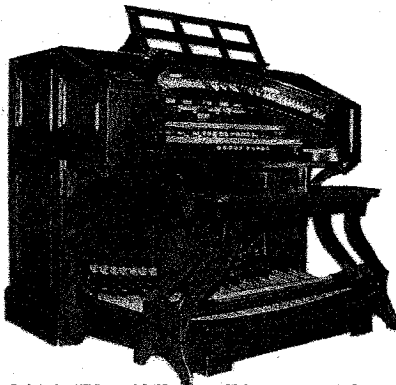
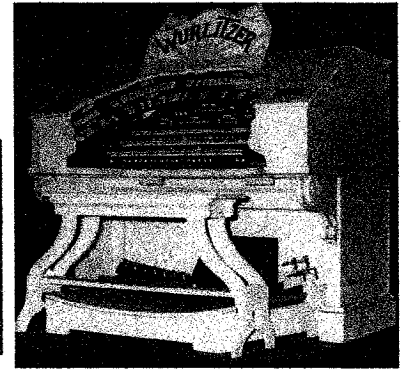


JUNE, 2002



2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA



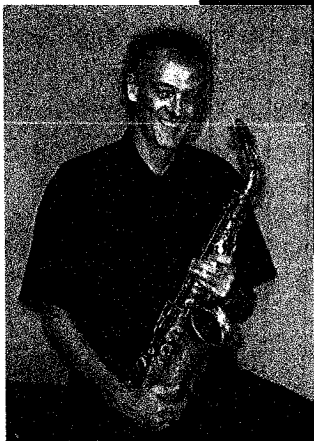
3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Margaret Hall

Australia's First Lady of the Theatre Organ



Margaret will play an entertaining programme of popular music on TOSA's magnificent WurliTzer Pipe Organ formerly in Sydney's *Prince Edward Theatre*



With Associate Artist, Owen Watkins and his "ragtime" Saxophone

Marrickville Town Hall

Free Security-Patrolled Parking in St Brigid's Catholic Church Grounds Opposite

Sunday 16th June at 2pm

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Issue 5
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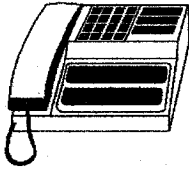
JUNE, 2002

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* DIRECTORY *



PATRONS:

Ian Davies
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PRESIDENT:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)
pearceww@ozemail.com.au

VICE PRESIDENTS:

John Shaw 9759 5825
Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7 pm)
npalmer@compassnet.com.au

SECRETARY:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318
schuie@netro.com.au

P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

TREASURER:

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, 1805

COMMITTEE:

Peter Harding 9629 2257
Barry Tooker 9744 1535
Robert Gliddon christieorg@bigpond.com
Rick Marschall ram@hydrophones.com
Ron Mosman ronmosman1@dingoblue.net.au
Cliff Bingham 9482 1438

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron 4841 1616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 9745 2417 (phone or fax)
P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 1805
francoise@physiol.usyd.edu.au

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon christieorg@bigpond.com

CONCERT TAPE HIRING and MARRICKVILLE PRACTICE CONVENOR:

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7 pm)

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

Kath Harding 9629 2257

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 9759 5825

TRANSPORT OFFICER

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COMING EVENTS

JUNE

- Monday 3 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 13 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Sunday 16 at 2.00pm Margaret Hall Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 27 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

JULY

- Monday 1 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 14 at 2.00pm Neil Jensen Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
Thursday 25 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

AUGUST

- Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 8 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Sunday 18 at 2.00pm Chris Powell Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 22 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

From The President

As I write, we have just cleared the second Post Office box FULL of renewals for the coming year. THANK YOU, all those who paid so promptly.

If your TOSA News mailing label says you are only paid to 30th June 2002, then your subscription is due. Please find a RENEWAL FORM between the pages of this edition. It will help us immensely if you pay promptly and save us work and extra printing.

And now would be an excellent time to find new members. Make a photocopy if you need extra joining forms - or phone me and we'll send you one. How about a gift subscription for your in-laws or an outlaw even!

As you will see elsewhere, member Andrew Grahame came along to the May Players' afternoon and played a few pieces. Andrew presents the Organ Music Society of Sydney's program on 2MBS FM Radio. He would like to see a TOSA program on 2MBS - but he is aware that a sample program submitted by Chris Styles for your TOSA Committee was knocked back recently.

Not deterred, Andrew told 2MBS that he was doing a new pilot program of Theatre Organ



- with a classical bent. But, unfortunately, 2MBS replied that they had already made a decision about TOSA, and the answer remained "no", without even listening.

Still not deterred, Andrew went ahead with a sample program called *The Theatre Pipe Organ - Seriously* for future submission to the 2MBS people.

I am listening to it through my computer speakers (and woofer) as I type. Hector Olivera is at the *Robert Morton* keyboard playing Debussy - and it SOUNDS BEAUTIFUL. Maybe time will wear away the 2MBS stone - or there may be another station on the dial.

We are looking forward to Margaret Hall's concert at Marrickville on June 16th. Details are in this *TOSA News* - Margaret has some associated artistry which should go really well with the *Wurlitzer*. Come and be surprised.

Watch this space -

Walter Pearce

Editorial

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at Margaret Hall's concert at Marrickville on Sunday 16th June. As you would know Margaret is certainly one of Australia's leading theatre organists (of either sex), not only "Australia's First Lady of the Theatre Organ", as we often bill her, and she always delivers a delightfully entertaining and varied programme.

For your peace of mind, the security guards will be there at Marrickville as usual to patrol our parked cars, in the St Brigid's Catholic Church grounds, on the opposite side of Marrickville Road to the Town Hall.

