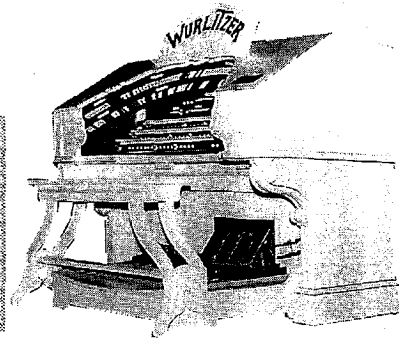


APRIL, 1997

# TOSA NEWS



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ  
Marrickville Town Hall

3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ  
Orion Centre Campsie

## OUR NEXT CONCERTS

NEIL  
JENSEN

JOHN  
ATWELL



Sunday, 20th APRIL at 2pm  
Orion Centre Campsie



Sunday, 18th MAY at 2 pm  
Marrickville Town Hall

Volume 36  
Issue 4  
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

APRIL, 1997

**THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.**

For the smooth running of TOSA, please contact the right person :

General Business - **SECRETARY**  
Ticket Bookings - **TICKET SECRETARY**  
Membership, Renewals, Change of Address -  
**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**  
TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - **EDITOR**



## COMING EVENTS

### \* DIRECTORY \*



#### PATRONS:

Ian Davies  
Canterbury Councillor, Ald. John Gorrie

#### PRESIDENT:

Robert Gliddon

#### VICE PRESIDENTS:

John Shaw 9759 5825  
Neil Palmer 9798 6742

#### SECRETARY:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318  
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

#### TREASURER:

Geoff Brimley (047) 87 1431

#### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)  
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, 2134

#### COMMITTEE:

Barry Tooker 9744 1535  
Colin Groves 9745 2417  
John Parker  
Paul Luci (043) 74 1108  
Peter Harding 9629 2257  
Walter Pearce 9716 0151 (after 7 pm)

#### RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048) 411 616

#### TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 9745 2417 (phone or fax)  
P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 2134

#### TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon

#### CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer 9798 6742

#### TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

George Newell 9750 0362  
(Mon - Fri: 10am - 6pm)

#### ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318  
P.O. Box 36, Brooklyn, 2083

#### PHOTOGRAPHY:

Barry Tooker (Home) 9744 1535  
(Work) 9550 5400

#### CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 9985 7318

#### PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 9759 5825

#### TRANSPORT OFFICER

Ritchie Willis 9580 3581

#### WORLD WIDE WEB HOME PAGE - TOSA (NSW)

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

### APRIL

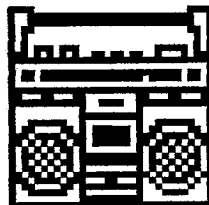
Monday 7 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting  
Sunday 20 at 2.00pm Neil Jensen Concert  
Orion Centre Campsie  
Wednesday 23 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night  
Orion Centre Campsie

### MAY

Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting  
Sunday 18 at 2.00pm John Atwell Concert  
Marrickville Town Hall  
Tuesday 20 at 8.00pm Half Yearly  
General Meeting  
Orion Centre Campsie  
Sunday 25 at 2.15pm Selwyn Theatre  
Home Party  
(see page 9)  
Wednesday 28 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night  
Orion Centre Campsie

### JUNE

Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting  
Sunday 15 at 2.00pm Barry Baker Concert  
Orion Centre Campsie  
Wednesday 18 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night  
Orion Centre Campsie



REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO

2CBA FM - 103.2

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm

For "Theatre Organ Highlights"

Presented by Chris Styles

# From Vice President, John Shaw

## Report on the Survey Taken at our December Concert

As usual, a maximum audience of just over 600 people attended last December's Christmas concert. At that **Tony Fenelon** and **John Atwell Duo** Concert we conducted a survey in which 400 people took part.

The survey was aimed at confirming the following points :

1. How many of our audience are members?
2. How did the non-members hear about our concert?
3. Which source of advertising reaches the largest number of people and which the least?
4. Would our audiences like an occasional associate artist?
5. Do our audiences wish any changes to be made?

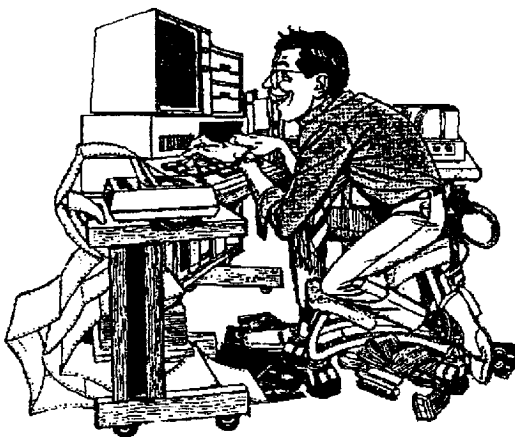
The result was similar to the last survey which was taken 8 - 9 years ago.

Our audience comprises 50% members and 50% non-members, which means we must cater for the general public as well as for our members.

In regard to advertising, following word-of-mouth, **2CBA** reaches the most people, followed by free advertising on commercial stations. However the local press and signage all play a large part and have proven worthwhile.

In relation to the occasional associate artists, over half have voted in favour and this needs to be taken into account. For your information, an instrumentalist was voted ahead of a singer, with silent film only scoring 135 votes.

