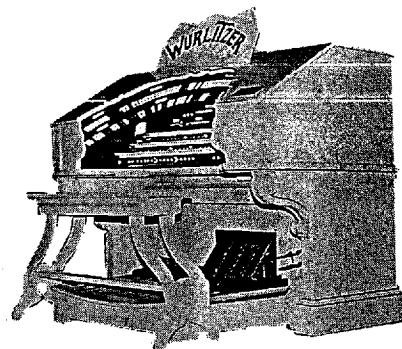


APRIL, 2000

TOSA



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Our Star Convention Artist *David Peckham*



Sunday, 23rd April at 2.00pm
Orion Centre Campsie

Volume 39
Issue 3
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TOSA NEWS

APRIL, 2000

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**



COMING EVENTS

APRIL

Monday 3 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 6 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone to confirm 9716 0151

Friday 21 to Monday 24

FESTIVAL OF THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC 2000 !!!

Thursday 27 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

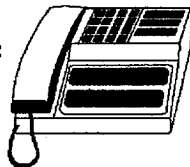
MAY

Monday 1 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 21 at 2.00pm John Atwell Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 25 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

JUNE

Monday 3 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 18 at 2.00pm Ray Thornley Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
Thursday 22 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

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WORLD WIDE WEB HOME PAGE - TOSA (NSW)

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

From The President

Hello again.

Yes it's almost here! The **National Convention of TOSA - "The Festival of Theatre Organ 2000"**, Sydney.

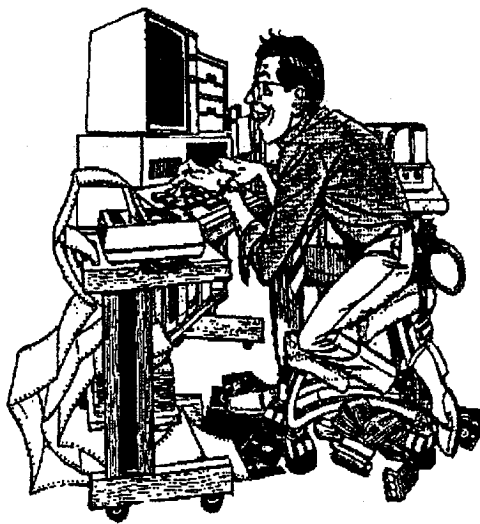
I'm handing this piece to **Collin Groves**, TOSA Editor, as he sits in the last-but-one **Convention Committee** meeting! Despite major problems that have beset us along the way, and despite continuing problems of organ access at Easter for rehearsals, tuning and setting up, we appear to be on track and counting down to a successful **Convention**.

I would like to record our thanks to **Margaret Hall-Nelson** for standing strong and for seeing it through. We all owe **Margaret** and the **Convention Committee** a unanimous vote of thanks for the effort they have put in. Maybe an Olympic Year gold medal?

About 70 people came to the combined **TOSA** and **Organ Music Society of Sydney** gathering on Friday evening 25th February. It was all very friendly, and supper was tops! **Margaret Hall-Nelson** and **Peter Held** demonstrated the **Wurlitzer**, **Neil Palmer** showed a goodly number of people around the organ chambers, and the **Organ Society** brought along a video "**Pulling Out All the Stops**" which **Robert Nelson** projected. I for one enjoyed the evening immensely and hope it will not be the last of that kind of event.

Don't miss the **John Atwell** concert at **Marrickville** on 21st May. He's one of my favourites - a musician who plays with a lot of understanding.

For those interested, we plan to have a **Members' Afternoon** at the **Orion** on Thursday 6th



April from 2pm to about 4.30pm. But don't take this for granted - phone me on the day (or previous evening) on 9716 0151.

But let me be brief - it's **Convention** news this month - and you'll hear it best from others.

Watch this space.

Walter Pearce

Last Minute
Convention News
on pages 5 and 6, also
see pp. 7, 8, 11 and 13.

Advertising in TOSA News

For members:

Small, organ-related
advertisement = FREE

For non-members :

Full page = \$80

Half page = \$40

Quarter page = \$20

Small bubble = \$10

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!!

Advertisements should be
submitted in writing to :

The Editor

PO Box 1257

Burwood, NSW, 1805

Editorial

Convention month at last! What a spectacular array of exceptional talent and memorable events are on offer! What a lot of excellent effort has been put in to preparations to please our **TOSA** members, both in **NSW** and also those from interstate and overseas.

Now, all that is needed is the full houses to experience the thrill of these fabulous occasions. Bookings have flooded in from the out-of-towners but we still need as many as possible local, **Sydney** people to welcome the visitors and to support the hard work performed on their behalf by reserving places for themselves and their friends at the concerts and other functions.

