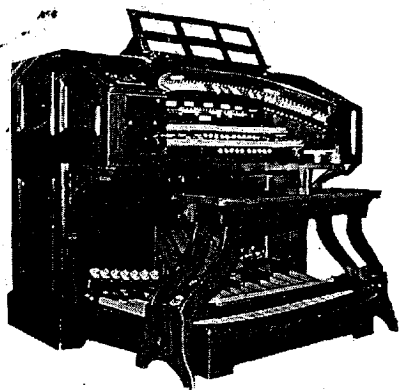


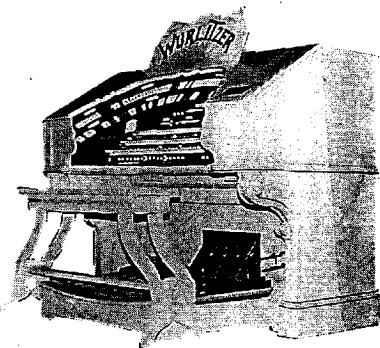
OCTOBER, 1996



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA

NEWS



3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Welcome Back to One of Australia's
Most Entertaining Theatre Organists
and a Chance to Hear the Newly
Renovated Marrickville *Wurlitzer*
RAY THORNLEY



Sunday, 27th October at 2pm

Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville

Volume 35

Issue 10

PRINTED BY TOSA

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TOSA NEWS

OCTOBER, 1996

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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Colin Groves 9745 2417

John Parker

Paul Luci (043) 74 1108

Peter Harding 9629 2257

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048) 411 616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 9745 2417 (phone or fax)

P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 2134

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon

CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer 9798 6742

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

George Newell 9750 0362 (Mon - Fri: 10am - 6pm)

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Barry Tooker (Home) 9744 1535

(Work) 9550 5400

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 9759 5825

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Ritchie Willis 9580 3581

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COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

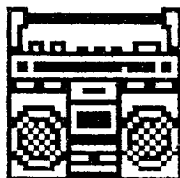
- Wednesday 9 at 5.00pm Nominations close for
all Executive and Committee
Positions for 1997
- Monday 14 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Saturday 19 at 2.00pm Members' Afternoon
Ian Davies and Friends
Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL
- Sunday 27 at 2.00pm Ray Thornley Concert
Marrickville Town Hall

NOVEMBER

- Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Wednesday 20 at 8.00pm Annual General
Meeting
Orion Centre Campsie

DECEMBER

- Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
- Sunday 8 at 2.00pm Tony Fenelon and
John Atwell Duo Concert
Orion Centre Campsie



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Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

John Giacchi, not unexpectedly, stunned us all with his excellent concert last month and a lot of us have since spent a considerable amount of time listening to his fabulous, newly-released CD, *Beyond the Blue Horizon*. In fact, so popular is his CD that our **Record Bar** is currently out of stock of the CD, but **John** has promised more in time for the **Ray Thornley** concert at **Marrickville** on Sunday, 27th October.

Although the **Annual General Meeting** is not until Wednesday, 20th November, there are two related items, which will be finalised then, for consideration in this issue. Firstly, nominations for the positions on the committee close with our Returning Officer at 5pm on Wednesday, 9th October - see last month's *TOSA News* for a form to fill out. Secondly, there are 2 proposed motions below, which will be voted on at the AGM, at the **Orion Centre**.

Please consider your responses to these two items and attend our **AGM** to settle these issues which will affect the future running and well-being of your **Society**.

A couple of **Orion** concert reminders : if you have to leave early please do so as quietly as possible via the back doors (not the side doors, which flood the auditorium with light) so as not to disturb the artist; and, for copyright reasons, the taking of photos and the making of video or audio recordings of any sort *during* the concerts are strictly forbidden.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome to the following new members. Wishing you all a long and happy association with our Society.

- Brian Banting - Mangerton**
- Carolyn Banting - Mangerton**
- Brian McKenzie - Unanderra**
- Norma Strachan - Concord West**
- Nicholas Lang - Penshurst**
- Kristie Crnkovic - Epping**
- Leslie Thorne - George's Hall**
- Mildred Thorne - George's Hall**

Membership

Notes...

MYSTERY - was this you?

In the mail, we received what was probably a membership renewal, but the envelope, only contained a blank piece of paper with a stamp in the corner. No name or cheque was enclosed.

Could this have been you? If so, please give me a call!

Thank you to all those people who have paid their dues - or joined **TOSA** - It's good to have you aboard.

With membership fairly stable at this time of year, I was "talking" to the computer and discovered the following facts.

Thought you might be interested.The financial membership of **TOSA (NSW)** comes to 663 persons, who are entered as follows (some of course could fit under more than one category) :

Full members	230
Pensioner	358
Country	50
Interstate	11
Overseas	7
Life members	6
Honorary member	1

TOTAL	663

All these have been updated over the past month or two. Please phone me if you have any membership problem.

Regards,
Walter Pearce

.....

Notice of motions for the AGM, Wednesday, 20th November, 1996, at the Orion Centre :

(i) Moved that By-Law 6 of the Constitution be amended to include the following :

"(f) Such other persons as may be decided by the Committee from time to time." - **Geoff Brimley**.

By-Law 6 (a) to (e) specifies those people who are authorised to play the Society's instruments. The Committee is aware that there is no provision for the instruments to be played by promising music students, particularly young people. It is hoped that such students may be introduced to the Theatre Organ under the guidance of their teacher and/or one of our members as selected.

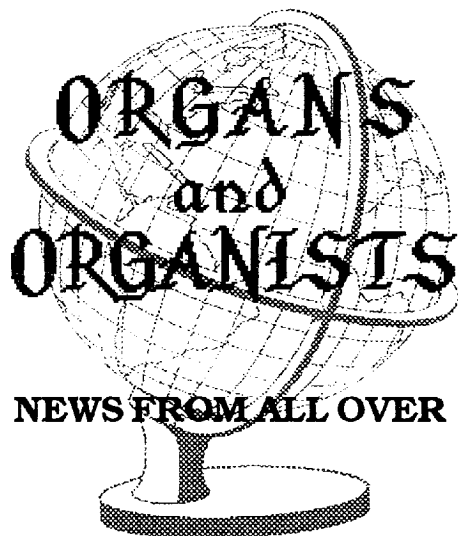
(ii) Moved that rule 13, part (2) be amended, so that lines (e) and (f) are deleted - to the effect that the positions of Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer be abolished. - **John Parker**.

