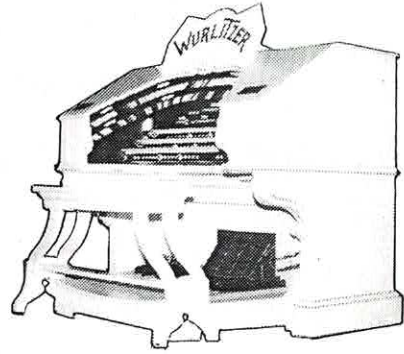
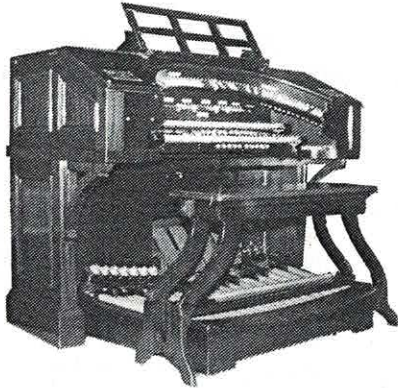


Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

# NEWS



## WHAT A GREAT DAY!

Our President & S.R.A's No.1 Driver, Jack Lawson with his Fireman, Dave Boyd, in Great Spirits at Central at the beginning of Jack's Last Drive.

More pictures and review of day's happenings inside on Page 6.

2 CONCERTS IN APRIL AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

On the WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ

★ NEW FACES CONCERT - Sunday April 1st at 2.00pm.  
ADMISSION FREE

★ TONY FENELON & JOHN ATWELL IN CONCERT  
- Sunday April 29th at 2.00pm.  
BOOKING FORM IN THIS ISSUE

# TOSA NEWS

MARCH 1990

## THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (N.S.W. DIVISION) Inc.

### DIRECTORY

#### PATRONS:

Ian Davies  
&  
Mayor of Canterbury, Ald. John Gorrie

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Jack Lawson (569 3775)

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John Shaw (759 5825)

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Eunice Palmer (798 6742)  
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#### RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048 411 616)

#### TOSA NEWS EDITOR & PRINTER:

Peter Bidencope (44 2728)

#### CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer (798 6742)

#### TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings)

Eunice Palmer (798 6742)

#### ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher,  
8 Wharf Rd., Brooklyn 2253  
Phone 455 1318

#### PHOTOGRAPHY:

Kevin Rowland  
Barry Tooker

#### CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher

#### PROMOTIONS OFFICER:

Kevin Rowland

Please address all correspondence to:

*The Secretary*  
*TOSA (NSW Division) Inc.*  
*P.O.Box C462 Clarence Street*  
*SYDNEY NSW 2000.*

### COMING EVENTS

#### MARCH

Fri. 16 at 7.30pm 2CBA-FM - Frank Ellis begins new series of broadcasts: "Careers of Australian Theatre Organists"

#### APRIL

Sun. 1 at 2.00pm FREE CONCERT at Marrickville Town Hall. This will be featuring: Colin ADAMSON, Wendy HAMBLY and Chris STYLES

Mon. 2 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING

Fri. 13 - Tues. 17 T.O.S.A. EASTER CONVENTION in Melbourne.

Sun. 29 at 2.00pm TONY FENELON & JOHN ATWELL  
These two highly acclaimed Artists will be appearing together once again at Marrickville Town Hall. Expect to witness some great duets on the WurliTzer and Grand Piano.

#### MAY

Mon. 7 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING

Tues. 15 at 8.00pm Club Night & Quarterly Members' Meeting at the Orion Centre.

Sun. 27 at 2.00pm IAN DAVIES will present another Popular Concert on Marrickville Town Hall WurliTzer pipe organ.

#### JUNE

Mon. 4 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING

Sun. 24 at 2.00pm DAVID DRURY & MARGARET HALL  
These two artists will be presenting a combined concert in their individual styles at the Orion Centre WurliTzer.

#### JULY

Mon. 2 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING

Sun. 22 at 2.00pm WALT STRONGY IN CONCERT at Orion Centre WurliTzer. He will also be drawing the winner for T.O.S.A. Guessing Competition.

Sun. 29 in afternoon Rolls Royce Owners Club will be holding a dance function at which the WurliTzer will be used in addition to other music. T.O.S.A. Members will be welcome. More details will be advised in future issues.

REMEMBER "THEATRE ORGAN HIGHLIGHTS"  
ON 2CBA-FM EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT 9.00pm.



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

MARCH 1990

TO MEMBERS OF T.O.S.A.

Your committee has asked that I write for your information a report concerning the irregularities in postal voting perceived at the last ballot for election of committee members.

The duty of the returning officer and scrutineers was to ensure that all votes cast were formal and authentic. Arising from an inspection of 21 purported postal votes we formed the opinion that there was at least good reason to doubt the authenticity of those votes, and indeed that a real attempt had been made to upset the ballot. Accordingly a direction was sought from the Annual Meeting which voted in favour of those votes being rejected.

The factors giving rise to our opinion included:

- (a) that the method of membership identification on the back of each envelope was coincidentally similar;
- (b) that the handwriting and printing on the envelopes bore remarkable similarities from which it could only be concluded that they came from the same source;
- (c) in two cases out of the 21, votes which appeared reliably authentic had been cast by the members from which the dubious votes purported to come;
- (d) that on inspection of the 21 votes involved it was beyond coincidence that a particular candidate was excluded in each instance;

The committee, at its request, has inspected the voting material and readily agreed with the observations of myself and the scrutineers.

