



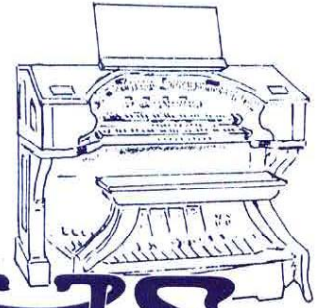
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EDITOR

John Atkinson, 46 Lily Street, Allawah, 2218.  
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# T.O.S.A. NEWS

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

ADDRESS BOX A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PERIODICAL—CATEGORY B

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## WHAT'S ON IN APRIL



# SYDNEY IS CONVENTION CITY '76

THIS MONTH WE PRESENT THE GREATEST THEATRE ORGAN CONVENTION EVER  
STAGED IN AUSTRALIA \*THE FUNTASTIC FIFTH\*

Never before have conventioners been able to hear so many theatre pipe organs of different size and manufacture together with electronic theatre organs of different makes, by courtesy of some of the organ retailing stores.

The long weekend promises to be the greatest organ entertainment ever with people coming from everywhere in Australia to attend and it is our opportunity to act as hosts to the guests and mutually enjoy the best that theatre organ entertainment has to offer.

We begin on Friday night with Registration at the Savoy Theatre, Hurstville, where your tickets will be available for collection and the evening's entertainment will be under the capable direction of Joh Congert at the National Electronic organ featuring silent films during a mini concert presentation specially worked out by organist Joh for our enjoyment. At the conclusion of the evening supper will be served in the Savoy Foyer area and an additional

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Bonus for 'All Inclusive' ticket holders will be a souvenir reproduction of the original opening programme for the Hurstville Savoy not available at any other time and a free Convention Programme which to other than 'All Inclusive' ticket holders will be \$2.00 each. The Convention Programme will feature historical photographs and information about the organs and organists.

Saturday morning sees a dual concert by Ian Davies and David Parsons on the magnificent State Theatre 4/21 Wurlitzer. A trip into the past in the last remaining super cinema. Transportation by Atlantian Bus to St. Columb's Church where the, not often heard, Alan Tranter will present on the Christie Organ music in the manner of his idols -- Sydney Torch, and Reg Foort and maybe an extra bonus to boot.

Then lunch and transport to Burwood Joint Parish Church to hear Bill Schumacher in concert on another of the very best preserved Theatre organs in a church. On Saturday evening for a once only special concert -- imported just for your entertainment JONAS NORDWALL in a concert which you are invited to bring your friends to, as this is the only concert open to the public and we want to fill Marrickville Town Hall to make the night a fulfilling and financial success.

Sunday morning begins with open console inviting any organists to play Marrickville Town Hall and try out the new additions to the organ then the Harbour Cruise with a Thomas organ on Board will take us all over Sydney Harbour with delightful scenery and organ music to entertain - an alternative to the Harbour cruise is offered at the Lyceum Theatre and during the 'Lyceum Platform' Eric Smith, Neil Gough and his Harbourside Groovers and the Cadence Chorale will entertain.

The Convention Dinner at the Menzies with a Gulbransen Organ will give us all a chance to unwind after a weekend to end them all before Jonas Nordwall ends the programme with a bang on the Romantic 'Big One' (5/127) William Hill and Sons in Sydney Town Hall - WOW What a Programme and if YOU HAVE NOT BOOKED YET YOU ARE ALMOST TOO LATE closing date is the 5th of this month. If you have overlooked things til the last moment then there is still a last minute opportunity to reserve your tickets by phoning Robert Gliddon on 869 2083 REMEMBER tickets ARE NOT for sale on Registration night UNLESS they are previously reserved so phone Robert now if you are a late subscriber.

The session times are detailed once again here and are also on your tickets.

SESSION 1	Savoy Theatre Ormonde Parade, Hurstville	Registration 7.00pm Entertainment 8.00pm
SESSION 2	State Theatre 49 Market Street, Sydney	Commences 8.00pm
SESSION 3	St. Columb's Anglican Church Cnr. Dickson & Bellevue Ave. West Ryde.	Commences 11.30am
SESSION 4	Burwood Joint Parish Church Burwood Road, Burwood.	Commences 2.30pm
SESSION 5	Marrickville Town Hall  OPEN CONSOLE Marrickville Town Hall	Commences 8.00pm  Commences 9.30am
SESSION 6	Cruise on Sydney Harbour Wharf 6, Circular Quay	Commences 1.00pm

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SAVE A PACKET ON PRE-USED INSTRUMENTS!

