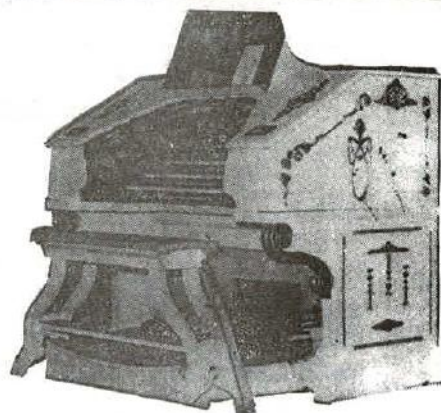


Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

FEBRUARY 1989

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★ FREE CONCERT ★

*Featuring*

**Clinton White**

&

**Maureen Dawes**

*at the console of the*  
**MIGHTY WURLITZER**  
Theatre Pipe Organ

**Marrickville Town Hall**

**5 March, 2pm**

Volume 28  
Issue 2  
Price \$1.00

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articles in this magazine need not represent the views of the committee

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (N.S.W. Division) Inc.

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#### A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

After last months' problems with the printing press and the resultant very meager TOSA NEWS for January this issue should bring us back into line to give you, the members, articles of interest from Australia and around the World. In this issue there is an interesting interview with George Wright reprinted from 'Theatre Organ', the official magazine of the American Theatre Organ Society. What

George speaks about, I feel, is very valid and perhaps, when you read the interview, you should try replacing the name of ATOS with that of TOSA. Also in this issue is a review on the Dennis James and Thom Gall concert held in early December. Another Electronic Home Organ page is inside plus lots more interesting reading. See you next month.

John Rattray - Editor



# CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- Monday 6 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING
- Wednesday 22 8.00pm. MEMBERS MEETING  
Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville

MARCH

- Sunday 5 2.00pm. FREE CONCERT - Clinton White and Maureen Dawes  
Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville.
- Monday 6 7.30pm. COMMITTEE MEETING
- Sunday 12 11.00am. HOME ORGAN PARTY  
Paul & Mary Luci, RMB 4228, Wisemans Ferry Road,  
Mangrove Mountain. See this issue for details
- Friday 24 )  
Saturday 25 ) NATIONAL CONVENTION - Hosted by TOSA (W.A. Division)  
Sunday 26 ) Perth, Western Australia  
Monday 27 )

APRIL

- Monday 3 Committee Meeting
- Sunday 23 Concert - Orion Centre, Campsie

## NEW ZEALAND ORGANIST COMES TO MELBOURNE FOR AGMS EXAMINATIONS

Richard Hore, the blind and famous New Zealand organist, visited Melbourne in October with his wife Marilyn for a short holiday and to sit for the pre-requisite examination for the Australian Guild of Music and Speech (AGMS) Associate Diploma in organ playing. As expected of one who is so talented, Richard passed easily through the Proficiency Certificate examination and is now busily getting ready for the AGMS Grade Six and Seven theory examination so that he can take out the Associate Diploma in 1989-90. It is his intention to go through to the Licentiate Diploma as he values these qualifications highly in his professional life.

Richard Hore is well known as a brilliant international organist and musician. His reputation as an executant is a formidable one and his public appearances are always an event. He is President of the New Zealand Organ Society and his international standing can be measured by the fact that he has been asked by the Detroit Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society to appear as a guest concert artist in the 1989 American Convention.

The AGMS is quite proud of the fact that Richard seeks it's highly sought after Diplomas. He is the first blind person to ever pass through the AGMS examination system. Congratulations Richard.

News sources - AGMS Newsletter.

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## THE MIGHTY WURLITZER

How did the phrase become so widely known? Simple, it was written into the purchase contract of every WurliTzer Organ that the organ should always be called "The WurliTzer" and the description "Pipe Organ" was never to be used on the marquee of the building in which it was installed. As instruments became large, and venues vied with each other to have the biggest attraction, the word mighty was introduced to differentiate between the larger instruments and some of the early smaller units!

## PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST

PAUL CULLEN

One of the most remarkable of our theatre organists of the past was Paul Cullen, a charming, engaging personality who became one of our best loved theatre organists. He was born in Ashburton, New Zealand into a large family, in the final count there were eleven of them. The whole family was musical, and in fact they constituted an orchestra of their own 'The Cullen Orchestra'. In fact his formal pianistic education was undertaken by his talented sister. He also studied violin, cello and organ. He studied the organ under well known organist Bernard Page who was at that time City Organist in Wellington. Page was later appointed organist at Notre Dame Church in London. Page took a dim view of theatre organists and is known to have said that "the theatre or cinema organ was a vulgar instrument played by vulgar people", a rather damning statement though odd in view of the number of theatre organists in England at that time who were Fellows of the Royal College of Organists.

Paul Cullen was educated at St. Patrick's College in Wellington and at the age of 15 was appointed as organist at the Catholic Cathedral in Wellington where he remained for four years. Like Benny Goodman's drummer Gene Krupa, Paul Cullen studied for the priesthood, but Paul for the good of the church finally realised that the life of a parish priest was not for him.

He gravitated to playing in the theatres and toured both islands for about six years, playing in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin. He came over to Australia somewhere about 1934 under contract, to Western Suburbs Cinemas, playing at Burwood, Parramatta, Hurstville, Auburn and in other theatres of the circuit. In Sydney he continued to be billed as the Singing Organist as he was in New Zealand though there he was irreverently referred to as the singing Codfish which Cullen did not seem to mind. Certainly he was no Pavarotti or Domingo but he did have a pleasant voice which seemed to have a trace of the Irish to it.

His playing became well known through the four weekly broadcasts from Radio Station 2CH by four organists at different theatres on various nights of the week.

Cullen was a very cultivated man. He was affable, charming, able to talk intelligently about literature, his famous authors being G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. Musically he tended to favour the French impressionists like Debussy and Ravel.

Paul Cullen died suddenly at the age of 43. It must have been in 1946 for I was still in uniform. I had spent a few hours talking to him and listening to him play at the Chatswood Arcadia. He came with me as I went home. We caught a Canterbury Tram and we both got off and talked for a while outside the hotel close to Sydney University where he was living (he always stayed in hotels). It was well after midnight when we parted company. The next morning I meet Bambi Tuckwell who told me that Paul Cullen was found dead in bed some hours previously. His death merited three lines in the daily paper. So ephemeral is fame.

R.J. Roberts

But this is not in the realm of home comforts. At the big Reiger organ in the Ratzburg Cathedral in West Germany the organist is hidden by a big Ruckpositive Division which contains a 16' Rankett by the way with lashings of 8' stops plus bells. This completely hides the organist from view. One trundles down the specification through Ruckpositive, Hauptwerk, Brustwerk until one is brought up with a full stop (no pun intended) when one reaches one labelled Rauschwerk, found in the pedal division. No footage is noted, and a mad scrambling through dictionaries of stop lists didn't make one any wiser. However a little further research revealed that the stop bearing the label Rauschwerk operates a 'drinks drawer' and it probably doesn't only contain mineral water. The presence of this stop on an organ with a concealed organ offers vast opportunities during long dull sermons. However a cinema organist could always get a Rauschwerk installed for the purposes of refreshment, provided his console is on a hoist. He could always disappear for a short break between numbers and refuel his lost energy! As Julie Anthony is always saying "What a great idea"!

R.J. Roberts

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### CATHEDRAL ORGANISTS & CINEMA ORGANISTS

Cathedral organists might not have the glitz, glamour and spotlights that their cinema organist confers do. But they have some advantages that their fellow friends in the picture palace do not have. For example they are not exposed to hot spotlights, do not have to really dress up in formal clothes and suffer in hot or uncomfortable weather.

The Cathedral organist in Europe is really favoured. He is hidden away. He is either tucked away in the choir loft or, as in the case of some organs in Germany built by Reiger, the case work of the organ which is free standing and is the same back and front located in a sanctuary next to the main altar. The console is at the back of the casework out of sight, as in a church in Rothenberg in Bavaria.