If you haven't book your **Convention** outings yet, please do so very soon (at least, before 7th April) so as to, as they say, "avoid disappointment."

Margaret's final **Convention** items (pages 5 and 6) give include details of the concerts that will have door sales for those who have failed to book in advance. These should be available half an hour before the advertised starting time, except in the unlikely (but not impossible) event of them being already booked out.

Of course, last-minute entries to the catered functions, the **Orpheum** concert and the **Harbour Cruise** are unfortunately impossible - these have to close on 7th April.

Before then there is a Sunday afternoon concert at the **Chatswood Wurlitzer** in the **Willoughby Civic Centre** in centre of **Chatswood Shopping Centre** and very close to **Chatswood Railway Station**. The **Chatswood** concerts have usually been on a Friday night and if this was an unsuitable time for you, you may be interested to hear the **Wurlitzer** played by a dazzling, young theatre organ star from **South Australia**, **Ryan Heggie** (See page 11).

See you at the **Festival of Theatre Organ Music 2000!**

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

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



AUSSIE INVASION

Following the piece in last month's TOSA News about the ATOS Young Organists Competition, here are 2 interstate items about young theatre organists :

From the Bendigo Organiser,
Nov/Dec 1999 :

Australian organists are making their presence felt in America, with **John Giacchi** who after an earlier visit in March 1999 has just completed performances at the Embassy Theatre, Fort Wayne; Manual High School, Indianapolis; and Long Centre, La Fayette, all in the State of Indiana and then a week later, he and **Tony Fenelon** joined America's top players in the weekend *Pipe Organ Extravaganza* in Illinois.

In one session, **John, Tony** and **Jonas Nordwall** performed at the Sanfilippo Victorian Palace.

Next year (i.e. 2000), **Nell Jensen** is booked for the Dickenson High School, Wilmington, Delaware; while **Heath Wooster** will be making three appearances at the Kirk of Dunedin, Dunedin, Florida.

These follow on from the successes of Australians competing in the 1999 ATOS Young Organists Competition. **Sean Henderson**, originally from New Zealand before moving to Melbourne, and now studying in America, taking out the Overall Winners Section, **Elizabeth Hanton** and **Paul Forte**, both of Ballarat, winning their respective divisions- **Elizabeth**, the Intermediate Section; and **Paul**, the Hobbyist Section.

ATOS WINNERS

From The Newsletter of TOSA
(Ballarat) :

Australian Winners of the ATOS Young Organists Competition

John Giacchi (Sydney)
1990 Senior

***Sean Henderson** (Melbourne)
1992 Junior

Chris McPhee (Adelaide)
1993 Senior / Overall

Heath Wooster (Melbourne)
1994 Intermediate

Kylie Mallett (Adelaide)
1995 Senior

***Sean Henderson** (USA)
1995 Intermediate

Ryan Heggie (Adelaide)
1997 Intermediate / Overall

Heath Wooster (Melbourne)
1998 Senior

Elizabeth Hanton (Ballarat)
1999 Intermediate

***Sean Henderson** (USA)
1999 Senior

Paul Forte (Ballarat), being too old for the Senior Section, entered the Hobbyist Section and was placed second in 1996 and 1997 and third in 1998.

*Note: **Sean Henderson**, although New Zealand born, came to Melbourne for tuition, before going to America, where he studies and his family now lives.

Cremorne Orpheum

The monthly Wednesday "Movie, Lunch and Coffee" 11am matinees for \$9 continue, with *Snow Falling On Cedars* - 12th April; *The Sixth Sense* - 10th May; *The End Of The Affair* - 7th June; and *Hanging Up* - 19th July.

As they say, "Enjoy a unique outing at Sydney's most beautiful cinema complex, the historic art-deco **Hayden Orpheum**. Win lucky door prizes and listen to resident pianist [TOSA member] **David Devenport** at the foyer grand piano. There's no other cinema experience like it - anywhere. (**Nell Jensen** [TOSA member] at the mighty *Wurlitzer* organ returning in June)"

THANK YOU

Raffle Prize Donations

I would like to thank all those who donated raffle prizes recently. The handicrafts were expertly made and were the subject of much favourable comment. Amongst those who donated goods were **Wendy Hambly, Mrs Reg Cant, Amy Caldwell** and **Tom Mackie**.

It all helps the cause.

Once again, many thanks.

John Shaw
Vice President

Sick List

TOSA members will be sorry to hear that member **Jack Williams** is on the sick list, and we send best wishes to him as he recovers from major surgery performed in January.

