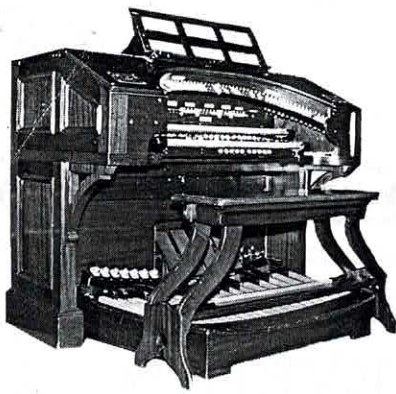
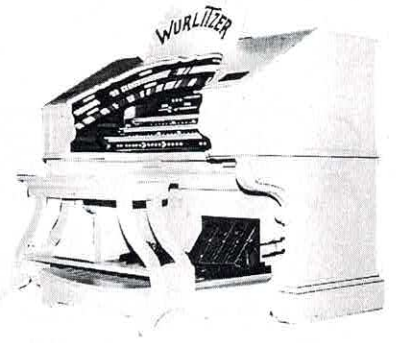


OCTOBER, 1995



2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ  
Marrickville Town Hall

# TOSA NEWS



3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ  
Orion Centre Campsie

## *A Special Afternoon*

with our patron

# *IAN DAVIES*

and friends



**SATURDAY, 28th OCTOBER at 2pm**  
**Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL**

Volume 34  
Issue 9  
PRINTED BY TOSA

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.  
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083  
Print Post Approved PP255003/01823

Price  
\$1.00



# TOSA NEWS

OCTOBER, 1995

**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 AND RENEWALS - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

**TOSA NEWS CONTRIBUTIONS - THE EDITOR**

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## COMING EVENTS

## OCTOBER

|           |    |           |   |
|-----------|----|-----------|---|
| Sunday    | 8  | at 2.00pm | Len Rawle Concert<br>Orion Centre Campsie                   |
| Monday    | 9  | at 7.30pm | Committee Meeting   |
| Wednesday | 11 | at 5.00pm | Close of Nominations<br>for Committee                       |
| Saturday  | 28 | at 2.00pm | Members' Afternoon<br>with Ian Davies<br>Bondi Junction RSL |

## NOVEMBER

|           |    |           |  |
|-----------|----|-----------|--|
| Monday    | 6  | at 7.30pm | Committee Meeting                              |
| Sunday    | 19 | at 2.00pm | Walt Stroyng Concert<br>Orion Centre Campsie   |
| Wednesday | 22 | at 8.00pm | Annual General Meeting<br>Orion Centre Campsie |

## DECEMBER

|        |   |           |   |
|--------|---|-----------|---|
| Sunday | 3 | at 2.00pm | Tony Fenelon's<br>Christmas Concert<br>Orion Centre Campsie |
| Monday | 4 | at 7.30pm | Committee Meeting   |



REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO  
2CBA-FM 103.2

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm  
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"  
Presented by Chris Styles



# Editorial

In an attempt to keep me (and TOSA) on the cutting edge of the communication by computer field my son, **Sacha**, has been "surfing the Internet" and finding all sorts of interesting snippets about organs and organists around the world. He has also set up the world's first **Theatre Organ Home Page** for TOSA (NSW), for which he has been congratulated by several Americans who were aiming to be the first with their own local **ATOS Chapter's Home Page**. On TOSA's Home Page **Sacha** has placed details about our Society, its organs and its activities, with colour photos of organs and people.

Through the Internet, we were also able to follow **John Ledwon** around **Australia** on his recent tour, as interstate Internet people reported on his concerts and argued about the relative loudness of some of **John's** performances. **John** left **Sydney** on a Monday and by the following day, through the Internet, he was able to report to the rest of the world on his safe return to the **States**. Some of the advances in relatively cheap, world-wide communications are quite amazing.

I'm sure that some of the interesting items from the Internet will find their way into the "Organs and Organists" column of *TOSA News*.

There is no **Orion** concert at the end of October, but in its place we have the afternoon at the **Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club** on Saturday, 28th October, and **Walt Strony** will be playing a concert at the **Orion** on Sunday, 19th November. The booking form on the back page is for this concert. There is no need to book for the **Ian Davies** afternoon - just come along and enjoy a pleasant afternoon with some great music in a very relaxed and comfortable atmosphere.

As always I'd like to thank sincerely the people who take the time to submit items for the pleasure of all *TOSA News* readers. We all appreciate their efforts.

Best wishes,  
Colin Groves



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

TOSA (NSW) is pleased and proud to welcome the following new members and we wish them a long and entertaining stay with our Society :

**Susan Bond - Hazelbrook**

**Howard Bond - Northmead**

### NEXT CONCERT

By Popular Request  
The Welcome Return of

# WALT STRONY

Sunday, 19th November  
at 2pm

## Orion Centre Campsie

Booking Form on page 14

# From The President

Well! Here we are again - election time. In the previous issue of *TOSA News* you will have found a nomination form on page 13. I would encourage all members to be involved in the election process by nominating for, or nominating someone else for, the various positions listed on that page. We still live in a democracy (in spite of the 'carry-on' of some of our political leaders) and these democratic principles certainly apply to TOSA.

If you feel that you have particular talent and could make the time to serve on either the Executive or Committee, please have your properly completed nomination form in the hands of the returning officer by 5pm, Wednesday 11th October, 1995. His address is on the bottom of the form.