This amendment is to take effect immediately unless someone nominates for these positions at the current election.

Both of these proposed motions carry the endorsement of the Committee.

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



NEWS FROM ALL OVER

NEW VOICES AT THE ORION

During August, society organ builder **John Parker** received a shipment of two exquisite string ranks, for installation in the **Orion Centre** organ. These strings - a *Violin* and *Violin Celeste*, were shipped from the USA by our organ parts expert, **Russ Evans** in Seattle.

TOSA was fortunate to have prior warning that these pipes would be available for purchase once the famous **Portland Organ Grinder 4/48 Wurlitzer** was decommissioned and broken up. Thus payment was quickly dispatched and the pipes were crated and shipped.

The 146 pipes are in pristine condition and, with special cleaning, look as though they have just left the pipemakers bench. It was a shame though, that sometime during transit, damage was caused to one of the wooden crates by what appears to have been a forklift blade. Ten of the longest pipes in the bottom octaves of both ranks received damage ranging from minor to serious.

Although this proved a great disappointment, we are shipping these damaged pipes to **Australian Pipe Organs Pty Ltd** for total repair. Also with these string pipes will be six pipes from our recently purchased **Robert Hope-Jones Horn Diapason** rank; also for inclusion on the **Orion Wurlitzer**. Although the *Horn Diapason*, made in 1912, is in excellent condition, the largest metal pipes will require new pipe feet and general rounding out, and fully qualified pipe makers are the only people to do the job, to ensure the **Orion** organ is always in the best possible condition and presentation.

During the week commencing 19th August, the backstage area of the **Orion Centre** was once again the scene of frantic organ building. Large boring machines, drills and all manner of equipment were

moved in to enable the installation of the new *Violin* and *Celeste* ranks from Tenor C up. Three complete ranks had to be removed from the main chamber to enable the existing two *Viola di Orchestra* ranks to be removed and allow enough room for work to proceed - All this work was completed in four days, allowing organist **Neil Jensen** to continue work on laying tracks for a forthcoming CD recording.

Work was completed on 22nd August at 11.15pm, with tonal finishing and final tuning by **John Parker**, assisted by organist, **John Giacchi**.

Although the *Violin* and its matching *Celeste* rank are presently missing their respective bottom octaves, the installation of these two remarkable tone colours have refined the overall tonal output of the **Wurlitzer** to a great degree!

Both **Neil Jensen** and **John Giacchi** are high in praise for our decision to improve the organ with these two new ranks - not to mention those members of **TOSA** committee who have been fortunate to hear them to date.

Members will hear the new *Violin* and *Violin Celeste* for the first time at a public concert at our September concert by **John Giacchi**.

After completion of installation and tonal finishing, **John** commented that it was a shame these ranks were not available when he recorded his CD *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, it was suggested that they would be there for *Volume 2* ... !

Incidentally, the new *Violin* and *Violin Celeste* are not actually "additions" to the **Orion** organ. It was decided to replace the **Orion Wurlitzer's** existing two *Viola di Orchestra* ranks with two units of pipes that would suit the acoustical properties of the building to a better musical degree. Also, the condition of the "VDO" ranks was questionable. It has been decided to ship these to a pipe voicer for total repair and revoicing. It is anticipated they will be reinstalled at a later date as additions to augment the tonal resources of the **Wurlitzer**.

CONCORD UNITING

Norm Weismantel sends news of another chance to hear **John Giacchi** - this time at a *Pleasant Sunday Afternoon* on the **Rodgers** organ in the **Concord Uniting Church** on the corner of Concord and Wunda Roads, **West Concord**, at 2.30pm on Sunday, 10th November.

The cost is \$7 (\$5 Concession) and this includes afternoon tea. Proceeds go to the Rev Bill Crewes' **Exodus Foundation**. For further information, ring **9809 1808**.



Beyond The Blue Horizon - John Giacchi - Orion 3/17 Wurlitzer. Reviewed by Nicholas Lang.

If there is one word to describe **John Giacchi's** new CD, it is "Excellence". In terms of performance, packaging, recording clarity and organ regulation, this is easily the best product yet released in **Australia**. **John** has never delivered anything less than a polished original performance.

Some selections on this album may be unknown to a few listeners, but rest assured they are all musically interesting and cover the spectrum from classic **American** popular to serious orchestral works.

Rather than review all twelve tracks I have opted to note some personal favourites from the program :

John's interpretation of **Ponchielle's Dance of the Hours** to me is the definitive organ performance of this piece. Other artists always seem to rush the first three quarters so that they can play the finale as fast as possible. **Giacchi's** orchestral restraint is a delight.

Elgar's Chanson de Matin is delicately performed and features a very simple and effective Tuba melody over Flute accompaniment.

Chopsticks by **Billy Mayerl** provides some jazzy refreshment later in the program with its unorthodox harmonies and rapid scales.

The Oak and the Rose (a fantasia of traditional **English** songs) sounds so at home on the Theatre Organ it makes one wonder if composer **Ronald Hanmer** intended it for performance on that instrument.

Sapphires and Sables is one of those romantic ballads that would fit "The Big Love Scene" of any classic 30's movie. **Bogart** and **Bacall**, where are you?

The optimistic opening track, *Beyond The Blue Horizon*, is an inspired choice of title, not only for the fact that the organ's original home was the atmospheric **Capitol Theatre** (featured as a colour centrepiece in the booklet), but because when you've got **John's** talent and dedication, the sky's the limit.....

Due to its popularity, more copies of **John's** CD will not be available until the next **TOSA Concert** with **Ray Thornley** at **Marrickville** on 27th October.

From The MAILBOX

Tony Fenelon writes from Melbourne via the Internet about the re-opening festivities at the wonderfully restored Melbourne Regent :

After 26 years of silence, Melbourne's palatial **Regent Theatre** reopened on Saturday night, 17th August, in a blaze of glory reminiscent of a gala **Hollywood** first night of yesteryear.

The searchlights were visible for miles away from the city, and I doubt whether **Melbourne** city-goers passing the theatre could have believed their eyes. The red carpeted pavement led to the fully restored grandeur of the marble stairway in the entrance. Even the original one-person ticket box was re-instated at the foot of the stairs. It seemed that the entire complement of **Melbourne's** show-biz population was there, together with invited guests from countless organisations in some way related to the saving and refurbishment of the most magnificent **Regent** of them all.