FOR SALE

Yamaha E-5AR Console

2 manual 61 note keyboards
2 octave pedalboard
3 octave portamento
Endless sound combinations
Preset drawer, 3 speakers
Instruction manuals
Almost 'as new' condition
Price : \$2,000
Phone : 9871 3531

FOR SALE

Baldwin Cinema II Theatre Organ

Full-size Instrument and Seat
In Polished Oak Timber
All in Excellent Condition
Price : \$2,000 o.n.o.
Phone (Penrith) : 4732 2045
E-mail : taylor@ozdocs.net.au



Festival
OF
**THEATRE
ORGAN**

Sydney 21-24 April

I hope you enjoy this special "pre-convention" issue of TOSA News including a photo spread of featured organists who will entertain you during the Festival.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that our Patron, the former Mayor of Canterbury, Mr John Gorrie will be our Master of Ceremonies throughout the Easter weekend...

...and what a weekend it will be! - Four days of the finest theatre organ entertainment you could wish for, accented with a variety of instrumental combinations, captivating audio visual presentations, plus a few surprises. Each venue, instrument and artist will contribute something unique to make every program memorable.

Remember, bookings close on 7th April and the only way to book is by completing and forwarding the yellow booking form you have received. (The original was distributed in November & a second one - with the revised Saturday schedule - was included with the March issue of TOSA News). Please send your completed booking form and payment to:

Festival Registrar PO Box 36 Brooklyn NSW 2083.

Your Registration Package, including booked tickets for all events, should be collected at Registration on Friday 21st April from 1.30pm at the Burwood RSL in the Entertainment Dome. In order to finalise arrangements with caterers, and allow time for tickets to be mailed to those not attending Registration please ensure your bookings are lodged by the official closing date.

It is preferred that everyone book in the manner described above. This is absolutely necessary where catering is involved. However, tickets at the door will be available for the following public concerts and all admissions are priced as listed.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Friday 21st April | 3.00pm Fire Up the Festival (\$15, excludes buffet tea)
8.00pm An Evening with Tony Fenelon (\$20) |
| Saturday 22nd April | 10.00am Console Cameos (\$10, excludes lunch)
2.30pm Christie Pipes Plus (\$10, excludes Spit Roast Feast)
8.00pm Sounds of Splendour (\$15) |
| Sunday 23rd April | 2.00pm Peckham, Pipes, Pizzazz! (\$20) |

For social reasons during the convention, seating numbers will not be allocated. Our Festival Hosts & Hostess (wearing their Gold Vests) will indicate available seating as you enter the venues.

.....continued

National Convention of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia



Festival
OF
**THEATRE
ORGAN**

Sydney 21-24 April

Parking at Marrickville on Saturday Night, April 22nd

Due to the unavoidable rescheduling of events on Easter Saturday (see December 1999 issue for the explanation), the John Giacchi concert "Sounds of Splendour" on Saturday 22nd April at 8pm, coincides with Mass at St Brigid's Catholic Church, just across the road from the Town Hall.

The public car park that is normally available for our concert patrons will be filling up with church-goers from about 7pm. (The Mass begins at 7.30pm)

For those travelling from Epping to Marrickville in their own car, we will endeavour to serve your evening meal and have you on your way to Marrickville to park as soon as possible. However congested the car park may become, there should be street parking available even if it means a short walk from the car to the Town Hall.

We regret any inconvenience you may encounter, but as you will appreciate, some things are beyond our control.

Free Bonus Concert

As part of the 2000 Series of Free Town Hall Organ Recitals, TOSA NSW has negotiated with the organisers to schedule a recital to coincide with the timing of our Festival of Theatre Organ 2000.

Hear the world famous Hill Organ at Sydney Town Hall in a concert of

Duets For Grand Organ

Four hands and four feet!

**City Organist Robert Ampt and his wife Amy Johansen,
organist at the University of Sydney.**

(Program includes 1812 Overture, Ride of the Valkyries and Waltzing Matilda)

Thursday, April 20, 2000 Commencing at 12.15pm

Join in our celebration of theatre organ at the

National Convention of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia

Festival OF THEATRE ORGANO

HEADLINER US ARTISTS TO PLAY IN SYDNEY



David Peckham will be playing "Peckham, Pipes, Pizzazz!" at the Orion Centre Campsie on Sunday 23 April 2000 at 2pm.

David Peckham

Based in New York State, David is a consummate artist who is highly regarded by his peers in the American Theatre Organ scene.

Since 1980 he has toured widely, performing on many of the finest theatre organs in the United States, including featured appearances at several ATOS conventions. Last year in the United Kingdom, David performed 11 concerts during a tour arranged under the auspices of the Cinema Organ Society.

As resident organist at the Clemens Center in Elmira New York since 1977, David has presided over the 4/20 Marr & Colton Theatre Organ. The Clemens Center is an active regional performing arts facility built around a renovated 1925 theatre.

