

Sunday 19 May 2013 2:00pm

5 TOSA MembersPlay

"A Fundraiser Show"

for the Christie Organ Restoration
Fund
on the
Wurlitzer Theatre Organ

Marrickville Town Hall
Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads
Marrickville

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From the President



Last issue I said that Donnie Rankin came "with great credentials and you won't want to miss his unique style and presentation." Those who attended the Orion earlier this month can verify that statement. A great mix of the old with the new interspersed with the Artist's comments resulted in a pleasant presentation.

It was extremely pleasing to see so many new faces and to those of you who invited friends I say a big "thank you". I'm sure no one went away disappointed. It also proved that the best promotion is by word of mouth and personal invitation.

Our coming show at Marrickville is a fundraiser for the Christie organ restoration. Each of the presenting Artists is a capable organist and has appeared in concert previously. A variety of styles will be heard in an entertaining program. Each Artist has offered his services free of charge enabling a reduced admission cost while still raising funds for the Christie. By the way – free afternoon tea for this occasion. See you there.

Happy organizing Geoff Brimley

Editorial



What a great atmosphere at the Donnie Rankin show at the Orion Theatre last month. TOSA Executive and Committee members were so pleased to see a large audience for Donnie's first performance in Sydney and we particularly thank all TOSA members who encouraged people to come along for the first time.

I hope you continue to enjoy the article on the Empire Wurlitzer thanks to Len Rawle and John Leeming.

There is still much work to be done on the Christie Organ including the purchase of the electronic relay system, stop tabs and materials for the layout of the organ in the chambers at West Ryde Anglican Church. We look forward to seeing you at the Fundraiser at Marrickville Town Hall on the 19th for a pleasant afternoon of music.

Deadline for TOSA News is the 12th of the previous month.

Enjoy the music, Ernie Vale PO Box A2322 SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235 editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in, telling us what you think.

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit any submitted comments and, as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of TOSA NSW Div.

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor editor@tosa.net.au or in writing to:
The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

New Members

TOSA welcomes new members & wish them a long and happy stay

No new members this month

Christie Organ Update

Xylophone is completed and only requires adjustment when winded.

Marimba action is well underway and Theo is doing his usual good and patient assembly work on it. Graham is working on one of the manual string chests and when this is completed all the original St. Columb's chestwork will be finished.

Tomorrow we expect to take delivery of two Christie Gedackt chests which have been traded from the Pomona, Queensland "Compton Project". Restoration of these chests will commence very soon. Pipework will arrive in due course.

The 4' offset Tuba chest is restored and awaiting new pallet valves which have been ordered from Organ Supply Inc. in the U.S.

Barry has spent quite a few hours refinishing the console sub-frame and has also assembled this on the newly built temporary console dolly. Installation of the primary piston chests will commence soon.

A Sensory Pleasure

"There is nothing like wine for conjuring up feelings of contentment and goodwill. It is less of a drink than an experience, an evocation, a spirit.

It produces sensations that defy description."

Thomas Conklin from "Wine A Primer"

To Watch Out For Sunday 27 July 7:30pm

Silent Film Show

Marrickville Town Hall **David Bailey**

accompanies on the

Wurlitzer Theatre Organ the Silent Movie

"The Cameraman"
Staring
Buster Keaton

filmed by Metro Goldwyn Mayer

Tickets: Members \$20

Concession \$20

Non Members \$25

Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE! For all other cases:

> Small bubble = \$11.00 Quarter Page = \$24.75 Half Page = \$49.50 Full Page = \$99.00 Full Page Insert = \$125.00

Members' Playing Dates The Orion Theatre Campsie

There will be some players days in 2013 - but not every month. Craig Keller will notify members by text when the dates have been confirmed .

Craig Keller on 0418484798 Players and listeners welcome.

Marrickville Town Hall 4th Monday evening at 7:30pm

For PLAYERS DAY in May Please contact Neil to confirm availability

To be sure there is no last minute cancellation at Marrick-ville please ring Neil on 9798 6742 after 7:00pm the Friday before.

