

TOSA NEWS

March 2017
Volume 56 No.2

Price: \$2.00

Are you ready to have fun?

**TOSA's World of Entertainment
brings you**

Bill Schumacher

& Debbie Fitzsummons

playing

The Mighty Wurlitzer

Sunday 19th March 2017

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Rds., Marrickville

 Find us on
Facebook

/tosansw

2:00pm - 4:30pm

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Vice Presidents

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)
John Weismantel 0435 258 287 *whitecoats@bigpond.com*

Secretary

Craig Keller *secretary@tosa.net.au* 0418 484 798
7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

Treasurer

John Wall *treasurer@tosa.net.au* 9528 9158

Membership Inquiries

David & Margaret Badman (02) 4776 2192
PO Box 589 RICHMOND NSW 2753

Committee

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

John Shaw 9543 3112

Robert Gliddon *christieorg@bigpond.com*

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131

Simon Ellis 0403 548 354

TOSA NEWS Editor

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 *editor@tosa.net.au*
P.O. Box A2322, Sydney South, NSW, 1235

Marrickville Players Convenor

John Batts 0420 424 103
Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)

Orion Players Convenor

Craig Keller 0418 484 798 phone or SMS

Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings)

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 before 8:0pm

Artist Liaison Officers

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122, John Shaw 9543 3112

Photography Barry Tooker 9744 1535

Publicity Officer Ernie Vale 0415 626 064
Printing by Ernie Vale & Graeme Costin

President



From the Secretary.

Hello again members. Geoff and Neil are still off-channel caring for family members, so Ernie called on me once more.

Our first concert for the year is rapidly approaching with Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons playing a duet concert at Marrickville. It should be a great afternoon's entertainment as we hear favourites from our musical past. Bring a friend or three along so that they too can experience the magic of a proper theatre pipe organ played by expert hands.

This will also be the last opportunity to purchase a season ticket for this year's scheduled five concerts. Information is in this TOSA NEWS.

In relation to Marrickville, In the past few days Neil Palmer has made available a video made for Weekend Magazine in 1968 by James Dibble of ABC fame. I remember James reading the evening news when I was a kid. The five minute article features the State Theatre, Clancy residence and the installation and opening of Marrickville. James Dibble was a TOSA NSW member for many years and an accomplished theatre organist.

Debra and I watched the video online soon after Neil uploaded it and tried to see familiar faces – perhaps a young Kevin Clancy was the only face.

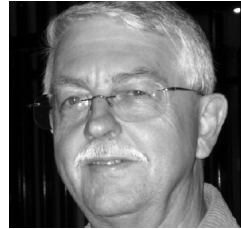
Featured people such as Frank Ellis and others have since departed this life. Neil has made the video available on YouTube for public viewing. If you have internet access go to

<https://youtu.be/OxYztl68rLU>

Remember, Members Days are regular events at Campsie and Marrickville. It's an opportunity for TOSA members to come and socialise with your fellow members – listeners and players are always welcome.

Craig Keller, Secretary

Editorial



Hello Members, Enjoy the Christie report from project leader Rob Gliddon and John Weismantel. Details of the 2017 concert program are included together with details of Season Tickets.

I have included some articles of interest as well as details of some theatre organ birthdays interstate.

Member John Batts has provided an excellent account of his experience in witnessing and hearing a performance at Sydney Opera House by British organist Joseph Nolan. Please note the program of silent movies for 2017 presented by Australia's Silent Film Festival 2017 - Ronnie and Sharon with some sessions accompanied by TOSA members John S. Batts and Cliff Bingham. Hope to see you at MTH on March 19th.

Enjoy the music,

Ernie Vale
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

From the Mailbox...



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

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

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor editor@tosa.net.au

or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

Member News

From MTO Vox Feb-March 2017

50th ANNIVERSARY

The style 260 3/15 Wurlitzer Opus 637 Pipe Organ was originally installed in Melbourne's Capitol Theatre more than 90 years ago in 1924.

It was purchased by the Victorian Division of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia in 1963, refurbished and installed in the Dendy Theatre in 1967.

On Sunday April 30th at 1:30pm we are celebrating the fiftieth year our Wurlitzer has been entertaining audiences at the Dendy.

