

TOSA NEWS

March/April 2024

Volume 63 No.2

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THE PRINCE EDWARD WURLITZER CENTENARY CONCERT SERIES

**Tony Fenelon at the
Marrickville Town Hall Wurlitzer**

Sunday, 5 May 2024



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Dear Members,

We got off to a flying start in March with the *Magical Afternoon of Organ & Jazz* at West Ryde Anglican Church (see Rod Blackmore's review in this issue). Special thanks to committee members and volunteers who started packing up the afternoon tea tables etc. during the second half of the show as we needed to vacate the church by 5pm due to another booking.

The Presidents of all the TOSA divisions had a "virtual" meeting via computer. You may have heard the term "zoom meeting". At the meeting in September 2023, one topic of discussion was a National Award of Merit. There were nominations for the late Bill Schumcher (former long-serving NSW Committee member) and Barb Cornish (former TOSA SA President). Bill's award was posthumously awarded at a concert at Kelvin Grove State College (home of the TOSA QLD Christie) and was accepted by his niece. Bill had served on Committee from the 60's until he moved to northern NSW in the 90's.

Whilst mentioning the name "Bill" William Coale, author of *The Genius of George Wright* biography spent three days in Sydney en route back to the USA and was able to attend the Marrickville players event in March. Bill thoroughly enjoyed his time at the Wurlitzer having about 4 or 5 turns at the console during the course of the afternoon. I was able to call in after work and let him have a viewing of the chambers. This year is the Centenary of the

Editor



Hello Members,

I hope you all had an enjoyable Easter and long weekend spent with family and friends.

Before I dive into what is featured in this issue of TOSA News, I'd like to thank this issue's main contributors - Rod Blackmore, Barry Tooker, Neil Palmer and Roger Dunk.

I'd also like to thank everyone who has sent in kind comments and feedback regarding my first issue of TOSA News. The support is greatly appreciated.

In this issue of TOSA News you will find information regarding TOSA's next event, players' days at the Orion Centre, a review of the "Magical Afternoon of Organ & Jazz" event, and much more!

I hope you enjoy this issue of TOSA News, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Tony Fenelon's concert at the Marrickville Wurlitzer this coming May.

Oliver Dunk, Editor

Marrickville Wurlitzer having been shipped from the factory in August 1924 for installation in the Prince Edward Theatre. Oliver will be featuring some articles and historic photos of this instrument over the coming months.

That's all for now.
Neil, President

From the Mailbox...



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Please submit all comments
via email to:
editor@tosa.net.au

Please Note

The Society's only bank account is
with **St George**.

Details are **BSB 112-879,**
account number 442 088 530.

Vale John McLennan

Long time TOSA Victoria member John McLennan passed away on the 31st of March. John had kindly donated his time and expertise to help restore some of the WRAC Christie chests prior to installation in the new building.

New Members

TOSA is pleased to welcome new members Richard & Joanna Phillips of Willoughby to the society.

Vale Member

TOSA member Joan Robb sadly passed away on the 9th of February, 10 days shy of her 20th anniversary as a TOSA member. Joan was a regular Season Ticket holder.

For Sale

Reader's Digest Music Books in very good used condition.

1 of Treasury of Best Loved Songs, Published 1972 (1989 7th printing) 114 All-Time Family Favourites

2 of Popular Songs That Will Live Forever, Published 1982

Surplus to my requirements

All sold as single units, \$20 each. Can be collected by arrangement at player days etc or posted at cost for approx \$14 extra.

Contact Craig Keller, 0418 484 798 or craigkeller1966@gmail.com

Membership Fees

Membership and Renewal of Membership

\$25 Full membership, \$20 Concession, \$25 Interstate or Overseas

(Only one TOSA News per household)

Membership Enquiries

0417 971 212 membership@tosa.net.au
Associate Membership for spouse/partner
an additional 50%

UPCOMING TOSA EVENTS

The Prince Edward Wurlitzer

Centenary Concert Series

Sunday, 5 May 2024

Marrickville Town Hall

**Tony Fenelon at the
Marrickville Town Hall Wurlitzer**

Theatre organ virtuoso Tony Fenelon will perform a concert on TOSA's 2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ originally installed in the Prince Edward Theatre, Sydney.

Find out more on the next page!

Sunday, 7 July 2024

Marrickville Town Hall

Organist(s) to be announced!

**Look out for another event
at West Ryde later this year
as well as the first concert
on the Orion Wurlitzer since
its major flood repairs!**

Stay tuned!

