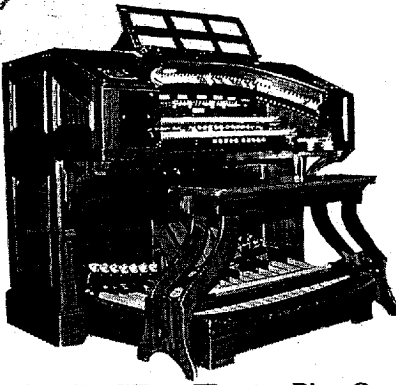
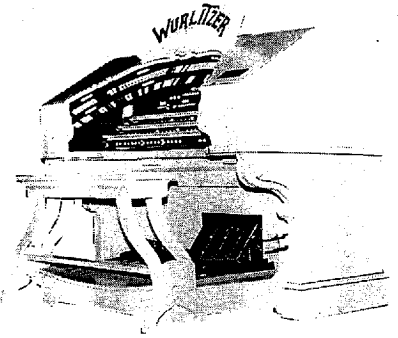


DECEMBER, 1996



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NEWS



3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

with **TONY FENELON** and **JOHN ATWELL** on Sunday, 8th December

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

with **CHRIS McPHEE** at the
Orion Centre on Sunday,
2nd February,
1997

*Season's
Greetings*
to all our
TOSA Members



Volume 35
Issue 12
PRINTED BY TOSA

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083
Print Post Approved PP255003/01823

Price
\$1.00

TOSA NEWS

DECEMBER, 1996

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

For the smooth running of TOSA, please contact the right person :

General Business - **SECRETARY**
Ticket Bookings - **TICKET SECRETARY**
Membership, Renewals, Change of Address -
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - **EDITOR**

* DIRECTORY *



PATRONS:

Ian Davies
Canterbury Councillor, Ald. John Gorrie

PRESIDENT:

Robert Gliddon

VICE PRESIDENTS:

John Shaw 9759 5825
Neil Palmer 9798 6742

SECRETARY:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

TREASURER:

Geoff Brimley (047) 87 1431

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, 2134

COMMITTEE:

Barry Tooker 9744 1535
Colin Groves 9745 2417
John Parker
Paul Luci (043) 74 1108
Peter Harding 9629 2257
Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048) 411 616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 9745 2417 (phone or fax)
P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 2134

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon

CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer 9798 6742

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

George Newell 9750 0362
(Mon - Fri: 10am - 6pm)

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Barry Tooker (Home) 9744 1535
(Work) 9550 5400

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 9759 5825

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Ritchie Willis 9580 3581

WORLD WIDE WEB HOME PAGE -TOSA (NSW)

<http://www.usyd.edu.au/~sgroves/tosa/home>



COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

Monday	2	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
Sunday	8	at 2.00pm	Tony Fenelon and John Atwell Christmas Concert Orion Centre Campsie

JANUARY, 1997

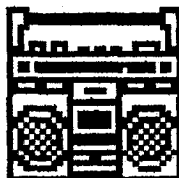
Monday	6	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
--------	---	-----------	-------------------

FEBRUARY

Sunday	2	at 2.00pm	Chris McPhee Concert Orion Centre Campsie
Monday	3	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting

MARCH

Sunday	2	at 2.00pm	Concert Orion Centre Campsie
Monday	3	at 7.30pm	Committee Meeting
Friday	28 - 31		National Easter Convention Hobart, Tasmania



REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA FM - 103.2

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

The end of another year and time to farewell our President, **Cliff Bingham**, who has done such a great job of uniting, encouraging and presiding over the progress of our Society. Thank you, **Cliff**, for your work for, and guidance of, the Society during the past three, very successful years.

Our new President, **Robert Gliddon**, is probably well known to nearly everyone because of his long-time association with **TOSA** and for all the work he has put into the Society in so many ways - committee member, printer of **TOSA News**, raffle-ticket seller, Convention organiser, technical adviser on organ matters, etc., etc. It is very fitting that such a faithful and hard-working member has the distinction of leading our Society as he already has the respect of all those who know him and his untiring efforts for **TOSA's** benefit. Welcome to the top spot!

Those of you who admire the **Sydney Town Hall's** grand organ, but who are not too interested in heavy classical programs, will have the chance to hear it played in a lighter mode. **Robert Goode** has recently made an interesting CD on it which includes popular, light classical pieces and even a touch of jazz. More information on page 5.

Best wishes,
Colin Groves

Membership Notes...

So it's end of year again! Doesn't seem 12 months since the last one, does it?

As of this month you can offer your friends a six-month membership for half the printed fee. This will take them through to 30th June, 1997. That would make a good Christmas gift for someone interested in our kind of music. How about it?

Anyway, may I wish you a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Walter Pearce



From The President

Christmas only several weeks away - seems hard to believe, doesn't it? Now is the appropriate time not only to assess 1996, but even more importantly to look forward to the coming year.

Firstly, I feel it is most important to acknowledge the work of our out-going President, **Cliff Bingham**. During the last three years, **Cliff** has presided over both your Society and the committee in a most able manner. Keeping any society on course and continuing to progress is no mean feat - keeping everyone happy is almost impossible; however, for the most part, **Cliff** has been able to achieve this. Thanks once again, **Cliff**. It is to be hoped that your absence from the administration of the Society is only a temporary one.

Looking into the new year, your committee has already planned many exciting events which will be truly worthy of your support. In addition to the concert scene, we hope to schedule more events where the membership can socialize together in a setting less formal than our regular concerts. In years gone by, parties conducted by members in their own homes were very popular - anyone able and willing to assist in this way is invited to contact any committee member.

Now the re-building of the **Marrickville Wurlitzer** is complete, attention will return to the **Orion**

instrument, which will be further upgraded with additional pipework which the Society already owns. These additions will make the **Orion Wurlitzer** even more tonally spectacular than it presently is.

