

T.O.S.A. NEWS

incorporating **THE DIAPHONE**

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

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SOCIETY DIRECTORY

January, 1975

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WHAT'S ON IN JANUARY

8TH. JANUARY, Tuesday 8 p.m. A Home organ party featuring the only remaining Theatre organist in the Sydney area is to be presented by our treasurer Mark Gabriel at 27 Yarran Rd., Oatley. The organist Ray Thornley features regularly at Phil Doyle's MECCA THEATRE, KOGARAH the most popular Sydney metropolitan Theatre. Ray will be featured in a popular and entertaining light musical program on Mark's Wurliwyer Console Organ. Mark can accomodate more poeple than have so far contacted him,so for an aggeable evenings entertainment during the holiday season phone Mark on 579-2169 and come along.

A donation of one dollar per person will be applied to our activities.

29TH. JANUARY, Wednesday 7.30 pm. A visit to the Mastertouch Piano Roll Co. at 173 Canterbury Rd., CANTERBURY by our members will interest us in Piano Roll mechanisms of the modern type connected to modern upright and grand Pianos. This Co. has also fitted roll playing mechanisms to electronic Organ and it is hoped they will have on display for us some samples of their workmanship.

They also have at the present time an Australian made Beale Piano with an Ampico Reproducing Action, the Ampico system was used by such pianists as J Grainger, Sergei Rachmaninoff, George Gershwin, Arthur R binstein,

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and this recording method is the closest to an actual performance which has ever been fitted to a musical instrument to date. So as you can see we are in for a real musical and mechanical treat on the 29th.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

21st February , Home Organ Party featuring the resident Organist at the Hawkesbury Inn Restaurant, our boy from Brooklyn, Bill Schumacher.

23rd February, Free Organ Concert at Marrickville Town Hall

19th March , Charity Organ Concert at Chatswood Civic Centre

28th March to 30th March THE FABULOUS FOURTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

The star attraction for the 1975 NATIONAL CONVENTION to be held in Melbourne is the American Theatre Organist Bill Thomson, Master musician, teacher and performer, Bill assured himself of an enthusiastic welcome back to Australia following his Concert tour last year when his superb musicianship enthralled us all.

The package price for all the activities concerned is Adults \$21, Children \$10, Students and Pensioners \$18.

Those wishing to attend must forward either a \$5 deposit or total registration fee, together with their name and address to:

FOURTH T.O.S.A. CONVENTION
17 Powderham Rd.,
Caulfield North 3161,
VICTORIA.

PROGRAMME

28/3/75	Registration Supper and Entertainment	Dendy Theatre
29/3/75	Bus Tour to Moorabin Town Hall First Convention Concert featuring David Johnston Various Classical instalations in the city and a Tour over the Fincham Organ factory. Second Convention Concert featuring John Atwell and Tony Fenelon	Cinema North Caulfield Town Hall
30/3/75	Open Console get together Third Convention Concert featuring Bill Thomson Official Convention Dinner	Dendy Theatre Moorabin Town Hall "au 'ty Nineties" Restaurant Glenferrie

Ansett Airlines of Australia are offering a group travel discount and the person to contact, in the Ansett Organisation, is Mrs Sandra Mattock at the Oxford Street address and the telephone number is 20-611.

A Bus Tour is also being arranged by President Tom Halloran and people interested in this method of transport should contact Tom on telephone number 523-5077 immediately.

TRACING THE GIANTS.

This month we present the concluding article in this series. Tracing the movements of all instruments originally installed in all other states of Australia except New South Wales.

Should any member have any further pertinent details which would be of interest we would be pleased to hear from you.

WINTERGARDEN THEATRE, BRISBANE. 2/7 Wurlitzer. One of the earliest "horse-shoe" console Wurlitzers to arrive in this country, this instrument was installed around the same era as the "Prince Edward" Sydney and "Capitol" Melbourne organs. Style number 185, 2 manuals and 7 ranks was unusual amongst Wurlitzers as it didn't have a tibia rank, however, to compensate a larger than normal scale concert flute was substituted. The "Wintergarden" organ remained in the theatre until 1938 when it was moved to Sydney to the "Plaza" Theatre. At this time Dodds, the Wurlitzer agents, built a large scaled tibia set - a copy of the "260 style" tibias, and added them to this instrument, consequently it became known for its big sweet sound. Removed from the "Plaza" in the mid 1950's much of the pipework was incorporated in the Penn Hughes' Residence Wurlitzer. The console, after having had several owners, became part of Cec Taylor's home organ, which has since been purchased by Steve McDonald.