Whether the perpetrator(s) of the irregularities intended to bring about a situation voiding the election or simply to cause a mischief, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that what was done amounted to a criminal offence of forgery. I have been asked by the committee that in the event of necessity for a ballot in 1990 I instigate secure but unpublished measures so that there is no doubt as to the authenticity of any vote. (In that regard a suggested measure of simply initialling ballot papers is not seen as a complete safeguard against intentional fraud.) It would be my recommendation in the event of a repeated attempt to interfere with the ballot that there be an official investigation leading to prosecution of any detected perpetrator.

ROD BLACKMORE  
Returning Officer

'CAREERS OF  
AUSTRALIAN THEATRE ORGANISTS'

A new series of broadcasts on 2CBA-FM  
By

Life Member Frank Ellis.

Members will be delighted to know that Frank will be presenting his new series of 14 programmes each of 15 minutes on Friday evenings at 7-30pm, commencing 16th March. (this Friday)

It is understood the first broadcast will feature our Patron, Ian Davies and this will be followed by many other well known and respected names which we have heard over the years.

Frank will be using material he has gained from personal interviews as well as some material from National Film and Sound Archives.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many thanks to all the Members and Friends who came on my 'Final Train Trip', making this an unforgettable day for me. I am also grateful for the many good wishes received.

A big thank you too to my hard working committee. It was a great day!

J.L.

## NEW FACES CONCERT

2.00pm Sunday April 1st at Marrickville.

It was advised in the February issue of TOSA NEWS that our new member Brendon Lukin would be one of the four organists playing the Marrickville WurliTzer.

Now, having just commenced as a student at the Conservatorium, he has been told that one of the rules he has to comply with, is 'not to appear in public concerts'.

Brendon had been looking forward to entertaining us and is quite disappointed, however we look forward to the time when he is no longer subject to this restriction.

FREE LUNCH TIME ORGAN RECITALS  
EACH FRIDAY AT  
BONDI JUNCTION-WAVERLEY RSL CLUB

Our well known Patron Ian Davies has commenced a new series of free lunch time organ recitals at the club each Friday from 1.00 - 2.00pm, when he will be featuring a varied range of music to suit all tastes. This new series will be continuing until further notice and all T.O.S.A. Members and Friends are most welcome at the club. You may just come to listen, but you can also purchase and enjoy lunch there too if you wish.

The club is located in Gray Street, Bondi Junction and car parking facilities are available in nearby Grace Bros.

Ian would be very happy to see you there - how about it members?

## THANKS TO T.O.S.A. TICKET SECRETARY

Your Committee would like to record their gratitude to Eunice Palmer for her untiring and continuing efforts as T.O.S.A. Ticket Secretary.

Eunice receives countless phone calls and enquiries at almost all hours of the day (and many at night too). This year so far she has been busily occupied with bookings and associated administration for issuing tickets and handling payments for the many, many tickets needed for:

Robert Wolfe Dance Night  
Robert Wolfe Concert  
Final Steam Train Trip  
as well as

Many early bookings for Tony Fenelon & John Atwell concert to be held on 29th April.

As if this were not enough, Eunice and a small group of regular helpers willingly gather at short notice every month to collate and staple the 600 odd freshly printed copies of TOSA NEWS. These then have to be inserted into envelopes and labelled in Post Code order, ready for bulk posting or handing out at concert (if one is scheduled within a few days).

This work doesn't 'Just Happen' - it requires dedication and much hard work.

We are indeed most grateful to you Eunice for all your efforts.

# TOSA NEWS

MARCH 1990

## CLUB NIGHT AT ORION CENTRE TUESDAY 15th MAY at 8.00pm

It is anticipated playing Members will have the opportunity to use the Orion WurliTzer on this occasion. To be fair with the allocation of time, we would like to hear from those Members who would be interested beforehand.

Would those interested in playing the organ that evening please contact Margaret Hall.

## 1991 T.O.S.A. CONVENTION IN SYDNEY

The Convention Committee have been meeting for the last 4-5 months and have already booked **two Overseas Artists**.

On present indications we have every reason to anticipate this will turn out to be a really **great convention**. More information will be announced in forthcoming issues of TOSA NEWS.

## T.O.S.A. FUND RAISING GUESSING COMPETITION

Following the success of an earlier event, your Committee has decided to have another 'Guessing Competition' with the lucky winner being entitled to a 'Dinner for Two' in Kables Restaurant at the Regent of Sydney Hotel [to a maximum value of \$200]. The lucky winner and their partner will be provided with free transport by Chauffeur driven, white Rolls Royce (a generous offer by Member Mr Nick Lang) from anywhere within a 60km radius of the Regent. You will also be driven home afterwards in the Rolls.

A perforated sheet of 11 pre-numbered tickets and butts is being forwarded to all Members covered by this area with this issue of TOSA NEWS. We request you sell 10 tickets for \$2-00 each and retain the 11th ticket for yourself free.

Remember to include name, address & phone number of each ticket purchaser as well as your own name, address & phone number on the 11th butt.