Thank you as always to the article and letter writers - without your kind contributions there would be no *TOSA News*. This month I've been going through some Internet files that I had down-loaded over a period of time and so some of this month's offerings are international items which I thought may be of interest, found on the Internet.

While on the subject of the Internet, a reminder too that if you can use e-mail to send any kind of communications to me, it makes my life easier than using ordinary letters or faxes, which have to be scanned or re-typed.

A request also not to throw out any historical material concerning theatre organs - please contact us, a member of the TOSA Committee for example, to see if it would be of interest to TOSA. A lot of valuable information, recordings and photos, etc., are accidentally lost each year when people clean up and throw out seemingly useless things which previously belonged to an enthusiastic collector of memorabilia. TOSA has a Research and Archives Officer, Ian Cameron, with a large collection of material (see the Directory on page 2 of every issue) who is glad to add new items to our archives.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

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

The Geelong Wurlitzer

In the April, 2002 issue of *Vox*, the Newsletter of the Victorian division of TOSA, Alan Glover gave the following update of the events surrounding this well-known organ:

During the weekends of September 2001 the historic *Wurlitzer* organ which had been shipped to Sydney in 1917 as the demonstration 'Unit Orchestra' for Australia, was removed from its location of 73 years, in 'Montana', Geelong.

The removal team, led by Julien Arnold and his son Mark, took great care throughout the 150 manhours taken to remove and store the organ in Julien's Mentone factory.

Back in 1928 this organ had been sold by W.A. Crowle, Australian representative for Wurlitzer, to Oswald Hearne of Geelong who built a chamber with swell shades opening at mezzanine level into the spacious two-storey hall of his home 'Montana'.

Following the death of his daughter Patricia Glover, my wife, in 2001, the property was to be sold but without the organ.

I, as custodian of the instrument, prevailed on the Trust Company of Australia, administering the Hearne estate, not to place the organ on the open market where a purchaser might offer it to the point where it would lose its National Trust classification.

Instead it was agreed that the organ could be donated to an institution which would guarantee to retain its present specification of eight ranks plus chimes, chrysoglott, xylophone and glockenspiel.

It came to my notice that Geelong College, a leading independent school, was planning a new Music Centre to be built in 2004 which would include a 200-seat auditorium.

After much discussion with the Principal, Council and Music Director of the school, Geelong College has accepted with great gratitude the offer of this *Wurlitzer* organ for installation in a chamber now incorporated in the plans for the auditorium.

Julien Arnold will be in charge of installation.

The O.C. Hearne estate is also making a generous contribution towards storage and restoration costs.

Already restoration in the form of complete re-leathering is in the expert hands of John McLennan.

It is intended that the organ will be presented to the school in first-class condition.

As the Geelong *Wurlitzer* for so many years, the outcome is a fitting one for this organ's future.

Alan Glover

Standaard

Following TOSA's visit to the *Standaard* organ in the Mosman Baptist Church, I found the following information about the manufacturing company on the Net, placed there by Frank Fitzgerald:

The *Standaard* web page is part of the history of the city of Schiedam, Holland: <http://www.dsv.nl/~histvers/handnijv/orgels.html>

The business was founded in 1904 as the organ factory Kam & van der Meulen, which built many church organs, becoming the N. V. *Standaard* Organ Factory, Schiedam, in 1923.

In addition to the building of church organs, the company built theatre organs in the late 20s and early 30s. The theatre organ was meant to accompany silent films.

These organs were originally built for Dutch theatres and then for export to France, Germany, Belgium, and Great Britain.

The company built more than half of the theatre organs installed in the Netherlands.

In Schiedam they built the organ for the Netherlands Reformed Protestant Church in 1914, and the organ for the Passage Theatre in 1933, with 146 stops controlling 10 ranks of pipes with many "special effects" including percussion stops, etc.

This last organ, through the members of the Netherlands Organ Federation, is being taken apart and soon will be rebuilt in the new theatre on the Stadserf.

Free Organ Recital

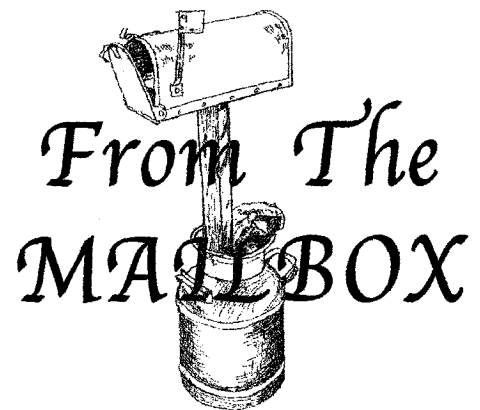
TOSA member Colin Anderson will present a varied programme on the historic J.W. Walker & Sons organ in Parramatta's St John's Cathedral.

The recital is on Wednesday 12th June from 12.30 until 1.10pm.

The church is on the Church St Mall, between Church and Hunter Streets in the centre of Parramatta.

Off-street parking is available and it is close to the railway station.

All welcome!



TOSA Vice-President, and Curator of the Marrickville *Wurlitzer* writes:

11th May 2002

In the May issue of *TOSA News*, Alan Brooker writes about his dislike of supporting artists at the TOSA concerts.

In one paragraph he mentions: "we have dedicated voluntary TOSA members who work on these wonderful instruments of a previous era, for the love of it. What an insult to them to have their hard working efforts on these labour-intensive instruments of the '20s diluted by non theatre organ events."

As curator of the Marrickville instrument, I don't feel insulted towards my efforts in maintaining the organ just because an associate artist is appearing on the program.

The organ still has the prominent role, and particularly at John Giacchi's concert, was used throughout, in the roles of both solo and accompaniment.

