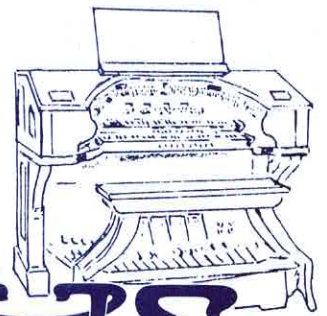


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EDITOR

John Atkinson, 46 Lily Street, Allawah, 2218.  
587 3374

# T.O.S.A. NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, N.S.W. DIVISION

ADDRESS BOX A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PERIODICAL—CATEGORY B

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Please address all correspondence to Box A584 P.O. Sydney South. 2000.

## WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

2nd June, Wednesday 7.45 pm Ray Thornley in concert on the Lowrey Symphonic Theatre Organ in Willoughby-Chatswood Town Hall at 7.45 pm. Flanagan & Winter have arranged this concert and also on the same programme with Ray will be two young members of the Young Organists Association and they will be making their second public appearance. Tickets are available from TOSA (NSW Div) P.O. Box 150, Epping, Telephone 869 2083 and 50% of the proceeds on the tickets sold by the Society will be donated back to the Society so in this way, by buying your tickets through the Society you will be helping to promote our mutual activities.

Tickets are \$2.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children and pensioners.

2nd June, Wednesday 8.00 pm Palings Music Centres advise us of a concert they are presenting in the Sydney Opera House Music Room to feature the very talented American musician, Don Lewis, in a one night only presentation on the Hammond organ. It has been said that 'Don Lewis can do anything with an organ that any nine men can do and all at the same time.' 'As an added treat he'll make you laugh with his cosmetic wit.....'

Tickets to this entertaining evening are available at the Opera House Box Office or Palings Music Centres 416 George Street, Sydney. Telephone 25 1641. They are Adults \$3.00 each, Children Pensioners, Students \$1.50 each.

10th June, Thursday 8 p.m. Meet Your Organ Night, Marrickville Town Hall. These evenings have always proved most popular with members and they give us a chance to see and understand the workings of our Wurlitzer Organ. This time lectures will be conducted for people interested in assisting on organ working parties. Names of those people willing to entertain will be taken and the evening organised to give those attending a most enjoyable night 'listening & learning'.

11th June, Friday 8.00p.m. Joh. CONNert in CONNcert at the 3 manual CONN organ. Joh. will be giving this concert at the Campbelltown Catholic Hall in aid of the Handicapped Children and admission will be \$1.50 for adults and 75¢ for children. A most popular performer and member of the Society not to mention the most worthy charity for whose benefit the occasion has been arranged. Any further enquiries telephone The Organ Stop 747 4055.

26th June, Saturday 8.00 p.m. Iris Begley informs us that at the new Gosford High School Auditorium, Tony Fenelon will be presented in concert at the X66 Hammond Organ. Tickets available from Palings Gosford; Iris Begley, 1 Orana Street Green Point; Mark Gabriel 27 Yarran Road, Oatley 579 2169. Tickets \$4.00 Adults and \$1.50 for children.

27th June, Sunday 2.30 p.m. Free Sunday Afternoon Concert at Marrickville Town Hall. This month we have a rarely heard organist within the Society, Robert Broughall an excellent organist who has performed for the Society on occasion with Eric Smith. A great opportunity to hear the Marrickville pipes in capable and experienced hands so don't miss out.

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

20th July, Tuesday QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING This meeting is to be a special meeting to firstly discuss some business matters of importance to the Society in the comfortable Committee Room at Marrickville Town Hall, then to be entertained at the Wurlitzer for the second half of the evening. At this evening the notice of motion printed below and at the top of page four, will be considered by the members of the Society ... more details next month.

#### NOTICE OF MOTION-SUBMITTED BY MARK GABRIEL

It is proposed that by-law No. 18 be altered so that the number of metropolitan members necessary to form a quorum at an Annual Business Meeting or Special Meeting be reduced from 25% to 15% - it would then read:-

18. A Quorum at any Annual Business Meeting or Special Meeting shall be 15% of the number of metropolitan memberships to the nearest whole number. There shall be only one vote counted on behalf of each membership.

#### NEWS OF COMING CONCERT

We had a note during the month from Rob Weismantel advising that following recent work on the State organ by the new maintenance crew and work now in progress, we can look forward to a concert in the not to distant future with ALL the pipework in use! Sounds like a lot of time is being put in there at the moment so we can all look forward to hearing the results soon.

## EDITORIAL

Well we've got through the Convention Weekend the Review's of which in all the interstate Newsheets, which we have received so far, have all been filled with praise. I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to a hard working sub-committee for a weekend that will be talked about for a long time to come. The highlight of the weekend was, no doubt, the Jonas Nordwall concert a Marrickville Town Hall, on an organ that was barely recognisable as being the old mushy Prince Edward sound. It now has a Rialto zing which has to be heard to be believed. Our mutual thanks must go to the people, including Jonas Nordwall, who spent countless hours under Jonas's direction showing us how to achieve a different sound. A sound which most of us thought to be impossible in Australia.

