

TOSA NEWS

Mar/Apr 2023
Volume 62 No.2
PRICE \$2.50

**Come on along, come on along to hear
Simon & Cliff play**

Your favourite

**Movie Music, Marches & More
on Your famous**

Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra

Sunday 12th March

Marrickville Town Hall 2:00pm



/tosansw



#tosansw

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Dear Members,

As the month of March leads us into Autumn, some songs that come to my mind are Autumn Nocturne, Autumn Leaves and Autumn in New York. Well, I don't know about New York but Autumn in Sydney heralds in our first concert for the year on March 12 at Marrickville Town Hall where you will be entertained by Simon Ellis and Cliff Bingham.

The concert theme is Movies, Marches and More. Hmm... marches in March! Do please come along and support your local Artists.

Also in this issue of the newsletter: progress on the Orion Wurlitzer repairs, a Perth theatre organ to be relocated, 40 years of theatre organ music at the Capri Theatre (Adelaide) and other tidbits.

I look forward to seeing you at Movies, Marches & More @ Marrickville.

Regards,

Neil

Editorial



Hello Members,

By the time you read this TOSA News, there will have been further progress on the Orion Wurlitzer refurbishment following water damage. Organ Builder, John Parker's report is in this issue.

Another stormwater drain at the Orion Theatre near the rear entrance has been up graded by Council.

I have included some history from Simon Gledhill about an award for young organists in the UK to show that young musicians are still learning to play the Unit Orchestra over there. I mention a concert in the USA by one of their young organists who won the American Theatre Organ Society's Young Organist Competition in 2016. This bodes well for future Australian Tours by overseas artists.

Best Regards,

Ernie Vale, Editor
editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



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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

Please Note

The Society's only bank account now is with **St George**. Details are **BSB 112-879, account number 442 088 530**.

Please direct all payments to this account with St George Bank.

News of the State Theatre, Sydney

The former State Ballroom is to be returned to a ballroom.

Whilst dining at the State Cafe recently I was chatting to a waiter who confidently mentioned that the area below the Cafe, currently used as a

cinema, is to be turned back into a ballroom. Lets wait and see.

Editor

Members

Treat your family and friends to a first time invitation to come along to Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday 12th March to hear Simon & Cliff play your mighty Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra.

This is a unique opportunity to introduce them to the wonderful sounds of the Wurlitzer musical instrument designed and developed by the genius Robert Hope Jones. Only \$25 per Adult. Children Free

Cabaret style seating with 7 to a table. You can BYO drinks and nibbles. Jugs of iced water and cups on each table.

If you book on the TOSA web site www.tosa.net.au you can print out your tickets at home and go straight into the concert. Pre booking is a big help for catering for afternoon tea.

Vale Warren Lubich USA

News of Warren's passing reached us last week. Warren played some tours of Australia in the 80s, was resident organist at the Castro Theatre, San Francisco and was a regular at ATOS Conventions. He was happy to chauffeur one around in his classic cars, Packard, Lincoln

To Watch Out for
Marrickville Concert

Music from

**Movies, Marches &
More**

with

**Simon Ellis &
Cliff Bingham**

Marrickville Town Hall

Sunday 12th March

2:pm - 4:30pm

Public Transport

**Buses 418, 425 & 426
all stop in front of
the Town Hall**

If your friends are first timers they only pay \$25ea and you can book by phoning Theo on 0410 626 131 before 8:00pm with their Name and Address and payment details.

**Please help us to achieve a
Full House.**

**Advertising
Rates in
TOSA News**

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

**Members' Dates
West Ryde Anglican Church**

**The next players day
is Wednesday 19th
April 2023**

**Convener is
John Weismantel**

0435 258 287 or
whitecoats@bigpond.com

Marrickville Town Hall

Monday 27th March 2023

**Convener is
John Batts on 0420424103**

He will email you
to confirm availability

40 & fabulous!

