

# TOSA NEWS

April 2017  
Volume 56 No.3

Price: \$2.00

***Are you ready to have more fun?  
TOSA's World of Entertainment  
brings you***

**Justin Stahl USA**

on his first Australian Tour  
playing

**The Mighty Wurlitzer  
Unit Orchestra**

**Sunday 18th June 2017  
Orion Centre Theatre**

155 Beamish Street, Campsie

**2:00pm - 4:30pm**

 Find us on  
Facebook

**/tosansw**

# Directory

## **Patron**

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## **Orion Players Convenor**

Craig Keller 0418 484 798 phone or SMS

## **Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings)**

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 before 8:0pm

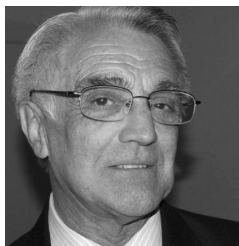
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**Publicity Officer** Ernie Vale 0415 626 064  
**Printing** by Ernie Vale & Graeme Costin

# President



From the Secretary.

It's me again! Geoff is still off-channel caring for Ruth. It was great to see them arrive at the concert at Marrickville on 19 March. Ruth was keen to be there and Geoff was under starter's orders for days before.

It was a great day at Marrickville and our first experience in concert mode with the new seating. The seats certainly look much better than the poor old mustard yellow, circa 1980s units. We did discover during setup and rehearsal that as the new chairs are a non-padded plastic shell they reflect far more sound into and around the room. A challenge for our excellent sound man, Ken Barwick. Audience numbers were up too with about 100 people there. Nice to finish with funds in hand.

Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons and singing guest artist, George Harvey (Debbie's husband), gave us a great variety of music of Stage and Screen Stars. The Technics digital piano donated to TOSA last year was put to good use during duet keyboard numbers. George's excellent rendition of several well-known songs with backing by piano and Wurlitzer theatre organ really demonstrated the orchestral leanings of the organ. Both Debbie and Bill also performed solo organ numbers again showing off our biggest little Wurlitzer.

Work continues apace at West Ryde for the installation of the Christie. Exciting news will be coming soon!

Our next concert is on Sunday 18 June at Campsie with Justin Stahl – a new artist that Debra and I met and were impressed by when he played at the 2014 ATOS Convention in Indianapolis. His musical skills are superb and his gentle sense of humour and nature will delight audiences. If you haven't already, make sure you book soon to see this new rising star of theatre organ from the USA.

See you soon!

Craig Keller

## Editorial



Hello Members, Enjoy the Christie report from John Weismantel. Please note the two Hammond organs available for your pleasure. The March 19th concert with Bill & Debbie and guest artist George Harvey was a most enjoyable afternoons musical entertainment. Thank you to everyone who came along to MTH to enjoy three accomplished entertainers. Hope to see you at the Orion on June 18th.

I hope you enjoy part 2 of the Hip, Hip, Hippodrome article.

Enjoy the music,

Ernie Vale  
PO Box A2322  
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235  
[editor@tosa.net.au](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)

# 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](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)

or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

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## Member News

### 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](http://www.ballarat.com/theatreorgan)

## Seniors Lunch at Marrickville Town Hall

**March 16th 2017**

The Inner West Council invited TOSA to play the Wurlitzer whilst Seniors were arriving for lunch and entertainment as part of the Seniors week activities.

Simon Ellis played the organ as many people arrived and sat in groups to chat.

Neil Palmer and Ernie Vale opened the organ for Simon and packed it away after a break in the entertainment. Neil and Ernie joined in the stretching exercises that were led by a group on stage.

As the first concert for the year was on Sunday 19th March at MTH with Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons, Neil and Ernie set up the advertising at the rear of the hall. The organ and concert were kindly promoted by the MC at the beginning and end of the function.

Sadly not many people showed an interest in the sign and photos of the Prince Edward Theatre.

When asked at the concert if anyone had attended as a result of the advertising no hands were raised.



## **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.

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#### **Orion Centre Theatre Concert Sunday June 18th**

Please spread the word about the next concert at the Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie on June 18th with Justin Stahl USA.