The restoration left everyone spellbound. Everything is as it was, only better! The original chandelier is back in its old dome. (It wouldn't fit anywhere else in **Australia!**) The auditorium could not have looked more spectacular on the original opening night in 1929.

The show was non-stop excitement. The **Victorian State Orchestra** supported many top line artists including **Debbie Byrne**, who will star in the first production in the theatre **Sunset Boulevard**, opening in late October. Old film clips relating to the **Regent's** colourful history added a special seasoning to the evening, in fact I doubt whether the **Regent** had ever hosted such a celebration.

The only major disappointment was the sight of the silent **Wurlitzer** console on its lift. **Julien Arnold** had completed his mammoth task of installing the organ over the past 18 months or so. Every pipe was in place, every magnet was wired back to the Uniflex boards in the chambers. This is an installation to rival any in the world. The console had its diagnostics run last weekend with **NO ERRORS!**

But a **Wurlitzer** needs wind, and that's what we still don't have. Other priorities took precedence over the completion of the

wiring to the two blowers and the extensive ducting to both chambers. We still needed at least four to six weeks to bring the organ to presentation standard. Not much time in 26 years, but an eternity in preventing its performance on opening night.

Today, the **Regent** is handed over to **Andrew Lloyd Webber's** company who will have sole use of the building for about two years. Access to the organ is still a very uncertain factor, but an investment of that magnitude will have to be maintained and utilised to justify its very being.

.....We are waiting. And, we are still very patient.

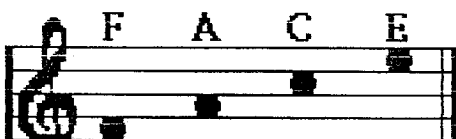
Pity **Sunset Boulevard** doesn't have a major part for a **Wurlitzer**. Why didn't **Norma Desmond** learn the organ?

Cheers all,
Tony Fenelon

Thanks again to Bettine Vallance of Burwood who has been inspired by our talented theatre organ artists to write a few poetic lines of praise :

Nicholas Martin - A Wow!

This amazing artist played for us, Not only with superb talent, But with personality plus. The programme was a delightful variety of entertainment, Presented with so much expertise, He just couldn't fail to please. Each artist we hear has their own inimitable style of presentation, And each one is unique, in my estimation. Just a lovely way to spend a Sunday, An exhilarating, uplifting musical treat That would be very hard to beat..



THE MUSIC
With Allan Tassaker

"After the last concert I gave in the country, I was drawn and quartered," said Allan.

"That's terrible!" grimaced a friend.

"Not really..." said Allan. "I was drawn to the local hotel and given a room!!"

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PETER ROWE

by Barry Tooker

Some time ago **Bill Tougher** (pronounced "Toga") donated some historical papers belonging to the late **Peter Rowe** to the **TOSA** archives. **Peter** had connections with our society in its early years and provided great assistance in helping to restore the **Capitol** organ to a playable condition, tuning it for us and teaching us the rudiments of organ maintenance.

I was first introduced to **Peter** by long time member and friend **David Devenport**, when he took me backstage to **Peter's** workshop at the **State Theatre**. This workshop was maintained at the theatre until after **Peter's** death and was solely for his use. From that time on, we became great mates, working together on the **State** and **Capitol** organs, and sharing the odd drink together. **Peter** was rather partial to **Resch's** beer.

When **Bill** gave these letters to **TOSA**, it was decided that I should write a short item for **TOSA News**. I have recorded my recollections and those of several others, many from the **Tougher** family who were so closely connected with him, together with extracts from his letters, but there is a lot more that could be added. Somewhere at home I have a taped interview with **Peter** which was recorded in his room at the **State Theatre**, but at present I cannot find it. So, for now, we will have to print an abbreviated history of a most interesting person, a great man, someone I was proud to call a friend, **Peter Rowe**.

I first met **Peter Rowe** during the early 1960's. Having joined the **Theatre Organ Society of Australia** in 1962, I heard that member **David Devenport** practised on the **State Theatre WurliTzer** each Saturday morning and was allowed to invite one guest during his practice time. Luckily I received one of these invitations and after **David** finished playing, he took me down to **Peter Rowe's** room beneath the stage and introduced me to the old gentleman himself.

Peter had a workshop full of tools, organ parts, books and sundry other odds and ends, adjacent to the music room and organ relay room.

It was later, when **TOSA** employed **Peter** to teach us some of the finer arts of maintaining and repairing the **Capitol** organ, that I got to know him a lot better, and we became the best of mates. **TOSA** would pay him the princely sum of \$2 per morning, if my memory serves me correctly, for his knowledge and assistance and the use of his hot gluepot, for repairing leather-covered motors in the action.

We had gained permission from **Greater Union** to use the **Capitol** organ for practice and concerts early on Saturdays before the morning session started. But, oh what a

sorry state the organ was in when we first tried it! The belts driving the blower were slipping, there were broken and shorted wires in the organ cable, pipes were out of chests and out of tune, blown motors in the action and just so many things wrong with it.

It took the dedication of an expert like **Peter** to show us how to organise the chaos around us and restore it to playing order again. He showed us how to test various parts of the action, and to diagnose and repair faults which could occur in any of the pipe chambers, relay room, main cable or console. As it also needed tuning, particularly before concerts, this was also left to his care.

At this time **Peter** was driving a little **Austin** car. He had a spare engine sitting in the space where the back seat should be and on at least one occasion used parts of this spare engine to repair

the car when it broke down. He was a very resourceful and independent character. After a few hours working with us on Saturday morning **Peter** would like to enjoy an ale or two, so he and I would retire to a local hostelry for refreshments, and this is where our friendship was cemented, and I learned some of his background.

Peter was born in **Bournemouth**, a seaside holiday resort in **England**, in 1900. He was apprenticed to organ building but not much is known of his early life, until after he came to **Australia**, late in the depression.

In 1936 he was working for **Airsales** radio station **2HD Newcastle**. Whilst working for this station he was actively engaged in trying to purchase a broadcast pipe organ and made enquiries to many organ builders and agents around **Australia**. These included **Hill, Norman & Beard (H, N**

& B), **J. Dodd, P a l i n g s , Whitehouse, Terrae Sanctae, Husband & Spinks, Roberts** and **S. Schronback**. Although negotiations with these suppliers ensued over several years, nothing eventuated.