Come along and hear David Johnston, Heath Wooster, John Atwell and Tony Fenelon play this famous instrument and enjoy afternoon tea with us.

To assist with catering, bookings would be appreciated

Adults: \$25

MTO and FODO members \$20

Contact numbers: 9891 7227

0412 422 309

trybooking.com/OTDU

Ballarat's Hidden Secret

The Compton Theatre Organ

is celebrating 80 years of music
1937 - 2017

A Grand Concert at
Her Majesty's Theatre
on 23rd April 2017 at 2:00pm

Scott Harrison, David Johnston
and friends
More details at
www.ballarat.com/theatreorgan

To Watch Out for

Concerts for 2017

Your Executive and Committee have planned five concerts for this year. Bookings have been confirmed with Inner West Council where we propose three concerts at Marrickville Town Hall and two concerts are confirmed for the Orion Centre Theatre.

Seating at Marrickville Town Hall has been replaced by very comfortable and supportive seats thanks to the Inner West Council. You are assured of a comfortable and enjoyable afternoons entertainment by Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons. *see centre pages for program information.*

If you post your Season Ticket application to Theo Langenberg early you can pick up your ticket at the March Concert at Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday 19th March. This will be your last chance to purchase a season ticket.

If you did not receive the Jan/Feb TOSA News in the post please advise the Editor at editor@tosa.net.au

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' Playing Dates

The Orion Theatre Campsie

2nd Thursday Morning

10:30am to 1:30pm

March 9th

April 13th

Convenor is

Craig Keller on 0418484798

Marrickville Town Hall
4th Monday afternoon/evening
at 2:20pm to 9:00pm

March 27th

April 24th

Under the Inner West Council
the time and dates may change
John Batts & Neil will keep
members informed

Players and listeners welcome.

Please contact John Batts
0420424103 or Neil Palmer on
9798 6742 after 7:00pm

to confirm availability

Members Day at the Orion Theatre February 2017

The second Thursday of the month (9th February) is nearing; it's important for TOSA's monthly gathering at the Orion Centre, Beamish Street, Campsie. I am hoping that the recent heavy rains have not accumulated in the lift well – and if indeed there has been seepage, I trust that the pump will have effected the needful. Fingers crossed!

Glorious full summer weather may have deterred some TOSA members from travelling to our usual haunts, but both the Orion and Marrickville events were held in late January and February. On our regular days and at our regular times a small cadre of organists and listeners have attended, perhaps undeterred by the prospect of encountering occasional Sydney bus and/or train without air-conditioning.

On Thursday, 9 February, 2017, numbers at Campsie were notably thin on account of holidays. Those enjoyed their time at the Wurlitzer were: **Graeme Costin, David Badman** and **John Batts**. Happily, the heavy rains of the preceding 48 hours had not affected the Wurlitzer's hoist and the bottom of the pit was near-dry. Among those who came to listen was that most loyal of members and knowledgeable organ-man **Kevin Clancy**. Another valuable non-playing attendee was **Margaret Badman** whose commendable skill in bringing a large plate of sandwiches has been a feature of recent members' events. Thanks, Margaret. As usual TOSA(NSW) is grateful for the cooperation of the Orion lessee George Khoury and his brother John.

Recent TOSA Members Event at Marrickville.

Members who came to the non-a/c Marrickville Town Hall on the afternoon of 28th January, 2017, were entertained by **Graeme Costin, David Badman, Tom Barber, Kevin Eadie**, and **John Batts**. Among the listeners at sundry times were **Margaret Badman, Kevin Clancy**, and **Neil Palmer**. Don't forget that if you would like to come along for a social hour or two, you don't need to stay the full course of several hours. There's usually a good selection of comestibles and this day again we enjoyed some

pizza courtesy of Graeme. Since that occasion, Neil and I have spent a couple of hours in the Solo chamber probing the non-speaking lowest C# of the Orchestral Oboe rank – so far in vain.

©jsbatts/02/2017.

Christie Organ Report February 2017

JOHN WEISMANTEL & ROBERT GLIDDON.

Progress has been slow at times due to the heat particularly in the workshop area and to a lesser degree in the chambers.

The following items have been worked on and/or completed in the last month.