Celebrating 40 years of theatre organ music at the Capri Theatre

1983



2023



HITS OF THE 1980S

plus *Dirty Dancing (M)*

FRIDAY

31ST MARCH: 7PM

A fundraising evening featuring local artists playing hits of the 80s on the mighty Wurlitzer, followed by one of the most iconic films of the era, *Dirty Dancing*.

STRIKE UP THE BAND

Chris McPhee & Rosanne Hosking

SATURDAY

1ST APRIL: 2PM

Chris, on the Wurlitzer, assisted by vocalist Rosanne, will feature music from the big band era. They will be joined by the acclaimed City of Unley Concert Band.

MAGICAL MOVIE MUSIC

John Atwell & Tony Fenelon

SUNDAY

2ND APRIL: 2PM

Two of the three organists from the inaugural 1983 concert will play the Wurlitzer organ to celebrate its 40 years in the Capri, with Magical Movie Music.



1982-78
\$30 FRIDAY NIGHT | 325 MEMBERS & CONCESSIONS
\$35 INDIVIDUAL CONCERTS | 330 MEMBERS & CONCESSIONS
\$10 CELEBRATION BOOKLET
\$90 DISCOUNTED FULL PACKAGE | 375 MEMBERS & CONCESSIONS
IF PAID BEFORE MARCH 3, 2023 (INCLUDES CELEBRATION BOOKLET)

OPTIONAL DINNER
SATURDAY NIGHT AT
'HEY GEORGE'
\$40 (LTD NO'S)

Book Now! CAPRI.ORG.AU | 8272 1177 | ENQUIRIES TO: secretary@capri.org.au

South Australia TOSA 40th

Over the weekend, Friday, March 31 to April 2, 2023, TOSA South Australia will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first theatre organ concert held at the Capri Theatre.

The weekend of celebrations ('40 and Fabulous') will include concerts on Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon. The Sunday concert will feature two of the three artists who played in our first concert 40 years ago - Tony Fenelon and John Atwell. In addition, interstate TOSA members will have priority to visit Richard Larritt's home installation on Sunday morning and an Open Console is planned for Monday morning, April 3, for those who would like to try their hand at the Capri Wurlitzer.

An invitation is extended to all interstate TOSA members to join us for the weekend.

DISCOUNT FULL PACKAGE if paid before March 3 (includes the three concerts and a Celebration Book) will cost TOSA members \$75 and non-TOSA members \$90.

This is an enquiry e-mail via <https://www.tosa.net.au/> from:
Adrian Tyler <tyler.adrian@gmail.com>

I have two Rodgers tone cabinets with their amplifiers for free offer to anyone who might be interested. They were bought in 1982 but roll surrounds are good and all other drivers operational.

Dimensions are 60w-60d-93h. The location is St.Paul's Pearces Corner Wahroonga. I am keen to liaise with anyone interested. My home phone is 02 94896851. 0414489685 (Elizabeth's phone) I thought of TOSA as I know 3 members. Paul Ballard, Craig Keller and Cliff Bingham. I transcribed many TOSA early years tapes to digital for Craig. Hoping that someone can find a new venue for them.

Give Adrian a call on 02 94896851

From Simon Gledhill One of the UK's outstanding Theatre Organists

Coming up soon, on Sunday 12th March! For those who didn't see my earlier post about this, I've provided some background information below. I'm looking forward to sharing this special event with Aaron Hawthorne. 40-year Flashback:



The black and white photo of Nigel Ogden and me was taken at the first COS Ian Sutherland Award Concert at the State, Grays in 1983. The award, named in memory of a former COS Newsletter Editor, has been given 18 times over the years to young theatre organists considered to demonstrate outstanding talent and potential. I was honoured to be the first recipient and Aaron Hawthorne is the latest. He and I will be playing the 2023 Ian Sutherland Award Concert on the fine COS Wurlitzer at the Victoria Hall, Saltaire on Sunday 12th March, starting at 2.30pm. I hope some of you can join us!



