

# TOSA NEWS

December 2014  
Volume 53 No.11

Price: \$2.00

**Sunday 7 December 2014 2:00pm**



*Doors open at 1:30pm*

***Tony Fenelon***

*International*

*Theatre Organist*

*plays*

**at Marrickville Town Hall on the**

**Wonderful 2 manual**

**Wurlitzer**



 Find us on  
**Facebook**

**/tosansw**

**www.tosa.net.au**

# Directory

## **Patrons**

John Gorrie and John Atwell

## **President**

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

## **Vice Presidents**

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)  
Craig Keller 0418 484 798

## **Secretary**

Ian Georgeson *secretary@tosa.net.au*  
101 Crinan Street, Hurlstone Park NSW 2193

## **Treasurer**

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

## **Membership Inquiries**

6351 3122

## **Committee**

John Shaw 9543 3112

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

John Weismantel

Robert Gliddon *christieorg@bigpond.com*

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

## **TOSA NEWS Editor**

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

## **Marrickville Players Convenor**

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)  
John Batts 0420424103

## **Orion Players Convenor**

Craig Keller 0418484798 phone or SMS

## **Ticket Secretary (Show Bookings)**

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

## **Artist Liaison Officers**

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122, John Shaw 9543 3112

**Photography** Barry Tooker 9744 1535

**Publicity Officer** John Shaw 9543 3112

**Printing** by Ernie Vale & Graeme Costin

# From the President



In a few days we will have our final show for the year featuring the one and only **Tony Felon**. In the last five months we have experienced three great overseas theatre organ exponents in **Donna Parker, Dwight Beacham and Richard Hills**: this show will bring to a fitting finale a superb season of the music you love to hear on an instrument you most enjoy - a Theatre Organ.

To you who have supported the Society by your membership and attendance at shows, thank you.

As we approach a new year of shows, I can assure you that your Committee has worked hard to ensure the standard will be maintained.

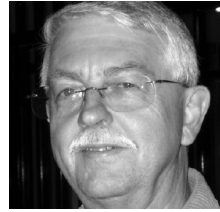
The one disappointing thing this year was the poor attendance at our AGM. With the venue being so central and also the location of our Christie installation one would have hoped for a much greater interest from our members.

On behalf of the Executive and Committee, I wish you all the blessings of Christmas. May it be for you a time of joy, peace and happiness.

Happy Christmas and  
Happy Organ-ising,

Geoff Brimley

# Editorial



To finish the year our very popular Australian Theatre Organist, **Tony Felon**, will play the Christmas Show at Marrickville Town Hall for a welcome return to our very special 2 manual Wurlitzer. **Two hours of music on a world class Wurlitzer played by Tony Felon at TOSA ticket prices has to be top value. Please invite your friends.**

It is now time to purchase your **Season Ticket for the 2015 shows** at the same prices as last year. A list of the shows for 2015 has been included in this issue so you can mark your calendars and diaries for the year and not miss any show. Also you can place the list on your fridge as a reminder.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Christmas Show.

Thank you to everyone who has provided articles and reviews during the year and to Barry Tooker for his many photos to make the TOSA News more interesting. Happy Christmas to you all.

Deadline for TOSA News is the 12th of the previous month.

Enjoy the music,  
Ernie Vale  
PO Box A2322  
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235  
[editor@tosa.net.au](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)

## From the Mailbox...



the people there were very appreciative, and certainly vocal of their enjoyment after the show."

*Alan Caradus*

"It was an inspiring concert on a fabulous in-tune organ."

*"Hi Ernie,*

*It was good to meet you today at Richard Hills' concert.*

*I am very pleased that I renewed my lapsed TOSA membership in time to receive the news of this concert. I was just blown away by Richard Hills' artistry. I've admired his playing for some time, having several of his CDs. The immaculate state of the Wurlitzer is indeed a credit to all who are involved with its maintenance. I am also hugely impressed by how TOSA manages its concerts. I hope to make the effort to get to more concerts in the future."*

*Kind regards,  
Andrew Grahame*

---

" To enjoy wine... what is needed is a sense of smell, a sense of taste and an eye for colour. All else is experience and personal preference."

**Cyril Ray (1908 - 1991)**

*from "Ray on Wine"*

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

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

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor [editor@tosa.net.au](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)

or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

---

### ***Some Comments from people who attended the Richard Hills Show at the Orion Theatre***

*Peter Jewkes*

"I'm just slightly gobsmacked at the absence of "serious" organists at concerts such as this - world class in every sense, and we have so much to learn.... Hope they recorded it? Fabulous!"