- Symphonic Cymbal Roll action testing revealed a dead magnet in the "modulator"; reiterate electronics did not initially work but identified wiring configuration error.
- Broken arm on the scissors stairs was corrected after consultation with Gorter Hatches representative; one tread section removed to reduce flexing, and handrails evened up.
- Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Hi-hat cymbal actions and non-tonal percussion chest all screwed down to walkway/shelves and winded.
- Glockenspiel and supporting shelf moved to area beside the Xylophone unit to clear space above inter-chamber doorway for Tuba manual chest in Solo Chamber.
- 2 Sand block units restored and tested.
- Strings wind and trem manifolds have been made and are in the process of being installed in the Accomp. Chamber
- Restoration, testing and installation of Crash Cymbal completed
- Proper drumstick fitted to Tap Cymbal action.

- Work continues on the 16' Tibia 2 note offset chest.
- Trip to Badman's saw additional work on the console end of the Uniflex relay and removal of the damaged Accompaniment Manual Bottom "G" key for repair.

It is time to get organ-ised for 2017

Only a full orchestra can match the thrilling sounds of a theatre pipe organ in full voice.

The theatre organ is a pipe organ in the real sense, with row after row of pipes replicating the voices of brass, woodwind and strings together with various percussion instrument ranks including a toy counter with drums, cymbals, castanets, tambourine etc. Together these unified sounds make for a delicious blend of heartwarming music - powerful enough to lift the roof one minute, fading to whisper quietness the next.

Concert dates, Artists and Venues for 2017

- 1.Sunday 19th March - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall* -
Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons Gold Coast
- 2.Sunday 18th June - 2:00pm at *Orion* – **Justin Stahl** USA
- 3.Sunday 10th September - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall*
- **Tony Fenelon** Melbourne
- 4.Sunday 5th November - 2:00pm at *Marrickville Town Hall* –
Nathan Avakian USA
- 5.Sunday 3rd December - 2:00pm at *Orion* -

Tony Fenelon and John Atwell both Melbourne

Booking of venues and artists are confirmed.

Season ticket prices

5 concerts for the price of 4

Members \$100; Conc \$120; Non Members \$140

Season tickets cannot be purchased on Trybooking

A Season Ticket Application form can be downloaded from TOSA Web Site www.tosa.net.au/events and posted to:-

The Ticket Secretary, 14 Warrah Place, Greystanes 2145

You can purchase a Season Ticket up until the March Concert at Marrickville Town Hall

If you post your application to Theo early you can pick up your Season Ticket at the Marrickville Concert.

Show & Membership Prices

	All Artists
Non-members	\$35
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	\$30
Family 2 Adults incl 1 child up to 19 yrs age	\$65
TOSA Members	\$25

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status

All Children FREE accompanied by an Adult

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$22 per person

First time Adult \$15 cash by completed Voucher at Box Office

Annual Membership Fees post June 30th 2016:

\$40.00 for Full membership, Family \$60 and

\$30.00 for Pensioner Concession, Interstate or Overseas \$40.

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 membership@tosa.net.au

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

Nolan Excites Opera House Audience:

an impression by John S. Batts.

The organist from the Palace was in town, so I had to attend. Well not quite! Joseph Nolan has performed many times at the Palace, recording solo albums on the Grand Ballroom organ of Buckingham Palace – so don't think of the Tower, Blackpool at this point! I heard his playing at a noon concert at Sydney Town Hall a few years ago, when as titular at Perth Cathedral, he was new to this country. The 17th February morning show titled "Organ Grandeur" was part of the Tea & Symphony series at Sydney Opera House, but here was solo organ with two items on the menu. Running for about 30 minutes the three movements of "Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale 'Ad Nos, Ad Salutarem Undam' (1850) offered exquisite switches of tonality ranging from brash invective to meandering gentleness. This Franz Liszt piece is a gift to those with sufficient technique and resources to match the imaginative writing, much of it polyphonic. This work is a good vehicle for showing off an organ. There are many voices clamouring for their say, including the solo pedal; the organist's choice of melody voices offered a partial tour of the Concert Hall's instrument. In the "Adagio" movement, clever control of the Swell and Choir boxes resulted in mysterious passages of whispered lyricism; at other times we heard solid flue-pipes and even splashes of austere reeds. Thanks to a dotted rhythm the contrapuntal "fugue" has a jaunty air, not unlike that in Liszt's contemporary Felix Mendelssohn's "Third Organ Sonata". One wondered what an audience of well over 2,000 and not necessarily organ fans made of this. The organ gallery is distant; one sees the organist's upper body, the discreet page-turner, and the occasional hand-registering but little else.

