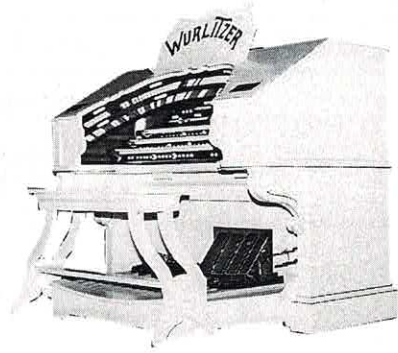
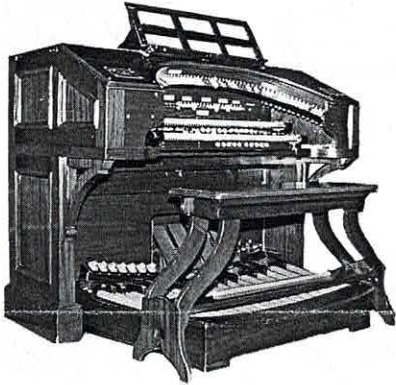


DECEMBER, 1993

TOSA

Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

NEWS

TONY FENELON's 1993 Christmas Concert



Sunday, 12th December, 1993 at 2 pm ORION CENTRE, CAMPSIE

Volume 32

Issue 11

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TOSA NEWS

DECEMBER, 1993

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

Monday 6 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 12 at 2.00 pm TONY FENELON

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Orion Centre, Campsie

MERRY CHRISTMAS
TO ALL MEMBERS!!!!

JANUARY

1994

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!!

Monday 10 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 30 at 2.00pm JOHN ATWELL

CONCERT

Orion Centre, Campsie

FEBRUARY

Monday 7 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 27 at 2.00 pm CHRIS McPHEE

CONCERT

Orion Centre, Campsie



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For "Theatre Organ Highlights"

Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

The last TOSA News for this year and the completion of a whole year of issues for me as your new editor. Being editor obviously has its pleasures but it is certainly a constant job - as soon as one issue is put to bed (or, to print, actually) it's time to start the next one! Of course, I don't achieve this on my own, however. The magazine is only as good as its contents which come from our faithful members who keep TOSA News in mind when they see an interesting item and remember to send it off to me to publish. I thank most sincerely all of these thoughtful people and those who write special articles for inclusion - most noteworthy this year have been **Frank Ellis** who, having been editor himself, realises only too well that blank pages are not filled by magic; **Rob Gliddon**, who has supplied lots of historical articles and his own report of organ events; and **Allan Tassaker**, who has kept up a constant supply of "jokes" for **Corn Corner** (which he would like to be re-christened **Face The Music** next year). The efforts of these, and of quite a few others who have sent in various items and kindly written reviews, are greatly appreciated by myself, and by all those members who enjoy receiving an interest-packed TOSA News each month.

Our AGM was, by all reports, one of the most pleasant and interesting ones in recent years, and it is with great pleasure that we welcome our new President, **Cliff Bingham**, our new Committee Members, **John Parker** and **Paul Luci**, and our new Practice Convenor, **John Hemmings**, to the team. We look forward to a happy and productive time together in the coming months. The purchase of the ex-Gordon Kings Theatre's Christie organ and the establishment of an endowment building fund are exciting new developments which will keep the NSW TOSA members and committee busy in the years to come.

If you have an organ-related advertisement, remember that members can have small items include in TOSA News free of charge. For non-members and commercial operations the charges



are \$80 for a full page, \$40 for a half page and \$20 for a quarter page advertisement. All you have to do is send the details off to me and I will type it up for inclusion in the next magazine.

Two points about last month's edition of TOSA News :

Firstly, to the gentleman who rang to point out to me that the Wilbur Kentwell concert could not possibly be on Thursday, 23rd April because that day in 1994 is Saturday and requesting me rectify this error, I regret to inform him that, to my knowledge, the great **Wilbur Kentwell** does not conduct posthumous concerts. The 23rd April referred to was in 1970, as the advertisement belonged with the historic article about the fully-functioning (at that time) **Plaza Theatre**. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Secondly, the decorative borders in last month's "From the Mailbox" column were due to a member, at the last minute (in fact even later than that!), requesting the withdrawal of his long letter and leaving me no time to find a suitable replacement. Thanks to our printer for finding some decorations to cover this otherwise embarrassing blank!

Don't forget to book as soon as possible for **Tony Fenelon's** concert on 12th December, since I hear it is already well patronised. Don't miss out on our most popular entertainer, who has always given stunning performances full of surprises, and this Christmas concert will be no exception, I can assure you!

While at Tony's concert you will also be able to pick that special gift for theatre organ lovers at our **Record Bar** which is stacked with organ music cassettes, CD's and videos of all types - perhaps even the new **Nicholas Martin** video made this year at his **Blackpool Dance Night** and his Sunday concert, and performed on our own fabulous **Orion Centre WurliTzer**. Gifts sure to delight the hearts (and ears and eyes) of all theatre organ buffs!!

On behalf of TOSA's Executive and Committee, I would like to wish all of our members and their families a wonderful Christmas season and we look forward to providing you with many happy hours of theatre organ entertainment in the New Year.

Best wishes,
Colin Groves

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

The deadline for each edition of TOSA News is the 12th of the preceding month



NEWS FROM ALL OVER

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

If you would like to hear the City of Sydney's organist, Robert Ampt, playing **Bach's Greatest Hits** on the Town Hall's grand organ, you should not miss the concert on Thursday, 2nd December at 7.30pm.

The concert will include *Air on the G String*, *Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor*, *Trio Sonata in G major*, *Sheep May Safely Graze*, and *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor*, with a guest appearance by the winner of the 1993 McDonald's Operatic Aria Competition.

The tickets cost \$10 or \$8 concession and are available from Ticketek outlets or from the Town Hall Shop.

NORFOLK ISLAND

News has reached us from Peter Irwin that the Norfolk Island Concert Organ Society has closed down. The history of the society was published in the *Norfolk Islander*, the island's weekly newspaper, and we will print this interesting story in next month's TOSA News, along with a report of David Parson's fairly recent visit to Norfolk to play a concert on the Father Willis organ in St Barnabas Chapel.

Peter Irwin in a note written to Mary Stewart, our secretary, thanked TOSA for the friendship offered to NICOS over the years.