The final statistics show that each member present that day attends 6.75 concerts out of the usual 10 per year and each non-member 4.48 concerts. However, I guess this is purely academic, although it was easy to work out due to the helpful co-operation that



we received from all those who took the trouble to complete the questionnaire.

Some of your comments included an organ concert combined with a dance orchestra, a sing-a-long, more UK organists, TV screen to show close-ups of playing, season tickets, less talk between numbers, shorter interval, programmes listing the numbers to be played, and a show with a local musical society.

On behalf of the committee, may I express our thanks to you all for participating, as the results will be most helpful in making our plans for the future, knowing what our audiences like and dislike.

Once again, many thanks for your help.

John Shaw  
Vice President



## Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is pleased to welcome 4 new members this month. We wish them all great enjoyment of our theatre organ activities :

**Chris Gain - Islington**  
**David Pitts - Narara**  
**Marjorie Poole - Castle Hill**  
**Myra Simons - Neutral Bay**

*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**

# Editorial

What a delightful, fun-filled concert **David Johnston** gave us last month! He is a talented, warm and witty entertainer with a great range of styles.

After the **Orion WurliTzer's** computer showed its displeasure at **Sydney's** hot and humid weather during the opening number, **David** played everything from jazz (showing off the **WurliTzer** piano and various percussions) to church music (with a selection of **Welsh** hymn tunes to celebrate **Saint David's Day**), to classical, with loads of best theatre organ music in between. Altogether a very entertaining afternoon.

A special thank you to **Barry Tooker** for filling in under emergency conditions as guest reviewer of **David's** concert.

A reminder to all member-players that the first of a series of **Players' Nights** at the **Orion** starts on Wednesday, 23rd April at 7.30. Come along (with a small item for a shared supper, if possible) and play, or just listen to our talented members put the **WurliTzer** through its paces. It is also a chance to see the organ chambers, peruse other national and international theatre organ societies' newsletters and magazines, as well as getting to know other members of our society in a relaxed atmosphere.

Best Wishes,  
Colin Groves

**Members'  
Playing Night**  
**Wednesday,**  
**23rd April**  
**at 7.30 pm**  
**Orion Centre**  
**Campsie**



# From The MAILBOX

**John Potter, Founder/Secretary and current Vice-President of the UK's Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, of St Patrick's Cottage, Llanbadrig, Cemaes Bay, Isle of Anglesey, saw Heather Finch's item about her travels in the February 1997 TOSA News and wrote to make a friendly offer to any other intending travellers :**

17/2/1997

I read with interest Heather Finch's article on her visit to the U.K. but was rather sad that if she went to **Blackpool** she almost certainly passed within a few miles of **Manchester** and had we known she could have enjoyed herself at the console of a **4/20 WurliTzer** and ridden the lift and played a **4/14 WurliTzer** both situated within half a mile of each other!

Noting that she got some information from the **Internet**, I thought it worthwhile placing on record for any further intending visitors to the U.K. that contact can be made with the **Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust** on Web page Url

<http://webi.com/organs/lancast/>

which is the address of our Chairman, **Don Hyde**. Not only are details of the **Trust** available but also details of all the recordings made or sold by the **Trust**.

Subject to availability we can offer playing time at the **4/14 WurliTzer** in **Granada Studios Tour, Manchester**, but unfortunately our **4/20 Publix No 1 WurliTzer** presently in the now-closed **Free Trade Hall**, will be dismantled in the very near future for its move to the Ballroom of **Stockport Town Hall**.

We can of course provide information on any other theatre organs in the immediate area - one, a **Compton 3/11**, still being in situ. Just get in touch!

With every good wish,  
Sincerely,  
**John Potter**

## FOR SALE

### Five Rank Theatre-Style Pipe Organ

Two manual, Horseshoe Console  
The 5 Ranks are:

Flute 16, 8, 4, 2 2/3, 2  
Diapason 8, 4  
Sring 8, 4  
Oboe Horn 8  
Vox Humana 8

Two Tremulants - Flue and Reed  
Chimes, Cymbal, Drum,  
Tambourine, and Wood Block

The organ was built by **David Walton** and is currently installed in his home in the **Adelaide hills in South Australia**. The instrument is in full playing condition

Price: \$8,000

Contact **David** on (08) 83910771 for further details or write to **D. G. Walton**,

**P.O. Box 214, Stirling, 5152 South Australia**

for an appointment to hear and play the instrument



"Ever wondered why my legs are slightly bowed?" asks **Allan**. "Well," he continues, "there is good reason. When I was young my mother said to me, 'If you want to play the organ well, you will have to learn to stand on your own two feet.' "So," adds **Allan**, "I've been playing the organ for a very long time - now you know why my legs are bowed!"

**IF YOU WANT TO BUY OR SELL A THEATRE, CONSOLE, OR SPINET ORGAN OR EVEN ANTIQUE MODELS, CONTACT : MANNING ORGAN SOCIETY ORGAN SEARCH FIRST. WE CAN HELP**

**Phone/Fax (065) 531 431  
Manning Organ Society  
15 Burdett Street,  
Tinonee 2430**

## FOR SALE

### BALDWIN "Fantasia" 230 DR Series

2 x 61-note Manuals  
25-note Detachable Pedalboard  
Owner's Manual  
Excellent Condition

Price : \$1,500 o.n.o.