Our 2 manual, 8 rank **Christie Unit Organ**, originally from the **Gordon Theatre** and latterly **St Colomb's Church, West Ryde**, is still in need of a home. Your committee has decided that the search for a suitable venue is on in earnest. If you believe you know of a suitable location - be it a public hall, or a church, or other location - please notify a committee member as soon as possible, as we are already checking out possible sites. We hope to have a location arranged before 1997 is over.

The Society has just leased a new **Canon** photocopier and we trust that the improvement in the quality of **TOSA News** will be noticeable. As this machine automatically collates and staples the magazine, this will relieve **Mary** and **Arthur Hall** of this most irksome task. They will however continue to fold and address and mail **TOSA News**. Many thanks to both **Mary** and **Arthur** for their long-term involvement in the production of the newsletter.

Lastly, may I take the opportunity on behalf of the executive and committee to wish you all a **Very Happy Christmas** and a **Wonderful New Year**.

Robert Gliddon
President

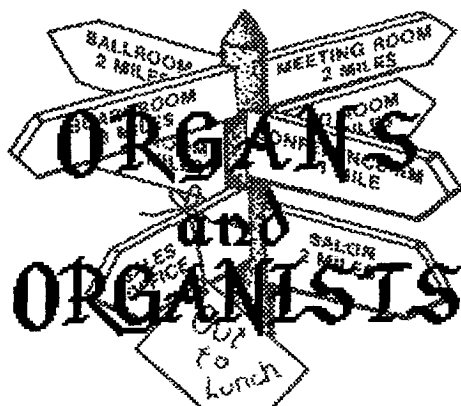
Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is pleased to welcome the following new members and wish them a long and happy stay with the **Society**:

Trish Deen - Sutherland
Barry Korendijk - Blackheath
Edward McGuckin - Hurstville
Warren Mossman - Eden Hills
Howard Russell-McKern - Leura
Ellen Williams - Five Dock

Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

The deadline for each edition of *TOSA News* is the 12th of the preceding month

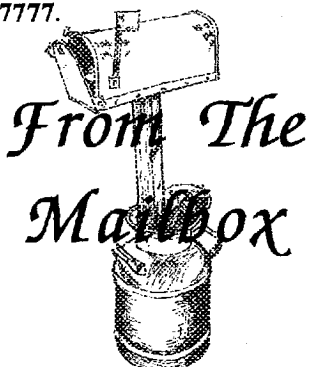


NEWS FROM ALL OVER

Opera House Organ

If you wish to hear the Sydney Opera House's Concert Hall organ, you will have the chance during the run of the show, "Christmas at the Opera House". The organist is our immediate past president, **Cliff Bingham**.

The show, based on *Treasure Island* this year, runs from Sunday 15th December until Tuesday 24th, with performances at 6.30pm every day and matinées at 2.30pm on a few of those days. Bookings and information from the Box Office of the Opera House, on **9250 7777**.



Joy Geraedts of Caringbah sends a kind word of praise to the security parking personnel hired by TOSA to watch over the cars of our patrons' while they are attending our concerts at both Campsie and Marrickville :

31/10/96

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the arranging of the security parking at our "great" concerts. I feel sure that it must give other drivers, as well as myself, great comfort to know that our vehicles are being protected whilst we, our families and friends are enjoying ourselves.

Thank you for including the parking at Marrickville also in your security cover. It was great to see them there last Sunday.

With thanks,
(Mrs) **J.A.Geraedts**

Don't Forget!
CHRIS McPHEE

Orion Centre Campsie
Sunday, 2nd February, 1997
at 2.00pm

FOR SALE

YAMAHA E 70 Console

Organ - Walnut Finish
This instrument has been meticulously maintained and is in showroom condition.

It is equipped with 2 x 61 manuals and 25 note pedalboard.

A rare opportunity to own a unique instrument of very high quality.

Priced at \$2,900.00

Phone : **9666 3282**

If unanswered, leave message on answerphone.

WANTED

A Home for two SCHOBER

Theatre and Studio Organs

Both in Need of Tender, Loving Care

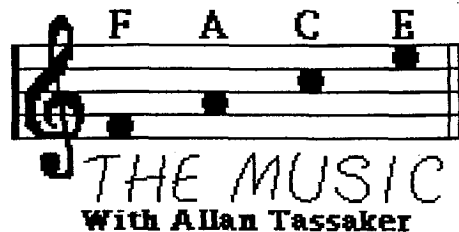
Technical Data and some Spare Parts Included

Free to anyone willing to come and collect them in

Gundaroo, 2620, NSW

Phone : **Roger Tuck on**

(06) 236 8185



"My organ is a collector's item," says **Allan**.

"Are you sure?" we asked.

"Quite sure," says **Allan**. "I'm behind with my payments and the bailiff is coming to collect it anytime now!"

IF YOU WANT TO BUY OR SELL A THEATRE, CONSOLE, OR SPINET ORGAN OR EVEN ANTIQUE MODELS, CONTACT : MANNING ORGAN SOCIETY ORGAN SEARCH FIRST.

WE CAN HELP

Phone/Fax (065) 531 431

Manning Organ Society

15 Burdett Street, Tinonee 2430

FOR SALE

YAMAHA G2

WALNUT GRAND PIANO

One Owner

Excellent Condition

Beautiful Tone

Must Sell As Soon As Possible

\$12,000 o.n.o.

Phone : **04411517813**

FOR SALE

HAMMOND SPINET

Electronic Organ

Model T-582-A

One Octave Pedalboard

Rhythms, plus Stool and

External Leslie Speaker

(700 series)

Good Condition

Price : \$950.00

Phone : **(02) 9387 7130**

Also "From the Mailbox" comes this letter from David Devenport, about the death of a very famous, organ-world personality, Ethel Smith, and including an historic biography of her, taken from the cover of a music album which is now at least 50 years old.

