

# T.O.S.O. NEWS

incorporating **THE DIAPHONE**

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

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## SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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10th May

Marrickville

Town Hall



31st May

Chatswood

Town Hall

Jonas Nordwall is one of the most musical young organists on the present music scene. He has played for almost every type of occasion from inaugural organ recitals to skating rinks. After his mother taught him the notes on the piano when he was three an interest began in the accordion and at age four began formal instruction on the instrument. After being exposed to organ through recordings, T.V. and a local rink he began playing on his own when a neighbour acquired an organ store. His classical organ instruction began at twelve and his pop training was

strictly on his own, through influence from local performers and records. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Portland and has since studied with Frederick Geoghegan in Toronto. Jonas was an artist at the 1966 Portland A.T.O.S. Convention and the 1971 Seattle Convention too and has played for A.T.O.S. Chapters from Seattle to Phoenix besides the many classical programmes he plays in the Northwest. He is in his 8th year as organist-choirmaster for Congregation Neveh Shalom and this fall will be organist for the first Methodist Church in Portland. He is currently also resident organist at the "Organ Grinder" Pizza Palace.

At the "Organ Grinder" Restaurant in Portland (his home town), he is playing a 3/34 Wurlitzer to over 8,000 patrons each weekend. Recently he relieved Lyn Larsen in Phoenix, Arizona for three weeks at the "Organ Stop" Pizza, while Lyn took his place in Portland.

In summation, we can say that if you like the theatre organ and if you liked Lyn Larsen, you'll love Jonas Nordwall. His style is different to Lyn's, covering perhaps and even broader range, but it has that same inventive impact and smooth professionalism. He gives only two performances for T.O.S.A, so be early. The concert dates are:

Friday, 10th May 8.p.m. Marrickville Town Hall  
and  
Friday, 31st. May 8.p.m. Chatswood Town Hall.

Admission \$2.50 General Public \$2.00 Members of T.O.S.A.  
\$1 Children and Pensioners. \$5.00 Full Family.

So, come along and bring your friends, as we think you are in for a real feast of popular organ music.

SATURDAY 18th MAY AT 8 p.m.

David Parsons, Member of T.O.S.A, will be featured at the console of the Thomas Lawrence Welk Organ, and also at the keyboard of the Gulbransen Piano, at the home of Ritchie Willis, 23 Selwyn Street, Paddington. Admission \$1 per person, and all proceeds will be paid into the Capitol Wurlitzer Organ Fund. Come along to a wonderful night of music and at the same time, help us clear the debt on the Capitol Organ. Phone 31 8883 after hours, but be early as these nights are sold out quickly. Seating is limited to 25.

SUNDAY 26th MAY at 2.30 p.m.

A free concert will be presented at the Marrickville Town Hall 2/10 Wurlitzer.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12th June - The Sydney Philharmonic Choir, with Eric Smith Organist, at Marrickville Town Hall, with Julie Maddon and Bruce Barry, will present a bright, classical concert.

22nd JUNE - Jim Patrick's organ party, at Longueville - various Organists.

28th JUNE - Ritchie Willis' Organ Party at Paddington - featuring Eric Smith.

JULY - Technical Meeting, details to be announced.

AUGUST - Quarterly Meeting, details to be announced.

CONCERT REVIEW - Geoffrey Day.

St. Columb's Church of England, West Ryde, owns a magnificent 2/8 Christie Theatre pipe Organ, and it was on Tuesday, 19th March, that the general public and T.O.S.A. Members were invited to attend a concert which was to consist of music befitting just such an instrument. Who else could have shown it off better than Alan Tranter, St. Columb's regular organist. It is all too seldom this instrument and organist are heard, so this night is one which will definitely be remembered.

Independence of hands and feet were well demonstrated in both march arrangements of "Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Anchors Aweigh/Sailor's Hornpipe". These complicated arrangements, I can assure you from personal experience, kept arranger, organist and audience on their toes. As a comparison to technical pieces such as "Polly" and "Runaway Rocking Horse", excellently executed, Grieg's "Nocturne", was an absolute gem. As far as choice of stops is concerned, Alan's taste is second to none. Undoubtedly, the highlight of the evening was an "Improvisation on a Dust Storm", which proved to be a masterly interpretation of the writer's thoughts, as well as musical suggestions.

Alan's relaxed approach towards his music, and especially to his audience, was most evident. His unique style of playing is so refreshing to listeners' ears after a long absence of intrinsic nuances that may be coaxed from the orchestral organ. Unfortunately many organists - past and present - fail in capturing this magical quality which was so evident in Alan's performance. Three years between performances such as this is much too long.

EDITORIAL.