Phone **Jennifer Kiernan** on :  
(02) 9543 1626

## FOR SALE

**William Boyce**, a TOSA member and a great lover of the theatre organ, died 23rd December, 1996, leaving 2 organs which unfortunately have to be sold :

### Conn 3-manual Theatre Organ - Model 652

With an Antique White Finish  
Includes Electronic Pipes

### Conn "Martinique"

### Model 644

Both organs look to be in good condition and are complete with owner's booklet

Contact **Geoff Boyce of Strathfield**  
by Phone: (02) 9763 1089  
or by Fax: (02) 9763 1082

## ORGAN FESTIVALS

**Toronto (Canada) : Toronto Organ Day** sponsored by the **Toronto Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists** on Saturday May 3, 1997.

Participants will travel to one of **St. James Anglican Cathedral, St Paul's Anglican Church or Deer Park United Church**. After lunch at **Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**, buses will take everyone to **Gober Organs Inc.** to observe first hand how pipe organs are actually made. The day's activities will end with a brief recital played by **William Maddox** at **Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**.

**Manchester (UK) : The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust** is holding a **Lancastrian Theatre Organ Weekend 97 - 12/13/14 September, 1997**.

Venues will include **Granada Studios Tour, Manchester - WurliTzer (ex-Gaumont Manchester), Blue Coat School, Oldham - Christie, Ossett Town Hall - Compton/Christie, Ritz Brighthouse - WurliTzer**.

**Indianapolis (USA) : Full details of the 1997 ATOS Convention** are on the page 5.

The American Theatre Organ Society has announced the programme and artists for their Convention in July this year. Although it would be great to attend, one consolation is that many of the artists have played for us in Sydney in recent times.

# ATOS 97 NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

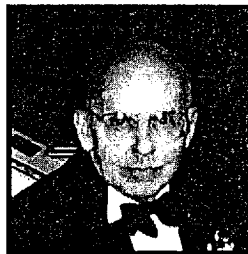
1997 ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION  
SATURDAY JULY 12 to THURSDAY, JULY 17, 1997 • INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
SCHEDULE of EVENTS

DATE	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
7/11(Fri)			Registration
7/12(Sat)	Registration	Registration No-host Cocktail Party Hyatt Regency	Warren Performing Arts Center, Ron Rhode 3/18 Barton
7/13(Sun)	Members' Forum Meeting Hyatt Regency	Long Center, Lafayette Lee Erwin—Silent Film Ken Double & Citizens Band 3/21 Wurlitzer	Free Time ETONES Meeting Pipe Owners Group
7/14(Mon)	Manual High Jelani Eddington 3/26 Wurlitzer	Hedback Theatre Walt Strony, 2/11 Page Artsgarden Donna Parker, Rodgers	Warren PAC Dwight Thomas 3/18 Barton plus Jam Session (optional)
7/15(Tues)	Paramount Theatre Anderson Clark Wilson 3/12 Page	Embassy Theatre Fort Wayne Jim Riggs 4/16 Page	Embassy Theatre Fort Wayne Simon Gledhill 4/16 Page
7/16(Wed)	Manual High Mark Hawn & Young Artists 3/26 Wurlitzer	ATOS Annual Meeting Seminars Hyatt Regency Ballroom	Cocktails/Banquet Indiana Roof Bill Tandy
7/17(Thurs) AFTERGLOW (optional)	Depart for Cincinnati	Wehmeier Res., Barry Baker 4/33 Wurlitzer Union Terminal Tour	Dinner Cruise on Ohio River

## ATOS 97 NATIONAL CONVENTION ORGANISTS



Ron Rhode



Lee Erwin



Ken Double



Jelani Eddington



Donna Parker



Walter Strony



Dwight Thomas



Clark Wilson



Jim Riggs



Simon Gledhill



Mark Hawn



Bill Tandy



Barry Baker



Karl Cole

With all the media attention on the film "Shine", its winning of Golden Globe Awards and its nomination for Academy Awards, the Ballarat Newsletter's editor, Winston Loveland, found an early appearance by the film's music composer. These items appeared in recent issues of Ballarat's Newsletter, when "Shine" had picked up a handful of awards at the AFI ceremony, and had been nominated for various Academy Awards.

The outstanding Australian film "Shine" won many of the recently announced Australian Film Industry Awards. The film depicts the story of Australian concert pianist David Helfgott; it is a "must see" for all music lovers.

The Award for Best Original Music Score went to DAVID HIRSCHFELDER, which sent me hurrying off to thumb through our Society's archives. There I located the old 1973 press photo of young David, aged 13. Like many other artists who have gone on to become world famous, David Hirschfelder began his musical career competing in the Royal South Street Society Competitions on the stage of Her Majesty's, Ballarat.

The text accompanying the Ballarat Courier photo reads: "A Ballarat boy, David Hirschfelder, on Sunday won the Junior section of the State final of the Yamaha Electone Festival in Melbourne. David, 14, and Gaynor Blanchfield, 14, gained equal first

place in the local section and both competed in the State Final .... a versatile musician, David plays piano and organ and is taking up guitar. He has been learning classical piano for 6 1/2 years but has been playing organ for only nine months ... apart from a few fundamental tips from Ballarat musician Mr. John Gilbert, David's organ prowess is self-taught. David, a Form 3 student at Ballarat Grammar, said that he had no firm favourites in music, but enjoys all types, but he does prefer popular music on the organ".