I would urge as many of you as possible to attend the **Annual General Meeting** at 8pm on Wednesday, 22nd November, 1995 at the **Orion Centre, Campsie**. We would like the business of the society to be conducted in the best and most democratic manner. This can only be achieved by the active participation of as many members as possible.

This month I would like to acknowledge the work of our "concert caterers". These are the willing workers who organise the teas, coffees, soft drinks and candy bar at our concerts. They are always on deck several hours prior to the doors opening, arranging the 'doings' so that our audience can enjoy that 'pause that refreshes' before and during the concert. It is treading on dangerous ground to name names lest someone be forgotten. However, I will risk it and express our particular thanks to **Eunice, Edith, Frank, Françoise** and **Karl**.

Our sincere thanks to these people and to all the others who have helped in this way.

Cliff Bingham  
President

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



# NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motions to be put at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held on Wednesday, 22nd November, 1995 at 8.00pm at the ORION CENTRE, 155 Beamish Street, Campsie - in accordance with Rule 25, (2).

## Motion 1 :

Delete from APPENDIX 1 [Rule 3(1)]

the words "who is personally known to me".

## Motion 2 :

Amend APPENDIX 2,

"a proxy vote may not be given to a person who is not a member of the association",

to read

"a proxy vote may not be given to a person who is not a FINANCIAL member of the association".

Notification of intended proxy must be given to the Secretary no later than 24 hours before the time of the meeting.

**Note to Members :** Your committee has approved of these corrections and alterations unanimously. Should you require a proxy form at any time, please contact the Secretary.

## **WEST HILLS RENAISSANCE**

- JONAS NORDWALL at the  
Vollum Studio WurliTzer.

Tracks : *Prelude to Act III from Lohengrin, Someone To Watch Over Me, Heart, \*Alleluia from Jubilate Exultate, What Are You Doing For the Rest of Your Life?, What I Did For Love, Valse Triste, \*O Mia Bambino Caro, Mephisto Waltz, \*I Feel Pretty, Toccata in F from the Fifth Organ Symphony, This Could Be the Start of Something Big. \*with soprano Gloria Cutsforth-Allen.*

Compact Disc \$25

## **SOUNDS OF LOVE**

- JOHN LEDWON at the Wurlitzer  
Theatre Pipe Organ.

Tracks : *Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, A Time For Us, My Cup Runneth Over, We've Only Just Begun, The Twelfth of Never, For Once in My Life, Endless Love, Always and Forever, Through the Eyes of Love, Love Story, Lady, The Hawaiian Wedding Song.*

Compact Disc \$20 (only a few left)



## **WURLITZER ON STAGE AND SCREEN**

- JOHN LEDWON at the largest  
WurliTzer in the West.

Tracks : *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber - Introduction (Starlight Express/Superstar themes), I Don't Know How to Love Him, Close Every Door, Those Canaan Days, Benjamin Calypso, One More Angel in Heaven, Any Dream Will Do (Joseph), Don't Cry for Me, Argentina (Evita), Mr*

*Mistoffelees, Memory (Cats), Unexpected (Song and Dance), Only You (Starlight Express). West Side Story - Mini Prologue, Balcony Scene, Tonight, One Hand, One Heart, Promenade, I Feel Pretty, I Have a Love, Gee, Officer Krupke, America. The Phantom of the Opera - Think of Me, Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again, Angel of Music, All I Ask of You, Masquerade, Prima Donna, The Music of the Night. The Music of John Williams - The Throne Room, Main Theme, Princess Leia's Theme Cantina Band (Star Wars), Can You Read My Mind? (Superman), Theme from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Theme from E.T., Raiders' March from Raiders of the Lost Ark.*

Compact Disc \$20

\*\*\*\*\*

Available at TOSA Concerts, or by  
Mail Order from :

**TOSA (NSW Division) Inc.  
304 Parramatta Rd  
ASHFIELD NSW 2131**

\*\*\*\*\*

Postage : \$3.00 per Compact Disc.





## NEWS FROM ALL OVER

### CONCORD UNITING

Colin Adamson, popular Sydney organist, will be playing for a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon organ concert on the Rodgers Classic organ in Concord Uniting Church on Sunday, 5th November, 1995, at 2.30pm.

Admission is \$7 (\$5 concession) and includes afternoon tea, with the proceeds going to the Ermington Family Centre (part of Burnside). The church is on the corner of Concord and Wunda Roads, Concord West.

Further information can be obtained by ringing 743 6990.

### YOUNG ORGANISTS

The Secretary of the Australia Felix Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, Gail Ward, has advised us that any young organist or hobby organist wishing to enter the 1996 ATOS Competition should notify her before the 16th January, 1996, if they intend to enter. This information has to be lodged with Dorothy Van Steenkiste in the USA.

The closing date in the USA is 20th March, 1996, so entries will have to be lodged with the Australia Felix Chapter by the 7th March at the latest. The 4 recorded selections required for entries are :

(i) an up-tempo number or rhythmic selection that could be used as an opening number in a program;

(ii) a ballad suitable to be performed on a theatre organ;

(iii) a medley of 3 songs, no more than 5, from a well-known Broadway Musical. The medley is to be between 5 and 9 minutes in length;

(iv) a classical work from classical organ literature, or a transcription of a

classical piano or orchestral work.

Further written information can be obtained from Mrs Gail Ward, 11 Lepena Crescent, Hallett Cove, South Australia, 5158.

### MEMBERS' NIGHTS

Since the last issue of *TOSA News* here have been 2 well-attended Members' Playing Nights at the Orion WurliTzer.