During the month, the Victorians presented a concert at Moorabbin Town Hall, featuring a new rank of Post Horns (copied by an American contemporary organ builder on the original WurliTzer specifications) and boy, do they do a fine job down South! They had a turn up of about 1,000 people, including some from South Australia, Canberra and New South Wales. Three top-notch organists in Tony Fenelon, John Atwell and David Johnston gave a presentation which was second-to-none. The new additions to the 21 ranks not only blended well, were in perfect regulation and tune, but also added a dimension to the instrument which gave Tony the Detroit sound for his arrangements, John the Sydney Torch sound and David's remarkable arrangements and magnificent pedal-work showed the Post Horn rank to be a worthwhile investment. Perhaps a Post Horn rank could be substituted for a certain rank of damaged Krumets. What do you think???

TAPE RECORDINGS OF T.O.S.A. CONCERTS.

The following list of T.O.S.A. concerts is available for copying, and details and arrangements can be finalised by contacting Committeeman Ray Garrett.

- Vic Hammett - Convention 1970
- Tony Fenelon - Marrickville November, 1970.
- David Pitts - Marrickville Sunday, P.M.
- David Johnston - Convention, 1971.
- Tony Fenelon - Marrickville 2nd Anniversary
- Capitol Organ - Final Concert - Part 1
- " " - " " - Bill Schumacher, Ian Davies  
plus Eric Smith(1st.part)
- " " - " " - Part II + E.Smith  
(2nd part)
- Peter Held - Marrickville, February, 1972.
- Cecil Cranfield - Marrickville, April, 1972.
- Vic Hammett - Chatswood, August, 1973.

Tape copies of Society Concerts cost \$3.00 each (plus tape).

RECORDING TAPE

Both EMI and Capitol 2 Recording Tapes are now available to T.O.S.A. Members at EXTRA LOW discount prices by special arrangement with EMI. The following tapes are readily available from stock:

<u>EMI - Reel to Reel, Low Noise (Library Pack)</u>		
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All of the above tapes are obtainable through Ray Garrett  
at Society functions or by contacting him at home:  
2 Boundary Road, Epping - Phone 869.7247

RECORDINGS AVAILABLE.

To introduce their recordings to theatre organ admirers  
the Concert Recording Company have reduced the price of  
two of their best selling discs:-

Record 1 Gives a comparison of an electronic organ with  
two large Wurlitzer instruments the title is the "Wizard  
of the Organ" and features Billy Nalle playing the Senate  
Theatre-Detroit Theatre Organ Club 4 manual 34 rank one-  
of-a-kind Wurlitzer pipe organ and the Auditorium Theatre-  
Rochester Theatre Organ Society 4 manual, twenty two rank  
Wurlitzer Theatre Organ and an Allen Organ Company Theatre  
Organ.

Record 2 re-creates the golden era of the theatre organ,  
Its title is "The Sound of the Silents" featuring Lee  
Erwin playing the 4 manual 19 rank Wurlitzer in the  
Beacon Theatre in Manhattan. Both records are usual  
high quality with colour jackets etc. record two even  
includes a booklet about the organ, organist and the  
music. Each record is priced at \$3.00 which includes  
package and postage, the address and telephone number to  
contact for your copies is P.O.Box 108, Wentworthville,  
N.S.W. 2145, Aust. 631 6189.

## ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING RECENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

We would like to mention some items that have been discussed at recent committee meetings to obtain your ideas before final decisions are made. It is proposed that we hold meetings to discuss technical aspects of both pipe organ construction and electronic organ construction and the aspects and structure of music. If anybody has any suggestions for topics or people who have anything of this nature to impart would they please contact any committee member as soon as possible.

We are also seeking a new approach towards our Christmas Party and any member who may have suggestions along these lines please contact a committee member also.

At the last Committee meeting the interest free loans advanced to the society at the time of the purchase of the Capitol Organ were discussed and it was decided that they are to be repaid to members as soon as possible.

### STATE THEATRE ORGAN.

It is understood that the State Theatre 4/21 will be used during the forthcoming film festival. Tickets to the Annual Film Festivals are generally at a premium so anyone wishing to attend should make arrangements to do so immediately.

### CAPITOL ORGAN

Vice President, Tom Halloran, reported during the last Committee Meeting that the Hurstville Municipal Council's acoustic consultants report has been completed and is now to be considered by a sub-committee appointed comprising of Mr. T. Halloran, Mr. R. Garrett, and Mr. D. Russell.