Vale Enzo Toppano 1928 - 2013

From the SMH

Enzo Toppano spent 79 years in front of audiences. From the time he made his debut on ABC radio at 13, he was regarded as one of Australia's best entertainers. He was also the father of a showbusiness dynasty.

He was born on February 14, 1928, in Broken Hill, the youngest of six children of Italian farmers Leonardo Toppano and his wife, Katerina (D'Appolonia). The Toppanos had left Italy then spent 10 years in Canada before the winters drove them to warmer climes. Leonardo loved to play the piano accordian so he encouraged Enzo and his brother Lou take up the instrument.

Enzo very quickly became a performer and left school at 16. He went to London in 1949, where he was many times voted the best instrumental performer on the London Palladium circuit. Julie Andrews, Petula Clark and other later luminaries were engaged as his support acts.

In London, he also met another Australian performer, Peggy Mortimer, and they were married in 1950. When they returned to Australia they were among the first entertainers to appear on television, with their own segment on Sydney's first television breakfast show.

Enzo was the musical director,

accompanist for other acts, comedy actor and even cameraman one day when the regular man didn't turn up. Peggy did interviews, sang and played the piano. By the end of the show's run, in early 1961, the Toppanos were working at breakneck pace. Enzo was staring in Harry Wren's travelling show Celebrity Circus, writing music for pantomimes and conducting music and making guest appearances on television and stage. As well, he composed music for the ABC television show Cafe Continental.

Peggy, meanwhile, was making daily appearances in panto, then racing to another theatre to appear in *Thanks for the Memory*, staring Gladys Moncrieff and George Wallace. They were both teaching at their talent school in Crows Nest and trying to bring up two, and soon three, children.

The pace was finally too much. Peggy developed an ulcer and temporarily retired, while Enzo became musical director at the Menzies Hotel.

In 1968, Enzo (music) and Peggy (libretto) wrote the musical *The Flintstones* which successfully toured Australia and New Zealand with the Rudas Organisation. In 1969, they began working exclusively with Tibor Rudas as writers and composers for his organisation in North America, the Bahamas and Europe.

The Toppanos proudly flew the Australian flag across the globe, performing in more than 35 coun-

tries. Whenever Enzo was asked what part of Italy he came from, he always whimsically answered, "Broken Hill, mate."

After returning again to Australia in 1971, the Toppanos and their close friend performer Lorrae Desmond wrote a religious rock opera, *The Jesus Christ Revolution*. Harry Wren had heard that *Jesus Christ Superstar* was emminent and wanted to get his show out before it - so the show was written in six weeks. It toured Australia and was one of the most popular musicals of its time in New Zealand. It also won the award for best new musical at the Edinburgh Festival in 1972.

In 1973 and 1974, Enzo and the entire Toppano Family performed exclusively for the Hilton hotel nightclub circuit throughout Asia.

From 1976 to the mid-1980s, Enzo and the Toppano Family were a permanent fixture at the Manly Music Loft. In 1977, Enzo was a subject on the television program *This is Your Life.*

In 1995, the Toppanos and Desmond began to write a musical called *Six Days*, a love story about an Arab and an Israeli, set against the backdrop of the 1967 Six Day War. It has never been produced.

After Peggy's death in 2003, Enzo dedicated himself to performing in her memory. He and one of his sons, Dean, frequently performed in homes and institutions for dementia and Alzheimer's disease patients in memory of Peggy.

In the last week of his life, Toppano was with his sons in Mexico recording keyboard overdubs for a coming CD for the Latin Americam market.

Enzo Toppano is survived by his children Peta, Lorenzo and Dean.

Lorenzo Toppano

Enzo and Dean performed for the Theatre Organ Society of Australia at the Orion Theatre Campsie as associate artists. (Editor)



Family affair: Enzo and his wife, Peggy Mortimer



Enzo Toppano

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All manuals working, some pedal pitching problems. Very good cabinet condition. Collect from church at Gorokan, central coast.

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Show & Membership Prices

The following TOSA show ticket prices now apply:

Non-members \$32.50
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder \$27.50
TOSA Members \$23.00

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status All Children FREE

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$20 per person Annual Membership Fees are now: \$35.00 for Full membership,

\$25.00 for Concession, Country, Interstate & Overseas.