On Wednesday, 16th August, over 30 people came to play and/or listen. The players included : John Griffiths, Todd Turner (an 11 year old budding star), Tom Barber, Reg Cant, Jack MacDonald, George London, Jim Birkett, Elaine Birkett, Maree Holden, Jan Kennedy, Wendy Hambly, Bill Schumacher and Cliff Bingham.

Wednesday, 6th September, also saw a good roll-up and the player-members included : Wendy Hambly, Maree Holden, Jan Kennedy, Todd Turner, Tom Barber, Jack MacDonald, John Griffiths, Jim Birkett, Walter Pearce, Roger Dornan and Bill Schumacher.

### LUNCHTIME RECITAL

On Wednesday, 1st November, Colin Adamson will present a program with a wide variety of music on the historic Walker Pipe Organ in St John's Anglican Cathedral, Parramatta, between 12.30 and 1.10pm.

Off-street parking is available via Hunter Street and it is only a short walk from Parramatta Railway Station.

Enquiries on 683 3014.

**If you are seeking  
an antique,  
theatre, console  
or spinet organ  
contact the  
MANNING  
ORGAN SOCIETY  
(065) 531431  
anytime**



Gordon Thompson of Narooma writes about theatre organ videos:

11/8/95

In response to Roy Walkley's letter in August *TOSA News* about theatre organ videos, he may be interested to know that there are 7 videos by Phil Kelsall available from :

A.P.Promotions

61 Sandhurst Ave,

Blackpool, FY2 9EB,England.

Also one by Robert Wolfe, available from :

The Thursford Collection,

Thursford Green, near Fakenham,

Norfolk, NR 21 OAS, England.

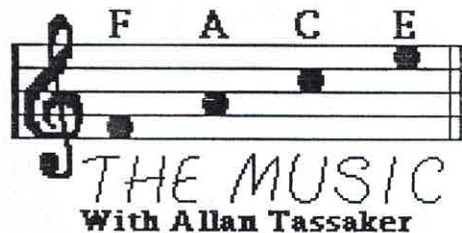
Unfortunately I don't know the current prices, plus air mail postage, so anyone interested would have to write and enquire. Payment is then made by bank draft.

I have all of the above videos and have almost worn them out as, not being able to get to many concerts, it is the next best thing.

It was through A.P.Promotions advising me of the recent Phil Kelsall concerts that I was able to get in touch and rejoin TOSA.

I have just sent off to TOSA for a copy of the Nicholas Martin video and I hope more become available in the future.

All the best from  
Gordon Thompson



Allan recently wrote a brilliant piece of music. His friend wanted it desperately - was willing to swap anything for it.

Allan tells he now has a good ear for music!!



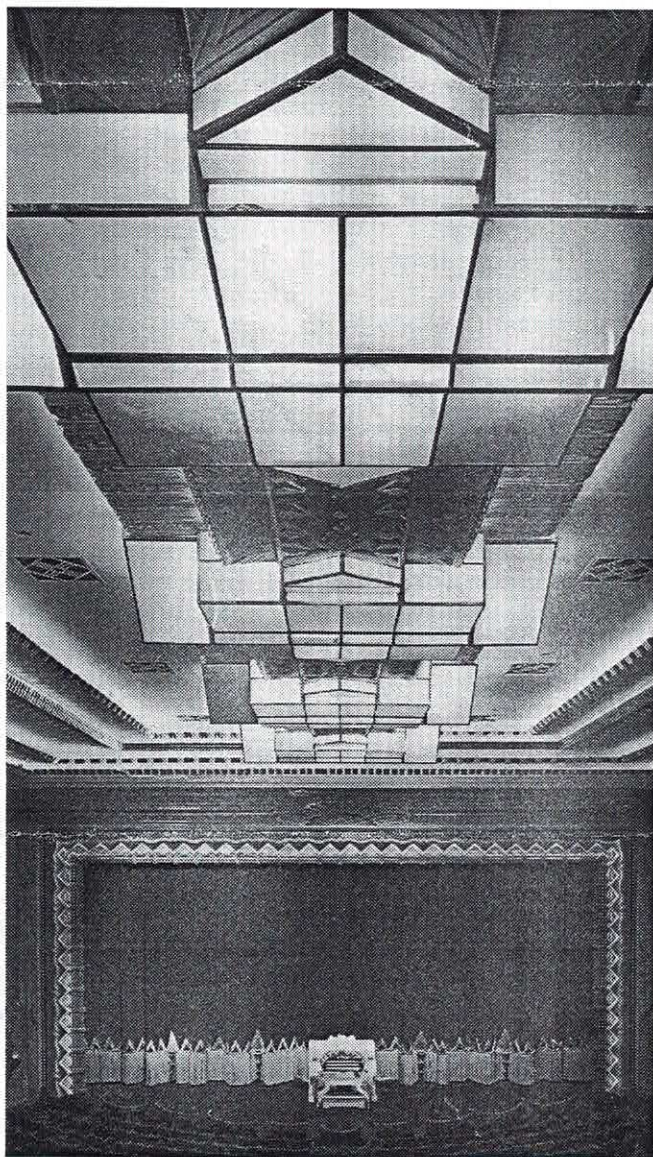
Keymedia Productions  
in conjunction with

Hayden Theatres Pty Ltd  
present

# The Hayden Orpheum 60th Birthday Concert

"As Time Goes By"  
The Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace  
(1935 - 1995)

A spectacular live concert of musical hits from the golden era featuring the sensational **"THE YELLOW ROLLS ROYCE ORCHESTRA"** accompanying keyboard stars **TONY FENELON & NEIL JENSEN** at the Orpheum's Wurlitzer Pipe Organ and Grand Piano with special guest vocalist **HELEN ZEREFOS** and Australia's own Astaire and Rogers, **"DANCE MAGIC"**.



## Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace

380 Military Road, Cremorne 2090 Reservations: 9908 4441

Bankcard, Mastercard & Visa Welcome

Sunday 29 October 1995 - Showtime 1.30pm

Adults \$19.50 Party Bookings (Minimum 10) - \$17.50 each

Concession \$15.50 Concession Party (Minimum 10) - \$14.50 each

Bookings are essential for this ONE SHOW ONLY presentation.

**WIN!**  
A Trip for 2  
to Europe  
Thru Astral Travel  
Fill in the Entry form  
with your ticket



# EPPING BAPTIST CHURCH

On Sunday, 27th August our President, **Cliff Bingham**, re-inaugurated the Sunday afternoon organ concert tradition at the **Christie Theatre Pipe Organ** in the **Epping Baptist Church**. The concerts had been suspended while the church underwent expansion works.

The new appearance of the church, with additions to the left of the original building



Photos by **Barry Tooker**.

**Cliff** at the **Christie** console

Associate artist, pianist **Barry Wilkins**



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Additional Details  
sent on request



# "PARADISE" RE-VISITED

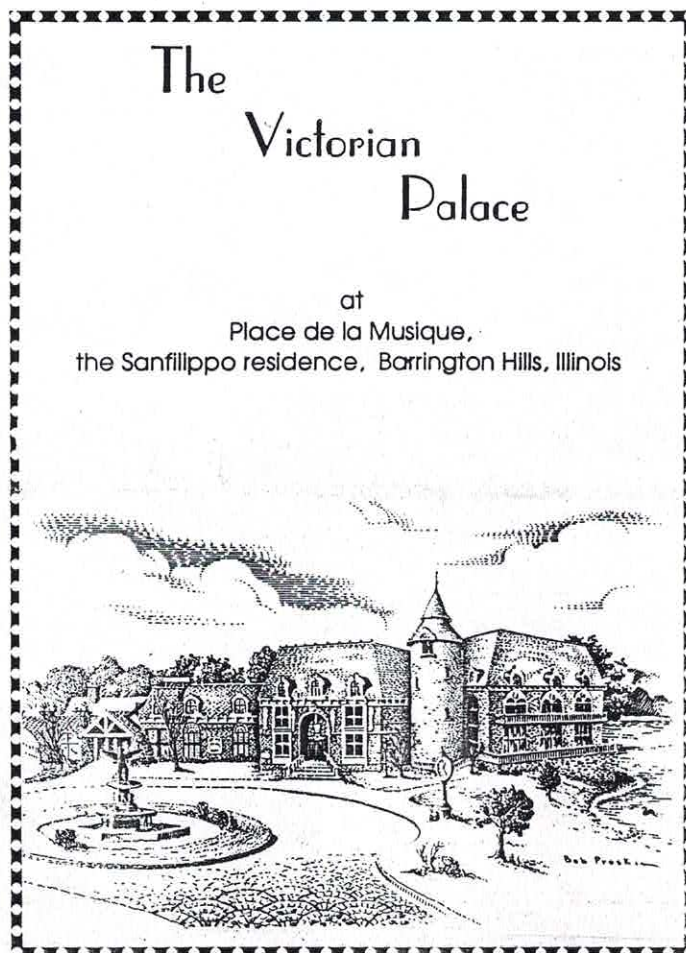
BY ALLAN BROOKER

The invitation stated "Saturday!! July 8, 1995" for this year's "Concert For Life - '95." Once again this celebration of music and beauty was to be presented at the magnificent music salon of **Jasper and Marion Sanfilippo**, "Place de la Musique", Barrington Hills, Illinois, about 35 miles North-West of Chicago. This gala program would raise money for the **Hopeful Heart Foundation Fund**, which provides money to those in the arts with life-threatening illnesses.

Was it really 2 years since I attended the inaugural concert featuring the 5 manual, 78' rank (mostly) **Wurlitzer**, the world's largest theatre organ? This concert, however, was going to be a little different. **Lyn Larsen** again was to be the main artist, and there was to be a special guest artist, noted classical organist **Carlo Curley**, direct from **England**. That was a concern, as I have never been too happy when classical material is introduced into theatre organ programs, unless it is of a particularly melodic or perhaps spectacular nature. However, there was also to be a special "surprise appearance by one of the organ world's brightest stars".

The big day finally arrived and as I strolled down that leafy drive leading to the magnificent **Sanfilippo** residence, I found it difficult to take in all the beauty of this property on such a gorgeous summer's day. Holding, this time, a ticket to the balcony in the **Victorian Palace**, I was ushered up the sweeping staircase of the main entrance, to my seat in the second row, right in the centre.

Once again I gazed in wonder around this music room, at the many items collected from theatres from all over the country. There were rows of chandeliers, big and small, balcony railing and seats, bronze and plaster fixtures to name a few. The beautiful,



The  
Victorian  
Palace  
at  
Place de la Musique,  
the Sanfilippo residence, Barrington Hills, Illinois

royal blue scrim curtain (an exact copy of that from the **Paradise Theatre, Chicago** - only 10% bigger!) has hanging on either side of it the 32 note **Deagon Tower Carillons**. These are playable from the console as well as by their own roll player.

Then there is the astounding array of musical instruments, all in fully restored, working order, which I understand constitutes the world's largest private collection.