Once sold, please forward the 11 butts together with cheque/money order for \$20 (in favour of T.O.S.A.) as soon as possible. They should be addressed to:

T.O.S.A. Guessing Competition Secretary  
P O Box 510  
HURSTVILLE N S W 2220

Additional supplies of tickets can be made available on request in sheets of 11, however please ensure all completed butts, cheques/money orders reach the above no later than 20th July 1990. This will enable the respective numbers to be checked against ticket sheet numbers sent out. Butts can then be separated and placed in a 'Drawing Box' from which the lucky butt will be drawn at Walt Strony's concert on 22nd July 1990.

If you do not wish to participate (for whatever reason) then please return the unsold tickets and attached butts promptly to T.O.S.A. Guessing Competition Secretary at the above address.

If you wish to make any queries or 'phone enquiries, please call the Guessing Comp. Secy. in evenings on 502 3279.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

In the February issue of TOSA NEWS we inadvertently omitted including the following new members and belatedly extend to them a warm welcome.

Alan Fountain, Elsie Hermes, Nellie Moore, Mrs Dinah Beazley, Ken Banfield, Brendon Lukin, Allan Taylor, Mr & Mrs J.Bostock, William & Mrs L.M.Denton, Mr Robert & Mrs Irene Waterford, H. Jobses, Miriam Morris, John & Lois Adlard and Ronald Donovan.

This month we are pleased to welcome more new members to the T.O.S.A. ranks.

Alison Bryson, Mrs Helen Lovat, Hilda Rose, Marjorie Watson, Alan Brown, Keith Browning, John Clapham, Howard Emerson, Donald Noonan, Donald Richardson, Douglas Rose & Arthur Sherer.

We are very pleased to have you with us.

## APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL CONCERT REVIEWERS

In December issue of TOSA NEWS an appeal was made for some additional volunteers to write the occasional concert review. Currently we have but a handful of willing correspondents who are prepared to assist in this way and we would like to spread the load. It would also add more variety for our readers.

How about it Members ?

You can contact the Editor on 44 2728.

## INVENTORY OF ALL T.O.S.A. EQUIPMENT

Currently your Committee are reviewing the overall inventory of the Society's equipment for insurance and general purposes.

If you have any items of T.O.S.A. equipment, film/s, tape/s, cassette/s, etc., would you please forward full details to:

The Secretary  
T O S A  
P O Box C462 Clarence Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Along with various items we would especially like to know the whereabouts of a 16mm sound film which we believe was last screened at a Sydney Convention some years back. If any Member knows of its whereabouts, or of any other T.O.S.A. items, we would be most grateful to hear from you.

## HOME ORGAN PARTIES

It is a long time since periodic home organ parties were a regular feature on the T.O.S.A. calendar. Many of our Members have commented they would like to see them resume. Do you agree? Also is there one of our Members who would be willing to take on organising this activity as say 'Home Organ Party Co-ordinator' ?

When these parties were a regular feature of our social calendar, they also provided a very welcome boost to T.O.S.A. finances.

## LAST CHANCE TO HEAR ROBERT WOLFE

You have one last chance to hear Robert Wolfe following his successful Australian and New Zealand tour when he plays in 'SHOWTIME' at the Orpheum in Cremorne at 1.00pm, Sunday 25th March, 1990. Robert will be playing an all new programme.

Bookings are now open and good seats are still available at \$12, with \$1 off for all 'Friends of the Orpheum'.

GUESSING COMPETITION BUTT No. DINNER FOR 2 AT KABLES including Rolls Royce Transport 0000	GUESSING COMPETITION TICKET No. 0000 THE TRE ORG N SOCI TY OF AUST A (N.S.W. Div.) Inc. 1st PRIZE - Dinner for 2 (\$200 value) at Kables Restaurant in T ent of Sydney Hotel, plus transport to m restaurant by chauffeur driven wh is Royce from anywhere in Sydney i S A M P L E nitan area.
NAME .....	Winning ticket to be drawn at Walt Strony Concert 22/7/90.
PHONE .....	
ADDRESS .....	

## A STORY FROM THE GOLD COAST.

Just over a year ago we decided to move house to the Gold Coast and it seems like it was only two weeks. What with the excitement of an almost new home, unpacking over 130 boxes and getting past the settling in period, time has literally 'flown' by for us.

After a short visiting time we joined the Gold Coast Chapter of T.O.S.A. and we haven't stopped since! This chapter of some 120 members is the most friendly and talented group of people I've ever had the privilege to meet. Everyone appreciates the fact that we're all up there doing our best and the harmonious atmosphere is obvious at all gatherings. At the Christmas break-up night just over 85 of the members attended, along with 30 or more guests. We rarely have a Club Night without 60 people attending at least!

During 1985 the Chapter formed a "Revue" group of singers and it has been active ever since. Many 'Music Hall' type shows have been done and they often get asked to perform elsewhere. No doubt many of us recall when this group performed during one Brisbane Convention which received high acclaim. The group is invaluable in that it can provide an excellent back-up for an organ concert and the talented ladies go to no end to attain perfection in costume and dress and a huge amount of fun is had at rehearsals etc.

Our President and his wife sing in the Revue group, oversee the arrangements for visiting artists, quite often open-up at practice, and also organise and cart around all the mikes, amps and speakers etc. for the stage and get there early to set up all the gear first. I often feel they use their spare time for breathing only! They never seem to stop.

We have both become food conscious, enjoying all the beautiful salads and tropical fruit available here. We also walk over 15km per week and we've both lost a stone.