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### BOOK REVIEW

#### HISTORIC ORGANS OF N.S.W.

Graeme Rushworth's comprehensive book on the historic organs of NSW is of intense interest to all organists whether they play an organ in a church or play theatre organs or even electronic substitutes. It covers a vast range of information on the history of organs in NSW from the time the first one was imported up to 1940. The documentation is meticulous giving location and history of hundreds of instruments accompanied by illustrations consisting of photographs or superb line drawings by the author himself.

He also gives accounts of organ builders, local or overseas, who have built instruments throughout the state and biographies of some of the well known church organists and recitalists like Lillian

Frost of the then Pitt Street Congregational Church and Ernest Truman the Sydney City Organist.

The book is extremely interesting, and it is the kind of publication that can be picked up and sections read at random. It is never technical nor condescending. It is written in plain language in a style that never allows the interest to flag and indeed almost compels one to read. It is never just a dry account of the superb organs there are in NSW, it is stimulating and fascinating.

Many aspects are dealt with such as the trend away from mechanical action to tubular pneumatic action and the undue pressure exerted to electrify the action, which in some cases has not been as satisfactory as the old mechanical action.

It is good to note that Mr Rushworth has included all the Theatre organs amongst the historic organs, and something about their players. There is an excellent section on Christie Organs although no list of them is given as it is for the WurliTzer organs, though there were nine Christie organs in Sydney picture theatres. There is also a very good section on the Rudolph WurliTzer Organs. However there are a number of inaccuracies, on page 359 it states that the Prince Edward organ was a 3/15, and later stating that the Capitol and Regent installations brought the total of WurliTzer 3/15 installations to three. However the list on page 361 describes the Prince Edward organ correctly. But that list wrongly states that the Plaza WurliTzer went to the Savoy Theatre Enfield. What did go to Enfield was the original 2/8 Christie. As regards the Christie installation were concerned, "Smithy" - Lance Clifford Smith gets a mention and in the other camp Ebenezer Dodd is acknowledged.

Many organists are mentioned. Owen Holland is only noted as the organist who gave the opening recital at the Methodist Church in Bondi in 1927. Stan Cummins also features in the pages, but it fails to mention that he was Deputy Organist to G.F. Allman at St. James Church. Stanfield Holliday who played in various theatres throughout Sydney was Deputy Organist at St. Andrews Cathedral for a number of years, is not found in the book, neither is that extremely fine organist

Leslie Waldron, who studied the organ for some years with the great Dr A.E. Floyd of St. Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne. Besides playing at the Prince Edward and the Plaza he was also organist at St. Mark's Darling Point. Incidentally the organist who opened the Capitol was Fred Scholl not Scholle. Mentioned also are Manny Aarons, Noreen Hennesy, Charles Tuckwell, (also a very well respected church organist), Eddie Horton, Eddit Fitch (who opened the Plaza Christie) and the superb Bach player Horace Webber who wasn't above playing BWV 565 (you look it up) for the audience at the morning session.

R.J. Roberts

(this book is available from most leading book sellers. An order form for it was included in an earlier issue of TOSA NEWS.)

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#### ON THE SICK LIST

Member Marie Stronach is on the road to recovery after a horrifying car accident late last year. The accident was heavily reported in local suburban newspapers. We all join in sending our best wishes to Marie for a complete and speedy recovery.

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#### SITUATIONS VACANT

At a recent committee meeting resignations were accepted from both the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Since John Rattray took over as Editor of TOSA NEWS his workload has increased to a point where something had to be off-loaded. Murray Ries has decided that he needs some time away from committee to pursue studies and devote more time to his job. As a result of these happenings there exists two vacancies to be filled.

Can anyone help out???

People wishing to have further information should contact either John Rattray or any member of the committee for further details. This job is important and it must be filled urgently. Can you help? Don't be backward, come forward and help us.

### HOME ORGAN PARTY

Member, Paul Luci and his wife Mary have agreed to open their home to TOSA members for a home organ party/bar-b-que in March.

Paul and Mary live at Mangrove Mountain and they have a swimming pool (bring your costumes) and a Conn organ for our enjoyment and entertainment.

The day will commence between 11am and 12 noon with the bar-b-que being ready hopefully around 1pm.

This promises to be a great day of fun and should be considered by all. To help the TOSA finances..a small cover charge of \$5 per person will be placed on the day. This will raise some much needed funds to help repay the deficit left after the opening of the Orion Centre WurliTzer late last year.

The address is RMB 4228 Wisemans Ferry Road, Mangrove Mountain and booking can be made by phoning Paul or Mary on 043-741 108 or John Rattray on 750 3779.

Next month we will give exact directions for getting to the function. In the meantime, ring and book your place for what will be a most enjoyable day out in the country.

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### ANOTHER GET WELL SOON

Former Committee member, Merv Palmer is in hospital as this issue went to press. We all join in wishing Merv a speedy recovery and hope that he will soon be back playing with the band on the weekends and attending and helping at our functions.

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### FOR SALE FOR SALE FOR SALE

There is for sale at the present time a **Conn Theatrette Model 552** organ for sale. It has two manuals and a small pedal board. The price? It's a bargain at only \$2500 (ono). Want to know more? Ring Karen Gorton on (02) 953 0619 (home) or (02) 9637 332 (work)

### FEBRUARY MEMBER'S NIGHT

At the conclusion of the member's meeting on 22 February in the Marrickville Town Hall, the concluding video of the 1988 ATOS convention will be shown. Members will remember the first part of the video being shown at the club night held at Epping Baptist Church last year.

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### NEW MEMBERS

At the January committee meeting the following people were accepted into membership of TOSA. A warm welcome is extended to each and everyone of you.

A.T. Surry, J. & M. Hunt, T.M.Bates, W.W.E Honey.

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### ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

29 April 1989 - We are joining with the Sydney Organ Society to visit one classical organ and one theatre organ on this day. The church organ will that housed in St. Albans Church in Epping and, of course, the nearest theatre organ to that church is the Christie in the Epping Baptist Church. Further information will be in next month's issue, but in the meantime remember to write the date in on your diary.

24 September 1989 - a concert is to be held at the Orion Centre featuring a TOSA member who most of you have not heard play before. The Canberra conventioners did however, and this person has consented to play on the newest of the TOSA (NSW) organs, that being the Orion Centre WurliTzer. One other artist will also join the programme and this name will be announced later in the year. I am now taking bookings for a reviewer for this concert. The pre-requisites will be as follows; honesty, a sound musical knowledge, and the writer of the review must be prepared to have their name published. Why these special talents? You might well ask. Well, one of the artists is no other than **IAN MCLEAN** of Canberra. This will be a concert that will stand out from all others in 1989. More details later.

## CONCERT REVIEW

## DENNIS JAMES AND THOM GALL

Sunday 4 December 1988  
Orion Centre, Campsie

The appearance of Dennis James the organist from Columbus Ohio with his travelling companion tenor Thom Gall at the Campsie Orion on the quite magnificently restored style 260 3/15 ex-Capitol now a 3/17 on Sunday December 4 was nothing less than a most auspicious occasion. It was not in the nature of the usual recital of popular numbers nor a dusty excursion into Persian Markets nor Chasing horsemen in the Light Calvary Overtures.

James set out specifically to recreate Theatre Organ music of the 1920's with what might be called travelogue like slides and also the accompaniment of silent film, and playing for the singing and some recitation of dramatic verse by way of Thom Gall.

The concert began with James playing 'Beautiful Ohio' by Mary Earl and 'Dear Columbus' as slides on the screen showed firstly, illustrations of the external and the interior of the theatre in which he normally plays in Ohio, including a shot of the superb console of the four manual Moller he plays, which he told me was quite an organ.

He gave a background briefing including a resume of the organists who were in residence prior to him. The first was Henry B. Murtagh, who only stayed six weeks. His fame was such that one could not open a copy of the Diapason (the American organ magazine of the time) without seeing his name. There followed Bill Dalton (1925 - 1932), Roger Barratt (1939 - 1943) and then from 1975 to present day Dennis James.

The concert proper began with a snappy portrait of 'Baby Face' by Benny Davis that had marked rythm and was stylishly shaped. Interesting too was his playing of three Ohio songs written or as played, by three Ohio organists. This was typical music of the 20's and also played very much in the manner of the 20's theatre organ styling recalling the mannerisms and

registrations of Jesse Crawford (don't forget Crawford had been playing since before the first world war).

