

T.O.S.A. NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, N. S. W. DIVISION

Volume 13 Number 9

SOCIETY DIRECTORY

September, 1975.

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WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

TONY FENELON ~ IN CONCERT

AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL
21st SEPTEMBER, 1975
2.30p.m.

Tony Fenelon will present for us the concert for 1975 - take advantage of this opportunity to hear his brilliant technique and enjoy his infectious enthusiasm. Advance preferential bookings are available from Mark Gabriel, 27 Yarran Road, Oatley, 2223, Ron Smith, 47 Horbury Street, Sans Souci, 2219, Robert Gliddon, 13 Neil Street, Epping or if you wish to obtain tickets by post send self addressed stamped envelope to "TOSA Concert" P.O. Box 150, Epping, 2121 all cheques to be made payable to the Theatre Organ Society. Tickets will also be available at the door on the day but to make sure of a good position in the Hall take advantage of the above offer to save disappointment.

Admission: General Public \$2.50, Children & Pensioners \$1.00 Theatre Organ Society of Australia Members \$1.50.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

19th October, Sunday 2.00 p.m. Free Afternoon concert at Marrickville Town Hall featuring David Parsons at the Wurlitzer.

21st October, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. A home organ party featuring Ray Thornley playing at Dan Cohen's home on his 3 manual Thomas Trianon. Phone early on 661 5937 for reservations. The address is 43 Rodman Avenue, St. Maroubra. A charge of \$1.50 for gents and \$1.00 for ladies will be applied to the Capitol Organ Fund and ladies are requested to bring a plate to assist with supper.

**Registered with the G.P.O. for posting as a periodical-
Category B**

26th November, Wednesday This is the tentative date for his year's Christmas Caberet - more details in coming months.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - DATE YET TO BE SET

This is a very important meeting and one which all members should make every effort to attend when the date and venue are announced. In this issue on page 19 there is for your convenience and use a committee and executive nomination form which must be completed and signed by the nominator and nominee before 16th October to comply with the Society's constitution. The positions for your consideration which automatically become vacant at the Annual General Meeting are:- President, 2 Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, 6 Committee Members, TOSA News Editor.

.....
PLAN NOW TO BE IN SYDNEY NEXT EASTER FOR THE ****FUNTASTIC FIFTH**** NATIONAL
THEATRE ORGAN CONVENTION
.....

SAVOY THEATRE CONCERT

We would like to make special mention of the efforts of our member Warren Wood from The Home Talkie Company in supplying and operating the projection equipment used during the Sunday afternoon concert held in July. We thank Warren and the Home Talkie Company for their generosity.

FREQUENCY MODULATION THEATRE ORGAN BROADCASTS

We believe the next Frequency Modulation Stereo Theatre Organ Broadcast will be presented on 9th September, between 7 and 8p.m. and if you are able to listen to this programme we hope you enjoy the entertainment and look forward to some comments from you this programme will be the second of a series initiated by our member Peter Bidencepe. Details and times of future programmes will be given in the Stereo Radio Guide which is mailed regularly to subscribers - for your information the existing FM station whose code name is 2MBSFM is funded entirely by this subscription and does not receive government subsidy or any other income, for this reason it is not believed proper that programme details will be given in this Newsheet in the future and we strongly commend that if you like the programme on ninth September you contact the station and become a subscriber. Telephone 439 4353 or write to P.O. Box 559, Crowsnest 2065.

REGULATION WORK ON MARRICKVILLE WURLITZER

It is with much pleasure that we can announce that the Tony Fenelon Concert will be the first public hearing of our Marrickville Wurlitzer following the work of regulation which has taken place recently. The people concerned, George and John Stevens have done an excellent job and you will be able to judge for yourself on 21st September what an incredible difference has taken place. Due to the efforts of Tom Halloran and his wife Ann a considerable saving to the society resulted from their hospitality to the visitors and all members of the Society extend thanks to the Hallorans once again.

Some work has been proceeding in the mean time on the organ's percussion section and to allow this work to proceed properly the percussions which were originally installed on the Capitol organ have been temporarily swapped so that the time element is not so important and a proper job can be achieved on the Marrickville percussions. You will recall that at the same time the organ was regulated it was brought down in pitch to modern standard pitch which is easy to do with pipes but not so easy to do with percussions.



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Create music in any style or mood. Your favorite Bach fugue. Your current pop experience. Or the contemporary rock sounds that are synonymous with the dynamic Moog Synthesizer . . . it's all there in the Celebrity Royale.

Making all this doubly exciting is the Royale's simplicity of operation. All tabs are easy to reach and easy to understand. With twelve presets plus convenient slide controls, Moog voicing is limited only by your imagination. Six independent percussion voices are yours at the touch of a preset tab. Exciting voices such as vibes, banjo, piano, and more. Vibra Magic automatically adds classical violin realism to the Celebrity Royale's already unexcelled voicing. And a bass guitar pedal voice, plus an authentic pipe organ Chiff have been added for even greater versatility.

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Surrounding all these versatile sounds are the clean cabinet lines and majestic theatre styling provided by Thomas' master craftsmen. Add a comfortable bench, a gleaming walnut finish, and you're at the controls of one of the most classic musical instruments ever. Equally at home from concert hall to conservatory, backing a choir or blasting off with a rock band, the Celebrity Royale 871 is the perfect choice. Ultimate proof that Thomas does indeed have a sound for everyone.



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• **MIRANDA**
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Centre Court
Miranda Fair
Phone 525 1032

