

TOSA NEWS

November 2016
Volume 55 No.9

Price: \$2.00

**TOSA's World of Entertainment
brings you Australian International
keyboard musicians**

**Tony Fenelon & John Atwell
playing
The Mighty Wurlitzer**

Sunday 4th December 2016

2:00pm - 4:30pm

**Orion Centre Theatre
Campsie**

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Secretary

Craig Keller *secretary@tosa.net.au* 0418 484 798
7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

Treasurer

John Wall *treasurer@tosa.net.au* 9528 9158

Membership Inquiries

David & Margaret Badman (02) 4776 2192
PO Box 589 RICHMOND NSW 2753

Committee

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

John Shaw 9543 3112

Robert Gliddon *christieorg@bigpond.com*

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

Simon Ellis 0403 548 354

TOSA NEWS Editor

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 *editor@tosa.net.au*
P.O. Box A2322, Sydney South, NSW, 1235

Marrickville Players Convenor

John Batts 0420 424 103
Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)

Orion Players Convenor

Craig Keller 0418 484 798 phone or SMS

Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings)

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 before 8:0pm

Artist Liaison Officers

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122, John Shaw 9543 3112

Photography Barry Tooker 9744 1535

Publicity Officer Ernie Vale 0415 626 064
Printing by Ernie Vale & Graeme Costin

From the President



Greetings,

With 2016 fast drawing to a close, there are three particular items to which I wish to draw your attention.

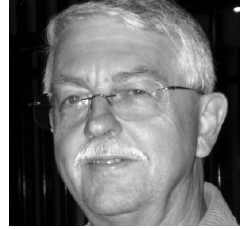
Firstly, in a few days time we will be back at Marrickville for our Christie "fundraiser" concert. Although to raise funds, the cost to attend is reduced. This in no way reflects on the ability of those taking part – rather that each is donating his time free of charge. Remember, bring your choice of nibbles – tea and coffee is free!

Secondly, our AGM is on Saturday 12th November, 2.00pm at St. Columb's Anglican Church, West Ryde. Transport is available from West Ryde Station by arrangement. In addition to the formalities, which will be kept brief, there will be photos of the chambers with an expert commentary and opportunity for questions. For those who wish closer inspection it will be possible to access the chambers in small groups. Please remember, this is your opportunity to hear about your Society and to ask questions. (It is noticeable that many of those who complain about some aspect of concerts or the Society, do not attend the AGM).

Thirdly, keep 4th December free for our Christmas concert with Tony and John.

Happy organising,
Geoff Brimley

Editorial



Hello Members, We look forward to see many of you at the Fundraiser concert at Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday 6th November. This is your first opportunity to hear the Marrickville Wurlitzer in concert this year. Member John Batts has been working with TOSA Member players to present a variety of music for your enjoyment. The MC for the day is Rod Blackmore who you all know from his web site www.theatreorgansaustralia.info

Chris Styles has done a great review of the September concert by Chris McPhee and Simon Ellis. It reminded me of the enjoyable variety of music played.

As you are aware the last issue of TOSA News was a combined September -October issue because your Editor went overseas on holiday for 5 weeks in mid September. Whilst in the USA I managed to visit the Byrd Theatre in Richmond Virginia and hear Bob Gullede play the original Wurlitzer organ installation there. I have included a brief overview of the visit in this issue.

I look forward to a good roll up at the AGM to keep you up to date with Society happenings and give you the opportunity to chat with the Executive & Committee members.

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

Member News

Vale Bill Howle

Member Bill Howle passed away 9th September 2016.

Vale Rod Bendix

TOSA SA advise of the sudden death on August 7th of Member Rod Bendix, long time Treasurer of TOSA (Victoria) and a member of their Concert

Committee. Rod also held the position of Treasurer of the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society in Victoria. He was a regular at TOSA Conventions and attended the TOSA South Australia Birthday Celebrations in 2015.

From President of TOSA ACT Inc

I take this opportunity to thank all our TOSA NSW and TOSA VIC friends and helpers who made the Canberra David Gray concert the great success that it was! The night was just one stand-out occasion and you were very much part of that! Many thanks again!

Kingsley Herbert
President TOSA (ACT) Inc.

It's amazing how many people see you on TV. I did my first television show a month ago, and the next day five million television sets were sold. The people who couldn't sell theirs threw them away.