One thing I do miss though is that great instrument at the Orion Centre and the good friendship of the organ project team, John Parker, Robert Gliddon, Col Tringham and John Giacchi. We did have many rewarding times together culminating in that fantastic opening at the Orion Centre, something I'll never forget. If I ever had the opportunity, I would like to do it all over again.

However, all the activities here have taken over and if you ever ask 'How do you like living in Queensland' ... we can only say 'Loving it!'

Kind Regards from  
Norma & Doug Smith.

LETTER OF APPRECIATION  
FROM A COUNTRY MEMBER

Dear Mr. Martin,

Thank you for your contribution to Tosa "Towards Better Organ Playing". I am enjoying your commentary on your Waltz very much - please continue. You make it so easy to understand and it is interesting to try out your suggestions for improving it. We all get careless from time to time & just accept the way the composer has written when with a little knowledge & thought we could improve it & make it more enjoyable. I will be looking forward to the next instalment.

Yours musically,  
(Mrs) J. Freer.

## TOWARDS BETTER ORGAN PLAYING

Number 5 by John Martin

This month we will examine note values and timing. I alluded to variations in notes as written, very early in this series when I mentioned the need to add some phrasing to your playing, now we will examine this in detail.

Our demonstration piece - The TOSA Waltz - is written in 3/4 time so we play our bass note on beat one, and our chords on beats two and three and the right hand follows naturally. Simple and irrefutable, right? No, let us put the music under the microscope and imagine we have thirty beats in every bar. Now our Bass note will be played on beat one, and the chords on beats 11 and 21. But what happens if we alter this ever so slightly and play our bass note on beat one, but our first chord on beat 12 or 13 and our second chord on beat 21. It would be very hard to write the music to show this degree of accuracy, but we now have a Viennese waltz which has a decided swing to it. Exaggerate your playing the first time, and then gradually practice slowly until you can hear the difference between this new 'delayed beat' waltz and the original. Try varying the last beat slightly and see if you can hear a 'different' waltz sound.

In a similar way, the time values of notes - especially scales or runs in the right hand - can be varied ever so slightly to give a different sound.

If we play a scale so that the sound is continuous i.e. as we release one note we hear the next, then we have an ORGAN sound. If we release one note just before playing the next we can hear a 'detached' sound - much beloved of Hammond Organ players where the sudden attack of each note really accentuates this style. Take this a little further and really detach each note from its neighbours and you have Staccato playing. Go the other way and make the notes overlap and you have legato playing. A Legato chromatic run is usually called a 'smear' and is a much used theatre Organ technique.

The techniques and variations in the previous paragraph can be practiced on your average Electronic Organ, but may have to be modified considerably when you go to the keyboard of the Pipe Organ. There is a great variation in the attack of the various ranks of pipes. The Post Horn rank has a sudden speech characteristic which enables all of the styles to be played, whereas the Diapason is a comparatively slow rank which would make the 'detached' style very difficult to play. Only practice and experience (along with some experimentation on the particular Organ you are playing) will help you make decisions on what style you should use for each piece you play.

Incidentally I have had several requests for my recommendation for books on Organ technique and playing style. Probably the best I have come across so far are the Bill Irwin books. There are three series, one is the "MAGIC" series which each contains information on one particular topic such as 'Tenth Progression Magic' and 'Chord Construction Magic'. The second series is the 'Easier to play series' which contain arrangements of eight or nine pieces along with notes and tips on what technique to use for each piece. There is also a 'Pop Concert' series for the more advanced Organist. The only problem is that the books are rather expensive for their small size.

## TOSA NEWS

MARCH 1990

## THE LAST STEAM TRAIN TRIP

By Colin Tringham

As we puffed through the Countryside, bystanders stopped, and stared - and many waved. Older citizens looked starry-eyed - perhaps remembering a more romantic bygone era. Youngsters waved in awe at the powerful locomotive and its antique carriages as we rattled past. We were on the last TOSA train trip.

On March 3rd, 1990 a large number of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts assembled at Central Station on this wonderful day; it was to be our last such outing as the State's No.1 Engine Driver and our much loved President, Jack Lawson was retiring after 46½ years with the Railways. This trip was his grand finale.

At 7.58am, with all except 2 passengers aboard, Engine No.3642, its green paint-work shiny and bright, burst into life with a powerful whistle. We were off. Leaving the station and a bevy of photographers behind, we steamed through Sydney's suburbs and out into the Country via the new East Hills line extension.

The day was perfect, the sun shone brightly but not too fiercely and a few fluffy clouds co-operated nicely by providing a background for a thousand pictures. The Countryside was lush and green from the recent rains and the cows in the fields looked very fat. Some animals took fright at our unusual train and ran in great confusion.

Just before Moss Vale we branched off onto the line to Robertson and Unanderra and Jack had a rest from the controls as a local crew took over.