AND

Shop 43, Warringah Mall. 938 2119

FLASHBACKS BY IAN CAMERON

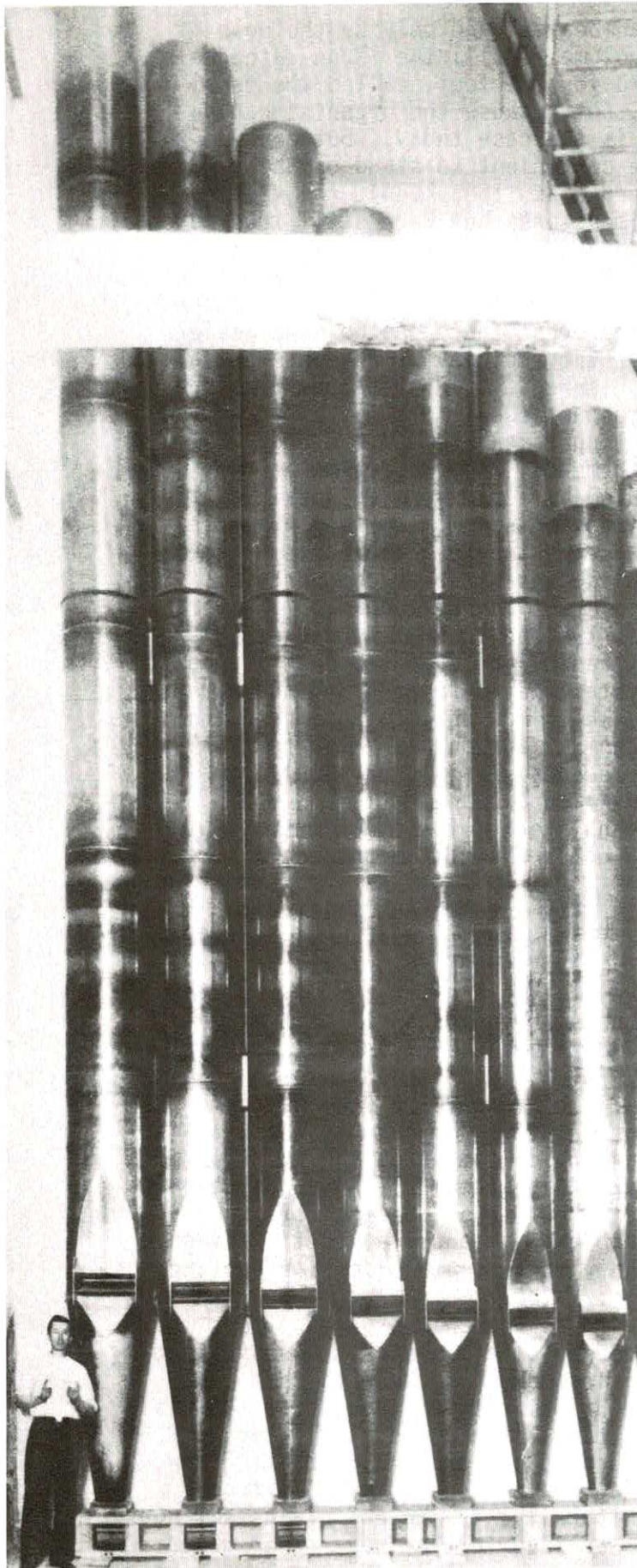
As mentioned in last month's news Ian Cameron has been doing a lot of hard work for us all for his 'Flashbacks' and has found an article in the Mitchell Library, which is reproduced here with photographs etc. with the approval of "Time-LIFE Inc." and was originally from Fortune Magazine in 1933.

THE U.S. ORGAN

. . . is not one but many things. It is St. Thomas's Church, Pierre du Pont's conservatory, and Jesse Crawford's pathos. It is a battleground where modernism (Wurlitzer) wars with classicism (most others).

Being fond of incongruities, history has recorded the first mechanical organ to have been the invention of a Greek barber. Of course, the elementary principle of creating sound by air vibrations in a pipe is indefinitely older, and a mouth-blown organ was used by the Israelites; but the product of the Greek tonsorial parlor (about 300 BC) was an actual mechanism which later became capable of about ten notes. It was called the Hydraulus, because air was fed into the pipes by means of a water appliance, and became popular with the Roman emperors because it was louder than any contemporary instrument. By 100 AD the Hydraulus had a range of perhaps three octaves, and by 950 had become identified with churches and monasteries. The first music in the modern sense of music was developed in the church about that time, and was therefore written for this kind of instruments which had been metamorphosed into the organ. This music culminated in the remarkable compositions of Bach (1685-1750), which the world will probably never surpass and will certainly never forget.

But it was in those days a primitive sort of king, with resources not in any way comparable to the modern organ; a king who was to be dethroned shortly by a long line of composers who wrote principally for other instruments. Due to the direct mechanical connections between the organ key and the air pressure, the medieval instrument called forth strenuous exertions on the part of its player. Technique was impossible because the keys had to be struck with the fist, and were therefore several inches wide.