SESSION 7 Menzies Hotel  
Carrington Street, Sydney

Commences 7.00pm

SESSION 8 Sydney Town Hall,  
George Street, Sydney

Commences 8.00am

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1st May, Saturday 7.30p.m. A Home organ Party at the home of Arthur and Dorothy Cammell of 63 Johnstone Street, Peakhurst. 53 9891.  
During the evening we will be entertained by no less than four talented organists, Don McDonald, Jan Wilson, Ron Smith and Lorraine Ney.  
The organ these artists will be featured on is the Cammell's new Celebrity Royale Thomas Organ.  
Admission is \$1.50 and Supper will be served - all proceeds of the evening will be used to further the activities of the Society.

27th June, Sunday 2.30 p.m. FREE SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL.

11th July, Sunday Entertainment week, Sydney Town Hall.

Technical Meeting and a Meet Your Organ Night - Dates to be advised.

### CONCERT OF THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC:

Back in the 'golden' years, no less than four theatres in the Parramatta district were equipped with theatre pipe organs. Now only one of these organs remains in the City of Parramatta the mighty 18 rank Wurlitzer 'special' from the demolished Civic Theatre at Auburn, it will be heard in concert played by Ian Davies on 1st May, Saturday. Due to limited accomodation seats must be ordered in advance. Some have been reserved for members of organ clubs including TOSA. for details ring 631 6189 evenings after 7pm.



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FAREWELL TO HOYTS "REGENT"

PART THREE

-by Ian Hanson

THE THIRTIES OPEN QUIETLY

The ensuing months of 1930 passed quietly while the world outside was facing a severe financial depression. American organist, Wallace Kotter was carrying over the live part of the presentation by himself; playing from early in the morning for one hour and filling the gaps between the intermissions while Eddie Cantor was starring in "WHOOPEE".

As one delves through various newspapers and magazines of the day things were rather quiet until May of that year when the Regent billed a new organist, also an American, Eddie Fitch. Eddie went to the Regent after a short sojourn across the road at the Plaza. He had opened the 2/8 Christie pipe organ there in April of that year. His engagement was for only six months and left the console in October to take up two other engagements for Hoyts in the Regent Brisbane and later, Melbourne. At the conclusion of his contracts he returned to the United States early in 1933.

Commencing October 10th 1930, Wallace Kotter again returned to the organ console. This move seems to indicate his immense popularity with Sydney audiences. He had a great flair for showmanship and was an outstanding organist. He was the most popular of the early organists who appeared at the Regent. He started at the piano at a very early age and at 18 he was appointed to the Wurlitzer Company in North Tonawanda and quickly became a success. When he was only 21 he was given his Australian post. He delighted audiences in the Regent Theatres in Brisbane, Melbourne and a short season in Adelaide. Wallace Kotter's final appearance before Sydney audiences was on the 6th of December, 1930. Stage Presentation Revival.

Whilst the Regent had given away stage prologues completely, the State and Capitol still carried on with lavish stage shows despite sound films and the depression. However, Hoyts new General Manager, Mr. Charles Munro, commissioned Mr. James Collins as Stage Presentation Manager, so on December 27th a lavish Oriental show, with over 50 in the cast, was presented. From then until 1933 such lavish shows were presented twice daily.

Amongst some of the shows being presented at this time, there was one in which an 18 years old dancer was featured. This particular show as entitled "The Fly and the Spider" and was regarded as one of the most complex dance sequences ever staged. The person in question we know today as Sir Robert Helpmann. The two