Sincerely,
Neil Palmer

In a similar vein, Ron Mills of Orange writes :

7th May 2002

Received my *TOSA News* today - many thanks for getting it out to us here, a long way from Sydney, fairly early in the month. I sat in the car, in the sun, and had a quick read and was happy until I reached page 4 where the letter from Allan Brooker was presented. It didn't quite ruin my day but to read so many negative statements certainly doesn't improve things. I normally don't set pen to paper about the statements of other people but I'm afraid there has to be a limit at some time.

Being a pensioner, not flush with funds, I don't get to as many concerts as I would like, but I do appreciate the effort that goes into setting up a concert of any kind, as I have been involved in that area quite a lot, albeit some years ago. I certainly believe in commenting on performances, etc., but I think that to be critical can only be acceptable when you can do better yourself.

So, to Mr Brooker, I feel impressed to say: Stop complaining about performances that are put on for the benefit of ALL members and their friends, and not just for you. I, for one, enjoyed John's concert with the additions, as did the friends that were with me (all from the country, I might add); one of whom had heard the singers before, and was delighted to hear them again, and will no doubt be at concerts in the future.

By the way, I have in my collection of Organ records a very old "Fats Waller" 78 with him on a *Wurlitzer*, and his associate is a lovely female voice. I wonder how the First Violin would sound in any orchestra without the association of the rest of the orchestra?

Please accept my congratulations to the organizing committee for all of the concerts that you put on for us members. I love them, and wish I could come to more.

Keep up the good work,
Kind regards to all down there,
Ron Mills

Our President explains further:

Stephen Bosanquet started something in his letter published in Jan/Feb *TOSA News*. But I guess his dislike of David Smith's "weak

imitation machine" could be more than matched by those who thought it was marvellous, as I did. On the other hand some would not share his liking for *Wurlitzer* plus "grand piano ... choir, orchestra, dancing". Walking out at interval, or not attending at all, does not help your cause or that of *TOSA*. How about some positive suggestions - better still, bring us some new members and put some constructive member-gathering ideas on paper and volunteer to do them.

Frank Lewis (*March News*) asks that advance concert publicity include to enough information to inform about associate instruments or artists. He has a point there, and though its not always easy, maybe we should try harder. And we can try harder to get good recent pictures as Allan Brooker (*May News*) asks.

But Frank, and members, please try to "take it" rather than "leave it" when choosing which concerts to attend. Quite apart from your personal tastes, *TOSA* needs people on seats to keep running. Maybe the days of *TOSA* are coming to an end, though I don't think so. But the days of enthusiasts working long hours restoring organs, then sitting happily through hours of straight playing of their creativity have gone - at least in Sydney for the present. They just might come back - but not right now!

But even in places where they have done, or are doing, massive works of restoration they are wondering how to fill their concert seats.

Meanwhile we have to entertain and attract people. Some organists are very good at this all on their own - in other cases maybe they need variety on the program. Committee members are thinking all the time.

Thank you, Allan, for your thirteen years of uninterrupted attendance at *TOSA* concerts - we need people like you. But, as I recall it, we used quite a few superlatives describing David Smith's "keyboard skills" and he certainly lived up to them. He also very ably showed another side to the *Wurlitzer* - as an accompaniment behind a singer. And so did John Giacchi! Wasn't that one of the roles of the original Theatre Organ, Allan? It by no means "underestimates" John Giacchi's skills to have him play second fiddle - it's just another ability which he and the *Wurlitzer*

demonstrate. And spare a thought for those members who DO like singers - we do not all find them an "especial annoyance"!

And to say the Committee has lost you and your "seven regular guests" is no encouragement - it feels more like a gun at our head! I really find it hard to believe that all eight of you would find no joy in ANY of the concerts *TOSA* presents these days!

In case members forget, may I say that the *TOSA* committee members have looked at countless ideas and tried many of them in their work for *TOSA*. There is no way to please all of the people all of the time, but we would like to interest MORE. Maybe I'll document some of this - but MEANWHILE WE NEED MEMBERS TO HELP US THROUGH THE GOOD TIMES AND THE TOUGH TIMES! How about it?

Walter Pearce

Members' Playing Sessions

Walter Pearce reports :

Members and visitors enjoyed the Members' Playing Afternoon at the Orion on 5th May. We each had to half an hour at the console and the standard of play was entertaining. We were glad to have Andrew Grahame along - he had not sat at the Orion console for many years. He is obviously at home with the classics, but had a crack at Theatre Style for us. Also very welcome were Eric Frost and Harry Robertson - I don't think they had been to a Players' Afternoon before.

Those who played were (in order of appearance): Andrew Grahame, Bruce Bisby, Amy Caldwell (cameo appearance), Walter Pearce, John Batts, Tom Barber, Wendy Hambly, Jack MacDonald (who blew out the cobwebs and finally played the organ down).

Listeners were: John Atkins, Jenny Pearce, Eric Frost, Harry Robertson, David James, Kevin Clancy, Ray and Edna Hambly.

The Westminster Abbey Organ

The Queen Mother's funeral, focused attention on Westminster Abbey and here is a brief outline of the organ heard during the ceremony, written by John Speller :

The current instrument was originally built by Harrison & Harrison of Durham in 1937 and is known as the Coronation Organ. This is because Durham was on the London & North Eastern Railway and the organ was built the same year that the "Coronation" streamlined train was introduced on that railway.

It was Arthur Harrison's last organ - indeed he stayed up doing the tonal finishing until 2am on the day he went into hospital for a cancer operation, and he died during the operation. The four-manual instrument

was first used at the Coronation of King George VI.

