Jan/Feb 2015
Volume 54 No.1

TOSA NEWS

Price: $2.00

Sunday 22 February 2015 2:00pm

Doors open at 1:30pm

A Four Kinsmen Duo:

George Harvey &
Debbie Fitzsummons
Orion Theatre Wurlitzer

155 Beamish St., Campsie

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www.tosa.net.au

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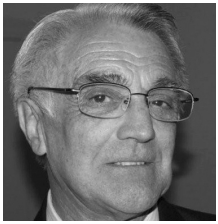
From the President



A Happy New Year to all.

Thank you to all of our members who have supported our shows during 2014: I hope we see you at each of our shows this year.

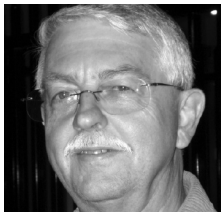
Several people have already availed themselves of the Season Ticket option for 2015. Remember that this option not only gives you seven shows for the cost of six but also ensures you have your seat of choice reserved for each show. Also you don't have to either arrange pre-purchase each time or alternatively queue for your ticket. You still have time to purchase with the shut-off date being 22nd February, the date of the first show for 2015.

May I encourage you to plan to be at each show this year. Your Committee has arranged a varied program and yet you will still find many of your favourite Artists with one or two new faces alongside. Your support is crucial to the ongoing success of your Society, particularly as we move forward with the installation of the Christie at West Ryde.

Happy Organ-ising,

Geoff Brimley

Editorial



It is now time to purchase your **Season Ticket for the 2015 shows** at the same prices as last year. A list of the shows for 2015 was included with the December issue so you can mark your calendars and diaries for the year and not miss any show.

The Orion Theatre at Campsie has been given a new colour change along with modernising of the kitchen equipment and bar areas. This has made for a brighter environment to present TOSA shows. The restrooms have all been refreshed for the comfort of patrons. The Four Kinsmen Dou - George & Debbie should be a fun show so we look forward to welcoming a large audience for the beginning of 2015.

Details of the ATOS Convention 2015 have been included so you can plan to visit Philadelphia to hear some very interesting organs. details are also available on the ATOS web site www.ATOS.org

Deadline for TOSA News is the 12th of the previous month.

Enjoy the music,

Ernie Vale
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235
editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...

Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in, telling us what you think.

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit any submitted comments and, as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of TOSA NSW Div.

Please submit all comments via email to:
The Editor *editor@tosa.net.au*
or in writing to:
The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

A warm welcome to New TOSA Members

Miss Carole Reece
Mr Ralph McIlwraith and
Mrs Fay McIlwraith - Season tickets also purchased.

For Sale

Hammond Elegante with spares

Hammond Elegante. 2 x 61 note keyboards and 25 note pedal board. Cabinet and bench in good condition. Sale includes numerous spares including internal Leslie and other speakers, most integrated circuit boards taken from a previous Elegante. Open to offers.
Contact Craig Keller 0418 484 798
or
email craigkeller1966@gmail.com

Maintenance on the Orion Wurlitzer

At the January players day the technical team identified the cause of a problem with the 16' diapaison not playing on the great manual. It was caused by a poorly soldered connection behind the stop tab on the console. John Weismantel solved the problem.

John Weismantel fixing the connection - Craig Keller and John Andrews tested if the 16' Diapaison now speaks from the Great Manual.

The lid goes back on - problem solved

To Watch Out For

in 2015

The program of shows have been confirmed that provides a mixture of Cabaret style, as well as solo performances presented by a variety of musicians. The overseas artists are both from the USA with Jerry Nagano making his first Australian Tour. Dave Wickerham makes a welcome return as he delighted audiences on his Australasian Tour in 2012.

Now is the time to purchase your Season Tickets before the first show on 22 February.

A Season Ticket booking form is enclosed in this issue of TOSA News and must be completed and posted to the Ticket Secretary to obtain your Season Ticket.

There are 7 shows for the price of 6 in 2015. Non - members save even more by becoming a TOSA member.

"Gentlemen, in the little moment that remains to us between the crisis and the catastrophe, we may as well drink a glass of champagne."