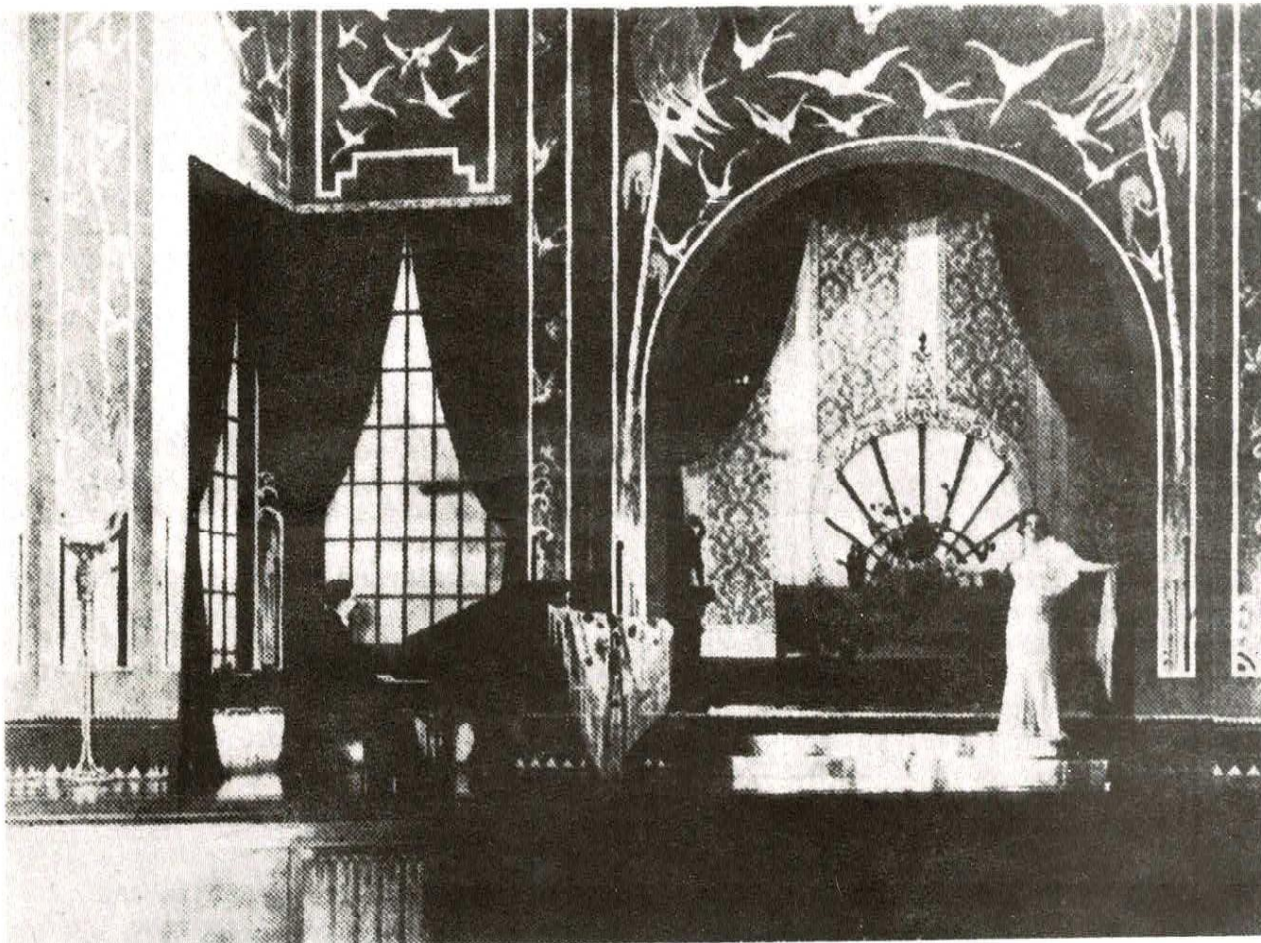
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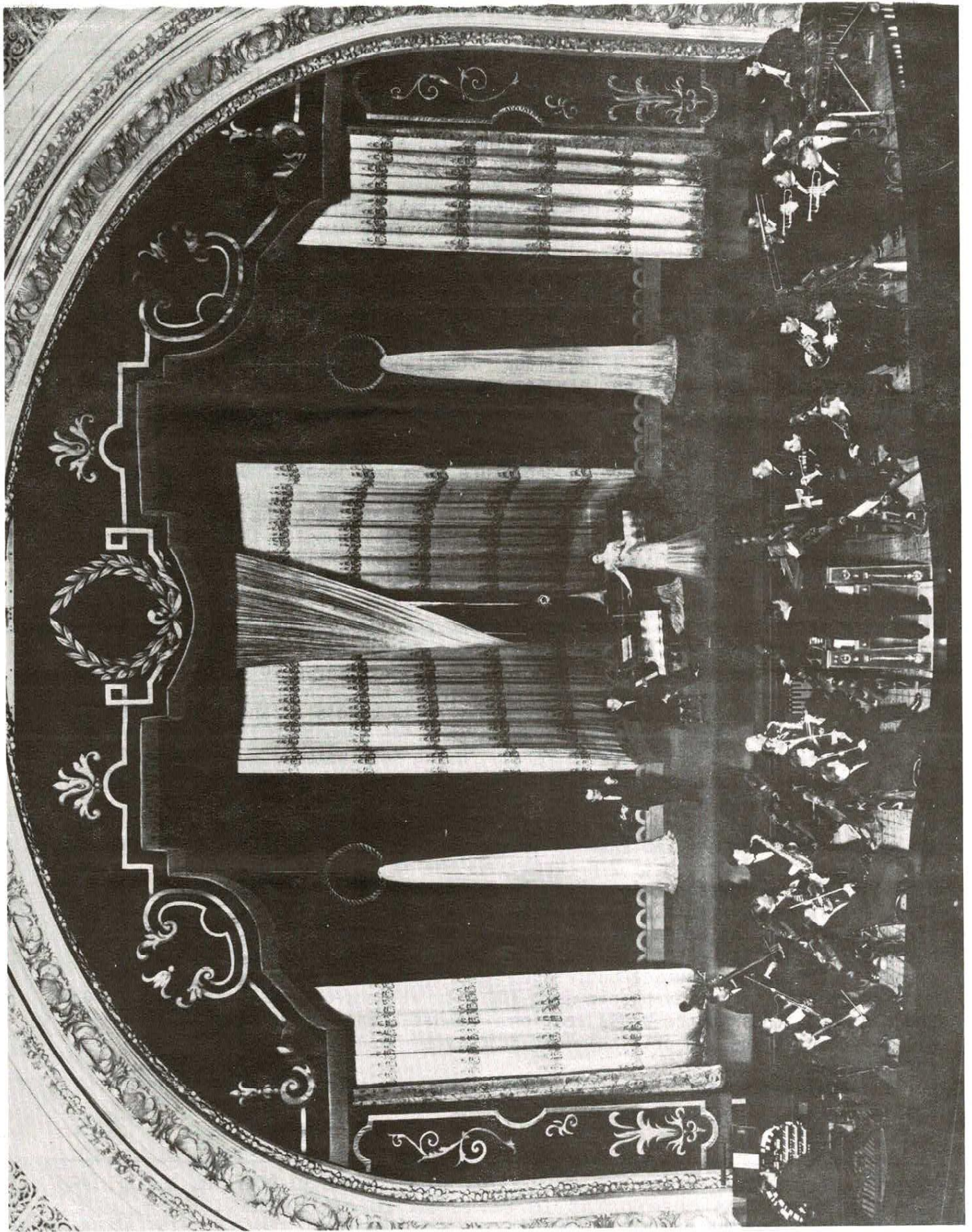


