

TOSA NEWS

March 2013
Volume 52 No.2

Price: \$2.00

Sunday 3 March 2013 2:00pm

David Bailey

Plays

**“ The Mighty Wurlitzer
Sings the Blues”**

on the

**World renowned Wurlitzer Theatre
Organ**

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads

Marrickville

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From the President



Our 2013 Show Season got off to a great start with Dr. John Atwell taking us on a musical trip through the world of the cinema, particularly highlighting the place of the mighty theatre organ in those early days of silent movies. A treat for those who attended.

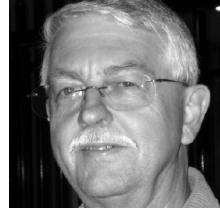
This show was all the more notable as John donated all of his costs to the Christie restoration project for which we sincerely thank him.

The success of the Society, and the shows we produce, is dependent on volunteers. As in most similar organizations, we are always looking for willing helpers for a range of situations. Involvement can range from very minimal to whatever extent one desires. Please consider offering your services to your Society: I assure you there is something you could do. **Two fit TOSA members required to help set up chairs at Marrickville Town Hall from 10:00am 3 March. Please contact John Shaw for details.**

Elsewhere in this edition there is news of receipt of a bequest from one of our past Vice Presidents and long time member of the Society, the late Frank Ellis. Have a look!

Happy organizing,
Geoff Brimley

Editorial



The organs advertised in this issue are still available to provide members with a wide choice of instruments.

David Bailey promises an interesting program for his show on 3 March so please mark your diaries now and book your seats.

The American Theatre Organ Society Convention in Atlanta Georgia this year promises to be most interesting with such a variety of organs and such a line up of talented organists. **See change of artist in this issue.** You need to be a member of ATOS to participate. Go to the web site www.ATOS.org for more details.

The article on the Wurlitzer from the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, London is the first of a series. I hope you enjoy the read and look forward to the next instalment.

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...



A tribute to Frank was published in the Jan/Feb 2012 edition of TOSA News and is repeated in this edition.

The Committee of TOSA is pleased to be able to inform you that a bequest of eighty thousand (80,000) dollars was recently received from Frank's Estate.

While the Committee were aware last year that this bequest had been made, it was considered advisable to delay communication to members until the period had elapsed during which any legal claim or challenge to the bequest could be made.

The majority of these funds will be used as a reserve for maintenance of the instruments at Campsie and Marrickville, both of which are in need of further maintenance. You are aware that the budget for the Christie restoration and installation is in the vicinity of one hundred thousand dollars which has been depleting our existing reserves at a steady rate.

This kind bequest has come at a most fitting time for the Society and we appreciate the forethought that Frank exhibited in making this provision to the Society.

Maybe it is something you could consider – no gift is too small or too large. If you would like further information on how this can be done, please talk to Vice President John Shaw .

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

THANK YOU, FRANK

Many members will remember the late Frank Ellis - a member of long standing, a Vice-President for many years, compere of concerts as well as, for many years, the now late, lamented radio program.

To Watch Out For
Sunday 28 April
2:00pm
first time in Australia
Donnie Rankin
from the USA
plays
The Orion Wurlitzer

FOR SALE

THEATRE ORGAN RECORDS

(LPs) Large collection from many countries (collectors items). Many recorded in original theatres (and by their organists) long gone, with magnificent large photos on the covers.

(LPs give the best sound with good speakers). These records are unavailable elsewhere - (mostly new). Also Fair Organ and Carousel (LPs) etc.

New record players and LPs are back.

Contact TOSA Member

Peter Anderson,

PO Box 35 Deepwater 2371

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 Febuary & March

Please contact Neil to confirm availability

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

VALE FRANK ELLIS

Repeated from the January/February 2012 TOSA News.

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of one of the Theatre Organ Society's most prominent figures, Frank Ellis. Long time members will recall Frank as the compere of many TOSA concerts, a role he would fulfil for nearly three decades. Always neatly attired in that well presented dinner suit complete with bow tie, Frank was the symbol of the Theatre Organ Society in New South Wales.