"Uncle Peter" had a children's show but I am uncertain if this was on station **2HD** or **2KO** in **Newcastle**. He also played a **Hammond** organ at



Peter Rowe at the State Theatre's 4/21 WurliTzer

the **Victoria Theatre, Newcastle**, during the war years.

Peter was organist for many churches, among them the **Hoskins Memorial Church** at **Lithgow** and the historic **St Thomas Church of England** at **Enfield** in **Sydney**.

He was also organist at **St Columbia's Church** at **Woollahra** for many years.

Here he became friendly with the **Tougher** family. **Mrs. Tougher** would invite **Peter** home for lunch after Sunday service. This was during the latter half of 1946 and her young, 5 year old son, **Billy**, became a lifelong mate. The church at **Woollahra** spent quite a lot of money on renovations to the building but did not do any maintenance on the organ. **Peter** offered to do repair work free, if materials were supplied, but this offer was refused. Eventually the organ fell into such a state of disrepair that **Peter** became fed up and, in a fit of temper during a hymn one day, leaned both arms across both manuals, creating a most discordant sound. The minister dispensed with his services.

Carnegies employed **Peter** for 25 years on their piano tuning staff.

For some time a society matron employed **Peter** as her chauffeur in **Melbourne**. As he hated washing and polishing the limousine, he would often only clean and polish the side that the lady would see, i.e. the side that she entered and alighted from. It is believed that she never found out.

Peter was also employed by the organ building firm of **J E Dodd**. This company was responsible for the installation and maintenance of all the **Wurlitzers** in **Australia**. He eventually became manager of the company, being responsible for sending out all the tuning and repair accounts.

After the end of World War 2, there was a desperate shortage of organ parts. On behalf of **Dodds** and **H, N & B**, **Peter** corresponded with a number of **American** organ supply companies, asking for samples and prices of organ leathers, magnets, electrical parts, switches and pipes.

Sydney suffered regular blackouts in the late 1940's, creating a great deal of disruption to theatre showings and organ usage. Many theatres finished up installing their own generating plants in order to keep going. At this time **Peter** contemplated moving to **Melbourne** to work for **H, N & B**.

Duncan Eustace Dodd died in 1946

throwing more responsibility on **Peter's** shoulders and he was often on business interstate, making it difficult for him to keep up with work at home. Problems arose with an employee working on the **State Theatre, Melbourne**, where work ran late and was not completed satisfactorily, causing **Greater Union** to complain and withhold payments, creating cash-flow problems. Eventually the contract was relinquished to **H,N & B**.

Weariness of all the problems developing, **Peter** resigned from **Dodds** and took over the tuning and maintenance of the **Sydney State** and **Capitol** organs. As mentioned before he had his workshop located below the stage at the **State Theatre**.

With the advent of TV, theatre attendances dropped alarmingly and the organs were shut down.

Major **Sydney** department stores such as **David Jones**, **Grace Bros** and **Mark Foys** would run Christmas attractions for children featuring animated fairy tale shows. **Peter** borrowed on organ technology to create and produce pneumatically operated dolls and animals for many of the shows. A lady friend would sew the costumes whilst he made figures from papier mâché with working parts connected by lots of tubing and bellows.

Peter played an early morning concert for **TOSA** one Saturday and accompanied **Cyril James** of radio fame for a vocal segment.

I always remember **Peter** tuning the **Capitol** and **State** organs for **TOSA** concerts. We did this on a Friday night after the last show and I would act as striker, holding the keys down as **Peter** tuned the pipes, calling "Next" each time we progressed to the following note.

Afterwards he would come down and have a play to check that everything was in tune, and it was then that I will always remember some of the sweetest music I have ever heard. There would be just the cleaners, **Peter** and myself - occasionally I would ask the name of a tune I had never heard before, only to be told that it was something which had come into his head and he had composed it on the spot. He could make absolutely exquisite sounds using just a few very quiet stops on the organ. **Peter** was also an expert at transposing music to different keys as he was playing.

When the **Lyceum Theatre** was destroyed by fire, **Sir Norman Rydge** donated the use of the **State** to the

Methodists for Sunday services and **Peter** was engaged to service and tune the organ and prepare it for **Miss Vera Plowman**. He set up a number of pistons with suitable combinations and removed unsuitable stops such as **Sleigh Bells**, etc. Poor **Miss Plowman** was bewildered at first by having twice as many manuals as her old organ and oh so many stop keys!

One Sunday the **Pleasant Sunday Afternoon** with the **Rev Alan Walker** was broadcast over **TCN 9**, and **Peter** was very popular as he played and entertained the TV crew that morning while they were setting up their cameras.

Peter played piano in a restaurant in **Woollahra** during the 1970's and saved enough to revisit his birthplace between 1976 and 1977. I had the feeling that he was disappointed with the changes in **England** since he had lived in **Australia**.

During the late 1970's, after water from a leaky roof above the organ chambers at the **State Theatre** damaged and warped some pipechests, some misguided people removed a main chest from the solo chamber and left it in **Peter's** workshop with the action taken out, for him to repair. It was a grave mistake as **Peter** was too old to attempt such major repairs and **Greater Union** was not supplying leather and equipment for the job. It was never completed.

One of **Peter's** great joys was to live long enough to see the **State Theatre** restored to its former glory. He seemed to be part of the theatre, and the theatre was part of him.

During the early 70's **Peter** cut a dashing figure driving an open-top, bright red **Vauxhall Velox** car, wearing a red and white striped beanie. I guess he felt like the oldest teenager on the block. He had always wanted a soft-top car.

During his last years, **Mrs Tougher** gave **Peter** a room at her house and her son **Bill** moved his possessions from the **Travencore Private Hotel** where he had lived for many years. At this time, **Peter** was playing for Sunday services at the **Penshurst Methodist Church**. One morning in 1980, **Mrs Tougher** found **Peter** dead in his room. He had written a note saying he thought he was about to die and to please apologise and inform the minister that he would not be able to play that Sunday.

Peter died in April 1980, aged 80, and was cremated at the **Eastern Suburbs Crematorium**.

Barry Tooker

On looking through some old *Diaphone* magazines sent in by **Rod Blackmore**, I came across this item, written by **Peter Rowe** (see pages 6 & 7) in July, 1964, on the subject of the father of the *Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ*, **Robert Hope-Jones**.

THE ROMANTICIST OF THE ORGAN

During the latter part of the last century arose one of the most interesting figures that the world of music has ever seen. Inventor, telegraphic engineer, musician, choir master and revolutionary, **Robert Hope-Jones** left his mark when he died in 1914 as deeply as **Karl Marx** or any great revolutionary who ever organised a complete change.