*John Parker*

"I must admit that considering the lower than usual attendance,

## ***To Watch Out For***

The current Executive & Committee of TOSA NSW Divn Inc have been confirmed as your management team for 2014-15.

The program of shows for next year have been confirmed that provides a mixture of Cabaret style, as well as solo performances presented by a variety of musicians. The overseas artists are both from the USA with Jerry Nagano making his first Australian Tour. Dave Wickerham makes a welcome return as he delighted audiences on his Australasian Tour in 2012.

**Now is the time to purchase your Season Tickets before the first show in February.**

**A Season Ticket booking form is enclosed in this issue of TOSA News and must be completed and posted to the Ticket Secretary to obtain your Season Ticket. Alternatively you can complete the form and bring it to the Tony Fenelon Christmas Show at Marrickville Town Hall together with your payment.**

**There are 7 shows for the price of 6 in 2015. Non - members save even more by becoming a TOSA member.**

## **Advertising Rates in TOSA News**

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Small bubble = \$11.00

Quarter Page = \$24.75

Half Page = \$49.50

Full Page = \$99.00

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

### **Members' Playing Dates The Orion Theatre Campsie**

**Thursday 11 December**

**Thursday 8 January**

**These dates have been  
confirmed by Craig**

Craig Keller on 0418484798  
Players and listeners welcome.

**Marrickville Town Hall  
4th Monday afternoon/evening  
at 2:30pm to 7:00pm**

**Monday 22 December**  
Players and listeners welcome.

**Please contact Neil or John  
Batts to confirm availability**

John Batts 0420424103

Neil on 9798 6742 after  
7:00pm

## REVIEW OF THE RICHARD HILLS CONCERT Orion Centre Campsie – 14th November 2014

There are times when I receive with hesitation, the 'request' from our beloved Editor Ernie Vale, for a review to be made of a forthcoming TOSA(NSW) concert. However I was thrilled to be asked to do so for the 'surprise' appearance for TOSA(NSW) of the UK artist-extraordinaire, Richard Hills. I had already made plans to visit Melbourne for the '*Tale of Two Organs*' concert on November 30th featuring the unique programming of the Melbourne Town Hall 150 rank organ and the Regent 4/36 Wurlitzer Organ, with our own Tony Fenelon as co-artist with Richard.

It is six years since Richard last appeared in Sydney, at that time at the Marrickville Town Hall, but on this occasion, he performed at the Orion Centre – and on a Saturday afternoon, in order to fit in with a busy schedule of other performances, none the least of which was to be at Christ Church St. Laurence in George Street the following day, - in his classical organ guise.



It was '*Just One of Those Things*' that opened Richard's concert, and anyone not familiar with the musicianship and expertise of Richard Hills, was soon 'educated' to realize that this would be just one of those very special concerts. The glissandos, the augmentations, the registrations, the sensitivity, the bravado, the 'manual-surfing' (a-la fellow Brit Phil Kelsall) – the lot.

In his opening remarks Richard commented that he had long seen coverage of the Orion Wurlitzer, and was now very pleased to enjoy its 'dynamism' for himself.

In an understandable choice, he lead off his concert with a charming little piece from the UK composer Ernest Tomlinson – '*Little Serenade*' composed in 1955 for a BBC-Radio production of '*Cinderella*.' Nothing spectacular, just sheer musicality.

Across the Atlantic, Richard provided a tribute to Irving Berlin with a selection of his best-known favourites from the movies, including '*Top Hat, White Tie and Tails*', '*Easter Parade*', '*Always*', '*The Piccolino*', '*Cheek to Cheek*', '*They Say it's Wonderful*', '*Steppin' Out with my Baby*', and '*They Say it's Wonderful*'. Not just a collection of 'the best of', but an exercise in the versatility of the artist and the organ. One could really appreciate through Richard's choices and interpretations, why the compositions of Irving Berlin form a large part of the '*Great American Songbook*'.

Richard commented that he likes to remember British organist colleagues who have passed away, and in the next segment he chose works of Vic Hammett and Harold Ramsay. The simple little novelty number '*Horse Box*' with the highly repetitive theme was the chosen item from the former legendary UK organist. A total change of mood was the contribution from Harold Ramsay, a popular organist and broadcaster of the 1940's. His choice from Harold Ramsay's output was '*Her Name is Mary*' played with all due sentimentality and sensitivity.