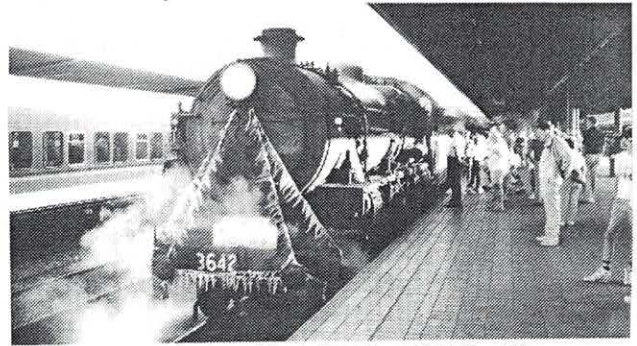
At Robertson, our lunch stop, all 301 people were fed at the local Bowling Club. Although the resources of the catering staff must have been stretched to the limit, we were quickly fed a good meal of tasty and tender roast beef and baked vegetables followed by a generous slice of apple pie. After a brief look around the town, we returned to the club for a short presentation to Jack. He looked suitably moved when his workmates presented him with an antique shunters lamp and a name plate from Eveleigh.

Promptly at 5 to 2 we departed Robertson for the most scenic part of the ride. At this point I gave up my seat so that the couple who missed the train at Central and who had miraculously caught up with us at our lunch stop, could sit together. I found one of the very few empty seats and sat amongst some of the train crew. It quickly became obvious just how well-regarded Jack was and I learned that if TOSA ever wants another Steam Train trip, that Drivers would soon be found!

The journey down the mountain and to the ocean was a real delight with glorious vistas at almost every turn. The twisting line also meant that by hanging out of the open doors, the photographers could snap the entire train as it went around the bends. The engine produced sufficient black smoke to please the shutter-bugs.

Eventually, after a scenic photo-stop, we joined the South Coast line and Jack again took the controls for the last part of the ride back to Sydney. Most of those on the train took the opportunity to purchase a refreshment or two and walk the length of the train talking to all the other friendly TOSA members. Finally we arrived back at Central, surprisingly tired, but yet exhilarated by the great outing. The highlight of the trip for me was to see Pearl Lawson emerging from the drivers cabin, clad in a boiler suit and with a drivers cap on her head.

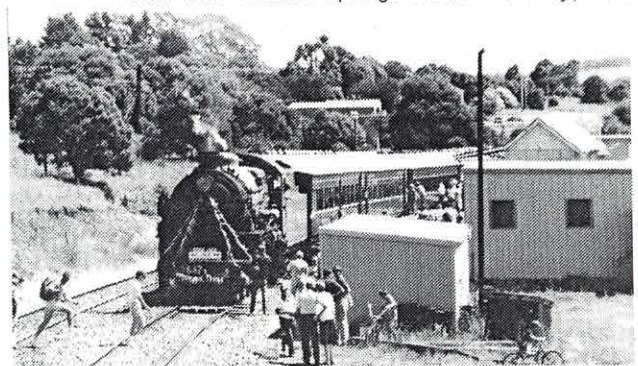
We all returned to our homes, to shower and change; Steam Trains may look photogenic and glamorous, but modern electric trains and Diesels are definitely cleaner!



JACK'S LAST TRAIN ABOUT TO BEGIN THE TRIP AT CENTRAL.



"CONDUCTOR" - JOHN PARKER AS HE CHECKED AND PUNCHED PASSENGERS' TICKETS. NOTE: He gained the uniform as licensed motor-man with Western Springs Elect. Tramway, N.Z.



AFTER ARRIVAL AT ROBERTSON PASSENGERS WERE SERVED A SUCCULENT ROAST BEEF LUNCH AND APPLE PIE AT THE LOCAL BOWLING CLUB, ONLY A SHORT WALK FROM THE STATION.



MARCH 1990

## REVIEW OF ROBERT WOLFE'S CONCERT AT ORION CENTRE, Sunday 11th February 1990.

Sunday 11th February - Orion Centre 2pm - the stage set for the return of one of England's most dynamic and energetic theatre organists - Robert Wolfe. I don't think that anyone expected an audience less than 500, but the official count of 728 came as no surprise. For three hours, the massive audience was held spellbound by Robert Wolfe from the time the white and gold console rose into the solitary spotlight until the mighty behemoth descended into the depths of oblivion.

It would be impossible (if not monotonous) to give a breakdown of the pieces that Mr. Wolfe played, but, out of an incredible 80 odd numbers, the audience were treated to the usual theatre organ standards, orchestral works, and other aural delights such as a brilliantly executed arrangement of the "Phantom of the Opera - Selections" (which to me was the highlight of the concert) as well as the theme tune which headed the 'Wolfe weekend' - Beside the Seaside.