How fortunate then are the TOSA(NSW) audiences with screens providing close-ups; that morning I would have loved to have seen exactly what the organist was doing. One personal observation was that the head and shoulders were ever moving. Did I even detect some flamboyance in arms waving around? One tutoring cathedral organist (still alive!) in my recollection would stand behind me holding my shoulders still even while I was playing Vienne – the precept of another age I surmise! And yet during the Liszt, and discounting the odd cough, this Opera House audience

was rapt by Nolan's performance – a difficult piece of music rendered with aplomb.

The other piece was the perhaps more familiar "Fifth Organ Symphony" (1901) by Charles-Marie Widor, like Liszt a virtuoso organist-composer. On this occasion it was pleasing to hear the whole work rather than just the "warhorse" Toccata. The opening "Allegro Vivace" opened with restrained registration – yes I know the score marks it "p"! Here the only possible criticism I can offer is that the uses of crescendo and diminuendo were a little violent at times; of course, the problem for the executant in the Concert Hall is that s/he cannot hear as easily as the audience what is being effected and the reverberation here lacks the presence of a French cathedral. By the close there was double pedalling and the registration has reached "fff". It made a good foil for the lyrical second movement "Allegro cantabile". The dotted notes stood out as they should to breathe air into the writing, and the section closed quietly with unison notes. The third movement opens with a pedal solo before more romantic writing ensues. Again, it struck me that for an audience of probable organ neophytes this section offers allure, not least both from the busy pedal ostinato and the chromaticism of the ending. The brief fourth section offered haunting textures of sound. No tremulants heard, but exquisite registrations. Considering that the organist probably had little enough time to acquaint himself with this organ, I was full of admiration. The finale of the "Toccata" opened with a sensible tempo and steady rhythm. The pedal playing was impressive, the line cutting through all else where needed. The central section wherein the fast semiquaver movement (24 to the bar!) briefly shifts to the left hand moved gradually from "pp" to "ff" before the run of descending double pedal notes brings one hectically towards the final flourish of organ magniloquence. Sustained applause ... and would one hear an encore? Surely there was nothing that could follow what we had just heard. My own finger muscles would have been aching and rendered near useless. But we did have an Encore. I'm not sure about the wisdom of doing so, but Joseph Nolan played the "Toccata" section again -- and with similar gusto! A bravura performance. Bravo!

©jsb/02/2017

TOSA Presents
Sunday 19th March 2016 – 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Talented Duo keyboard musicians

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons



Direct from the Gold Coast, Queensland

on a World Renowned Wurlitzer Theatre Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham & Marrickville Roads, Marrickville
Featuring music of the **"Stage & Screen Stars"**

Be swept away on a musical journey.....from Charlie Chaplin's "Smile" through the Great American Song Book, Monti's "Czardas" to ABBA, Jerome Kern's "The Way You Look Tonight" to the "Jalousie" tango, music from the "Muppet Movie" to Disney's "When You Wish Upon A Star".....and beyond!

This is a rare opportunity to hear Bill & Debbie play a genuine "Mighty Wurlitzer" in Sydney

Come and Join us - you won't be disappointed!

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons

Bill and **Debbie** are the driving force behind **TOSA Gold Coast**. Together they organize and play regular concerts there, with **Debbie** as President and **Bill** as Secretary & Patron. **Bill** is the proud owner of a *George Wright GW-319 Allen Theatre Organ* as well as a *Yamaha Grand Piano*. **Bill** and **Debbie** are also supporters of **TOSA QLD**, and perform in concert on their Christie Cinema Pipe Organ.