REGENT THEATRE, BRISBANE. 3/15 (260 style) Wurlitzer. The only "French" style 3 manual console in this country ~~has~~ photographs of this instrument easily distinguishable from any other of the numerous "260's". Rumour has it that this organ was initially ordered for the "Palais Theatre" St. Kilda, Melbourne. However, in 1929 it was installed in the beautiful "Regent" Brisbane. Removed from the theatre in 1958(c) the organ was purchased by Dr. Keith King, of Lawson N.S.W. who shipped it south in a large railway truck. The organ is now installed in a chamber adjacent to the King's living room.

STATE THEATRE, MELBOURNE. 4/21 (270 Special, Publix One) Wurlitzer. Almost an identical twin to the organ in the "State" Sydney, the Melbourne instrument actually had both consoles installed, although only the "master" was on a hoist - the "slave" stood on the Right Hand Side of the proscenium. The piano was situated next to the orchestra lift near the master console. When the organ was offered for sale, Gordon Hamilton, the then President of Melbourne T.O.S.A. purchased and stored the instrument for some years. Moorabin Council were the next purchasers of the organ and Victoria T.O.S.A. members have achieved a very successful reinstallation of this fine instrument.

REGENT THEATRE, MELBOURNE. 4/21 (270 Special Publix One) Wurlitzer. Similar to both the "State" Sydney and Melbourne, except it didn't have the 32' diaphone extension. This instrument was installed in 1929 and was totally destroyed in a disasterous fire which consumed the entire auditorium of this theatre in 1945. For details of the second organ see notes on "Ambassadors Theatre" Perth.

CAPITOL THEATRE, MELBOURNE. 3/15 (260 style) Wurlitzer. Melbourne's first large theatre organ was installed in 1924 in this famous Walter Burley Griffen designed building. During its term in the "Capitol" the chambers were repositioned when the auditorium was altered. Victoria T.O.S.A. were the successful tenderers when the organ came up for sale and have re-installed it in the Dendy Theatre, Brighton.

TRACING THE GIANTS. cont.

DELUXE THEATRE, MELBOURNE. 2/7 WurliTzer. We are unable to determine the year of installation of this organ, but it is certain that in 1927 it was moved from the "Deluxe" (now "Esquire") to the "Paramount" (later "Lyceum") across the road. On the rebuild of the "Regent" Melbourne in 1945 four ranks of this organ formed the orchestral chamber of the new "Regent" WurliTzer.

REGENT THEATRE, ADELAIDE. Number One. 2/8 WurliTzer. Like the Sydney "Regent" the Adelaide counterpart was originally to have a small instrument. It was found that these were not large enough to fill the Theatres. This organ was therefore enlarged by four ranks (as was the Sydney one) and moved to the Metro Theatre, Perth. Removed only fairly recently from the "Metro" it is now in storage in Perth, awaiting a new home.

REGENT THEATRE, ADELAIDE. Number Two (3/15 260 special) WurliTzer. (see opposite page. Photograph of the arrival of the organ outside the "Regent" Rundle Street, Adelaide.) Shipped to Adelaide and installed about the same time as the "Capitol" Sydney (1928) the instruments were twins with two exceptions - the "Capitol" had a Brass Saxophone and 32' diaphones and the "Regent" organ had a Krumet rank and no 32' diaphones. The Krumet and Sax ranks were switched by mutual agreement and the tabs have never been, even to this day!! When the Theatre closed in 1967 for extensive alterations the organ was removed and placed in the Assembly Hall of St. Peter's College Adelaide.

AMBASSADORS THEATRE, PERTH. 3/15 (260 Special) WurliTzer. Installed c1928 the organ remained in this cinema until 1945 when it was removed for transportation to Melbourne. The console was enlarged by one manual and an extra stop rail added. As previously mentioned 4 ranks from the "Lyceum" WurliTzer were added - making it up to 4 manuals and 19 ranks. The organ was then installed in three chambers in the rebuilt "Regent" Melbourne. The organ had much exposure under the hands of Stanfield Holiday and later Tony Fenelon. Purchased by Alan Tranter some four or five years ago the organ remains in storage awaiting a new home.

REGENT THEATRE, PERTH. 2/8 Christie. Possibly the most travelled organ in Australia, didn't remain long in its first home before removal and installation in the hoyt's "DeLuxe" Melbourne. Here too, it remained only a couple of years before being moved into the newly completed "Plaza" Theatre Sydney (1930) In 1938 it was replaced (for some unknown reason) by the "Wintergarden" Brisbane, WurliTzer and the Christie moved on to the new "Savoy" Enfield, Sydney. Franklin Baldwin of Castle Hill, Sydney purchased it in the mid 50's for installation in his home, a project which was never finally completed to the playing stage. Just some two months ago Geoff Smith purchased the Christie from Mr. Baldwin and Geoff is placing it in his Adelaide home!!