Another bracket of numbers, this time from the pen of Sigmund Romberg, with memories of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald and Viennese Opera Houses. The tribute selection comprised songs from the 1927 stage production of '*The New Moon*'. Included in Richard's choices were : '*One Kiss*', '*Stout Hearted Men*', '*Softly as in a Morning Sunrise*', and '*Lover Come Back to Me*'. Richard's arrangements were particularly notable for some interesting segués, lovely key and registration changes, and clearly a mastery of the art of harmony and counterpoint.

A comment made to me by my co-reviewer Chris Styles was "You didn't know the organ had a 32ft stop did you?" which aficionados of the Orion Centre's 3/17 Wurlitzer know – it doesn't! But Chris was referring to the ability of the artist to extract a beat frequency of half that of the 16ft. ranks, simulating that from a 32ft rank. And Richard did so frequently to dramatic effect, none the least was during the



Sigmund Romberg selection.

A return to another British composer but one who spent his last years in Australia – the composer of the theme of the ABC's long-running theme to *'Blue Hills'* – Ronald Hanmer. As a run-out to Interval, Richard chose to play a selection of items arranged by Ronald Hanmer recalling the American wild west – *'Boots and Saddles'*. Amongst those items in the arrangement could be heard: *'She'll be Coming Round the Mountain.'* *'Skip to my Lou'*, *'Home on the Range'*, *'Jimmy Crack Corn'*, *'On Top of Old Smokey'* and *'Turkey in the Straw'*. One of the delights in listening to Richard's arrangements, is the sense of comedy in his performances. He is clearly having fun whilst he plays. His ability to navigate the manuals, pistons and tabs is undoubted, but it was rather amusing to see him operate various tabs with his elbow, and to surf the keyboards (a-la Phil Kelsall) at break-neck speed to add staccato 'colour' to the item.



Following interval, Richard returned to the stage with a quick march in the fine British tradition. He chose to play *'Scarlet and Gold'* by a one-time theatre organist on the Granada Theatre circuit in the UK – Lloyd Thomas. One could almost see *'Dad's Army'* pacing it out at a really brisk marching pace.

Selection time once again and this time it was a tribute to the work of Burt Bacharach. Bacharach is notable for his unique time signatures and harmonies, and Richard gave us a demonstration of some of the musical genius of Bacharach with pieces including: *'I Say a Little Prayer'*, *'Do You Know the Way to San José'*, *'24 Hours from Tulsa'*, *'I*



*Say a Little Prayer for You*, *'Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head'*, and *'What the World Needs Now'*, *'Magic Moments'*, and *'Alfie'*. Richard admitted that the first piece of music he recalled having appealed to him was *"Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head"*. He remembered attempting to play it as a toddler, reaching up to the keys of the family's upright piano. He admitted, "it must have been a frightful noise". A gentle harmonium-style soon gave way to a full-bodied introduction to *'Do You Know the Way to San Jose?'* and onwards through a most inventive selection of the Bacharach genius. Judging by the sheer musicality Richard brought to this selection, I venture to say that his early fascination for Bacharach, is maintained to this day.

A significant change of composer, Richard chose to play *'Lonely Town'* by Leonard Bernstein, which was part of the 1944 Broadway stage production of *'On the Town'* demonstrating the more restrained side of Bernstein the melodist.

Back to the British influence to pay a tribute to Sidney Torch with *'Our Love Affair'* from the 1940 Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney film *'Strike Up the Band'* which he arranged and made very popular with his performances on the Blackpool (UK) Opera House Wurlitzer. Richard's version provided a very believable *'Torch'* sound. Without a break he went straight into *'A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square'* – a lovely lingering arrangement which as Richard indicated: "didn't need any introduction – which is why I didn't give one."

## Show & Membership Prices

The following TOSA show ticket prices now apply:

	<b>All Artists</b>
Non-members	\$32.50
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	\$27.50
TOSA Members	\$23.00

**All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status**

**All Children FREE**

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults           \$20 per person

Annual Membership Fees are now: \$35.00 for Full membership,  
and

\$25.00 for Concession, Country, Interstate & Overseas.