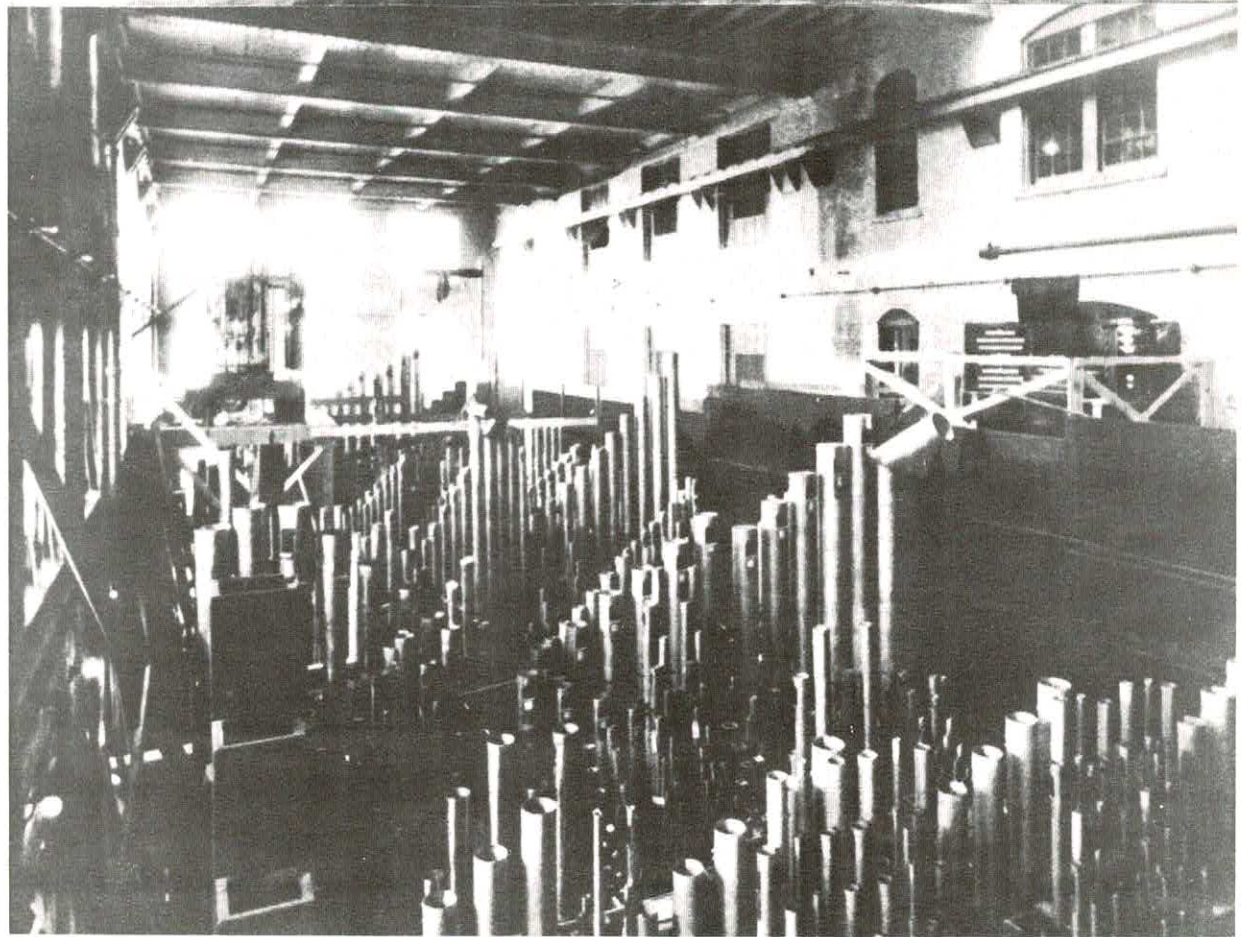
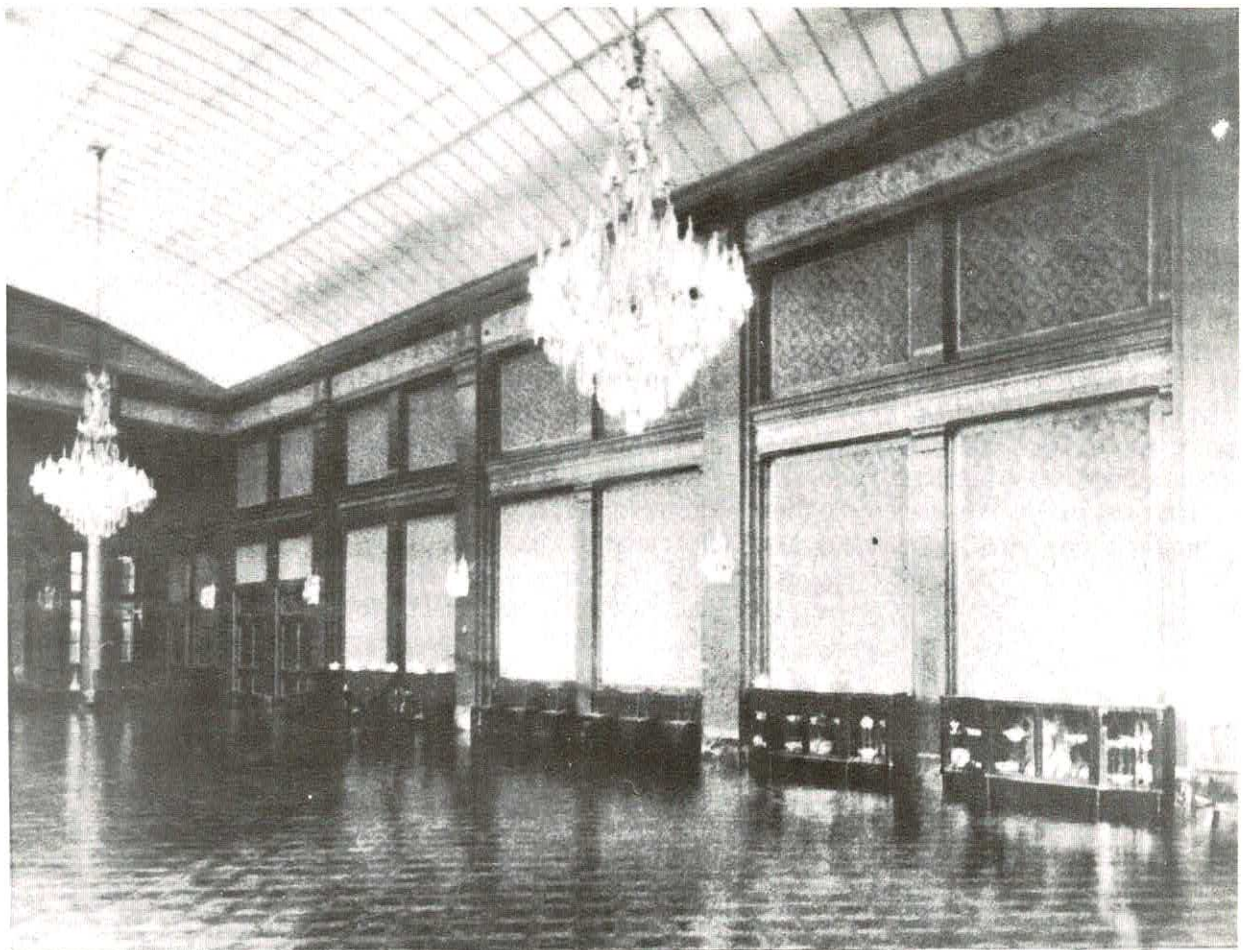


The willing virtuoso was called an 'organ-beater', and only by the help of several pumpers could he obtain enough volume to fill the large cathedrals. It is noteworthy that the modern keyboard for the feet, called the pedal clavier, originated in the 15th century, not because the organist had so many things to do with his hands (which is the case today), but because the bass keys were so stiff that it was more convenient to stand on them. By the time of Frescobaldi, famed Italian organist (1585-1644), the keys had shrunk to approximately their present dimensions, but were still much more difficult to depress than those of the modern piano.

The organ of the 18th and 19th centuries became a thing of beauty, but the organ of the 20th century is a thing of miracle. Not only has the matter of the key action been solved, so that the organ touch can be made easier than that of the piano if so desired, but the rapidity of response actually exceeds the piano in good instruments. Pierre S. du Pont's conservatory near Wilmington, Delaware, has a cubic content equal to three European cathedrals, yet the merest touch of the fingers on the Aeolian organ installed there fills the whole place with music. Any modern maker can accomplish this result, which is, of course effected by electrical mechanisms. Modern keys make electrical contacts. Modern wind pressure is delivered by electric fan-blowers. Modern stop levers are electrical switches connecting into a vast and complicated switchboard exchange. Besides this, electricity has made possible the modern mechanical player-rolls. With the result that the organ is the one instrument whose music can be successfully 'canned' Phonograph, radio, and even the best automatic piano attachments have their certain limitations in reproducing the work of virtuosos. Not so the organ attachment, which has only to duplicate the precise electrical contacts that the organist made on his keyboard. This task never passes the precise limits of mechanics and is obviously far simpler than the reproduction of the strike of a piano hammer. Thus electricity has not only changed the organ into a colossus of music, but has brought first hand musicianship into homes where it might not otherwise exist.