It is showtime, and after a brief welcome from **Mr Sanfilippo**, **Lyn Larsen** brings up that glorious 5 manual, gold and burgundy console from the depths, to a rousing version of **Veradero**. Quickly moving into his next number, a beautiful **Crawford** arrangement of *Isn't It a Lovely Day To Get Caught in the Rain?*, which indicated that **Lyn** was out to show off as many of the wonderful array of "colours" this organ has. Now up to 80 ranks, the organ has had added to it a Vibraphone which sits enclosed, to the right of the console, in its own cabinet

similar to an upright piano. It is playable from the organ console or by its own keyboard. **Lyn** demonstrated it to perfection with **Henry Mancini's Mr Lucky**.

Another change was the organ bench - now a gold, enamelled, more familiar **Wurlitzer** style instead of the Howard seat, but with a difference - it has an electric height adjuster! Well, why not?

**Lyn** concluded his first segment with some seldom heard tunes from *Showboat*, such as *Nobody Else But Me* and *Hey Mister*, all the while showing off his dexterity at the console as it swung from side to side through 180°.

Our special guest with his dreaded classical music was next. I clenched my teeth - but what was this piece he was playing? It was a whisperingly quiet *To a Wild Rose*. Not so bad. With an assistant on stage

with a mechanical bird in a cage twittering at the appropriate juncture, he followed up with *The Largo, Allegro and Two Variations* - different, but pleasant. It wasn't until a very nice version of *Londonderry Air* that **Mr Curley** confessed that it was the "frustrated theatre organist in him coming out". Perhaps that is why I had enjoyed everything he played so far and even his brief *Fugue in C Major*, his final piece for his first segment.

**Lyn** took us into intermission with the delightful *Victor Herbert Suite*, made up of the *Spanish, Cuban and Oriental Serenades*. We were invited to partake of a sumptuous hot and cold buffet in any of 3 basement rooms which, in his own words, **Lyn** stated "stretch all the way to **Indiana**". He was right!

As the audience shared these refreshments so generously provided by the **Sanfilippo** family we were entertained by many of the fantastic music machines around the house. One by one these magnificently restored

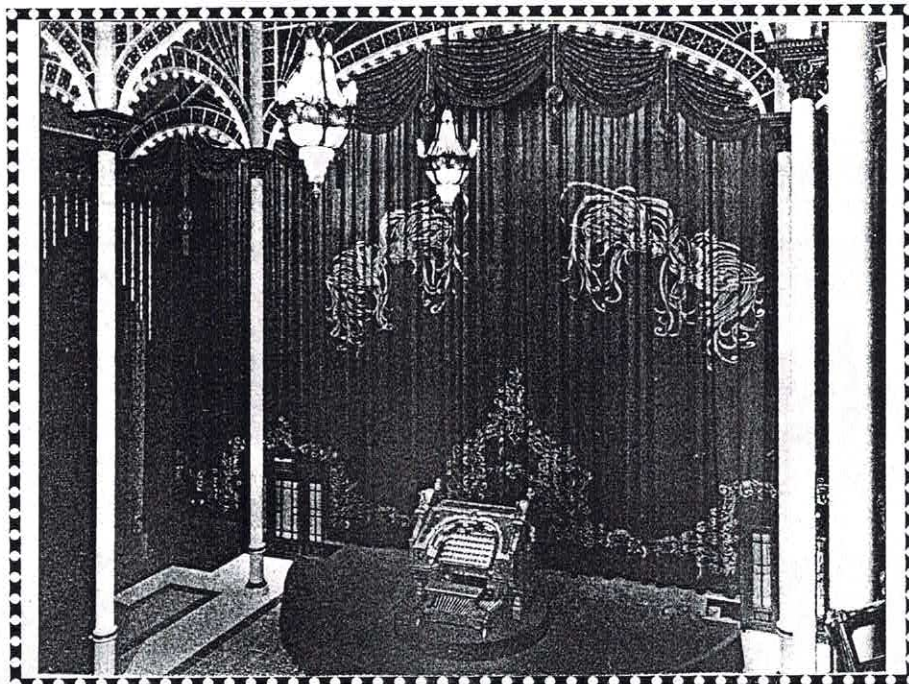


instruments burst into play, such as the **Wurlitzer Band Organ**, the **Mortier 115-key Dance Organ** from **Belgium**, and the **65-key Gavioli Fair Organ**. In other rooms phonographs were playing old 78rpm records and there was the bizarre machine playing a violin and other plucking a ukelele alongside piano roll players.

With one's senses well into "overload", **Lyn Larsen** heralded in the second half with a cheerful ragtime number. *Lotus Land* followed, and showed off the huge Chinese gong. Before handing back to **Carlo Curley**, **Lyn** played a number very close to his heart - a gorgeous *Lovers Belong to Sorrento*, written by none other than the maestro himself, **Lyn Larsen**.

**Mr Curley's** large frame again mounted the bench and he began to display once again his flamboyant playing technique. Everything had been melodic so far and none better than *Melody in A*, with high-flying hands but ever so precisely placed fingers as the "frustrated theatre organist" admission came out again.

Well, he had successfully "wooded" me so far, but now he was about to "wow" me with a spectacular finale, his "pièce de résistance" - *Ride of the Valkyries*. The balcony is just **THE** spot to be for this performance as all **FOUR 32'** pedal stops came into play. No better piece to display the schizophrenic nature of this organ. The balcony



*The setting for the 5/80 Theatre Pipe Organ*

still shaking as if from an earthquake, **Carlo** was seen off to a vocal and standing ovation. Well done!