In December 1994 David performed the world's first complete transcription of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet with the Delaware Dance Company. Utilising the vast tonal resources of the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society's renowned Kimball Theatre Organ, this artistic collaboration has gained widespread recognition of excellence. A seventh engagement is scheduled for December 2000.

David studied at the Eastman School of Music with Dr David Craighead. In addition to his theatre organ career, David has been organist at the First United Methodist Church in Horseheads New York since 1985. He has accompanied numerous choral and instrumental groups throughout the Southern Tier of New York State.

Critics have remarked on David's recordings as "top-notch and highly recommended." All three recordings have been featured on the US radio programme Pipe Dreams.

Since 1983 David has been associated with the family business, L.A. Peckham & Son Pipe Organ Service.

Tom Hazleton

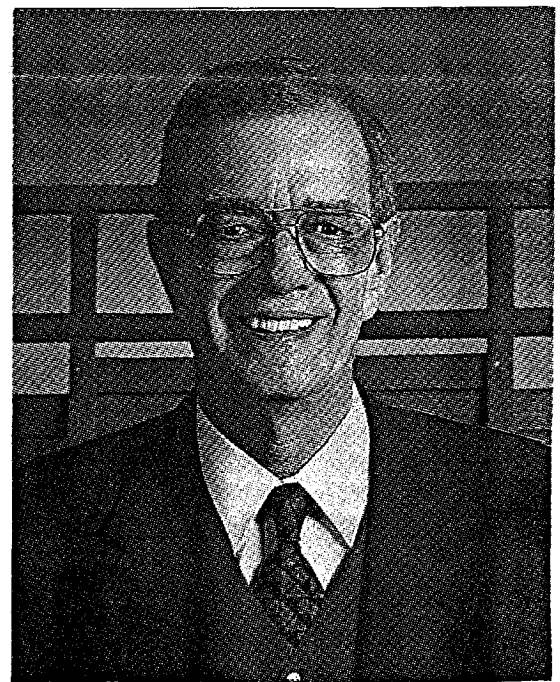
A celebrated American organist, Tom returns to Australia to "Fire Up The Festival" playing the Allen R-311 Theatre Organ at the Burwood RSL Club's Entertainment Dome on Friday, 21 April 2000 beginning at 3pm.

Tom Hazleton is one of the few organists in the world who is both top-rated theatre and classical organist. He performs many programs each year which show the versatility of his dual musical personality of theatre organ and classical organ, on the same program or separately.

Tom was a student of, and assistant to Richard Purvis at the San Francisco Grace Cathedral. He served as the last staff organist at the San Francisco Paramount Theatre. Whilst Chief Stall Organist for the Cap'n's Galley Pizza and Pipes Restaurant in Redwood City, Tom was also Organist and Associate Director of Music at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church at the University of the Pacific, Stockton California.

The last time Tom toured Australia for TOSA was in 1983.

In 1986 the American Theatre Organ Society named Tom Hazleton as "Organist of the Year." Tom has travelled the globe, performing on most major pipe and electronic organs.

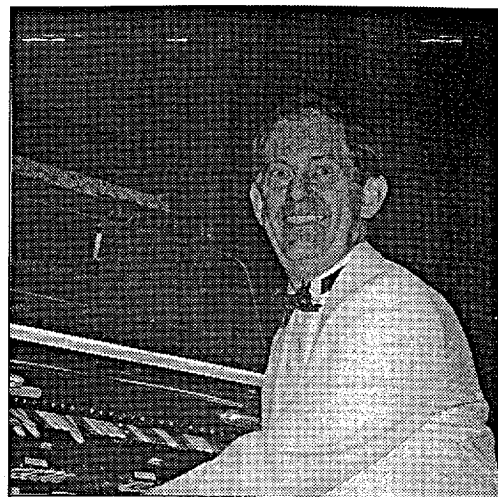


Featured artists at the Festival

Festival OF THEATRE ORGAN



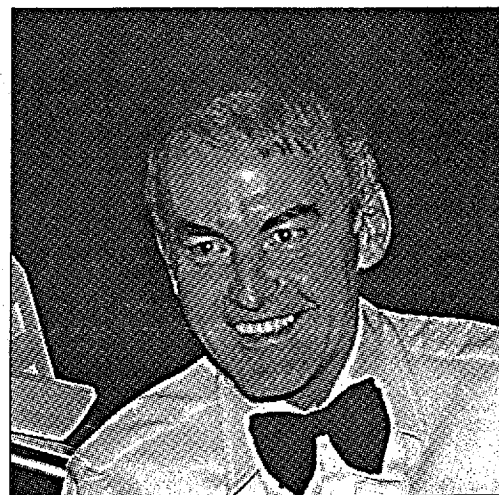
John Giacchi plays *Sounds Of Splendour* on the renowned 2/11 Wurlitzer in the Mar-rickville Town Hall on Saturday, 22 April at 8pm.