Frank was born in Manchester, England in 1917. His family migrated to Australia in 1925. They ultimately settled in Melbourne and it would be here that Frank would be introduced to the world of the theatre organ at Melbourne's Capitol theatre, in the halcyon days of the silent movie. The first site of the organist rising out of the pit coupled with the wonderful sounds of the mighty Wurlitzer would strike a chord with Frank. This experience would generate in him unbounded enthusiasm for the theatre organ, something that would stay with him for the remainder of his long life.

In the 1930's, Frank took to retailing as his occupation working at Foy and Gibsons in Melbourne and later for the Tarax company which used to operate a number of beverage outlets in

Melbourne. Frank was later sent to Sydney to manage the one and only Tarax store in Pitt street, but the Sydney venture met with little success. The year was 1939 and the Second World War was upon us. Frank enlisted in the army and was sent to Greta camp near Newcastle. Later his war service would see him serve in Townsville, New Guinea and Singapore. At the end of the war, Frank and his family had moved to Sydney where they ran their own business, the local grocery shop at Wentworthville.

Despite being a long way from the city, Frank did not have far to go to hear the theatre organ as the local independent cinema, the Regent theatre at Wentworthville, possessed a small 2/7 Wurlitzer, played in those years by Les Denley. Frank was also no stranger to many of the suburban theatres around Sydney.

Of course the theatres which he spent a great deal of time in were those that had theatre pipe organs installed - both in the city and suburbs.

The Roxy at Parramatta, Melba at Strathfield, Savoy Theatre in Hurstville, Arcadia at Chatswood to name a few of the shows in the suburbs. Then there was those great movie theatres in the city, the Regent, Capitol, State, Plaza and Prince Edward. Frank knew them all very well, and many organists knew him, even a few he had served with in the Army. He forged friendships with many of them in those years. The

friendships continued with several of those gentlemen well and truly after the theatre organ had ceased to exist in theatres. The names of those organists included Denis Palmistra, Wilbur Kentwell and Reubert Hayes to name just a few.

In 1955, Frank moved to Lidcombe and by this time the grocery business had been sold. Frank went to work for Farmer and Co. in Sydney (later to become Myers department store). Thus began a new career in his life. Frank would become a familiar fixture at this store for the next 25 years as the manager of the Tie section which was located on the ground floor. Over time, it came as no surprise to those who knew him, the Tie department at Myers became the font of knowledge on all things to do with theatre organs! It was not uncommon to notice a former or current musician chatting to Frank over the counter on one's visit to this store.

In 1962, Frank Ellis joined the very young Theatre Organ Society. In those days, there were still several theatre organs around in Sydney in their original venues, but only the 2/10 Wurlitzer at the Prince Edward theatre was still played regularly by Noreen Hennessy.

The early 1960's would be the beginning of the decade that the Theatre Organ would resurface, this time in a state of long term preservation through the efforts of volunteers in the T.O.S.A. move-

ment. Frank, with his enthusiastic demeanour and theatre organ encyclopaedia in hand, went onto become not only Editor of TOSA NEWS, but also as a very long term committee man and Vice-President of the Theatre Organ Society in NSW.

It was during those years that his vast knowledge of theatre organ and its organists would be shared amongst like minded people in the theatre organ scene through his years as Editor of T.O.S.A. NEWS. An interesting aspect of his journalistic skills was the great deal of effort and trouble he would pursue to obtain interviews with many of the organists from that golden age. Sometimes this would involve travelling interstate to arrange an interview. His series of biographies of the many Australian theatre organists overtime have become interesting reading for the historian.

It was also well known that Frank Ellis had a great interest in radio and compering. He was great friends with Walter Elliot, radio announcer from 2CH and in later years a personal friend of Geoff Moore, retired announcer from ABC radio in Newcastle. It was his interest in the medium that would lead him onto compering concerts, and in later years, becoming a radio announcer himself, with his very own theatre organ programme presented on behalf of TOSA.