Bob Hope

To Watch Out for

Office Bearers & Committee for the year 2016-2017

Members are advised that the current Office Bearers and Committee Members have been elected unopposed for 2016-2017. There is no need for a ballot at the AGM.

Please come along to the Annual General Meeting in the church to hear reports of the years activities.

Following the meeting there will be a showing of some DVDs. There will also be the opportunity to have a look in the chambers to see the significant progress. For those who prefer not to climb the ladder to the chambers there will be a picture show of work completed to date.

If any member wishing to attend the AGM at West Ryde Anglican Church requires transport from West Ryde Station to the church, please phone President Geoff Brimley on 6351 3122 or email president@tosa.net.au before Saturday 12th November.

Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

**Members' Playing Dates
The Orion Theatre Campsie
2nd Thursday Morning
10:30am to 1:30pm**

**November 10th
December 8th**

Convenor is
Craig Keller on 0418484798

**Marrickville Town Hall
4th Monday afternoon/evening
at 2:20pm to 9:00pm**

**Monday 28th November
No Play on December 26
Public Holiday**

Players and listeners welcome.
Please contact John Batts
0420424103 or Neil Palmer on
9798 6742 after 7:00pm
to confirm availability

**Theatre Organ Society of Australia
(NSW Division)(TOSA)
Presents**

A fund-raising concert

in aid of ongoing maintenance for
the Society's theatre pipe organs.

Selected TOSA NSW volunteer members will be playing short
segments with a variety of tunes and styles.

Seating will be cabaret style with
six to eight chairs per table - *see the seating plan.*

**You can book seats by phoning Theo Langenberg
0410 626 131 before 8pm please**

Unfortunately Trybooking sales will not be
available for this concert

**BYO snacks and drinks
Free coffee and tea will be available.**

Marrickville Town Hall

Sunday 6 November 2pm

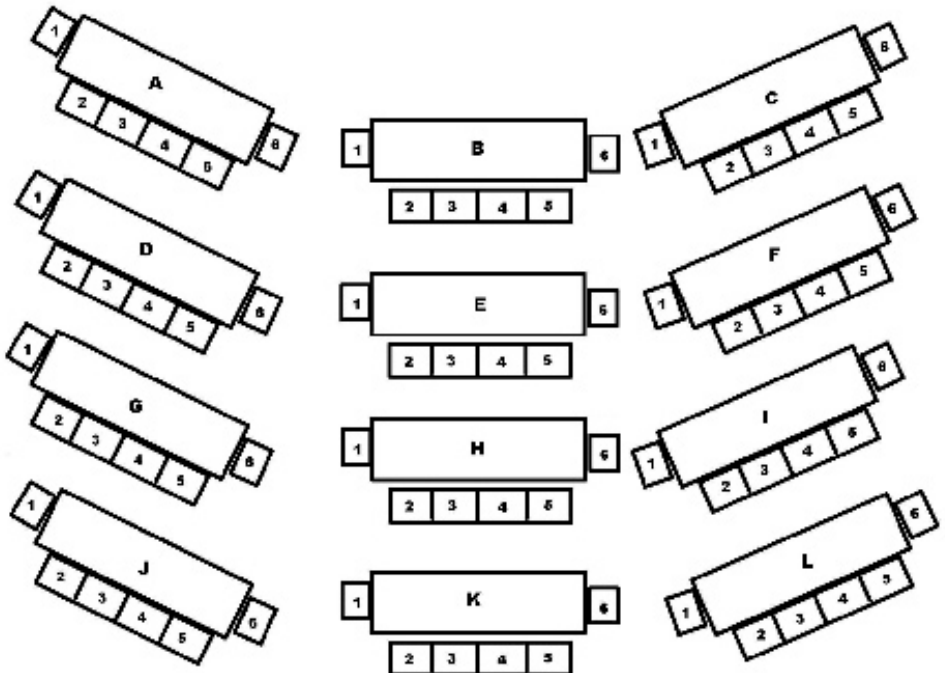
ALL tickets \$15 at the door

This Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ was first installed in the Prince Edward Theatre, Castlereagh Street, Sydney in 1924. With the closure of the theatre and to ensure its preservation, the organ was purchased by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) in 1965 and over a three-year period was restored and installed in Marrickville Town Hall. The organ contains 827 pipes ranging in size from approximately 5 metres to around the size of a pencil and represent the various tonal families of an orchestra: brass, woodwind, strings. The pipes are divided between two "chambers" on both sides of the stage behind decorative grilles.