The modern king of instruments falls naturally into three divisions; residence, church and theatre. The effects desired by each are so different that an argumentative contrast of their virtues seems most futile; but the organ world is an intensely argumentative one, to a point just short of the forensic. The reason for this is that the American organ is in a state of flux, and will so remain for many years, both because of its potentialities and the variety of demands made upon it. No field is the exclusive property of any builder, although the Aeolian Co. is certainly the star performer in the matter of residences, having built at least 75 per cent of the nation's private organs. But the Wurlitzer company, which dominates the theatre business with an easy hand, has recently cut spectacularly into residence and church markets - except in certain circles. What these circles are, it will be the duty of this article to explain. Meanwhile, to fix things in their proper proportion, it is necessary to grasp the facts of Wurlitzer's success.

The Wurlitzers are modernists, and are perhaps the only organ-builders who have a thorough understanding of the modern public. A stream of unsolicited testimonials never used in their advertising makes it clear to them that persons for whom organ music is dull and uninspiring are converted to this instrument upon hearing the colourful, at times passionate, Wurlitzer tone. As a result of this understanding of the contemporary mind, Wurlitzer now does one-third of the American residential business, and installs from thirty to forty church organs a year. Naturally, in the era of installing organs for motion picture theatres, the Wurlitzer organ drove other makers



(except W.W.Kimball Co.) out of the theatre business, helter-skelter; for this field, more than any other, is dominated by what the public likes. But the company's success has not been confined to America, for it has a very healthy exporting business, and this is maintained against restrictive tariffs and in spite of the fact that Wurlitzer organs are expensive to begin with. Outside of America the Wurlitzers have succeeded best in England and Germany, where many musicians have acclaimed them. They are most progressive builders and predict that in ten years they will dominate all fields, from the theatre to the church, and their recent popularity in the residence may be a foretaste of this success. Their gross organ business at peak is in the neighbourhood of \$6,000,000 a year, and their business ability is such that they present to their competitors (who are for the most part less able financiers) a front that is constantly mobilized with great reserves behind it. Their factory capacity is one organ a day -- which is larger than any other except that of M.P. Moller, Inc.

Pictures (a) THE MAMMOTHS OF SOUND - AND THE MIDGET

32ft. diapasons of the World's largest organ, now being built in the Convention Hall at Atlantic City by Midmer-Losh. The workman holds the smallest pipe in his hands and between these extremes there will be 35,000 others.

(b) AN ORGAN POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FILL THREE CATHEDRALS

Pierre S. du Pont's Aeolian is one of the largest of residential organs. The 10,000 pipes are installed behind screens along the wall of this large room, which opens out to the du Pont conservatories near Wilmington, Delaware. The expression shutters are concealed behind the screens. The organist is Firmin Swinnen. On the first and third Sundays of the month, the conservatories are open to the public (charity admission 50¢).

(c) NEARLY A MILLION PARTS SUCCESSFULLY ASSEMBLED

Following the best organ practice Aeolian assembled Mr. du Pont's organ on the factory floor before tearing it down and shipping it to "Longwood" in 14 freight cars. To test the monster special power lines were leased and enormous switches and starters installed to operate the 72 hp blowers.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH.

PRACTICE SESSIONS AT MARRICKVILLE

We are glad to announce that practice sessions have once again resumed following the work of regulation having taken place on our 2/10 Wurlitzer and two matters should be mentioned in reference to practice times.

- a) Those people having been allotted practice times are asked to please phone Phyllis Wilson 24 hours before your time if you cannot attend a particular session this is to enable substitutions to take place so that our organ is used to the maximum benefit by the Society members. If 24 hours notice is not given then the usual levy for practice time will apply.
- b) If you are a member and would like to make application for a practice session time then you should write to Phyllis Wilson C/- The Secretary whose address etc. appears in the Society Directory on the front of this newsheet and if sufficient applications are received the necessary steps will be taken to obtain additional practice time.

..... 1976 SYDNEY CONVENTION YEAR

...THE FUNTASTIC FIFTH...

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 **National**
Just slightly ahead of our time

THE KINGS THEATRE GORDON, 2/8 CHRISTIE ORGAN
(Researched by Charles Cohen & Rod Blackmore)

FOREWORD:

This information and the accompanying photographs were originally intended to be part of a much larger whole - a project dealing with the history of as many as possible of the theatres on the upper North Shore line, with special attention to the Kings Theatre, Gordon, the old Empire which had stood on the same site for many years previously, and the ventures in the movie field in Gordon by the Genernazzis, and the Gay Brothers some time earlier. Unfortunately much information and material which it was hoped would be uncovered has disappeared or been destroyed.

I have been offered much help and support by many people and have been offered what seemed to be quite useful breakthroughs in obtaining background material - only to find that pieces of information which looked promising have led nowhere. I am regretfully compelled therefore to reduce the scope of the present article to material which I can attest from my own memory and also substantiate by reliable information given to me by people who have lived through the period and have been associated with the subject under review.

I use the word 'reliable' advisedly and without any apologies. Frequently looking back over a period of forty five years, one's memory of details can become blurred, and I'm probably no exception in this regard myself. For instance you may strike someone who will swear that the 'Prince Edward' Wurlitzer used to rise up on a lift!

The scope of this article will now be restricted to the old Empire Theatre, its demolition and replacement by the structure later to be known as the Kings Theatre, the installation of the 2/8 Christie Organ in 1928, its eventual sale to St. Columbs' Church of England, West Ryde, and the specification of the organ.

Though restricted in scope I hope that the article will be of general interest.

Chas. D. Cohen.

ADDENDUM TO FOREWORD

Since writing the above foreword some further information has been elicited from 'North Shore Sydney from 1788 to Today (1970)' by the late Les G. Thorne. The facts given by Mr. Thorne had been compressed into only a couple of paragraphs but I had not known some of them at the time of writing the article - especially those dealing with the later period.

As the article is now ready for publication it would be rather difficult to re-write the parts concerned. I am therefore attaching Mr. Thorne's extra information at the end of the article.

CDC

THE FAMILY OWNED THEATRE:

In the early years of the present century, the small suburban cinema was a family owned and controlled affair. Many examples come to mind - the Crispe family of Chatswood 'Arcadia', the Szarka family of Enmore, and quite a number of theatre entrepreneurs in the Gladesville, Ryde and Drummoyne districts. A theatre at the corner of Wharf Road and Meriton Street, Gladesville, now a clothing factory, was initiated by a Gus Bowe, who also built a second theatre about half a mile away, almost opposite the Gladesville Catholic Church. This is now the site of a fruit and vegetable market. Bowe also built a later one at Ryde - the 'Rialto', which is now the site of a car park. Another Gladesville theatre - the 'Palace' - built by a Mr. Park, later came under the control of Hoyts' Theatres, was closed down in 1967 or 1968 and was later demolished for a re-development purpose. In Drummoyne, the Sutton family owned a 'semi' open air theatre (open towards the screen but covered towards the rear end of the building.) This was pulled down and later rebuilt. Still another cinema, at the corner of Victoria Road and Edmund Street, was owned and controlled by the Clare family.