David's first South Street success was in 1974, winning the 16yrs and under Electronic Organ Solo, the same year that member Mike Conron won the Open Age organ section. The next year he again took out several placings, in both organ and piano sections. In 1976 he was guest organist at the BTOS Outdoor Concert held at the old Smeaton Mill. In 1978 he started a 3 year Diploma Course in Modern Jazz Improvisation and Arranging at Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, and freelancing as a professional musician.

Our archives then have a press photo of him as a mature 19yr old (sporting a black beard) at the piano with Warwick Kittson, preparing for our mid-year concert at Her Majesty's, when he and 3 other students played a jazz quartet item as associate artists with Ray Thornley and Edith Dizon.

The rest is history - musical arranger for Johnny Farnham, TV productions, etc., and now this prestigious film award. How thankful we are in Ballarat that our South Street Competitions, with its 19 different artistic disciplines, has been the start of many a successful artistic career.

David, now aged 37, the father of two children and living in Melbourne, has been nominated for one of Hollywood's greatest accolades, an Oscar, for the Best Original Dramatic Score in the Australian hit film, Shine.

He has already achieved fame as a musician, producer and composer of John Farnham's albums. He holds the 1993 British Film and Television Academy Award for Best Original Music in the Australian film, Strictly Ballroom.

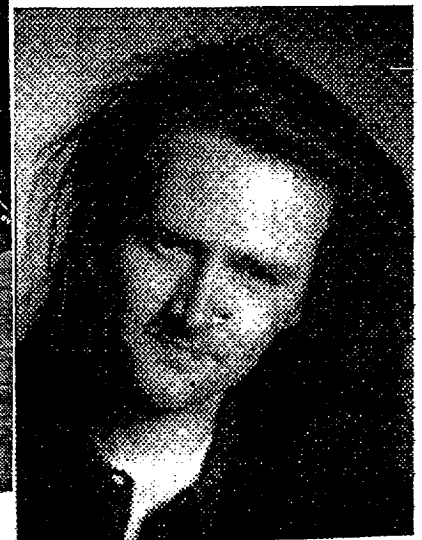
His gift for music is inherited from both sides of the family - his grandmother had been a concert pianist in Germany before World War Two. While being educated at Ballarat Grammar, he trained on piano for nine years from age seven, with Ballarat's Sister of Mercy teacher, Frances Lynch, whose musical teaching he described as "wonderful" and contributed to much of his musical success.

Right now he is working on a recording with his former Ballarat school friend and star of Opera Australia, David Hobson.

### Oscar nominee, David Hirschfelder



14 yr old David Hirschfelder plays the organ two hours a day





New member, **Marjorie Poole** (formerly **Prowse**) has sent in some interesting historical items along with her application to join **TOSA**. These are copies of press cuttings of the times when she was a child performer in Sydney theatres. Welcome to **TOSA, Marjorie**, and thank you for sharing these wonderful memories with us and for reminding us all of the way Sydney theatres used to entertain their customers.

# From MARJORIE PROWSE'S Scrapbook

"The World"

Wednesday, 2nd March, 1932

Tune In, At 7.30 p.m., To  
2UW and Station TOT:  
Novel Program.

At last Station TOT has become a reality. The finishing touches have been added, the artists have had their last rehearsal, and to-morrow they will be on the air, making radio history.

TOT, sponsored by THE WORLD and Station 2UW, is the first completely juvenile broadcasting station in the world.

Although the competition for child artists to appear with TOT closed over a week ago with over 800 entries, applications are still being received daily from children who want to be on the station.

The children who will be heard have been selected after exhaustive elimination tests.

Every child, from the smallest five-years-old to the biggest 14-years-old, was given an audition, and only the best have been chosen.



**Marjorie Prowse.**

and only the best have been chosen.

Marjorie writes: "I trust that the photocopies of press cuttings, chosen from my scrapbook covering the years from 1930 until the 1960's, will be of interest, as well as showing why I have an interest in TOSA."

As a child performer in the late 1920's, I took part in stage presentations in city and suburban picture theatres and in the 1940's had my seasons at the **Prince Edward, Regent, State and Capitol Theatres.**

Attending TOSA's **Chris McPhee** concert brought back many memories. As well as my memories of seeing that very **Wurlitzer** rising from the pit, I recalled the many times I heard it as I waited in the dressing room. Not to mention the memory of **Noreen Hennessy** at the **Prince Edward Theatre** as she turned to greet her audience with all her charm!"

## STRALIAN RADIO NEWS

Now here is a little picture of **See Saw Marjorie Daw**. She is a clever little girl, and has won lots of prizes and medals, and I know you all like to hear her little songs.



Then listen-in every night at 5 o'clock to 2CH and hear all about it.—With lots of love, from your excited  
**FAIRY GODMOTHER.**

*At this age I had heard most of Sydney's theatre organs while I waited for the Variety presentation to begin, in which I did my song & dance act in costume!*



# More from MARJORIE PROWSE's Scrapbook

## REG. LEWIS BAND PRES AT "PRINCE EDWARD" IS A HONEY!

FOR his current musical presentation at the Sydney Prince Edward Theatre, Reg. Lewis offers as fragrant a musical bouquet as we have savoured for quite some time. Featuring his Show Band and singers Marjorie Prowse (who recently returned from Hongkong, where she appeared at the British Centre) and Geoffrey Moore, young New Zealand tenor, programme opens with an excellent arrangement of American Patrol, which has more snap than a pre-war girdle, with saxes bouncing a clipped accent and hitting the rhythm right on the nose.