Frank became a long serving committee man in the 1960's

as well as compering concerts. Before the Society owned its own organs, Frank would be compering those fondly remembered concerts at the Capitol Theatre and the State theatre in Sydney. From November 1968, Frank was at the microphone on the occasion of the official opening of the Marrickville Town Hall organ rescued from the long since demolished Prince Edward theatre. In 1988, Frank was again at the microphone for the opening of the transplanted Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer organ at the Orion Centre (Orion Theatre) at Campsie. There was even a stint compering at the Orpheum Theatre at Cremorne for a special theatre organ concert.

Frank Ellis was also on the organising committee for a number of those famous TOSA Conventions and was back on the Committee again in the 1980's and 1990's for another long term. It was from 1985 that Frank also presented his regular weekly theatre organ programme on 2 CBA FM. This task he performed admirably for a few years until 1988. This was the period in which theatre organ music reached a very large audience around the Sydney area. It was advertising money could not buy.

Frank retired from compering in the late 1990's, but returned in 2003 to comper one last concert at Marrickville Town Hall. After that time, he continued to be seen regularly at the many concerts at the society's venues until recent years when he fell ill.

In addition to being a long serving member of TOSA, Frank was also one of the founding members of the Australian Cinema and Theatre Society in 1982 and continued to undertake an active roll in that group as well. His contribution to promoting theatre organs and the Theatre Organ Society was monumental.

Frank passed away on December 22nd 2011 at the age of 94.

Ian Hanson

Theatre Organs available for purchase and or to a good home

FREE TO COLLECT FROM NORTH
SYDNEY

c.1974 Wurlitzer Electronic Organ Model 4573C

2x61 note manuals, 3rd manual
25 note synth,
25 note pedalboard. May need
some work.

Ph: Libby Jones 0417 200 999
or 9955 7883. Email:
libbyj@auslin.com.au

Eminent Solina P256 organ

"Free to anyone who will pick it
up from Burwood (NSW), a non-
working **Eminent Solina P256
organ** – may be good for parts.

Contact David Gordon 0400 426
373."

**Secretary, The Sydney Festival
Male Voice Choir**

**National Panasonic
Technics Organ
Model SSEX 30 (6)**

Purchased August 1987 in good working order. 2 keyboards and pedals. Price negotiable. Located at Hurstville to be picked up by the purchaser.

Phone Glenda on 0411 255 235

**Yamaha "Orchestrelle"
2006/151/33
Player Organ
in working order**

Player mechanism made by Mastertouch, Sydney, c.1986

This organ was purchased by the late Bill Denham whilst working for Mastertouch and is

now with his Sister Kate.

There are 40 rolls that go with the organ. Price is \$1500 negotiable and purchaser to arrange transport. Location Blacktown area.

Contact Kay Smith 0413093397

**Lowrey GAK25H - 1
Theatre Organ
played regularly**

2 manuals and 25 note pedal board. Well maintained and played by a musician on a regular basis until 18 months ago.

Price negotiable. Located at Carlingford and purchaser to arrange transport. Contact Jenny on 98764846 or 0459592119

Show & Membership Prices

The following TOSA show ticket prices now apply:

	All Artists
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,
and

\$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%

Lane Cove Uniting Church Organ

Following government rezoning of the site, the Finlayson Street Uniting Church at Lane Cove is soon to be demolished and redeveloped for residential purposes. The Church's organ, which has served well for over 50 years and has continued in regular use, **is now available for sale and needs to be removed before the end of April 2013.** Information on the organ is shown below.

1. From Organ Music Society of Sydney www.sydneyorgan.com
Finlayson Street Uniting Church
cnr Finlayson Street & Cox's Lane, Lane Cove
Built 1960 J.P. Eagles 2 manuals and pedals. 4 ranks. ext., electro. magnetic action. Additions 1980 G. Kendall.

2. Advertisement by Kelvin Hastie (UC Synod Music Committee)
for Sydney Organ Journal
Pipe Organ For Sale (Price by negotiation)

J.P. Eagles 1960, with later enlargements
Electro-magnetic action with Kimber-Allen electro-mechanical switches
Good quality console cabinet with roll-top lid
Good quality silent blower.
It is thought that Eagles obtained the Diapason rank from an old 1920s "Fotoplayer" organ – an automated instrument played by rolls to accompany silent movies.