Double Bay

I've heard that the popular organist Ethel Smith passed away recently, at the age of 86. I'm sure she did much to inspire many of us when we were learning organ and I believe she deserves some sort of tribute in theatre organ journals.

I enclose a picture and biography of this fine player to see if you would like to include it in our journal.

It is from the cover and first page of a album of music published in the 1940's (or 50's) after the picture *Bathing Beauty*, starring Red Skelton, Esther Williams and Ethel Smith, first came out. This film was the first in which *Tico-Tico* was first featured.

All the best,
Sincerely,

David Devenport

Biography of Ethel Smith

As American as her name, Ethel Smith is considered the foremost exponent of the Samba, Rhumba and other Latin American rhythms on the Hammond Organ. Nimble finger action plus a native sense of the exotic rhythms mark her musical interpretations of Latin American music as perfection itself.

Born in Pittsburg, Pa., Miss Smith was educated at Carnegie Tech. Institute where she studied German, Spanish, French, plus organ and piano in her music curriculum. After graduation she got a job playing the piano in the pit for a Shubert show and toured with them for twenty-eight weeks. This was her first taste of commercial musical life and she loved it. She was the only woman ever to play in the pit of a musical show.

It wasn't until she reached California on a personal appearance tour that she once again took up the study of the organ. Until this time, there was no organ made that could



admit to her fine finger action and speed. It seems that one day she had been asked to accompany a singer at one of the Hollywood Studios and she noticed an electric organ, the first of its kind put out by the Hammond Company. She was fascinated by it and managed to visit the studio daily to practise on it. At that time she was sent to Florida with a trio and one of the Hammond dealers permitted her to practise on the organ, using her as a demonstrator of the fine qualities of the instrument.

Her knowledge of classical music and her fine understanding of the instrument convinced her that the exotic music was best interpreted on an organ, because of its depth of tone and shading. She decided to make a study of it.

Ethel made three different trips to Cuba and the South American countries and lived among the people of those countries for several months - studying their customs, their languages and their music. Then followed recognition with a highly successful engagement at the *Copacabana* in Rio.

It was while she was playing here that an executive of a tobacco company asked her to return to New York for a commercial radio show. She was featured on the *Hit Parade* for a year until Hollywood beckoned.

She had earned for herself the reputation of South America's own artist because of her fine understanding

of their music. It was in Rio de Janeiro that she added Portuguese to the other languages she already knew and because of her linguistic ability, Ethel became a central figure in Diplomatic circles. Many of the American news correspondents and commentators sought her out as an interpreter and sometime good-will ambassador, since she understood the people so well,

Her trip back to the States through submarine-infested waters was well-rewarded, since she found recognition in her own country. This music, never before heard on any type of organ, is one of the best mediums of good-will that can be found to give the world a better understanding.

Now one of the most popular featured artists in the film world, Miss Smith's first picture for MGM was *Bathing Beauty*. This was followed by *Easy to Wed* and *Twice Blessed* for the same studios and *George White's Scandals* for RKO. Her obvious position as an outstanding performer of Latin American melodies led to her appearance in Disney's *Carnival*, with Donald Duck as her leading man. After more than a year's absence, Ethel was invited to make a return appearance for four weeks on the Saturday night *Hit Parade* at a figure ten times greater than the amount which she originally received. During this visit to New York she also realised resounding success in her first theatre engagement at the Capitol Theatre on Broadway.

A popular recording artist, Miss Smith has made discs for Decca of many of these South American tunes which she has introduced to North American audiences.

Her favourite sport and hobby is golf. She started to play at the age of sixteen at the Municipal links in Pittsburgh and now plays in the low eighties. She had coaching from Jimmy Grossen, Gene Sarazen and Willie Coggin and has played almost every course in the United States and Latin American countries.

In private life Miss Smith is the wife of Mr Ralph Bellamy, the famous stage and screen star, whose enthusiasm for Ethel's repertory has led him to become a proficient performer on several native percussion instruments.

- *TOSA (NSW) has its own page on the World Wide Web on the Internet, which can be read by anyone connected to the Internet anywhere in the world. In fact, it was the first theatre organ web page in the world to appear, but it has been followed since by many other theatre organ pages. On this page you can see the format for the title page of TOSA's Home Page - by clicking with the computer's mouse on anything that is underlined (and brightly coloured in the original) you can call up the corresponding information. On the following pages there is an explanation of the "Internet" and some examples of information to be found on other international, theatre organ society's web pages.*

THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA(NSW)'S

HOME PAGE

The TOSA(NSW) WWW Page!!!

Welcome to the Theatre Organ Society of Australia's(NSW Division) WWW page. The following is a list of where you can go from this page.

Also, this page is dedicated totally to the New South Wales Division of TOSA. So any reference to TOSA is actually TOSA(NSW). I do not know of pages for any of the other divisions in Australia, so I would appreciate it if any one could enlighten me concerning this. If anybody from the other divisions intends to start a page (or already has one up) please e-mail me at sgroves@extro.ucc.su.oz.au

COMING EVENTS

TOSA News Online


Click on this heading to see some of the articles from the current TOSA News. TOSA News is the monthly journal of the NSW division of TOSA and contains news from around the world, as well as from here in Australia concerning theatre organs.

Click on the following to see other pages...

- [What is a Theatre Organ?](#)
 - [What TOSA\(NSW\) is all about.](#)
 - [Other organ-related internet sites.](#)
 - [Click here to send me mail.](#) : If you want to make a contribution/suggestion regarding this page, want to find out more information about TOSA, or anything else you want.
-

The Organs That TOSA(NSW) Owns

- [Orion Centre Campsie's Wurlitzer](#)
 - [Marrickville Town Hall's Wurlitzer](#)
-

	<p>REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO 2CBA-FM 103.2 EVERY MONDAY AT 9:00PM FOR "THEATRE ORGAN HIGHLIGHTS" Presented by Chris Styles</p>
---	---

Last Modified: 2nd July 1996.