Advertising

Rates in

TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

Members' Dates

West Ryde Anglican Church

Wednesday, 17 April

Wednesday, 15 May

Convenor is John Weismantel

0435 258 287 or

whitecoats@bigpond.com

Please email him to confirm availability

Marrickville Town Hall

NO PLAYERS DAY IN APRIL

Monday, 27 May

Convenor is John Batts

0420 424 103

Please call him to confirm availability

Orion Centre

Thursday, 11 April

Thursday, 9 May

Convenor is Craig Keller

0418 484 798 or

craigkeller1966@gmail.com

Please email him to confirm availability

TONY FENELON AT THE MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL WURLITZER

Sunday 5 May 2024
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NSW presents Tony Fenelon at
the soon 100 year old Marrickville Town
Hall Wurlitzer

On Sunday, 5 May 2024, Theatre Organ
virtuoso Tony Fenelon will perform a spec-
tacular concert on TOSA's 2/11 Wurlitzer
currently installed in Marrickville Town Hall.

The organ is celebrating its 100th anni-
versary this year since it was installed
in the Prince Edward Theatre, Sydney.

This very organ was the first Wurlitzer
to be installed in a theatre in New
South Wales, making it a significant
piece of music history in Australia.

This is a concert that cannot be missed!



Location

Marrickville Town Hall

303 Marrickville Rd, Marrickville NSW
2204

No public parking onsite.
Street parking available surrounding
the town hall.

Marrickville Town Hall is 550m from
Marrickville Station.

Bus routes 418, 425 and 426 stop
outside the town hall.

Time & Date

2:00pm

Sunday, 5 May 2024

Ticket Prices

(Afternoon Tea Included)

Member	\$35
Adult	\$50
Concession	\$40
Student*	\$15
Children	FREE
First-Timer	\$35

*Students must be 18 years or under

Booking

Tickets may be booked and reserved
online using the link or QR code
provided.

<https://www.trybooking.com/1203348>



THEATRE ORGAN MAGIC

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RNB-FM from Sydney, NSW Australia

88.7 FM and 90.3 FM (locally) at noon every first Sunday of the month and at that precise hour only

Streamed to the world-wide web via
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<https://soundcloud.com/john-s-batts>

Mail: Theatre Organ Magic, RNB,
POBox 221, Belrose West NSW 2085
Email: theatreorganmagic@gmail.com



CHRISTIE ORGAN AT WEST RYDE

(A Magical Afternoon of Organ & Jazz)
By Rod Blackmore

The occasion on Saturday 9 March 2024 entitled "A magical afternoon of organ and jazz" was the first formal presentation of the Christie organ following the best part of ten years meticulous renovation by the TOSA committee concerned. In that time there was not one aspect which did not receive attention equivalent to rebuilding.

This organ was originally installed in the Gordon Theatre (later Kings) in 1928 consisting of 8 ranks with a "D.2" console. It had badly deteriorated by 1958 when it was sold to St. Columbs Anglican church, West Ryde, and located in the then church hall. In 1992 it was sold to the Service City Mechanical Instruments Museum (Alexandria). In the following year it was offered for sale to TOSA (NSW Division) and remained in storage until 2012. A new West Ryde Anglican church had been built and an arrangement was finalized to rebuild the organ to the benefit of both the church and TOSA. The second benefit is having an instrument available in the northern suburbs - TOSA's other two theatre organs (Wurlitzers) being situated in the inner west suburbs of Marrickville and Campsie.

The March 2024 concert attracted a significant and appreciative audience opened by president Neil Palmer. John Batts was the opening recitalist with the military march Blaze Away, (a typical theatre organ number by Abe Holzmann) This was followed by "Dreaming", the novelty item "Wedding of the Painted Doll" and film music "Blues in the night", Duke Ellington compositions.

The David Clegg Sextet (well known in Blue Mountains tomes) gave a riveting performance with vibraphone, percussion, bass, trumpet, piano and saxophone, in two segments.

Prior to a delightful afternoon tea our new and young TOSA News editor Oliver Dunk took to the console with Till I hear you Sing and Beyond the Sea. We look forward to hearing both the sextet and Oliver in future renditions.

Finally TOSA secretary Simon Ellis rendered Sari Walz, 1940 number How high the Moon, Forgotten Melody and Love's old sweet song. Well done! And the sextet completed the day's programme with Girl from Ipanema, Laura and Open the Door Richard!