S STAMFORD INDUSTRIES PROUDLY PRESENT

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635-6037

FEATURES.

SOLO VOICE AND CONTROLS:

Flute Section: 16' - 8' - 5' 4" - 4' - 2' 8" - 2' Flute cancel - Flute volume sliding control.

Orchestra Section: Bourdon 16' - Clariney 8' - Trumpet 8' - Oboe 8' - Violin 4' - Clarinet 4' - Salicet 4' - Quint 2' 8" Fifteenth 2' - Piccolo 2' - Orchestra cancel - Orchestra volume sliding control.

Sustain: Preset sustain voices for Piano, Bar Piano and clavichord Sustain short/long - sustain volume sliding control.

Percussion: Flute section percussion - Orchestra section percussion, plus percussion on 8' - 4' - 2' 8" - 2' percussion short/long repeat on/off - percussion volume sliding control - repeat speed sliding control.

Accompaniment Voices and Controls: Trombone 8' - Clarinet 8' - Tibia 4' - Horn 4' - Oboe 4' - Tibia 2' - Shart 2'.

Pedal Board Voices and Controls: Suobass 16' - Clarinet 16' - Clarinet 8' - Strings 8' - Sustain control - pedal volume control.

Tremulants: Vibrato on/off - vibramagic on/off (delayed vibrato starting) Vibrato speed and intensity controls.

Leslie: Leslie on/off - Tremolo/Corale.

Reverb: Reverb on/off - short/long.

Transposer: This is an EKO exclusive, it will automatically change key by pushing a button.

General: Power on/off - pilot light - bright and mellow tone control switch - expression pedal - switches for preset voicing combinations. INPUT & OUTPUT for external connections on amplifier, additional accessories.

The list could be extended indefinitely, but a clear enough picture should have emerged by this time to indicate the essentially family nature of these undertakings. No doubt in many cases the cinemas would only constitute part-time activity for at least some members of the family, perhaps leaving the major responsibility for the concern as a full-time commitment to only a couple of members.

The early theatres were flimsy structures, frequently either completely open air, or at any rate partly so, with a dirt-floor and wooden benches for seats.

THE HANCOCK FAMILY AND THE "EMPIRE THEATRE", GORDON:

The Hancock family was the Gordon equivalent of the Crispes, the Szarkas, the Suttons, the Clares, etc., and the "Empire" Theatre was their Theatre. They had lived in Gordon for many years and were a large enough family to be able to run such an undertaking successfully.

Just when the "Empire" Theatre was built, I cannot ascertain, but I would say that it was in existence during the period of World War 1, and perhaps even before. Like the theatres of its particular period, it had a dirt floor and wooden benches for seats. Not the most comfortable accommodation, by any means, but that seemed to be the least of the worries of the youngsters of the day who turned up in their numbers at Saturday matinees and yelled and screamed themselves hoarse watching the exploits of Fred Thompson, Art Accord, Tom Mix, and other screen heroes, fighting their battles with the screen 'baddies' - and always coming out on top - while down in the orchestra pit, a pianist was busily occupied playing music of the right mood for each part of the film. Quite frequently the music couldn't be heard for the uproar during an especially exciting part - but what did that matter? One thing is certain - the kids enjoyed themselves.

The "Empire" did have at least one advantage - it was at least roofed, so the state of the weather did not affect the comfort of the patrons of the theatre. It may be raining cats and dogs outside - but the cats and dogs only fell on the roof - not on the heads of the audience inside.

DEMOLITION OF THE "EMPIRE" - THE NEW GORDON THEATRE:

The old "Empire" Theatre was eventually demolished to make way for a new brick theatre, simply called the Gordon Theatre. This would have taken place early in the 1920's - unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the dates for there are no records to check by. At this point I have to rely on my unaided memory, bearing in mind that many changes occurred between then and 1929 the next important year in the theatre's history. The new Gordon Theatre was a vast improvement on its predecessor. In fact, it compared quite favourably with other theatres built at the same time. It was not a very wide building - certainly not as wide as the Chatswood "Arcadia" - but it seemed to have greater length. The front entrance was flanked by two lock-up shops which, so far as I can recall were only open when the theatre was, and provided sweets, icecreams, etc. for patrons.

The entrance was slightly arched, the arch rising from a fluted pillar on each side. A single flight of stairs leading to a landing branched here to form two flights leading to a very large vestibule. From this vestibule, stairs on either side led to the dress circle.

Seating showed a striking improvement. The type of seat, familiar to theatregoers throughout the twenties, thirties and from then on, was installed, with the comfort of the theatre goer being taken seriously into account.

So Gordon acquired a theatre in which the locals could feel some pride. It was destined to have a chequered future career - but that was all in the future. In the meantime it continued to provide entertainment for

young and old, a resort for young fellows to take their girl friends, and a source of excitement for the youngsters at the Saturday matinees.
TO BE CONTINUED.....

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

As I've just returned from a trip to the United States, I thought I would drop you a few lines for the Newsletter, if you wish to include them. The main portion of my trip centered around a visit to St. Louis, Missouri, and the Fox Theatre. The St. Louis Fox was opened in November, 1928, with the celebrated fanfare that was always associated with major theatre openings, contained in the theatre is one of the five Fox specials, a 4 manual, 36 rank Wurlitzer.

The theatre was designed by C. Howard Crane, who also designed the Fox in Detroit, which is a twin to the St. Louis theatre. Both buildings were overly decorated by Eve Leo Fox, the wife of the famous film magnate. The Wurlitzer was played on opening night by guest organist Betty Gould (there was an article on her in the ATOS Theatre Organ magazine this year) and resident organist Tom Terry. Mr. Terry stayed at the Fox until 1935, when the organ was silenced.

Over the years, the Fox in St. Louis saw many of its expensive furnishings sold off, and eventually the theatre became a part of the Arthur Theatre Chain, which still owns it today.

In 1952, St. Louis organist Stan Kann took up residency at the Fox, playing for shows three times a day. He had an assistant, Dale Zieger, who has since left St. Louis. It's also interesting to note that this organ, which has remained unused for 15 years before Stan Kann played it, was in remarkably good condition, which I guess shows the reason for the expression 'Rolls Royce of Organs' which has always been applied to Wurlitzer. At the time of the theatre's opening in 1928, the St. Louis Fox Wurlitzer was valued at \$75,000. Stan Kann continued to play the instrument up until a year ago when, as attendance started dropping off, it was decided to discontinue the organ intermissions. Since that time the organ has not been used except by Stan Kann and others for private practice sessions.