Dennis James then said that some theatre organists are frustrated composers. He had occasion to go through piles of manuscripts of another Columbus Theatre Organist, the late Arthur Streng. He came across a work of considerable merit by him, a Toccata, which is more a short organ sonata than a Toccata, a work recalling 19th century romantic style, not romantic in the sense of Tin Pan Alley compositions but a serious organ work, its middle section, an adagio, strongly influenced by Cesar Franck.

James was splendid in performance, the organ responding wonderfully to the demands made on it, and responding very much like a concert organ, in a full great body of sound that truly fitted the music.

At this point Thom Gall really joined the concert, singing three songs by Oley Speaks. With his voice he is quite capable of filling the Orion Centre, though for some perverse reason he used a microphone. James kept the organ well under his voice, and accompanied him extremely accomodatingly, never obscuring him with playing of great artistry, exhibiting a fine musical sense and showing how a singer should be supported.

The best thing of the afternoon was Dennis James filling a musical background to a 1928 silent Laurel and Hardy comedy. James pointed to every single aspect of this visual humour, the facial expressions, the proper sounding 'chase' music. James provided a masterpiece of timing, the music couched in the right terms. It was not an accompaniment that specifically drew attention to itself. The ear heard it, but it filled in details for the eye. It was effective, intelligent organ playing, the tonal design of the performance was always appropriate and James has his own little 'in' joke. He very subtly inserted a few bars of a pedal passage from the Bach Passacaglia in C minor BWV 582 for the benefit of Margaret Hall who had played the whole Bach work at an open concert for her Bachelor of Music in Organ performance earlier that week at which Dennis James was present.

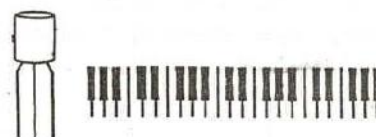


Most interesting was the segment on Charles Chaplin done with slides. Few people realise what an accomplished musician Chaplin was. While illustrating the many aspects of Chaplin's art, James played three songs about Chaplin written by various composers including one by an Australian Herbert B. Pinna, followed by Thom Gall singing another Chaplin song 'Oh that Cello' in which Gall mimicked Chaplin with hat and cane. James seemed to reserve his best moments for classical works playing a work called 'Cathedral March' written by an organist who played at Canterbury Cathedral, Harry C. Peroni at the turn of the century. It was a vigorous piece typical of the music English church organists were churning out at that period of history. That James and the organ gave a good account of it was only to be expected. The slides that went with the music were of great interest to anyone who has ever been in Canterbury Cathedral.

Some good things came from Thom Gall, a truly fine account of the Oley Speaks' setting of Kipling's 'On the Road to Mandalay' and an excellent piece of singing in Rossini's La Danza and a highly dramatised verse reading of 'The Pigtail of Li Fang Fu'.

It was an afternoon to be remembered but not a recital in the strict sense. It was entertainment plus, with theatre organ accompaniment. If James was not heard in the context of a conventional program, it was still possible to see him as a very fine organist. There was little of that organ he did not explore, the tibias, the reeds, the flues and the brassy reeds but no kitchenware. It was possible to see him as a perfect orchestrator, his instinct for the right registration always flawless. That he is a sound all round musician is beyond question. But he has a weakness he confessed to me, he likes playing the piano best. He is a conservative player who places his talents at the service of the music without seeking any need to play to the gallery, and actually it was good to be there. It was the kind of occasion that comes rarely, and one was left with the feeling that it would be good to hear more of Dennis James.

R.J. Roberts



## THE ELECTRONIC HOME ORGAN PAGE

No. 7

by Alan Deveaux

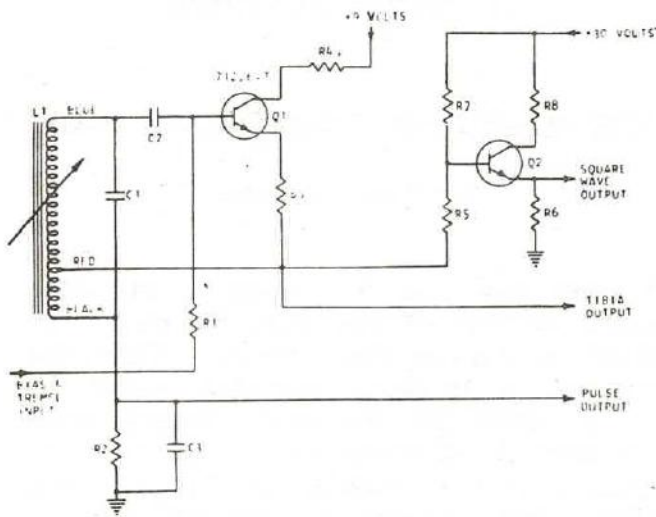
We will now look into some of the finer points of two of the most common 'free phase' organs on the market - Conn and Rodgers. It is significant that model for model across all the other brands these two (plus Allen) were always the most expensive. This was not a rip-off. There are simply more critical components used in the oscillator than anywhere else. So the highest quality parts had to be used to avoid constant tuning problems.

Conn used valves for much longer in its organs than anyone else, purely because they could not obtain the same type of waveforms with transistors. With up to 85 oscillators, providing 97 tones, much research had to go into making the Conn individual oscillators reliable and stable. But what is this about 85 oscillators and 97 tones. Well this is one of those touches of genius which makes organ design so much more intuitive than other electronic items.

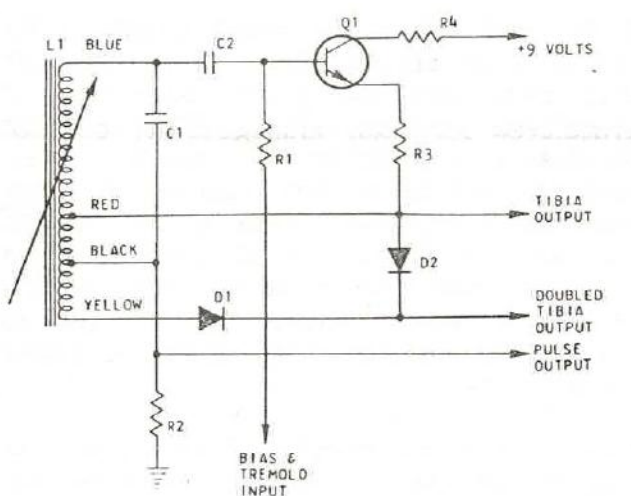
Look at the two circuits shown below. The one on the top is used for 73 notes and provides an almost pure sine-wave for the flute or tibia voices and a pulse for the reeds and strings. In the top of the line models, an extra transistor shown as Q2 was added to provide a square wave for the clarinet voice. It is easy to see that this is just a severely over-driven amplifier stage which chops off the top and bottom off the tibia's sine-wave.

The circuit on the bottom is used for the top most octave. It still provides the pulse waveform for the 4' reeds and strings in the top octave, and also the normal tibia sine-wave. However by adding two diodes and a few turns of wire on the tuning core, another waveform, which is twice the frequency of the normal tuning range, is obtained. This is further filtered and used for the 2' tibia sounds. Yes, these are exactly twice the frequency of the

octave below, but at these high frequencies, very few owners would be any the wiser.



Single-note tone generator used in Conn organs, with square-wave, tibia, and pulse outputs.



Special type of tone generator used in Conn organs that provides a doubled tibia output instead of a square-wave output.

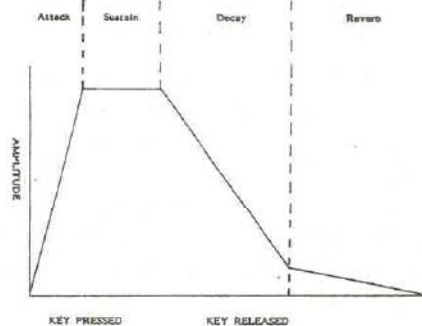
Conn uses electronic keying for the tibia or flute voices - which eliminates the key clicks on the pure waveform and allows some sustain effects to be added. The reed and strings are taken from the pulse waveform which has the shape of a lower case 'h' and this pulse is directly keyed at two or three pitches on the keyboards. All of the oscillators are running all of the time.