Membership enquiries Geoff Brimley (02) 6351 3122

[membership@tosa.net.au](mailto:membership@tosa.net.au)

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

Following that marathon, he again presented the music of Richard Rogers, but specifically, music produced during his time partnered with Lorenz Hart, on this occasion music from the show 1948 movie *'Words and Music'* starring Mickey Rooney, Perry Como, and Ann Sothern. The selection opened with the highly recognizable opening bars of *'Slaughter on Tenth Avenue'* but moving quickly into *'There's a Small Hotel'*, *'Mountain Greenery'*, *'Blue Room'*, *'We'll Build a Stairway to Paradise'*, *'Manhattan'*, *'I Wish I Were in Love Again'*.

A really big finish with *'Manhattan'* led to Richard giving his closing remarks for the afternoon. He gave a special thank-you to John Parker for having just completed tuning of the organ, and complimented TOSA(NSW) for the state of preparedness for his recital.

As his 'final' contribution, as he remarked "It is unusual to play an overture at the conclusion of a concert", but as his choice, it was to be *'The Poet and Peasant Overture'* by Franz Von Suppé (or to be pedantically correct Francesco Ezechiele Ermenegildo Cavaliere di Suppé-Demelli). Richard rendered this old workhorse highly respectable with a stunning performance of fingering dexterity and accuracy, together with a golden opportunity to demonstrate the orchestral capabilities of the instrument.

Unable to leave the stage for long, Richard 'graced' the audience with a fantastic performance of *'Rock Around the Clock'* (by Max Freedman and James E Myers) made popular by Bill Haley. Never would Bill Haley have been able to keep up with this version, the likes of which even Liberace would have shirked, which featured incredibly dexterous fingering, and 'manual-surfing'. The old piano got a workout at one stage, (and handled it well). Believe it or not, the entire tour-de-force was entirely musical. The audience en-masse rose to provide Richard Hills with a standing ovation.

TOSA(NSW) has been graced with some outstanding talent during 2014 and Tony Fenelon's Christmas performance is yet to come. With the pairing of the two superb artists in Melbourne on the 30th November, a stunning musical experience awaits.

I would like to thank my co-reviewer Chris Styles for his input, and to Barry Tooker for his assistance in providing details of Richard's between-item comments.

Doug Grant  
24th November 2014

## For Sale

### Hammond Elegante with spares

**Hammond Elegante.** 2 x 61 note keyboards and 25 note pedal board. Cabinet and bench in good condition. Sale includes numerous spares including internal Leslie and other speakers, most integrated circuit boards taken from a previous Elegante. Open to offers. Contact Craig Keller 0418 484 798 or email [craigkeller1966@gmail.com](mailto:craigkeller1966@gmail.com)

---

### Johannus Opus 225

Yes, we're looking for a good home for this organ from the famous Dutch maker of church organs, **Johannus**. Originally bought by an enthusiastic organist for his private use in 1989, this organ is still in a fine condition and would suit a small church or organ enthusiast. Finished in solid oak with bench, it presents really well.



When purchased, the Australian list price for this organ was A\$12,186. We're keen to find a good home for the fine example of an electronic organ. We will let it go for a small amount, well below its real value, to a buyer who appreciates its value. Call Marius on (0411) 248 617 to register your interest, request further information or an inspection on site in Penrith, NSW.

**The Next Performance**

**Australia's Favourite Theatre Organist**

***Tony Fenelon OAM***



***Plays***

**"The Christmas Show"**

**on the**

**Marrickville Town Hall Wurlitzer**

***an all Wurlitzer performance***

**Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads, Marrickville**

**Sunday 7 December 2014 2:00 - 4:30pm**

**Note: Due to works in front of the Town Hall  
please enter via the ramp next to the firestation**

## Tony Fenelon

From childhood Tony Fenelon displayed remarkable talent as a pianist. Early successes included winning the Victorian Final of the A B C Concerto and Vocal Competitions, and the Open and Bach sections at the National Eisteddfod in Canberra. In the same year, he obtained the highest marks ever awarded for a Licentiate Diploma in Performing Piano at the Conservatorium.

Tony showcases his incredibly wide repertoire in music genres at his concerts. He provides a tasteful balance between popular and light classics, including music from movies, stage shows, jazz and great standards.

Internationally acclaimed, Tony has performed countless major concerts in prestigious venues throughout Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan, UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan on Roland's extensive range of contemporary keyboard instruments.