Well-known and popular **Tony Fenelon** presents *An Evening With Tony Fenelon* at the Orion Centre Campsie on Friday, 21 April playing the 3/17 Wurlitzer and Grand Piano.



Neil Jensen, together with **The New Trocadero Dance Orchestra** (not pictured) presents *The Organ, The Dance Band And Me* at the Orpheum Theatre Cremorne on Sunday, 23 April commencing at 9.30am.



Sydney organist **Cliff Bingham** will play the Christie Theatre Organ at the Epping Baptist Church on Saturday, 22 April starting at 2.30pm. Also featured will be violinist **Jason Mok** (not pictured).



Margaret Hall, theatre organist and Convention Convenor, presents the marvelous mechanical automata together with husband **Robert Nelson** (not pictured) at the *Antique Mechanical Music Collection* at Alexandria on Monday, 24 April starting at 2.30pm.

In the Spring 1999 issue of *The Sydney Organ Journal*, from the Organ Music Society of Sydney, their President wrote an amusing account of an experience remembers with some regret. A lot of TOSA members are, or have been, church organists and will probably be able to sympathise with his unfortunate experiences

“Some days, everything goes wrong”

Playing for the funeral from hell by Mark Quarmby

Some days, no matter how well prepared you are, everything goes wrong. With all the best intentions in the world, and years of experience behind you, things beyond your control can still go wrong. Such was my experience in June when I encountered a domino effect of one disaster after another. It was the worst funeral I had ever played.

It all started the evening before as I was about to play for Evensong at the **Cathedral (St Andrews, Sydney)**. A colleague of mine rang me on my mobile phone to see if I could play for a funeral the following morning which he was unable to do, due to school teaching commitments. I was free in the morning so agreed to play.

The funeral was to be held in a Catholic church located a few suburbs away at 10am.

Having played for weddings at this church on a few occasions, I knew where it was and how to unlock the organ and turn it on. My friend stressed that I be there no later than 9.45am as there would be a visiting priest taking the funeral.

There would be one hymn, *All things bright and beautiful*. Knowing from experience that Catholic churches have no idea what a hymn book is, I packed a hymn book with the required hymn bookmarked.

The following morning I arrived at the appointed time. As I walked into the open church, I was surprised to find that there was no coffin, no congregation and no priest! I unlocked the organ and turned it on.

By 9.50am I was beginning to worry so I rang my colleague only to get his answering machine. I walked up around the altar, hoping I might set off an alarm to get someone's attention.

My phone rang! At last, I thought! But no, it was just an enquiry from a cathedral wanting to know if I knew of anybody who might be interested in

applying for the job of organist there. I decided to go outside and walk around the church grounds to see if I could find somebody. Perhaps the funeral was at 10.30 or 11am?

Right on 10am a young girl came running over from the school attached to the church. Waving her arms about as if she were trying to play a keyboard in mid-air, she called out, “Please tell me you are the organist! There has been a big mix-up. The priest told the person who booked you the wrong church. The funeral is at another Catholic church in a neighbouring suburb. They are waiting for you. The priest just rang me on the funeral director's mobile phone as he just realised why you weren't there”.

Having played for a couple of weddings in this other church some time ago, I had a rough idea where it was located. I remembered that it was not on the main road but down a narrow side-street on a hill overlooking the harbour. I ran back inside the church, grabbed my music bag, and ran to my car.

It wasn't until I was approaching the next suburb that I realised that I had left the organ unlocked and switched on. When I later told this story to a catholic organist, he just laughed and said not to worry - they wouldn't notice for at least six months (he must know something about the Catholic church which I don't!).

About 10 minutes later I was driving down the main street of the neighbouring harbourside suburb. All the streets were lined with parked cars - there was nowhere to park! I had no choice but to park illegally, **Parisian-style** on a street corner.

I remembered that there was a sign pointing down the side street “To Catholic Church”. I found the sign and ran down the street and down the hill, almost into the harbour! Where is the church? It has to be here somewhere! I don't remember coming down this hill

before.

I looked up to my right and there above me on the top of the hill was the historic stone church. (I later discovered that someone had kindly bent the sign to point down the wrong street. Two weeks later when I returned to the church to play for a wedding, I noticed that someone had bent it back again - the sign was now in the shape of an “S” - to the correct direction).

What was I to do? I didn't have time to run back up the hill and find the correct street! There was no other alternative but to scale the cliff through the bush, music bag and all! No sooner had I stepped into the bush than something began to rustle around my feet. I didn't want to know if I had stepped on a snake or not!

I took off and by the time I got to the top, dripping with perspiration (it was mid-winter!), I felt there was a chance after all of my making one of the Olympic teams!