**Lyn Larsen** returned to the console with a rousing piece of music given to

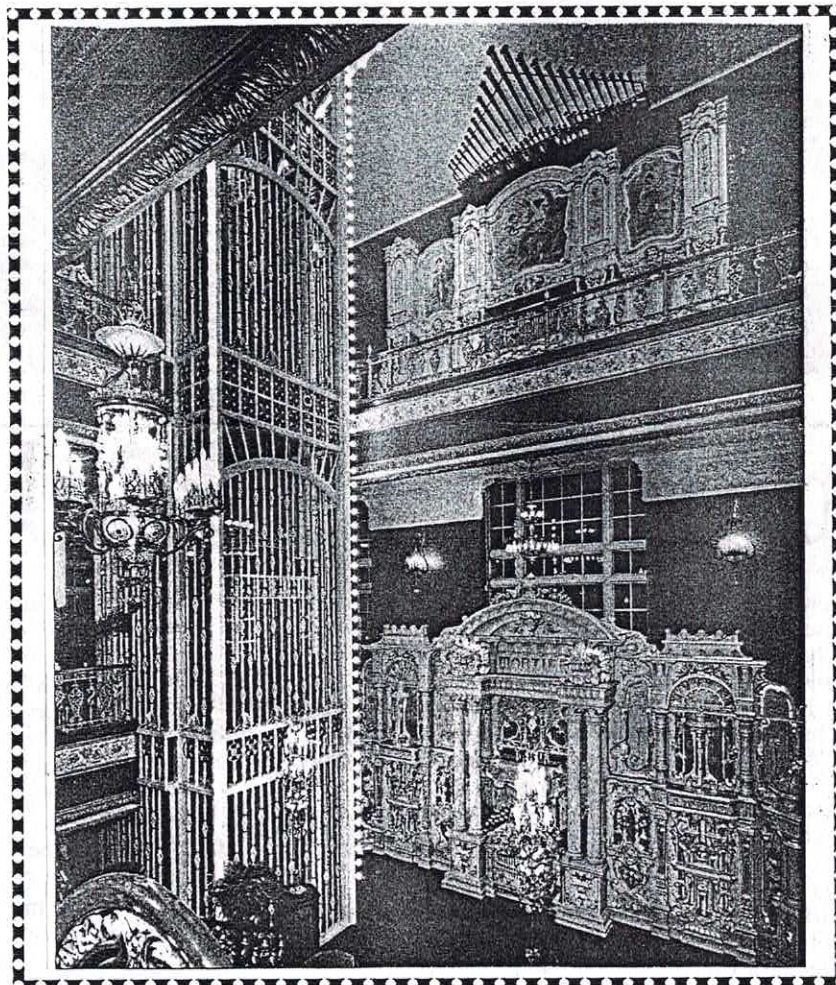
truly brought out the orchestral side of this organ, with an extended medley from *Carousel*, such as *Carousel Waltz* and *If I Loved You* to just name a couple of piece.

It was a splendid cameo performance and **Simon** was awarded a raucous and well-deserved standing ovation. Good news too, in that **Simon** has agreed to record the instrument on the **Musical Contrasts** label.

Sadly all good things must come to an end. **Lyn** returned and thanked all who had attended, especially those who had travelled many thousands of miles to experience this "Concert For Life".

With tears welling in his eyes and voice cracking with emotion **Lyn Larsen** took the console down with *My Hopeful Heart* - a glorious end to a glorious day, and thanks to the **Sanfilippo** family, artists and crew for a fabulous concert.

What a day!



*At the rear of the auditorium, filled with other organs*





Neil Jensen is Australia's only theatre organist.

## Neil plays a special tune

INNER Western Suburbs people have often enjoyed the skill and expertise of Australia's last surviving professional theatre organist who is also an aerobics instructor.

Neil Jensen, 39, of Ashfield, is renowned for his performances in local clubs and also at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace at Cremorne.

Mr Jensen is well known overseas and sells his music to international markets.

The talented organist is also a qualified aerobics instructor and conducts lessons five days a week in a Western Suburbs gym.

He told the *Courier* he enjoyed the mixture of keeping fit with the combination of exercise and music.

Neil's most regular Sydney haunt is the Orpheum cinema where he plays the organ five

Story: Jenny Lockhart  
Picture: Andrew Gorrie

nights a week before the evening films begin.

The talented man was born into a musical family and his fingers met the keyboard of a piano at an early age.

He studied classical piano then turned his creative talents to the organ and became fascinated by the instrument.

In 1983, Neil Jensen extensively toured New Zealand, Canada and the United States where he performed a "whirlwind" concert tour of more than 30 cities.

During the tour, he released his first album *Neil Jensen Australiawide*.

During a second tour of the United States, he released his second album *Neil Jensen Concepts*.

Mr Jensen has performed six international concert tours and produced several albums which are marketed internationally.

He recently entertained music lovers with a variety of organ music at the Orion Centre at Campsie.

He told the *Courier* that he loved his career as an organ player.

"I enjoy music and entertaining people," Mr Jensen said.

"I like to make a crowd of people happy when they listen to me play.

"It's either in you or it's not to be an entertainer."



## SPECIAL EVENT

Members' Afternoon - Saturday, 28th October

### Ian Davies at Bondi

Our Patron, **Ian Davies** has invited all **TOSA** members to a special **FREE** afternoon at the club where he regularly plays. The date is **Saturday, 28th October** at 2.00pm and the club is the **Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club**. Several of our leading player-members will be playing the **Rodgers "Trio" Theatre Organ** including, of course, **Ian** himself.