The two beautiful cases date from the previous five-manual Hill organ and were designed by Victorian architect J. L. Pearson, best known as the architect of Truro Cathedral. The casework was decorated in an attractive polychrome scheme by Stephen Dykes-Bower, whose brother John Dykes-Bower was organist of St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1983-87 the original builders, Harrison & Harrison, rebuilt the organ and added a fifth Bombarde manual.

The stop-list may be seen at <http://lehuray.csi.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/npor_details/N00646>

I have not seen the instrument since

it was rebuilt, but a friend of mine who has, reports that the fifth manual is very nicely done but seems to bear little relation to the tonal concept of the rest of the instrument and that it is difficult to see what purpose it serves. He predicts that it will be removed the next time the organ is rebuilt.

The Bombarde manual probably was not used at the funeral of the Queen Mother, because ever since Sunday, October 17, 1790 when His Majesty King George III demanded that royal organ-builder Samuel Green remove the Trombone or Bass Trumpet from the organ at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, the Royal Family have always been fairly consistent in their dislike of party-horns and other loud noises on organs.

Debra Marschall found this unusual item about a locally-made organ case in the 9th April edition of *Penrith Press* and kindly sent it to *TOSA News*

Pipe dream realised

TO maintain his high standard, Sydney Town Hall associate organist Robert Goode spends many hours each week practising for concerts at home.

Robert has yearned to have a pipe organ in his home built in French traditional style, ornately carved and rated in gold giltwork.

When Robert read an article about furniture maker Vic Cleary of Rothschild Avenue Traditional Furniture, he called Vic to discuss the idea of designing and making the opulent pipe organ case for Robert's music room.

After visiting Vic's workshop Robert was convinced he was the man who could make this difficult request a reality.

Of course, Vic had never been asked to make an organ case so he and wife Irene delved into the wondrous world of pipe organs to come up with a working design.

Robert gave Vic a brief of what he wanted and left the final design and finish to him.

Because the instructions were sketchy, Vic and Irene shrouded themselves in secrecy for four months

while they tirelessly worked towards producing a magnificent work of art.

And although Robert wanted to see the work in progress he opted to wait until delivery, a wait which at times became quite trying as curiosity crept into the equation.

Other important work was put on hold for Vic to put all his energy into making this masterpiece.

Irene works side by side with Vic on pieces with her forte being gold and silver gilding, an art in itself. The work is very tedious and not only hard on the hands but draining on the eyes. Irene spent five weeks of full-time work just gilding the decorative pieces on the organ.

A great majority of the work is hand carved as no machine tools could be used. A carved eagle takes centre stage with cheeky cherubs strategically placed for an excellent effect.

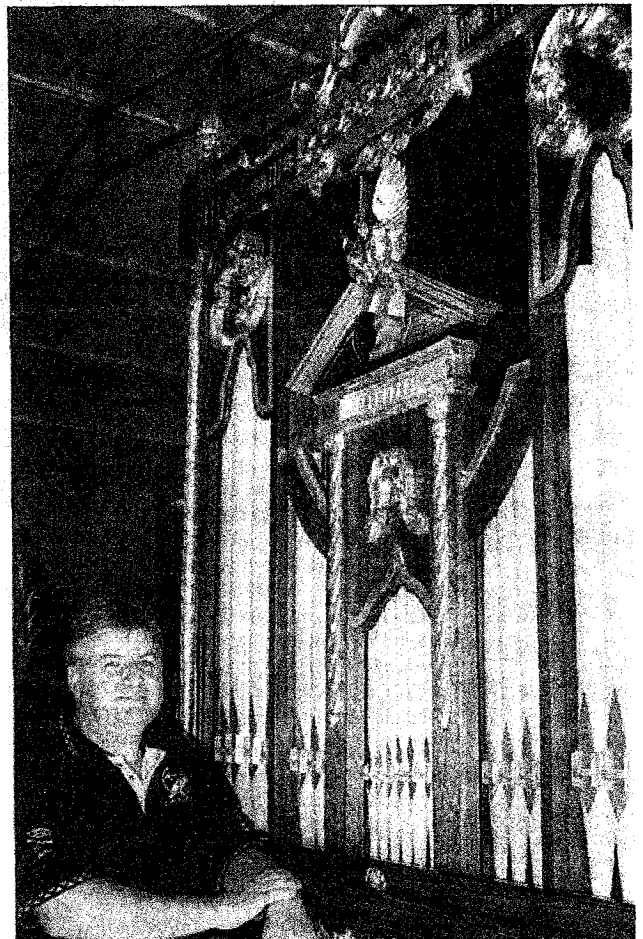
In fine French traditional style, the organ case has now been delivered to Robert who is in awe of the fine piece of craftsmanship.

Call in to Rothschild Avenue Traditional Furniture, 696 Old Northern Rd, Dural, to view the fine pieces on display or call 9651 6650.



Home Living

with Pauline Priest



Vic Cleary with the pipe organ case he made

The Smithsonian Wurlitzer

The famous Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, collects a large variety of historic, cultural objects and this article from its Smithsonian publication outlines the interesting history of their Wurlitzer and the history of American theatre organs in general. While the organ does not belong to ATOS, this organisation has offered to help with the installation and has raised a considerable amount of money for the project

Of all the musical instruments in the Smithsonian Institution's collection of 5,200 violins, pianos, banjos and others, the largest - it fills three rooms - represents a unique period of nearly forgotten American history.