photographs show two of J.J. Collins presentations the one above shows distinguished singer Elsa Stralia in one of his presentations and opposite shows the full Regent Orchestra as it appeared in 1933 with Stan Porter conducting and a very young Own Holland at the organ.

"Musical Chairs" Just before Christmas on December 12th., musicians once again took their command in the orchestra pit, this time under the baton of Stan Porter who, for the previous ten years had been in the employ of Union Theatres. Just over two years before he came to the Regent, Stan had opened the State Theatre in Melbourne. Stan's orchestra began, from 1932, alternating from the Regent to the Plaza and continued this special arrangement until September 1933 when he was transferred to the Melbourne Regent.

To take Stans place, deputy conductor Vol Pursehouse took over for a while before a new and very talented conductor came up from the Regent Melbourne. Will Cade commenced his Sydney season on September 23rd, 1933. He had been conducting orchestras for Hoyts since June of 1928 when he opened Adelaide's 2,300 seat Regent conducting a 16 piece orchestra. He then went on to Melbourne where he took over the baton from Ernest Mitchell at the Regent. His engagement was for a brief six month period which ended on March 12th, 1934.

ORGANISTS CHANGE: With stage shows and orchestras re-introduced, Hoyts decided to engage another new organist. This time it was another American who was sent out from the United States to teach local organists the latest techniques in theatre organ playing and to further their knowledge of the instrument.