PAUL CLAUDEL (1868–1955)

Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:
Small, Organ related ads = FREE!
For all other cases:

- Small bubble = $11.00
- Quarter Page = $24.75
- Half Page = $49.50
- Full Page = $99.00
- Full Page Insert = $125.00

Members' Playing Dates
The Orion Theatre Campsie

Thursday 12 February
Thursday 12 March
Thursday 9 April
These dates have been confirmed by Craig

Craig Keller on 0418484798
Players and listeners welcome.

Marrickville Town Hall
4th Monday afternoon/evening
at 2:30pm to 7:00pm

Monday 23 February
Monday 23 March
Players and listeners welcome.

Please contact Neil or John Batts to confirm availability

John Batts 0420424103

Neil on 9798 6742 after 7:00pm

2015 ATOS Convention Registration Open

Registration is now open!
To register, please visit the 2015 Convention Registration Website hosted at regonline.com. The link address is: https://www.regonline.com/atos2015
Note that you must be a member of ATOS in good standing. To join or renew, visit our Online Membership Join/Renew Website.

****Concerning "Necessary meals"**
Because of the bus schedules and travel times, it will be necessary to eat 2 of your lunches and 3 of your dinners en-route. The cost of these meals is included in your registration.

Hotel Information
Doubletree Hotel, 237 S Broad St, Philadelphia PA 19107
Phone: +1 215-893-1600
ATOS convention rate code is TOG - $119 per night plus tax

Current Schedule

Overture on July 2
Longwood Gardens with Jonas Nordwall
Welcome Cocktail Party with cash bar (Open to all, not just Overture)
Macy's (Wanamaker organ) with Peter Richard Conte

Day 1 July 3
Membership Meeting
Macy's Greek Hall with Ron Rhode -- Group A
Colonial Theatre with Mark Herman
Dickinson with Dave Peckham

Day 2 July 4
Membership Forum
Macy's Greek Hall with Ron Rhode - Group –B

Colonial Theatre with Young Organist Competition
Colonial Theatre with Andrew Van Varick
Dickinson with Dave Wickerham

Day 3 July 5
Allen Organ Octave Hall with Lance Luce – Group A
Grand Theater with John Barrata and film – Group B
Allen Organ Octave Hall with Lance Luce – Grloup B
Grand Theater with John Barrata and film – Group A
Sunnybrook Ballroom with Awards Banquet/Ceremony

Day 4 July 6
Dickinson with Hector Olivera (theatre organ concert)
Wilmington & Western Railroad ride
Dickinson with Simon Gledhill and Richard Hills in duet

Encore July 7
Atlantic City
Broadway Theatre with Don Kinnier
Boardwalk Hall with Steven Ball (main hall)
Boardwalk Hall with Steven Ball (Ballroom)

I will be happy to answer any questions. Send e-mail to
b.dilworth@atos.org
Bob Dilworth
2015 Convention Chairman
2015 Convention PRINTABLE Registration Form

Wanamaker Dreams Come True

An article from the Wall Street Journal By Eric Felten
Kindly sent by TOSA Member Alex Walker

Philadelphia
For two and a half decades, Peter Richard Conte has had one of the strangest, most wonderful jobs in all of retail. Twice a day, six days a week he has performed 45-minute concerts on one of the largest pipe organs in the world, an instrument improbably located in a downtown Philadelphia department store.

The organ, built for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, was such an enormous--and enormously expensive--

undertaking that it bankrupted the manufacturer. It was claimed that the instrument with some 10,000 pipes, was "capable of producing 17,179,869,183 distinct tonal effects."

After its starring role at the world's fair, the organ languished in storage for a few years until it was bought by John Wanamaker as the centrepiece of the new store he was building in Philadelphia. In 1911, the organ debuted in the Grand Court--a seven story, marble atrium that proved too large for even such a monster. And so Wanamaker and his son Rodman had the organ vastly expanded through the teens and '20s -- to more than 28,000 pipes.