Aaron Hawthorne

New Membership Fees

New Membership up to June 30th 2023

\$25.00 Full membership, \$20.00 Concession, Interstate or Overseas \$25. \$5 discount if TOSA News emailed to you in color. (Only one TOSA News per household)

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

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

New Associate Membership for spouse/partner
an additional 50%

12TH MARCH 2:30PM

LIVE MUSIC

for the

COS Ian Sutherland Award Concert



Featuring award-holder Aaron Hawthorne
with Simon Gledhill

VICTORIA HALL
SALTAIRE
WURLITZER

Cinema Organ



giftaid it

Registered Charity Number 1189263

 @cosorgans

 @cinemaorgans

General Admission £12

Under 18's Free

Information Line (after 7pm) 0845 400 2208

Homemade cakes and
refreshments from Inturlude Cafe



STIRLING THEATRE ORGAN PRODUCTIONS NEWSLETTER (No.63 - March 2023)

WURLITZER FAREWELL TO KARRINYUP

On April 2nd, 2023, the final Wurlitzer organ concert will be held in the Karrinyup Community Centre. The Centre has been the focal point of good music, camaraderie, and a meeting place for friends since the initial concert by Tony Fenelon in 1981. The instrument spent 42 years leased by the City of Stirling, just short of the 45 years of its time installed in the Hoyts Regent later Metro Theatre in William Street Perth. The City of Stirling recently renewed its organ lease but understood the owners were looking for certainty of longevity for the instrument. Certainly at some time WA weekend shopping hours will be extended causing more chaotic parking at the Karrinyup Shopping Centre which works against providing a pleasurable concert experience.

Extensive investigations on the availability and suitability of schools, local government and other auditoriums in Perth was undertaken. Organ builders often joke the most important stop on an organ is the auditorium into which it speaks. Some auditoriums have acoustics which help pipes create a cohesive sound, others do not. The Karrinyup organ enjoys an auditorium well designed for music with no right-angle corners, and a high parabolic instead of flat ceiling. In a nutshell a new home for the Wurlitzer required space for its installation and a good auditorium for music. Investigations of venues found their acoustics varied in suitability and that wherever the Wurlitzer was moved some building works would be required to provide pipe chambers and a blower room.

Fortuitously, for some years John Fuhrmann had been playing a large electronic organ in the heritage listed art deco Cygnet Theatre in Como and noticed the building was located on a hill with a significant fall underneath the stage from one to the other. In a strange coincidence the Stiles family who had owned the theatre since construction in 1938 put the building up for sale in 2019. Although the Cygnet met the acoustical requirements to house an organ it had no pipe chambers. The Cygnet's new owners were looking for a point of difference to assist promote the theatre's viability and help reinvigorate Preston Street Como. They accepted a submission to transplant the Wurlitzer organ back into a theatre setting with under-stage pipe chambers and inclusion of an organ lift.

A Google search for “Heritage Hub – Cygnet Theatre” will give interested parties details of the scale of developments that are to occur and provide context for the heritage significance of the Cygnet Theatre.

THE CREAM OF ORGANISTS

Concentrating on the period 1981 – 2023 an analysis of artists shows 55 different organists from overseas, interstate and locally have entertained and delighted audiences on the Karrinyup Wurlitzer. The list reads like a who’s, who of keyboard talent headed by Australia’s Tony Fenelon who only missed playing the instrument three times, two of which were due to Covid restrictions. Other artists have performed multiple times. Young unknown artists were also judiciously selected to play the Wurlitzer and went on to fulfill their potential. For example, Richard Hills (UK) became deputy organist at Westminster Abbey and is featured on YouTube playing for the BBC Proms. David Gray (UK) topped his final graduating year at the London Royal College of Music. Jelani Eddington and Brett Valliant were both recognised as Organists of the Year by the American Theatre Organ Society.