Eddie Ford was the man who took to the console on December 27th 1930; the same day the Regent presented the dazzling Oriental stage presentation "The wedding of the Teenee Sing". Before coming to Australia, Eddie had been working as a demonstrator for the Wurlitzer Company in North Tonawonda. His first Australian appearance was in the Regent Theatre, Brisbane. Eddie remained in Sydney for a short while before returning to the US in 1931. This Sydney season ended on March 20th 1931.

Prior to Eddie Ford resigning from the Regent the theatre manager Santley N. Wright, advertised for a new organist. After several had been auditioned, the management engaged Owen Holland, formerly a church organist in Ashfield, NSW, Owen's first day at the Regent was March 21st, 1931 which was to result in many happy years at the Regent Console.

The only major change in the organists during the 30's was a brief one week appearance in October 1933 by American organist, Leslie V. Harvey. During his short stay, he presented "Reve Angeliqæ" simultaneously with a silent picture being shown which depicted the interior and the exterior of a Russian Cathedral. Leslie V. Harvey came to Australia in 1925 and succeeded Byron Hopper at the 2/7 Wurlitzer in the Brisbane "Winter Garden" Theatre. Then came a popular season at the Prince Edward Theatre, the Regent in Perth and the Victory, Kogarah. After Leslie V. Harvey's departure from the "Regent" Owen Holland was again back on deck and remained the resident organist for the next 13 years.

PRE-WAR EVENTS. Commencing August 7th, 1935, the same week the Regent screened "Go Into Your Dance" the theatre manager Mr. Wright requested that the orchestra be re-organised in a new manner as to give it greater intimacy. So Stan Porter set to work. The members of the orchestra were so placed that they were facing the audience instead of each other. As well, Stan Porter added two instrumentalists (who were soloists) to the ensemble. They were Lionel Lawson, Violinist, and Beryl Howard, Pianiste, both of whom were well-known favourites.

Virtually, this was more of an orchestral stage show; three soloists were introduced by Stan Porter, preceded by the full orchestra in the 'London Suite' by Eric Coates. Lionel Lawson's violin solo contribution was Fritz Lang's arrangement of "Pale Moon" while Beryl Howard made her re-appearance in a symphonic transcription of "Stay as Sweet as you are". Keith Kersey, using four hammers, got a sparkling effect from his xylophone solo "Tiger Rag", the whole then being rounded off by organ and orchestra playing the music of Bizet. The full ensemble was splendidly received and a variety of ever changing lights on the orchestra and stage tabs that formed a background to the whole show added charm to the presentation and all for the sum of 2/6 (25¢) plus the film as well!!

With this type of presentation, Stan Porter reached great acclaim until December 12th, 1935 when he returned to the Regent Melbourne where he became Musical Director of both the Regent and Plaza Theatres. At this point in time the newspapers advertised Shirley Temple in "Curly Top" as well as another new orchestra conductor, Maurice Guttridge.

Maurice specialised in symphonic jazz and naturally re-organised the orchestra and made additions to the brass section. He had been a conductor for J.C. Williamsons' at the old original "Her Majesty's" Theatre in Market Street for some years.

For the next three years, Maurice Guttridge and his orchestra enjoyed great popularity.

TO BE CONTINUED

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--- AN ORGAN COTTAGE PROMOTION ---

\*\*\*\*\*

A RECORD MYSTERY - by Dianne Brown

During the Christmas holidays I had the pleasure of spending a whole day with a Sydney resident who has a fabulous collection of records and tape recordings of organs, going back to the twenties; I would guess thousands in all; perhaps the biggest collection in Australia.

One day was not enough to explore this treasure trove of organ history, but still I covered a lot of ground. I was, as a visitor to Australia, very interested in the Australian Theatre organs. There were not a lot of actual records ever made of these. However, the deficiency was more than made up by tape copies of broadcasts.

Commercial tape recorders did not really make an appearance until after the war, being preceded by wire recorders. The quality of the recordings is certainly not 'hi-fi' by today's standards, but still, I could hear a lot of exciting sounds from the various organs. The 1930's broadcast copies were made directly onto records at the studios, and since then have been copied on to tapes. Just imagine, a whole half hour broadcast of theatre pipe organ music every Sunday at lunch time; plus sometimes two broadcasts through the week as well; relayed over the ABC network from theatres all over Australia! and here I was on a time trip to the past, actually hearing these mighty organs as they sounded at the peak of the theatre organ age.