For more than a century, there has always been an Official Grand Court Organist at the department store. The longest serving was the second, Mary E. Vogt, who performed at Wanamaker's from 1917 to 1966. "You must entertain without distracting," she said. You don't want to "annoy people who after all have come into the store to shop." Vogt managed the six keyboards at the massive console, but couldn't quite reach all of the organ's 729 color-coded "stop tablets" (the domino-size paddle-switches that turn ranks of pipes on and off). She would throw the more distant tablets with a whack from a rolled-up newspaper.

One of the strangest most wonderful jobs in all of retail

Mr. Conte still follows Vogt's repertoire advice, shying away from the atonal and modernistic, and avoiding extravagant works from composers such as Olivier Messiaen. "Great music," he says of Messiaen, "but not shopping-conducive."

On a recent Saturday afternoon Mr. Conte performed the sort of accessibly eclectic program that the organ, and the organ's commercial environment, calls for. The mix included a third-act scene from Richard Strauss's "Der Rosenkavalier," a scherzo from Alexandre Guilmant (the French organist-composer who famously performed on the organ during the St. Louis World's Fair) and "The Easy Winners," a Scott Joplin rag.

Mr. Conte's specialty is symphonic works that he transcribes for the organ himself. His scores are housed in black binders, and the sheets inside are crowded with little flourescent sticky-dots in magenta, green and tangerine that he uses to mark the many changes to the stops.

Mr. Conte was a choir boy at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, N.Y., when he took up the organ. After earning his

degree at Indiana University, he began pestering the third Grand Court Organist, Keith Chapman, to let him audition to become an assistant. Chapman finally gave him a chance in 1987 and Mr. Conte got the gig, which entailed performing when Chapman was on tour, travels he made at the controls of his own plane. It was on one of those trips, in the summer of 1989, that Chapman crashed in the Rockies. In September 1989, Mr. Conte was named the fourth Grand Court Organist.

The organ had long since fallen into disrepair. By the 1990s, only about 10% of the instrument was playable. "For most of my tenure, the organ was in steady decline," Mr. Conte says. "We were limping along with very few ranks."

But it was a benign sort of neglect. Sixty years ago, celebrity organist E. Power Biggs championed a fad for building organs in the style--and using the technology--of the 17th century. "The best way--in fact the only way--to build an organ," Biggs insisted, was "the classical way." He sneered at the "machines" measured by their "volume and number of stops," and, as if explicitly describing the Wanamaker instrument, he sneered at organs designed to imitate all the sounds of an orchestra. And so, under the outsize influence of Biggs, many of the lavish orchestral organs of the first half of the 20th century were ripped out and replaced by what Mr. Conte derides as "Neo-Barogue squeak-boxes."

Not the Wanamaker. Come the 1950s and'60s, the department store could barely be bothered to pay for minimal upkeep on the instru-

Show & Membership Prices

The following TOSA show ticket prices now apply:

	All Artists
Non-members	$32.50
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	$27.50
TOSA Members	$23.00

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status

All Children FREE

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults $20 per person

Annual Membership Fees are now: $35.00 for Full membership, and

$25.00 for Concession, Country, Interstate & Overseas.

Membership enquiries Geoff Brimley (02) 6351 3122

membership@tosa.net.au

Associate Membership for a spouse/partner is only an additional 50%

ment, let alone even consider the monumental expense of tearing the organ out and replacing it. The organ escaped the "Organ Reform Movement" unscathed (even benefiting from it by gaining some tuba pipes salvaged from a less-fortunate church organ).

When the department store became a Lord & Taylor in the late '90s, the retailer began the process of repairing the organ. But it was when the landmark store became a Macy's in 2006 that the organ's restoration began in earnest.

Now at full strength, "Baby"--as the organ is nicknamed--produces a huge, enveloping sound without screaming or screeching. Many smaller organs blast away like a fire hose; the Wanamaker Organ has the elemental power of surf and tide. The ranks of strings, equal to three orchestras' worth, are silky and lush and, with the Grand Court's lingering echo, melt away like a mouthful of cotton candy.