Bill Schumacher was one of the first members of **TOSA NSW** and has performed interstate concerts in **Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide** and **Perth**. During several visits to the **USA**, **Bill** played a recital for the Puget Sound Chapter of the **American Theatre Organ Society**, and has been guest artist at the Pizza and Pipes Restaurant in Seattle. **Bill** considers himself fortunate to have visited and played some major US theatre pipe organ installations including the **Seattle Paramount** and **Portland Paramount's** San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, the Kern Residence, **Detroit Fox** and Portland and Denver's **Organ Grinder** Restaurants.

Debbie Fitzsummons has a wealth of experience in all areas of entertainment. **Australian champion** organist at the age of 15, she was a concert organist & released a solo album at age 19. At 14yrs of age was the youngest organist to then be invited to play the **Christie cinema organ** in Brisbane. Debbie's musical career has been wide and varied, and she has been fortunate to be Musical Director and play for many great Australian and International performers such as **The Four Kinsmen** (including their USA and Las Vegas tours), **Wickety Wak, Simon Gallaher, Debra Byrne, Julie Anthony, Max Bygraves, Phyllis Diller, Joe Longthorne, Judy Stone, Johnny Tillotson, Rolf Harris, Kerri-Ann Kennerley & Gina Jefferies** to name a few.

Together, **Bill** and **Debbie** have performed Theatre Pipe Organ and Piano concerts in **Sydney, Perth & Brisbane** as well as the **Gold Coast**.

Tickets : \$ 35; Concession \$ 30; Members \$25

Family ie 2 Adults including 1 or more children \$65

Adult Group of 10 or more \$22/person;

First time patrons \$15 by Voucher at the Box Office

Students up to 25 years Free on confirmation of student status.

A LOT TO LOVE IN TAMPA!
2017 ATOS Annual Convention.

a note from Ken Double

It's Great To Know that so many of you have already decided that Tampa is THE place to be this summer for the 2017 ATOS Annual Convention. So much to enjoy!

The Sumptuous Surroundings of the atmospheric Tampa Theatre, and its Mighty Wurlitzer hosting the likes of Wickerham, Rhode, our young competitors and more!

Scintillating Silent Film Fun at the historic Polk Theatre in Lakeland with Clark Wilson, featuring a restored 3/13 Robert-Morton sounding rich and glorious.

One Of The Finest Wurlitzers in existence, the Forker Memorial Organ at Grace Church in Sarasota, finds Mark Herman, David Gray and Simon Gledhill performing!

And The Five-Manual Behemoth at the 21,000-seat Amalie Arena will bring back memories of the Chicago Stadium, with Richard Hills at the console.

All this plus not one, but TWO ENCORE EVENTS for even more music to enjoy.

TAMPA IN 2017 PROMISES TO BE A GREAT, MEMORABLE EVENT!

Join Your Friends in ATOS And Register Now! It's so easy! On line at www.atos.org. And the Waterside Marriott awaits your reservation.

Important Note On Encore II To South Florida.

The trip to the Jancko and Brittain Residence Installations:

Please note these are private residence installations, and are not public venues. These homes do not have handicap accessibility for those who MUST travel by wheelchair. ATOS extends our apology

to those who will be affected by this limitation, and we felt it important to make this information available to you.

~Ken

Ken Double, President/CE
American Theatre Organ Society
www.atos.org
k.double@atos.org

Something new and rare at Lawrence Museum

*An article from the August 12, 2015 Clarence Valley Independent
by Roz Jones
(thanks to the Editor's cousin, the Late John Vale)*

A rare 1954 Jennings Univox synthesiser organ was the topic of the day for the volunteer staff at the Lawrence Museum this week. The Museum houses a vast array of historical and collectable items, and collection officer, Brian Titcombe, took the opportunity last week to show this now rare, collectable, item to the group.

Brian explained, "The Jennings Univox synthesiser organ was made in 1954 at Dartford in Kent, England. It was the forerunner of today's synthesiser. The Jennings 7 valve synthesiser has wooden keys and would be attached to the underside of a piano or an organ, and could be used as a mono voice. This instrument made the 60s instrumental group, The Tornados, famous and was the solo synth instrumental voice that is so recognisable in the 60s international hit 'Telstar'."

"This item is one of very few left in the world and we are pleased to be able to have it on display for all to view. It does, however, need some expertise in cleaning up the internal power board and operation requirements. We would love to hear from anyone who has any knowledge of the synthesiser."