Ranks available –
Open Diapason (8' 4' 2'),
Geigen (pipes from 4'),
Bourdon(16' 8' 4' - open flute from 4'),
Stopped Flute (8' 4' 2')
Dulciana (TC - pipes from 4')

An additional rank of reed pipes (uninstalled) is also available.
I am trying to find a new home for the organ and thought that you might know if there is anywhere in your area that might be looking for a nice pipe organ - church, school, hall etc. or private enthusiast.

Contact Hugh McCormack on (02) 9427 1713 or by email lanecoveuniting@bigpond.com

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

Accommodation 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***

The next show

David Bailey

Presents

“ The Mighty Wurlitzer Sings the Blues ”
on the

**World Renowned genuine Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Marrickville Town Hall,
Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads Marrickville**



Sunday 3 March 2013, 2:00pm – 4:30pm

For the best reserved seats you can book securely on trybooking.com by going to www.tosa.net.au then Events, click on the Show Title then scroll down to [click here to buy your tickets](#), [click on it](#) then select your preferred seat/s and complete the purchase.

David says he really enjoys playing the music of the Blues genre and proposes an interesting mix of blues music along with traditional theatre organ stylings.

Marrickville Council has been busy during January/February refurbishing Marrickville Town Hall with a new colour scheme. Come along and see the updates to the Town Hall as well as hear one of Australia's fine exponents of the art of playing Theatre Organ.

Through performing for many organ societies in Brisbane and interstate, David has acquired invaluable knowledge on every aspect of the cinema organ. He is now keen to venture down new musical avenues and bring the seldom heard voice of the cinema organ to a new audience.

Cinema organs are rare across the globe and until recently Brisbane possessed only one. With the installation of the Wurlitzer style 260 (formerly of Brisbane's Regent theatre) in the Australian Cinematheque in Brisbane, a new opportunity to experience films from the silent era has arrived. Sydney is fortunate to have two genuine Wurlitzer theatre organs in perfect working order owned and maintained by the Theatre Organ Society.

David is now kept busy composing and performing scores to augment films from the first age of cinema. This includes screenings of rare and important films at the Cinematheque and also as one of a group of musicians performing for the Australian Silent Film Festival at various venues around the country. David continues to perform for TOSA in many states and will play the Marrickville Wurlitzer, considered by organists world wide as one of the best 2 manual Wurlitzer installations in the world.

**Tickets : Members \$23;
Non Member Pensioner/Seniors Card \$27.50
Non-Members \$32.50;**

All Children FREE. Students FREE entry on confirmation of student status by phone booking a ticket prior to the show or download the Free entry form from www.tosa.net.au and send it in

Group booking for 10 or more adults \$20 per person

for the best paid reserved seats

book early and securely online at trybooking.com

Visa & Mastercard accepted

Go to www.tosa.net.au click on Events, then the show title, then scroll down to **to buy your tickets click here** and complete your booking by selecting your preferred seat

or

book by phone to Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

Visa & Mastercard accepted

' O happy indoor life in Chorleywood....

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

...where strangest dreams of all are realised...! So began Sir John Betjeman's fabled verse in 'Metroland'; a television programme which has become as legendary in film circles as the subject of that poem, **Len Rawle**, has in ours. Forty years have passed since Betjeman's famed journey north on the Metropolitan Line, and some fifty years since the great Wurlitzer organ of the Empire, Leicester Square followed the same path from the towering brick and smoke of the metropolis to the peace and serene calm of the Metro-lands. **Richard Hills** follows the remarkable story of that journey in this series, and turns the proverbial spotlight on to an instrument whose significance cannot be understated.