While I was in St. Louis, and as I am a friend of Stan's we got together and he arranged to show me the organ. We spent the better part of a morning at the Fox, and if anyone over there gets the chance to see it, you'll be aghast at the huge size of this 5,000 seat house, along with its opulent surroundings. Stan brought up the gilded console in regular fashion and played several tunes from the only album ever made of this organ, 'Stan Kann in St. Louis', which was produced by Malar Records in California. It's probably the most exciting private concert I've ever experienced in my life, as Stan played for more than 3 hours! When the projectionist arrived for the day's work, he put a white spotlight on the console, just as he would have during a regular organ intermission.

Unfortunately, the spell of this trip back into time ended all too soon, and we had to send the console back down into the pit, as the day's regular show was about to begin.

I was fortunate to meet Mr. Edwin Arthur, Lawyer for the Arthur Chain, who confirmed the fact that the St. Louis Fox Wurlitzer is about to be sold. There is at the moment a bid of \$60,000 on the instrument, and should it be sold, it will then be the highest price paid for a Wurlitzer to date. From what I have heard, the bid has been put forward by Mr. W. Brown of Pizza Parlour fame, but Mr. Arthur told us that all bids would be considered before a buyer would be announced.

So I left St. Louis with photographic and physical memories of a great movie palace, and a great organ, perhaps for the last time.

To date I understand that the Detroit Fox and its organ (another Fox special) are safe, but you can never tell in this time of quick changes. I next moved on to San Francisco, and while I was unable to attend the ATOS annual convention there, I didn't suffer from not hearing a Theatre organ. I made a trip to the Lost Weekend Bar where the sounds of the 2/10 Wurlitzer formerly from the Senater Theatre fills the lounge each night. The organ is in playable condition, but needs quite a bit of work, as more than 70 pipes lay on the chamber floor, the result of cyphers. I also visited the Oakland Paramount in Oakland, where restoration is almost complete. The theatre's original Publix Wurlitzer was unfortunately sold, but another has been bought from the Detroit Capital Theatre to be installed in the near future. The lift has also been repaired, and is just waiting for its new occupant. The theatre is really great; it's well worth seeing.

The 4/22 Robert Morton in the Orpheum Theatre, San Francisco was inaccessible, but I understand it is in good condition, and will be heard during the convention. Of course, San Francisco was needed for the Fabulous Fox, probably the best known of all the great movies palaces. Well, believe it or not, you can still see some parts of this great theatre, resurrected in a small theatre known as the Little Fox Theatre. The performances here are live, and there is no organ, but incorporated in the building are the original brass doors from the front of the fox; the original box office; some of the brocaded seats; part of the proscenium arch, some chairs, and much panelling and pillars.

Well, that's about it for ramblings. As I enjoy reading TOSA News, I thought your readers would like to hear something of what's been going on over here.

Yours sincerely,
Larry Partridge. (Toronto, Canada.)

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a reply from the ABC regarding the Malcolm Patterson segment from Adelaide. I thought the reply may interest you as all members were requested to complain to the ABC on the August Edition of TOSA. I would also like to mention in regard to Postal charges for our future editions of TOSA I suggest all members be reminded of this and fees should be increased to cover this, as it will be a big drain on the Society's funds which it can ill afford to pay out. Especially as we are getting new members all the time which is of course very good. I trust this can be put to all members, a small amount for members but a big bite out of the funds we badly need, if we are going to get the old Capitol Wurlitzer on its feet and talking to us all.

I have been trying for years to contact a chap who at the time drove a taxi for Royal Cabs, he was taking lessons on the Regent (Sydney) about 1934-35, many years after this I had a confectionery shop near the Victory at Kogarah when we met again and he then told me he was to start playing at the old Victory (now Mecca) I have forgotten his name and he may still be playing. I wonder if you could help me find him as he may even be a member.

I have not had any enquiries re my Thomas Troubadour 186 - They are now close to \$1,900 so whoever buys it will be about \$300 better off and this as well as about \$60 extras.

sincerely,

Colin L.H. Stewart 771 1370

The letter from the ABC as mentioned above reads as follows:-

Dear Mr. Stewart,

Many thanks for your letter of August 4th. I was most interested to read your comments and I appreciate your feelings about the loss of the Malcolm Patterson segment. However, the producer and compere of 'Sentimental Journey' are fully conscious of the organ's appeal and I can assure you they will be including suitable illustrations in their future programmes.

Yours faithfully,

Director of Radio Entertainment,
Bruce Webber.

BRITISH CINEMA ORGANS

THE "REGAL" THEATRE, MARBLE ARCH, LONDON. CHRISTIE UNIT ORGAN

"The organ at the Regal, Marble Arch, is to my mind, one of the most characteristic creations of that great artist, Herbert Norman, and as such it commands the respect and admiration of all organ lovers, The Regal is not a large theatre, and its interior decoration scheme is of an intimate and delicate character; hence the organ partakes of the same nature and blends perfectly with the beauty of its surroundings. Being a unique and individual work of art, built and designed to secure perfection, regardless of expense, it has little in common with the ordinary 'mass production' type of cinema organ, and is a shining example of what can be done when an organ builder is given a free hand and allowed to express his individuality without being unduly hampered by commercial restrictions."

The above is the opinion of the first resident organist, the late Quentin M. MacLean, who also drew up the original specification with Mr. Herbert Norman of Messrs. Wm. Hill and Norman & Beard Ltd., well known British firms of straight organ builders and of Christie Unit Organs.

The console stood on its own lift in the centre of the orchestra pit, its two chambers were attacked on the right-hand side. The 36 ranks (30 units) were housed:-

In Chamber "a" Diapason Phonon, Open Diapason, Hohl Flute, Tibia Clausa Gedeckt, Strings (2 ranks), Viole, Viole d' Orchestre, Viole D'amour, Saxophone, Vox Humana, Tuba Horn, Fanfare Trumpet.

In Chamber "b" Gemshorn, Diapason, Orchestral Flute Tibia Minor, Violins, (2 ranks), Muted Strings (2 ranks) Violincello, Salicional, Quintadena, Musette, Clarinet, Orchestral Oboe, Oboe Horn, Tuba Sonora, Trumpet and 4 rank Cornet de Violes.