Hope-Jones was not a social re-organiser. His sphere of revolution was in the world of organ building. He applied the science of telegraphy in a modified form, combined with entirely unorthodox tones, to the unbending and entirely unemotional '*King of Instruments*'.

Hope-Jones was an **Englishman**, born and educated in **England**, but he did not suffer with **England's** own particular national complex - conservatism. His principal tonal laboratory in **England** was **St John's Church, Birkenhead** - a handsome example of a good sized parish church, boasting a fine organ of conventional, or so-called 'classic', design - the only kind of organ then in existence. Such organs graced hundreds of churches in **Europe** and **America** in those days.

The influence of what this enterprising romanticist did to that organ has shaken the whole world of organ builders, and though many have endeavoured to imitate his work since - and have to a great extent failed - he started a controversy amongst this placid fraternity which has never yet been settled.

In all probability organ builders in general will never give their O.K. to **Hope-Jones'** revolutionary reconstruction of the organ. It had always remained unchangeable in an "odour of sanctity". **Hope-Jones** gave it monkey glands; brought it before the public as an instrument that could express the whole gamut of human emotions, a proceeding hitherto considered far beneath the dignity of so venerable an instrument. In so doing, although he failed to receive the support of his fellow organ makers, he did receive the O.K. of the man in the street. Unreservedly and overwhelmingly the public has endorsed the product of **Hope-Jones'**

by **Peter Rowe**

brain. Most readers of these lines have probably endorsed this majority opinion.

What's all this about? Well - it's all quite familiar really; the **Wurlitzer** organ, the organ which brought organ music to millions in the world's cinemas.

Robert Hope-Jones, after much experiment, applied electricity to the heavy task of playing a large organ. Instead of having to operate a cumbersome mechanism to open air valves which had to have sufficient force exerted upon them to overcome the wind pressure employed to blow the pipes of the organ before they could be moved, the keys of the **St John's** organ merely had to complete low voltage electric circuits. These circuits in turn energised small electro-magnets which activated minute air valves, arranged to act as exhausts to air-motors - like bellows. These immediately collapsed, aided by air pressure around them, pulling open the wind-valves of the pipes and causing them to speak promptly as soon as the finger of the player depressed the key.

Hope-Jones' successful use of electrical energy brought many advantages to the player. The touch of the keys became as light as that of a fine piano; music could be played much more rapidly than ever before; rattling and noise - inescapable results of wear in the old type of mechanism - disappeared. Besides this, by a simple arrangement of multiple switches, any family of pipes could be played from any set of keys in the organ, allowing a much greater flexibility and the production of new and astonishing tonal effects. Ingenious touches were also introduced, producing tonal changes by merely exerting greater pressure on the keys, and special effects resembling the plucking of strings, the notes of a banjo and the tonguing of brass instruments.

Furthermore the organist, who had previously been pinned to a position hard up against the case of his instrument where he was unable to hear the full effect of his music, could now be situated at a distance, at an angle and elevation most suited to his

convenience. The key desk, or console, was merely connected to the organ by a flexible cable of small diameter.

When **Hope-Jones** received permission to apply his inventions to the **St John's** organ, he actually made the light console, which is really nothing more than a complex switchboard, movable. A photograph still exists of the inventor sitting outside the church in the gravel drive-way playing the organ installed inside! Thus it was **Hope-Jones** who made it possible for theatre organists to be raised from a pit as they called up music from organ chambers situated in the proscenium or ceiling.

Hope-Jones also greatly changed the tonal plan of the organ at **St John's**. But his path, like that of all revolutionaries, was beset by much bitter opposition from musical know-alls and purists, as may be realised from the fact that the organ has since been rebuilt on conservative lines and the electric action removed. It is, however, to be noted that many who tried it were loud in their praises of its ease in playing. The original **Hope-Jones'** actions are still preserved amongst the archives of **St John's** and are a monument to the skill and pioneer spirit of thoroughness of the "Romanticist of the Organ", **Robert Hope-Jones**.

It has been suggested that **Hope-Jones** should have made his theme song, "*You Are Old, Father Willis*", parodying the well known poem from *Alice in Wonderland*. The **Willises** were, and are, one of **England's** most famous organ building families.

So great was opposition against the **Hope-Jones** idea of applying electricity to the organ and against his tonal novelties that he was eventually forced to make his home in **America**. There, the great musical inventor and dreamer (he was incidentally a hopeless business man), after sending two small organ builders bankrupt and stranding himself on the rocks, managed to interest "**Rudy**" **Wurlitzer**, head of one of **America's** greatest instrument-building houses, in his apparently impossible scheme of marketing an organ which would appeal to the masses, an organ capable of rendering songs and dance

music.

Wurlitzer, a shrewd business man saw possibilities and entered wholeheartedly into the scheme.

He placed at **Hope-Jones'** disposal the necessary capital to develop his ideas on a grand scale, a thing which the inventor himself had never been able to achieve previously.

He was allowed to hire the finest workmen the world could offer and was installed in a factory with his team of experts and supplied with every device necessary to carry out his research work and organ building.

For months **Hope-Jones** and his men laboured to produce an instrument embodying his "impossible" tonal ideas and mechanical changes; time after time **Wurlitzer** was approached for his final O.K. to set the wheels of production going; world-famous organists were called in to try the instrument; day after day they played, noted faults and suggested possible improvements; time after time the manufacturer refused his O.K. and further changes and adjustments were made, until at last perfection was reached, and the **Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra** went into production, to be known to the public as the **Wurlitzer** organ.

The **Wurlitzer-Hope Jones** combination perfected many schemes to improve their organs. All mechanical parts were standardised and are interchangeable - an unheard of breach of organ building etiquette.

Each model was also standardised, making mass production possible and maintenance very simple.

The **Wurlitzer** factory holds the world's second place for organ output and was capable in normal times of producing an organ a day.

Hope-Jones never lived to see the full fruition of his schemes, for he died in 1914, when few **Wurlitzers** had come into use. It was not until several years later that the managements of theatre concerns fully came to realise their value.

Then as the great de-luxe theatres were built the **Hope-Jones** organs were installed throughout the world.

Many of those organs are still in use; a tribute to their mechanical perfection.