I ran across the lawn and wondered why the undertakers were smiling. I must have looked a strange sight appearing from the bushes over the cliff's edge! The funeral director handed me an order of service, stating that they had started without me. It was 10.15am. I noticed the hymn was first. Had they sung it unaccompanied or left it out?

I entered the church and discovered that it was packed. Every aisle, except the central one, was full with standing mourners. The deceased had been a senior person in one of the country's largest companies and had died of cancer in his 60s.

I had to squeeze past countless people. The side aisle was barely 18 inches wide. Everyone was looking at me as I repeated “Excuse me” over and over.

I remembered that the electronic organ console was in the left transept. By the time I got to the transept, I was

stunned to find the area, including all around the console, packed with people standing. I fought my way to the console, sweat still dripping from my forehead and collapsed onto the organ bench. Here at last!

It was locked! I couldn't believe it! I thought hard, trying to remember where the key had been hidden the last time I had played here. I suddenly remembered! It was hung on a nail behind the hymn number board beside the altar. I had to get off the bench and force my way through the crowd in front of the whole congregation and wend my way up to the altar. Sure enough, the key was there. I then had to squeeze my way back to the console.

I unlocked the cover and pushed the "on" button. No power! I couldn't believe it! I got off the bench again (in full view of most of the congregation) and looked for the power cord and a power point to plug it in to. No sooner had I turned it on, than the priest announced the second hymn. No one had told me there was a second hymn! I grabbed the order of service to find it was the *23rd Psalm* to Crimond.

I jumped back on the bench and, with no time to select any stops, I noticed there were five General Pistons, so I pushed number 4, believing it would be one notch softer than full organ and would be loud enough to accompany the packed church.

What I hadn't realised was that these "general pistons" were blind. That is, there was no way of knowing what stops were on and what ones were off. Moreover, changing any stops by hand made no difference whatsoever to the stop combinations which had been set

up internally.

I launched into the hymn and nearly jumped off the bench when I heard the sound coming out of the speakers. You would have thought you were in a cinema with some *Star Wars* character about to appear on the overhead projector screen and the console about to lift off and rise above the congregation!

It was impossible to sing along with such a merry-go-round type sound and it took me two verses to manually set up the stops correctly while I was playing and then switch off the general piston I had pushed. No doubt the tremulants got rid of some cobwebs!

The eulogy followed and the priest began by making two apologies.

Firstly he apologized for telling the organist the wrong church which was very decent of him, and then he apologized for the lack of flowers. I hadn't even noticed there weren't any!

Apparently the day before there had been a wedding in the church and after the wedding, the family of the deceased removed the wedding flowers and prepared new flowers for the funeral the next day. Later that evening the bride's family returned to take the wedding flowers and took the funeral ones instead!

The eulogy continued and then I heard some sort of commotion in the nave. A very large dog, no doubt belonging to one of the neighbouring houses, came bounding down the central aisle and ran around the coffin barking its head off. No one knew whether to laugh or to cry!

After the eulogy, the priest *Trapp, accompanied by some deceptive, booming pipe organ music. He wrote :*

The organ music for *The Sound of Music* wedding scene was recorded on a sound stage in **Hollywood**.

On a **Wurlitzer** theatre organ!

Sans tremas of course; and "sweetened" with post-production "Cathedasonic Reverb" — compliments of a gifted sound engineer and some electronic hardware.

(Oops ... I said the vile and profane "e" word. Sorry, ladies.)

Next time you see the movie, listen

announced that we would sing the first hymn. As I still had it bookmarked, I flung it open, only to find it wouldn't stay open. I grabbed a pile of MIDI discs which were lying on the console and used them as a page holder.

I then prepared to play **Handel's Largo** for the recessional when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned to see a guy with a long pony-tail standing there telling me not to play. He was going to play a "track" instead. I saw a large hi-fi system set up behind me and the coffin was carried out to **Frank Sinatra** singing "*I did it my way!*"

I waited around to be paid and found that no one had thought to pay the organist, so I didn't get paid! After all that!!

I gave the priest my card and about a week later received a cheque from the church for 50% more than I was expecting.

Some days later I was cleaning out my music case and found the order of service. I hadn't noticed the deceased's name before - **STOREY**. What a stor(e)y is all I can say!

Postscript: After returning home, I posted this story on the Internet and received many funny replies. When I turned on my computer early the next morning, still half asleep, to check my e-mails, you can imagine my shock to find one from "Jesus".

What have I done now, I thought? I was only joking when I said that Catholics didn't know what a hymn book was!

I opened the e-mail and found it was a message from an organist called **Jesus Bernal in Mexico City**. Phew!

to the organ very, very closely with this information in hand and see - er - HEAR for yourself.