Over the years Tony has displayed an ability to skilfully arrange and sensitively accompany soloists and choirs. He is regarded highly by his peers as a musician's musician for his unique approach and examples of artistry and taste.

In 2003 Tony was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to music.

**For the best reserved seats** you can book securely on trybooking.com by going to [www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au) then Events, click on the Artists name/show title then scroll down to the text to buy your ticket, click on it, select your preferred seat/s and complete the purchase.

**Tickets to the show:** Members \$23; Non-Members \$ 32.50;  
Non Member Pensioner/Senior \$ 27.50  
Group bookings for 10 or more adults \$20 per person  
**Students Free** on confirmation of Student Status  
**Children Free** accompanied by an adult

**Bookings:** Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 -  
Visa & Mastercard accepted

**Collect your tickets at the Box Office**

# History of the Kelvin Grove Christie Theatre Pipe Organ Part 3

*Compiled from various sources, with special thanks to Don Clark.*

*This information is reproduced from TOSA Queensland Division's 50th year - 2014 Souvenir Book with the kind permission of the Author - Mike Gillies*

The third genuine Christie manual was found by Don Clark in February 1999 to replace the odd one out in the console. He found this interstate (kindly donated by the Bendigo Theatre Organ Society) while inspecting rebuilt consoles and gathering technical information for our Christie console's rebuild.

And so work started on the new Christie console in March 1999. The new console was to be built in the garage of Don's home on the Sunshine Coast. At this time two grants had been forthcoming, providing funds towards the project. Included in the rebuild were new stop action magnets, tablets, thumb pistons, manual key switches and a new stop capture action memory system. Re-felting and re-bushing of all manuals and pedals was to be done as well. The organ bench, music rack and pedals were finished in polished timber to match the console. This was a mammoth task and a credit to Don Clark for his meticulous work not only on the console but also on the previously rebuilt organ chambers.



An anonymous donation of \$1,000 meant that the organ would be completed with 11 ranks, with a much sought-after Kimball Solo String rank being again sourced by Russ Evans in May 1999. The farewell playing of the old (second) console was held on August 1999 in the presence of our Patron.

As well as the eight-memory stop capture action, all the pistons would be range settable, providing a vast array of registrations for the organist. The new console was also re-specified to modern theatre pipe organ standards, allowing even more beautiful combinations to be used. To help make the organ 'user friendly', a new combination system was purchased to allow 15 range-settable pre-sets pistons per manual plus some other additional pistons on the great and accompaniment manuals.

Once the new horseshoe rails were made, the console could be gradually built around them and by late 1999, the console was nearing completion. By February 2000, the wiring of the Z-tronics multiplexing was almost complete in the new console. In March, 34 individual console pieces went to the timber polishers. Finally in October that year, the wiring of the console was completed. Minor fettling by Don and various adjustments saw the new console delivered to the hall at Kelvin Grove over the school holidays in January 2001.

In March 2001 at the monthly meeting, 60 members attended and over 13 individuals had a play of the 'new' Christie. All were gob-smacked at the transformation of the Christie—its sound, feel and instant touch of the controls. The new console now sat on a moveable platform so it could be rolled onto the stage when the organist is playing with other instruments.

The work was not over yet. The organ needed to be regulated and tuned for its environment and readied for the 2001 Easter Convention. Weekends and nights were a hive of activity at the hall as 'fine tuning' took place and any pre-commissioning gremlins ironed out. Julien Arnold from TOSA Victorian Division kindly visited the hall a week before the Convention and helped Don Clark with the final regulation and tuning. Richard Hills was the first international artist to play on the new console and the whole organ acquitted itself extremely well at the Convention.



All this work on our Christie theatre pipe organ wouldn't have been at all possible if it wasn't for the very hard work of one man—Don Clark, our former Vice-President for Restoration—who provided his labour free to the Society as his interests were only in the future life of this very beautiful instrument. Thanks must also go to Kevin Purchase, Kevin Charters, Don Bland, Ken Davies, Merv Lock, Russ Evans and Russell Cornish who helped in the restoration and re-installation of the organ from 1996 to 2001. To others unnamed, we also thank you for your help.



### **The Final Rank**

The first solo international artist performance of the complete new organ was by Brett Valliant on 15 August 2001. In December that year, work on the new Flute chest commenced. The old Flute chest was being used to take the Clarinet rank. Its pipes were rebuilt in Adelaide. Installed in February 2004, the Christie was now a genuine 3-manual/11-rank organ.