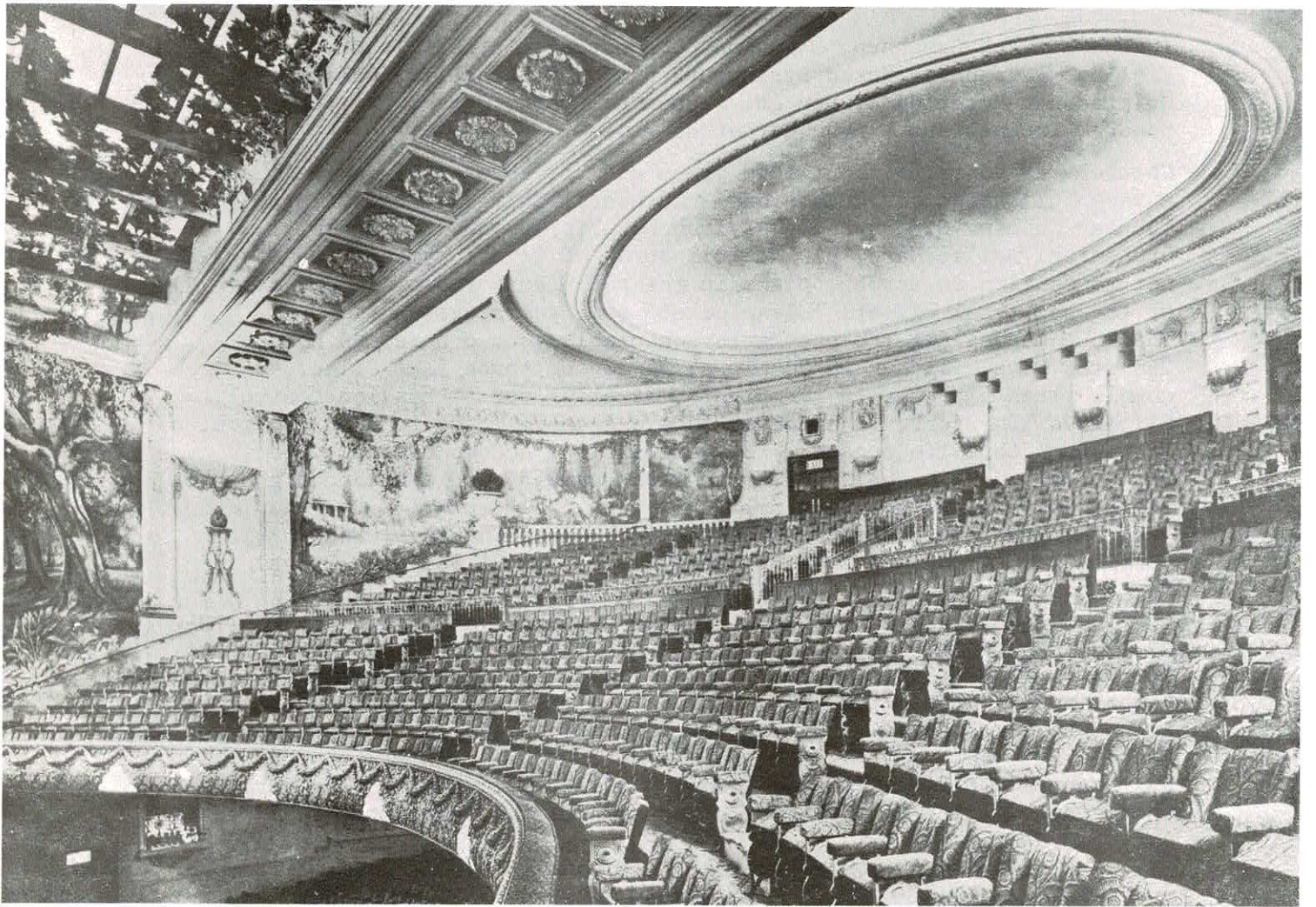
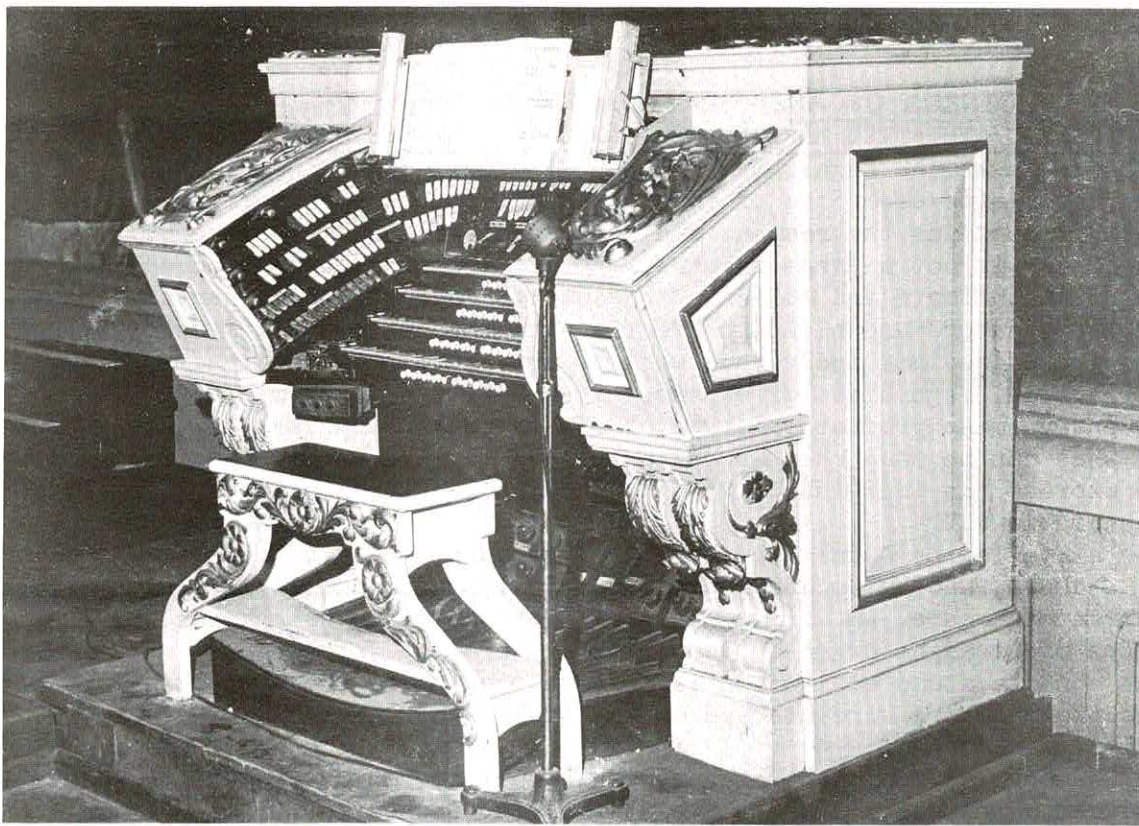
Chamber "a" contains about 1000 pipes and "B" about 1500, as well as a very full range of percussions - Cathedral Chimes, Muted Chimes, Tubular Chimes, Sleigh Bells, Zyllophone, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Orchestral Bells, Harp, plus a full array of drums, cymbals and effects, not to mention an upright piano in the pit. Both the piano and most of the non-tonal effects 'disappeared' some years ago.