The alphabetical list of Karrinyup Wurlitzer artists is as follows: JOHN ATWELL, NATHAN AVAKIAN USA, BRUCE ARDLEY, BARRY BAKER USA, DAVID BAILEY, CHARLIE BALOGH USA, DWIGHT BEACHAM USA, DAN BELLOMY USA, LISA BENNETT, CLIFF BINGHAM, RAY CLEMENTS, NIGEL DAVIES, KEN DOUBLE USA, JELANI EDDINGTON USA, MARTIN ELLIS USA, Jo ANN EVANS USA, ALAN FLANDERS, TONY FENELON, JOHN FUHRMANN, JOHN GIACCHI, SIMON GLEDHILL UK, DAVID GRAY U,K, MARGARET HALL, RYAN HEGGIE, RICHARD HILLS UK, RUSSELL HOLMES UK, NEIL JENSEN, DENNIS JAMES USA, DAVID JOHNSTON, PHIL KELSALL UK, LYN LARSEN USA, MATHEW LOESER, WARREN LUBICH USA, LANCE LUCE USA, JOHN LEDWON USA, JERRY NAGANO USA, NIC MARTIN UK, CHRIS McPHEE, JONAS NORDWALL USA, TONY O’BRIEN USA, ALESSANDRO PITTORINO, JOHN POUND, CHRIS POWELL UK, DONNIE RANKIN USA, LEN RAWLE UK, ROB RICHARDS USA, JIM RIGGS USA, JUSTIN STAHL USA, BILL SCHUMACHER, WALT STRONY USA, RAY THORNLEY, BRETT VALLIANT USA, DAVE WICKERHAM USA, ROBERT WOLFE UK.

WHAT WILL THE ORGAN TRANSPLANT TO THE CYGNET THEATRE MEAN?

From an audience point of view there will be several benefits, namely:

- Substantial theatre undercover parking,
- Comfortable cushioned raked cinema seating with good sight lines,
- Opportunity to sit in the circle for a different concert overview.

From an organ installation and maintenance perspective, the benefits will be:

- Floor level entry pipe chambers for ease of installation and maintenance,
- Installation of an organ console lift for improved presentation and storage,
- A permanent film screen available for silent film presentation,
- Installation of a new relay system with playback mechanism for duetting,
- Organ installation will take between six and 12 months.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PAST SUPPORT AND YOUR HELP IN ANY WAY WOULD BE APPRECIATED



The State Theatre, Sydney Wurlitzer and Orchestra both on their hoists. They played before the movie and during interval. In those days "Sweets lollies and chocs" and "Peters Ice" were sold inside the Theatre.

The Next Concert
Sunday 12th March 2023 2:00pm
featuring TOSA Members
Simon Ellis and Cliff Bingham



playing the **Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra** at
Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr. Marrickville & Petersham Rds.

Marrickville 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Cabaret Style Seating means you can

BYO drinks, glasses & nibbles.

Jugs of Iced Water & Cups are provided on each table

A delicious Afternoon Tea will be available at \$5 per person.
This includes a tasty treat and fresh brewed percolated coffee
or tea.

A gluten free option will also be available.

You can book now on the TOSA Web site
www.tosa.net.au

Tickets: Non Member Adult \$40, Concession \$35; Members \$25
Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$22 per person

First time Adult \$25 by completed Voucher at Box Office

Simon Ellis is a native of Sydney, and has a background in Philosophy, English, Law and Theology. After initial piano studies from the age of 6, he studied organ with Robert Broughall and then with the late Eric Smith. He served as Assistant Organist to Eric at Wesley Central Mission for 6 years, and was regularly heard playing the Christie theatre organ in the Lyceum Theatre, playing for both church services, and before and after movies.

In later years, he was privileged to spend many occasions gaining experience and advice from the late Ashely Miller, who among his other achievements, was for many years one of the celebrated organists of Radio City Music Hall in New York.

Simon was Organist/ Choirmaster at Northmead Uniting Church for 9 years until the early 1980's, and concurrently Director of Music at a large reception venue, Fairfield House, at Windsor. He also served several years as Associate Music Director for the Sydney Touring Theatre Company, and was Director of the highly successful Blue Mountains Consort for 6 years until 1998.