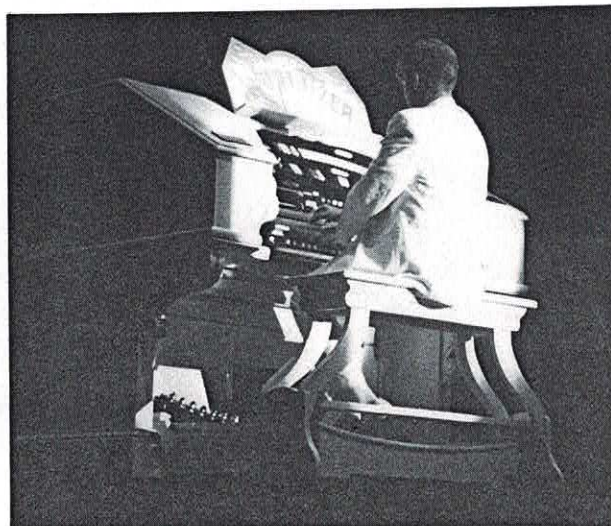
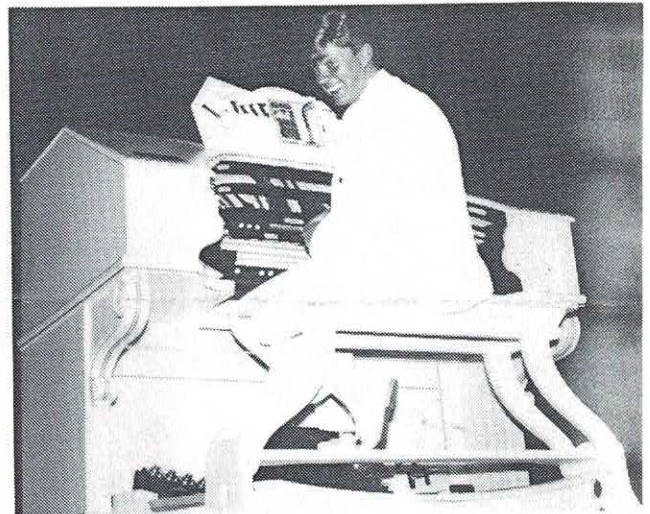
At the end of the concert, amongst the 'credits', Robert Wolfe thanked, inter alia, the mammoth efforts of John Parker. Many members know of Mr. Parker as the organ builder who installed the Orion Organ. John was also responsible for the majority of the organising for the 1990 Australasian Tour and publicity and it is largely through his efforts that the Wolfe weekend was so successful.

I don't think it would be unreasonable to state that another tour in 1991 should be in order.

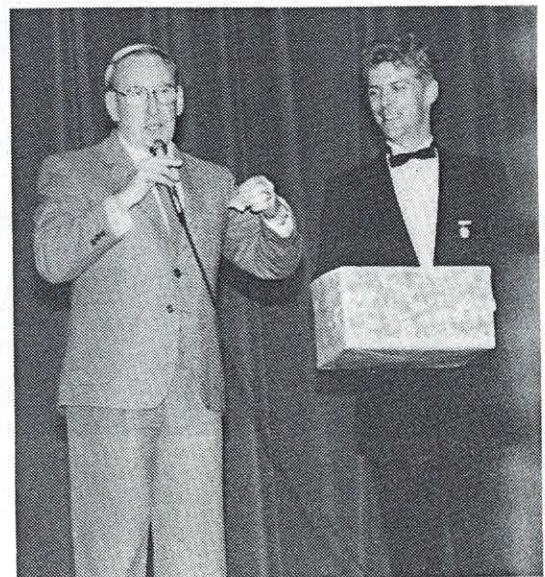
John Giacchi



ROBERT WOLFE & HIS TYPICAL FUN STYLE MANNER AT THE WURLITZER.



THE ORION CONSOLE ILLUMINATED BY CONSTANTLY CHANGING COLOURED LIGHTS. THIS ADDED GREATLY TO THE VERY PLEASING OVERALL EFFECT.



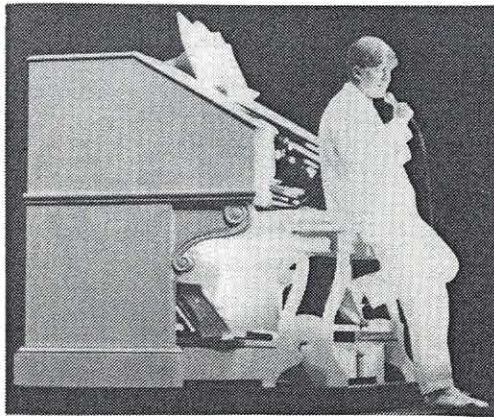
OUR CO-PATRON, THE MAYOR OF CANTERBURY, ALD. JOHN GORRIE WITH COMPERE JOHN PARKER AS HE DRAWS RAFFLE WINNER.

# TOSA NEWS

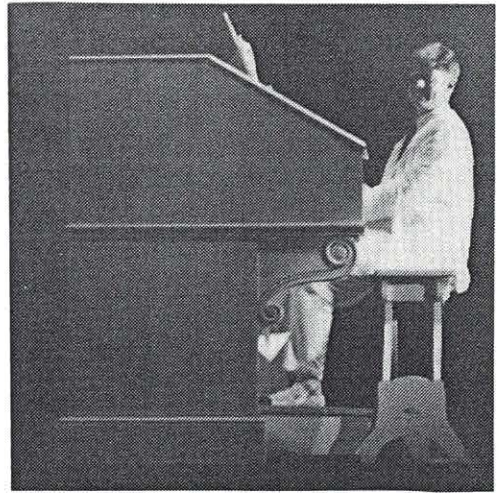
MARCH 1990

## "BLACKPOOL DOWNUNDER"

A Dance Night with Robert Wolfe at the Wurlitzer  
Friday 9th February 1990.



ROBERT WOLFE IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS HE 'COMMUNICATES' WITH HIS DANCERS ON THE FLOOR.



AN ENERGETIC & VIBRANT PERFORMER AT THE CONSOLE, ROBERT KEPT THE DANCERS MOTIVATED WITH HIS CONSTANT SUCCESSION OF DANCE NUMBERS.



BY COINCIDENCE IT WAS ALSO THE 45th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY (RIGHT TO THE DAY) FOR FRANK AND EDITH ROHANEK.