Membership enquiries Geoff Brimley (02) 6351 3122

membership@tosa.net.au

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

American Theatre Organ Society Convention in Atlanta Georgia 2013

Two Days and Five Big Shows at the Atlanta Fox on Mighty Mo

July 4th with Two Big Concerts on Big Bertha at the Alabama

The Stephenson H. S. Grande Page in Stone Mountain

The Strand Theatre Allen GW-IV in Marietta

Featuring a lineup of your Favourite Concert Artists

At the Fox Theatre, with its 4/42 Moller, see and hear:
Richard Hills, Clark Wilson,
Dave Wickerham, Tony Fenelon,
and Larry-Douglas Embury, Organist-in-Residence!

At the Alabama Theatre, featured at Big Bertha, the now 4/30 Wurlitzer

David Gray and Mark Herman! The Awards Banquet in Birmingham is INCLUDED

At the Stephenson H. S. Grande Page: Dwight Thomas

At the Marietta Strand Theatre Allen GW-IV: Lance Luce

Overture in Chattanooga, with concerts at the beautiful Tivoli Theatre 3/13 Wurlitzer with Jonas Nordwall plus the Memorial Auditorium 4/81 Austin with Walt Strony! also visit and dinner at Rock City on Lookout Mountain

The After-Glow, South Georgia, Rylander Theatre 3/13 Moller with Ron Rhode & the Grand Theatre 3/18 Barton with Jelani Eddington

Accomodation is at the luxurious J.W. Marriott Hotel in Buckhead, Atlanta's most prestigious location, at a special convention rate!

Y'all come to "HERE WITH THE WIND": 2013 ATOS Convention, July 1-6, in beautiful Atlanta, GA! see www.ATOS.org for more details



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An afternoon of music played by

Five TOSA Members

on the 2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ at

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Rds
Marrickville

Sunday 19 May 2013 at 2:00pm

Seating will be at tables of 6 to 8 cabaret style. People can bring their own snacks and drinks if they wish. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available free of charge.

A donation of \$15 per person will go towards the Christie Organ Restoration Fund

No Free list

Bookings by tickets@tosa.net.au or by phone to Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

Booked seats tickets can be collected at the door

No booking available on Trybooking.com for this event

Tickets also available at the door

Artists for the Fundraiser are:

John Batts

Simon Ellis

Peter Held

Graeme Costin

Craig Keller

These restored Christie Organ items have been moved into the chambers at West Ryde Anglican Church



`O happy indoor life in Chorleywood.... - Part Three:

'Mellifluating out from modern brick'

Richard Hills and Len Rawle

This article is reproduced with the kind permission of Len Rawle and with thanks to John Leeming, Editor of Cinema Organ UK

As the fire exit doors were slammed on the Empire, Leicester Square for the final time a golden era was left behind. And yet, as the final pieces of the great Wurlitzer organ were escorted up Regent Street to the waiting calm of Northolt, a new and exciting chapter began. This was, after all, the age of super-sonics, of stereo recording and space travel! What did the future hold? Richard Hills picks up the story ...

ANYONE who has seen a disassembled organ of any variety knows it to be quite a sight – at once impressive because of the sheer quantity of material and yet depressing at the same time! Consequently, I wondered what the scene was like back at the family home in Northolt where the Wurlitzer was being packed away into storage. Len continued the saga:



This picture is one of the last to be taken in the theatre, and shows some activity taking place at the console, lit soley by the reflected glow of the curtain.