### BIRTH NOTICE 4.4.74.

We are happy to have the task of advising that a new member of the Tooker-Lawson menage has put in an appearance and seems to be keeping the correct hours of that family having arrived at 3.30 a.m. Alan Robert is conditioning himself early to his organ working evenings. (We don't have a weight but guess he can't have been much heavier than Tenor C Vox - which we hope is not heard too loud, too often). All Well !!!

### JUNE DEADLINE

The deadline for all copy for T.O.S.A. News June Edition is 17th May so bear this in mind while you are madly scribbling information down for us.

## A HISTORY OF BRISBANE'S CITY ORGAN

Brisbane of the 1880's loved its organ recitals. Not that there were many organs to give recitals on - and those few were small and relatively restricted instruments - but there was an enthusiastic group of good organists ready and willing to make their contribution to the city's entertainment. The players and their audiences were, naturally, keen to have a large and comprehensive instrument to play and hear, but Brisbane had not even a large concert hall in which to instal an organ, if it had had an organ.

For several years, city fathers had been talking about building a new Town Hall to house an organ, but nothing eventuated. In despair, a group of music loving citizens decided to take matters into their own hands by forming a public subscription company to erect a concert hall with a first class organ. In June 1888, fire destroyed the wooden Exhibition building in Brisbane, and just by chance, one of the promoters of the hall plus organ committee was a member of the Queensland National Association Council. After several meetings, it was decided to incorporate a concert organ into the new Exhibition building. The Q.N.A. appointed two organists to draw up a specification for the new organ. It was decided to have an instrument of four manuals, forty four speaking stops and twelve couplers. A stop crescendo pedal as well as pneumatic pistons were to be provided. The console was to be detached at least ten feet from the organ. Such modern refinements for the 1890's were quite a rareity then, when electricity was still out of the question for organ action.

The contract was let to Henry Willis in England and so by Christmas 1892, Brisbane was finally blessed with a concert hall and organ. At the opening recital, proceedings began with W.T. Best's "Variations On the National Anthem". This created a great deal of confusion. After standing for the announcement of the theme, the audience was in a quandry when the variations began. To stand or to sit. However, after all the confusion, the concert went off without a hitch. By present day standards, the programme was extremely light, yet the reporter made a plea for less classical music and more popular. Encores were demanded for Annie Laurie.

Although the audiences during the next five years and undoubtedly the organists were having a ball, so to speak, the Q.N.A. wasn't. They were bankrupt. The Queensland Government took over the building and grounds and the National Bank possessed the organ. After this turn of events, the daily paper reported that an offer for it

had been made from Melbourne and also St. Johns Cathedral Brisbane was showing considerable interest. The report stated M. Auguste Weigand, Sydney City Organist, as saying- "It is one of the finest organs out of Europe. Out of the World's finest in 1900, it is placed twenty third". Mr. George Sampson, Brisbane's City Organist was instrumental in saving the organ by getting the Brisbane City Council to buy it. The government allowed the instrument to stay in the Exhibition Hall indefinitely until the new City Hall was to be built.

The organ did remain there until 1925 when the City Hall building was commenced. The problem arose of moving the organ to its new home and it was decided to modernize the action as well as enlarge the specification considerably. In consultation with the original builders, Henry Willis & Sons, and the city organist George Sampson, they drew up a new specification for a five manual and pedal organ which would be the second largest in Australia. Action was to be electro-pneumatic. The console was to be far detached from the body of the instrument and many improvements in coupling and swell box control were also taken into account. The main divisions now are: Pedal, Choir, Great, Swell, Orchestral, Solo enclosed and unenclosed. All other divisions except the Great and part of the pedal are enclosed. The new orchestral division is worth comment. Keen string tones were incorporated in it as well as tibias and a host of orchestral reeds including the French Horn. This stop is voiced so close that it is very difficult to detect that it is a reed stop at all. Also in the open division of the solo is a set of cathedral chimes and sets of Diapason Stentors and Harmonic Tubas at 16, 8 and 4 foot pitches voiced on 25 inch wind pressure.

Back in depression times of the 1930's, Wallace Kotter, one of the Wurlitzer's American demonstrators, put on a show with Ned Tyrell's Regent Theatre Orchestra entitled "banish Depression Blues". Admission was sixpence and went towards financial aid for those out of work. From all reports, Wallace was quite at home with a large Willis instead of a large Wurlitzer. This entertainment was provided for a couple of years every Sunday night.

All the original pipe work has been retained and the organ still continues to give good service and is in immaculate mechanical order. By present day standards of 1974, this organ is far behind the times in the purist's ideals as are the Melbourne Town Hall and the Sydney Town Hall organs. Willis's organs as well as many other British builders may be called Romantic, or Orchestral, but possibly no other school of organ building can produce the wealth of subtleties that these instruments are capable of.