Part One: Empire Days

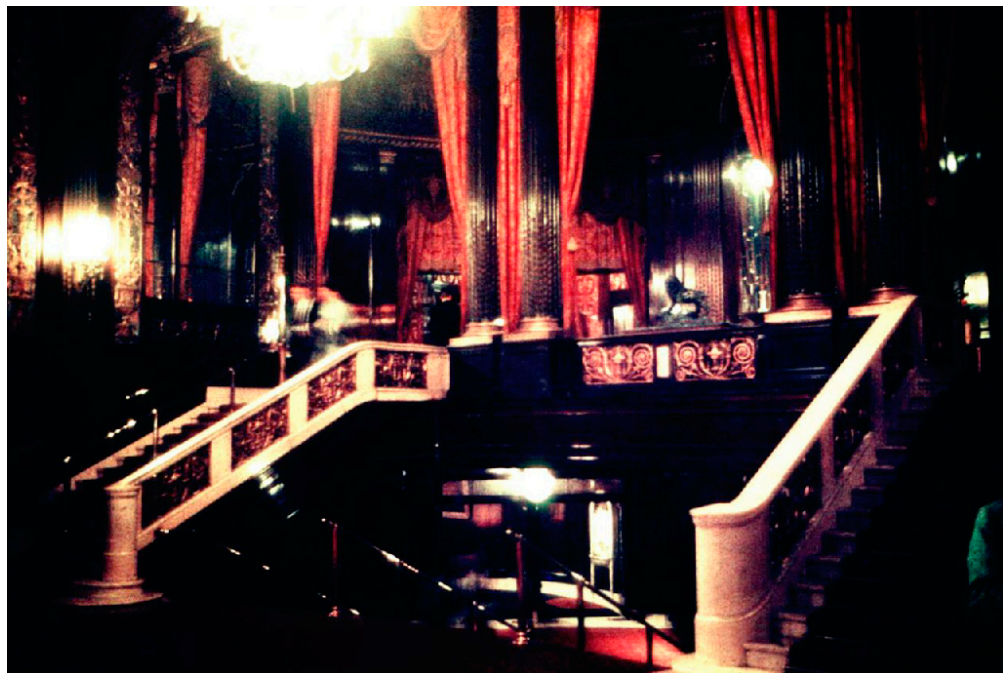
IN A delightful corner of Berry Lane nestles the family home known, appropriately enough, as 'Tonawanda'. Surrounded by shrubs and trees, backed by a handsome garden, and benefitting from a typically open-plan design redolent of the forward-thinking 1960s, the passer-by would be forgiven for mistaking number 132 as just another comfortable suburban residence, were it not for a slightly larger-than-usual expanse of windowless brick to the left of the front porch.

*Opposite page: **The magnificently opulent foyer at the Empire** (Len Rawle collection)*

*Below: **A rather dark photo of the foyer reveals some of the richness of colour which greeted patrons of the theatre** (Tony Moss archive)*

Therein it was my pleasure to talk to its designer and builder, Len Rawle, about the story of his famous Empire organ. One of two 'twin' instruments built by the Wurlitzer company in 1928 (the other being for Loew's State in Syracuse, NY) it is rumoured that the instrument originally intended for Syracuse ended up coming to the Empire as that theatre (also owned by MGM) was finished first. Similar four-manual instruments, again built in 1928, were ordered for the Palace Theatre in Rochester, NY (21 ranks) and the Beacon Theatre in New York City (19 ranks).

As the great console of the Empire organ sat timelessly in one corner of the living room, stop-rails glowing enticingly, the thought struck me that, if key





boards could talk, the history pouring forth from that particular set would be remarkable. Jesse Crawford cut some of his most famous records at those key-boards, Reginald Foort and Sandy Macpherson cemented their fame as leading theatre organists of the day in the same manner. Quentin Maclean was a regular after-hours visitor. Later on, the great instrument would channel the stylings and creativity of the likes of Jackie Brown, Eric Spruce, Nelson Elms, Hubert Selby and George Blackmore. Surely there can be few instruments left in the world with such a pedigree?

Len was barely into his twenties when this saga began, and I wanted to learn more about how,

at such a tender age, he came to own one of the greatest instruments to cross the Atlantic.