Over the next decade the Christie provided exemplary service at monthly meetings and guest artist concerts. It never ceases to amaze organists and visitors who come to hear it—and seems to have gained a reputation as one of best Christie installations in the world. The maintenance crew of volunteer members continues to maintain and make improvements as required to the organ.

In May 2005, a freak hailstorm passed over inner western Brisbane, dumping nearly a quarter of a metre of hail on the Kelvin Grove assembly hall roof. As it melted, it penetrated the chamber and entered the pipes, causing all manner of water damage to the organ. The Solo chamber suffered the worst and fortunately the insurance cover was instigated. The Main chamber was not damaged nearly as much. Subsequent inspections by the assessors approved a full rebuild of the damaged ranks and electrics by Don Clark and TOSA volunteers, under the professional supervision of Simon Pierce Pipe Organ Works.

By February 2006, the Christie was nearing its rebuild completion after the hail damage, when again the roof leaked. Fortunately a plastic sheet had covered the pipes and no damage occurred. There were more leaks during rain in March and the school assured TOSA that this time it would be properly fixed—which it was. The grand reopening of the Christie was performed by visiting American theatre organist Mark Herman on 25 June 2006 to the joy of TOSA members and public alike. The organ again sounded superb.

Recent work has included the commissioning of the Vibraphone after a near 30-year absence; installing a separate Trumpet tremulant for the Post Horn stop; reconfiguring the Tibia tremulants; addition of a synthetic 32 foot pedal stop; service of the traps and toy counter and many other small items. The piano is now working well. This has kept the Kelvin Grove Christie performing as one of the best around.

In January 2013, the console hoist platform was removed and refurbished. This involved a rebuild of gearbox and fitting of new guide wheels and shims. After 38 years of regular use (and the countless operating hours in its previous life as a vintner's storehouse lift) the hoist has survived well.

And so, the vintage Christie theatre pipe organ (Opus 2911) at Kelvin Grove continues to perform today, eighty years after its birth. Thanks and gratitude must go to Don Clark and all those TOSA volunteers before and after him who have kept this wonderful cinema organ working as a fine example and demonstrator of the almost lost art of the cinema organ—its solo performance and silent film accompaniment.

## **The CCA organ ... 1942--2014**

*Reproduced from the printed program provided at the  
Dave Wickerham concert, October 19 2014  
and with the kind permission of the Editor of the Pipeline -  
JoAnn Evans and the concert reviewer Jamie Snell*

The Calvary Christian Assembly (CCA) organ is a combination of Kimball & Wurlitzer pipework controlled by a Balcom & Vaughan console. Kimball Opus 6651 (Liberty Theatre, Centralia) was built in 1922, and in 1942 was acquired by and installed in Hollywood Temple (across 8th Ave. where I-5 is today) as a memorial to Mr. E. R. Erickson. It has served the congregation 72 years.

When the present building was completed, the Kimball was moved from Hollywood Temple with the console placed out of view next to the old choir loft. During the late 1960s the organ was melded with Wurlitzer Opus 697 (Hollywood Theatre, Hollywood, CA), acquired from the well-known California gospel music personality, Lorin Whitney. The combined and enlarged organ was installed by Balcom & Vaughan Pipe Organs and contained 19 ranks plus two sets of chimes, marimba and chrysoglott. The new Balcom & Vaughn console was equipped with a full complement of combination pistons operated by a then-state-of-the-art mechanical control system. The enlarged and reinstalled organ was dedicated June 28, 1970.

The instrument served the church well for many years. Over the years the organ was used less and less and slowly fell into a state of needing much repair.

### ***PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY ENTERS THE STORY***

In 2008, Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society (PSTOS), the local Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society, agreed to host the 2010 week long ATOS international convention and wished to include the CCA organ in the program lineup. To prepare the instrument for presentation to this group of critical listeners, PSTOS invested considerable time and resources to bring the organ up to an acceptable concert performance level. That event was such a resounding success that PSTOS began working with CCA to produce one or two theatre organ concerts each year. But the organ still needed a great deal of costly maintenance and repair not included in the church budget.