The Lawrence Museum houses a large collection of telephones, radios and associated equipment and always welcomes donations.

The Lawrence Museum is operated by the Lawrence Historical Society and has operated in the former Radio 2NR Broadcasting Station Building. Merton Street, Lawrence since 2004.

**Australia's Silent Film Festival 2017 and silent films
with organ accompaniment**

Note these events are not organised by TOSA

HUNTERS HILL June 4 - Sunday, 2pm Hunters Hill Congregational Church. Classic silent comedies with live organ music, John S. Batts.

BOWRAL June 11 - Sunday, at 2pm St Judes. Classic silent comedies with live music, organ and grand piano, Paul Paviour OAM.

TERRIGAL June 17 - Saturday, Terrigal Uniting Church. Classic silent comedies with live organ music, John S. Batts.

TERRIGAL October 28 - Saturday, Terrigal Uniting Church. Classic silent comedies with live organ music, Cliff Bingham.

Best wishes,

Ronnie and Sharon

AUSTRALIA'S SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

Website: www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au

We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

Charles Kingsley



“Organ-ics”

**A six-session practical course
in the Craft of the Theatre Organ**

Simon Ellis will lead you in a hands-on study of many aspects of the art of Theatre Organ Playing including:

- Playing styles
- Registration
- Arranging
- Advanced accompaniment, chord progression, and harmony
- Left-hand techniques and counter melody
- Rhythm variation and improvisation Transposition

Sessions will be limited to a maximum of 8 participants and will be held on various instruments at the home of Peter Robinson in Eastwood.

Sessions will be held on Sunday from 2pm – 4pm, commencing Sunday 23rd April.

Cost: \$300

Please contact Simon Ellis for information and bookings.

Ph: 0403 548 354 Email: sellis639@gmail.com

*An article from the Puget Sound Pipeline -
February - March 2017*

PAGES FROM THE PAST1905 - 1939

Before theatre organs...Before full length movies...
History of a fantastic theatre

“Hip, Hip, Hippodrome” By Frank Cronican - Part 1
Reprinted from *MARQUEE*, the journal of the Theatre Historical Society, 1972

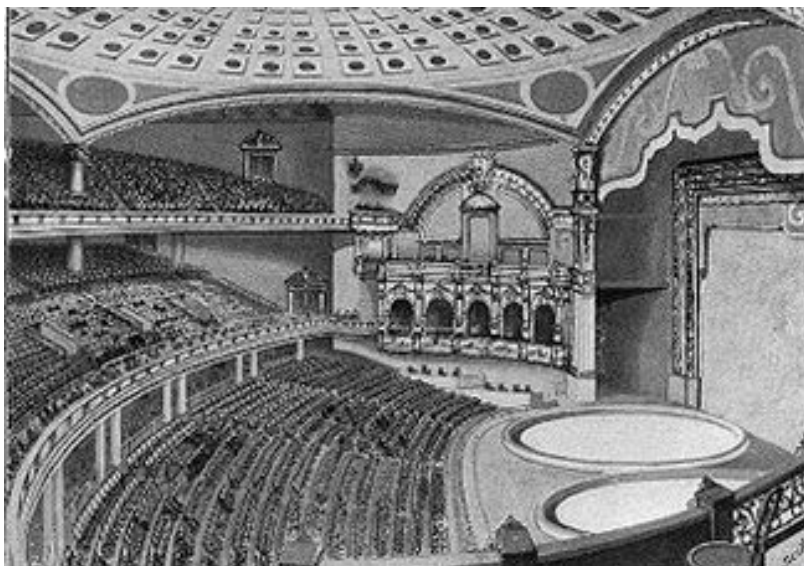
New York has Radio City Music Hall, London the Palladium, Paris the Lido, none of which are comparable, but each in its own way is an outstanding showplace of today. Yet, back at the turn of the century, New York had the greatest of them all, the Hippodrome... still the largest theatre ever of its kind. The Music Hall outranks it only in seating capacity. The stage, for dimensions and equipment, has never been surpassed and today's prices would prohibit a duplicate.