A TYPICAL VIEW FROM THE BALCONY OF THE DANCERS ON THE FLOOR AT THE ORION, WITH THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE WURLITZER.

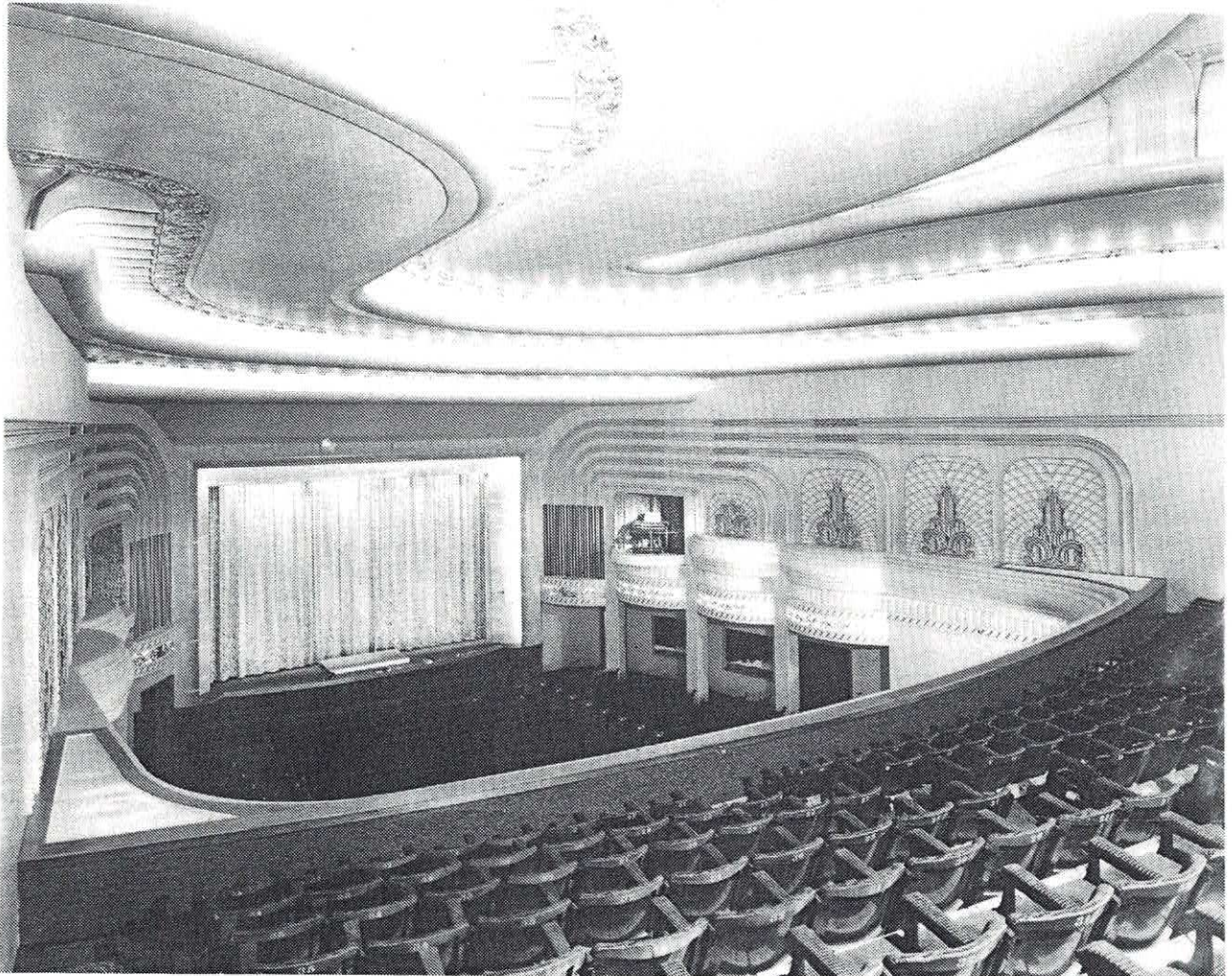


DURING ROBERT'S BRIEF SPELLS FROM THE CONSOLE, THE MUSIC CONTINUED FROM THE GRAND PIANO ON STAGE. PIANISTS WERE: VICE PRES. JOHN SHAW, ALSO MEMBER PETER HELD AND JIM PERRY.

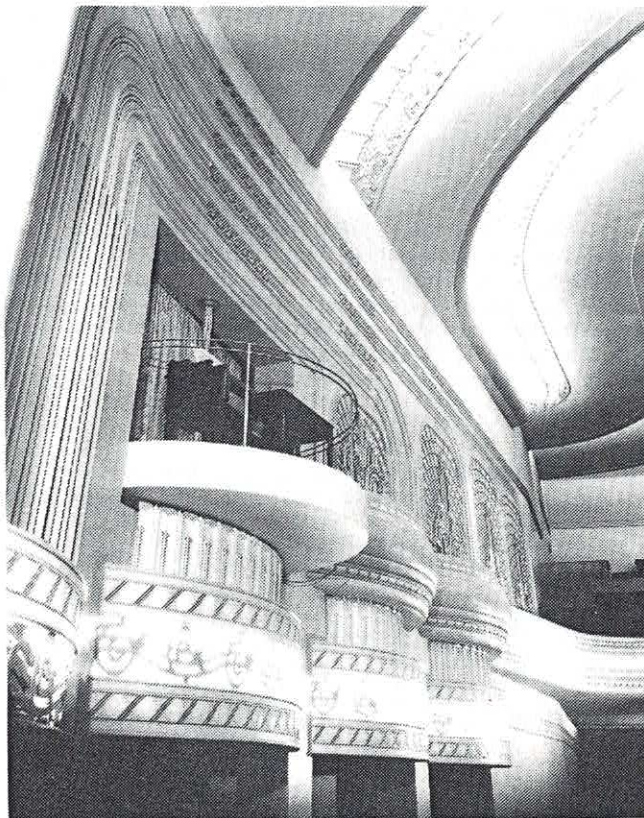
EDITOR'S NOTE: A review was not written for the Blackpool Downunder evening.



