birthday Party*, *Something's Gotta Give* and *It's De-lovely*, all played in a foot tapping style with registrations just delightfully different.

I had a little concern for **Jelani's** pre-interval selection, *Dance of the Hours*, as my first thoughts were, "Here comes that old war horse again". Not to worry, for **Jelani** again used the organ to its full potential and brought us an interpretation that was neither boring or in the least tedious.

Jelani during the concert occasionally turned the tremos off which he used to great effect for short portions of some of the music he played. They say this is a good way to see if the organ is tuned well. It was! This effect I'll have to remember in future.

To summarise - **Mr Eddington**, you were great and I intend to write an e-mail to you on your **Internet** site and tell you so. Thanks to the committee of **TOSA** for

again arranging for **Jelani** to visit us. Let's hope he can visit regularly in the future.

Also, **Jelani** has graciously given permission for us to use his concert on *Theatre Organ Highlights* on **2CBA-FM103** some time in the future. I'll let you know when and, on that note, can I just finish by respectfully bringing up a couple of matters that I would like to beg your indulgence for a minute or two more.

We broadcast concerts such as **Jelani's** for those listeners to *Theatre Organ Highlights* who may not be able to get to concerts for one reason or another, and of course for those of us who want to hear these superb performances over again. Would you help us keep the high quality of these recordings for our radio listeners by observing just a few simple things at concerts? These are:

(1) If you arrive late for a concert please take a seat at the rear of the auditorium till a break occurs in the concert. This saves you disturbing those patrons who are already settled in their seats and also undue movement may put the artist off.

(2) If you have to move around the auditorium whilst the artist is playing eg toilet visit, you are a **TOSA** helper or you have to leave early to catch transport, could you try not to make too much noise with your shoes on the timber floors or with any baggage you may be carrying, e.g. plastic bags, as all these sounds are picked up by our sensitive microphones and the listener is disturbed by them. Also the opening and closing of doors can be distracting to other patrons and noisy if you let the door bang closed.

(3) If you have to cough, please cover your mouth with a hankie/tissue and try not to do it in the quiet parts of the music. Better still (as is recommended at the **Opera House**) take some lozenges to get to that throat tickle before it starts!

Thanks for your indulgence and please continue to support **TOSA** and the continuing high standards of our concert artists.



OUR NEXT ARTIST :

John Giacchi

John Giacchi holds the honour of being the first young **Australian** theatre organist to be awarded a place in the **American Theatre Organ Society's Young Organists Competition**. He subsequently travelled to **Indianapolis** to perform for the Convention audience there and had the opportunity of playing some of the famous theatre organs around the **San Francisco Bay** area.

At the relatively young age of 26, **John Giacchi** from **Cronulla** has already achieved considerable success in his theatre organ career, although **John** has not been seen or heard much in the very recent times on the theatre organ circuit. However, his passion for the theatre organ has not waned in the slightest.

Having commenced electronic organ studies at 12 years of age, **John** was awarded, just a few years later, first place in the Classical category and second place in the Popular category of the **Sydney Eisteddfod**.

In that same year, **John** made his theatre organ debut on **TOSA's 2/11 WurliTzer** installed in the **Marrickville Town Hall**. His performance was highly acclaimed and since then **John** has made a number of other appearances for the **TOSA NSW Division** and interstate.

In 1988, **TOSA NSW** sponsored a competition to compose a piece of music appropriate to the Bicentenary and **John** achieved first place with his entry. As a result he was invited to play his composition, called *Opus '88*, on the 5-manual **Hill and Son** grand pipe organ in **Sydney Town Hall**.

With an intense interest in the technical side of theatre organ, **John**

was a member of the project team who rebuilt the **Capitol Theatre WurliTzer** and installed it in the **Orion Centre**, seeing the project from its initial stages through until the opening concert in 1988.

The 1990 international **Young Organists' Competition**, sponsored by the **American Theatre Organ Society**, saw **John** become the first **Australian** to be awarded first place in the Senior Division (19-21 years). In 1991, as part of his prize, he travelled to the annual **ATOS Convention** in **Indianapolis, USA**, to play a solo spot as part of **Barry Baker's** concert on the **3/26 WurliTzer** installed in the **Manual High School Auditorium** in front of 800 enthusiastic conventioners. While in the **USA**, he also played the **4/27 WurliTzer** in the **Oakland Paramount Theatre**, the famous **4/21 WurliTzer** in the **Castro Theatre** and many other installations.

He was highly praised for his February 1991 performance in **Victoria** at the **3/15 WurliTzer** in the **Dendy Theatre, Brighton** and has since played both interstate and overseas engagements, always to high acclaim.

At **Sydney's 1991 National Convention**, **John** played a memorable concert with **Margaret Hall** on the **Christie Theatre Organ** in the **Epping Baptist Church**. That convention also marked the release of **John's** first recording entitled *Night Moods*, which was recorded on **TOSA's 3/17 WurliTzer** in the **Orion Centre**.

Since that Convention performance, **John Giacchi** conducted a 10 week tour of **New Zealand, the United States and England**. Some of the instruments

he played included: **Castro Theatre 4/21 WurliTzer, Oakland Paramount Theatre 4/26 WurliTzer, Seattle Paramount 4/20 Publix No. 1 WurliTzer, Krughoff Residence 4/33 WurliTzer, Patio Theatre 3/16 Barton, Bellevue Pizza and Pipes 3/17 WurliTzer, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium 3/16 WurliTzer, Founder's Church 4/31, Southbank Polytechnic 4/24 WurliTzer, Odeon Leicester Square 5/17 Compton, Granada Theatre Tooting 4/16 WurliTzer, Cannon Theatre Walthamstow 3/12 Christie, Oriental Theatre, Milwaukee 4/33 Kimball** and many others.

In recent years he has been kept busy with his job as a Law Clerk and his studies for his Bachelor of Laws degree from the **University of Technology, Sydney**. On May 1, 1995, **John Giacchi** was conferred his Bachelor of Laws degree at the **University of Technology** and is now a practising solicitor in the Media, Defamation, Copyright and Insurance areas.

At last year's Easter **TOSA Convention** in **Sydney** he was acclaimed by many interstate and local reviewers as the outstanding performer of the whole event, with his Sunday morning mini-concert on the **Chatswood WurliTzer**.

Last year he released a CD entitled *Beyond the Blue Horizon* which was recorded on the **Wurlitzer** in the **Orion Centre, Campsie**.

This year in **Indianapolis**, **John** became the first **Australian** to have been invited to give a full concert for an **ATOS Convention**.

Sunday, 26th October at 2pm

Orion Centre Campsie

Booking Form - Page 14

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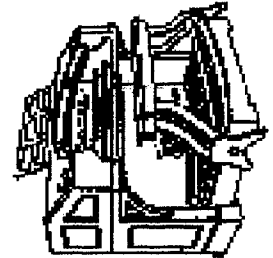
OCTOBER, 1997

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