You will note the reedy, sans-mixtures ensemble; there is the faint presence of wobbly, unequal-temperament upperwork but which is actually, again, "untremulated" Tibias and due not to "flexible" wind but rather, to copious unification.

So ... sorry to burst anyone's bubble, but those glorious organ strains did not issue from a gorgeous Rococo tracker organ case in **Salzburg** but, rather, from the homely, utilitarian grillework of a **Mighty Wurlitzer** in La-La Land.



On the Internet last year **Charlie Lester** gave an amusing outline of *The Sound Of Music* scene in which **Maria** is married to **Captain von**

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- (iv) *Christie Pipes Plus* at **Epping Baptist Church** (Saturday 22nd April, 2.30pm) -
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- (v) *Sounds of Splendour* at **Marrickville Town Hall** (Saturday 22nd April, 8pm) -
John Giacchi - \$15
- (vi) *Peckham, Pipes, Pizzazz!* at the **Orion Centre Campsie** (Sunday 3rd April, 2pm) -
David Peckham - \$20

(These prices exclude the food which is supplied with the full-price tickets)

A Report on *Chris McPhee's* Concert

Sunday, 2nd February

by *Cliff Bingham*

Orion Centre Campsie

In the space of not quite a decade, **Chris McPhee** has established an international reputation as one of the best of our younger generation of theatre organists. Today's concert did nothing to damage this reputation - in fact, it was considerably enhanced with a wonderfully varied program.

Opening with a "smoking" *Legend of the Glass Mountain* (smoke courtesy of a strategically placed smoke machine), **Chris** merged into a bouncy *Something's Got to Give* which contrasted well with the dramatic opening.

A ballad, *Make Her Mine*, with snatches of untremmed Tuba and Trumpet with a soft jazzy feel (**Nat King Cole**) was followed by a **Crawford**-like treatment of an **Australian** composition, *It Was So Sweet* by **Tom King**.

The music from *Jesus Christ Superstar* has rarely worked when transcribed to theatre organ. In fact, the only organist to do a successful transcription was, in this writer's opinion, **Jonas Nordwall** - until today! Perhaps it is due to the fact that he spent some time in the US, studying with **Jonas**, that **Chris** produced a very good interpretation of what is not easy music to present effectively on theatre organ.

An old **Mae West** song, *My Old Flame*, was an excellent foil to the previous selection, played in an appropriately suggestive "West-like" style.

Lots of snappy Post Horn/Xylophone registrations featured in a toe-tapping *Java*, an old **Floyd Kramer** number.

One of **America's** finest orchestral writers of this century was **Leroy Anderson**, and **Chris** played a quite beautiful version of one of his quieter compositions, *A Trumpeter's Lullaby*, featuring

naturally the Brass Trumpet stop on our **Wurlitzer**, with Tuba/Tibia interludes.

The music from *The Godfather* movie trilogy is generally pretty dark stuff and not easy to play and maintain audience interest. **Chris** overcame these difficulties with contrasting registrations and a fine sense of the drama contained in this music.

A song that is synonymous with **John Farnham** (and **Tony Fenelon** to some extent) is *Please Don't Ask Me*. **Chris'** interpretation was a pleasant contrast to the heavy drama of the preceding selection.

To bring us up to intermission, **Chris** played a Latin piece, *Elanora*, a bit of a 'finger-buster' that demonstrated his excellent finger technique.

After a refreshing interval (thank you to all our refreshment volunteers), **Chris** brought the console up with a rousing **Sousa** march, *El Capitan*.

None Shall Sleep Tonight from the opera *Turandot* was given a restrained treatment in the early sections but built to a great climax.

A cute **Larsen**-esque arrangement of *She Didn't Say Yes, She Didn't Say No* featured soft untremmed Strings.

This was followed by a selection from *Oliver* that captured both the happiness and pathos of **Charles Dickens'** story with the music of **Lionel Bart**. Songs included *Consider Yourself, Who Will Buy?, Oom-pah-pah*, and *As Long As He Needs Me*.

It is always refreshing to hear a new piece on the theatre organ and **Chris** introduced a novelty number called *Waltz of the Orchids*, played with some flair and panache.

When presenting a song some

organists (including the writer!) omit the verse and only play the well-known chorus. **Chris** avoided this trap in **Romberg's** *Lover Come Back*, playing a restrained verse and chorus, and climaxing with a key-change on a reprise of the chorus, using full ensemble registrations, cutting back to a soft combination on the final chords.

The compositions of **Albert Ketelby** have been favoured by many organists (some of them to extremes!). *Wedgewood Blue* is one of the lesser-known **Ketelby** pieces which **Chris** used to explore a variety of sounds of the **Wurlitzer**, from Tibia/Glock, Strings/Chrysoglott, to ensemble registrations.

The organ's piano got a workout in an upbeat, traditional theatre organ treatment of *When I Take My Sugar To Tea*.