The club is at 1 Gray Street, **Bondi Junction** and is very close to **Bondi Junction Railway Station**. Parking will be available in the **Grace Bros** car-park until the end of the afternoon's great entertainment. Come along and enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the Club, being entertained by these first-class performers. No bookings necessary.

### A Profile of Ian Davies

Our patron, **Ian Davies**, started to study music at a very early age. He began piano lessons under the tutelage of his mother. Two years later, he became a pupil of **Miss K. Cox** and continued with her for 3 years.

It was at this point that the pipe organ made its entry into **Ian's** life. His mother frequently played the organ at **St Joan's Presbyterian Church** at **Essendon, Victoria**. **Ian** persuaded her to give him lessons and after 6 months he became a pupil of the organist of the church.

**Ian** began his professional theatre organ career in **Melbourne**, playing the **Plaza, Regent** and **Capitol WurliTzers**, and the **Hammond** organs at **Brunswick** and **Albert Park**.

During the war, while serving in the **R.A.N.** overseas, **Ian** was guest organist at the **Regal Theatre, Grays Forum Theatre, Liverpool**, and the **Bristol Theatre, Avonmouth, Wales**.

Upon arriving back in **Melbourne**, he returned to the **Hoyts** circuits, his last theatre organ season being at the 3-manual, 15 rank **WurliTzer** at the **Capitol Theatre**, where he held a 5 year residency. He then moved to **Sydney** and spent some years in the showrooms of **Rees Wills Pty Ltd**, demonstrating **Lowrey** and **Rodgers** organs.

His magnificent opening recital at the 1965 Convention of the **Theatre Organ Society of Australia** was long remembered by those who attended. He was also the featured opening organist at the 1966 Convention on the **Capitol WurliTzer**. These are but two of the many memorable programmes he has played and which made **Ian Davies** so popular with **TOSA** members. He played over 90 concerts for the **NSW Division** during his long association with **TOSA**, always drawing a large crowd of devoted fans.

For many years **Ian** has been resident organist at the **Bondi-Waverley RSL Club**, playing each Friday for an hour in the club's auditorium for the pleasure of the club's members and guests.

In 1972 following the retirement of **Reginald Dixon** from the **Blackpool Tower** and from the position of patron of **TOSA NSW**, **Ian** was elected to the position and to this day he remains faithfully still as our patron.

He has always been ready to give of his many talents for the members of our **Society** and we are sure that many members will appreciate the opportunity to hear **Ian** play again at the **Bondi-Waverley RSL Club**, in the company of some of our other player members. Come along and bring a friend to this special event. The last **TOSA** visit to **Ian's** club was appreciated by all those fortunate enough to attend.



# Report on the JOHN LEDWON Concert

by Cliff Bingham

I first heard **John Ledwon** in the mid-sixties, When I acquired a recording of *Theatre Organ Overtures* played by this young organist on the 3/15 **Wurlitzer** in the **Plaza Theatre, El Paso, Texas**. I remember experiencing some pangs of envy listening to this fine player of around my own age, and admiring his digital dexterity and registrational abilities. Some 30 years later, on Sunday 3rd September, 1995, I

finally had the opportunity to hear **John** in concert at our own **Wurlitzer at Campsie** on his first visit to Australia.

From his console-raiser, *Man of La Mancha*, we realised that we were listening to an artist with a real affinity for the instrument, as **John** played a balanced program of music designed to appeal to all tastes. The first half ranged from old standards such as *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* to more recent music from the pen of **Lionel Ritchie**, *Endless Love* and *Lady*, and a selection from *Phantom of the Opera*. Perhaps the favourites for theatre organ fans were the 30's and 40's medleys featuring *Of Thee I Sing*, *Night and Day*, *It's Only a Paper Moon*, *Two Hearts Beat in 3/4 Time*, *Dancing in the Dark*, *Begin the*



*John Ledwon at the Orion Wurlitzer*

*Beguine, Get Happy, Oh! What a Beautiful Morning, You Are My Sunshine, Over the Rainbow* and a rollicking *In the Mood* to send us out at interval.

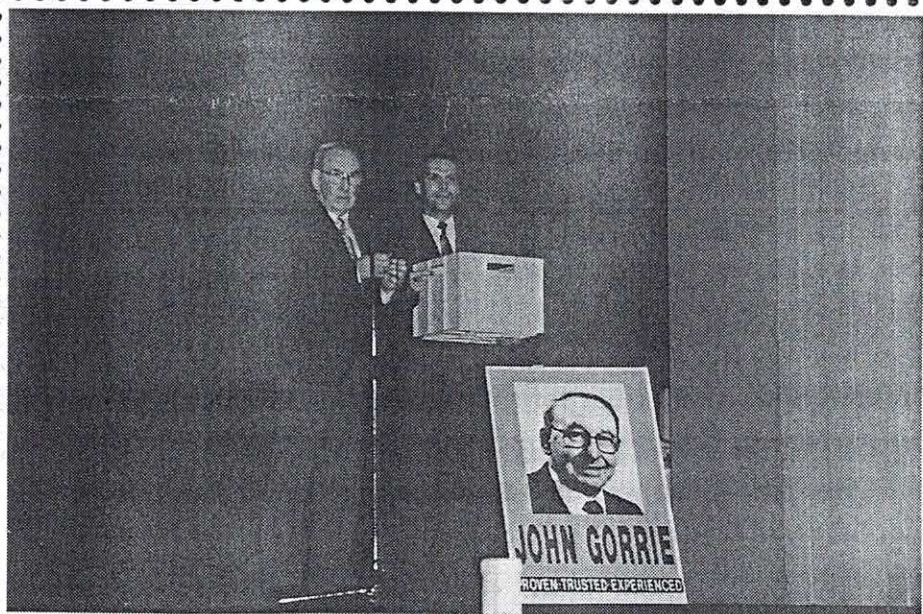
Following refreshments of the customary high standard, **John** brought the console back up again to the strains of *Napoleon's Last Charge* by, I believe, **E. T. Paull**. **John** certainly