Also in the chambers are real percussion instruments including xylophone, drums, cymbals, tambourine, castanets. Sound effects include a bird whistle, vintage car horn and horses hooves as theatre organs were originally designed to accompany silent films.



SEATING PLAN FUNDRAISER

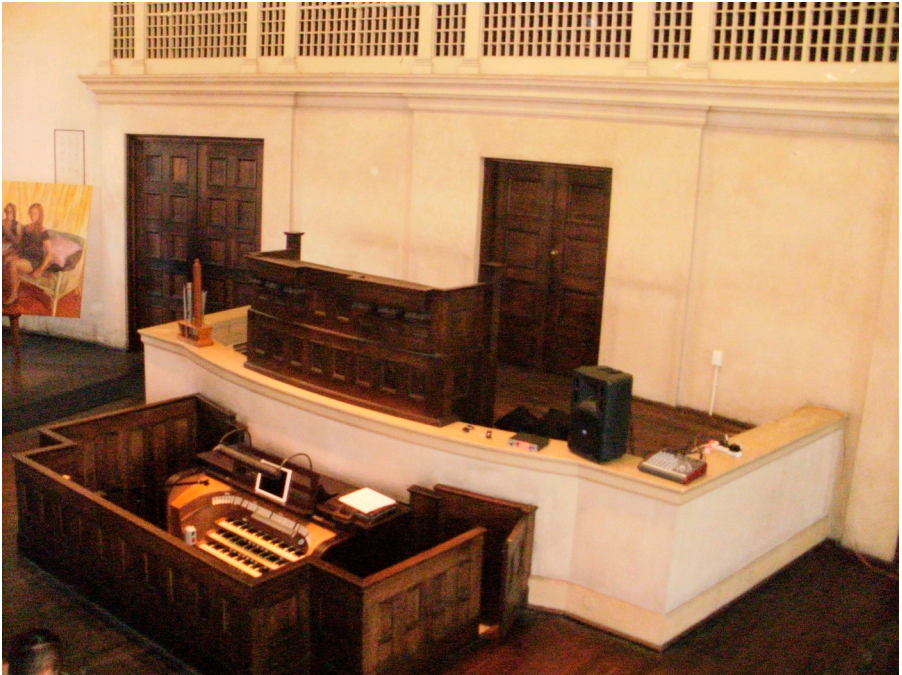


Members visit to the magnificent J E Dodd/Whitehouse organ in the former First Church of Christian Scientist, Corner of Forbes and Liverpool Sts., Darlinghurst Sunday 23rd October

Around 30 people comprising members of OMSS and TOSA attended a most interesting afternoon at this venue. Robert Fox had arranged the visit on behalf of the Organ Music Society of Sydney and gave us a history of First Church of Christian Scientist in Sydney and of the building and organ. The organ chambers were designed into the building and when the organ had been installed and the building completed it was virtually impossible to remove any of the ranks and hardware for restoration.

President of OMSS, Greg Cunningham, welcomed everyone followed by a tour of the organ ranks and a short performance by Robert Fox. There were many comments about the good quality and excellent sound of the pipe work. OMSS Secretary, Geoff Lloyd, then called on those present who would like to have a short play on the organ for 5 minutes each. He recorded about 12 players who wished to have a go including some TOSA members. TOSA member, Kevin Clancy commented that TOSA had included a visit to the church in it's Convention programs in the 1960s.





The console is hidden in a small pit with the organ behind the grills above.

Show & Membership Prices

	All Artists
Non-members	\$35
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	\$30
Family 2 Adults incl 1 child up to 19 yrs age	\$65
TOSA Members	\$25

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status

All Children FREE accompanied by an Adult

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$22 per person

First time Adult \$15 cash by completed Voucher at Box Office

Annual Membership Fees post June 30th 2016:

\$40.00 for Full membership, Family \$60 and

\$30.00 for Pensioner Concession, Interstate or Overseas \$40.

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 membership@tosa.net.au

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



Lowry Symphonic Citation Theatre Organ Console

Stripped of it's heart (amplifier, pedal and electronics module), this console could be used for a virtual organ, a roll top desk or just as a nice piece of furniture. It comes complete with registration tabs, buttons sliders, keyboards (non-midi), speakers, wiring harnesses and a technician's manual.

Late 19th Century Estey Reed Organ

Its very old, plain and dirty, having been stored in the garage for 10 years and under a school for a decade or two beforehand. It may even have some little critters inside. But everything works! It could be stripped for its parts or done up into a nice piece of antique furniture or it could be painstakingly restored.