*TOSA Secretary, Craig Keller, and his wife Debbie heard Justin Stahl at the Indianapolis ATOS Convention USA in 2014 and were very impressed with his playing style and presentation during his performance. He is another Theatre Organist who will help keep the art form alive for many years to come.*

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Gaming, women and wine, while they laugh, they make men pine

*15th century proverb*

## **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**

**April 13th**

**No Members Day**

**May 11th**

**Convenor is**

Craig Keller on 0418484798

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

**April 24th**

**May 22nd**

**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**

# **Christie Organ Report April 2017**

JOHN WEISMANTEL

- Robert has taken several stop tabs with him to the UK for engraving in the same style as all the others (Tuned Birds, Tuned Sleigh-Bells, Acme Siren).
- Remaining thumb pistons and key-cheek buttons have been sent to Don Clark to get his engraver to label them (G.C., Range, Set, effects).
- Pistol shot effect is in process of manufacture. Sand-blocks (2 off) are complete, one for WRAC (installed) and the other possibly for Marrickville?
- String chests inlet manifold had to be remade as the cut-down original would not correctly fit. Despite several attempts it was deemed more efficient to make a new one from scratch using part of a Flute pipe unearthed by Robert.
- String chests trem manifold has been installed.
- Assembly of the two-note offset for the 16' Tibia is progressing slowly due to the need for a suitable primary action to be purchased or manufactured.
- All regulators and related items, along with an extra drum action and some stored tremms, have been moved from the Solo chamber to the Accomp chamber to make room for design & assembly of the Solo chest frames. The walkway under the Solo Shutters has been removed for the same reason.
- Installation of the Tuned Sleigh Bells on the front wall of the Solo chamber is complete.
- The console has had the Swells & Crescendo pedals installed, wiring of these to the Uniflex boards will happen shortly.
- Final coats of polyurethane on the console panels, bench, and music rack is only awaiting sufficient fine weather.

•Plans are underway to move the console from Yarramundi to WRAC on Easter Monday, provided suitable transport can be found, and providing sufficient person-power can be available for an hour or so on that day.

Cheers,  
John Weismantel

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## **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.

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## **Concert dates, Artists and Venues for 2017**

- 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.***

## Music of the Stage and Screen on the Marrickville Wurlitzer 19th March, 2017

On a warm and humid Sunday afternoon our guest artists from the Gold Coast, Bill Schumacher and Debbie Fitzsummons, treated us to some magnificent music from stage and screen.



Bill opened the concert with *Something's Got To Give* from the 1925 movie *Daddy Longlegs*. This is a lively piece with a gentle, slower middle section and made an excellent start to the concert. Feeling the heat, we all sympathised with Bill's request to remove his jacket!

The first sound film to win an Academy Award for Best Picture was *The Broadway Melody* of 1929. From this movie Bill played *Wedding of the Painted Doll*, and had it skipping along delicately on the Wurlitzer. The ballad *At Last* was written for the movie *Sun Valley Serenade*, where it was used only as instrumental music because a vocal rendition was held over until the next Glenn Miller movie *Orchestra Wives* in 1942. Bill made the Wurlie "sing" this ballad and gave it some magnificent last chords!

Then Bill welcomed Debbie Fitzsummons to the console.



The 1940 movie *Strike Up the Band* starred Judy Garland and



Mickey Rooney. Its title song was composed in 1927 by George and Ira Gershwin. Debbie made good use of percussion and untremmed pipes from the Accompaniment manual; full tremulants were added in the transition to the second time around.

Next Debbie played the quiet song *A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square* which was composed by Manning Sherwin and Eric Maschwitz in the French fishing village of Le Lavandou. It has been recorded by Vera Lynne, Frank Sinatra, and a host of others. It was eventually used in the 1970 movie *A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square*. Debbie's performance was delightful with some great counter melodies.

Rimsky Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee* was the inspiration for the *Bumble Bee Boogey*, music that "goes like the clappers" as Debbie said before playing it. And it was a really lively piece!

Debbie then introduced singer George Harvey (from *The Kinsmen*) who sang the song *Anthem* from the musical *Chess*. The organ accompaniment started with untremmed classical sound but as the song approached its climax tremulants were added. Both voice and organ were great.

Bill Schumacher then returned to the console with a medley of two songs from the musical *Chorus Line*. The song *One* was performed brightly with good rhythm. Then followed the quieter song *What I Did For Love*, with the melody brought out beautifully down in the baritone range and later mid range with flute sound.