### ***CCA & PSTOS FORM AN ALLIANCE***

It was learned that other ATOS chapters in the U.S. and abroad had formed alliances with churches wherein an ATOS chapter agrees to upgrade and maintain the church's theatre organ in exchange for certain usage, including presenting concerts for the enjoyment of the

congregation, Chapter members, and the public. In each such case, a detailed legal agreement was carefully crafted to protect both parties. And in each case, the alliance worked to the benefit of all—the church enjoying a perfectly working organ with no maintenance costs, and the Chapter able to confidently present internationally recognized organists, knowing the instrument will meet expectations and perform flawlessly.

In 2012, PSTOS representatives began a dialog with the CCA Board, exploring their interest in forging such an alliance. With thanks to Jeff Snyder, who sits on that board and is also president of PSTOS, an agreement was eventually crafted and signed.

#### *ADDITIONAL PIPEWORK ACQUIRED TO ENLARGE AND ENHANCE THE ORGAN*

Meanwhile, confident that the agreement would be finalized, the PSTOS Board of Directors authorized purchase of four ranks of beautiful pipework from the estate of member Ray Whelpley —Tibia, Orchestral Oboe, Kinura and Trumpet, plus a complete toy counter and additional tuned percussions. These parts were stored at the church until work could begin in earnest in January of this year. In addition, Russ Evans designed and constructed a new rolling platform for the console which allowed it to be moved from beneath the balcony, making it easier for organists to hear the instrument. This also eliminated the need to manually lift the console from its former fixed location to the platform level for concerts.

#### *THE PSTOS INVESTMENT*

When the PSTOS Board of Directors authorized the project, they were confident of having sufficient funds, mostly from the 2010 convention, to cover the costs. But by March, 2014, over \$42,000 had been paid out for the Whelpley parts, replacement of the blower motor and starter (an unexpected expense), the Uniflex control system, the new control panel with all new stop tabs from Klann Organ Supply, and 380 hours of professional technician's work. A like number of volunteer hours were contributed. A dedicated fund drive would be necessary to complete the work. The fund drive began in March. The goal —\$20,000. The drive was a success.

#### *THE CCA KIMBALL-WURLITZER PLAYS AGAIN FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL!*

PSTOS and CCA have partnered to bring this wonderful instrument back to its full glorious potential for the enjoyment of all! It is hoped everyone who enjoyed Dave Wickerham's inaugural program will return often to be entertained by highly regarded theatre organists. The first annual three-concert series begins in February of 2015.

## Wickerham Wows at the Wurlitzer!

*Review by Jamie Snell – Photos by Bruce Andre Photography*



### **Dave Wickerham**

On the very special Sunday afternoon of October 19, acclaimed organist Dave Wickerham inaugurated the newly upgraded Wurlitzer-Kimball organ at

Calvary Christian Assembly with a concert that could certainly be described as spectacular.

This concert marked the completion of a massive project of rebuilding and expanding the organ. Improvements included four new pipe ranks (bringing the total to 25), a complete toy counter, additional tuned percussions, a new blower motor, a state-of-the-art Uniflex control system, a rebuilt console control panel with a new row of stop tabs, a new console platform, and repair or replacement of numerous other components. The project cost over \$60,000 and required many hundreds of hours of both volunteer and professional work over many months. Wickerham had last performed on this instrument in February, 2013, before the upgrade; this concert was an opportunity for him to demonstrate the organ's new capabilities. He succeeded. The concert was a triumphant celebration of the rejuvenated instrument.

After introductory remarks by emcee Bob Zat and Pastor Steve



### **Master of Ceremonies, Bob Zat did his usual outstanding job**

Pecota, Wickerham set the upbeat tone with a snappy rendition of "A Wonderful Day like Today" and Joplin's "Chrysanthemum Rag," and captured the audience with his understated and wry commentary. Next he played a tribute to Gershwin, with sumptuous highlights from "Rhapsody in Blue" and seven songs including the catchy "Liza (All the Clouds'll Roll Away)" – performed, like the entire concert, entirely from memory, fluidly and flawlessly, and with seemingly endless varied registrations. Following the hymn "It Is Well with My Soul" came a medley of Fats Waller tunes, including "Honeysuckle Rose" with bits of Gershwin cleverly woven in. Wickerham concluded the first half with Eric Coates's rousing "Knightsbridge March," providing a virtuosic opportunity to demonstrate the organ's brass ranks. But before breaking for intermission, he asked audience members to use the designated paper pad in the lobby to submit their requests, which he would attempt to assemble into a medley in the second half.