"You can imagine the position of my mother in all of this over that fortnight. She never once complained about any of the organ components coming into the

house, day after day. I counted my parents as helpful geniuses - and I apologise if that sounds silly - because my mother as much as my father would instantly say things like 'let's put this so-and-so here'. Also, 'well, under the beds are the obvious places for pipe trays, so we'll have to raise the beds' and so on. In came a couple of bricks, and up went the beds! Nobody ever saw them as they were covered with blankets, but there were double layers of pipe trays under all our beds! Nobody ever saw them as they were covered with blankets, but there were double layers of pipe trays under all our beds! Wardrobes in each bedroom were pulled forward of the wall and behind them a goodly number of the 8' length offset pipes were stored. We fully used the attic, of course, which was nothing like as substantial as this one here [in Chorleywood], but it was a fair size and we managed with great care to distribute the weight of the pipes evenly. The big worries however came with the arrival of the wood Diaphones and the pedal Gambas. For these we used the path in the garden! We covered it with swell shutter frames thus turning the pathway into a long shed. We covered the frames with roofing material and so appeared our waterproof garden 'bunker'. We put the longest Diaphones, the Gambas and the

Marimba in there. The console went in the garage along with a lot of the chestwork, stacked on end. Generous to the end, my father never once commented on having to leave his much prized new Ford Consul car outside until we had finished the house here in Chorleywood!

"Not only did we have a 'growing' Granada eight-ranker up and playing at all times in our home Wurlitzer Lodge, Northolt, we also had the twenty ranks of the Empire organ there yet out of sight to the constant flow of visitors to hear our home installation. I don't think that has ever really been acknowledged anywhere, but it was a real act of support by my parents for my enthusiasm. From Dad's point of view it was a huge learning curve he took in his stride. Although we had erected the eight-ranker with the help of Derek Batten, an electronics wizard who helped us understand the relays when we first went into the Granada, Wandsworth Road, we had never undertaken anything on the scale of the Empire project."

Organs can be particularly vulnerable when they are in storage, but Len was blessed with good fortune on at least one occasion. He continued:

"The console was right behind the garage doors, which had glass in the upper portions. The good thing about that was



Len's Morris 1000 transports a piece of main wind trunking from under the stage at the Empire to Wurlitzer Lodge. The take-off point for the console wind-line is visible on the right. Edith Rawle is on the left of the photo, with Sam Burge on the right (Len Rawle collection)

that after the console had been in there for six months I noticed that the keys on one end of the keyboards were much whiter than on the other end. For a long time I'd been upset, as I've mentioned before, about the condition of the console. It really was looking pretty grim and the keys in particular looked awful. Initially I thought it to be nicotine staining. The keys may or may not have been affected by that but we subsequently found that if ivory isn't exposed to light it will go yellow. I kept experimenting with 'Manager's

Whiting' and Methylated Spirits anything to try to whiten them. I just couldn't get find the answer.

"I think we'd had a particularly good couple of months of summer sunshine and then one day I noticed that one half of the keyboards were beautiful. I thought 'Gosh! they're a lot better!' then I noticed a shadow and stream of light created by the half glazed garage door. I suggested to Dad that we turn the hefty console. He said 'What do you mean turn the console? It must weigh more than a ton'. I said 'Come on, we've got to!

Look – the keys have come up beautifully!' Somehow in that small space we did it using metal rollers on the concrete floor and the process of letting daylight treat the other half of the keyboards commenced. Our secret of how to whiten keys has since be passed on to many appreciative preservationists."

I wondered if Len was concerned about the parts of the organ that were stored in the garden 'bunker' he had made from the shutter frames: "Yes," he said, "but there was

nothing we could do about it. We just kept an eye on it. Nothing was actually on the ground - it was all up on bricks and well ventilated - so there wasn't any danger of water damage, and there was no splitting of any of the timbers. To this day the organ is still on original 1928 leather. How much longer does it go on I wonder? I remember many years ago saying 'Well, I'll give it another ten years and then I'll take the pipes out and up-end the chests one at a time for re-leathering'.

Wurlitzer Lodge - 47 Doncaster Drive, Northolt - home of Len's parents Les and Edith, and temporarily home to a second Wurlitzer organ (Len Rawle collection)



Ten years further on I thought 'Well, perhaps it will do another ten years', and then after another ten years I said the same thing!' The organ continues to play so well today, some 50 years on and so it will be no surprise that I still feel the same today – let's give it another 10 years! For now it all remains entirely original, however when it eventually moves to a new home that will be the perfect opportunity to enjoy re-leathering everything."