**These treasures are free. But any
donations towards a TOSA project
would be appreciated.
They are both very heavy.**

**For pick up only from Kings Langley
in Sydney's North West.**

**Enquiries Dennis Clarke
ph (02) 9674 4519**

**TOSA Presents
Australia's International Artists
By popular choice of TOSA Members**

Tony Fenelon & John Atwell



**play the
Christmas Concert**

Sunday 4th December 2016,

2:00pm – 4:30pm

**Orion Centre Theatre
155 Beamish St., Campsie**

For the best reserved seats you can book securely on trybooking.com by going to www.tosa.net.au then Events, click on the Artists name/show title then scroll down to buy your ticket, click on it, select your preferred seat/s and complete the purchase.

Visa & Mastercard accepted.

Alternatively, Phone Theo Langenberg on 0410 626 131 before 8pm

Tony Fenelon & John Atwell

Tony's insatiable interest in lighter music and a love of the majestic sound of the Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra (Theatre Organ) led to his "other" career, leading to his appointment in 1965 as the resident organist at Melbourne's then prestigious Regent Theatre.

Tony made his first tour of the United States back in 1969, and has returned at least 30 plus times. He has performed at some of the most prestigious theatre organ venues in the U.S. including, the Oakland Paramount, the Ohio Theatre, Columbus, San Sylmar, the Sanfillipo residence, the Orpheum Phoenix, the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Seattle Paramount with **John Atwell**, and at the Dickinson High School Kimball to mention a few.

In 1999, **Tony** returned to his old stamping ground to be featured in the Inaugural Concert of the Regent Theatre Melbourne's new Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. This concert was an overwhelming success, drawing an unprecedented record attendance since the civic reopening of the Regent. In 2014 **Tony** returned to the Regent again with Richard Hills in presenting the "Tale of Two Organs" to a very appreciative audience of some 1,500 people from Melbourne and interstate.

John Atwell receives repeat invitations to play concerts at theatre organ venues around Australia both as a solo performer, as well as in piano/organ duo combination with his long-time colleague and friend, **Tony Fenelon**.

John has also taken his talents overseas on many occasions, playing performances in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom Europe and New Zealand.

John's musical activities have not been limited to theatre organs. He is an experienced classical organist and pianist. In 2012 John accepted the invitation of the City Organist, Robert Ampt, to play a lunchtime performance on the Sydney Town Hall Grand Organ and was very well received by the large audience. **John** has performed overseas on many occasions in recent years playing theatre organ in Europe, the UK and USA. Make a date to come and enjoy two of Australia's outstanding keyboard musicians.

Tickets : \$ 35; Concession \$ 30; Members \$25

Family ie 2 Adults including 1 or more children \$65

Adult Group of 10 or more \$22/person;

First time patrons \$15 by Voucher at the Box Office

Students up to 25 years Free on confirmation of student status.

Review of TOSA concert Sunday 4th September, 2016 – Chris McPhee and Simon Ellis

What a joy to be back in the auditorium of the Orion Centre now that it has had a tasteful paint job which included highlighting the art deco features and also the removal of those metres and metres of tulle! Also a joy to be hearing organ pipes (of the theatre organ variety!) after some months being kept busy in the Highlands, and unable to get to TOSA concerts. Who said retirement means a break from lots of work. Just about all of my retired friends, like me, wonder how we fitted work in before we retired!

Both artists are known to me – Chris McPhee for having arranged access to the Capri organ when I was visiting Adelaide some twenty or so years ago and who I recall Tony Fenelon first introduced to us at the Orion a long time ago. I thought then that Chris showed great talent with the instrument. Simon Ellis who lives a short drive from me in the Highlands and who (as I have mentioned in a past review) has given me many fine tips and advice on playing the theatre organ. This may have increased my limited talents ever so slightly (not Simon's fault that I am a slow, lazy learner!) and Simon's vast experience in theatre organ technique has been a joy to behold and enjoy at his own magnificent George Wright Allen 4/34 enlarged with midi to a 4/72.



Chris McPhee reminds us it is Fathers Day

Chris opened the programme with a delightful bright *Powder your face with sunshine*. Chris then reminded us it was Father's Day and of his family, his wife with us at the concert, and two daughters back in Adelaide. Chris also mentioned the well known Adelaide organist Knight Barnett who started his career in Sydney so may well have known the Orion Wurlitzer in its previous incarnation at the Capitol Theatre Sydney.