Why - here was an organist named Stanfield Holliday, playing on Hoyt's Regent Theatre, Melbourne, Wurlitzer; and said the announcer in his perfect delivery, Stanfield will now demonstrate the Cathedral tones of the Wurlitzer by playing the introduction to the Bach D Minor Toccata. Well, Stanfield sure had been trained on classic organ playing because he stamped out that Bach; and then came a selection of light classics, and some 'pops' of the day ending with a fast and furious 'Samba Caramba'.

Each theatre organist had his own special theme which introduced the broadcast. For example, Owen Holland from the Savoy Theatre, Hurstville had a very appropriate theme - "Say it with Music". And after some hours of listening it became clear to me that each of these Australian Theatre organs had its own special character, a very important fact in helping to solve the mystery record I discovered while sorting through a pile of LP's.

The record was entitled 'A Pipe Organ Spectacular'. The cover showed a multi-manualed theatre organ without any real distinct features that would help to identify it. The caption stated that this was the fabulous Wurlitzer Organ at the Pickwick Square Theatre, Sydney Australia.

The cover notes said... 'Mr. James Magnussen was a classical organist, who adapted his style and repertoire to play popular music as his contribution to the war effort, when he spent three years in France with the British forces. His matchless technique on the Wurlitzer Organ will delight even the most critical of listeners.' (The songs he plays on the record are mostly by Cole Porter, such as 'Night and Day', 'Begin the Beguine', 'Easy to Love' etc.)

'James Magnussen's flawless performance at the Wurlitzer in Pickwick Square, Sydney brought a bit of the United States to thousands of American servicemen who passed through Sydney during the war years.'

Now I am told that there never was a 'Pickwick Square Theatre' in Sydney, in fact when I looked up a present day street directory there isn't any Pickwick squares or even streets of that name. Also 'James Magnussen' is a mystery bag because apparently no one has ever heard of him. Perhaps one of the TOSA News readers knows of this organist, who played the Wurlitzers during the war years. Failing this I am going to advance a theory about this record which might help to solve our problems.

Recollect that I said in a previous paragraph that each of the theatre organs I listened to on record and tape had its own special sound, a kind of 'fingerprint'.

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For example the Sydney 'Regent' Theatre Wurlitzer, as played by Stan Cummins, was completely flooded by a very rich and beautiful tibia rank, which even drowned out the reeds. So a broadcast on this organ was in effect a one rank concert - all tibia combinations. Very beautiful, but I longed for some contrasts. However, the little Plaza Theatre Wurlitzer, as played by Reubert Hayes, had a very powerful sound, with violent contrasts, sounded on tape like about 30 ranks! The Capitol Wurlitzer, as played by Jean Penhall was dominated by its super powerful Diapason rank, with a very 'flat, sort of lifeless' tibia rank, giving a strange church like quality to the music. The State Wurlitzer, as played by Mannie Aarons, can only be described as gorgeous, most delightful orchestral sounds, almost like a full symphony orchestra. The Prince Edward Wurlitzer, as played by Noreen Hennessy, very sweet and soft with an excellent percussion section, and the fastest trem. settings I have ever heard! As for the Christies, without exception they were much inferior to the Wurlitzers, sounding like rebuilt church organs, dull and lifeless except for the Odeon, Eastwood, which had a particularly nasty snarling and nasal tone. Yuk! I don't ever want to hear that sort of organ sound again!

The remaining Sydney Wurlitzers on the tapes were the Savoy Hurstville, a nice blend of ranks mostly played full organ, the Civic Auburn, some superb solo stops and very lush strings, and the Regent, Wentworthville played by Dick Hood, this one had to sound theatrical because it had no Diapason rank anyhow.

On the interstate organs the Regent, Adelaide had the slowest tibia tremulant giving it a very distinctive sound, the Regent Brisbane resembled a larger edition of the Savoy Hurstville sound, the Capitol, Melbourne had a good set of reeds, the Metro Perth had a choked sound, and the Plaza Melbourne was a beauty good contrasts in tone and very good percussions.