— Marjorie Prowse follows this number and charms with a golden version of You Are The Echo Of My Song, displaying excellent production but just a trifle too much vibrato in one or two places. The shimmering beauty of Miss Prowse's image then makes way for Harry Willis, who trundles his bass down to the mike and delivers himself of a laugh-making morsel, You're Bound To Look Like A Monkey When You Grow Old. Harry really rings the bell with this number, and his voice has a lot of Waller's infectious mischief.

Piece de resistance, for my particular taste, is the really lovely presentation of Symphony. Reg. Lewis takes most of the first chorus on piano, using only rhythm accompaniment for 16 bars and carrying the melody in the dulcet left-hand position: brilliant ensemble leads up to a satin-smooth vocal by Johnny Wade, with Reg. floating some florid chords on piano against the band and voice in the Duchin manner, after which Neville Thomas picks up the melody line on tenor and hands it to Jack Hanson's trumpet; band later builds up to a soaring climax and pulls a surprise fade for Johnny Wade's vocal to coda. This is a most effective piece of scoring, and the whole thing dripped class.

Geoffrey Moore then makes his appearance, bringing his rich tenor voice to bear most effectively on the ever-popular Donkey's Serenade. Moore has splendid control, and makes tough phrases sound easy.

Finale is most spectacular, employing both singers and the Show Band in a particularly clean-cut arrangement of Song Of The Dawn, in which several members of the band—notably Colin Bergerson—lend some distinctly effective harmonised vocal support.

Personnel of Reg. Lewis' band: Trumpets, Jack Hanson, Neil Thurgate, Doug. Burgess. Reeds, Reg. Stevenson (dep. leader) and Colin Bergerson, alto; Neville Thomas and Colin Anderson, tenor. Rhythm, George Taylor, piano; Johnny Wade, guitar and vocals; Harry Willis, bass; Frank Marcy, drums. Reg. Lewis, leader.

Film is Alan Ladd's 12 bullet-punctuated reels of Blue Dahlia, in which he co-stars with Veronica Lake.—J.B.

"MUSIC MAKER"

THE DAILY MIRROR, MONDAY, JULY 29, 1946.

A murder-mystery thriller, set in the heart of Hollywood's Night Spots!

Alan LADD • Veronica LAKE  
William BENDIX  
**The BLUE DAHLIA**  
Adult Ex.  
A Paramount Picture  
Commmences FRIDAY  
Reg. Lewis & BAND with Geoffrey MOORE, MARGIE PROWSE, HARRY WILLIS

LADD is back in the most sensational role of his amazing career!  
WATCH FOR IT!

Alan LADD  
Veronica LAKE  
William BENDIX  
**The BLUE DAHLIA**  
Adult Ex.  
A Paramount Picture  
It commences FRIDAY, Aug. 2nd  
Prince Edward  
Reg. Lewis & BAND with Geoffrey MOORE, MARGIE PROWSE, HARRY WILLIS

From "Music Maker", 1957 :

## "MISS VARIETY'S" WIDE SHOW BUSINESS EXPERIENCE Well known in Sydney's entertainment world is "Miss Variety", Marge Prowse.

No newcomer to the business, Marge has an act which combines classics, musical comedy and pop songs with fast changes of costume and lively patter.

In her early days as a child performer, she appeared on 2UW's first children's session, "Station TOT".

After studies at the NSW Conservatorium of Music, Marge embarked on a career of musical and recital programmes. Later she was a permanent member of the AWA Light Opera Company, under Humphrey Bishop's direction.

During the war, Marge branched into vaudeville, working as a straight singer, soubrette and doing "bits".

Chosen to jopin the British Centre Entertainment Unit, she toured South East Asia with Wilfrid Thomas, Joe Lawman, Joy Robbin, Barbara James, Ron Jackson and others.

After visits to Hongkong and Singapore, she returned to Sydney to join Reg Lewis' Band at the Prince Edward Theatre.

She later joined Stanley Mackay's shows on tour, and has been heard frequently on national and commercial radio.

As a singer of traditional Scottish songs, Marge is a regular artist for the NSW Highland Society concerts at Sydney Town Hall.



*You* are invited to a  
**TOSA HOME PARTY!!!**

Hear talented theatre organ artists on the  
**Thomas Celebrity Organ**  
and on piano

**SUNDAY, 25th MAY, at 2.15pm**

Hosted by **Ritchie Willis** and **Norm Read** at the

*Selwyn Theatre*

**13 Rosemont Ave, Mortdale**

(between Mortdale and Penshurst Stations)

Admission : \$8 for men ; \$6 + a plate for ladies

Limited Seating!! Book Early!!