STRAND THEATRE, HOBART. 2/7 WurliTzer. Very little is known of this organ when it was in the theatre. The instrument was purchased by the Hurstville Presbyterian Church during the 1950's. Hill, Norman and Beard did the re-installation and added a new "straight" console and specification. The original console together with 3 Christie ranks from N.Z. became part of a small organ in the S.D.A. Church Concord, which has since been sold to A.C.T. Division of T.O.S.A. who are incorporating it into their society instrument.

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CHRISTMAS PARTY REVIEW.

This year everyone who attended our Christmas Party agreed it was such a roaring success it is indeed difficult to find ample adjectives to use without sounding biased.

In an endeavour to present to you a different type of review we conducted an interview with a well known critic.

The results of the interview were overwhelming in praise of the evening.

The decoration in the hall was a credit to the hard work put in by the few people responsible as was the entire organisation and smooth running of the evening.

Ian Davies played in his competent manner and his style contemporary influenced by his club engagements makes a get together like this really swing.

Dinner music for supplied, during the meal by some of you members. These being, in order of performance; Ian Summerville, Peter Held, and our past President Herbert Wyatt.

Throughout the evening the hall was filled with the sights and sounds of our members and friends either dancing or just sitting, chatting and enjoying the entertainments provided.

It is nights like this when you involve yourselves that brings a realisation of just what can be done with a little foresight and effort.

After this Christmas Party it is now no secret this is the kind of Party that should be presented every year.

Hope to see you there next year.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE FOR 1975

For your attention a Subscription Form is printed at the rear of this issue which we ask you to fill in and return to the Treasurer immediately to allow us to continue to serve you in 1975.

Please remember you can reduce your membership rate by introducing to the Society a New Member which effectively reduces membership dues by \$1 per member up to the maximum of \$4. Student concessions may also be available on application to the Committee.

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THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SCENE - PART 2 - Bill Schumacher

During our stay in New York we were fortunate enough to take a guided tour through the Rockefeller Centre complex which is some dozen or so buildings all linked together by underground tunnels and the complex has entrances into the underground railway network. Included in the tour was a visit backstage at Radio City Music Hall. There seemed to be as much room behind the stage as there was in the main auditorium. The music hall employs a staff of around 500 people so you can imagine that there is always a lot of movement behind the scene.

It's very interesting to walk down Broadway and try to pick out where some of the big movie houses such as the Roxy, Paramount and Capitol once stood. The Paramount building is still standing there but the theatre area is now all office space. We were lucky to get tickets to see the Broadway production of "Irene" which had Jane Powell & Patsy Kelly in the main roles.

We then moved on to Phoenix Arizona after quite some delay at Kennedy Airport. They found that the aircraft had motor problems just as we were about to board. It was necessary to exchange aircraft. When we finally arrived in Phoenix we were met at the airport by David Pitts who was living there at the time.

David drove us over to the hotel and then on to the "Organ Stop Pizza" restaurant. This was our main reason for the stop over in this city to hear Lyn Larsen who is the resident organist. One always expects a high standard of performance from Lyn & this one was to be no exception.

The Four manual Wurlitzer (ex Harvey Heck's residence) is installed in glass walled chambers and has a really big sound. Lyn plays lots of requests during the evening both classic & pops. The sing-a-long is a big feature of the night. The patrons sing their lungs out & have a ball.

After a few hours sight seeing on the next day we flew on to Las Vegas to have a quick look at the gambling capitol of the United States. It's quite a place & you have no trouble getting rid of your money. The poker machines are just waiting to eat the cash. We took the air & road tour of Grand Canyon which has to be seen to be believed. One can't describe it.

We then moved on to Los Angeles for another quick visit because time was fast running out. We did a tour of Universal Studios & had our second trip to Disneyland which would have to be the cleanest, best run, good value tourist attraction in the world.

Rob Gliddon flew back to Sydney from Los Angeles & I moved on up to San Francisco for two days then up to Portland Oregon where I was met by Jonas Nordwell & stayed with he & his wife Nancy for the next three days.

First stop was the "Organ Grinder" restaurant where Jonas is one of the staff organists. This place would have to be the best appointed Pizza restaurant anywhere.

The organ has a three manual Wurlitzer console & some thirty four ranks of pipes & must be one of the best installations

in the world. The chambers take up the whole front of the restaurant and can be seen from both outside and inside the building. Each chamber has quite a selection of coloured lights and mirrored balls which are all controlled from a panel at the side of the console. There are "bubble machines" and the bubbles float down from the ceiling at the touch of a button. The organ has traps and percussions both in the chambers and on the front wall above the tables. At the press of a button a screen rolls down and the silent movies appear on the screen. These are shown at the end of each organ spot.

This type of restaurant, with a pipe organ, is the ideal venue for a great night's entertainment and is just what we should have in Sydney.

I was taken into the Portland Paramount Theatre to hear and play the 4/20 Publix One WurliTzer which is kept in top condition by Dennis Hedberg. What Dennis doesn't know about the installation and maintenance of pipe organs is not worth knowing.