Rodgers uses a very similar approach, but electronically keys all of its waveforms. The main generators provide the reed and string sounds, a separate set of oscillators provide the tibias or diapasons (depending

on whether the organ is Theatre or Classical style). These oscillators are all running all the time. However a third set of oscillators, directly turned on by keying voltage from the keys, is used to furnish chorus effects. In general with Rodgers, the more expensive the organ, the more sets of generators it contains.

As I mentioned at the start of this series, sampling is now coming more and more into vogue as the cost of storage of electronic data comes down. Allen Organs uses this system to the full. Their voices are taken from real organ pipes, and the samples of the waveforms are stored internally. However to get a real organ sound there is something missing from the sound. This is what is known as ASDR. This stands for Attack, Sustain, Decay and Reverb.

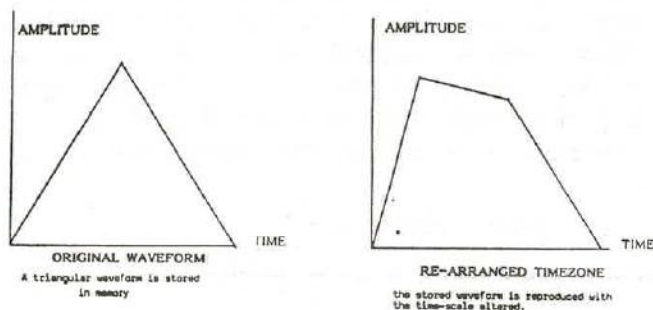
A glance at the diagrams below will show what these mean. If you want to know the audible effect of these, listen to the Post-horn at the Orion - there is a rank with a very quick attack. Tibia pipes-by comparison have a slow attack (caused by the slow build up of the waveform at the mouth of the pipe).



to make the Allen Organ sound natural it is necessary to take the waveform for each rank of pipes, and scan it at the correct frequency to get the correct final pitch. This waveform is then multiplied by the attack and decay waveform which is also stored in the organ memory. Usually one microprocessor is used to cope with each note being played. This leads to a problem on early organs when more than twelve notes were played as there are only twelve microprocessors in the organ. I understand that later models overcome this problem.

To conclude this ramble through the working of modern electronic organs a mention must be made of F.M. synthesis of

waveforms. This is a cunning system usually found on those lower priced keyboards found in the music stores. The idea is very ingenious. If you take any waveform - such as the triangular waveform shown below, and then distort the time scale of the waveform, you will arrive at a new sound. The waveform is being Frequency Modulated. The big advantage of this idea is that storing just a few waveforms digitally can apparently give a wide range of sounds. Somehow my ears do not take kindly to the descriptions given to some of the resulting instruments.



In the next column I will give some ideas for the experimenters amongst you.

### YOUNG ORGANISTS' DAY AT THE SYDNEY TOWN HALL

On Tuesday 20 December at 3pm the Sydney Organ Society, with the sponsorship of the Sydney City Council, presented the third annual Young Organists' Day at the Sydney Town Hall.

This worthwhile event was an informal gathering attended by approximately 80 people. The function provided an opportunity for people of all ages to hear the world famous Hill & Son organ played by some of Sydney's younger organists.

Earlier this year the Organ Society of Sydney ran an organ competition. Winners of the junior and intermediate sections,

Eric Peterson and Brendon Lukin, were given the opportunity to perform on the Town Hall organ as a result of their success in the competition. Brendon Lukin performed Max Reger's 'Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor' and Eric Peterson rendered the 'Moto Ostinato' from Petr Eben's 'Sunday Music'.

TOSA member, John Giacchi, who won our own Bicentennial Organ Composition Competition, was invited to perform his 'Opus 1988' which added a theatrical aspect to the afternoon's musical offerings.

Although written more specifically for the sound ideal of Theatre Pipe organ, this composition on the Town Hall's grand 'Romantic' instrument still proved to be quite satisfactory (even if the essential elements of a theatre organ, i.e. tibia foundation tone and heavy tremulant, were absent).

All three young organists displayed musical understanding in their interpretation of the music performed. They are also to be congratulated for their manageability of such a large organ considering their rehearsal time amounted to less than an hour each due to the limited availability of the organ for practice.

The three musical items were interpolated with talks by two of Sydney's leading organists/teachers. Norman Johnson gave an enlightening and educational talk on the transference from piano to organ technique and advice on practice methods. David Rumsey who is head of the Department of Organ and Church Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music briefly reiterated Mr Johnson's comments and then spoke about the various courses available at the Conservatorium in which organ may be studied.

The afternoon concluded with the City's organist, Robert Ampt, taking small groups through the organ in relays whilst others enjoyed making new acquaintances during afternoon tea.

Thanks must go to Robert Wagner and Mark Quarmbay from the Organ Society of Sydney who were the principal organists of this event.

Margaret Hall

# Henningsens' 30th Year

by Dr. Edward J. Mullins  
(reprinted from THEATRE ORGAN September/October 1988)

Carsten Henningsen, who conceived the idea of a theatre organ in a pizzeria, celebrates thirty years in business on 29 November 1988. Henningsen was born and raised in Minden, Nevada. His wife, Joyce, was born in Great Falls, Montana. They met when they were students at Montana State University in Bozeman. They fell in love with the theatre organ and with each other when they heard the 2/7 Wurlitzer in the Ellen Theatre in Bozeman, played by Ed Pegram. In 1955, Carsten obtained his B.S. in Industrial Engineering, a profession he pursued for the next three years.

On 29 November 1958, Carsten opened Ye Olde Pizza Joynt on Mission Boulevard in Hayward, California, in the East Bay area south of Oakland. Fred Finn and his wife played banjo and piano there (years later they would become nationally known on their television programme, "Mickey Finn's").

In the late fifties, stereophonic high fidelity swept America like a tidal wave. Riding the crest of this wave was George Wright with his numerous theatre organ recordings on the Hi-Fi label. Wright played the 4/36 Wurlitzer during the thirtieth anniversary celebration at San Francisco's Fox Theatre on 28 June 1959, to a full house. His midnight organ concerts at the Fox in the early sixties proved enormously popular. Seeing the line of concert-goers winding around the block, the Henningsens knew that pipes and pizza would be a winning combination.

The Henningsens, theatre organ enthusiasts from their Bozeman courtship days, attended these concerts that packed the house. A friend, Bob Denny, had installed a 3/11 Robert-Morton theatre organ in his home which they went to see. Carsten decided to install a theatre organ in the pizzeria and asked Denny to look for a suitable organ.

In 1960 the present Ye Olde Pizza Joynt was built to Henningsen's specification at 19510 Hesperian Boulevard in Hayward. It took Bob Denny one year to find a two manual, nine rank, Style 210 Wurlitzer, Opus 1835, originally installed in the State Theatre in Fresno, California, in 1928. It had passed through several ownerships and was in the home of Babe March in Vallejo, California, when purchased in 1962. They began dismantling the organ at 8.00am and by 8.00am the following morning the task was completed and the instrument returned to the warehouse.

## Tonal Resources

<b>Ranks:</b>	<b>Percussions:</b>
Tibia Clausa	Bongo Drums
Concert Flute	Chimes
Violin	Chrysoglott
Violin Celeste	Glockenspiel
Horn Diapason	Liberty Chimes
	(Celeste Gongs)
Gamba	Marimba/Wood Harp
Gamba Celeste	Saucer Bells
	(Kilgen from a theatre in Ellensburg, WA)
Vox Humana	Sleigh Bells
English Post Horn	Xylophone
Kinura	"Go-Go" bells
Brass Trumpet	Roll Cymbal
Brass Saxophone	Slapstick
Tuba	Tympani
	Toy Counter
	Chinese Temple Gong
	5'8" Knabe grand piano with Ampico "A" roll player.
	5-stop French Celeste Accordion played by pine "fingers".
	43-note red and gold brass Calliope sits atop a coin-operated Cremona upright grand piano, plays ten different pieces on roll.
	A real 18-wheeler, Diesel, semi-truck horn.
	Exact copy of a Santa Fe steam engine whistle.