Created: 3rd August 1995

This page is run by [Sacha Groves](#). To find out about me click [here](#). This will point you in the right direction to see the other pages I run!

The Organ and the Internet

Introduction

The Internet is no longer just a playground for nerds and cyberfreaks - it's beginning to encroach upon all our lives. This article aims to introduce the Internet to beginners, and gives some pointers of special interest to organ lovers.

What is the Internet?

The **Internet** is the name given to a system which links together large numbers of computers throughout the world, and allows these computers to exchange information with each other.

Why might I be interested?

It is probably the fastest way of getting up-to-date information to and from individuals, groups and organisations on almost any subject you wish. Here is a selection of facilities available:

* Electronic Mail

If you look on bottom of the **Directory** on page 2 of this magazine, you will see that the editor has an 'e-mail' (electronic mail) address. This means that anyone who has a computer, anywhere in the world, connected to the **Internet** can write to me, and normally their message is available for me to read within minutes. They can also use e-mail to send me articles and pictures for *TOSA News*, and even sound recordings and movie clips if they wish.

Using e-mail is not the same as sending a fax. A fax machine is rather like a long-distance photocopier. With a photocopier you put a piece of paper in at one end, and a photostat of that page comes out the other end. Fax is like this, except that the copy comes out of the other end on someone else's machine. The image is converted to electronic impulses which go down a phone line to the recipient, whose machine re-assembles these impulses into an image of the original page.

With e-mail, what you get is not a photo-copy, but a re-creation of the original information. An e-mail message delivered to my computer is just the same as if I had typed it myself - I can edit it and change its style

by **John Leeming**

(layout, size of text, etc.). A letter 'A' is a real letter 'A', not just a photostat picture of one. Some of the articles appearing in *TOSA News* come to me by e-mail, which means I don't have to retype them when I am assembling the issue.

* The World Wide Web

This is the easiest way to get information via the **Internet**. It enables you to receive screen-sized 'pages' of text and pictures on any topic you wish, using the **Internet** like a live encyclopedia. You can save these **Web** pages for future reference, and print them on paper if you wish. Most commercial and academic organisations have so-called '**Web sites**', as do an increasing number of individuals and special interest groups, including *TOSA* (NSW).

Have you ever wondered about those funny little messages beginning with 'www' at the bottom of so many advertisements in the press and on TV? Well, that's the organisation's **Web** address - when you connect to that it is a bit like sending for a brochure through the post ('snail mail', in net talk!).

However, the beauty of pages obtained via the **Web** is that it uses what is known as a **hypertext** system. This is a bit like a built-in index and cross-referencing system. Suppose that, in this article, I wanted to refer to another article in another magazine. I might include a line like "see the specifications for the **Regent** organ in *Vox* newsletter, July 1986, page 4". That's fine if you've got a copy of that issue of *Vox*, and know where to find it. With hypertext on the **Internet**, all you would have to do would be to use the computer's mouse to point at that reference, press a mouse button, and the information in question would appear on the screen before your very eyes.

This new screenful of information may come from a computer on the other side of the world. It doesn't matter to the user - it only costs the price of a local phone call wherever it comes from! It could even be that the text

comes from **Victoria** and a picture on the same page from **Hong Kong**, to be put together seamlessly inside your own computer. The only clue might be that the page takes a little longer to appear.

* Newsgroups

Once you are connected to the **Internet**, you can join any of thousands of newsgroups. Imagine these as being a bit like a notice-board. You pin up a notice with your comments on it. Anyone who passes can read your message, and, if they wish, pin a reply to the notice-board. You, and others, can read and reply to this, and so on.

The only difference with a computer newsgroup is that your message gets stored on a central computer somewhere, and it is distributed to anyone who 'subscribes' to that newsgroup. There are groups covering any subject you can imagine, ranging from fishing to photography, *Star Trek* to *X-Files*. Subscribing to a newsgroup doesn't cost anything. You just tell your own computer to collect messages from the group(s) which interest you.

Some groups are 'closed', meaning that they are available only to people who register with the person or body which runs the group. One of these newsgroups is the Pipe Organ List (**PIPORG-L**). This is a list serving about 1,000 members of the list throughout the world who are interested in pipe organs and related topics.

Although the interest of these members is mainly on the classical side, a fair amount of theatre organ material gets disseminated through the group. If you subscribe to this list, you will receive something like 50 messages a day on topics like organ maintenance, news of installations and personalities, tremulant settings, reports of events, suggestions for concert programmes, and so on. You can join in and respond to any of the messages as often as you wish. Sometimes the correspondence can get quite heated.

If you already have an **Internet** connection, and you want to know how to subscribe to the **PIPORG-L** list, you can get details from the list's home page at: <http://albany.edu/~piporg-l/index0.html>.

How do I join the Internet?

To connect to the **Internet** you need:

(i) a computer (any fairly recent model will do; it doesn't matter whether it's a PC, Mac, Acorn, Atari, etc.)

(ii) a telephone line (your normal telephone line will be fine)

(iii) a modem (this is a device which goes between the computer and the telephone line)

(iv) connection to a service provider (look in computer magazines or newspapers for advertisements for Internet service providers)

(v) software to give access to the various facilities of the Internet (the service provider will often supply suitable software free or at low cost)

What does it cost?

If you don't already have a computer, they cost anything from \$1,000 to \$4,000, depending on the features you want. However, it is unlikely that you would want to buy a computer just to access the Internet.

A suitable modem costs about \$300 (get the fastest you can afford - 33.6K is the figure to look for). Subscribing to a service provider costs around \$20 per month, though there are many bargain offers around at present. After that, all you pay is the cost of a local phone call each time you connect. Even if you are sending or receiving mail or **Web** pages from the other side of the globe, you still only pay for a local phone call. You can write a dozen letters to different people, and send the lot for 40c!