It's a *Wurlitzer* theatre organ. In the early 20th century, thousands of these gigantic pipe organs were installed in movie theatres throughout the United States, Canada, England and Australia to accompany silent movies. This one worked its wonders in the Fox Theatre in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The Smithsonian's instrument is a rare, completely original *Wurlitzer* donated by the estate of Lowell Ayars, a New Jersey music teacher, in 1993. Ayars kept it in museum-quality condition during the 30-some years it was played in his home. When Ayars died in 1992, he willed it to his friend Brantley Duddy who contacted the Smithsonian, which gratefully accepted it for the musical instrument collection of the National Museum of American History. For now, it sits in storage, its burnished white-and-gold console protected by a sheet of plastic. But there are plans to restore it to its former glory.

The Ayars organ, a Model 190 (serial number 2070), was built by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of North Tonawanda, New York, in 1929 for the Fox Theatre. After the theatre became a department store in 1959, the organ briefly went into storage until Ayars bought it and installed it in his New Jersey home.

As theatre organs go, this one is modest in size - its pipes fitting into a space about 15 feet wide and 13 feet deep. It sports two keyboards (called manuals), 584 individual pipes organized into eight ranks, and four tuned percussion instruments as well as special effects. The largest original *Wurlitzer* still in operation - with more than 4,000 pipes in 58 ranks, ranging from 32 feet in length to the

size of a pencil - is also the most famous: the Radio City Music Hall *Wurlitzer* in New York City, which was installed in 1932.

Between 1911 and 1943, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company built more than 2,000 theatre organs, most of them about the size of the Ayars, for smaller, neighbourhood theatres. The first silent films had been accompanied by a pit orchestra or, for the more frugally minded impresario, a lone piano. When the theatre organ came along, with its ability to imitate an orchestra and create special sound effects, every movie house owner had to have one.

At its peak in 1926, the company was shipping a *Wurlitzer* a day, mass-producing one of the most technologically advanced machines of its time. The theatre organ is related to the classic church pipe organ, whose basic design has been around for more than 2,000 years. Air blown through pipes, each tuned to create a different musical tone, creates the sound. Blowers located under the ranks, or sets of pipes, force air into them when valves are opened as the organist plays the keys and stops (tabs the organist flips up or down to activate different ranks of pipes).

In a church organ, this rather simple mechanism can produce only a certain number of sounds. To the dismay of lovers of the traditional organ, British inventor and telephone engineer Robert Hope-Jones electrified it and created a switching system to allow any combination of pipes and effects to be played at once. His instruments could produce numerous inventive sound effects, including train and boat whistles, car horns and bird whistles, and some could even simulate pistol shots, ringing phones, the sound of surf, horses' hooves, smashing pottery, thunder and rain.

The new organs either incorporated or at least imitated other musical instruments - from piano and violin to

trumpet, drums, cymbals, even bells and chimes. Hope-Jones dubbed it the Unit Orchestra: with it an organist could imitate an entire dance band or orchestra.

In 1910, after his company foundered, Hope-Jones was bought out by the Wurlitzer Company which, with elegant-looking products and aggressive advertising, dominated the theatre organ market. Even today many people remember the slogan "Gee Dad, it's a Wurlitzer".

Wurlitzer's time in the limelight was brief. The sound of Al Jolson's voice in *The Jazz Singer* of 1927 spelled doom for the theatre organ. Soon Hollywood was putting sound in every movie it produced. By the mid-1930s, most theatre owners had replaced their organs with speaker systems.

Of the more than 5,000 organs manufactured in the early 1900s, only a few hundred remain in public venues; a few others, like the Ayars organ, were rescued by private collectors. Only a handful are in their original theatre installations. Richmond, Virginia, has three theatres with original organs, the Chicago Theatre still has a *Wurlitzer*, and some of the truly grand movie palaces have original organ installations, including the Fox Theatres in Atlanta, St. Louis and Detroit and the Orpheum in Los Angeles.

Forty years ago, Carsten Henningson, owner of *Ye Olde Pizza Joynt* in Hayward, California, and a devoted organ enthusiast, decided a *Wurlitzer* might help boost business. It did just that, and the phenomenon spread throughout the state and beyond as dozens of moribund theatre organs found new lives in restaurants.

At one such venue, the Bella Roma Pizza Restaurant in Martinez, California, on a recent Sunday night, organist Kevin King put a *Wurlitzer* through its paces, bouncing in his seat

as his hands played different keyboards, occasionally pausing to flip stops, while his feet plied the pedals. "You're playing all the orchestra sounds plus some real instruments," he says.

Musical historians and theatre organ buffs would like to see the Smithsonian's *Wurlitzer* played publicly once again. Exhibits specialist and theatre organist Brian Jensen helped bring the organ to the Institution. "Ours does not have all the bells and whistles of the larger organs found in big cities," says Jensen, "but it represents what was in 90 percent of the theatres across the country, in neighbourhoods and smaller towns. Like the *Star-Spangled Banner*, it's a recognized symbol of American culture."

by Mary K. Miller

(Mary K. Miller is a writer and producer for the *Exploratorium*, a hands-on science museum in San Francisco, California.

Further to this, the June 2001 issue of *ATOS International News* carried the following information:

SMITHSONIAN UPDATE

The Lowell Ayars Wurlitzer project is alive and well if not a little detoured.

Originally slated for the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History, the project was stalled by a redefinition of priorities for the Museum and a change in administration. While it was assumed the console could be displayed, the organ itself would not be playable since the space intended for the chamber had been assigned to another use.

Enter James Weaver, Executive Director of the National Music Museum which is a joint project of the Smithsonian, The Library of Congress, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Mr. Weaver has kindly invited ATOS's participation in installing this wonderful *Wurlitzer* at the new facility.