Back to the Magnusen record, but somehow it did not seem to resemble any of these organs. Well, maybe it wasn't in Australia after all - how about New Zealand? We found a tape of the Civic Theatre Auckland Wurlitzer and hit the Jackpot! Here was an almost identical sound to the record, tonal balance, trem settings, reverb, percussions all very similar.

There were US soldiers in New Zealand during the war years perhaps Magnusen was a New Zealand organist, perhaps the record was made under a nomme de plume by Ron Boyee who was resident at the Civic at that time. I freely admit that this is all speculation, but I hate mysteries, and on my trip to New Zealand I intend doing some more detection work to see if my theory is correct, and while there look over some of the New Zealand theatre organs; and maybe climb Mt. Cook, have a bath in a hot spring and hear some Maori music.....

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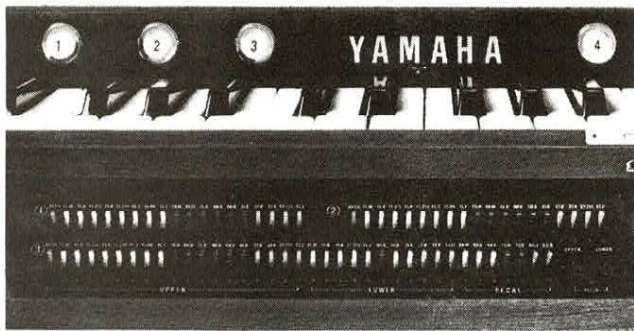
#### DEADLINE

TOSA NEWS APRIL EDITION'S DEADLINE WILL BE 19TH APRIL. ALL ARTICLES MUST BE IN THE EDITOR'S HANDS ON OR BEFORE THAT DATE. BEING CONVENTION MONTH MEANS AN EDITOR AND PRINTER IS FLAT OUT LIKE THE PROVERBIAL LIZARD SO PLEASE MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO GET ALL COPY TO HIM EARLY NEXT MONTH.

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#### NEW MEMBERS

What a great month to be a New Member with so much going on I guess they will meet just about everyone in the Society. A welcome is extended to:-

Mrs. R. I. Findlay, Petersham; Mrs. M. Ruckert, Lugarno; Mr. & Mrs. J. McGrath, Orange; Mr. & Mrs. E. Ellis and Simon and Geraldine, Baulkham Hills; Mr. & Mrs. Hewit, Brighton-le-Sands.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Convention activities and trust you will make many new friends in our ranks.

#### REVIEW

##### YOUNG ORGANIST AT THE 'SELWYN THEATRE'

by-Barry Sharp

A capacity audience at Ritchie Willis' home organ evening on Saturday 28th February had a surprise in store for them when 15 year old Simon Ellis presided at the console of the Thomas Lawrence Welk Theatre Organ.

This was the first time Simon had played before an audience, he gave a brief summary of the various composers prior to playing their compositions in a polished manner. It was evident that he had prepared the programme with a selection of tunes that appealed to the general organ enthusiasts.

Opening the evening with Movie Themes from 'Annie Get your Gun', 'Moon River' from 'Breakfast at Tiffanys', 'Ol Man River' from 'Showboat' and other popular hits. Simon then played some George Gershwin numbers 'For You For me For Evermore' and 'Rhapsody in Blue'.

The popular singalong enabled everyone to exercise their vocal chords with a few tunes including 'Bells of St. Mary's' and 'Swanee'. Then as time regretfully moved on we were thrilled with a selection of numbers from 'Oliver'. The finale being Noel Coward's 'I'll see You Again'.

All told an excellent night's entertainment and a vote of thanks was moved by Vice President Des Russell after which we had the usual 'cuppa'. Judging by the conversation at the conclusion of the concert we could well have a Theatre Organ Star on the horizon.

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Simon played the piano for 4 years prior to beginning serious study on the organ and has played occasionally at church services, he is now in his second year under the guidance of organ teacher Robert Broughall.