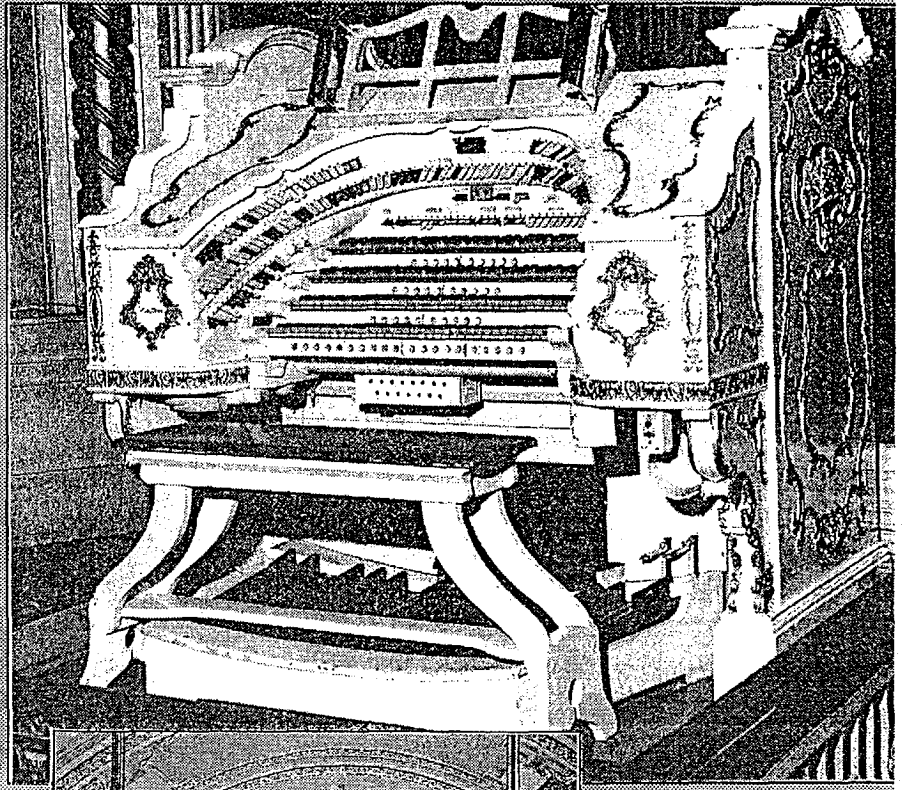
**Booking Essential on 95803581**

*Proceeds to the TOSA Building Fund*

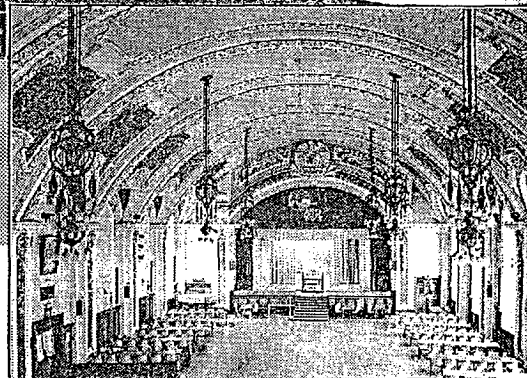
Players include : **Cliff Bingham, Bill Schumacher,**  
**Chris Styles, John Shaw and David Devenport**

## Mighty Wurlitzer will move to town hall ballroom

We've  
won  
organ  
swap  
battle



THE Free Trade Hall Wurlitzer, above, is heading for Stockport's ornate town hall ballroom, left



by Eileen Payne

STOCKPORT has beaten off the challenge of Manchester to become the new-home of the Free Trade Hall's mighty Wurlitzer organ. Owners the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust decided that the great "organ transplant" should be from the Free Trade Hall to Stockport Town Hall's magnificent ballroom rather than rival contender, Gwythenshawe Forum.

And the £200,000 project to move the £250,000 organ which is expected to take two years - will not cost Stockport's hard-pressed council tax payers a penny.

Don Hyde, of Bramhall, chairman of the organ trust, said: "We are paying a lot of the cost of moving the organ ourselves.

### Lottery

"We have already received a grant of £60,000 from the Sports and Arts Support Fund, run by the football pools organisations.

"We have also applied for £65,000 from the National Lottery for work which will have to be done to the ballroom before the organ can be moved there."

The organ, almost twice the size of its famous Blackpool Tower Ballroom counterpart, and at 14 tons the biggest ever shipped from America to Europe, will be divided into small parts for the restoration work which will have to be done.

"We have professional restorers in many parts of the country who are going to do the

work," said Mr Hyde. "If we did it ourselves it would take four years."

The organ is still in the Free Trade Hall, which closed last summer when the Halle Orchestra moved to the new Bridgewater Hall.

But there is no danger it will deteriorate as the heat-ing is switched an because the Royal Exchange Theatre holds rehearsals there.

The organ was shipped to Manchester in 1930 for the Odeon Cinema, then known as the Paramount.

### Loan

The Lancastrian Organ Trust, which has 1,000 members and associates, was set up in the 1970s to save the Wurlitzer when it had to be removed from the cinema. The

organ, which has been at the Free Trade Hall since 1977, will be on loan from the trust at the Town Hall as it was in Manchester.

It was made by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company in New York State to whom organ patents originally drawn up by Robert Hope-Jones, who came from Cheshire, were assigned.

Bramhall Conservative Councillor Ken Holt, who came up with the idea that the Wurlitzer should be moved to Stockport, was delighted: "This will not cost Stockport taxpayers a penny and will bring prestige to the borough," he said.

The final organ concert at the Free Trade Hall was last September when one of the soloists was Nigel Ogden. He will be playing again at a concert in aid of the Wurlitzer "transplant" fund at the Bridgewater Hall on February 15.

The *Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust (UK)* has published an interesting review of the recent video, *ONCE UPON A DREAM*, which tells the story of Sydney's *Capitol Theatre* and its *Wurlitzer organ*. The video is now on sale in the UK, but can also be bought from the *TOSA Record Bar* for \$25 (+ \$6 postage)

## VIDEO REVIEW

*"ONCE UPON A DREAM"* - The story of Sydney's *Capitol Theatre* - VHS, approx. 60 minutes.