"I was a Junior Clerk in the Royal Insurance Company in Leadenhall Street, EC3," he began, "and, as was the way in those days, one of the early things that we did was to open the post and read the newspapers. There just happened to be a little mention in the Daily Telegraph that the Empire Theatre was due to close. I thought 'this is where that fantastic organ is that's on the headed-notepaper of Mr Ralph Bartlett' (he regularly used to write nice notes to me, encouraging me). I hadn't played the organ then, but I'd been to a couple of films there and heard it

being played from sitting in the back stalls – I think it was Nelson Elms that I heard there – and I always thought that it made a lovely rich rolling sound.

“So I saw this mention in the Daily Telegraph and I immediately got on the phone to Ralph. I said to him, ‘Look, you keep telling me that we can’t have a meeting at the Empire, Leicester Square because of the importance of the theatre (with its Royal premières and such) but it’s closing so surely they’ll allow you to go in to have a final concert there?’

*Opposite page: **Crowds through the Empire entrance in the rain in the 1930s** (Tony Moss archive)*

*Below: **The Wurlitzer console in the Empire after a re-paint** (Wayne Ivany collection)*

“He didn’t do anything about it initially, so I rang the Empire because, surprisingly enough, we were allowed to use the phone in those early days, and we were used to speaking to the managers of companies and so on, so I had no qualms about picking the phone up and saying, ‘Can I speak to the General Manager, please?’

“I said, ‘Could you tell me something about the closure of the building and what’s going to happen to the organ?’ He said, ‘We will sell it.’

“To cut a long story short I eventually said to him, ‘I belong to an organ society. Do you think it might be possible to have a meeting there?’ He said, ‘I can’t see any reason why not!’





Above: **The circle lounge at the Empire** (Tony Moss archive)

Opposite page: **The splendid Empire Dome** (Len Rawle collection)

I then passed it back to Ralph, who rang him and organised that in a couple of weeks' time we could go in and have a farewell concert for the Wurlitzer. That's really how I got the TOC to go there and have a meeting, and they booked Jackie Brown and George Blackmore to play it.

"Ralph rang me back and said, 'I've organised it,' and I said, 'Oh, that's marvellous and I can't wait!' Then I said to him, 'I've just got this Ferrograph tape recorder. How about recording it? Would that be possible?' He rang me back the following day and said 'I've made special arrangements for you to get there an hour beforehand and you can bring your Ferrograph up into the Circle and you can set your microphone up there and record it' – which I did.

"The next thing that happened

on the day was that Ralph was faffing about down in the Stalls and he shouted up in his broad East-end voice, 'Oi! If you want to play this thing you'd better come down here now!'

"So I flashed downstairs and leaped over the orchestra rail on to the bench. I'd only ever played the seven rank Wurlitzer in Aldershot and the original eight ranks we had at Northolt, and I wasn't used to four manuals or anything like that. I sat there at the cockpit and thought, 'Hell's bells!' So I just did the sensible thing of only putting down the stops that I recognised from the Aldershot job. I was amazed at how tatty

it looked, but as soon as you put your hands on the keys, and put down two Tibias, a Vox and Saxophone, goodness gracious, this sound just came out! It was just an astonishing experience to play.

"I played for about fifteen minutes and extended the chorus – added some strings and the Tuba – and everything just felt silky-smooth, like a Rolls-Royce compared with all the other instruments I'd played. Nothing else had that 'quality feel' about it. And that was it! I felt that it had to be preserved, and we had to do something about it.

"It was about seven weeks away from the closure of the

building, so that's when I went home and started talking to my dad and said, 'We've really got to save this organ somehow.' He said, 'Why not?', and added that he would always find a way of storing it. Of course, neither of us had seen inside it then!

"Anyway, I counted up my bank balance which was, frankly, a few hundred pounds and I then went, by appointment, to meet the manager, Mr Albert Sidi, after work and had a chat with him in the foyer about the possibility of buying it. He'd explained that they'd had these high offers from a couple of organ-builders and one scrap metal merchant but



he said 'since you're wanting to preserve it for the next generation' (which was the promise that I made him), 'I like that.' He was a Jewish gentleman who had been there for many years and he said, 'We're in the hard commercial world here, but we do have an affection for the organ. It's done us proud. I'll put your case to the board.'