The organ installation was completed by Bob Denny and was premiered on 25 July 1962 by Dave Quinlan. They used to call the pizza orders from the kitchen over

the banjo and piano music. While this method had worked, it was no match for the Mighty Wurlitzer. Quinlan told Henningsen, "We've got to do something about this!" Being from Nevada, Carsten solved the problem by making a copy of a Keno lighted numbers board and numbering the pizza orders.

In 1963 Ye Old Pizza Joynt acquired the present Style 235 three manual console to replace the two decker. It was originally installed in San Fransico's Warfield Theatre in 1925, Opus 984. It was first played in November 1963, when it was temporarily situated under the sleigh bells. Both consoles were playing for a while until the two manual console was sold to Warren Blankenship of Monterey, California.

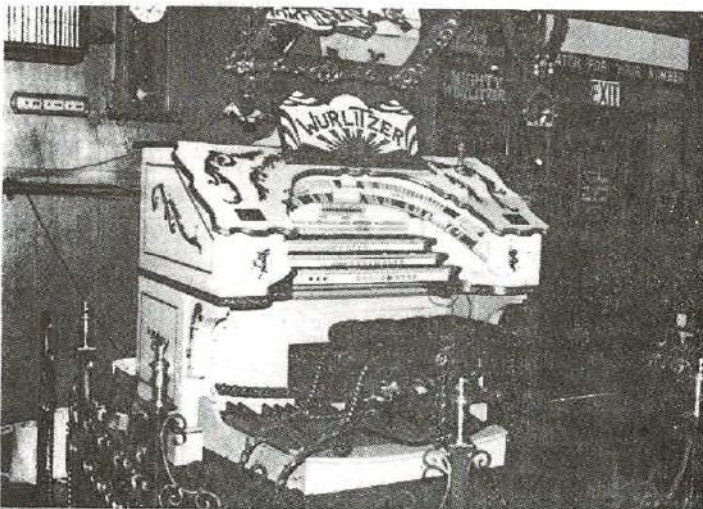
Four more ranks were added to the original nine making it thirteen ranks at present. There are no plans to add more ranks. There are other interesting diversions in the restaurant. The latest eye-catcher is the "Pizzacato Fire Flies" designed by Joyce Henningsen. These are little lighted fire flies that are wired to the pizzicato relay and light up when that stop is used.

Dave Quinlan played there from 25 July 1962, until 12 October 1963. He was followed by Bill Langford who stayed on the bench for eighteen years. Don Thompson was organist from May 1983 until late in 1988.

In the thirty years since the opening of Ye Olde, Pizza Joynt the idea of pizzerias equipped with theatre pipe organ has spread across America and into foreign countries. Many have come and gone. Some were in the wrong location. Some were too large; the Pizza Joynt is about the size of a neighbourhood tavern which gives it an ambience. Some places still operating do not have quality control of the product, despite having excellent organ music. In many pizzerias the organist plays too loudly. Many pizzas are over-priced. The list could go on. The grand-daddy of them all still flourishes.

When I asked Carsten the secret of his success, Henningsen said, "It's like an automobile, everything has to function. If you have a 500 horsepower engine with a burned-out clutch, you don't go anywhere. All functions have to operate. You have to have quality control and your employees have to be civil to the customers." In my opinion, Ye Olde Pizza Joynt serves the best pizza in California.

ATOS has acquired many new members who heard a theatre organ for the first time in a pizzeria. Carsten Henningsen deserves the admiration and gratitude of every theatre organ enthusiast for what he has done to perpetuate the theatre organ and bring it closer to the public. In his own particular way he has helped to bring about the renaissance of the instrument in America and throughout the world.



3/13 Wurlitzer console; overhead mirror enables patrons to see organ key-boards.  
Ed Mullins Photo



Knabe grand piano; French Celeste Accordion mounted on the wall between piano and console. Baskets beneath piano contain tambourines, maraccas, etc. used for audience participation.  
Ed Mullins Photo

# INTERVIEW

*Banquet attendees at the 1988 ATOS Convention were entertained by Dennis Hedberg and George Wright in dialogue about the world of the theatre organ and its music. A friendship between these two has existed since the early 1960s, and their dedication to the Philosophy of Excellence was evident in the remarks exchanged between them that night. We would like to thank George Wright for allowing us to share this interview with our readers. Thanks, also, to Randy Rock for providing the tape recording. Ed.*



## GEORGE WRIGHT

**Hedberg:** Some of the things I want to probe here might be a little provocative for some people out there, but in keeping with the theme of this convention, I'm trying to stir the pot a little bit. I'm trying to

**Wright:** Intentionally be provocative?

**Hedberg:** Not to the point to degrade or be nasty about anyone or anything, but it seem to me that there are a lot of what I call "myths" that are being perpetuated by many people in ATOS concerning how well did people play in years back — and how well did the organs themselves actually play. I realize, George, that you are not old enough to — not to have been of the early silent era, but still close enough to it to see what was happening. And we hear that every little town had its Bijou Theatre and had a Wurlitzer, a Robert-Morton, or a Moller or Kimball or whatever. Were all of those instruments really that well-played?

**Wright:** No. So our friends here will get a more exact picture of where I fit in that time period — I don't — I was born in 1920 and I'll be 68 next month. And so I came along either too early or too late. I started playing the organ at a time when there were no organs to play — and no jobs. It was the depth of the Depression. I was, however, observing this musical scene — the organ scene — from an early age and, in retrospect, found that I was very astute, and I was gifted by being able to separate some of the wheat from the chaff. A valid and large part of my

musical education was gleaned from radio, and in the earlier days of radio there were more unsponsored periods of broadcasting than there were sponsored. And, of course, a good way for little stations in little towns to fill a lot of time was to have Miss Johnson go over to the First Baptist Church and play the organ. And she would sit there for two or three hours and play everything she knew and some things she didn't know. And when she was finished the guy would say, "Well, that brings us to the end of today's organ recital." I recall hearing some wonderful, beautiful music being played beautifully on organs that sounded wonderful. And I was also able to get so many little stations up and down the dial that were broadcasting these little "pip-squeak" organs with totally ungifted, untalented, hacks playing them that the good became notable by comparison to the really bad. And there were some very, very bad players. I think that, at one point, anyone who could play diddle-diddle-da on the piano was delegated to come in and play for the matinee at the local showhouse on the three-rank something-or other.

I'm wandering on about this, but have I answered that question? I think there were both very good and very bad things going on in the theatres and on the radio.

**Hedberg:** Well, what do you think we are doing with it today? Do you think that the kinds of programs that ATOS presents show the good or the bad compared to the performances of years back?

**Wright:** This is a question that is difficult for me to answer, because I may not endeavor myself to certain segments of the population. I meant to say before this dialogue between us started that every thing that I am going to say must be prefaced by the phrase, *in my opinion*. Okay? In my opinion, I have very mixed emotions about what the ATOS is doing. I think some of it is excellent, and I think some of it is kind of mediocre — ineffectual. I realize that there are small chapters that do not have any budget and may be off the beaten path and so on and so on. I just feel that, perhaps, there are a few too many concerts being played on a few too many organs that aren't really up to exposure to the general public, and I feel that some of the people who play are not as good as some of the others. I agree that there is a high degree of professionalism with some of the players and they do an excellent job, but it is a mixed bag — and of necessity it must be. Some people like Gershwin — others like Cole Porter. Some like marches — other like Strauss waltzes, and it is difficult to take the shotgun approach and have a little something that everyone will like.

Have I gracefully skirted that question? It's really a loaded one. I want to be honest. I think some of it is just excellent and I think some of it is quite mediocre. How could I be more outspoken?

**Hedberg:** Well, we've all heard some turkeys, and we've all heard some great stuff, too. I believe — in my opinion —

that the music you make is of an outstanding nature. It is, in fact, so outstanding that there is hardly a theatre organist in the country, who is 40-45 years old and younger, who has not emulated, or tried to use, some of the things that you do. Do you find this a form of flattery or do you think, "Why do people steal my stuff all the time? Why can't they do something for themselves?"