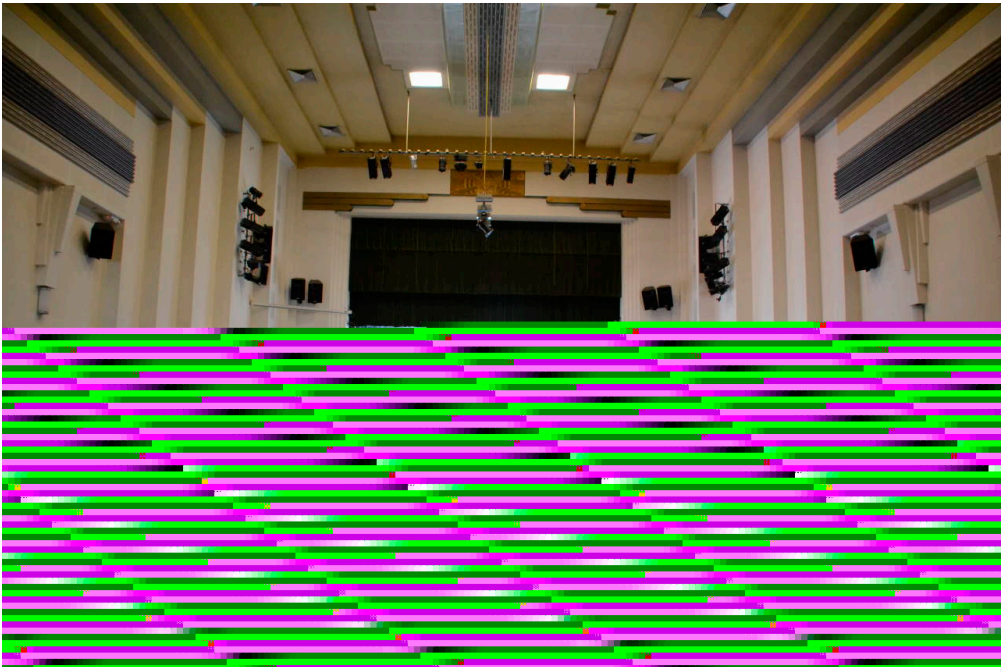
On Saturday, Mr. Conte will be performing for "Wanamaker Organ Day," one of several special performances during his 25th anniversary year. The evening program includes both Sergei Rachmaninoff and George Gershwin. Jeremy Filsell will be at a Steinway grand to play the solo parts of the Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor and "Rhapsody in Blue," while Mr. Conte, seated at Baby's keyboards, will provide the orchestral accompaniment.

"You don't get tired of playing this instrument," Mr. Conte says. "There's a reason I'm only the fourth Grand Court Organist."

Mr. Felten is a writer and musician in Washington.

Foyer at the Orion Centre Theatre

The first TOSA Show for 2015 will be in the newly refurbished Orion Centre Theatre Campsie



Auditorium above and Foyer Bar at Orion Centre Theatre

A surprise addition to the program followed as Tony introduced a silent film made in 1921 which, through a set of amazing coincidences, showed the assembly of the actual Wurlitzer now 'gracing' the Regent Theatre. The print itself was in amazingly good condition and clearly showed the incredible size difference of the smallest and largest pipes, the loading of the instrument on a train which transported the entire complement of equipment to San Francisco, and the carriage of the shipment by multiple horses and carts through the streets of San Francisco to its first home in the Granada Theatre. At risk of making an awful pun, the audience were 'blown away' to see such an amazing record of the history of the 'pride of the Regent'.

Richard Hills made his entrance for his appearance at the Regent, demonstrating his versatility this time, as a theatrical organist. He accompanied another film print, the 1956 trailer to the movie *'High Society'*, featuring Grace Kelly, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong. Richard managed to match the 'clips' with the appropriate Cole Porter music from the movie. It was a very clever updated version on the accompaniment-technique employed for silent-movies.

The following item produced a return to a format which has become very welcome over the years. **Tony** occupied the grand-piano with his co-artist **Richard** performing on the Wurlitzer. Together they presented the mini-concerto *'Skyscraper Fantasy'* by British songwriter Donald Phillips, written in 1940. This piece is similar to others written around the same period including *'Cornish Rhapsody'* and the *'Warsaw Concerto'.* His *'Skyscraper Fantasy'* owes much of its popularity to a Charles Williams recording. Incidentally, in 1935 Charles Williams wrote the *'Majestic Fanfare',* which is still used to this day as the theme to ABC-Radio news bulletins.