*Pinocchio*, the second animated feature film made by Disney Studios, was initially a box office disaster, but it eventually made a

## 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 \$20 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](mailto:membership@tosa.net.au)

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

profit in its 1945 reissue, and is now considered one of the greatest animated films ever made. Its song, *When You Wish Upon a Star*, won an Academy Award for Best Music, Original Song, and Bill gave us an excellent rendition of that song.

Debbie Fitzsummons returned to the console and told us some background to *The Syncopated Clock*. This tune was used for 25 years as the theme music for a TV program called *The Late Show*, a nightly program with a format of old movies. Use of the Chinese Block on the accompaniment manual gave the tick tock beat.

Debbie then played a 1904 composition *Chardus* that has been used in the movie *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* and many others. Debbie's rendition covered a wide range from untremmed, classical sound to tremmed theatre organ with percussion.

Bill Schumacher returned to the console with selections from Charlie Chaplin. Most people remember Charlie Chaplin as a comedy actor but he was also a composer who composed the scores for his movies. *Love, This Is My Song* showed off some typical theatre organ sounds and led straight into *Smile as a duet* with Debbie on the electronic piano.

George Harvey, accompanied by Bill on the organ and Debbie on the piano, sang *You'll Never Walk Alone* from the musical *Carousel*.

The final number before interval was *Seventy Six Trombones* (from *The Music Man*) with Bill on the organ and Debbie on piano (the cute piano riffs in the last refrain were good and helped the liveliness of the performance).

The second half of the concert was opened by the colourful and splashy Act 2 opener of the musical *Barnum*. This musical portrays the life of Phineas Taylor (P.T.) Barnum, the circus entrepreneur. Debbie Fitzsummons gave us a lively rendition of this infectious crowd-pleaser - *Come Follow the Band*.

Wearing her cats ears jewellery headdress Debbie treated us to yet more gentle sounds from the Wurlitzer as she started the song *Memory* (from the musical *Cats*) with xylophone arpeggios on the solo manual and a delicious untremmed reed pipe melody on the accompaniment manual. Fuller theatre organ sounds were used in the next sections. The ending was gentle with flute and xylophone. The band ABBA was remembered with the song *Money, Money, Money* in a lively rendition that went up a semitone for the last refrain.

Bill Schumacher returned to the console and put in a short surprise item, *Happy Birthday* for Alex, a visitor from the USA who had just celebrated his 100th birthday. He then continued the scheduled program with a medley from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *South Pacific*. This included: *Bali Ha'i*, *Cockeyed Optimist*, *Some Enchanted Evening* (with George Harvey singing), *There Is*

*Nothing Like a Dame, This Nearly Was Mine* and finished with the last phrase of *Bali Ha'i*.

From the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I* Bill played *The March of the Siamese Children*. Untremmed orchestral oboe and flute led the way through the start of the march.

George Harvey then introduced one of the great songs from *Les Miserables: Bring Him Home*, accompanied by Debbie on the piano.

Debbie returned to the console to play a march that has been used in the movie *Monty Python's Flying Circus* amongst others: *On the Double Eagle*. In some parts the melody was low down on solo manual, in other parts xylophone took the melody.

Kermit the Frog was then sat on the organ bench as Debbie introduced songs from *The Muppet Movie*, starting with *The Magic Store* and finishing with *The Muppet Connection*.

George Harvey then sang the Jerome Kern song *The Way You Look Tonight* accompanied by Bill on the piano - a really delightful song performed brilliantly by both artists.

The final item on the program was the *Prelude and Fugue from Tico Tico* played beautifully by Debbie Fitzsummons on the Wurlitzer. Strong then delicate classical sounds at the start, then the Brazilian tune came to the fore in a Bach-style fugue; then the opening of Bach's Toccatta in D minor led into the theatre organ sounds of the Brazilian tune and a dramatic conclusion.

Following lengthy, enthusiastic applause, we were treated to *The Dam Busters March* by Debbie on the organ and Bill on the piano.

Your reviewer, amongst many others, appreciated a really entertaining afternoon of music. Both artists were happy to engage in humour with the audience. May there be more occasions like this!