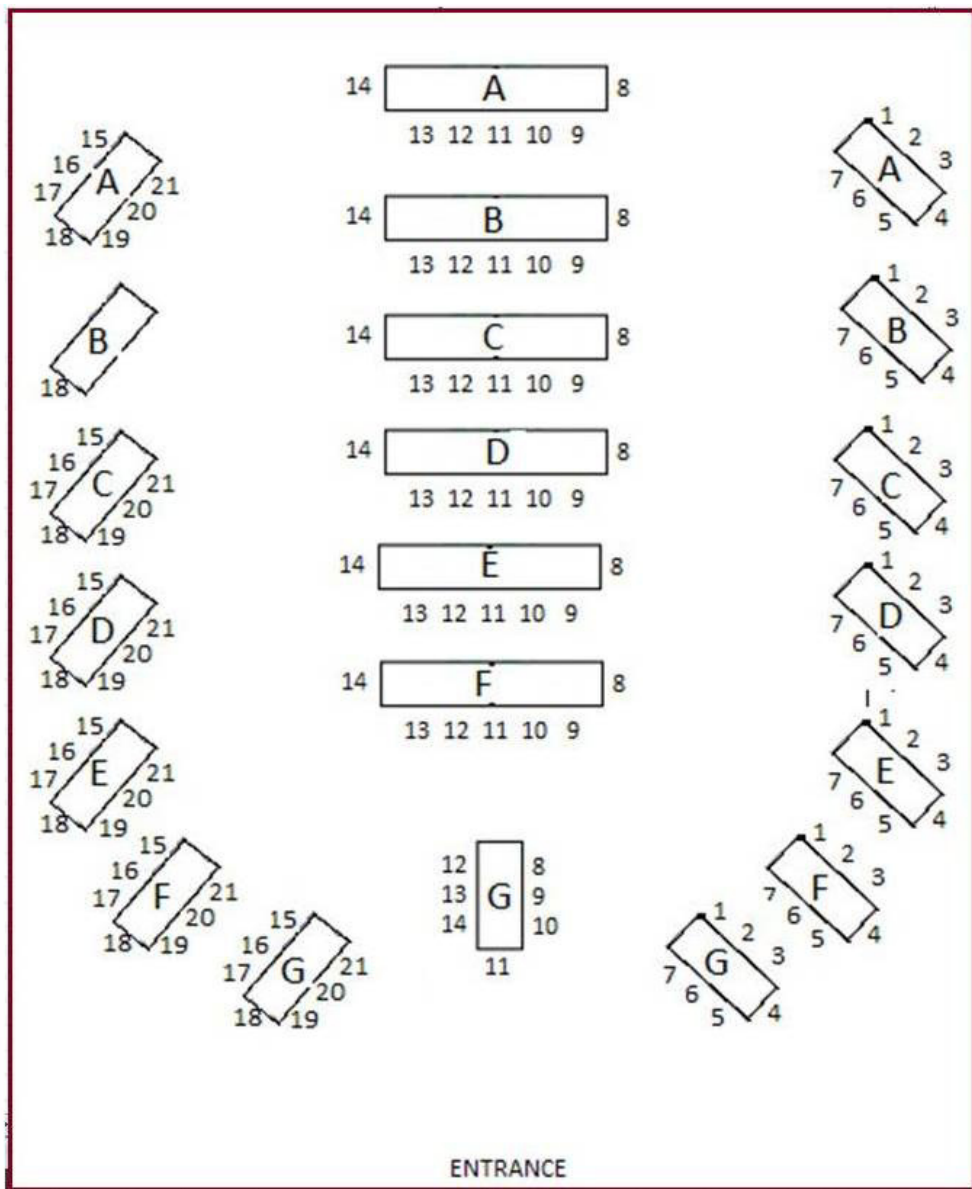
Simon has performed in both theatre and classical organ venues in many parts of Australia, America, Britain, and Europe. He has accompanied many singers and instrumentalists, both in Australia and overseas, and also studied singing with the late Florence Taylor. He has had a long involvement with the Royal School of Church Music, and is currently in his 20th year as Senior Staff Organist for a large Sydney church.