ORGAN SOCIETY

The secretary of the North Shore

Organ Society has sent the following information about the society which may be of interest to some of our members:

This small and friendly group meets in different members' homes each month on the third Wednesday, and all players are encouraged to play a piece in front of the rest - rather like the Home Organ Parties which TOSA used to hold before they had two WurliTzers of their own. There are Theme Nights (some of which include a little dressing up) and an annual Concert by a visiting artist which add variety.

The number of members is limited to allow the owners of the various houses to accommodate all members, but a rare vacancy has occurred.

Prospective members should live on the lower North Shore and be prepared to hold a meeting in their home about every 18 months or so. Fees are \$15 single and \$20 a couple.

For further details call the secretary on 419 3739.

FOR SALE

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CORN CORNER



Allan Tassaker says he was busy playing a slow waltz, when he suddenly found himself playing a quickstep!.... Later, he noticed 3 ants running across the music... So what did he do then? He added another 3 ants ... and can now play *Flight of the Bubble Bee* in 60 seconds!



For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the Jim Riggs concert, we still have some of his cassettes available :

GRANADA - Jim Riggs plays the *Grande Barton* organ. Tracks include : *Granada*, *Can This Be Love?*, *Remembering Duke Ellington*, *Once In a While*, *When It's Sleepytime Down South*, plus more.

SINGIN' IN THE BATHTUB - Jim Riggs at the *Alabama Theatre WurliTzer*. Tracks include : *Singin' in the Bathtub*, *Oh Gee! Oh Gosh!*, *Four Waltzes*, Selections from "*Singin' in the Rain*", *Softly as In a Morning Sunrise*, *Hot Dog*, and more.

The above recordings are available only on cassette for \$15.00, plus postage of \$2.45 each.

FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON!

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS - David Johnston plays the *Capri Theatre WurliTzer* in Adelaide. Tracks include: *We Need a Little Christmas*, *The Christmas Song*, Selection of *Australian Carols* by William James, *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town*, *Silent Night*, *All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth*, plus more. This is Australia's first digitally-recorded theatre organ CD! Available on **Compact Disc** for \$20.00 plus \$2.80 postage or on **Cassette** for \$15.00 plus \$2.45 for postage.

Available at TOSA Concerts, or by Mail Order from :

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The JIM RIGGS CONCERT

Sunday, 24th October, 1993

A report by Colin Tringham

After a short announcement, brought the console up with his theme, *Paramount On Parade.*, played in a bold brassy manner.

This was contrasted with a Jesse Crawford arrangement of *I Love to Hear You Singing*. The *El Capitan March* by John Philip Sousa was played in a lively manner, with full registrations showing the power of the Campsie installation.

A rather wistful version of *I Surrender Dear* made very good use of the WurliTzer Piano, and some of the modern, chromatic runs added a lot of interest to the piece.

Fred Astaire inspired many people with his wonderful dance steps and Jim has put together a great arrangement of his most famous numbers, including *Cheek To Cheek*, *A Fine Romance*, *Isn't This a Lovely Day*, *Pick Yourself Up*, *They Can't Take That Away From Me*, *The Piccolino* and *Flying Down To Rio*. All were played in a fine foot-tapping style with plenty of registration changes, although many of the registrations were again rather "full".

Dancing With Tears in my Eyes was the first-ever electrical recording made by Jesse Crawford. Jim's arrangement made great use of the open harmony style and showed the very slightly exaggerated phrasing so typical of Crawford.

Henry Mancini wrote many pieces for TV series and his *Dreamsville* would be voted by me as the piece which should be most quickly dropped from an otherwise bright programme.

Foxtrot in a Minor Key and *Blue is the Night* brought the tempo back up, and a modern swinging version of *Georgia* (played in tribute to his young daughter) was thoroughly enjoyed, as was the final piece before interval, the rarely heard *20 Million People*.

After interval we heard another rare piece of music, *She's the Girlfriend of a Whirling Dervish*.

The second *Laurel and Hardy* film ever made was then shown. Jim says he picked up this very rare copy in a flea-market for only \$15. Fortunately it was not printed on the highly flammable Nitrate stock, so Jim was lucky that he did not have to have the

film recopied. Jim's organ accompaniment matched the film perfectly and both added to the enjoyment of the other.

Jesse Crawford again came to the fore when Jim played his arrangement of Jesse's themesong *Forgotten Melody*. Another Crawford piece called *Hullo, Aloha, How Are You* was next and then a recording made in 1932 in the Empire Cinema in Leicester Square during a Crawford tour of England of *A Broken Rosary*. Once again Jim's expertise with the Crawford style was thoroughly enjoyable.

A jazzy version of *Sweet Lorraine* with plenty of percussion got a particularly loud applause, and deservedly so!

Lullaby of the Leaves was played in the up-tempo style reminiscent of a small combo, with the changing lights adding to the mood.

Robert Fannon (sometimes called the Canadian Leroy Anderson) wrote many novelty pieces and his *Jumping Bean* was much used in early TV series. It was a great novelty piece and very well registered.

Jim Riggs then played one of his own compositions, written in the style of Eric Coates, and called *The Motion Picture Herald March*.

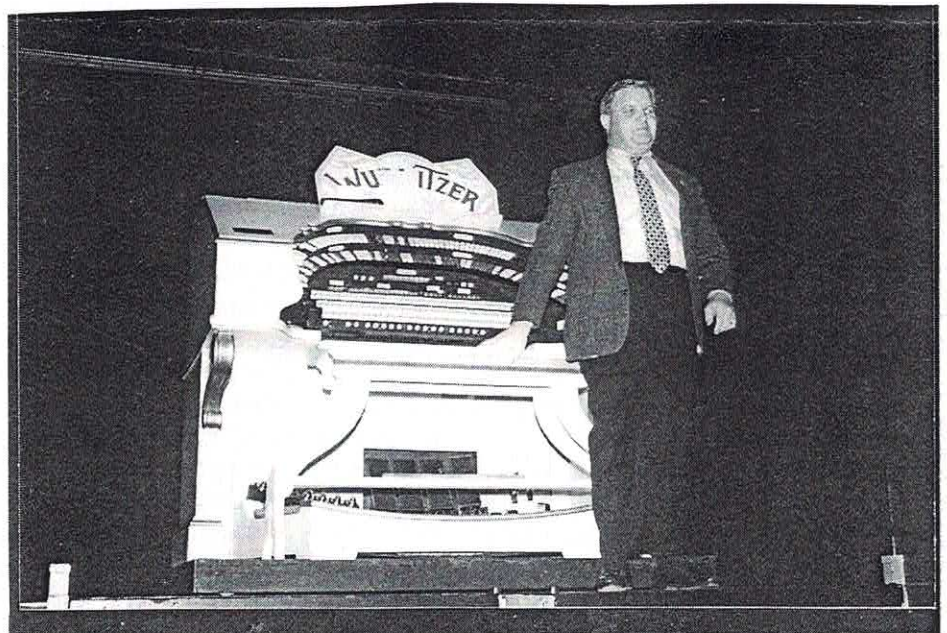
The final medley was taken from a Sydney Torch 78 called *Hot Pipes* and

included the *Toy Trumpet Serenade*, *Getting Sentimental Over You*, *Serenade For a Wealthy Widow* and *Twilight in Turkey*. Jim even arranged to stop when the record had to be turned over!