Review by  
Graeme Costin

Photos by  
Barry Tooker

**TOSA Presents**  
**Sunday 18th June 2017 – 2:00pm – 4:30pm**

**An Afternoon with**

**International keyboard musician**

**Justin Stahl (USA)**

playing

Sydney's Premier 3 keyboard Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe  
Organ

Including theatre lighting and  
video projection of Justin as he plays  
an entertaining program of music from the movies, Broadway,  
jazz and rock classics as part of his five week Australian tour. His  
program will include stunning selections from hit musicals Cabaret  
and Guys and Dolls, a delicious assortment from Willy Wonka,  
frolicking rags by Scott Joplin and rock classics by Toto,  
just to name a few!

Justin is an experienced musician and performs regularly to rave  
reviews from his American audiences. This program will connect  
with your musical soul and leave you wanting more.

at

The Refurbished Orion Centre Theatre,

155 Beamish Street, Campsie

Sunday 18 June 2:00 – 4:30pm

Free parking behind the theatre & good public transport access see  
[www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au)

***See the enclosed flyer for more information***  
***Tell a friend who enjoys music***

# Justin Stahl

**Justin Stahl** is a native of Beech Grove, Indiana. Beginning at age five with the encouragement of his great-grandfather, **Justin** was mostly self-taught in piano and organ. His passion for music has reached many venues that have included accompanying for several choral departments, contributing as his church's music director, playing for community theatre, and serving for over fourteen years in the Indiana Army National Guard's 38th Infantry Division Band.

**Justin** has entertained thousands of patrons of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in the last five productions of their annual Yuletide Celebration, playing the 3/24 Wurlitzer installed at the Hilbert Circle Theatre. Theatre organ has always been a passion of Justin's and has taken him to performance venues across the United States. Most recently, **Justin** was a featured artist at the 59th ATOS National Convention held in Indianapolis.

A graduate of Marian University with a Bachelor's degree in piano performance, **Justin** presently serves as director of music at the Horizon Science Academy in Columbus, Ohio where he resides with his wife, Lora. His approach and philosophy includes the continued promotion of the theatre organ by using a wide base of musical genres. **Justin** wishes to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in his first Australian tour!

**This is a rare opportunity to hear Justin play a genuine "Mighty Wurlitzer" in Sydney on his first Australian Tour**

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

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 \$20 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](http://www.atos.org). And the Waterside Marriott awaits your reservation.

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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](http://www.atos.org)  
[k.double@atos.org](mailto:k.double@atos.org)

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**Hammond Colonade - in working order, in the home of  
Jan Pringle at Illawong**

**Interested ? best offer**

**Ring Jan 9543 6605, 0412457053  
[Janpringle@bigpond.com](mailto:Janpringle@bigpond.com)**



# **AUSTRALIA'S SILENT FILM FESTIVAL**

*Note this event is not organised by TOSA*

Hunters Hill Congregational Community Church  
Corner of Alexandra and Ferdinand Streets Hunters Hill

Sunday @ 2 pm June 4 Tickets \$20/ \$15 concession  
includes a light afternoon tea after the show.

Kings of Comedy with live organ music by John Batts

Excursion to the Moon (1908) Segundo de Chomon 7 mins

The Cure (1917) Charlie Chaplin 24 mins

Dog Shy (1926) Charlie Chase 23 mins

Now You Tell One (1926) Charley Bowers 22 mins

**AUSTRALIA'S SILENT FILM FESTIVAL**

Website: [www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au](http://www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au)

Phone: 0419 267 318

Email: [info@ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au](mailto:info@ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au)

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Robin Brettner, the eldest son of the late Barrie Brettner, inaugural organist @ the Civic theatre Auburn. Prior to the passing of Bertie Meyers I came into the possession of his 2 manual, 50th year, "Brite Foot" Hammond organ. I am currently down sizing & seek a new home for (uncle) Bertie's instrument. I live @ Woongarra, 10 km north of Wyong on the Central Coast. My contact No. is 0409318720. Yours sincerely, Robin M. Brettner







# “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](mailto:sellis639@gmail.com)

*An article from the Puget Sound Pipeline - April 2017*

**PAGES FROM THE PAST ....1905 - 1939**

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

**“Hip, Hip, Hippodrome”** By Frank Cronican - Part 2

The second and final part of the fascinating tale of New York City's  
Hippodrome Theatre,  
reprinted from *MARQUEE*, the journal of the Theatre Historical Society, 1972