I wondered if Len had always intended to follow his father's lead and install the organ in his own home.

"No," he said. "I wanted it to go into a school. Right behind us in Northolt was a school with a hall and I had it in mind that I'd only have to go over there and say, 'Headmaster, would you like to come and hear the organ at 47 Doncaster Drive, and, by the way...' I had this vision, because everyone who ever saw the organ at our home always said, 'How wonderful! I wish we could have one of those!' I thought it would have been a pushover to persuade some Headmaster of a school to put it in their hall and give the children the benefit of seeing how one of these things goes together at the same time. That was what I had in mind. We got in touch with Ealing Town Hall and tried that too, but the climate for it at that time was

nothing like it has been over the last ten or twenty years. There was just no interest whatsoever. The size of the organ societies was quite small also – it was the early days really.

"So, we dropped that idea and, along the way, Judith and I struck up our relationship and when we decided to get engaged we asked the question 'where do we live?' Judith wanted to live down in Sevenoaks; I didn't mind where I lived as long as everybody was happy and not too far away. I was coaching a gentleman called Cliff Crook every month in his house in Ruislip. He had one of the very early Baldwin organs and I used to go up there and give him an hour or so as a very good friend of the family. It was during a casual conversation after we'd had an evening session that he started asking about 'that lovely girl we've seen you with at Wurlitzer Lodge.' Where were we going to live? I said 'We really don't know. We haven't enough money to buy a house, and with the need of a home also for the Empire organ, we are beginning to think we might do the same as Dad did.' In other words, 'where can I find another piece of land?' Mr Crook said 'Well, if you're looking for a piece of land I happened this morning to be driving through Chorleywood and I saw that there was plot numbered 52 available in Berry

Lane.' That was it. The following morning I obtained permission from my departmental boss at the office to have the morning off and I cycled up to the surveyor's office of Rickmansworth Council. Without an appointment, I knocked on the big oak door of the council offices at their stately Chorleywood House and just walked in. The other side of a huge desk supporting masses of papers, files and drawings, I said 'Good morning, would you happen to be the Chief Surveyor?' He said 'Yes! What can I do for you?' I said 'I understand you have some of the original Metropolitan Railway land still for sale!' I was a total novice at such things and, despite not even having telephoned my interest, this kindly gentleman invited me to sit down and he started explaining how one should go about these things. He said 'Plot 52 and just one other on "Metroland" remain available, if you'd like to go and have a look and then agree to write me a letter within 24 hours I'll reserve it for you.' So we did all that! I cycled across the beautiful Chorleywood common (Dog Kennel Lane remains for me the most picturesque road in the UK) to view the land. We wrote a letter, put the deposit down and then got going with the business of arranging a mortgage with my employer, the Royal Insurance Company.



Len helps to emphasise the height of the Diaphone resonators in the garden at Wurlitzer Lodge. Edith Rawle in the centre and Arthur Aldridge (a former editor of the Cinema Organ Journal) on the right.

(Len Rawle collection)

"It seems absurd now, but I was worried, for I was actually £200 short on the amount I could obtain as a mortgage – I think the land was £2,800 and the maximum I knew they would lend on my salary was £2,600. Anyway, when I arrived back at the

office I told my departmental boss how things had gone and that I'd obtained a piece of land. I also confessed that Judith and I had a problem. He said 'Let me first see if there is anything Head Office can do regarding the amount of the mortgage.' Within the hour I learnt from him that they wouldn't move.

"Word of my situation must also have come back to our top City management who operated from the hallowed portals of the executive corridor of our magnificent offices in Leadenhall Street. I'd been back at my desk for a couple of days hoping that somehow Judith and I could find the extra £200 when Mr A H Edwards, the executive who oversaw my boss, called for me to present myself in his office. His was a place where no-one, other than departmental heads, normally ventured, so a certain amount of anxiety was in the air as I trotted down the sweeping staircase into the marbled labyrinth of executive corridors and magnificent managerial city offices. AHE's kindly nature, however, was not unknown to me as he closely followed the progress of 'his boys' as he called youngsters who were learning the insurance game. By way of example, he would occasionally take us out for an extended lunch and educate us in the ways of the big city life - it was this that

eventually convinced me to join the outside staff as a surveyor rather than remain desk bound.