Cliff Bingham began classical organ studies in 1962 with Roland Stenton and Frank Taylor at St Matthew's Anglican Church, Manly. In 1964 in his final school year, he was organ soloist at the Festival of School Instrumental Music in the Sydney Town Hall, the first of many occasions on which he would be featured at that iconic instrument.

His first meeting with a theatre organ was in 1959 at the West Ryde Christie. (Yes, the same organ TOSA is currently reinstalling in the newer church building.) **Cliff** was living in West Ryde at the time. His best mate at school was the Rector's son. This early encounter sparked such an interest that he joined TOSA NSW in 1962 and set about learning as much as he could about playing the theatre organ.

Over the years, he has had a number of valued moments with some of the theatre organ greats. Standouts are Tony Fenelon at an 11pm to 4am session at the Melbourne Regent 4/19 in 1969, a two-hour session with Jonas Nordwall at the Portland Organ Grinder 4/44 in 1979 and a lovely dinner at the Rawle residence around Len's wonderful 4/24 Wurlitzer in 1985.

Cliff has played numerous concerts in all Australian states and New Zealand on both pipe and electronic organs and was featured at many TOSA conventions. Since 'retirement', **Cliff** has made an appearance along with good mates **Simon Ellis** and **Titus Grenyer** at the **State Theatre, Sydney, Wurlitzer relaunch in February 2020.**



**Book via the link on tosa.net.au using the Trybooking seating plan
or phone Theo on 0410 626 131 before 8pm please**

Your Committee has reviewed the practice for purchasing a ticket to concerts so you can be assured of reserving your seats

based on the seating plan. Payment for your ticket must be made at the time of booking which is easy using your credit or debit card. **Visa, Mastercard and American Express is acceptable.**

If you book your seat in advance then can't attend the concert for any reason then TOSA will give you a credit towards the next concert. Alternatively you can give your ticket to someone else - the tickets are transferable.

Please book early to reserve your preferred seats and to help with catering preparation.

You can purchase tickets at the box office on the day of the concert using your credit or debit card. There will be someone assigned to specifically process credit/debit card purchases at the box office.

We would love to see you at this Concert. Please encourage friends to come along to hear Simon and Cliff play your World Renowned Wurlitzer in the perfect acoustics of Marrickville Town Hall.

**Make up a table of friends to have a fun afternoon of music.
7 seats to a table.**

To keep costs down the bulk of the food is homemade and baked fresh on the Saturday prior to Sundays Concert.

At \$5 this represents great value for a tea or coffee plus tasty treat. There will be a choice of 4 tasty treats, 1 of which will be "gluten free"

Most Coffee Shops now have coffee and cake for \$9.00 plus, so this is a bargain. I'm sure you'll agree.

**Members, please help us to fill the Town Hall by inviting
some friends or acquaintances to the Concert
to introduce them to the wonderful sounds of
the
Mighty Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra**

TOSA(NSW) Meeting at West Ryde Anglican Church on Wednesday afternoon, 15th of February, 2023.

Impressions by John S. Batts.

A hot day meant a demanding climb from West Ryde railway station to the WRAC. Nonetheless a TOSA technical team had been labouring several hours on the Christie instrument before any players arrived for a noon start. Changes in temperature and humidity are never kind to pipe organs, but in truth the organ sounded rather well. John Parker has spent some time earlier tuning the Clarinet rank, and a polite reed is always an asset.

The number of listening members understandably fluctuated a little during the session, and church organist (& member) Philip Bongers made an appearance late in the session – but he could not be persuaded to play!

Three organists David Badman, Graeme Costin, and your scribe took it in turn to explore new and old possibilities – notably Graeme, executing a first, engaged the tuned Bird-whistles for one of his pieces. Many of us will think of their employment in a chorus of 'Hot Dog' recorded by Sidney Torch at the Regal Cinema, Edmonton (N. London) in the 1930s. However, there is other music in or around the theatre-organ repertoire that might use the Bird-Whistles: think of songs like 'Let's All Sing Like the Birdies Do' or on a different level Ketelbey's 'In a Monastery Garden'. Readers may wish to start searching through their albums for the likes of – let me get you started! – 'Bye, Bye Blackbird', 'Skylark', 'When the Red, Red Robin', 'La Paloma' (the Dove), a certain avian who sang in Berkeley Square, Gene MacLellan's 'Snowbird', Neil Diamond's 'Skybird', the Beatles' 'Blackbird Singing in the Night', 'Feed the Birds (Mary Poppins). Google the topic if you must! (or spend time learning the Overture to Rossini's 'Thieving Magpie!'). And do not think that my injunction is compulsory for the March meeting.