Throughout the varied programme, Jim made short but interesting announcements on each bracket of numbers. The playing showed his mastery of registration changes and to me this was one of the best concerts I have attended for some time. The playing could have been a fraction more precise in one or two instances, but to play an entire concert without music (including a couple of last minute requests) is no mean feat.

Once again, the lighting by Miles Perry was deserving of a special mention. He had expertly placed 28 lamps and the 2 follow-spots for maximum effect, starting to set up the lights at 3.30am on the day of the concert and not finishing until midday. Some of the effects were quite subtle and very pleasing, with the console at one stage bathed in pink and pale yellow light, contrasting effectively with the deep blue lights on the background curtains.

Talking to Jim after the concert, he expressed his appreciation of the work John Parker had put into the organ, the tuning and maintenance were highly praised.



Photograph by Barry Tooker

From the AGM - 18th November, 1993:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

John Shaw and I take pleasure in presenting our joint report on the progress of the Society over the past 12 months. 1993 was a very successful year for your Society - it was also quite an eventful one! Our concerts this past year have all been financially successful, with the concert attendances showing quite a considerable increase.

This has been most encouraging for your Executive and Committee in planning events which will maintain and enhance the Society's reputation for highly professional and pleasing concerts.

Artists appearing this year have been : **David Johnston; David Parsons; Cliff Bingham; Tony Fenelon and John Atwell** in a duo performance; **Nicholas Martin** from England presenting a **Blackpool Dance Night** as well as a concert; a welcome return by **Ray Thornley**; and **Jim Riggs** from the USA presenting a concert and a workshop for those members seeking to improve their skills.

Our patron **Ian Davies** invited TOSA members to a free concert afternoon at the Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club, where we were entertained by **Valda Lang, Bill Schumacher, Wendy Hambly** and of course by **Ian** himself. The timing of this event could not have been better as **Ian Davies** had just completed 21 years as our Patron.

Still to come this year is the annual Christmas concert show with **Tony Fenelon**, and the bookings at this stage indicate a sell-out house.

We were not able to book the **Orion Centre** at a time suitable for the tour by that great English organist, **Len Rawle**, but **Epping Baptist Church** stepped in to present him on their **Christie** organ, so we were fortunately able to enjoy his talents after all.

This time last year the committee announced that the **Marrickville** organ was to be shut down for 6 to 9 months for a thorough restoration. Also **Marrickville Council** had announced plans for a rejuvenation of their auditorium. Due to unforeseen difficulties there have been long delays in both these projects, but the **Marrickville WurliTzer** project is now about to get underway. However **Neil**

Palmer will outline these details when he makes his report on that instrument.

John and I would like to sincerely thank all members of the Executive and Committee for their commitment and total support during the year. They have worked exceptionally well under, at times, quite difficult circumstances, and we could not have wished for a better team effort. To all of them, our grateful thanks.

We could not operate the Society without the efforts of a large number of voluntary workers, who give generously of their time and talents : our Ticket Secretary - **George Newell**, and his wife, **Jean**; Membership Secretary - **Jeff Clark**; **Eunice** and **Merv Palmer**; **Frank** and **Edith Rohanek**; our lighting expert - **Miles Perry**; our organ maintenance people - **Neil Palmer** and **John Parker**; and their respective assistants. Then there are those who look after the catering in the tea and coffee bars - **Françoise Groves** and her many assistants. Then there are those who come to the Hall on concert days at 10 o'clock in Sunday morning to physically get things ready for the concert.

Without the help of these willing people your concerts would not be the smoothly-running professional shows that you expect.

I must also make mention of our former Ticket Secretary, **Ed Wharton**, who, despite ill health, carried on until we could find a replacement, and as it happens, just in time too, for **Ed** could no longer continue. Another tireless worker for the Society that I must mention is **Karl Zipsin** who made a tremendous effort single-handedly running the refreshments bar at the **Blackpool Dance Night**, and who is on duty and ever ready at every concert.

I must here make mention of our TOSA News editor, **Col Groves**. From the excellent TOSA News we receive every month, it is more than obvious to every member that he spends untold hours in the preparation of each issue. That, however, is not the end of getting TOSA News out, merely the beginning. From **Col Groves'** hands it goes to **Rob Gliddon** to be printed - all 700 copies of it. Again, this is a time-consuming task. Once printed, TOSA News then comes into the hands of

Arthur and **Mary Hall** who have the boring job of sorting all the TOSA News into Postcode order for the posting out of same. **Arthur** and **Mary** have done this task wonderfully for years.

As you can see, it takes a lot of people, putting in a lot of effort and a lot of time to this Society rolling along on track.

If we have left anyone out of this acknowledgement, we apologise - it was not intended to, but there are so many who very loyally give their services that it is easy to overlook someone, no matter how much **John** and I regret it. For all your good work and assistance **John** and I thank you most sincerely.

The shutdown of the **Marrickville WurliTzer** means that there can be no members practice sessions for some months. Nevertheless we have appointed member **John Hemmings** to the position of Practice Convenor and he will thus be ready to take up his duties when the organ re-opens. In the meantime those who look forward to future practice on a rejuvenated **Marrickville WurliTzer** have plenty of time to meet and get to know their Practice Convenor.

It truly takes a great team effort to successfully handle the complex nature of TOSA's organisation these days, and it is with pleasure that **John** and I submit this report to you.

John Shaw
Frank Ellis

Copies of the Treasurer's Report, distributed at the AGM, can be obtained from the Secretary.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I wish to thank you all for coming tonight and also for being such wonderful audiences during the last 12 months.

This has been a very busy and exciting year for TOSA (NSW) Inc., and I expect next year to be even more busy and exciting, what with the **Western Australian Convention**, the restoration of the **State Theatre** organ and the visiting artists from interstate and overseas, including our very own **Chris McPhee**, the overall winner of all sections of the (US) ATOS Awards! (He will be giving a special concert in Sydney in the near future!)