How do I get further information?

The best place to go is to your local computer dealer. If you are starting with new equipment, it is best to buy it from a specialist, local dealer rather than from a "pile-it-high-sell-it-cheap" merchant. Computers are complicated devices, things can and do go wrong, and you are bound to need after-sales support. A friendly, knowledgeable, local dealer will often be able to call round and sort out your problems quickly.

.....
• *The rest of this page and the next*
• *have information taken from the*
• *USA's ATOS Web pages, and page*
• *11 shows information from the UK's*
• *COS Web pages. These brief samples*
• *show what a wealth of information is*
• *available on the Internet.*
.....

The American Theatre Organ Society

The Story of the Theatre Organ

How Did It Begin?

by David C. Kelzenberg

The story of the theatre organ is, in a real sense, the story of the movie palace which housed it; and its existence may be solely attributed to the fact that the movies of the time were silent. In larger theatres, movies were originally presented as part of larger shows, which also included live on-stage acts such as singing and dancing. Music was required for these performances, and theatres employed staff musicians—sometimes entire orchestras—to provide live music for the stage acts. In smaller, less affluent settings, a piano would serve as the sole musical accompaniment to this live entertainment. With musicians and instruments at hand, the silent movies were quickly provided the luxury of a musical accompaniment.

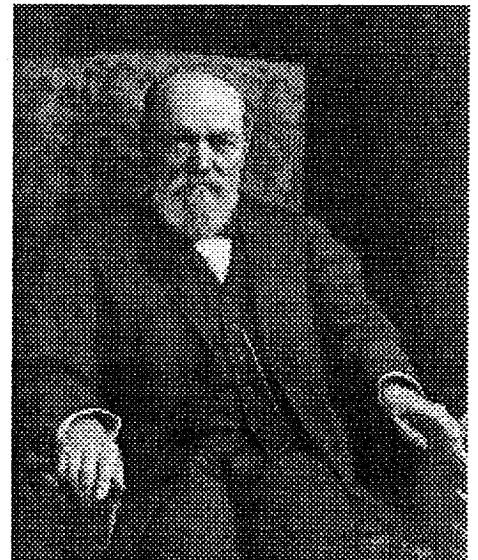
But the impresarios who brought these nightly extravaganzas to an eager public were searching for something new and different, and an idea was born. What better to contribute to the image of the theatre as a "cathedral of the motion picture" than the peal of a mighty pipe organ? An added incentive, surely not lost on these shrewd and competitive businessmen, was the savings afforded by having to pay only one musician, who while playing a pipe organ could produce sounds approaching those of an orchestra of dozens of players.

The first pipe organs to appear in theatres were little more than transplanted church organs. While they looked and sounded impressive, they were ill-suited to the performance of the popular music of the day—a necessity in the realm of the theatre. However, the instrument quickly began to evolve into an entirely different type of instrument, one which far better suited its intended purpose. Many of the innovations which led to the perfection of the theatre organ were the work of one man, a brilliant **English** inventor named **Robert Hope-Jones**. **Hope-Jones** developed many of his innovative ideas regarding organ design in his native **England**, but it was not until his arrival in **America** and his



Robert Hope-Jones

fruitful collaboration with the **Rudolph Wurlitzer Company** of **North Tonawanda, New York**, that many of his ideas were realized. The product of that collaboration was called "**The Wurlitzer-Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra**", and although it quickly became just the "**Mighty Wurlitzer**" in the eye of the public, its official name better reflected its nature. For, with the incorporation of **Robert Hope-Jones'** ideas, the instrument had truly become a one-man substitute for the orchestra.



Rudolph Wurlitzer, Sr

The American Theatre Organ Society

THE STORY OF THE THEATRE ORGAN

by David C. Kelzenberg

In the first thirty years of the twentieth century, a new art form took America and the world by storm. Cinema. Film. Motion pictures. "The picture show." Whatever one called it, movies captivated the masses in a way nothing else ever had, and our love affair with movies continues to the present day.

Unlike today, when we are likely to watch movies in a small multiplex theatre, early movie-goers were treated to a much grander spectacle for their nickel. Theatres were larger and more opulent, especially in the bigger cities. While the massive, ornately-decorated downtown theatre quickly became known as the "movie palace," or even the "cathedral of the motion picture," virtually every city neighborhood and small town boasted at least one "Bijou" which would put today's mall 8-plex to shame.

In those days, everyone went to the movies. Theatres offered an escape from the troubles of the world. Within their dark, cavernous auditoria, one was pampered by a huge uniformed staff of ersatz servants. The movie might be part of a larger show which included musical numbers and stage acts, and the movie itself was shown not on the minuscule screens of today, but on the "big, silver screen." And, likely as not, that show would include a performance on the giant pipe organ which was installed in the auditorium.