Exactly two years ago we reviewed *"Palace of Dreams"*, an *Australian* video on the history and restoration of the *State Theatre, Sydney*, and now comes a similar, but longer, production covering the same city's *Capitol Theatre*, considered by many to be the finest in the *Southern Hemisphere*.

Atmospheric in design and with a striking proscenium, the walls extending to the back of the circle resemble a *Florentine* garden amphitheatre, complete with birds, trees and statues from various periods of history, while stars twinkle in the blue sky.

The history of the *Capitol* site is well covered, and includes some turn-of-the-century black and white footage.

It started in 1893 with the building of the *Belmore Fruit Market*, which by 1918 had so outgrown the available space that a replacement was built elsewhere.

The *Wirth Brothers' Circus* had long been popular in *Sydney*, so next on the site was the *"Hippodrome"*, and to meet the requirement that the decorative exterior of the old market must be retained, it was rebuilt as the upper part of the new building. The *Hippodrome* was a fully equipped theatre with stage and fly-tower, and in the stalls area was a circus ring, the floor of which could be lowered and filled with water for aquatic shows and the performing seals.

Ten years later the circus was in decline, and application was made to convert the building into a cinema, which resulted in the 2771-seat *Capitol*, opened in 1928. Again, the historic exterior had to be retained, as was the fly-tower, but the auditorium was close to the atmospheric theatres of the U.S.A., and it was not until the 1970's that researchers discovered it to be the work of *John Ebersson*, one of *American's* leading theatre architects. He was given no credit at the time, the plans and design drawings showing only the name of *Australian* architect, *Henry White*.

Opening in the silent film era, the theatre boasted a 30-piece orchestra and a sizeable three manual *Wurlitzer organ* which was played by *American* organist *Fred Scholl*, who is seen in a still close-up and at a distance in movie shots showing the rising console. The organ was allowed to deteriorate, and in 1964 local enthusiasts became responsible for maintaining it in playing order, but with the theatre lease expiring in 1972 and the possibility of demolition, the *New South Wales Chapter* of the *T.O.S.A.* purchased the *Wurlitzer*, which started a new lease of life in the *Orion Theatre, Campsie*.

The video takes us there to hear the appropriate march *"Theatreland"* excellently played by *John Giacchi*, who handles the console beautifully and appears to be an unassuming young man. Included are brief chamber shots, all in perfect synchronisation.

The *Capitol* has not had a smooth life, the lease having passed to various operators over the years, and it has had periods of closure - the first time only four years after its opening, due to the depression. In later years it became used for various functions, including rock concerts, at which damage was caused, and due to lack of funds for maintenance, by the start of the 90's it was shabby and starting to crumble in places. With demolition on the horizon, a scheme

for a complete restoration as a fully-fledged theatre was proposed and sanctioned. The task was tremendous, large parts having to be rebuilt, and an adjoining site was acquired on which to build new foyer, sales areas and bars. The stage was rebuilt in enlarged form with a new fly-tower, and boxes were added in the completely refurbished auditorium. Found beneath the stalls floor was the *Hippodrome's* circus ring, and it has become the band room which is so necessary with an orchestra pit now housing over a hundred musicians.

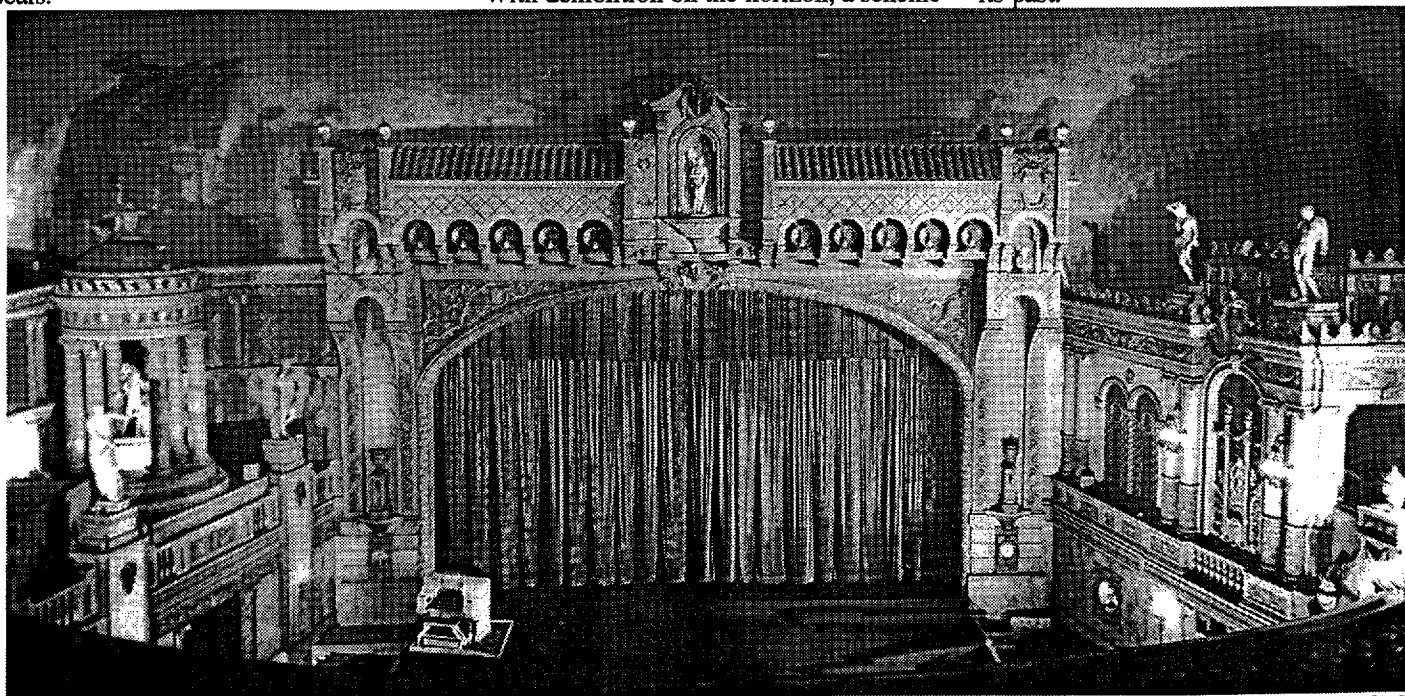
While it is a pity that the organ is no longer there to share in this new life, it would not have fitted into the new regime, and must therefore be more secure in its present home.