Theatre in 1907 on hand tinted post card

The Hippodrome opened April 12, 1905, the brainchild of an architect from Ohio, Frederick Thompson. His partner, Elmore S. Dundy, hailed from Nebraska and was well educated in the world of the carnival. Thompson was a genius and dabbled in the realm of

illusion. During the great epidemic of World's Fair fever their paths crossed several times and met head-on at the fair in Buffalo in 1901. They joined in a bit of hokus-pokus called "A Trip to the Moon." Thompson's illusion plugged them into a rainbow, and they filled pot after pot with expositionite's gold. The fair closed and the lunar voyage landed them at Coney Island. A rerun into space brought astronomical profits that would orbit them into their next venture, where they buried the pot to the brim in real estate called "Luna Park," another creation from Thompson's fertile brain. It was costly and both were wearing rented suits at the opening, but profits soon deluged the till. They met John W. Gates, better known as "Bet-a-Million" Gates, a horse fancier, raw and ready at all times. He liked money and wasn't fussy from whom, or how, he got it. It was his suggestion they move into New York's show world. At dinner Thompson sketched plans on the tablecloth for a gigantic theatre, while Gates and Dundy sat goggle-eyed. Gates unloaded \$2 million for a gaping hole at 43rd Street and Sixth Avenue, where one year later the Hippodrome stood completed, the largest and costliest theatre in the world.



Hippodrome interior

There were seats for 5,697 paying patrons who sat facing a richly draped stage resembling an ornate whole in the wall. It was 210 feet wide, 110 feet deep and 60 feet high, still the biggest ever constructed. It was divided into 12 sections that could be raised in many patterns by hydraulic lifts. Thompson put an apron in front of the proscenium in addition to the stage. With a flip of a switch the surface became the floor to a giant tank 17 feet deep, 48 feet wide and 140 feet long with 960,000 gallons of water. Within minutes lakes, waterfalls, streams, spillways and fountains could be created. This was the famous Hippodrome tank.

The switchboard to operate everything was the targets constructed and all control platforms were 30 feet in the air. There were 9,000 lights of all types on stage, 20,000 bulbs turned darkness into daylight in the cavernous interior. Five thousand additional mazdas exploded into illumination in the sunburst fixture in the auditorium ceiling.

To span the tremendous openings over the stage and auditorium four huge steel trusses were used. The steel in them and the balcony totaled 15,000 tons. The stage fly gallery had a grid with moving cranes to lift and move the tons of scenery. The Cyclorama was 85 feet high and 212 feet wide compared to 24 feet by 35 feet for a normal stage. When completed, the stage and all its operating machinery weighed 300 tons (without water).

The walls of the theatre were covered in crimson velvet and silver, with gold trimmed borders, ivory and gold completing the color scheme. All pillars and posts on the boxes, columns and borders of the house were topped with carved marble elephant heads. Their tusks of gilt were tipped with light bulbs.

The building fronted on Sixth Avenue for 240 feet and upward for 115 feet. The facade was attractive with twin towers at either end with finials of illuminated globes. Flag poles in dozens ringed the edges of the roof. Entrance doors centered on the Avenue between cafes on either corner of the building. A grand lobby lined with marble (and elephant heads) was pierced on the sides with extensive stairways. Additional halls, promenades, tea rooms, and such, honeycombed the upper floors as well as more elephant heads. Thompson had a passion for elephants.

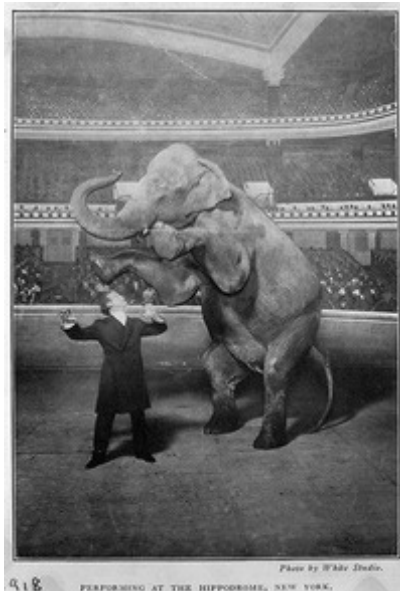
An automatic arrangement, in case of fire, would start a flow of 445,000 gallons of water to any part of the theatre. The water was always on hand for this purpose. The principals were in 44 dressing rooms off the stage, each having a window. Other rooms were under the stage and in the auditorium basement were pens

and quarters for the animals and rooms for their keepers. The building was classed as the safest in New York with its countless appliances and devices for just about anything even a genie could imagine. The structural steel and concrete was covered with walls of red brick and trimmed with white stone.