"Attempt" in this case would be an understatement! Following several more planned numbers, notably the theme from "I Love Lucy" and variations on "Puff the Magic Dragon," he embarked on the audience-request medley. This reviewer noted at least 25 tunes; to mention a few: "Bippity Boppity Boo," "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," "Who," "Nola," Joplin's "Easy Winners Rag," "Brazilian Sleigh Bells," theme from "The Lone Ranger" (complete with a cry of "Hi-oh, Silver! Away!"), improvisations on "Chopsticks," highlights from Chabrier's "España" and Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2," and "Phantom of the Opera" (with a quote from Bach's famous D-minor fugue), concluding with "God Bless America." Wickerham played the medley from memory for 48 minutes non-stop with, by one attendee's count, at least 205 registration changes.

Needless to say, by this time the audience was in a state of amazement, and Wickerham indicated that he was fairly exhausted. But that didn't stop him from playing the lively "Rondo in G" by John Bull as an encore. After the concert I heard many comments from attendees that in a different setting might be considered hyperbole, but in this case were heartfelt: awesome, astonishing, sublime, thrilling. Amen.

PSTOS thanks everyone who helped make this concert happen, including the church staff, organ crew, production and A/V teams, program organizers, and the many people responsible for printed materials, ticket sales, ushering, refreshments, setup, cleanup, artist lodging and transport, and other aspects. Having witnessed the organ's inauguration, PSTOS now looks forward to its first-ever subscription concert series in 2015, with renowned organists Walt Strony on Feb. 8, Jonas Nordwall on June 14, and John Atwell on September 27. We hope to see you there!



## THE AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION.

The American Theatre Organ Society presents an Annual Convention commencing in early July. In 2010 the Puget Sound Chapter of A.T.O.S. based in Seattle, Washington hosted this annual event. To the best of our knowledge there has never been a larger contingent from a foreign country than the Fifty (yes Fifty) Conventioneers from Australia. Many Australian visitors for years had been personal friends of Seattle residents and T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Divn.) Honourary Members, Russ and Jo Ann Evans and this surely prompted a larger contingent than usual. Many Australian organs have benefitted by parts shipped over the years by Russ.

Fifty conventioneers made the difference between making a small profit and making a really profitable event. Puget Sound's Treasury was in good shape after mid-2010. The Australians were a key factor.

N.S.W. Division were also able to assist in the negotiations with the Church as we had recently been down that track with St. Columb's West Ryde Anglican Church. Copies of our draft agreement were sent to Seattle and these were taken into consideration when writing up Puget Sound's Agreement with C.C.A.

Both Chapters have not only benefitted two Church installations but have excellent concert and social venues for two outstanding organs.

Surely other Chapters will have to seriously consider such arrangements in the future as the availability of Civic Halls is severely limited by shrinking Council Budgets.



**Dave enjoyed interacting with an ever appreciative audience**



## Members Diary

Monday 1 December Committee 6:00pm

St Columb's Anglican Church, West Ryde

**Sunday 7 December 2:00pm - 4:30pm**

# Tony Fenelon Australia

plays

## "The Christmas Show"

*all Theatre Organ on*

the **Marrickville Wurlitzer**

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads, Marrickville

**Book at** [www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au) - Events **OR**  
**Contact Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131**  
**and pick up your tickets at the Box Office**

***\*Now is the time to purchase your Season Ticket\*  
for all the Theatre Organ Shows in 2015***

**Please complete the Season Ticket booking form in  
this issue and bring it together with your payment to  
the Christmas Show at Marrickville Town Hall  
on December 7**

Radio 2MBS-FM 102.5 "Colours of the King" (program of the Organ Music  
Society of Sydney) 2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm

***\*Theatre Organ Magic\* on RNB - FM from Sydney, NSW, Australia.***  
88.7 FM and 90.3 FM 12 noon first Sunday of the month for one hour

**Web Sites of Interest:** <https://www.facebook.com/tosansw>  
[www.theatreorgansaustralia.info](http://www.theatreorgansaustralia.info) (history of cinema organ installations in  
Australasia)

<http://www.omss.org.au> (our sister society, the Organ Music Society of Sydney  
OMSS) - [www.ATOS.org](http://www.ATOS.org)

# TOSA NEWS

December 2014  
Volume 53 No.11

**PRINT  
POST  
100004836**

**POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA**

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

101 Crinan St., Hurlstone Park NSW 2193

If undeliverable please return to :

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235 [www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au)