*Wright:* I have mixed emotions about that. Sometimes it bothers me, and other times I couldn't care less. I am going to say something that sounds terribly egotistical, but I don't mean it to be that way. I'm weird. I'm different. I'm me. (*Hedberg:* That's for sure — there's you, and then the mold broke.) And I have been influenced in my youth by older players and better players. My playing is a polyglot. It's an eclectic collection of influences and flavors and tastes put together. I mentioned listening to the radio so much when I was a kid, and this went on from the middle twenties until the early 1940s. I know that some of you may not agree with the abilities and taste of the artists that I'm going to mention, but you don't know — and I do know — and that makes a difference. I was really strongly influenced by a number of players whose personalities, both personally and musically, couldn't have varied more. And I'm speaking of people like Edna Sellers and Herbert Foote and Larry Larsen, who broadcast from Chicago, and, of course, Jesse Crawford, who later on broadcast from Chicago. And then there was Eddie Dunstedter when he moved from Minneapolis to St. Louis and played on this wonderful-sounding Kilgen organ. Herbert Foote, in Chicago, played at the Marine Dining Room at the Edgewater Beach Hotel on coast-to-coast CBS, and it was a little, dinky Moller — I think about five ranks — and it had one tremulant on it that went wa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa, but it sounded very over-sexed and romantic and lovely and wonderful. Foote played it so beautifully, and he played such a variety of things — dumb little trivia, pop tunes of the day, selections from operettas — and he made it sound glorious! Now, this wasn't just a kid's idea of it — by then I had become a connoisseur of what sounded good and what didn't. Another Chicago artist who was heard all over the dial on a very small three-manual Wurlitzer organ from WBBM was Milton Charles. I was also influenced very strongly by Ann Leaf, and, of course, by Jesse Crawford.

So, a little thrill ran through me tonight when I heard that there is a Jesse Crawford chapter of ATOS. I think that is just wonderful, because that man's art is sometimes denied, and it is all but forgotten. And the younger people who condescend, maybe, to listen to Jesse

Crawford recordings are, perhaps, listening to some of his very poor output. I'm speaking specifically of things that he recorded on the Simonton organ in Los Angeles and on the Lorin Whitney organ in California. Those organs weren't him — they weren't his type of organ — he didn't like them. He was pressured into recording — flattered into it. He was told, "Oh, come on, you're the king. You are the greatest!" When Jesse said, "But I can't do what I want to do," they said, "Oh, come on, you can sit down and play a reed organ and everybody would love you." Not true! Consequently, I talk to younger people about the heart of Jesse Crawford and they say, "Oh, I don't like Jesse Crawford at all." And it turns out, most of the time, that they haven't heard the real art of Crawford as demonstrated by him on the old Victor 78 records. Not all of those were great, but there are gems among them that are little works of art where that man poured his soul out — his heart was on his sleeve — and he sat there and emoted and put this genuine, wonderful, fervent feeling into his playing. I could make you a list of what, in my opinion, separates the Crawford wheat from the Crawford chaff. And if young, aspiring professionals could only be exposed to this in its true form, they'd say, "Why, this is a revelation! I have never heard such expressive, poetic playing, such clean playing, such phrasing, such meaningful translation of the lyrics of the song to the tones of the organ."

Have I gotten way off in left field again? Those of you who know me know that I always say what I think, and it is not with the intent of hurting anyone, because I'm a lover and not a fighter by heart. And I feel that when I am asked a direct question, particularly about my love, my art, my music, all of which are inseparable, that I have to be honest. I have been willingly cast in the role of a coach and a teacher and have given seminars, and that is a great responsibility because it behooves me to pass on, to those who want to learn, the truth. And the truth can only be what I feel in my heart.

*Hedberg:* George, there are so many people who learn from what you do — you've probably influenced people more than any other living organist, and yet, when you hear someone else play something that sounds like something of your own, you have been heard to say, "Boring." Are you saying this because it's boring to you because you do it and you hear somebody else do it?

*Wright:* God, I think, I did that ten years ago, and so then I sit my buns down on the bench and think I'll do something different. But I'm not going to do that anymore. It's become a cliché. I must call to

your attention a question that was asked at a recent seminar by a really sweet, nice, good man, Dr. Dee Williams from Denver. He said to me, "Why is it that you have changed your style so drastically?" And I said, "Why, Dee, I don't know how to answer that because I wasn't aware that I had changed my style. Why do you ask?" And his answer was, and this is not verbatim, "Well, you opened the seminar last night with a concert, and I heard you play things that I have just never heard you play before." My response was, "There is your answer. I have been playing the same things for years because people ask me to — you know, 'Jealousy' and 'Ebb Tide' and 'Dancing Tambourine.' I love all those numbers or I never would have played them in the first place, but last night I purposely chose a program of things that I have hardly ever played in public. And I did that to show that, perhaps, you could be interested in some music for the sake of music, and that the registration and tone of the organ would please you, that I had selected the right things to go with the type of music that was being played. That is the only truthful answer that I can give you, because I feel that I haven't changed my style. My style, if any, is made up of so many elements gleaned through the years — you can't put a name on me — I'm not this, and I'm not that. I'm nothing, and yet I'm everything, and I thank God that I have been fortunate enough to have been in the right places at the right times to have gotten the kind of jobs that I have had. And so I have played in so many different situations, so many different kinds of music, that they overlap, and a little of this style blends with a little of that, and through the years a flavor creeps in here and there from the past." So I have wandered far afield again. Did I straighten out anything at all?

*Hedberg:* You're working at it.

*Wright:* As you see, I'm a shy thing. I'm very reticent about talking in public, and I don't feel at ease or anything like that. The minute I started this I felt your warmth and your interest, and I thank you for that. I want to say something else to you, too. I was asked by several of you, "You mean you are going to the convention and you're not going to play one note?" And I said, "That's right." Wrong! (at this point, George took a small organ pipe from his pocket and played one note.)

*Hedberg:* The tone I seem to be hearing from you — you're laying real heavy on the music — on the art of music.

*Wright:* That's it!

*Hedberg:* Well, that IS it, of course. Without the music, there's no point in having the organ because it is only the tool to

play the music to get the feeling across to the listener. With that idea in mind, what can ATOS do to keep the music alive — to keep the calibre of music high. If the organ is to carry on into the future — and ATOS, too, for that matter — it's the music that has to get it there. This is what I am hearing you say.

*Wright:* In the final analysis, in my opinion, it is the music that is of first importance — not the player — not the instrument. It is the music — or it should be. If you can find a capable player who can translate the music to the instrument, they you have a winning combination.

*Hedberg:* What do you think about the music of the '80s and going into the '90s? There is so much electronic input going into it. Can you take that music and use it with the theatre organ? After all, like everyone else, we're all getting a little older.

*Wright:* Speak for yourself, old man.

*Hedberg:* And after this week, I'm a LOT older. But this technology that we have today, we hear it everywhere and it's so far removed from the instrument that we know and love — how are we going to get the music that's coming, that's being composed today, on the instrument that we love?

*Wright:* I think we have to look at it realistically and think of it this way — a lot that is being composed today is composed for these electronic instruments that you mentioned and is completely impossible to perform on a theatre organ. Okay, you might be able to play the notes, but it just wouldn't sound right because so much of it is without formal melody or any elaborate harmony as we know it. There is more accent on tone color and rhythm than on melody and harmony. I find the way popular music has gone to be very disturbing, very upsetting to me and just downright offensive at times. I had great hopes for the way it drifted along in the '60s and into part of the '70s. I felt that the Beatles, for instance, made a valid contribution to influencing the flavor of our songs and that those things they did were mostly at home on the theatre organ. And the Burt Bacharach songs — charming. And "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" — people go 'ehhh' at that song — only because too many organists played it at the national convention that year and everyone was sick of it — but that doesn't mean it isn't a good song. I find it very disturbing that the acid rock and punk rock occupy such a large part of the time on the radio. And that isn't just because I'm old and out of it. You see, I keep track of these things. I keep listening. The music may turn me off, but I don't turn the radio off because I've got to keep abreast of the times. As

a performer, in respect to my God-given talent, I have to keep listening to things that may possibly add another facet to my abilities. I keep on learning — I don't vegetate and stagnate. But then, this music I call upsetting, unmusical, offensive does kind of go along with the perilous times we live in — gang warfare, drug dealing, theft — and on the radio, some clown singing a song about drugs, and I think this is just inexcusable. Even if I did like these forgettable melodies, my conscience wouldn't let me repeat them. I see no reason for me to translate that to the thing that I do. I do, however, think that we must keep an open mind about music. Throughout the ages of popular music in America, the oldsters have been saying, "Oh, this popular music is so awful — that Charleston — it's just too fast and racy." We're doing the same thing today.