back memories of that early recording of overtures as **John** closed the program with a dazzling *Poet and Peasant*. No artist at a **TOSA** concert has ever escaped without an encore and **John** replied to the sustained applause with *I Could Have Danced All Night* from *My Fair Lady*.

In spite of the fact that we could only present **John** on Fathers' Day, a good audience of around 400 enjoyed a concert from an artist, and real lover, of theatre organ.

In the opinion of this reporter, the concert is best summed up by the words "Light and Shade". **John** has a real talent for extracting a wonderful range of tone colours from the organ, and this talent was more than adequately displayed this afternoon.

Don't wait for another 30 years before returning to **Australia, John**.



*John Parker helps our Patron, John Gorrie, to draw the raffle in the presence of some surprise council election material*



When **Len Rawle** last toured **Australia** in late 1993, the **South Australian T.O.S.A. News** carried the following article about the installation of **Len's Wurlitzer TOSA (NSW)** was unable on that occasion to fit **Len** into our busy schedule of **Orion** concerts, but to the delight of many he played brilliantly on **Epping Baptist's Christie Theatre Pipe Organ**.

## **LEN RAWLE AND HIS HOME ORGAN INSTALLATION**

At the age of four, **Len Rawle** began studying piano and continued until he was called up for National Service aged 18.

Music changed the course of **Len's** life. Because of his ability as an entertainer and accompanist, he remained at **Aldershot** for the next two years organising and appearing in all the entertainments designed to keep the troops happy.

It was at **Aldershot** that **Len** first saw a cinema organ - a seven rank **Wurlitzer** housed in a theatre. He was allowed to play the instrument and immediately was inspired by the **Wurlitzer** sound. He became fascinated with its orchestral qualities and spent much of his spare time finding out how many different sounds he could obtain - a characteristic for which he has become famous. In **Len's** words, he "dissected what it was all about."

Some time later, after completing his National Service, the **Granada, Wandsworth Road**, was flooded and he and his father **Les** bought the cinema's 3/8 organ and installed it in **Les's** house.

In 1961 **Len** heard that the **Empire, Leicester Square**, was to be pulled down. That cinema had been the home of a 4 manual 19 rank **Wurlitzer** since 1927 when it had cost £35,000 to install. This organ was unique in that it was a "special", particularly in its console design and percussion.

**Len's** bid was accepted because "the management were pleased that the instrument was to be preserved in its entirety." However, there was a time limit of three weeks in which it had to be removed as the demolition squad was due to move in then.

At a time like that you really find out who are your true friends and **Len** must have been thankful for his popularity! Removing six 16ft ranks alone is not a job for the faint hearted, much less the handling of monstrous wind chests. However, succeed they did, with two hours to spare!

Perhaps the most significant thing about the whole operation was that **Len** met **Judith** who became his bride three years later in 1964. He is quick to point out that **Judith** has been as involved as he has in the whole project. He must surely be the envy of many organ enthusiasts to have marital co-operation to that extent!

Having removed the organ from the **Empire**, they were faced with the problem of what to do with it. For the next four years all the pieces were stored in **Len's** father's house whilst a home for its re-installation was sought. With an almost total lack of interest from schools, town halls etc. there was only one thing to do - build a place. Fortunately for **Len** his "normal" occupation was that of a surveyor, so that building his own house was not as daunting as it might have been to a man with no connection with the building trade.

For the next two years **Len** and **Judith** physically laid 65,000 bricks and did numerous other jobs to make the unique, two-part house. Half was for the organ and the remainder was for living purposes. One of the problems of designing such a space is to contain the sound within the pipe chamber. This needs to be done for two reasons - if it was not well insulated the swells would lose their effectiveness, but equally importantly, the sound had to be contained to keep the neighbours

happy. Success was achieved by building the walls of the chamber 18 inches thick and pouring the ceiling with concrete 11 inches thick. The ceiling had to withstand the unusual weight of the relay racks.

In all, it took two years to install the organ, during which time another five ranks were added, making it the largest **Wurlitzer** in Europe. The task was a family affair, although all the electrics and wind were done by **Len** alone.

Then came the huge task of balancing the organ. For this, recordings of the organ whilst at the **Empire** were used and **Len** claims, justifiably so, that it is now perfectly balanced. So good was the final outcome that the installation has become the yardstick by which almost all other home installations are compared and upon which many others are modelled.

Visitors from every country where theatre organs are known have visited the house in **Chorleywood** to see how it should be done.

It is interesting to note that the name of the house is **Tonawanda** which all enthusiasts know was the town in **New York State** where **Wurlitzer** organs were built.

During all this pandemonium the **Rawles** found time to raise a family of three children. The whole **Rawle** family has continued to encourage and help others to preserve and present the theatre organ for the past 40 years.

**Len's** musical ability, his capacity to present quality workshops to appreciative listeners and his friendly personality have endeared him to many people.

Thanks to the **South Australian T.O.S.A.** for this interesting item.