Another British composer with Australian associations was Ronald Hanmer who wrote Tony and Richard's next item *'Hocus Pocus',* a bubbly little piece ideally suited to Tony's crisp piano articulation and Richard's well-chosen registrations in support. It may be remembered that Ronald Hanmer composed the theme to the ABC's long-running serial *'Blue Hills'.*

To complete this bracket of numbers, **Tony** and **Richard** chose Emmanuel Chabrier's *'España'*, which **Tony** introduced by saying that he had long hoped to transcribe as a version for organ and piano, to take advantage of the lovely melody line and the exciting rhythms, ideally adapted to piano, and thrilling organ accompani-

ment with copious calls on brass registrations. It worked well on all counts.

A change of format once more as Tony, from the keyboards of the Wurlitzer, accompanied the MC for the day Donald Kant, in a singing role reviving his time as the *'Phantom'.* As always, a sympathetic accompaniment from the organ to one of Andrew Lloyd Webber's more memorable compositions.

The grand finale for the day saw a return to the stage of Donald Kant, soprano Jacqueline Porter, the Melbourne Opera Chorus, Tony Fenelon on grand piano and Richard Hills on the organ. The ensemble launched into highlights from various stage musicals including *'Singin' in the Rain', 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', 'Consider Yourself', 'All I Ask of You', 'Mama Mia',* and the wonderful finale from *'Les Miserables'* - *'Do You Hear the People Sing?'*. This ideal choice of item as a finale, drew a standing ovation from the 2000-strong audience, plus a tear from this 'emotionally charged' reviewer of the afternoons proceedings. The choice of *'Do You Hear the People Sing'* as a finale to ***'A Tale of Two Organs'***, was a fine choice of item for the conclusion of the scheduled program for the dual concerts, and a fitting reflection on the work of Charles Dicken's *'A Tale of two Cities'.*

Not to let the occasion pass without an encore, **Tony** and **Richard** returned to piano and organ respectively to provide a stunning rendition of *'Tiger Rag'*. The version presented by **Messrs Fenelon and Hills** would have defied the best of the best. Their arrangement must have sorely tested the 'action' of organ and piano alike, regardless of the skill and musicality of the organist and pianist respectively. The upshot of their performance of *'Tiger Rag'* provided a further enhancement to the spirits of all those fortunate enough to have been a part of the very special occasion.

The organisers, the supporting artists, and particularly **Tony Fenelon** and **Richard Hills**, deserved all the acclamation they received at the conclusion of the day.

'A Tale of Two Organs' was a masterpiece of concept and performance, and well-deserved the level of support obtained from the Melbourne public, and those who travelled from afar. It will be a concert long-remembered by all, either as performers or audience member alike. Thank you all.

Kindly reviewed by TOSA(NSW) member Doug Grant.

Members Diary

Monday 2 February Committee 6:00pm

St Columb's Anglican Church, West Ryde

Sunday 22 February 2:00pm - 4:30pm

"The Four Kinsmen Duo"

Debbie Fitzsummons & George Harvey

at the

Orion Centre Theatre
155 Beamish St., Campsie

Book at www.tosa.net.au - Events **or**
Contact Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131
and pick up your tickets at the Box Office

Now is the time to purchase your Season Ticket
for all the Theatre Organ Shows in 2015

Please complete the Season Ticket booking form in this issue and send it to Theo for seat allocation

Radio 2MBS-FM 102.5 "Colours of the King" (program of the Organ Music Society of Sydney) 2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm
Theatre Organ Magic **on RNB - FM from Sydney, NSW, Australia.**
88.7 FM and 90.3 FM 12 noon first Sunday of the month for one hour

Web Sites of Interest: https://www.facebook.com/tosansw

www.theatreorgansaust.info (history of cinema organ installations in Australasia)
www.omss.org.au (our sister society, Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)
www.ATOS.org American Theatre Organ Society

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