AGM (cont'd)

We are also adding to our theatre organ collection with the recent purchase of a **Christie Theatre Organ**, formerly installed in the **Kings Theatre, Gordon**. Major repairs and renovations to the **Marrickville Town Hall Theatre Organ** are immanent, with negotiations with **Marrickville Council** beginning next Monday. We have acquired a new Ticket Secretary, **George Newell**, who has been trained by **Mr Ed Wharton** himself. Our Box Office is looking healthier than ever and we are playing to almost full houses again.

I wish to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work, dedication and co-operation, and also the technical staff particularly, who do such a wonderful job backstage and with the lighting. Everyone is important - from the tea and coffee bar and candy bar workers to the Record Bar; from the programme and newsletter distributors to the raffle ticket sellers, the ushers, the photographers; also the furniture removalists, signwriters and the chair putter-upper-and-downers. They give so much of their time voluntarily, often starting work in the early hours of the morning and finishing very late at night.

Office-wise, I am happy to report that the books are all "in apple-pie order" and we are receiving letters and magazines from all over **Australia** and all round the world. We are "updating" all our office systems and equipment, and endeavouring to keep abreast of all the latest developments in office technology.

We are hoping to seek out new (and young) talents to give them the opportunities to use our theatre organs as a showcase for their talents and also somewhere to have practice sessions and rehearsals.

Finally I would like to stress that we have a wonderful working committee and each one of them would be very hard to replace. They are all very mature, experienced people and many of them are specialists in their own field. We have had a very happy, harmonious and productive year, and I hope this state of affairs will continue for the next 12 months or more. It is a pleasure to work with them and for them.

Thank you again.
Mary Stewart
(Hon. Secretary)

ORION ORGAN REPORT

Over the past 12 months the organ has continued to function well, with those artists playing it having been quite happy with its performance.

Recently a new set of Devtronic control directions and an updated disk have been received. Work commitments have not enabled me to attend to the wind-supply refinements I mentioned at the half-yearly meeting, but it is hoped that a major part of this work can be done prior to **Tony Fenelon's** December concert.

During the year the committee saw fit to purchase a Saxophone rank of pipes from **Ian McLean's** organ sale for future installation on the organ - and these pipes are presently at my workshop waiting for the committee's go-ahead to refurbish them.

Generally the organ is performing well and gives little or no trouble - one cipher in the last 12 months, from recollection.

Committee has recently discussed with me the possibility of engaging an overseas artist to assist me to tonally refine both of the Society's organs at some time in the future. This is a forward-thinking move, as I believe 2 heads are sometimes better than one, and it will be the icing on the cake for our 2 organs and will certainly bring them to the pinnacle in being world-class concert instruments. At this time an organ consultant has not been discussed, but it is a future project that will be of great musical benefit to TOSA.

John Parker

MARRICKVILLE ORGAN REPORT

Although the **Marrickville** organ has not been used for concerts this past year, it has continued to be maintained for the members to practise on.

The **Cliff Bingham** concert that was to be held at **Marrickville** in May of this year was moved to the **Orion Centre** as the **Marrickville Council** were planning to start their renovations at the hall. The committee felt that it was better to move the concert rather than risk having it cancelled at short notice by **Marrickville Council**. The committee also scheduled all future concerts at the **Orion Centre** as it was not known when the **Marrickville Town Hall** would be available for use, or when the organ would be closed down for refurbishment. As a matter of interest the renovations to the **Marrickville Town Hall** building include moving the Adult Library from

its present location to join the Children's Library in the basement area where extra space has been gained by extending into the former Caretaker's living quarters. Renovations are also being carried out to the Kitchen area. However, probably not much will be done to the Hall itself, apart from some touch-up painting.

Most of you would be aware that the **Marrickville** organ is to be closed down for refurbishment, and hopefully we will soon be able to set a date for this work to commence. The work to be done includes: replacing the old, failing relays with a solid-state relay; modifying the console to accept new electric stop and piston actions; refurbishment of the manuals and pedal-clavier, including all new contacts, re-specifying the stop list, re-polishing the console and improvements to the console housing to allow easier access. A 16' octave will be added to the Tibia rank. Our member, **Russ Evans** from **Seattle**, was able to locate a second-hand Tibia and chest that was suitable to our requirements. These are now in storage at **Marrickville** and will be restored. Thanks to **Robert Gliddon** for taking delivery of them and to **Ross Adams**, **Peter Harding** and **Chris Styles** for helping me to get them safely to **Marrickville**.

A **Krumet** rank will replace the existing **Kinura**, as it can be used in a similar role to the **Kinura**, but is more useful, particularly on a smaller instrument such as at **Marrickville**. Whilst the **Campsie** organ was in storage, its **Krumet** rank was used for several years at **Marrickville** and was well liked. Provision for a piano has been included in the new stop list. The 2 String ranks will have their own Tremulant and Regulator and additional Regulators will be added to control the bass offset chests. Some items will be moved in the chambers to allow easier access. The entire instrument will be rewired and flexible wind-lines will be replaced with solid PVC type.

I would envisage that this work could take anything up to a year to complete. Fine tonal regulation has been planned for the instrument once it is back on-line.

In closing, I would like to thank **Ian Tullock** for assisting me with maintaining the **Marrickville** organ throughout the year.

Neil Palmer

The **NOREEN HENNESSY** Story

It is impossible to think of **Noreen Hennessy** without immediately thinking of the **Prince Edward Theatre**, or vice versa, such was her long and happy association with the **Wurlitzer** organ of this famous showplace. **Noreen** was born in **Brisbane** and at the age of 3 years began to play the piano, under the guidance of her concert-pianist and organist mother, **Mary Agnes Mogan**. Three years later at the age of 6 she began to study the violin and when 7 years old appeared as guest artist with the **Queensland Symphony Orchestra**. She became very widely known as a child prodigy on both the piano and the violin.

During the next 10 years **Noreen** studied the cello and the church organ and also began to study singing at the **New South Wales Conservatorium of Music**. Later she was to sing leading roles in such productions as *The Country Girl* and *The Geisha*, etc. In early 1944, seeking new fields of musical endeavour, **Noreen** arranged to take a course of advanced theatre organ technique from **Mannie Aarons**, the acknowledged master organist of the **State Theatre**. Several months later, on 18th August, 1944, she was appointed theatre organist at the **Prince Edward, Theatre Beautiful**, and so began a season that was to last for over 19 years of her life.