Peter Rowe

Copies of letters from Peter Rowe to organ parts suppliers after the Second World War, when he was manager of the Sydney branch of Dodds

Jerome B. Myer, & Sons,
125 Austin St.
Milwaukee,
Wisconsin.

2nd. April, 1946.

Dear Sirs,

Now that the war is over we are contemplating several repair and addition jobs. We are interested in obtaining pipes for several organs.

In particular we are in need of a heavy gamba for a large Wurlitzer installation. Also for the same job a Tuba Mirabilis, a Horn Diapason, and English Horn, and also a large scale Harmonic flute.

We should be happy to have your quotations for these pipes including 16 ft. basses for the Diapason and English Horn.

A price list of all ranks which you can supply including costs of packing etc. would be much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

E.W. ROWE. Manager.

W.H. Reisner. Mfg. Co.
Hagerstown,
Maryland.

2nd. April, 1946.

Dear Sirs,

We are at present experiencing some difficulty in obtaining organ magnets and other parts and would be pleased to know if you are able to supply us. In particular our need of Wurlitzer magnets is urgent. We also have direct electric actions under our care and hope to replenish our stock in magnets and other electrical parts for these jobs.

Would you be so good as to supply us with a catalogue with prices of all organ supplies which you handle.

Yours faithfully

E.W. ROWE
Manager.

The Mansfield Organ Pipe Works.
Mansfield Depot.
Conn. U.S.A.

Dear Sirs,

We should be pleased to receive from you a complete price list of all ranks you are prepared to supply both for straight and unified organs.

We are particularly interested at the moment in the following sets to increase the power and resources of a 3 manual Wurlitzer:
Horn Diapason, with 12 16ft. pipes
English Horn, " " " "
Tuba Mirabilis,
Oboe Gamba.

We should be happy to hear from you at your earliest convenience,

Yours Faithfully

E.W. ROWE. Manager.

Wood & Werner Inc.
83 Gold St.
New York.

Dear Sirs,

Would you kindly furnish at your earliest convenience prices and samples of all organ skins which you carry in stock. We are in considerable difficulty on account of the shortness of supplies in Australia.

Yours faithfully

E.W. ROWE Manager.

HISTORY CORNER

by Frank Ellis

About 25 Years ago I compiled a list of all the theatre organists who had played in Australian cinemas.

During my long years as Vice-President and compere for NSW TOSA, I was very frequently asked by members for details of some almost-forgotten organist and which theatres they may have played in. So my list became an invaluable means of my being able to answer many questions.

In July this year I had a couple of phone calls from a Victorian member seeking information about some theatre organists from the past, and once again, my list came in very handy.

I therefore thought it may be of interest to NSW members if my list were published in our TOSA News. So here it is in alphabetical order, 105 in all, with my best wishes. If perhaps, I have missed an organist you may remember I would appreciate your phone call on (02) 9649 7011. I won't guarantee it is 100% accurate as it is extremely difficult to track down this kind of information from the past in the 1990's. However, it is accurate to the best of my memory.

Alphabetical List of Organists who have Played in Australian Theatres from the Earliest Times

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| AARONS, Mannie | HALL, Margaret | PALMISTRA, Denis |
| ALIFFE, Walter | HAMILTON, Gordon | PAULSON, Gunnar |
| ALTON, Newell | HARVEY, Lesley V. | PEARL, Cyril |
| ARDLEY, Bruce | HAYES, Reupert | PENHALL, Jean |
| | HEATHER, Charles | PITTS, David |
| BAILEY, Barrie | HENNESSY, Noreen | |
| BARNETT, Knight | HERWEG, Kurt | RICHARDSON, Brian |
| BARRETT, John | HOLLAND, Owen | RICHMOND, Les |
| BLACK, Clarence | HOLLIDAY, Stanfield | RILEY, Victor |
| BOWMAN, Carole | HOLMES, Ann | ROBBINS, Nicholas/Norman |
| BOYCE, Ron | HOOD, Richard | ROBERTS, Frank |
| BRETTONER, Barrie | HORTON, Eddie | ROBERTSON, Geoff |
| BRISBY, Bruce | HUGHES, Penn | ROWE, Peter |
| BURRSTON, Percy | | |
| | JENKINS, Idwal | SCHOLL, Fred |
| CHAFFER, Ray | JENSEN, Neil | SEWARD, Peter |
| CHARLTON, Horrie | JOHNSON, Ian | STEAD, Hal |
| CHICK, Lyle | JOHNSTON, David | SWANSTON, Minnie |
| COLEMAN, Arnold | JONES, Ellie | |
| CORRICK, Lionel | | TANNER, Des |
| COULSON, Ruby | KELLY, Tom | THOMAS, Ian |
| CRANFIELD, Cecil | KENTWELL, Wilbur | THORNLEY, Ray |
| CROSS, David | KERSEY, Valda | TRAISE, Norm |
| CULLEN, Paul | KING, Tom | TRANTER, Alan |
| CUMMINS, Stan | KOTTER, Wallace | TUCKWELL, Charles |
| | | TUCKWELL, Cyrus |
| DAVIES, Ian | LANTERMAN, Frank | |
| DAVIS, Len | LAPTHORNE, Irene | WALDREN, Les |
| DAWN, Julia | LEES, Renee | WALES, Albert |
| DE CLEMENS, Ray | | WAYNE, Joe |
| DENLEY, Les | MADDAMS, Reg | WEBER, Horace |
| DEVANEY, Roy | MASON, Iris | WELCH, Mervyn |
| DIBBEN, Gail | McKENZIE, Gordon | WELDON, Harry |
| DICK, Billy | McPHEE, Chris | WELLS, Lance |
| DUNLAVY, Price | MILLER, James | WEST, Ron |
| | MYERS, Bert | WESTBROOK, Will |
| FENELON, Tony | | WHELAN, Aubrey |
| FERGUSON, Maynard | NORGRAVE, Iris | WILLIAMS, Jim |
| FITCH, Eddie | NORTH, Tony | WILSON, Laurie |
| FURHMAN, John | NEWELL, George | WOOSTER, Heath |

SPECIAL EVENT

Members' Afternoon - Saturday, 19th October "Ian Davies and Friends" at Bondi

Our Patron, **Ian Davies** has invited all **TOSA** members to a special **FREE** afternoon at the club where he regularly plays. The date is **Saturday, 19th October** at 2.00pm and the club is the **Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club**. Several of our leading player-members will be playing the **Rodgers "Trio" Theatre Organ** including, of course, **Ian** himself.