The four manual electro-pneumatic console is very ornate and has some 250 stop keys. It has 16 couplers, 31 second touch facilities, 40 double touch pistons, 10 tremulants, 38 stops for percussion control, 21 percussion stops, 26 effects stops and cancel bars to each section, a feature of Christie organs. Four manuals are Accompaniment, Great, Orchestral, Solo. Swell pedals to each chamber, and a balanced general crescendo pedal with indicator.

-----Extract from cover notes of the recording "The Regal Sound" with Gerald Shaw at the console. Produced in the early 1960's by Carwal Records.

The Christie Organ was removed in the mid 1960's just prior to demolition of the theatre building. On the site stands the new Odeon, Marble Arch. The fate of the organ has been the subject of great debate, but it seems almost certain that it is now erected in a disused aircraft hangar somewhere in south-west England. Any further information available from your English readers??

Next month in British Cinema Organs we will continue with more details & photographs of the Regal Christie and some of the organists, included will



will be photographs of its real Carillon of 32 genuine bells which were played from the console and operated by some very special pneumatic motors.

Photographs:-

a) The Christie 4/36 console

b) The Regal Cinema in Marble Arch, London, stood, as the opening programme stated "somewhat paradoxically, on the site used by the Roman Legions to guard the Tyburn on the corner of the Edgware Road." Its decoration therefore was not in the English tradition but in a contrived Roman style. The main scheme was designed by Clifford Aish and the design for the interior was chosen from sketches submitted by forty artists in competition. You were meant to feel regal at the Regal. No expense was spared. Passenger lifts took patrons from the principal entrances to all floors to the dance hall, the tea rooms and the circle.

The interior decoration of the auditorium was based on the colours of a spray of autumn leaves from Bnrnham Beeches provided by the Managing Director, A. E. Abrahams. Colours matching these leaves, gold, brown and red, were used throughout the auditorium which was based on a Roman amphitheatre, "with glades of trees and garlands of creepers visable in autumnal guise through a graceful colonnade." The foliage was carried out in bas-relief. The proscenium was ornamented with "vigorous acanthus leaf designs" while the cove above the proscenium arch depicted Dawn; and on either side fountains flanked the ornate organ grilles. A massive pergola was situated in the roof space, where, to continue from the ridiculous programme notes, the 'trails of golden creeper twine, catching the truant sunbeams as they pass ... The Centre of the Temple has a coffered beam, which carries the Pergola, supported by a wall with a pilaster and Roman tripod, and the glade continues right around to the doorways, which are embraced in the Roman scheme'. When the gold curtains were drawn back a simple rectangle in white, of Divine Proportions, could be seen against a black background. It must have been a relief!

VISITOR FROM ENGLAND

From a part in 'Mac's Spot' a column regularly contributed from the U.K. by Ian McIver to the 'Vox', as follows:-

"As I mentioned above, I shall be away from home for a period shortly. I shall in fact be indulging in an organ safari to Australia, in connection with research work for a book I am writing, which, among other topics, will cover the story of the theatre organ in Australia. I shall be visiting Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, accompanied by Narelle Palfery, who is working with me on the project. We hope therefore to meet many of you in the course of these travels and are looking forward to this very much.

In connection with the trip, I have compiled from my files a list of all theatre organs I can trace in Australia, and will be seeking to get this as accurate as possible. So far I have managed to track down references to a total of 53 distinct instruments many of these moved around a bit into several homes, including 26 Wurlitzers and 11 Christies. One organ in Melbourne on which I am trying to trace more details is the Wurlitzer installed in 1917 in the Melba Theatre. It was a 2/4 style 1, with piano console, opus 150. Does anyone know what happened to it."

I am sure we will all look forward to meeting these U.K. visitors and wish them a pleasant trip!

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR BOOKING FOR THE TONY FENELON CONCERT AT
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL - IF NOT RE-READ PAGE ONE AND GET GOING!

HISTORIC WURLITZER PLANT SHUTS DOWN

In this month's edition of our Newsheet in the article under the heading of 'Flashbacks' we mention the lead which the Wurlitzer Company had in the 30's over all other Theatre Organ manufacturers. The position in 1975 is that after 70 years operation by Wurlitzer in North Tonawanda they are about to close up. The plan is to move Wurlitzer manufacturing operations to Corinth in Mississippi and Logan in Utah where they already have factories. The Company has begun to turn the corner and last year's loss has been turned into a profit for the 9 months ending 30th September, 1974. The Corinth plant is concerned with the manufacture of Electronic Organs while the Logan plant builds pianos and electronic pianos as well as having teaching laboratories.

'ROCK' WURLIE??

The Rock Opera "Tommy" now showing in Sydney's Regent Theatre has received a mention in a recent edition of the Financial Review and during the article the following quote is noted.

"The mighty Wurlitzers have since gone transistorised and all that is left is a little box on the wall.

Yet Wurlitzer itself saw the potential of the nostalgia market and brought out a reproduction of one of its 1950 models (juke boxes) a couple of years ago."

It would also be worth mentioning that in "Tommy" there is a Theatre Organ sequence which is the real thing; soundwise, and is played by the late Gerald Shaw probably at the Odeon Leicester Square Organ. Gerald Shaw is given credits in the film titles and also on the recording of the soundtrack music.

FUTURE ARTICLES

In future editions of this magazine under the heading 'Showcases of the Past' written by Barry Sharp we will present shortly a photographic and verbal essay on the Duke of York Theatre at Eastwood. In addition a further article by Rod Blackmore on the Plaza Theatre Sydney is to be presented in a future issue.

DEADLINE

The deadline for the October issue of TOSA News is 16th September, please make particular note and get that information to us BEFOREHAND!!!

THE PRINTING OF TOSA NEWS

During the time that the printing has been undertaken by members of the Theatre Organ Society a major cost saving has resulted enabling a higher standard to be achieved which can only be continued by your support with photographs information and articles for inclusion.

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HAVE YOU MADE THAT ARRANGEMENT FOR YOUR PREFERENTIAL BOOKING
FOR THE MAGNIFICENT TONY FENELON CONCEPT - NO!!!!

THEN GET BUSY NOW

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