Jonas Nordwall arranged for me to see some home installations, the most impressive being Howard Vollum's 4/49 WurliTzer. The organ and the beautiful auditorium next door to the Vollum home cost over one million dollars. I'm quite certain you will not find a pipe organ with a better sound anywhere.

Time had run out so I left Portland to fly home through Seattle and Honolulu.

I had ten hours to spare in Honolulu so to kill time I went to the movies and when the session ended a pipe organ started playing and when I looked again there below the stage was a three manual Robert Morton console complete with organist and band-box. The organ sounded as if it was in good condition.

As far as I'm concerned the trip was worth every cent and I can't wait to go again. The A.T.O.S. National Convention is in San Francisco next July, so why not start saving now?

EDITOR'S NOTE.

During the month it has been brought to notice that quite a large number of our members are already thinking very seriously about attending the A.T.O.S. Convention in San Francisco next year. Anyone wishing to contact other members who are going to America could phone the Editor for these details.

In addition to the organs in the San Francisco area it is hoped by July that the newly re-opened Oakland "Paramount Theatre of the Arts" will have its refurbished Publix One WurliTzer Organ installed and will be a feature during the 1975 Convention.

Our member Adrian Holmes has sent me an article by Bernice Scharlac containing colour photographs and information that the Oakland "Paramount" is completely restored with new, but original design, seating, carpets, drapes, light fittings etc. The same companies who made the original fittings back in the 30's have once again been employed to duplicate the initial furnishings. Mr John Nethercutt of Los Angeles has donated a 4/20 WurliTzer, which will be installed in the building to replace the original which was sold many years ago. The organ is currently undergoing a complete restoration by professional organ builders and should sound as new when re-installed.

A TRIP TO SYDNEY'S SISTER CITY DURING JULY '75 WOULD BE THE
HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS.

Dear John,

I was interested in the reference (Page 9 T.O.S.A. News Nov.74) to old sheet music showing photographs of Theatre Organists.

Amongst my collection of sheet music, I have the following two pieces, purchased new by me in Melbourne, the first in 1929, the second in 1929 or 1930.

- (1) "When you played the Organ (and I sang the Rosary)";
photograph on front of Fred Scholl;Caption:
Featured by Fred Scholl, Capital Theatre.
- (2) "Mexican Serenade";
photograph on front of Frank Lanterman;Caption:
Featured by Frank Lanterman on the Wurlitzer- State Theatre
Melbourne.

Each photograph is head and shoulders, profile; not sitting at the Organ.

Yours Faithfully,

Frank H. Williams.

REFERENCE TO "FLASHBACKS"

During the month a foundation member of our Society rejoined and the first copy of our news sheet he received had a reference, by Ian Cameron, to a piece of music called " Where the Blue Gums turn Red in the Sunset" on reading this Earnie Davidson immediately phoned me to let us know he was the composer. When this music was released in Australia Nicholsons had a complete shop window devoted to the promotion of this one title.

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T.O.S.A. ADVERTISEMENTS.

Last month our regular Advertisements were not used because our printing techniques were altering. Advertisers have insisted even a typed add will suffice until we can make better arrangements. Thank you fellows very much and it must prove it pays to advertise.

NEW MEMBERS.

We wish to welcome the following new members who have joined our Society last month.

These new members are:-

Mr Clive Ord, Jannali; Mr R Erex, Biloga Plateau; Mr SK Small Epping; Mrs A Thorn, Balgowlah Heights; Mr and Mrs Lankspear, East Maitland; Mr and Mrs Soper, Sylvania; Mr and Mrs James, Gynea; Mr and Mrs Cohen, Sth Maroubra; Mr JP Brown, Marrickville; Mr and Mrs Leahy, Nth Richmond; Mr B. Davidson, Bankstown; Miss K Fitch, Hurstville; Mr & Mrs Durham, Kelso:

As a point of interest our membership now exceeds 400 but it must be remembered the only way our Society can survive is by the interest and activity of you, its members, we are a friendly Society and the more of us that get involved the more enjoyment we create from our mutual interest.

4/16 Wurlitzer/Christie ARRIVES IN ADELAIDE

It was announced in the December issue of South Australian T.O.S.A. News the long awaited addition to the South Australian Divisions "Family" has arrived from Darwin.

After a week on the road it reached Adelaide on Tuesday 3rd December, just in time for Christmas. By the time you read this, it is hoped restoration work will be underway.

It seems a pity the enthusiasm shown by the South Australian Chapter has not rubbed off on our members and the restoration of our own 3/15 Capital Wurlitzer.

We wish every success to the South Australian folk in their admirable task.

TEAR HERE

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM.

Send to:

The Treasurer, T.O.S.A. N.S.W. Division
27 Yarran Rd., OATLEY 2223

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SEE PAGE THREE FOR CONCESSION RATES.