The club is at 1 Gray Street, **Bondi Junction** and is very close to **Bondi Junction Railway Station**. Parking will be available in the **Grace Bros** car-park until the end of the afternoon's great entertainment. Come along and enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the Club, being entertained by these first-class performers. No bookings necessary. Come along for an entertaining, social afternoon with **TOSA**.

A Profile of Ian Davies

Our patron, **Ian Davies**, started to study music at a very early age. He began piano lessons under the tutelage of his mother. Two years later, he became a pupil of **Miss K. Cox** and continued with her for 3 years.

It was at this point that the pipe organ made its entry into **Ian's** life. His mother frequently played the organ at **St Joan's Presbyterian Church** at **Essendon, Victoria**. **Ian** persuaded her to give him lessons and after 6 months he became a pupil of the organist of the church.

Ian began his professional theatre organ career in **Melbourne**, playing the **Plaza, Regent** and **Capitol WurliTzers**, and the **Hammond** organs at **Brunswick** and **Albert Park**.

During the war, while serving in the **R.A.N.** overseas, **Ian** was guest organist at the **Regal Theatre, Grays Forum Theatre, Liverpool**, and the **Bristol Theatre, Avonmouth, Wales**.

Upon arriving back in **Melbourne**, he returned to the **Hoyts** circuits, his last theatre organ season being at the 3-manual, 15 rank **WurliTzer** at the **Capitol Theatre**, where he held a 5 year residency. He then moved to **Sydney** and spent some years in the showrooms of **Rees Wills Pty Ltd**, demonstrating **Lowrey** and **Rodgers** organs.

His magnificent opening recital at the 1965 Convention of the **Theatre Organ Society of Australia** was long remembered by those who attended. He was also the featured opening organist at the 1966 Convention on the **Capitol WurliTzer**. These are but two of the many memorable programmes he has played and which made **Ian Davies** so popular with **TOSA** members. He played over 90 concerts for the **NSW Division** during his long association with **TOSA**, always drawing a large crowd of devoted fans.

For many years **Ian** has been resident organist at the **Bondi-Waverley RSL Club**, playing each Friday for an hour in the club's auditorium for the pleasure of the club's members and guests.

In 1972 following the retirement of **Reginald Dixon** from the **Blackpool Tower** and from the position of patron of **TOSA NSW**, **Ian** was elected to the position and to this day he remains faithfully still as our patron.

He has always been ready to give of his many talents for the members of our **Society** and we are sure that many members will appreciate the opportunity to hear **Ian** play again at the **Bondi-Waverley RSL Club**, in the company of some of our other player members. Come along, and bring a friend, to this special event. The last **TOSA** visit to **Ian's** club was appreciated by all those fortunate enough to attend.

NICHOLAS MARTIN'S CONCERT

Sunday, 11th August, 1996

Orion Centre

by Chris Styles

What a great afternoon! As I sit at my PC typing this I still feel the afterglow of a fun afternoon's music at the **Orion Centre**. I had the good fortune to renew acquaintance with **Nicholas** earlier in the week prior to the concert and I was again reminded of his warm personality and complete "down-to-earthness" (if there is such a term). This was reflected in his rapport with the audience of more than 400 who, if they weren't fans before they arrived (and I know quite a few *were* fans, from my discussions as I helped show people to their seats), they were all certainly members of the **Nicholas Martin Fan Club** by the time they left after the performance (and even by interval!).

As we would expect, the console rose to **Nick's** theme tune *Hey Look Me Over* and then straight into *Boo Hoo*, *The World is Waiting for the Sunrise* and *What's New?*. All played with lots of "oomph" and a wild post-horn finish. Should I feel concerned for those in the front pews almost on top of the chambers with all that sound? Not a bit, as I know they enjoyed every ear-piercing minute - they told me so at interval! **Nick** told us that the **Orion WurliTzer** was the last stop on his current **Australian** tour and he really looked forward to playing our top class instrument.

On with the motley and **Nick** went into the *Carousel Waltz* and then, with an amazing change from waltz time to march time, commenced *March Militaire* by **Schubert**, a piece well known by those of us who played it as a piano duet in much younger days! He continued this medley with a **Franz Léhar** piece *Count Luxembourg* and then a drum roll to end all drum rolls to introduce *Knightsbridge March*. *Under the Linden Tree* followed straight on and then came the *Toreador March* from *Carmen*.

Straight organ next for the beautiful *Nimrod* from the *Enigma Variations* of **Edward Elgar** and the **WurliTzer** sounded just fine as a classical sounding organ. Can I borrow it for my Sunday's playing at **St Peter's, Cremorne?** (Not a word to the Rector as we do have a fine classical pipe organ there!).

Next came a medley of tunes with a theme of "blue" and I won't list them all as you'll

already guess what they are. Suffice to say they included *Blue Skies*, *Love is Blue* and *Blue Velvet* amongst others. All played in **Nicholas'** clear, concise style with tango beat where necessary and some numbers up-tempo to their normal speed to add variety.

Now we were in polka mood and along came the *Peanut Polka*. This was fast and furious with lots of percussion. Next a favourite of mine - *The Whistler and his Dog* and I consider this to be the version all others should be measured by. It brought back memories of my late mother who had a liking for this little ditty. **John Parker** was then responsible for releasing canaries into the chambers to appropriately accompany *Rustle of Spring*. We were able to clean up the mess left by the birdies by flushing them out with *Twelfth Street Rag* and I can assure you we won't have those birds back for a while after **Nick's** version of this number. We had loads of "goanna" (piano, for the uninitiated) with the organ and much percussion - why even the sleigh bells got an airing - in August??

That took us to interval and welcome refreshments. Back to our seats for the raffle drawn by one, **John Giacchi**, who was also able to tell us about his new recording to be released at his concert on the 8th September. Now, this is an order to be there (a) to hear **John's** international talents and (b) to buy his CD. I, dear reader, have been very privileged to hear some of the tracks and it's a must for your collection. Listen in to *Theatre Organ Highlights* on 2CBA-FM on Monday 2nd September for a preview.

Nick came up on the lift to good old **Blackpool** favourites - *I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside*, *Happy Days*, *Good Morning from Singing in the Rain*, *Yes*

Sir, That's My Baby and **Sidney Torch's** *Hot Dog*. We then found out that **Nicholas** is to become a father in November. My spies tell me he doesn't know whether it is a boy or girl yet but we'll sure want to know in due course.