Hope-Jones starting putting drums and cymbals, glockenspiels, and pianos and chimes on pipe organs. The purists holered, "You're desecrating! You're making a band organ and this is a calliope! It's just terrible!" But the theatre organ thrived on that sort of thing, and I think it was very adventurous of the companies to think "to heck with the purists — we're going to manufacture something more entertaining. And if you will note the Wurlitzer Company, for instance, as late as the late twenties and early thirties, the end of the era, kept coming up with newer things for their organs, newer percussions, newer kinds of voicing. So, I see nothing wrong at this point with incorporating other technologies into this wonderful instrument. I think it shows that it IS a wonderful instrument in that you can take a set of contacts and electronically or mechanically play another

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*... It's like the guy said on the corner of 7th Avenue and 57th in New York, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" And the answer he heard was, "Practice, man, practice."*

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*Hedberg:* Is this why — what seems to be happening more and more — certainly in your new recordings on your own instrument — we hear more modern electronic embellishments?

*Wright:* Yes, but not because I am thinking "Well, George, old boy, you've got to keep up with the times. Let's put a synthesizer in there and that will make everything all hip." I won't endear myself to the purists of the organ world by what I am going to say, but you ask very astute questions and I feel I have to say what I have to say. I have to go back to the 16th or 17th centuries in England when an organbuilder and an instrument-maker friend of his built a harpsichord or a clavichord into the church organ at St. Somethings-on-the-Thames, and the purists raised holy hell about it. They said, "How dare you desecrate God's instrument by putting a clap-trap thing like that on it!" And they paid no attention to it. But it died a natural death because it was impossible to keep the stringed instrument in tune with the pipe organ. The same thing happened when people like

kind of instrument instead of just the glockenspiel or the chimes or what-not. You can play a synthesizer — you can play a sampler — you can play a something. It's got to be done with taste — with discretion — the two have to be integrated artistically so that they complement each other. And so, if we do use an electronic adjunct to an organ, it mustn't upstage the pipe organ. Have I answered that question?

*Hedberg:* You have. Now, I've saved something here that is the real focus of what I'm trying to emphasize at this convention, and that is to make ATOS realize that the future *does* lie with the young people.

*Wright:* Amen.

*Hedberg:* And we'd better be getting on with it, trying to do more to get the young people interested in this and get the music they are most familiar with to integrate as best we can with the theatre organ. There are several young people here tonight — some are performing at

*(continued)*



## NOTICE OF MEMBERS MEETING

## INTERVIEW continued...

this convention, others are guests. There are many others who will hear about this event throughout the country, people who have these little buds, little seeds of interest, maybe cropping up about the theatre organ. And you, the man who probably carries the greatest influence of anyone in the world, will affect the music and the survival of the theatre organ. What would you say to these young people who are starting to show some interest in the instrument and, with God willing and a little luck, might really pursue it?

*Wright:* Simple — tell them the truth. It's like the guy said on the corner of 7th Avenue and 57th in New York, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" And the answer he heard was, "Practice, man, practice." It's an old story, but a true one. I say to the young people, there have been too many just downright untalented, bad organ teachers around. There have been some good ones, but, for example, I think terrible harm has been done to a lot of people by teaching them to play with the Pointer System. This is no place to start for someone who wants to be a professional. So I say to the young people, study the piano. Study the classical piano and learn that first. (Applause). Thank you for supporting me in that. I know it's true. The organ is easy to play if you can play the piano halfway well. You can ask Lew Williams, who came to me some twenty years ago and asked me to hear him play, and I did, and I gave him an evaluation, and I was totally honest with him — and he was good then, and he's great now! I said, "What you need is concentrated classical piano study, and then go back to the organ." So that is the first word of wisdom. Learn to read music. It's easy. There are only seven letters to learn — twenty-six to learn to read English, but only seven to learn to read music. It's inexcusable that you can't read music — only because you won't. And the standards of music, I think, get higher and higher through the years, and this calls upon everyone to improve himself by reading music and playing better. You must have, of course, a certain innate sense of what is right as far as tone color and taste.

Be yourselves. Try things. Be adventurous. Don't just use the Tibia because someone else does. How do you know? You might turn off the tremulant and use the Diapason instead, and say, "Hey, that's a wonderful effect!" Use unlikely registration in unlikely places. Be unexpected. Be daring. Be creative. And most of all, have fun and enjoy it, because then your fun and your enjoyment will be conveyed to the listener.

*Hedberg:* That about does it. Well said.

Notice of the quarterly special general meeting is hereby given.

Date: Wednesday, 22 February 1989

Time: 8.00pm

Place: Marrickville Town Hall,  
Marrickville Road,  
Marrickville.

Agenda: 1. Opening by Chairman  
2. Apologies  
3. Reports (a) Secretary  
(b) Treasurer  
(c) Marrickville Organ  
(d) Orion Organ  
(e) other  
4. General Business  
5. Closing

Supper will be served after the meeting, please bring something to share. The organ will be open after the meeting also for members to play.

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**OBITUARY**

Member, Ron Mills recently lost his father Bert, also a TOSA member. This loss came only a matter of weeks after Ron's mother passed away. The society sends condolences to Ron and other members of the family.

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**MEMBERS PLAYING NIGHT**  
Orion Centre

Approximately 15 members arrived to play the newly installed Orion Centre WurliTzer on Wednesday 18 January 1989. This was the first opportunity that members have had to play the organ since the opening in October last year. Comments from the members were interesting to hear. They ranged from 'fantastic' to overwhelming and nearly every other superlative in-between. A most enjoyable supper was then enjoyed, accompanied to the strains of the WurliTzer of course. This evening was most enjoyable and allowed members access to the organ.

### THIRD HOME FOR CHRISTIE ORGAN

The second Lyceum Theatre is now but a memory. All that remains is a large hole on the Pitt Street site between Park and Market Streets Sydney. The original Lyceum Hall dated from 1892 and was purchased by the Methodist Church early this century. This building served up until fire destroyed it on 25th February 1964, though the interior was altered several times. The second Lyceum opened some-time later however its lifespan has proved to be even shorter than the original building.

T.O.S.A. members will naturally be wondering just exactly what is going to happen in regard to the Christie organ which has been a part of both the first and second Lyceum Theatres. To answer these questions we quote from an article by Rev. Dr. Gordon Moyes in the December 1988 edition of "Impact" - the magazine of Wesley Central Mission.

#### "THE CHRISTIE ORGAN

A number of organs have served over the years, but since 1930 the Lyceum Theatre has been known for the Christie Theatre Organ. It was built by the famous English organ builders Hill, Norman and Beard who named their theatre organs after their chairman and famous founder of the Glyn-debourne Opera, Captain John Christie.

The console was positioned centrally in front of the screen half out of the floor with the two organ chambers located behind the screen, one on top of the other. It was installed to accompany silent movies, but by the time it was installed, the Lyceum became equally first to present talking movies in Australia: Al Jolson in "The Jazz Singer". So the organ was used mainly on Sundays for the Mission. Vera Plowman and Eric Smith will be remembered as the two longest serving organists.

In the Lyceum fire of 1964 the organ survived with only scorch damage to the console. The organ was repositioned with the two chambers above the platform allowing the sound to descend into the theatre and a new console was built and positioned into the side wall. Unfortunately the magnificent horseshoe console and all the important percussion instruments on the organ were sold to the Theatre Organ Society of Victoria.

The fire of December 19th 1982, made one half, of the organ unusable for 12 months. It was dismantled under the direction of Pitchford and Garside our tuners, and sent to Melbourne to be rebuilt by Fincham and Co. It was totally rebuilt and revoiced, the chamber fully enclosed and a swell added. All percussions were restored and the chimes muted, all actions and wiring replaced and provisions made for permanent additions of new pipes and percussions. It is our intention that this organ will be installed in the new theatre and enlarged to become one of the great theatre organs in the nation."