Noreen made full use of her training as a singer and featured a vocal item at each of her appearances at the console. She was the youngest organist to be appointed to a large city theatre in this country and as a singing organist she enjoyed great popularity as well as the right to be a featured part of the show. A beautiful honey-blonde, **Noreen Hennessy** was always exquisitely gowned and, in the spotlight's amber glare, she presented a picture of grace and elegance at the mahogany console of the **Prince Edward's Wurlitzer**. During her long reign at the theatre **Noreen** was seen and heard by over 30 million patrons in **Sydney's Theatre Beautiful**.

Two of the most exciting moments

of her career at the **Prince Edward** were the nights she worked with film stars **Bob Hope** and **Danny Kaye**, during the personal appearance tours of these entertainers. Recalling her many memories of the theatre, **Noreen** said that one of her most rewarding moments had taken place during the run of an **Elvis Presley** film - while playing the music of **Debussy** during the intermission she had casually glanced down at the occupants of the front stalls seats to find several hip-swinging **Presley** fans absolutely engrossed in her presentation of good music.

Noreen was often called upon by charitable organisations to open fêtes, to be a guest speaker at afternoon meetings, or to visit hospitals, etc., and these were tasks she was happy to fit in between her matinée and evening shows at the theatre. When visiting a hospital **Noreen** always made certain that not one patient, old or young, was missed or passed by without a few words of greeting and a little gift of sweets, cigarettes or a book. These were usually wheeled around the ward on a trolley by the Matron or Sister who accompanied **Noreen** on her round.

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AGM (cont'd)

We are also adding to our theatre organ collection with the recent purchase of a **Christie Theatre Organ**, formerly installed in the **Kings Theatre, Gordon**. Major repairs and renovations to the **Marrickville Town Hall Theatre Organ** are immanent, with negotiations with **Marrickville Council** beginning next Monday. We have acquired a new Ticket Secretary, **George Newell**, who has been trained by **Mr Ed Wharton** himself. Our Box Office is looking healthier than ever and we are playing to almost full houses again.

I wish to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work, dedication and co-operation, and also the technical staff particularly, who do such a wonderful job backstage and with the lighting. Everyone is important - from the tea and coffee bar and candy bar workers to the Record Bar; from the programme and newsletter distributors to the raffle ticket sellers, the ushers, the photographers; also the furniture removalists, signwriters and the chair putter-upper-and-downers. They give so much of their time voluntarily, often starting work in the early hours of the morning and finishing very late at night.

Office-wise, I am happy to report that the books are all "in apple-pie order" and we are receiving letters and magazines from all over **Australia** and all round the world. We are "updating" all our office systems and equipment, and endeavouring to keep abreast of all the latest developments in office technology.

We are hoping to seek out new (and young) talents to give them the opportunities to use our theatre organs as a showcase for their talents and also somewhere to have practice sessions and rehearsals.

Finally I would like to stress that we have a wonderful working committee and each one of them would be very hard to replace. They are all very mature, experienced people and many of them are specialists in their own field. We have had a very happy, harmonious and productive year, and I hope this state of affairs will continue for the next 12 months or more. It is a pleasure to work with them and for them.

Thank you again.
Mary Stewart
(Hon. Secretary)

ORION ORGAN REPORT

Over the past 12 months the organ has continued to function well, with those artists playing it having been quite happy with its performance.

Recently a new set of Devtronic control directions and an updated disk have been received. Work commitments have not enabled me to attend to the wind-supply refinements I mentioned at the half-yearly meeting, but it is hoped that a major part of this work can be done prior to **Tony Fenelon's** December concert.

During the year the committee saw fit to purchase a Saxophone rank of pipes from **Ian McLean's** organ sale for future installation on the organ - and these pipes are presently at my workshop waiting for the committee's go-ahead to refurbish them.

Generally the organ is performing well and gives little or no trouble - one cipher in the last 12 months, from recollection.

Committee has recently discussed with me the possibility of engaging an overseas artist to assist me to tonally refine both of the Society's organs at some time in the future. This is a forward-thinking move, as I believe 2 heads are sometimes better than one, and it will be the icing on the cake for our 2 organs and will certainly bring them to the pinnacle in being world-class concert instruments. At this time an organ consultant has not been discussed, but it is a future project that will be of great musical benefit to TOSA.

John Parker

MARRICKVILLE ORGAN REPORT

Although the **Marrickville** organ has not been used for concerts this past year, it has continued to be maintained for the members to practise on.

The **Cliff Bingham** concert that was to be held at **Marrickville** in May of this year was moved to the **Orion Centre** as the **Marrickville Council** were planning to start their renovations at the hall. The committee felt that it was better to move the concert rather than risk having it cancelled at short notice by **Marrickville Council**. The committee also scheduled all future concerts at the **Orion Centre** as it was not known when the **Marrickville Town Hall** would be available for use, or when the organ would be closed down for refurbishment. As a matter of interest the renovations to the **Marrickville Town Hall** building include moving the Adult Library from

its present location to join the Children's Library in the basement area where extra space has been gained by extending into the former Caretaker's living quarters. Renovations are also being carried out to the Kitchen area. However, probably not much will be done to the Hall itself, apart from some touch-up painting.

Most of you would be aware that the **Marrickville** organ is to be closed down for refurbishment, and hopefully we will soon be able to set a date for this work to commence. The work to be done includes: replacing the old, failing relays with a solid-state relay; modifying the console to accept new electric stop and piston actions; refurbishment of the manuals and pedal-clavier, including all new contacts, re-specifying the stop list, repolishing the console and improvements to the console housing to allow easier access. A 16' octave will be added to the Tibia rank. Our member, **Russ Evans** from **Seattle**, was able to locate a second-hand Tibia and chest that was suitable to our requirements. These are now in storage at **Marrickville** and will be restored. Thanks to **Robert Gliddon** for taking delivery of them and to **Ross Adams**, **Peter Harding** and **Chris Styles** for helping me to get them safely to **Marrickville**.

A **Krumet** rank will replace the existing **Kinura**, as it can be used in a similar role to the **Kinura**, but is more useful, particularly on a smaller instrument such as at **Marrickville**. Whilst the **Campsie** organ was in storage, its **Krumet** rank was used for several years at **Marrickville** and was well liked. Provision for a piano has been included in the new stop list. The 2 String ranks will have their own Tremulant and Regulator and additional Regulators will be added to control the bass offset chests. Some items will be moved in the chambers to allow easier access. The entire instrument will be rewired and flexible wind-lines will be replaced with solid PVC type.