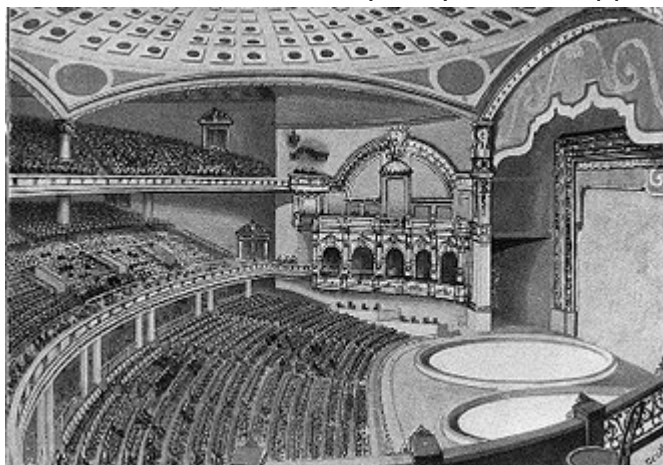
**The Hippodrome as it appeared in 1905**

The second part was “Andersonville – a Story of Wilson’s Raiders.” As it unfolded, 20 mounted cavalymen came charging through the tank chasing confederate raiders. After eight months of continuous chasing through two shows a day, the waterlogged

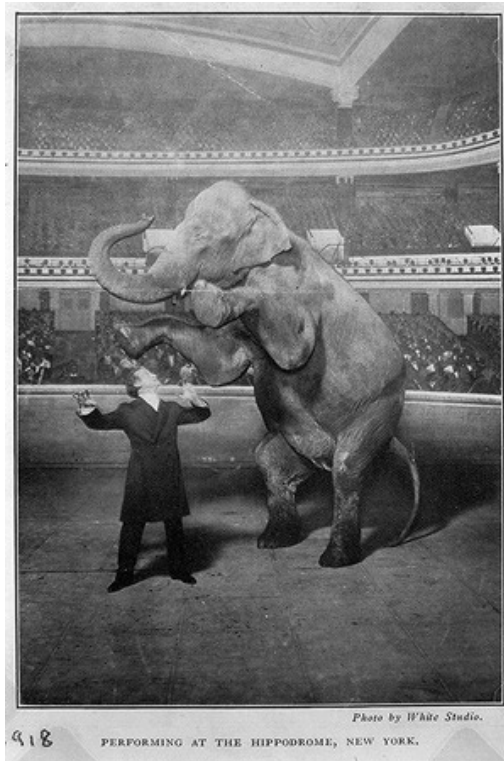
horses and men required drying out, so a temporary truce halted the raid and "Romance of a Hindu Princess" replaced that portion of the show. An Oriental orgy of sordid plots by a wicked Grand Kahn unfolded amid the architectural splendor of the East. The Grand Khan, perched in a howdah atop his elephant let his mounted army on stage. Naturally a battle was eminent on what now appeared to be Abraham's Plains. His undoing was death in the tank and his due came on cue... in he went, but the elephant plunged in too... everyone as far back as the third row in the balcony was soaked! This version of "Circus on Mars" ran for 122 performances.

In December, 1905 they opened "A Society Circus" and it ran for 596 performances, becoming the longest running of all the Hippodrome productions. It was Thomas & Dandy's last work in their theatre. The shows were fine, but expensive to mount and operate. Gates wanted a return on his money. He raised the prices and booted the partners out. He went to the Shuberts and Lee & J.J., ascended the throne. They plugged "Society's" holes (and there were many within the awful plot) and added a bit of their own frosting.

When the Shuberts opened their first venture they shocked the audience and created a sensation. At 10:30 that opening night 64 shapely young women cued up in squads of eight on a great stage. Heads up, bosoms out, shoulders back, they marched to the edge of the pool and descended into the swirling waters to disappear (so it seemed) forever...not a bubble, not a wave, remained. The audience thought something had gone awry, but the Schuberts had a gimmick and it became the hit mystery at the Hippodrome.



It was the world famous disappearing water ballet. "Pioneer Days," like every Schubert offering to follow, was on the sawdust side. Unlike the early shows they had some plot. This program was crammed with horses, Indian ponies, half breeds, war- whoops, Sitting Bull Jr., elephants Chief Big Turnip, (his wife Nellie Big Turnip came along too), and plenty of broom weilding stage hands. It appeared as if the Hippodrome stage had drained the reservation.