There was no lack of variety in the music heard that afternoon. David presented a vigorous version of the South American 'Besame Mucho' and John tried out Neil Moret's 'Chloe: Song of the Swamp'.

There were refreshments on hand for the needy – thank you Margaret!

Listeners lending encouragement were: John Weismantel, Rob Gliddon, Margaret Badman, Kevin Clancy, and Philip Bongers.

Orion Report From John Parker February 2023

Dear Committee,

A productive and very HOT four hours was spent at the Orion on Tuesday 7th February.

Many thanks to John Weismantle, Neil Palmer, Barry Tooker and Ernie Vale for their help on the day. The "C side" of the 16' Tibia chest was reassembled with fully restored parts, and the eight wooden pipes replaced.

Wall support stays were checked, with one being refixed to the wall.

The 10 note 8' Tibia chest (fully restored) was reattached to the back wall of the chamber and two repaired wooden wind trunks fitted to each end of the chest.

Pipes were removed from storage and placed back in position.

Four upper pipes of the "C# side" Tibia 16' were also replaced back on the restored chest – the larger eight remaining in storage to allow space to move in the Solo Chamber.

It has been suggested that the wind trunks are reconnected, wiring attached and the wind run up. This will give an idea of how things stand since the water has dried from the organ. It will also show any evidence of any other timber warpage that may have resulted from the long-term water damage.

After this we will attend to the three regulators that require re-leathering.

In the meantime, I will liaise with Neil/John/Ernie to arrange a couple of days to attend to the two split Tibia bass pipes.

John Parker, Organ Builder

Concert on the Carma Labs Wurlitzer USA

Seamus is a young theatre organist from Bath, Maine. He is the 2016 winner of the American Theatre Organ Society's Young Organist Competition and has since had the privilege of performing at venues across the country.

Seamus' interest in pipe organs began at age 8, when he attended a Christmas concert at Merrill Auditorium in Portland, Maine, and first witnessed the mighty Kotzschmar Organ played by Ray Cornils, with whom he later studied classical organ throughout middle and high school. Soon after discovering the pipe organ, he

quickly found out about theatre organs by accidentally stumbling across a YouTube video and was instantly hooked.

Since the Fall of 2022, Seamus has been a guest organist at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, Arizona, home to one of the largest theatre organs in the world, where he fills in as needed throughout the year. Having a broad taste in music, Seamus' programs contain a wide variety of selections that is sure to have something for everyone.



Progress on TOSA's Orion Theatre Wurlitzer



**John Weismantel & Ernie Vale
attach bracket for 16' offset**



**John Weismantel & John Parker
attach the face of the 16' Tibia
offset chest after restoration**



John Weismantel holding the face of the 16' Tibia offset chest ready for attachment as in the photo below left of JW & JP



John Parker above & John Weismantel below replace the 8' tibia offset pipes after restoration of the chest



Left

All 8' Tibia pipes now back in the restored offset chest



Neil Palmer crawled in through a door from the storeroom at the front of the Solo Chamber to reinstall a tremulant, (not visible), that had to be refurbished after the flooding.





The trunking to the 16' Tibia offset chest back in place following reinstallation of the refurbished chest



Craig Keller attaches a block over a hole in the timber trunking on both sides of the leg of the 8' Tibia offset chest. The air runs from a Regulator on the left of Neil Palmer into the bottom of the timber leg in the foreground, then through the chest and then down the leg where Craig is blocking the holes. Another short piece of trunking then runs out the bottom of the leg on the far side where Craig is and into the 16' Tibia offset chest.

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