Instead of being shoe-horned into an existing space (250-seat lecture hall), the instrument will now be the centrepiece of a newly constructed 600-seat Concert Hall, with the chambers

already planned into the overall design of the auditorium. Given this opportunity, the project has shifted several blocks to the north, close to the White House and right in the centre of Washington, D.C.

Since this is a new museum with a new mission, its development hopefully will be swift and productive. Having the American Theatre Organ Society participate in this historic venture will benefit our organization and help us to tell our story to the largest possible audience with the new museum, whose sole reason for being is its dedication to the musical art form.

Even though the restoration of the instrument is on-going, installation will have to wait for the complete financing of the new museum and for its construction, which will be several years away. In the meantime, the instrument awaits its new home and its endowment so generously contributed by ATOS members will continue to grow as such time when these monies will be used to pay for the installation of the organ and to fund its programming. - Nelson Page, ATOS President

Five-Manual Consoles

Jon C. Habermaas published on the Internet the following information about these large consoles

When George Wright's original Hi-Fi recordings came out, there was a prominent picture on the jacket of the Vaughn ex-Paradise 5-manual *Wurlitzer* console.

My dad was a professional organist and organ teacher (back in the days when home electronic organs were very popular and he had a busy schedule teaching organ students). He was often asked about why the big pipe organs had so many keyboards. He would explain the versatility of multiple keyboards, allowing different combinations which could be readily accessed for quick mood changes during film accompaniment and also said you could in some cases play all four manuals at the same time by bridging each hand on two manuals. He would be asked the inevitable question about playing all five manuals at the same time....his answer was you would have to use your nose for the fifth manual.

Wurlitzer built three 5-manual organs, installed in the Marbro and

Paradise Theatres in Chicago (both 5/21s) and the Michigan Theatre in Detroit (5/28).

The Paradise went to Vaughn's studio in Los Angeles where George Wright made his famous Hi-Fi recordings and is now in Bill Brown's residence in Phoenix.

The Marbro organ was removed and installed in a residence in Minneapolis and later moved to the Performing Arts Center in Providence, Rhode Island.

The Michigan organ has been installed in Fred Hermes' residence in Racine, Wi, since it was removed from the theatre and is regularly heard for Dairyland ATOS events.

Wurlitzer later built a 5-manual console for the demonstration organ that was in their Dekalb headquarters. I'm not sure what happened to that console.

Another famous 5-manual organ was Reginald Foort's "*Travelling*

Moller" which was built to move from theatre to theatre before World War II, and when the war started found its way into the BBC studios, after their Compton Theatre Organ was destroyed in a bombing raid. It travelled to Holland after the war before ending up in a San Diego Pizza Parlor. It is now in the Pasadena Civic Center Theatre.

Marr & Colton built a 5-manual organ for a theatre in Rochester, NY, which went to a Roller Rink in Astoria, Oregon, and is now in storage somewhere in the Pacific North West, and last but definitely not least is the Roxy Kimball 5-manual console which was in a hotel in New Mexico and is now in the closed Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizza in Las Vegas.

The keyboard names changed with different organs and different manufacturers, but the *Wurlitzer* organs appeared to have used: Accompaniment, Great, Bombarde, Orchestral and Solo.

The Poetry of the Theatre Organist

TOSA member John S. Batts has been inspired by a poem and a challenge from Ian McIver of Brisbane to write a Theatre Organ-themed poem and has kindly allowed TOSA News to publish his (as always) witty and erudite poem, followed by Ian McIver's inspirational verses

John writes:

"On the Second-Touch Discussion List, Ian McIver, theatre organist now a resident of Brisbane and compiler of the Southern Cross Web Site dealing with theatre organs in the southern hemisphere, asked if there were any verses dealing with the theatre organ.

He printed a whimsical poem written in his schooldays dealing with the fictional career of "English" theatre organist, David Morgan who supposedly ended up accompanying angels with their harps.

The following, recently written by a sometime schoolboy now in adult clothing, is offered as a light-hearted sequel with an Aussie slant."

A Whimsical Sequel:

or,

David Morgan Plays On?

Dedicated to Ian McIver, KCSOB

Prelude

There's a twist to the tale of Morgan
Who supposedly rose with his organ
Past St. Peter himself, on high to toot
Among that hallowed gang so cute.
David, not saint but "Fingers Morgan,"
May yet be living with his organ,
Having not met such splendid demise
On a console lift that forgot its size.
So here's another folk version
Which carries its own assertion.
This truth, as told, reached me but lately
On Scottish breath of a man, McMatey;
And his yarn of where Morgan ended
We'll rehearse in this verse appended.

1st Fytte

Dismiss the claims of lifts unbridled
As if to heaven Morgan sidled.
In atmospheric house well lit,
Where gorgeous sounds from chambers split

Filled every niche and distant cranny
-T'was designed by "ArtDeco" Crombie-
There was an errant organ lift,
Which did the deed on its last shift!
So "'Organ" lost his musical way
While concluding "A Perfect Day."
When Morgan ceased his interlude
E'en though the playing was not crude
The console sank and kept descending
Mysterioso, never-ending.
From Regal's mauve and baizéd aisle
Morgan sank, but sank in style.
The house and all its plush receded
As instrument on its way proceeded,
Dragging pipes with wondrous pouring
Into a tunnel by magic boring.
His music followed all the while
Till diaphones were not as deep,
Nor could he then his tibias keep
From clutching him from clasping sleep.
Descending faster than old Nick
His fall Miltonic was ironic.
Had his MD disliked his suavity?
Had there been whispers of depravity?
Perhaps the Fates had packed a wallop,
For had he not played 'The Devil's Galop'?
Yet patrons noticed nothing spoiled;
With spotlight off, the film uncoiled.
Compton had gone where all Comptons must
To sleep for hours amid the dust.
Or so they thought, and little guessed
Where Morgan went, the button pressed.
He kept his fingers playing much
He loved the effect of Second Touch.
He also thought of his Headmaster
Who'd warned him of career disaster.
But after many days and nights
Hitting sforzando in his frights,
Drawing cymbals and the drums,
Forswearing sins from rums to nuns,
Dai pressed a novel combination
Which brought new ranks into relation,
And reached, at last, his destination,
This one, a newer Nation.