### **Harry Houdini and Jennie the elephant performing at the Hippodrome**

In 1907 the pool was frozen for ice skating and 1908 saw the "Battle of Port Arthur" when Japanese boats fired at the Russians on stage. "Sporting Days" saw a horse race, boat race and ball game following scene after scene. They went "Around the World in 80 Days" at the Hippodrome in one of these extravaganzas long before Mike Todd made his trip in Todd AO.

The schuberts reigned for ten years, abdicating in 1915 in favor

of Charles Dillingham. While the Schuberts first chore was dunking the chorus, Dillingham dunked the plots and put revues on the stage. His first effort was a superbly mounted revue, "Hip, Hip, Hooray." Between 1915 and 1923 he produced eight colossal shows. He took the theatre through the war years and thereafter. The payroll was \$40,000 a week for just the backstage help. A week's intake of \$80,000 would swell to \$118,000 with holidays. It was a gamble from the start, as Gates found out. One spectacle earned \$1 million and another paid off \$5 or maybe lost far more.

In April 1923, Ed Albee of the Keith-Albee circuit moved in for the next four years with indifferent success, using his "polite" vaudeville. They bought it in July for \$6 million and closed for re-modelling. Opening for Christmas it was still called the Hippodrome, but it was no longer so on the inside. He narrowed the stage with a false proscenium, tore out all the marvels, the pumps, pistons and platforms, even the tank was junked. It was now like any other unit in any vaudeville chain.

Four years later it was sold for the price they paid and ten months later the buyer sold it to the Fred F. French Company for \$7.5 million. Razing rumors started in favour of an 83 store office building, but Wall Street's fallen arches dispelled all plans...it was October 1929.

In July 1939 the doors closed, to await demolition. The depression ate on until 1932 when the beloved old theatre was sold at auction for \$2,908,263 or \$100,000 over its debt.

Alfredo Salmaggi staged popular priced opera on the greatly reduced stage, grind vaudeville came in for awhile, mass meetings and political rallies shook dust from the rafters. The rumors ran all the way from gigantic beer gardens to huge roller rinks and bus stations. For 30 years the Hippodrome held forth as the best known and most famous theatre in the world, millions upon millions saw the great spectacles and revues which today are still unmatched.

Billy Rose came in to look it over in 1935 and asked about the rent. He removed what little Albee had left. The opening night audience entered a Hippodrome that was now one full circus grandstand from the orchestra to the balcony...everything of the original Hippodrome was gone.

"Jumbo" opened and ran for five months, then moved to the Dallas Fair where the tent folded. For one fleeting moment the old Hippodrome had seen a small (in Hippodrome fashion) spark of the good old days. The theatre's doors closed, never to open again.

Inside nothing remained, it was a vast open enclosure. September 1, 1939 the wreckers attacked the lofty walls and a million dreams came tumbling into the dust. Once again, a gigantic gaping hole lay between 43rd and 44th Streets on Sixth Avenue for the next 13 years, seemingly waiting for another "Bet-A-Million" Gates.

**Member Graeme Costin has this post card from his Grandfather**



### **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. 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. Come along to the Orion Centre Theatre and be entertained by Justin Stahl and please bring a friend, and/or family Member.



## **Members Diary**

Next Committee Meeting Monday May 1st at 7:00pm

West Ryde Anglican Church

TOSA Presidents Forum Saturday 6th May 10:00am

West Ryde Anglican Church

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## **Justin Stahl USA**

**on his first Australian Tour**

**Sunday 18th June 2017**

**2:00pm - 4:30pm**

**Orion Centre Theatre**

*see centre pages for details*

**Securely Book your reserved seats through the TOSA  
web site [www.tosa.net.au/Events](http://www.tosa.net.au/Events)**

**or**

**by contacting**

**Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 Before 8:00pm please**

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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](http://www.theatreorgansaustralia.info) (history of cinema organ installations in  
Australasia)

[www.omss.org.au](http://www.omss.org.au) (our sister society, Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)

[www.ATOS.org](http://www.ATOS.org) American Theatre Organ Society

# TOSA NEWS

April 2017  
Volume 56 No.3

**PRINT  
POST  
100004836**

**POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA**

Official Publication of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.  
7 Aldinga Ave., Gerringong NSW 2534

If undeliverable please return to :

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