The Theatre Organ Society of Australia (N.S.W. Division) certainly wish the Wesley Central Mission well in the proposed restoration of this fine instrument. It is to be hoped that a more theatrical specification will be implemented returning the instrument to its full theatrical capability. Dare we even hope for the return of a horseshoe console and all the necessary percussion stops?

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### FAMOUS THEATRE ORGANIST DIES

Our member, Frank Ellis, reported to TOSA NEWS that organist Reupert Hayes had passed away at his residence in the North Coast area of Salamander Bay on Thursday 5 January 1989, aged 75. Parker Oakes, Reuperts son-in-law, who was on holiday in Tasmania, had rung Frank to tell him the sad news. Reupert Hayes was one of the great names on the Australian theatre organ scene, and had been a loyal supporter of TOSA in its early struggling days. He played many concerts for the society including our earliest convention.

As a tribute to Reupert, we re-publish a profile of this popular organist which was written by Frank Ellis, and which appeared in the May 1967 issue of TOSA NEWS during Frank's years as Editor.

### THE REUPERT HAYES STORY

One of Australia's most broadcast organists, Reupert Hayes, commenced his study of the piano at the age of seven. Between the ages of twelve and sixteen he was a student of Dr Arthur Haig, and

went on to become the holder of no less than three Diplomas. Ruepert's first contact with the WurliTzer organ was at the Prince Edward Theatre, where he heard Eddie Horton playing Sydney's first modern WurliTzer, and he decided there and then to become a theatre organist.

He was, later, able to obtain practise time at the organ of the Ritz Theatre, Concord, on a two manual Christie organ, and set about teaching himself the art of theatre organ styling.

Amongst his record collection, were discs by Jesse Crawford, Lew White, Sydney Torch, Harold Ramsay and Quentin Maclean, and with these various styles of interpretation in mind, he was able to express these forms, -after countless hours of practise.

About this time, he met Knight Barnett, then appearing at the Palatial Theatre, Burwood, and through Knight's good offices he was able to have practise time on the Palatial's larger three manual Christie organ. It was not too long before it was arranged for Reupert to play the Saturday afternoon matinees at the Palatial, in order that Knight Barnett might have that afternoon free each week. After about a year of this arrangement, Reupert became resident organist at the nearby Strathfield Cinema on Boxing Day in 1935. This organ was the Christie originally in the Ritz Theatre, Concord, so of course, he was no stranger to the instrument. The engagement lasted for one year exactly, and then on Boxing Day 1936, he took up his residency at the Victory Theatre, Kogarah, where he remained until July 1939.

He was then approached by Hoyt's Theatres to go to the Regent Theatre, Brisbane, for a six month season, after which he was to have six months in the Regent Theatres of Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide respectively. However, the six months in Brisbane continued on and on as the second world war intensified, and there was a shortage of organists due to enlistments. It was also found, by the management of Hoyt's, to be impracticable to rotate organists from interstate theatres due to manpower controls imposed for the duration. And so, Reupert remained as the feature organist at the beautiful Brisbane Regent until 1946, after the war's end.

During Reupert's residency at the Brisbane Regent his deputy, Les Richmond, played the 11am and 5pm sessions, with Reupert playing the major sessions at 2pm and 8pm.

Reupert Hayes, apart from being the first Australian featured organist at the Brisbane Regent, achieved wide fame for his radio program which was broadcast "live" from the theatre at 6.30pm each Sunday, on a national ABC network, as well as being beamed to our forces in the South Pacific. This show, titled, "Forces Sing Song" featured Reupert at the famous WurliTzer with an audience of approximately 3000 servicemen and women, in a morale boosting program of songs of the day, and was heard by an audience of millions in Australia, as well as Australian and United States servicemen in the South Pacific. It was broadcast from 1942 until 1945. As well as this Sunday night broadcast, Reupert also did two other programs on two other Brisbane local stations.

In 1946, Reupert returned to Sydney for a long and very successful residency at the Plaza Theatre which lasted until 1958, a twelve year stay, during which time he frequently broadcast over the ABC in Sydney. In 1958, following the retirement of Stan Cummins, organist of the Regent Theatre, Reupert crossed George Street to become the Regent's resident organist until the shut-down of the organ in 1960.

He then entered the commercial field of the electronic organ and became Organ Consultant and NSW Manager for the Conn Organ Company and was located in the R.H. Elvy Pty. Ltd's Sydney musical warehouse. In 1962 he became organist at the Odeon Theatre at Campsie playing an electronic organ and remained there for about five years or more. He was also the organist at the Western Suburbs Leagues Club for a considerable time, and so, with his work at Elvy's, plus the Odeon Theatre and the Leagues Club, Reupert could have been considered a very busy musician indeed.

I once asked him which was his favourite theatre and organ, and he told me the Brisbane Regent was his favorite theatre but the Sydney Regent was his favorite WurliTzer. He went on to say that the

best Vox Humana on any theatre organ he had played, was undoubtedly the Sydney Plaza Organ.

Natural and friendly, with an obvious sincerity, he had an unbounded enthusiasm for the theatre organ, allied to precise and meticulous musicianship for the highest order - this is REUPERT HAYES, our PROFILE FOR MAY 1967.

Now, sadly, Reupert Hayes is no longer with us, but older TOSA members will always remember his Brisbane broadcasts, his fine presentations in both the Plaza and the Regent in Sydney, and his outstanding broadcasts over the ABC Sydney. One of his Sydney broadcasts I will always remember was one he called "Shades Of Blue", in which every song played during the 30 minute show, had the word "blue" in the title - Blue Moon, Blue Star, Alice Blue Gown, Rhapsody In Blue, and so on for the duration of the program. It was an outstanding program presented with Reupert's usual flair.

**We remember you and salute you Reupert, and farewell.**

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### JOHN GIACCHI - PERTH CONCERT

West Australian Theatre Organ concert-goers were treated to a fine example of the old adage "The show must go on" when Canberra based Maureen Dawes and Sydney's John Giacchi gave a concert on the Compton Theatre Organ at the John Lecke Music Centre on Friday 20 January.

Despite the discomfort of century heat, plus a plague of moths both artists excelled themselves and in so doing helped the audience understand the fine talents of John Parker who, with the assistance of John Giacchi wrought wonders to tonally finish the organ for our convention. Those of you who have heard this instrument would be amazed at the changes John Parker made to this fine organ.

The concert opened with John Giacchi playing "Another Opening, Another Show", an appropriate piece of music played with gusto and finesse. This was followed by the two Johns giving a demonstration of the work performed on the various ranks.

John Giacchi then handed the instrument over to Maureen Dawes who delighted the audience with a well chosen program of favourite tunes from the 1930's to the present day. She then played a small program of light classical numbers on our Yamaha Grand Piano.

After interval John returned to the console and was immediately beset upon by the moths who proceeded to burrow into his hair, eyes, nose and down his immaculate white shirt. However a good squirt of "Ava Good Weekend" fixed all but a rather nasty looking wasp who conducted the rest of the program from the music rest.

John played a 40 minute program that included "Hooray for Hollywood", Chopin's "Grande Valse Brillante", a Magnificent arrangement of the main themes from "Showboat" and on the grand he contributed Scott Joplin's "Bethena". Of special interest was John's own composition for the Bicentenary year.

All the above and the rest of his program was greeted enthusiastically by the audience and although working under tremendous difficulty from heat, moths and said wasp he performed brilliantly showing a great amount of feeling for the art of Theatre Organ styling as well as technical ability and confidence - unusual in so young an artist.

His performance underlined the tremendous job done by John Parker. T.O.S.A. (N.S.W.) are very fortunate to have two such talented young people available to them. We envy you.

Altogether a very rewarding week for T.O.S.A. (W.A.). We now have the organ and can't wait to show it off at our convention. As well, we have made two new friends.

Geoff Knaggs  
President - T.O.S.A. (W.A.)

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Don't forget the free concert on 5 March at Marrickville Town Hall featuring Clinton White and Maureen Dawes. T.O.S.A. (W.A.) were delighted with Maureen's playing. We should be in for a great concert.  
(Editor)