"His normally closed door was wide open and he quickly invited me in sat me down and said, 'Tell me about this house and the plot of land.' I gave him the full story also about the organ, and he said 'I'm not a musician or a practical man but it all sounds very interesting and ambitious.' Sitting there at the end of his impressive desk, I was beginning to await his reinforcement of the bad news regarding the maximum amount of the mortgage, when all of a sudden, his hand came across the table and he said 'Leonard, here is an envelope with a small cheque inside. I'd like you to make use of it to help achieve what you want.' I just didn't know what to say. So I opened the envelope and there was a £200 cheque. It was a marvellous lesson and a moment that changed my life in many ways, not least how to deal with other people. When somebody does something so significant for you, it transforms your attitude to many things.

Anyway, he said 'You don't have to say anything; the money has been in the bank for some time, it's doing nothing and it's not immediately required. When you feel you're in a position to repay it, I'd appreciate seeing you again with a piece of paper that you'll pass



The Empire Wurlitzer console at Chorleywood (Len Rawle collection)

across the desk to me. Now off you go!' It was just like that, all sorted in a couple of minutes. I got straight back to work feeling as high as a kite.

"Thanks to my casual earnings deputising on Hammond Organ each Monday evening for John Bowrey at the Silver Blades Streatham Ice Rink, I was able to return to the executive corridor six months later with my own cheque.

"Then, of course, we had to get down to the business of designing the house and digging the foundations!"

To be continued

You know you're getting older when you try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you're not wearing any.

Leonard L. Knott from "To a Senior with Love"

If all be true I do think,
There are five reasons we should
drink;

Good wine - a friend - or being dry - or lest we should be by and by - or any other reason why.

Henry Aldrich
"Reasons for Drinking"

TOSA NSW

* 2013 - OUR 53rd YEAR *

Silent Movie Sunday 27 July at 7:30pm Marrickville Town Hall Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads, Marrickville Contact Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

TOSA South Australia

Tuesdays and weekends TOSA (SA) members play the 4/29 Wurlitzer in their Capri Theatre, Goodwood Road, Goodwood (08) 8272 1177

TOSA Western Australia

John Leckie Music Centre 3/12 Compton
Currently Members days first Sunday of the month at 2pm in the
Dalkeith Hall using a Kawai Organ
Contact: Pat Gibbs (08) 9450 2151 patqibbs@oneseniors.com.au.

TOSA Gold Coast

Club Musical Afternoon on the 3rd Sunday of each month (except December)

Contact: Rosa Free 5575 3295

TOSA Queensland

Executive Secretary: Brett Kavanaugh 0412 879 678

Stirling Productions

Karrinyup Community Centre, Perth, Western Australia All concerts are on Sundays at 2pm. Prior bookings are essential with John Fuhrmann on (08) 9447 9837

Interstate TOSA Members are welcome to a 50% discount to concerts on presentation of their membership card

TOSA Victoria - mto

Contact Margaret Sutcliffe on (03) 9891 7227

Warragul Theatre Organ Society

Events Contact: Di Yuill (03) 5623 3301

Members Diary

May 6th Committee 7:00pm WRAC

**Sunday 19th May 2013 2:00PM **

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads

Marrickville

John Batts; Simon Ellis; Peter Held;

Graeme Costin & Craig Keller

Play

a Christie Organ Fundraiser show on the

World Renowned WURLITZER THEATRE ORGAN

Book at tickets@tosa.net.au **or** Contact Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

June 2013

Monday 3rd Committee 7:00pm WRAC

Radio 2MBS-FM 102.5 "Colours of the King" (program of the Organ Music Society of Sydney) 2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm

Web Sites of Interest:

https://www.facebook.com/tosansw www.theatreorgansaust.info (history of cinema organ installations in Australasia)

www.sydneyorgan.com (our sister society, the Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)

www.ATOS.org for details of the ATOS Convention, Atlanta Georgia USA

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