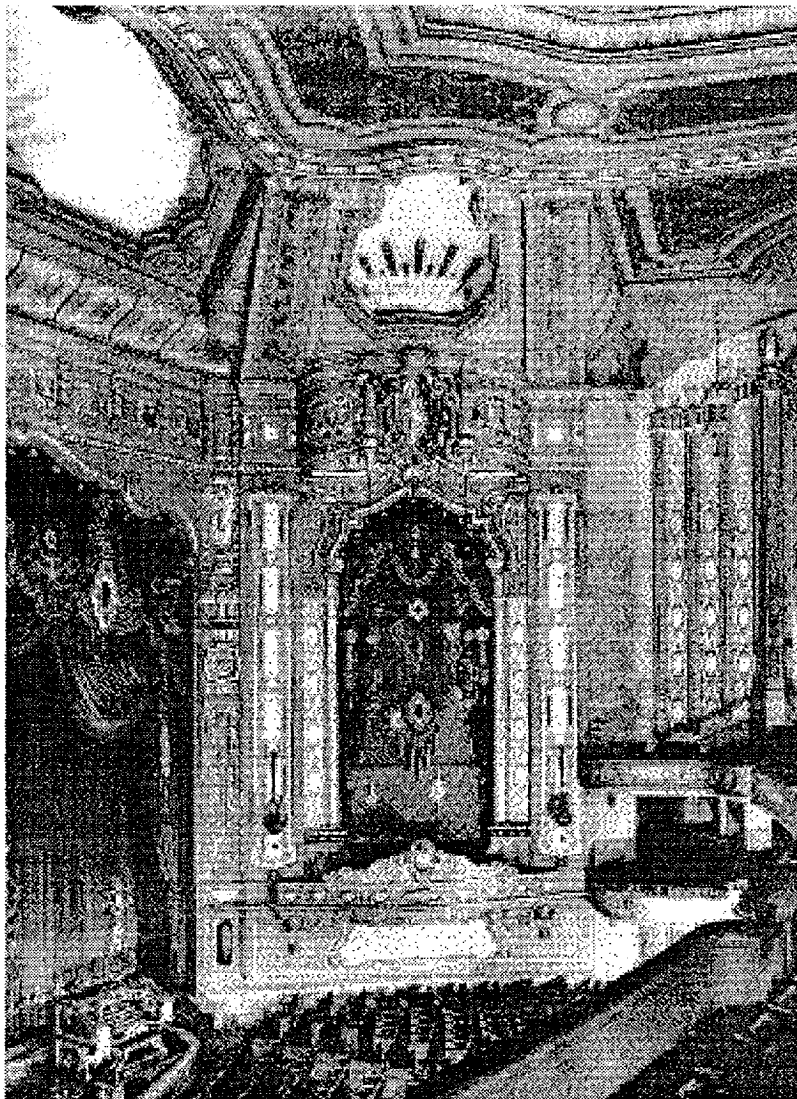


Photo: Ambassador Theatre, St Louis, Missouri

- How did it begin?
- How do Theatre Organs differ from other organs?
- Who built Theatre Organs?
- Who played Theatre Organs?
- Why did production stop?
- A Renaissance
- Preservation for the future

The Cinema Organ Society (UK)

What is a Cinema Organ?

Well, it's an organ in a cinema - or, at least, that's how it got its name. Cinema (or theatre) organs originally made music for silent movies in the 1920s, but when the talkies came they took on the role of solo musical instruments. Cinema-goers would often find the music of the **Mighty Wurlitzer** (or **Compton** or **Christie**) as exciting as the movie, and the theatre organists themselves became stars. Radio and records brought the same thrilling sounds to the home, and the music of the theatre organ became part of everyday life.

Theatre organs are real pipe organs, but they're much more versatile than church organs. **Robert Hope-Jones**, the organ builder who set the ball rolling at the turn of the century, called them "**Unit Orchestras**", instruments that really can cope with everything from classics to big band. The rich, spine-tingling sound of a mighty theatre organ is something you'll never forget!

Where are they today?

Most cinemas sold their organs when the buildings were tripled or closed. Only a handful of organs remain in cinemas in **Britain**. The rest have found their way into town halls, clubs, churches, schools, museums, places of commercial entertainment and private homes. But, wherever theatre organs are to be found, there's wonderful music to be heard.

The **Cinema Organ Society** has five of its own, and is involved in the care of others, too. The **Cinema Organ Society** is for everyone interested in organ music as entertainment. The Society is also building an extensive archive of printed material and recordings.

Selecting this section will lead you to a range of other pages, giving details about the Society, news, concert listings and so on.

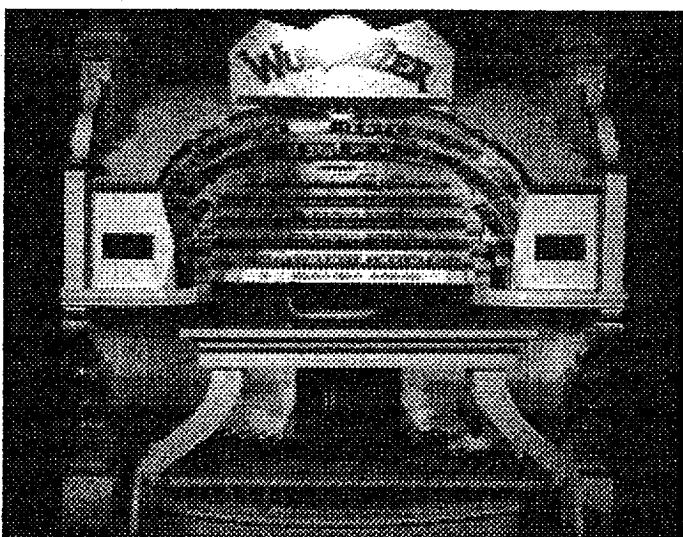
A concise history of the theatre organ's rise, fall and renaissance in the **USA** is available on the **The American Theatre Organ Society** Web pages.

Links with similar societies

overseas, such as **The American Theatre Organ Society**, **The Theatre Organ Society of Australia** and **The Netherlands Theatre Organ Federation** mean that you will be kept abreast of exciting developments on a worldwide scale. Other **British** theatre organ groups on the Net include **The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust** and **The Scottish Cinema Organ Trust**.

There is plenty of other material about pipe organs, classical as well as theatre organs, on the World Wide Web. The **PIPORG-L** and the **Theatre Organ Home Page** pages are useful places to start.

The **Cinema Organ Society** pages are maintained by **John Leeming** (email john@leemingj.demon.co.uk).



THE CINEMA ORGAN

The essential difference between the church organ and the cinema organ is that the former is intended for the purpose of accompanying choirs, for which it is necessary to build up huge masses of ponderous tone, and, owing to the large spaces and consequence reverberation, any attempt to play rhythmic music is practically hopeless.