Backstage were 800 production employees that included carpenters, prop men, electricians, costumers, engineers, dressers, stagehands, scenic painters, and animal handlers. The company for the spectacles numbered 1,000. To operate the auditorium were 125 doormen, ushers, attendants, ticket takers, sellers and cleaners. The ushers were uniformed and drilled military fashion by a corps of officers...and Roxy was never at the Hippodrome!

April 12, 1905 saw the biggest opening New York ever witnessed. Ticket gougers were selling the top \$2.00 boards for the first show in the new Cathedral of Spectacular Frivolity for \$20. It was a curious conglomeration of fantasy, color, animals, clowns, gymnasts, airships, and countless numbers of people. They called it "A Yankee Circus on Mars."

Thompson was at his best, Dundy was in his glory, and Gates was now in for \$4 million -- plus! Barlow's elephants came in from Coney Island and to make sure there were enough, they put Power's troop in with them. The audience watched in awe, almost in disbelief, for here was a stage opening in which Thompson and Dundy could have lost the Grand Canyon. Scenery was changed magically, as part of the show, in full view of the audience. Toward the end, King Borealis of Mars, with his troop of 200, flocked onstage to join the assorted gross already in position amid bejeweled totem poles topped by elephant heads! Within moments 280 shapely ladies carrying golden scorpions danced on with their insects. When it appeared the stage must bend from sheer weight, another army of dancers entered, not with lit guns, but with a forest of spears to gyrate in endless action. The audience loved it, responding with resounding ovations. The little space left was promptly filled with a Martian ballet under ever-changing iridescent lights. When it was obvious they had run out of room, horns honked and a parade of motor cars driven by the elephants in caps and chauffeur's uniforms came out with ten chorus girl's stuffed into each open auto. The audience went wild, the applause emanating from 6,000 pairs of hands shook the structural bones of the building. And that was only the finale of the first part.



Harry Houdini and Jennie the elephant performing at the Hippodrome

TOSA needs to grow our audiences

Good audiences for local artists have been achieved when there is a promise in their promotion and program of something more than a solo performance. It could be a dual bill of top artists and instruments, or a theme that promises interest and engagement.

It is about the ability of the promotion and program to reach some internal motivator and/or interest in potential respondents which may have little to do with the theatre organ as an instrument. It is something in a potential attendee's life experience that is triggered by the promise in the promotion. The program and performance must of course live up to its promise which involves top playing and great sound. But it must have something more, that sends people home 'with a song in their hearts' and a lilt in their steps.

It is time to leave aside introspection about the glories of the past and think like the next generation if TOSA is to survive. Let it be the norm rather than the exception.

Come along to Marrickville Town Hall and be entertained by Bill and Debbie and please bring a friend, and/or family Member.

Members Diary

Next Committee Meeting

Monday April 3rd at 7:00pm

West Ryde Anglican Church

Sunday 19th March 2017

2:00pm - 4:30pm

Marrickville Town Hall

Bill Schumacher & Debbie Fitzsummons

see centre pages for details

**Book your reserved seats through the TOSA web site
www.tosa.net.au/Events**

or

by contacting

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 Before 8:00pm please

**Season Tickets for 2017 can be booked now until the
March concert at Marrickville Town Hall**

**Download the Season Ticket form
from TOSA web site**

Radio FINE MUSIC 102.5 "Colours of the King" 2nd Saturday of each month,
6pm till 7pm.

***Theatre Organ Magic* on RNB - FM from Sydney, NSW, Australia.**

88.7 FM and 90.3 FM 12 noon first Sunday of the month for one hour

Web Sites of Interest: <https://www.facebook.com/tosansw>

www.theatreorgansaustralia.info (history of cinema organ installations in
Australasia)

www.omss.org.au (our sister society, Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)

www.ATOS.org American Theatre Organ Society

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