Eric Coates music then next and no, not one of his famous tunes eg Knightsbridge March, but *Birdsongs at Eventide*, a gentle Coates composition. Who now recalls Floyd Kramer from our "much younger" days? One of those many novelty "brassy" numbers of the period - *Java*. Next, something that I can relate to as a sometimes church organist, a selection of hymns, though these were more in the gospel style and included, *In the garden*, *Great is Thy faithfulness*, and *Amazing Grace* [with a bagpipe interlude. I hate bagpipes (a long term malady of mine) but if we have to have them, let's have them imitated on the Wurlitzer!]. Nice choosing of registrations for these which all sounded great when played on our Wurli.

Chris took a break here and Simon took to the console. From the 1972 movie of the same name starring Liza Minelli, we heard *Cabaret*, a great opener with a big finish showing the rich sounds of the 3/17 in the Orion Centre.



Simon Ellis introduces a Richard Rogers number

Why not now some music of Richard Rogers? Simon obliged with *Spring is here* (played in the style of that great Radio City Music Hall organist Ashley Miller, and *It might as well be Spring* (all very well if you believe Spring commences on 1st September!) It might as well be Spring comes from the more than once made movie State Fair but I'm only (just) old enough to remember the 1962 version starring Pat Boone.

A favourite composer of mine next – Ray Noble – and probably his best known number, written in 1938, *Cherokee*, started at a gentle pace with a jazz tempo in the middle. Next a number I first came across on an LP of the San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer – *Slow Poke*. As Simon related, our English friends didn't know what the title meant so it became "Slow Coach" in the UK. It was played on the recording mentioned above by Everett Nourse and I've tried to mimic it without success over the years. A pretty little tune and Simon did it justice, also utilising the piano attached to the console.



Chris returned following this to give us the well overplayed on radio in its heyday *I remember you* and the version that we will hum in our minds till we go to the grave was sung by Frank Ifield. Actually, it was nice to hear it again sans Frank and what better interpretation than on a Wurlitzer with Chris in charge adding some percussion. We heard from Chris that George Michael also

recorded this number but I am not a GM fan so haven't heard it in its later version.

Thinking on films again and Chris took us back to 1938 (well, not me as I'm just a little younger than that!) for the novelty number as sung by Shirley Temple, *At the codfish ball*. Right then up to the 1990's and music from the 1994 Italian film, "Il Postino" (the Postman) played in a dramatic style by Chris.

Last before Interval Chris entertained us with music from the 1936 Fred and Ginger movie "Swing Time", *Bojangles of Harlem*, modelled on the George Wright arrangement and superbly interpreted. Music for the movie was written by the inimitable Jerome Kern.



Simon opened the second half of the programme with the *Flying theme from E T*, a very familiar John Williams composition from the 1982 movie I was not greatly enamoured of, though, then again, to just hear the atmospheric music is enough for me without having to sit through the sugar-sweet movie! The Tchaikovsky 1869 composition *None but the lonely heart*, was a delight to listen to played in symphonic style by Simon. Right up to 1948 next before dropping back to 1941. The John Benson Brooks composition made famous by Della Reece, *You came a long way from St Louis*. Della according to my sources is still with us at 85 but not at all well these days. (Who of us at 85 will be operating on all cylinders??). 1941 brought the Duke Ellington hit sung by many famous names – Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and

Nina Simone to name just three, *I got it bad and that ain't good*, and I liked Simon's interpretation.

Camille Saint-Saens has an almost unpronounceable surname (unless your French – and in that respect the name of our Mittagong property Chinoiserie has to be spoken by a French speaking person to sound just right). Saint-Saens 1886 composition *Carnival of the Animals* is a masterpiece and especially the *Danse Macabre*. This is a long piece and one that an organist has to put a great deal of preparation into. I know Simon did. The music as Simon interpreted it reflected very much the intention of the composer and is an excellent piece for the wide ranging capabilities of the Wurlitzer as a Unit Orchestra.

Chris then re-entered taking to the console for the last few items of the programme commencing with another novelty number - *Baby's Birthday Party*. Next - *If I loved you* from the 1945 stage musical of Rodgers and Hammerstein "Carousel" later to become a hit movie in 1956 starring (as many of you will remember, Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones). Last of this trio of numbers was the Gracie Fields hit of 1938 *The biggest Aspidistra in the world*. (I must check if there are any aspidistras in Chinoiserie's garden!)