Fats Waller was well-known as a jazz pianist, but in fact was also a very competent theatre organist, and composer who spent some time in **England**, and thus it is not surprising to hear that he wrote a piece called *Chelsea*. **Chris** gave it a soft ballad treatment in the first chorus and followed it with a typical **Waller**-feel to finish off.

In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning had just the right feel of insomnia and was followed by **Easthope Martin's** *Evensong*.

The finale was a rousing version of *Sabre Dance*.

Encores are traditionally required and **Chris** responded with **Liberace's** theme song, *I'll Be Seeing You*.

Chris' program had something for everyone - old favourites, along with some refreshing new numbers, played in his own wonderful style.

Top job, **Chris!**

Introducing Our Star Convention Artist

David Peckham

Biographical details and Glowing Reviews

David Peckham's publicity kit includes the following biographical details :

David Peckham is an organist of multiple musical talents. He has been touring as a theatre organist since 1980 and has performed at many of the finest theatre organs in the USA. His playing has earned accolades from critics around the globe. He has appeared as a featured performer at several conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society and recently completed an 11 concert tour in the United Kingdom under the auspices of the Cinema Theatre Organ Society.

In December 1994, Peckham performed the world's first complete transcription of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* with the Delaware Dance Company, utilising the vast tonal resources of the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society's renowned Kimball theatre organ. This artistic collaboration has gained a widespread recognition of excellence; a seventh engagement is scheduled for December 2000.

Peckham has three recordings to his credit, excerpts of which have been featured on *Pipe Dreams*, Public Radio International's showcase of organs and organists from around the world. Critics have described his playing as "top-notch and highly recommended."

David Peckham has been Resident Organist at Clemens Center in Elmira, New York, since 1977. Clemens Center is an active regional performing arts facility which is built around a renovated 1925 theatre. The 4/20 Marr & Colton theatre organ there has been under the care of the Peckham family for over 30 years. David Peckham has been associated with L.A. Peckham & Son Pipe Organ Service since 1983, specialising in high quality pipe organ

restoration, rebuilding and maintenance.

Peckham's classical training at the Eastman School of Music with Dr David Craighead has allowed him to pursue more traditional organ avenues as well. He has been organist at the Horseheads N.Y. First United Methodist Church since 1985, and has accompanied numerous choral and instrumental groups throughout the Southern Tier of New York State.

In the May/June, 1999 issue of ATOS' Theatre Organ, a letter was written to the American editor from a new English fan of David Peckham's talents :

Dear Editor,

You will probably be surprised to read this note but I feel I had to write to someone your side to say how I feel.

I have been a cinema organ nut for about 40 years and have heard many artists including several from the US. I thought I had heard everything until last Friday. I went to hear your David Peckham who is over here on tour. He was playing the largest Wurlitzer ever installed in UK, a 4/21 - small by US standards, but big to us. I must say, I was totally amazed at the man's versatility. This was true not only in his fantastic playing, but in his choice of programme, which included pieces I had not heard before, along with some I knew but had never heard on the cinema organ.

I was particularly impressed by a piece written by someone I had never heard of called, I think, Robert Elmore. It was a classical piece written, to my ears at least, in the style of Lefebure-Wely and was nothing short of fantastic including glissandos the full length of the pedal board, something I had never seen before. If you meet up with him,

please tell him that at least one Limey thinks he is the "Cat's Whiskers" and please, do come back again.

Anthony Bethell

Hatfield, Hertfordshire, UK

In the September/October, 1998, issue of Theatre Organ, a reviewer gave his report on David Peckham's 1998 ATOS Convention performance in San Francisco on Thursday, 2nd July, 1998:

That evening, the crowd took BART over to the Oakland Paramount to hear David Peckham play its large 4-manual Wurlitzer. Mr Peckham caused quite a stir in 1996 when he burst on the national scene with a brilliant concert at the ATOS convention. His appearance this year at the Art Deco Paramount was another polished, well-planned program exhibiting meticulous console manipulation. The audience was treated to a mix including Gershwin, novelty tunes and an early soft ballad by Ellington. David played *Love Potion #9*, a 1959 pop hit by the Coasters, which contrasted with a hair-raising tremolo toccata, an exciting piece that established his classical credentials. Rocker Freddie Mercury's *Bohemian Rhapsody* was so well adapted to the theatre organ by David that it sounded as though it had been written for this medium. It exhibited many dynamic levels and moods with a light classical feel. His closer, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, was an adventure in strong visual images generated by sound. It was extremely well played, as evidenced by the exceptional absence of audience noises during soft passages and pauses. The result was a much-deserved standing ovation.

Ron Musselman

Sunday, 23rd April, at 2.00pm

Orion Centre Campsie

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