The cinema organ is designed for entertaining an audience, and its effects must be essentially pleasing. It is more in the nature of a one-man orchestra than an organ, and, apart from the fact that its sounds are produced by organ pipes and it is played from key boards and pedals, it bears little resemblance to the orthodox organ.

The combination of the modern electric action and the acoustics of the cinema enable the most amazing rhythmic results to be obtained. When moving pictures were first introduced

in the 1900's, it was realised that movies could not be "run cold", some kind of musical accompaniment was necessary to disguise the fact that speech and other essential sounds were lacking. So the early pictures were accompanied by some kind of an orchestra, usually a trio, who played any kind of music they happened to have, without any idea of synchronising the musical accompaniment to the scenes in the picture. Many ridiculous combinations of picture and music resulted from this haphazard method; pathetic scenes being frequently accompanied or dance music, and vice versa.

An orchestra could not be expected to play for eight or nine hours at a stretch, and while they paused for rest and refreshment, some kind of musical accompaniment still had to continue. The result was the introduction of the relief pianist, who would accompany the second feature or the "shorts," the pictorials, comedies, gazettes, etc. As the relief had no one else to follow, he could improvise to the pictures and frequently produce a far more suitable accompaniment, particularly in the comedy scenes. On the other hand, the thinness of tone of the piano by itself in a large cinema let the whole show down as soon as the orchestra stopped playing.

Although large orchestras were used to accompany films, the advent of the depression led to "rationalisation" of the cinema costs which paved the way for the cinema organ or unit orchestra. These organs were developed to imitate the various sections of the orchestra, to allow a single performer to give essentially an orchestral sound. The console was situated in the orchestra pit vacated by the redundant musicians.

Television brought an end to the popularity of the big cinema, and the organs and organists fell victims to cost-cutting by cinema owners. The modern tendency to divide the old cinemas into multiplexes was the final blow for the organs, as they had to be removed to make way for building developments.

Today few remain in their original homes, and those that have been rescued are installed in halls and museums and lovingly looked after by their devotees.

Review of MARGARET HALL in Concert at Willoughby Town Hall - Saturday, 21st September, 1996

by Amy Caldwell

What a feast of fine organ concerts we have been treated to of late! The recent one, at **Chatswood**, with **Margaret Hall** at the console of the **Wurlitzer**, was no exception.

Margaret gave a most enjoyable concert with a bright opening to the show entitled *The Good Old Bad Old Days*. After this **Margaret** greeted the audience and told how privileged she felt to be asked back to do a second concert in 12 months, then back to the console.

From the film *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* came *Spring, Spring, Spring*. This was certainly a descriptive little tune - one had visions of **Walt Disney**-type, coloured butterflies and furry, little animals amongst the spring fields - quite delightful.

Latin American-style came next with *La Paloma (The Dove)*. As this was only my second visit to the **Willoughby** venue, I was quite taken with the lovely sounds from the organ. My first visit there was during our **Easter Convention**, when **John Giacchi** played his successful concert.

What A Wonderful World, which was used in the film *Good Morning Vietnam* and originally made popular by **Louis Armstrong**, gave a lovely contrast to the previous item.

A most descriptive and realistic selection was **Gershwin's Porgy and Bess**. One could almost see, and certainly hear, the bustle of the wharves in the overture, then on to a poignant *Summertime*, *It Ain't Necessarily So*, then a beautiful arrangement of *Bess, You Is My Woman Now!*

Music from light opera, performed by **Miss Rachel Cunningham** and **Mr Dean Sinclair** gave a nice balance to the evening's entertainment. We were to have heard **Miss Leslie Martin** singing, however, due to illness, she was unable to sing. With only a couple of days to learn the music and rehearse, **Rachel** did an excellent job and was most enjoyable.

It was a treat to hear these two singers in duet. **Rachel** enchanted the audience with her delightful singing, along with a most competent and experienced **Dean Sinclair**. We first heard *To-Night* from *West Side Story*, then *Sweethearts* - both most enjoyable.

Back now to the organ, with a novelty number, *Midnight in Mayfair*. One more medley before the time honoured break for "a cuppa". **Margaret** started a circus medley with *Strike Up The Band* and *Join the Circus*. Of course, *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* was in there too, having a great time because as they say *There's No Business Like Show Business*.

The **Willoughby Town Hall** at **Chatswood** is certainly a lovely venue for a concert such as this. The seating is excellent, both for viewing and for comfort, with tiered seating on the sides. The timber work throughout has been well planned and creates a most imposing visual effect.

However, back to the concert after the break, to that very popular march by **J. F. Wagner**, *Under The Double Eagle*, which sounded very good indeed on this **Wurlitzer**.

Next to a "rainbow" collection with some well remembered melodies. A *Rainbow on the River*, which used to be sung by a young boy soprano called **Bobby Breen**, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder* and of course the much loved

I'm Always Chasing Rainbows, and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Not forgetting **Kermit the Frog's** song about his *Rainbow Collection*.

From the 20's, *Am I Blue*, and then to an entirely different sound - music usually heard played on the cello - *The Swan*. This was a very pleasant contrast to the earlier selections.

Il Baccio was next on the programme and **Margaret** is hoping someone will tell her where this piece originated. It was certainly a great arrangement that we heard.

Time now for the two vocalists, **Rachel** and **Dean**, again accompanied on the organ by **Mr Ron Sinclair**. *The Donkey Serenade* was sung by **Dean**, a number we don't often hear these days. It made very pleasant listening. Then, with **Rachel** joining in, the delightful duet *Vilia*. These two singers combined well together and it was a joy to listen to them.

Back to the organ again and from the show *Annie*. *I Don't Need Anyone But You* and then the title song, *Annie*. Next a selection of **Irving Berlin's** music from *Easter Parade*. This selection showed off the organ to great advantage, with some lovely effects being used, as well as setting all the feet a-tapping!

Another march to finish off an excellent concert from three talented artists - *Music For The Movies*, which was the theme music for the old **Gaumont British News** at the movies.