I would envisage that this work could take anything up to a year to complete. Fine tonal regulation has been planned for the instrument once it is back on-line.

In closing, I would like to thank **Ian Tullock** for assisting me with maintaining the **Marrickville** organ throughout the year.

Neil Palmer

The **NOREEN HENNESSY** Story

It is impossible to think of **Noreen Hennessy** without immediately thinking of the **Prince Edward Theatre**, or vice versa, such was her long and happy association with the **WurliTzer** organ of this famous showplace. **Noreen** was born in **Brisbane** and at the age of 3 years began to play the piano, under the guidance of her concert-pianist and organist mother, **Mary Agnes Mogan**. Three years later at the age of 6 she began to study the violin and when 7 years old appeared as guest artist with the **Queensland Symphony Orchestra**. She became very widely known as a child prodigy on both the piano and the violin.

During the next 10 years **Noreen** studied the cello and the church organ and also began to study singing at the **New South Wales Conservatorium of Music**. Later she was to sing leading roles in such productions as *The Country Girl* and *The Geisha*, etc. In early 1944, seeking new fields of musical endeavour, **Noreen** arranged to take a course of advanced theatre organ technique from **Mannie Aarons**, the acknowledged master organist of the **State Theatre**. Several months later, on 18th August, 1944, she was appointed theatre organist at the **Prince Edward, Theatre Beautiful**, and so began a season that was to last for over 19 years of her life.

Noreen made full use of her training as a singer and featured a vocal item at each of her appearances at the console. She was the youngest organist to be appointed to a large city theatre in this country and as a singing organist she enjoyed great popularity as well as the right to be a featured part of the show. A beautiful honey-blonde, **Noreen Hennessy** was always exquisitely gowned and, in the spotlight's amber glare, she presented a picture of grace and elegance at the mahogany console of the **Prince Edward's WurliTzer**. During her long reign at the theatre **Noreen** was seen and heard by over 30 million patrons in **Sydney's Theatre Beautiful**.

Two of the most exciting moments

of her career at the **Prince Edward** were the nights she worked with film stars **Bob Hope** and **Danny Kaye**, during the personal appearance tours of these entertainers. Recalling her many memories of the theatre, **Noreen** said that one of her most rewarding moments had taken place during the run of an **Elvis Presley** film - while playing the music of **Debussy** during the intermission she had casually glanced down at the occupants of the front stalls seats to find several hip-swinging **Presley** fans absolutely engrossed in her presentation of good music.

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To show the variety in his performance here are some other numbers from the list of programme so expertly performed by Colin: Belton's *Down The Mall*, Racheibel's *Canon in D*, *Toreador* from Bizet's *Carmen*, *Can't Help Lovin' Dai Man o' Mine* and *Old Man River* from *Showboat*, Von Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, Sousa's *Washington Post* and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, *Tonight* from *West Side Story*, the theme from the ABC series *GP*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* Waltz, *I'll Walk With God* from *The Student Prince*, Lemaire's *Andantino*, the Andrew Lloyd Webber numbers - *Love Changes Everything*, *Music of the Night* and *All I Ask Of You* from *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Friends For Life* and finishing with the rousing *Radecky March*.

Although there was no charge, all proceeds were donated to 2CBA-FM. - a report by Ted Hale

Colin Adamson Recital - Sunday, 7th November, 1993

About 100 people came to hear Colin Adamson's recital on the pipe organ in St John's Anglican Cathedral, Parramatta at 2.30pm on Sunday, 7th November.

This young organist puts his all into his concerts and is to be commended on the whole programme, and his renditions of both the light and the classical pieces he played.

Overall, on a small Walker Pipe Organ, the programme was quite remarkable for the variety of music played - from the light jazz of *Everything I Do, I Do It For You* to Handel's *Royal Fireworks Suite Allegro*.

Photograph by Barry Tooker



Jim Riggs at the console of the Epping Christie

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In short, this was an interesting night, but those members who look along tape recorders would have gained the most. The event was video-taped by Bill Schumacher and it would be nice to be able to borrow the tape and add to my sparse notes.

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The Jim Riggs Workshop - Tuesday, 26th October, 1993

About 20 people attended this workshop night at the Epping Baptist Church and each was presented with a nicely bound booklet for the event. However on opening the sheets, we found just headings, with space for us to add in our own comments. The difficulty with this approach was that while writing down one hint, etc., you tended to miss several more. A great deal of time was spent finding out what we wanted from the workshop and what our degree of expertise was. Although Jim gave unstintingly of his time and expertise (the workshop was still going at 11.30pm) it would perhaps have been better to have followed the more usual workshop practice of allowing someone else to play and then giving hints on what should be done to improve their performance.

One valuable bit of advice was to record your playing and play it back after a day or so, and listen critically. Jim says many of us would be amazed at the mistakes we make and which we do not hear when we are actually playing.

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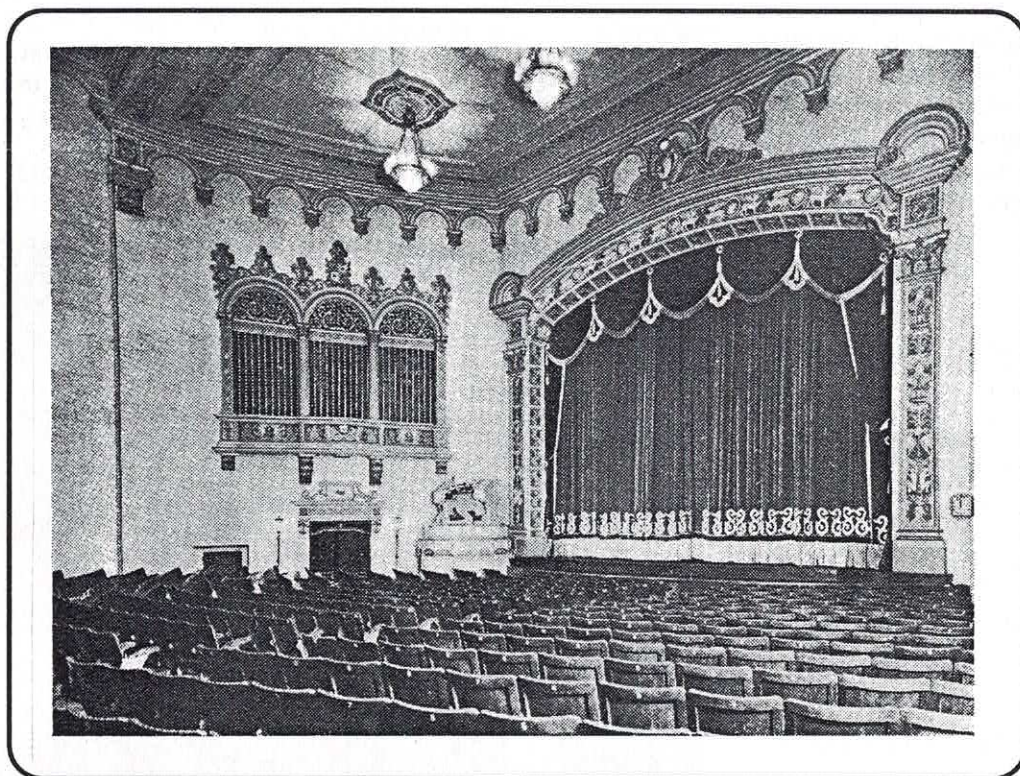
Although there was no charge, all proceeds were donated to **2CBA-FM**.