Shortly after the reopening, the spectacular *"Miss Saigon"* was staged - some short extracts being seen and heard, and lots more music is heard in the course of the video. We recognised some tracks from the *Chappell* and *Bosworth* recorded music libraries.

Both sound and picture quality are superb throughout, and telling the story is the charming singer turned actress *Lorrae Desmond*, who for many years appeared as *Shirley Gilroy* in the T.V. soap *"A Country Practice"*.

There are contributions by architects, actors, musicians, etc., and all who appreciate cinema and theatre history will find this video of absorbing interest. So will many others, for it is a superb production - 100% professional, and perfect in vision and sound. We enjoyed every minute, and would sum it up as a video not to be missed - so do order while copies remain available.

The recent restoration, only briefly covered here, fills one with admiration, and after spending so much money and effort, it is to be earnestly hoped that the *Capitol's* future will be more secure than its past.





## BOOKING FORM

The Ticket Secretary  
18 Dudley Street,  
PUNCHBOWL  
NSW 2196

Always include a stamped self-addressed envelope with your booking. If this is not done, tickets will be held at the Box Office.

**JOHN ATWELL CONCERT**  
**MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL**  
**SUNDAY, 18th MAY, 1997 at 2.00pm**

Phone Enquiries & Bookings: George Newell - (02) 9750 0362  
Between 10.00 am & 6.00 pm. Mon. - Fri. only

Cheques & Money Orders should be made payable to:

**TOSA. (NSW Div.) Inc.**

(Sorry no refunds after purchase)

Please send me:

Adult tickets @ \$12.00 each      Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Concession tickets @ \$10.00 each      Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(This includes Members and Pensioners)  
Family tickets @ \$25.00 each      Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Covers 2 Adults & 2 children who are non-members under 15 years)  
Child tickets @ \$5.00 each      Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(non-members under 15 years)

Total this order \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque [ ] or money order [ ] for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

My Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

My Phone No. is (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERRED SEATING LOCATION

CUT ALONG THIS LINE BEFORE POSTING BOOKING FORM

# OUR NEXT ARTIST :

## JOHN ATWELL

John Atwell is well-known to us for his fabulous duo concerts with **Tony Fenelon**, but this time we welcome **John** back once again to play for us what we know from past experience will be an entertaining solo concert.

Highly talented, **John** comes originally from **South Australia** and received tuition in piano and classical organ in **Adelaide**. He taught himself to play theatre organ by listening to, and watching, **Knight Barnett** at **Adelaide's Regent Theatre**, as well as picking up other organ stylings from recordings.

Since 1971, he has lived in **Melbourne**, where he gained his PhD in Immunology/Biochemistry at the **University of Melbourne** in 1974. Currently he works for the **CSIRO** as a Senior Research Scientist in the field of Genetic Engineering/Bio-Technology.

John has presented theatre organ concerts, both solo and in conjunction with other artists, for most **TOSA Divisions** around **Australia** since 1971. Some highlights of his career as an organist include :

- \* being one of the first artists to play a concert on the **Adelaide Regent's** organ in its new location in **St Peters College** in 1970;

- \* playing the **21st Anniversary Concert**, with **Tony Fenelon**, for **TOSA (Vic)** at the **Dendy Cinema** in 1981;

- \* opening the **Compton** organ, with **Hubert Selby**, in the **Memorial Theatre** (now **Her Majesty's**), **Ballarat** in 1982;

- \* presenting a concert on the **Cassavant** organ in the **Melbourne Concert Hall** during the month-long opening celebrations in 1982;

- \* opening **Adelaide's Capri Cinema's Wurlitzer**, with **Tony Fenelon** and **Ray Thornley** in 1983;

- \* recording on the **Capri** organ as part of the "**Five Alive**" album in 1985;

- \* participating in **Melbourne's "Carols by Candlelight"** each Christmas Eve on piano or organ;

- \* presenting, with **Tony Fenelon**, highly-successful duo concerts with piano and organ duets for the past 17 years.

He has had a hand in the tonal design and console lay-outs of several theatre organ re-installations, including **Dallas Brooks Hall, Melbourne**, the **Capri Cinema, Adelaide**, and the **Marrickville Wurlitzer's** recent refurbishment. He has also been the editor of **Vox, Victoria's** excellent answer to **NSW's TOSA News!**

Welcome back!

## Marrickville Town Hall

### Sunday, 18th May at 2pm

Booking form at the top of this page