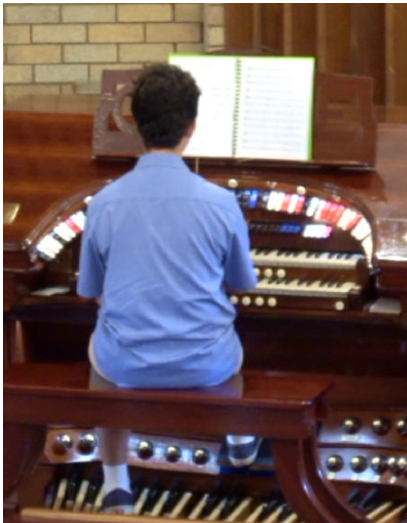
Below: John Batts seated at the Christie console





Above: The David Clegg Sextet

Below (L-R): Oliver Dunk and Simon Ellis seated at the Christie console



ORION WURLITZER UPDATE

MARCH 2024

By Neil Palmer

On Wednesday 24 January, David Badman fitted the replacement castor wheels. He also made removable plates to cover the gap between the basement floor and lift platform. This gap is thought to have contributed towards premature wear of the castor tyres every time the console is rolled on/off the lift platform. While this was happening, the organ builder was re-leathering two tuning stoppers for the 16' Tibia bass pipes which had become loose and had fallen down inside the pipes.

Initially stopped by venue lock down due to the pandemic then water damage to the instrument, after a two year absence we have been able to hold two member's playing events on the Orion Wurlitzer organ.

But prior to these, attention had to be given to the Kinura chest due to the amount of ciphers (where the pipe continues to sound when the key is released). This was due to the moisture in the chamber affecting the chest pallets following the storm water ingress. Once the ciphers were addressed, the organ was completely tuned which also revealed some "dumb" notes. Fixing these is still a work in progress but we are on the downhill run.

During the first player's event there were some ciphers from other ranks. Not unexpected due to the instrument's long period of silence. Most of these could be cleared by rapidly repeating the note although a persistent Tuba cipher had to be blocked off pending further investigation (since fixed).

I believe at the second player's event there were a few more ciphers but reports are that these were able to be cleared by repeating the notes. Those present enjoyed being able to play the Orion Wurlitzer again after such a long hiatus.



Above: One of the replacement castor wheels and removeable plate

Below: The new removable plates



MEMBERS' PRACTICE AT ORION

By Barry Tooker

On the 29th of February 2024, TOSA had its first members practice session since the flooded chamber incident two years ago. This was to check if there are still faults, and to play the organ in again.

Present were Neil Palmer, David and Margaret Badman, Graeme Costin, Eric Burwood, Kevin Eadie, Tom Barber and Barry Tooker. Three of us were just observers relying on the others to entertain us and put the organ through its paces.



Graeme Costin

This turned up several ciphers at the upper end of the scale, which Neil managed to cure mostly by manipulation from the keyboard, but a later development with a tuba pipe resisted all attempts to stop it so the pipe was removed for further action.

Thanks to Margaret Badman for supplying refreshments. It makes the day go better.

We need several more sessions like this to get the organ reliable and ready for our next concert at the Orion.



Eric Burwood with President Neil Palmer trying to cure a cipher



Kevin Eadie



Tom Barber

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN THE PRINCE EDWARD WURLITZER

By Roger Dunk

As we celebrate the centenary of what is now the Marrickville Town Hall Wurlitzer, I thought it apt to take a brief look back to where it began, when Wurlitzer Opus 875 was heard for the first time at The Prince Edward Theatre Beautiful, Castlereagh St, Sydney, on the evening of Saturday, 22 November 1924.

American organist Eddie Horton was brought to Australia to open the “£10,000 orchestral organ”, and patrons were also entertained by Will Prior conducting the 21-piece “Prince Edward Concert Orchestra”. The feature presentation was Cecil B. DeMille’s “The Ten Commandments”.

The following Monday’s edition of The Sydney Morning Herald had the following to say about the organ recital:

Eddie Horton, from the Californian Theatre, San Francisco, was warmly welcomed on appearing at the console of the new Wurlitzer orchestral organ, the exquisitely mellow tone of which was shown in Sinding’s “The Rustle of Spring.” Mr. Horton’s skilful use of tone-combinations and the sound of many vox humana voices at the climax where the song-like theme was supported by chromatic passages, contributed to an artistic and touching ensemble. Nevin’s “The Rosary” and the piquant devices employed for “Roses of Picardy” were features in the brief recital.

Eddie Horton remained at the console until October of 1925. Successive organists were Leslie Harvey (1925-28), Eddie Horton again (1928-9), Julia Dawn

(1929-31), Knight Barnett (1931-33), Les Waldron (1933-38), Kurt Herweg (1938-40), and Walter Aliffe (1940-44). The organist who was featured daily at the Prince Edward for more than 20 years until 1965 was the delightful Noreen Hennessy. The final recital at the Prince Edward was on August 15th, 1965.