- a report by **Ted Hale**

CASTLES IN SPAIN - Part 2

This month we continue the article about the 2 Spanish-style theatres in Sydney, which comes from the April, 1970 edition of the "Music Maker" magazine.

The first part of the article told the story of the Plaza Theatre in George Street, Sydney, and John Gardiner now turns his attention to the Roxy Theatre in Parramatta. The Christie organ referred to here is now awaiting installation in the Hills Centre at Castle Hill, but unfortunately the project is currently stalled by the Council's lack of funds to proceed with the installation, although the chambers are there ready to receive the pipes. Let's hope that this project can continue soon, so we can once again have the pleasure of hearing this magnificent instrument in the near future.



The proscenium of the Roxy Theatre, Parramatta, viewed from the stalls, and showing the Christie console in its relocated position

FIESTA!

While construction work progressed on the Plaza, a momentous event in the history of the Australian cinema occurred at 8.00 p.m. on Thursday, 6th February, 1930 when the Roxy Theatre, Parramatta, opened with a blaze of light and sound to become the largest, most decorative and best appointed suburban cinema in Sydney.

The idea of the Roxy Theatre came to pass early in 1929 when the directors of the Victory Theatre, Kogarah, visualised a large cinema in the rapidly growing town of Parramatta (incorporated in 1938 as the City of Parramatta) as a sound investment, particularly as the proposed site would enable the theatre to be observed from several vantage points and attract the population of the expanding Hills district to the north.

A company registered as Roxy Theatres Limited was formed and the three newly appointed directors who were to raise the theatre to its highest pinnacle of success stepped into the limelight from the interior of the Prince Edward Theatre — House Manager Fred Burr, Director of Presentations Hal Carleton, and Chief Projectionist Terry O'Shea.

The plans of the Roxy were drawn up by architects Herver and Wilson, while the construction of the building was undertaken by Moore and Dyer at a cost of approximately \$174,000 and completed in eight months.

The Roxy was supposed to resemble a theatre in Albuquerque (New Mexico) and immediately set a high standard for theatres outside the city area.

The large forecourt was originally lined with decorative lamps and potted

palms, while the wide flight of steps leading to the arched entrance was illuminated, creating an effect not unlike a coloured waterfall.

Apparently Herver and Wilson sought to give an individuality to the theatre through the medium of Spanish renaissance, the grand foyer being composed of beamed ceilings, brightly coloured Spanish tiles, and textured walls, from which hung rich tapestries and banners.

A tiled wall fountain and fish pond was another principal feature.

The spacious auditorium accommodating 1,938 seats also featured textured walls, decorative motifs and attractively designed balconettes fronting onto arched grilles on each side wall near the proscenium arch.

Behind each grille were the organ chambers.

The ceiling, surmounted by a large dome originally contained what was

CASTLES IN SPAIN

• Continued from page 18

described as "a brilliant sunburst effect" surrounded by decorative suspended chandeliers. All these effects were replaced some years later by light fittings of moulded plaster.

The side walls of the Roxy were further made up of ornately designed windows, which, like the Plaza, gave the effect of an evening sky beyond.

A Christie Unit organ which became the largest instrument of this type to come to Australia was purchased from the British organ building firm of Hill, Norman and Beard for an estimated cost of \$32,000, the installation being personally supervised by Donald Beard.

The dark wood console adorned with an ornamental cloth was placed on a lift situated in a shallow pit in front of the stage where it remained until early in 1938 when it was transferred to a hydraulically controlled elevated platform inside a circular shaped well on the left hand side of the stage.

On 13th December, 1929, Fred Burr, Hal Carleton, Terry O'Shea, organist Eddie Horton, in company with five usherettes, cashier and page boy all resigned from the Prince Edward Theatre and headed west, to the place that had gone down in history as the second oldest settlement in the Commonwealth of Australia, and which was to have in its midst, one hundred and forty-two years later, a theatre of prestige value.

On opening night, bands played and speeches were made to the immense crowd that had gathered in the forecourt and spread across the road, where police were directing the large limousines bringing the many dignitaries and members of the first night audience to what was to be a most auspicious occasion in Parramatta history.

Above the milling throng the immense facade of the theatre was brilliantly lit by floodlights while on the very top of the building the words ROXY were illuminated in large red letters.

A telegram had been sent to Samuel L. Rothafel, the creator of the since demolished Roxy Theatre, New York, requesting his blessing on this mighty achievement. His reply was to the

effect that he would sue those responsible for the illegal use of his name.

However, nothing came of the incident and Samuel (Roxy) Rothafel died in 1936 a broken and disillusioned man, the same year as the Roxy celebrated its sixth anniversary with a stage presentation featuring Cyril Douglas and his Cocoanut Grove Orchestra.

The inaugural programme consisted of Paramount Talking News, a song cartoon "Old Black Joe", a featurette "Dear Teacher", and a special film in which Hollywood stars O. P. Heggie, Nancy Carroll, Richard Arlen, Clive Brook, and Harry Green voiced their greetings to the Roxy and the people of Parramatta. The main feature starred the immortal Maurice Chevalier in his first Hollywood film "Innocents of Paris", which was followed by another special film that had been processed earlier, showing the audience entering the theatre.

The fuchsia coloured curtains then closed to the strains of the organ played by Sydney's first imported organist, Eddie Horton.