After enthusiastic applause we were treated to a bright encore - *Dark Town Strutters' Ball* (another toe-tapper!). **Rachel Cunningham**, **Dean Sinclair** and **Ron Sinclair** then came back on stage with **Margaret Hall** to receive a well deserved round of applause. This prompted one last encore (and this was really "something out of the box") with **Ron** at the grand piano, **Margaret** at the organ, and our two vocalists - *Ah Sweet Mystery of Life*. A beautiful ending to a grand night's entertainment.



A Report on Ray Thornley's Concert

Marrickville Town Hall Sunday, 27th October

by Amy Caldwell

With the Marrickville Town Hall

filling rapidly, there was an air of excited anticipation. **Ray Thornley** didn't disappoint his audience, who gave him a very warm welcome. Starting off with a short, snappy selection from *The Wizard of Oz - We're Off to See the Wizard* to set the mood and then to **Judy Garland's** song, which will remain forever hers, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

Ray welcomed the happy audience to the wonderful sounds of the **Wurlitzer** cinema organ and praised the work that had been carried out on it and also commented on the resulting marvellous sounds now available.

On to the **Henry Mancini** music from the movie *The Great Race*. **Ray** suggested that the video be hired to hear all the music again and to enjoy the great story. I, for one, will be taking his advice and try to watch this video, as the music really was quite lovely. **Ray** demonstrated the almost church-like sound of the organ in one section, and what a beautiful contrast it was. From the processional sound, the selection moved on to a bright and different registration, bringing in the xylophone. A superb selection - let's hope that when **Ray** has the time to do a CD, this selection will be included.

The *Waltz* from *Sleeping Beauty* came next. Another exciting opening and then to the softer sounds of this lovely waltz, displaying the orchestral range of voices to advantage. **Ray** mentioned that he was doubly pleased to be in **Sydney** for, as well as playing the **Marrickville Wurlitzer**, it gave him a chance to visit his parents.

Nostalgia time! With a



Wife, Carol, congratulates Ray after his concert at Marrickville

gentle introduction and using chimes, **Ray** drifted into a dreamy style of *My Funny Valentine*. Here again, it was interesting to note the very different choice of harmonics used in this selection. We certainly were being treated to a wide range of styles and music throughout this concert.

Just a Spoonful of Sugar - a bright and happy start to the selection, certainly brought back memories of the movie *Mary Poppins*. Then using Tibias, this flowed into the plaintive melody of *Feed the Birds*, followed by the gay little *Chim Chim Cheree*.

In complete contrast, and one of the



Ray's parents were also delighted with their son's concert

loveliest items on the programme, was an appealing arrangement of *Plaisir d'Amour*, which brought enthusiastic applause.

Before the traditional "cuppa" break and the visiting of the CD and tape sales tables, another toe-tapping, rousing selection - this time from **Gilbert and Sullivan**, with various excerpts, including *Pinafore* and *Yeomen of the Guard*. The applause certainly demonstrated the approval of the audience!

To start off the second bracket, **Ray** played the very popular march, *Under the Double Eagle*. A march always seems to be expected in these concerts, and no-one would have been disappointed with **Ray's** interpretation.

More show tunes with **Rodgers and Hammerstein's South Pacific** and such memorable tunes as *Some Enchanted Evening*, *Bali Ha'i*, *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair*, and *This Nearly Was Mine*. Again, a very lovely presentation of this arrangement.

A popular choice with ballroom dancers, was the nostalgic **Hoagy Carmichael** melody, *Skylark*, then on to some samba music.

Something not heard so often in an organ concert was *Comedian's Gallop*. Quite an exciting finish to a very fine and enjoyable afternoon's entertainment.

This was followed, after more enthusiastic applause, by an encore of *Anchors Aweigh*.

Thanks to **Ray** for a most entertaining and enjoyable show.

BOOKING FORM

Post to: **The Ticket Secretary**
18 Dudley Street,
PUNCHBOWL
NSW 2196

Always include a stamped self-addressed envelope with your booking. If this is not done, tickets will be held at the Box Office.

CHRIS McPHEE CONCERT
ORION CENTRE
155 BEAMISH ST, CAMPSIE.
SUNDAY, 2nd February, 1997 at 2.00pm

Phone Enquiries & Bookings: **George Newell** - (02) 9750 0362
Between 10.00 am & 6.00 pm. Mon. - Fri. only

Cheques & Money Orders should be made payable to:
TOSA. (NSW Div.) Inc.
(Sorry no refunds after purchase)

Please send me:

- _____ Adult tickets @ \$12-00 each Total \$ _____
 - _____ Concession tickets @ \$10-00 each Total \$ _____
(This includes Members and Pensioners)
 - _____ Family tickets @ \$25-00 each Total \$ _____
(Covers 2 Adults & 2 children who are non-members under 15 years)
 - _____ Child tickets @ \$5-00 each Total \$ _____
(non-members under 15 years)
- Total this order \$ _____

I enclose a cheque [] or money order [] for \$ _____

My Name _____

My Address _____

Post Code _____

My Phone No. is (____) _____

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERRED SEATING LOCATION

CUT ALONG THIS LINE BEFORE POSTING BOOKING FORM

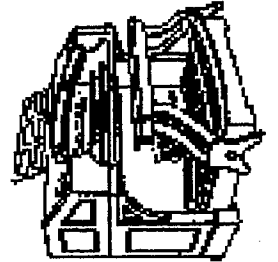
TOSA NEWS DECEMBER, 1996

Theatre Organ Society of Australia

(NSW Division) Inc.

TOSA NEWS

If undeliverable return to
PO Box 243
BURWOOD NSW 2134
Print Post Approved
PP255003/01823



Mr G BRIMLEY
28 Mount York Rd
MOUNT VICTORIA NSW 2786

51 Paid to 30-06-97

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**