2nd Fytte

Dai surfaced, of course, displaying pluck
And enjoying one large chunk of luck.
Henceforth on quite a new footing
Miles from the Granada, Tooting,
He'd arrived - you may well wonder! -

In a city far Down Under.
No warning given of his arrival,
Dai was chuffed at his survival.
As to venue he had no clue
When first he came to this new view.
His instinct honed - it never fails! -
Hinted he'd hit on New South Wales;
So, told by his guru, Saint Kilda,
He segued into 'Waltzing Matilda'.
In truth he'd struck into a theatre
Called The Roxy, in Parramatta.
By deception beyond comprehension
The console revolved in suspension,
So it rose from that new-dug pit
In a glamorous house matching it.
Now tousled Morgan was unshaven
But dressed quite well for his new haven.
He wowed the crowds from stalls to circle
With interludes in spot-light purple.
And continued thus for many years
Entertaining the old dears
Who'd heard his broadcasts overseas
And recognised his favourite keys,
But knew not of his emigration,
That Valkyrian Ride with much vexation,
That brought him far in good condition
To take up (oddly) a new position.

3rd Fytte

Whatever hap'd to David Morgan
Wondrous migrant with his organ?
Famed Roxy now lies cold and empty
That opened back in Nineteen Twenty.
Dai has gone we know not where:
Perhaps he's followed the 10" air,
Lost his pressure or moved to the bush?
Tangled with Song-lines? been given a push?
Had he been on a Gilbertian list
That fingered one "cinema organist"?
Had he caused affront and found 'The
Lost Chord'?

Or, like a tall poppy, been cut by the horde?
His musical talent so plain to behold
Would not be stifled by growing old.
But jealousies during a stint at The State
May have surfaced in many a mate.
Had a life *con brio* reached *diminuendo*
With cadenced Morgan lacking *da capo*?
Had all been done because of a mock?
Could man of renown while at the Troc'
Have pressed his last piston inside a croc?

Epilogue

All such are idle speculations
And, happily, exaggerations!
I've told you a story that never can fold:
One theatre organist who never grew old.
Gone are his broadcasts and signature tunes,
Like a taste for the music of Charlie Kunz.
That crinkled sheet music which once
cued his spell

Can seldom be found in the world of quick-sell.
His superior version of 'On the Old Back Porch'
Had drawn comparisons with Sidney Torch.
Those theatres he graced have fallen too
Most wonderful buildings razed before cue.
Where now the Regal, the Ritz, and the Regent?
Gone with the Capitols, Majestic, & Gaumont,
Rialto, Rex, The Palace & Paramount.
And yet on an evening when wind's in the pipes
And your mood is conducive to whims
of such types,

You may catch a faint echo of posthorns
and strings,

Of voxes and tibias, and traps and such things,
The rasps of a Krumet or even Kinura,
Giving a hint of ageless bravura.
This should remind you of once-on-a-time
When David Morgan, on cloud nine,
Was playing his music quite sublime.

Finis

©jsbatts/St. David's Day, 2002 (rev.)

*Ian McIver of Brisbane wrote,
under the heading of "Kulcha
Korna" :*

*"Whilst sorting through some old
papers over the weekend, I came across
the following work of poetic art that I
penned while I was still at school
(perhaps in a wistful moment). As it is
perhaps the only work of its kind ever
written about theatre organs, I present
it to you as the best in its field (albeit,
a field of "one") and invite List
members to compose other offerings to
share with us and so that I can perhaps
add to the "Journal" page of my website
to stop my effort feeling so lonely."*

Ode to a Cinema Organist

This is the tale of David Morgan,
Who learnt to play the cinema organ.
That he did this was just as well,
For academically he did not excel.
His headmaster could but stand and stare

When young Morgan chose to dare
To say, imperious as an eagle:
"Tonight I open at the Regal,
I'm through with French and mathematics;
Next week I'm playing at the Ritz."
Seeing the headmaster's confusion,
He added: "I've just got a job with Union
Theatres, who appreciate my talents rightly
By featuring my organ nightly.
For fifteen minutes I give music and wit,
Then gracefully sink into the pit
As the film comes on the screen.
Afterwards I play "The Queen".
I have now found my vocation,
I don't need no more education."
Standing before the headmaster's gaze,
Wondering whether to expect praise
Or censure for his bombshell,
He listened amazed as the old man said:
"Well, I wish you all good luck and fortune.
Your career seems most opportune.
May you one day reach your Nirvana
And play 'Tiger Rag' at Tooting Granada."

Sure enough, as the years went by,
Morgan's name lit up the sky,
And all the world revered the name
As broadcasts and records increased his fame.
Alas, though, this was not to last,
For after a few more years had passed
One night the end came soon.
As he was playing his signature tune
The organ rose before the audience's eyes.
It went on and on, continued to rise,
Right past the top,
It did not stop.
He heard their cries too late,
For he was at the Pearly Gate.
At St. Peter's feet stopped Morgan,
Still playing his Wurlitzer organ.
Said St. Peter, all austere,
"You can't bring that thing in here,
So why don't you stop being a pest
And play the harp like all the rest?"
But Morgan said: "Just listen to this ditty",
And sat down and played 'The Holy City'.
Moved by this, St. Peter said: "All right,
But keep it hidden out of sight."
But the angels heard it and as one arose
And said: "We all want one of those."
St Peter sadly turned: "I'd like to please,
But where can I get more or these?
You'll have to play your harps with Morgan,
Who'll accompany you on his organ."