The opening of the Prince Edward Theatre in 1924 originally brought Eddie Horton to Australia where he quickly gained popularity, or notoriety, with his flair for showmanship either seated at the organ or in his Stutz Bearcat parked outside.

During his nine years sojourn in the Southern Hemisphere Eddie Horton fulfilled engagements in nearly every major theatre throughout Australia, including a season at the Embassy Theatre, Wellington (N.Z.) in 1926.

After eighteen months at the Roxy, Eddie Horton gave his final recital on 25th September, 1931, and the quiet rural byways on the outskirts of Parramatta were no longer disturbed by the powerful exhaust and fanfare horn of his red Chrysler roadster which had become as familiar as the twin spires of St. John's Church.

Horace Weber from the Capitol Theatre, Melbourne came to the Roxy following a guest appearance at the Sydney State, and gave Parramatta the opportunity of hearing an organist who could have quite easily become a successful concert artist. He returned to Melbourne in January, 1932.

Desmond Tanner, featured organist at the Kings Cross Theatre, gave his opening recital at the Roxy on 2nd January, 1932. He became the theatre's first resident organist, staying

until 10th March, 1936, when he accepted an offer to appear in New Zealand at the Civic Theatre, Auckland.

On 11th March, 1936 Denis Palmistra who had recently returned to Australia from Auckland, became the last organist to appear at the Roxy before it formed part of the theatre chain controlled by Western Suburbs Cinemas Limited.

Hal Carleton resigned in 1933 in favour of joining the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer organisation, Fred Burr accepted a new challenge in 1935 when he was appointed a director of the remodelled Cameo Theatre in Sydney (now known as the Town Theatre), and Terry O'Shea, after a term as Roxy House Manager, resigned in 1938 to become the licensee of Parramatta's Woolpack Hotel.

Over the next five years from January, 1937, Roxy audiences were entertained by the various well known organists of the Western Suburbs circuit commencing with Paul Cullen who appeared for two seasons, followed by Knight Barnett, Ruby Coulson and Ray Chaffer.

Denis Palmistra made a return visit in June, 1940, and was later succeeded by Nicholas Robins who remained the Roxy's permanent organist throughout the war years until 1945 when Denis Palmistra made his final appearance on the circuit before resigning from Hoyts Theatre Limited who had taken over Western Suburbs Cinemas on 8th June, 1944.

In 1948, Owen Holland from the Sydney Regent became the last organist to appear at the Roxy on a regular basis until the dispensing of all musicians employed by Hoyts Theatres took effect in March, 1949.

For the next five years the large Christie organ that had at one time become an accepted part of the Roxy, was only featured on Saturday nights, and in 1958 was dismantled and removed from the theatre.

Despite progressive changes, the Roxy Theatre still stands firmly entrenched within the City of Parramatta, symbolic of a time when the Australian cinema conjured up a world of fantasy that provided a form of escape from the regular routine of everyday life.

The Roxy and the Plaza also stand as symbols to the men who created the atmosphere of colourful "Castles in Spain".

CLIFF BINGHAM at the Sydney Opera House

Although I would like to offer *Bouquets* to the Opera House management for putting on this concert, I would like to throw *Brickbats* at the very officious staff who kept several hundred people, many of them elderly, waiting in the dark, airless entrance way until the last possible minute before removing the rope barriers. I guess they were frightened that people sitting for an extra 15 minutes would have worn out the fabric prematurely!

The audience sit a long way from the organ and Cliff seemed little more than a black dot in the distance. I was amazed to see, after the concert, that Cliff was wearing the jazziest bow-tie I have ever seen!

Opening with a bright *Colonel Bogey March*, Cliff showed himself at home with the organ, despite little practice time on the instrument. Some of the louder Brasses and Reeds gave a great military band atmosphere to the piece.

As a complete change, we heard a Lloyd Webber selection which concluded with one or two numbers from the *Phantom of the Opera*. Here Cliff did his best to obtain a theatre organ sound from the instrument, although a couple of lush String ranks and a heavily tremmed Tibia would have helped.

A delightful novelty piece, composed by Lyn Larsen and called *Stanley* in tribute to Stan Laurel, was very well played with terrific use of a small Chiffy Flute, sounding almost like a Chrysoglott.

A John Williams selection, including items from *Superman*, the *Star Wars* Trilogy, the *Raiders March* from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, made wonderful use of the full fiery Solo Reeds to give a great fanfare effect.

This was the only time that the organ sounded reasonably loud. Mostly it needed a few more ranks to boost the

audio levels for those seated in the rear of the Concert Hall.

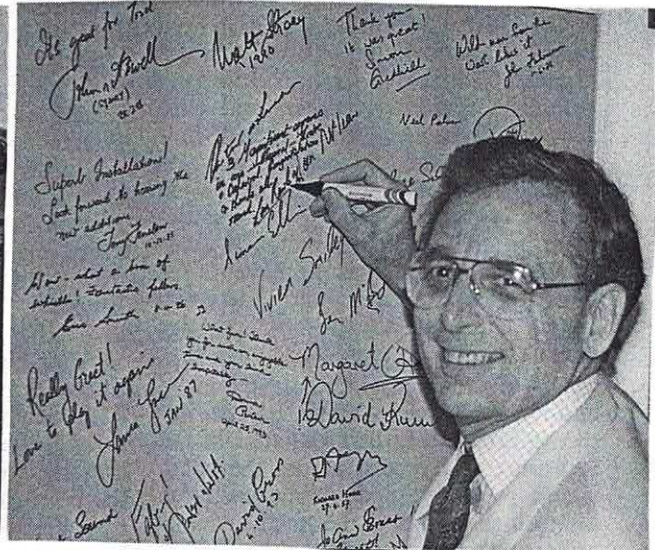
The Eric Coates composition, *The Dambusters March* sounded great and the concert concluded (all too soon) with the *Dance of the Comedians* from *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana played at lightning speed.

Although it did not seem possible to realise a real theatre organ sound on the Opera House organ, Cliff's choice of programme was varied and sensible, and he received a most deserved round of applause from the 600 or so people there.

I arrived at the Opera House early, and intended to eat at the snack bar at the rear of the complex and which has a pleasant view over the harbour. I was disappointed to find only fried foods available, and these were of the incredibly greasy nature. Next time I'll take my own sandwiches!!!

- a report by Colin Tringham

LEN RAWLE at Epping



A photographic report by Barry Tooker

Cliff Bingham and Len Rawle