"He did that within forty-eight hours, and he sent me a letter at home confirming that we could have it, and that it would have to come out within a three week window, beginning from the date of the letter. Anything that was left there at the end of the three weeks would cost me ten thousand pounds! He explained that there was a very tight schedule for the rebuild and they would have to put a stop on all the heavy machinery that was coming in to get the girders down and so forth if we weren't out because of the safety issues. Even in those days they were worried about those things.

"That frightened us. Funny enough it didn't frighten my mother, but Dad and I sat down and thought, 'How can we possibly do this within three weeks?!' The long and short of it was that we pulled everyone together that we could think of who could help us, and that included Derek Batten of Compton's and Bill Sellars who had tuned and maintained the Empire organ, and who was already tuning our organ at home.

Between them both we learned the art of organ restoration. Bill said he would take a fortnight off work to come and do what he could on the relays. He said that's where our problem would be – getting the relays disconnected and out in time. What with the neighbour having a lorry that he was prepared to bring along and Robin Richmond saying he'd bring his little van, we gradually put together a team of about fourteen people and kept them informed day-by-day about whether or not we were going to go ahead.

"Backtracking slightly, after having had the letter, the following night Dad and I went to the cinema armed with hand-lamps and we met Mr Sidi who introduced us to a sub house engineer. The proper engineer had already been moved on to another job. This other chap said, 'Well, I don't know much about the organ. I don't even know where it is!' You can imagine us, being used to a few ranks under a stage – we had no idea that you had to go up ladders on the side of the stage, and he had no idea where the blower, relays or setter-board were.

"We managed to find the Main chamber (because I knew the sound came from 'over there', as it were), by going up thirty-rungs or so of iron ladder by the side of the stage and through a trap door. As I went through the trap door dust came down on top of me and, suddenly, there I was looking straight up at the longest wood Diaphone pipe! And I thought,

'Oh, my goodness gracious me, what are we going to do? My father said, 'Go on, up you go', so I went straight in and he came up behind me. and said, 'Oh, for goodness sake! How does this lot come out?'

The only access to it appeared to be the trapdoor, and that chamber was 'stacked' with four full sets of shutters, two sets above the other. After that we went down and found the console. We never found the blower or the relays because we needed someone to get us up into the roof trusses above the dome for that (we had asked Bill Sellars where those were). Truth was that it was only once we started taking the job out that we then found where the Solo chamber was and where the blower was – it was under the stage in the coal hole, actually. Next to it was a room with the setter relay in it, in a terrible

state! So, it was all a bit frightening.

"I immediately said 'shall we take something home in the car?' but Dad said, 'We don't touch any of this, because once we've started we are committed. Until you reply to the letter and accept the full terms and the ten thousand pound condition we leave it well alone.' It was absolutely the right decision, and a critical point.

"With that, Dad and I came home with our hand-lamps, and the discussion about drawing in other people came about. However, all of that ate into the first week, and we didn't go back to the theatre because I needed to confirm it. I held off for that first week until we pulled a team together. Then, of course, it was all go!"

To be continued

Are you in need of legal advice?

For legal advice on a variety of matters:
Conveyancing/Property; Criminal Law;
Employment law;
Wills & Estates

Contact: **Rhonda Furner**,
BA (Hons,UNSW), LL.B (UNSW), Dip. Legal Practice.

Mob - 0451 085 199

c/o The People's Solicitors - 9356 3307

TOSA NSW

* 2013 - OUR 53rd YEAR *

Donnie Rankin USA Sunday 28 April at 2:00pm

Orion Centre Theatre

155 Beamish Street, Campsie

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 patgibbs@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

March 2013

Tuesday 5th Committee 7:00pm Burwood RSL

****Sunday 3rd March 2013 2:00PM ****

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads

Marrickville

David Bailey PLAYS

“The Mighty Wurlitzer Sings the Blues”

on the

World Renowned WURLITZER THEATRE ORGAN

Book on-line at trybooking.com see www.tosa.net.au **or**
Contact Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

April 2013

Tuesday 2nd Committee 7:00pm Burwood RSL

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.theatreorgansaustralia.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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