Once it became known that the theatre was to close in 1965, TOSA made enquiries regarding the purchase of the Wurlitzer organ, and a deal was made. The organ was moved into storage where refurbishment could commence, pending the availability of a suitable location to re-install the organ.

The theatre closed in Dec 1965, with the final film shown being a re-presentation of “War and Peace” starring Audrey Hepburn. The theatre was demolished early the following year.

(List of organists courtesy of Rod Blackmore)

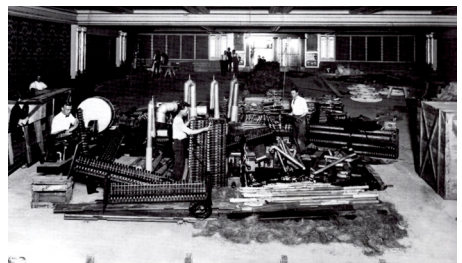
Below: Noreen Hennessy at the console



THE PRINCE EDWARD
 Theatre Beautiful.
 Castlereagh street, opposite Hotel Australia.
 Managing Directors: E. J. Carroll, Dan Carroll,
 F. J. Tait.
GALA OPENING NIGHT,
TO-NIGHT, at 8, and twice daily at 2.30 and 8 all
Next Week.
 Plans at Hotel Australia, Theatre, and Paling's
 for Next week at these prices.—Matinees: 1/6, 2/, 2/6,
 3/. Ordinary Nights: 1/6, 2/6, 3/, 4/. Saturday
 Nights: 2/, 3/, 4/, 5/. All Seats Reserved without
 extra charge. Seats in 1/6 section sold only at door.
 Cecil B. De Mille's Paramount Picture,
"THE TEN COMMANDMENTS."
WILL PRIOR
 conducting the Prince Edward Concert Orchestra.
EDDIE HORTON
 at the £10,000 Orchestral Organ.



The Wurlitzer Organ being delivered and un-crated at the Prince Edward Theatre



RITCHIE'S CONCERT AT GEORGE'S ESTATE

By Barry Tooker

Tuesday 20th February was a red letter day for our member Ritchie Willis. On his Thomas Celebrity organ he held a mini concert for members and friends in the auditorium at George's Estate aged care home in Penshurst.

This has been a long time dream of his, since becoming a resident several years ago. When he moved he brought his beloved organ, which featured in numerous monthly Selwyn Theatre concerts at his home in Mortdale.

TOSA member John Batts willingly agreed to entertain, on this soggy Tuesday afternoon at 2.00 pm, to a select group of about 20 friends including several TOSA members.

As a couple were running a few minutes late due to parking problems, he told us about his introduction to the theatre organ. As a youngster he was given permission to practice on the organ at the Regal Henley On Thames theatre and later was invited to play for some sessions.

Appropriately John opened his concert with "Happy Days Are Here Again" composed by Milton Ager, with lyrics by Jack Yellern from the film Chasing Rainbows.

Next came "Blaze Away", a popular march composed by Abe Holzmans in 1901.

Then he played the beautiful hesitation waltz "Dreaming" composed by Archibald Joyce in 1911.

The catchy "Wedding of the Painted Doll" by Art Freed and Nacio Herb Brown from the year 1929 followed.

For a bit of variety John played a dance medley which included "You're the Cream in My Coffee", "Yessir, She's my Baby", "That's My Weakness Now", and "I'm Nobody's Sweetheart Now".

From here we swung into a soft ballad "You Made Me Love You" written by James Monaco in 1913.

A bright and bouncy tango "La Rosita" followed by a novelty number "Buffoon" written by Zez Confrey came next.

Here we got another dance medley which included "Lullaby of the Leaves", "Getting Sentimental Over You", "Georgia On My Mind", "Please" and "Everything's Been Done".

I well remembered "Java" from an old LP I bought many years ago.

"Brazil", a samba from 1939 brought us to the final selection which came from "The Student Prince" by Sigmund Romberg which was a favourite of Ritchie's, ever since he saw the film.

A few of the staff paused to enjoy the music as they went about their duties.

Georges Estate provided tea, coffee and pastries for refreshments after it was over. Thank you.

Well done John and Ritchie for a great afternoon and a great vote of thanks to George's Estate for having us.

Let's hope this will be one of many.



TOSA member Karl Zipzin (foreground)



Above: The audience at George's Estate

Below: John Batts introducing one of his pieces



John Batts seated at the console



John Batts seated with TOSA's oldest member, Ritchie Willis

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