THEATRE ORGAN HERITAGE



A VIEW FROM THE REAR OF THE AUDITORIUM SHOWING THE STAGE AND THE ORGAN.



PARK THEATRE, ALBERT PARK, VIC.

A PIONEER ELECTRONIC INSTALLATION!

By Ian Hanson.

SHOWN HERE IS THE CONSOLE OF THE PARK'S HAMMOND, PERCHED HIGH UP THE WALL. THE ORGAN VIRTUALLY REVOLVES IN MID-AIR! NOTE THE INTERESTING 'MUSICAL' ARCHITECTURE EMPLOYED JUST UNDER THE ORGAN.

PHOTOGRAPHS: From the Author's Collection.

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PARK THEATRE, ALBERT PARK, VIC.  
A PIONEER ELECTRONIC INSTALLATION - Continued.

Following a letter which was printed in a recent issue of TOSA NEWS, in which it was revealed that Victorian T.O.S.A. Member, Bruce Ardley, appears to have acquired the antique Hammond from Sydney's now defunct Century Theatre, I thought I would take another plunge into the annals of obscurity. Whilst on a recent visit to Melbourne, I managed to undertake some research into Hoyts Park Theatre at Albert Park, an inner suburb of Melbourne.

If Australia had a thriving Theatre Pipe Organ manufacturing business in the 1920's and 30's, perhaps theatres like the Park, and many others would have installed a pipe organ. Better still, if financial fortunes had been more favourable, then the process of importing Christies from England and WurliTzers from America would, no doubt have continued, at least until the outbreak of World War II.

The Park Theatre, and the Rivoli at Camberwell, would rank as the Country's finest metropolitan theatres. The latter opened about a year after the Park, and was also fitted with an electronic organ.

The Park installation certainly deserves great credit, if for nothing else, for showmanship. A most interesting and unique feature was the placing of the console on a revolving platform half way up the wall on the right side of the theatre. Access being via a stairwell from the stalls floor. When the organist was ready to appear in the auditorium, a button was pressed, which enabled the electrically driven platform to rotate a full 180°, if required. When the organ was not in use, it was returned to its alcove and obscured by a panel of gold crushed velvet on the auditorium side.

Directly across on the opposite side of the theatre, another void, also obscured by a crushed velvet curtain, housed the speaker system for the organ. Just how effective this installation was in flooding the theatre with the sound of the organ is not really known. The theatre itself, whilst not a lofty picture palace was large, with seating for 1,552 patrons.

According to the "Argus", Hoyts Park Theatre officially opened on December 24th, 1938 with

a ceremony taking place that Saturday evening at 8.00pm. The first film shown was Fox's "Alexander's Ragtime Band". The opening program, unlike "The Argus", did make quite a mention of the organ, including the theatre's first Resident Organist who happened to be Len Davis, later featured at the original 4/21 WurliTzer in the Regent Theatre, Melbourne. Unlike a popular practice in Sydney of listing the names of various organists at their respective locations in the newspapers, in the suburban directory, this service did not carry over to Melbourne. Accordingly tracing organists is made all that more difficult.

One of the former Park organists now lives in Sydney. Ian Davies played at the Park in 1951, after his discharge from the Second World War. Ian was asked about his term at this theatre, but it was only a brief season, and the finer details (of which there seem to be no record) are now but in dim memory. Ian visited several of these suburban Hammond installations during his years at Hoyts. In 1953, Ian Davies followed Stanfield Holiday as organist at the Capitol Theatre's 3/15 WurliTzer, in Melbourne.

It is not known when the organ was taken out of use, although the writer was surprised that it was still in regular use in 1951, and may have continued on a limited basis at least until 1955/56 period.

The Park was renowned for its novel electrical gadgetry. In addition to the new electronic organ (which was a new-age wonder 50 years ago!) the Park had installed an electrically driven band wagon, which, on opening night, carried the Resident Stage Band, under the conductorship of Abe Trewarne. The latest developments in "Black Light" were employed for atmospheric lighting in the auditorium as well as a host of other novel features also being included.

Regrettably, the Park Theatre became an early victim of television and crippling entertainment taxes. The theatre was down to Saturday only performances by August, 1961 and finally closed, with no fanfare, on Saturday, March 31, 1962. The property was eventually sold to be replaced by that other new-age wonder - a petrol station!

REFERENCES: La Trobe Library, Melbourne  
"The Argus", "The Film Weekly",  
and "The Herald".  
Barry Sharp, Ian Davies, Late Jack  
Neylan.  
Hoyts Ltd.

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