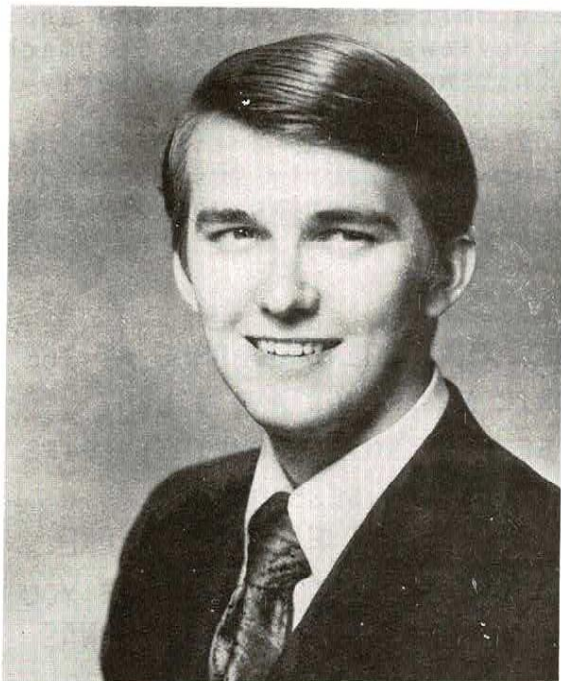
With the ranks of our professional organists decreasing owing to some members moving interstate and retirements etc. due consideration could be given to enable some of our younger members the opportunity to appear as associate artists at our Marrickville concerts. For if we do not encourage same how will new organists every be discovered?

#### INTEREST IN OUR ARTICLES (Interstate Divisions please note)

Other Divisions have shown an interest in work that is being put into your Newsheet by members and in both the Queensland 'Pipeline' and South Australia's TOSA News the articles by Ian Hanson is currently being copied. We wish to reiterate, that if due acknowledgement to source is given we invite any use of material whatever, we

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

# YOUNG AMERICAN ORGANIST



## *JONAS NORDWALL*

-- one of the most musical organists on the world scene. Commencing with an accordion at the age of four, he turned to classical organ when he was twelve. He received his B.Mus. degree from the University of Portland, did Post Graduate studies in Canada, and is currently resident organist at the Portland, Oregon, 'Organ Grinder' Pizza Palace and the Portland Methodist Church.

Jonas last visited Australia in 1974, inspiring local organists with his lightning technique, modern chord structures and inventive improvisation.

We are indeed fortunate to be able to welcome him back to the console of the mighty WurliTzer Pipe Organ for this, his

ONLY AUSTRALIAN CONCERT

the centrepiece of TOSA's Fifth Annual Convention

MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL,  
EASTER SATURDAY, APRIL 17th, 8 p.m.

ADMISSION: \$2.50      Children, Pensioners \$1.50

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For more information about this or other Convention sessions see separate leaflet, or write to P.O. Box 150, Epping, 2121 Telephone also 81 4268.

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for other divisions newsheets. Any size paper Quarto and over we would suggest as we use good quality bond paper that both sides of one sheet be printed with two photographs at the cost of \$10.00 for the first 100 and \$3.00 for each 100 thereafter (plus postage) Interstate Editors, please give us at least three weeks notice.

## REVIEWS

This month concert reviews have been omitted but will once again be a feature of the May issue with reviews of the Bill Schumacher concert, The organ Spectacular at Chatswood and the Quarterly General meeting, taking precedence.

It is also worth mentioning, some of the regular articles, such as "Flashbacks" by Ian Cameron have been temporarily suspended due to the pressure of work with the Convention coming up but we look forward to their return in coming months.

\*\*\*\*\*CONVENTION STOP PRESS\*\*\*\*\*

THIS MONTH IT HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED THAT THE PROGRAMME AT THE 'SAVOY THEATRE' WILL FEATURE HISTORIC NEWSREELS AND SILENT COMEDIES AND THAT ERIC SMITH WILL BE PLAYING THE CHRISTIE PIPE ORGAN FOR THE SUNDAY AFTERNOON ALTERNATE TO SESSION SIX. IF YOU HAVE NOT BOOKED YET FOR THE \*FUNTASTIC FIFTH\* YOU ARE ALMOST TOO LATE CLOSING DATE IS THE 5TH OF THIS MONTH, IF YOU HAVE OVERLOOKED BOOKING (WHO COULD OVERLOOK A ONCE ONLY JONAS NORDWALL CONCERT) YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO TELEPHONE ROBERT GLIDDON ON 869 2083 REMEMBER TICKETS ARE NOT FOR SALE ON REGISTRATION NIGHT UNLESS THEY ARE PREVIOUSLY RESERVED SO PHONE ROBERT NOW IF YOU ARE A LATE SUBSCRIBER, FOR THE ALL INCLUSIVE TICKET.....

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