So Morgan plays there in the clouds,
Never missing the cinema crowds.
He's got a whole new repertory,
From Handel's 'Largo' to Bach's 'Suite in D'.

And that's the tale of David Morgan,
The man who plays the cinema organ;
Not here below at the flicks thrice nightly,
But up above before the Almighty.

©Ian McIver

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(Budgewoi)

Associate Artist: Owen Watkins - Saxophonist

Owen Watkins is one of Australia's most experienced "period instrument" musicians. His formal tuition began on clarinet and recorder at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, gaining a DSCM (Diploma of the State Conservatorium of Music) in 1979. He then commenced postgraduate study at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam, followed by a Master of Music degree in Historical Performance from Boston University.

Whilst resident in the USA for a decade, Owen became an established member of several prominent "early music" groups and orchestras on the east coast, playing recorder, oboe and chalumeau - an 18th century precursor to the clarinet.

Owen is a founding member of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra (est.1991) and has been a guest soloist and toured with them on several occasions.

In 2001, Owen returned to Australia on a permanent basis. In addition to his professional engagements, he teaches saxophone and clarinet at Mitchell Conservatorium in Bathurst, and woodwinds at MLC Burwood and Kincoppal Rose Bay.

Discovering the Vintage Saxophone

The saxophone is most familiar as a contemporary jazz instrument and is usually assumed to be thoroughly modern. However, since its invention in the 1840s it has undergone a number of changes - especially in mouthpiece design and tone quality - responding largely to the demands of jazz, particularly post World War II.

Owen Watkins became interested in the early history of the saxophone whilst studying "period instrument" performance in the United States. The first vintage instrument he acquired was a 1930's *Selmer* alto saxophone. Over the ensuing years Owen has collected other antique and vintage instruments, and original print music dating from the 1880s through to the 1930s.

As a wind player, Owen is a unique specialist on the instruments and music of this era. Through his research and study of old saxophone tutors, Owen seeks to recreate many of the pre-war performance characteristics in order to achieve an authentic tone quality and "period style" when playing these original instruments.

Theatre Organ and Vintage Saxophone

Since the theatre organ's demise in its true setting, preservation groups have elevated its role to be that of a solo concert instrument. Since that occurrence, it has been exposed less to the public at large, but rather enjoyed by dedicated enthusiasts. Rarely, if at all, when the general public bought their tickets to enter the entertainment palaces of yesteryear, was the theatre organ ever the sole focus of attention for the duration of a two hour performance.

The theatre organ was and is so versatile! We only need look back at old theatre programmes and listen to vintage recordings to realise that the theatre organ, like the orchestra it emulated, was employed in all manner of musical situations - originally it accompanied silent film; then for a greater part of its heritage it was not only heard in featured spots but also in combination with theatre orchestras and used to accompany instrumental soloists and vocalists. It is in this versatile tradition that we present together the theatre organ and vintage saxophone.

Having undertaken to authentically recreate music by the virtuoso saxophonists of the 1920s, Owen Watkins realised the theatre organ would provide the ideal accompaniment. He has been collaborating on arrangements with Margaret Hall for several months with the intention of making a recording.

The concert on 16th June will showcase the partnering of these instrumental contemporaries in a segment in each half of the programme. Audiences can expect to be charmed by ragtime and novelty-styled pieces including such familiar tunes as the *Twelfth Street Rag*.

OUR NEXT ARTIST : Margaret Hall

Margaret Hall is Australia's foremost female theatre organist. Born in Sydney, she began learning popular electronic organ at the age of nine and a few years later concentrated on piano studies. Margaret completed her formal musical training with a Bachelor of Music from the Sydney Conservatorium majoring in classical pipe organ.

The theatre organ however, has always been Margaret's passion. In 1976, at the age of thirteen she became the resident organist for Mecca Theatres in Sydney performing to movie patrons at the deluxe weekend sessions. During Margaret's four year tenure a three manual *Wurlitzer* theatre pipe organ was specially imported from England and installed in the theatre. This was a great encouragement and rare opportunity to have such an instrument at her disposal for practice.

In 1977, TOSA featured Margaret in a concert at Marrickville Town Hall on the *Wurlitzer* formerly of Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre. Since then Margaret has accepted invitations to play throughout Australia, as well as New Zealand, the USA and England.

Margaret has fulfilled engagements with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and played recitals on the organs of the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Town Hall. She has also been organist for several parish churches in southern Sydney over the years.

Presently Margaret has stepped back from regular liturgical playing to enjoy singing with her parish choir of St Mark's, South Hurstville - a suburban church rare in Sydney famous for its choral tradition.

Currently, Margaret and her husband Robert Nelson operate a small venue called "*Margaret's Music Room*" where they present a nostalgic 90 minute show called *Theatre Organ and Picture Palaces*. The show is presented to groups by appointment. Enquiries: 02 9584 2353

Margaret's recording *Kitten on the Keys* was recorded on the Orion Centre *Wurlitzer* (ex-Capitol Theatre, Sydney). It includes selections indicative of the music she includes in her concerts and is available on CD through TOSA for \$20.00.

Margaret's other interests are movies and cinema history, music theatre, architecture (especially old theatres) and all things Art Déco. She also takes great delight in her pet pooch - a Lhasa Apso called Jazz.



Margaret rehearsing with Owen Watkins