On with some **Richard Rodgers** melodies which included my favourite *Mountain Greenery*, *This Can't Be Love*, a delightful *Manhattan* with piano, *Lover*, *Climb Every Mountain* and *The Lady is a Tramp* amongst others.

Now an **Al Jolson** medley and all those famous tunes, ten in all, concluding with *When Day is Done*. The next medley provided a variety described best as "Wow" - *Wedding of the Painted Doll*, *In a Monastery Garden* (using the chimes to great effect), *Nola*, *My Hero* (from *The Chocolate Soldier* and made famous by **Gladys Moncrieff** and her radio show of the 'fifties) and last in this bracket, *Russian Rag*.

Nicholas decided to end this full afternoon's entertainment by doing the *Storm at Sea* medley which was great fun and included an incredible storm with crashing thunder and brilliant lighting (lightning) effects provided by our multi-coloured **Miles Perry**. The numbers, *Sailor's Hornpipe*, *Anchors Away*, *Life on the Ocean Wave* and *What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor?*, were followed after the storm by hymn tunes *Crimond* and *Eternal Father*, strong to save. Was that to be "it"? Not on your life! **Nick** reappeared out of that great hole in the floor, (not to be confused with the **Budget Black Hole**) with *Tiger Rag* which included the famous *Widor Toccata*. What an encore!!

Well, what a great day. I was helped in remembering those names of pieces **Nick**

played (and which had not been announced) by **John Adey**, **John Giacchi**, **Merv** and **Neil Palmer**. Thanks, gang, for your assistance.

How do we summarise all of the above? We can't. The audience voted with their feet by turning up in such numbers and will do so next time **Nicholas Martin** appears. Thanks for the pleasure of your company **Nick** and we will see you in **Sydney** town again in the future.

Chris Styles



A PROFILE OF OUR NEXT ARTIST at MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL:

RAY THORNLEY

Ray Thornley is one of those incredibly talented musicians who have led many hundreds of Australians into playing their own keyboard instruments. Ray has travelled extensively around **Australia to Yamaha Living Music Centres** playing the **Yamaha Electone**. He has played for product releases, concerts for **Yamaha** dealers and has conducted clinics for music teachers.

Although Ray has been mainly known for his activity in the electronic organ field for many years, early in his musical career he was resident organist at the **Victory Theatre** in **Kogarah** for several years at the time when the theatre boasted a **2/7 Christie**.

In 1972 Ray was awarded the first place in the **City of Sydney Eisteddfod** in the **Open Electronic Organ** section and was invited to play at an exhibition concert. Since 1976 Ray has been giving recitals throughout **Australasia**, with concert performances in **Japan, USA, New Zealand** and **Singapore**. He has given solo television performances in **Hobart, Brisbane, Adelaide** and on regional stations.

Ray has performed on many occasions with his long-time friend and fellow musician, **Tony Fenelon**, as half of their duo which plays concerts on electronic organ and piano. On these occasions Ray proves the

versatility of the modern-day keyboard as an orchestrating instrument and, as those who have had the good fortune to attend his concerts will attest, displays his exceptional dexterity. They have performed at many venues throughout **Australia** including the **Newcastle Conservatorium of Music**, the **Adelaide** and **Brisbane Town Halls** and a live broadcast from the **Sydney Opera House**.

Ray's credentials include a **Bachelor of Science (Eng.)** from the **University of NSW** (1975), a **Licentiate** of the **Yamaha Music Foundation** (1983) and studies in electronic music, acoustics and solid-state physics.

He has conducted seminars for the **Yamaha Music Foundation** in **Japan, Singapore** and **Australia**, was a guest lecturer at the **Yamaha Music Foundation (Aust.) Teacher Conventions** of 1990 and 1991. He has been an adjudicator for the **City of Sydney Eisteddfod, Dandenong** and other regional eisteddfods, including the **1993 Royal South Street Eisteddfod** in **Ballarat**.

With his vast knowledge of computer-assisted music which he has accumulated in more recent years through the changing technology inherent in today's keyboard instruments, Ray has been internationally recognised in his close association with the **Yamaha** new-product design

department.

Ray has released 8 solo recordings, one of which won "**Most Popular Electronic Organ Record in Australia**" (**Keyboard World**, 1980) and he was voted "**Most Popular Electronic Organist**" in 1978, 1979 and 1980, and on this last occasion also picked up the "**Overall Best Australian Organist**" award. As well as taking part in its Inaugural Concert, he was a featured organist on the well-known recording of **Adelaide's Capri Theatre Organ, "Five Alive"**, along with **Neil Jensen, John Atwell, David Johnston** and **Tony Fenelon**.

One of the primary reasons Ray has received enthusiastic receptions wherever he has performed is his styling. His up-to-date, yet easy-on-the-ear arrangements are widely acclaimed. As audiences in both **Australia** and **America** will bear out, Ray's popularity results from the fact that he is first and foremost an entertainer - one of the best! Ray Thornley is a keyboard artist with a difference and his concert last June at the **Orion** was greatly enjoyed by all those present. His music and his concerts are most definitely not to be missed by anyone who enjoys music.

Come and hear this great entertainer on Sunday, 27th October at 2.00pm at the **Marrickville Town Hall**.

BOOKING FORM

Post to: **The Ticket Secretary**
18 Dudley Street,
PUNCHBOWL
NSW 2196

Always include a stamped self-addressed envelope with your booking. If this is not done, tickets will be held at the Box Office.

RAY THORNLEY CONCERT
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL
Marrickville Road, Marrickville
SUNDAY, 27th October, 1996 at 2.00pm

Phone Enquiries & Bookings: **George Newell** - (02)9750 0362
Between 10.00 am & 6.00 pm. Mon. - Fri. only

Cheques & Money Orders should be made payable to:
TOSA. (NSW Div.) Inc.
(Sorry no refunds after purchase)

Please send me:

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(This includes Members and Pensioners)

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(Covers 2 Adults & 2 children who are non-members under 15 years)

_____ Child tickets @ \$5-00 each Total \$ _____
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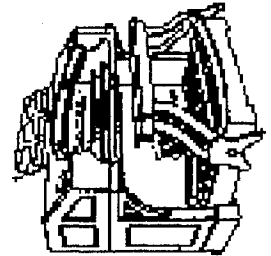
TOSA NEWS

OCTOBER, 1996

Theatre Organ Society of Australia
(NSW Division) Inc.

TOSA NEWS

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