Many a tribute has been made since the very recent passing of Gene Wilder and of course the movie he is most well known for - *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. The beautiful composition given delightful treatment by Chris *Pure Imagination* reminded us of Wilder's talents. Chris's last concert item was the 1932 composition *Granada* and this old warhorse was given a good work over. One good thing of not being able to get to all organ concerts is that such tunes do sound refreshing if one hasn't heard them for a long time which was the case here for me. Many the voices that have sung this famous tune, among them Mario Lanza, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti.

The audience decided that both artists deserved an encore and first Simon returned to the console and played the Cole Porter melody *Every time we say goodbye* and Chris played appropriately for *Fathers Day, O my Papa*.

So nice to have the ears stretched with a most enjoyable afternoon of theatre organ again. Thanks very much to Chris and Simon for all their hard work in providing us with a most entertaining afternoon's music.

Chris Styles

TOSA NSW Division Editor visits the Byrd Theatre in Richmond Virginia USA

On my recent holiday to the USA visiting relations in Virginia I had the opportunity, thanks to my wife's cousin's family, to pay a visit to Richmond Virginia and the Byrd Theatre. On the recommendation of TOSA Secretary, Craig Keller, I asked cousin Diana if we could go down to Richmond on a Saturday to not only visit the theatre but to hear the Wurlitzer played by Bob Gullidge every Saturday. Diana was happy to oblige and a group of family motored on down.



The Poe Film Festival was in recognition of Edgar Allen Poe, a local identity. The guy behind me decided to get in the act of me pointing to the theatre sign board - all in good fun. It was Saturday afternoon and there are a lot of cafe's and bars along the street near the theatre.



Bob Gullidge met us at 6:00pm near the box office. Bob said he learned to play Theatre organ on this Wurlitzer



This Wurlitzer is an original installation running on the original relays. The chambers are located above the proscenium and speak straight into the auditorium.

WOW!!!! what a beautiful sound.

Bob advised that they now have an organ builder looking after the instrument and have a concert once a year specifically to raise funds for maintenance.

Bob asked if I would like to have a play and took me down to the organ bench. I quickly advised him I am not a player however agreed to have a go if he would set some stops. A poor attempt at playing Alley Cat convinced Bob that I should let him play whilst we listened to the marvellous sound of the Wurli.

Bob obliged by playing a range of music for 30 minutes prior to opening time at 7:00pm

Thank you Bob for your kind demonstration of one of the best sounding Wurlitzers I have ever heard.



TOSA NSW DIVN Inc Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 12th November 2016 at 2:00pm
St Columb's Anglican Church,
Cnr Dickson Ave., & Bellevue Ave.,
West Ryde**

**This is the location of the TOSA (NSW)
Christie Cinema Organ**

**Please come along to hear about your Society and see
the significant progress on installation of the Christie**

**Afternoon Tea will be provided following the meeting
with a chance to mingle with members and chat to the
Executive and Committee who have all been elected
unopposed for the ensuing year.**

**You have the opportunity to visit the organ chambers
in small groups or if you don't wish to climb the ladder
there will be photos of the organ chambers shown on
the screen in the church.**

**It is proposed to also show some DVD footage of the
Prince Edward Theatre and other items of interest.**

**If any member requires transport from West Ryde
Station to the church, please phone President Geoff
Brimley on 6351 3122 or email president@tosa.net.au
before November 12th.**

Members Diary

Saturday 12th November 2:00pm AGM

**St Columb's Anglican Church, West Ryde
Home of the Christie Cinema Organ**

**Sunday 6th November 2016
2:00pm - 4:30pm**

TOSA Fundraiser Marrickville Wurlitzer

Marrickville Town Hall
see details elsewhere in this issue

**Book your reserved seats by contacting
Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 Before 8:00pm please**

**Sunday 4th December 2016
2:00pm - 4:30pm
Orion Centre Theatre
Tony Fenelon & John Atwell
Christmas Concert**

Radio FINE MUSIC 102.5 "Colours of the King" (program of the Organ Music Society of Sydney) 2nd Saturday of each month, 6pm till 7pm
***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.theatreorgansaustralia.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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Volume 55 No.9

**PRINT
POST
100004836**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

Official Publication of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

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SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235 www.tosa.net.au **AGM Saturday 12th November**