The comments from many of the interstate visitors can be summarised by some who said that Sydney now has the best sounding instrument in Australia. This has also been confirmed by many of our organists who have since tried the instrument and the committee is in receipt of a letter of praise from a prominent overseas organist, resident in Sydney. In some of the reviews of the concert appearing in this edition of the newsheet quotations from interstate newsheets have been included but I would like to include here part of the review appearing in the Canberra TOSA Action ..... "It was just after 8 pm when Frank Ellis entered the auditorium and made his announcements and presented Jonas Nordwall. A very enthusiastic welcome was given to Jonas who opened his programme with a bright and lively Pinetop Boogie. Then I thought ... no, I was hearing things!! This wasn't the sound of the instrument I had played just three weeks before! It had at least 15 ranks ! The sound of this instrument was incredible. Jonas had worked on it practically non-stop since his arrival in Australia and had it sounding better than it ever could have sounded before! Suffer, all you unfortunate people who didn't hear this brilliant performer on this magnificent little organ! I thought Jonas was superb two years ago when I heard him in Melbourne and Canberra but compared to his performance in Sydney for this Convention it would seem that his performances two years ago were just amateur! ..... Jonas' phrasing and arrangements were ecstasy to hear. The sounds he brought forth from his organ were sounds never before thought possible. His impeccable playing and superb artistry were an inspiration to us all."

I would like to especially thank those people who helped with the production of the programme, with the supply and installation of amplifiers for public address, spotlighting and kaleidoscope effects and all those people that made themselves available to assist when needed - it was the best joint effort that we have all, collectively, been involved in and you made it successful.

PIPE ORGAN FOR SALE ack. American Theatre Organ Magazine.  
4 Manual - 20 Rank Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ built in 1931.  
This instrument is known as a Publix No. 1 Opus 2164 originally installed Paramount Theatre Oakland, California. Firm Price \$80,000. For more details write to Edward Restivo, 1983 San Luis Avenue, Mountain View, California 94043. (makes you think dont it!)

NOTICE OF MOTION submitted by John A. Weismantel

I move that wives of financial members of TOSA be classed as full members and No.1. shall have the right to vote at TOSA meetings and No.2. shall be eligible to stand for official positions within the Society.

## FUNASTIC FIFTH CONVENTION REVIEW -BY IAN HANSON

### Session One - Registration and Supper

Rounding out as the biggest thing yet done in Theatre Organ Presentation in this country the 5th National Convention, held over Easter is a credit to the organisers and something which they can be proud of. Commencing in the luxurious 'Savoy' Hurstville on Good Friday evening with the registration and supper, organist was our popular and dazzling personality, Joh Congert. Occupying the former site of the 2/10 Wurlitzer console were the latest advances in electronic organs and gadgetry from National and Conn.

Joh commenced with a popular bracket of numbers, in the next bracket the red curtains opened on a 1928 'Australian Gazette' which depicted views of our beautiful 'State' Theatre being constructed. At the end of the film Joh treated us with a selection of 'Strauss' Waltzes, this was followed by a second newsreel and following this another spot was presented by Joh Congert and then a film on the closing of the 'Prince Edward Theatre' and the installation of the Wurlitzer in Marrickville Town Hall.

By courtesy of Jonas Nordwall, we were treated to a very interesting film on the Organ Grinder Pizza organisation showing incredible organ installations. The final film for the evening was a 1916 Charlie Chaplin picture 'Easy Street' accompanied by Joh Congert. The evening concluded with a very enjoyable supper and gave an opportunity for everyone to meet each other.

### Session Two - The State Theatre

Probably the most outstanding feature of the Convention was our early morning recital in the gothic grandeur of the 'State' Theatre, at exactly 8am David Parsons rose up on the temperamental hoist. David presented us with a well balanced programme of theatre favourites such as 'Colonel Bogey March', 'Hello Dolly' and others, the most outstanding feature was the rendition of the popular classical number the 'Zampa Overture' which was received with the greatest acclamation by the audience, and, appropriately, David played 'Wish me Luck' to take the organ down.

Rising up for the second half was our popular patron, Ian Davies, who presented a nostalgic array of numbers in the traditional theatre organ manner, such as 'Swanee', 'Happy Days are here again', 'I'm Looking over a four Leaf Clover' etc.

At 10am the public began entering the 'State' for the first morning session and Ian Davies still continued to play right up until the start of the picture, meanwhile conventioners were taking time out to inspect the statuary, paintings and furnishings of the grand palace of splendour. The whole morning received great acclaim from our interstate visitors.

At the conclusion of the 'State' theatre recital we boarded buses which took us on the second phase of our Saturday outing to St. Columbs Church at West Ryde.



### SESSION 3 - 2/8 Christie, St. Columbs

The church was virtually jammed packed to hear Alan Tranter at the Christie Organ.

The instrument was in perfect condition and Alan Tranter executed a beautiful programme which covered all organ tastes. He played a rather long concert and quite a lot of numbers were presented the most outstanding was 'In a Monastery Garden' by Albert Ketelby. also a popular novelty tune 'Polly'. On the classical side Alan played a very good arrangement of 'Fanfare' by Lemons. Also it was noticed by our author Alan's similar style of playing to Stanfield Holliday - a most exquisite concert.

### Session 4 - Burwood Congregational Church

The buses carried us from St. Columbs Church at West Ryde to the Burwood Park where in the lovely surroundings on a perfect day a delicious luncheon was prepared, we then proceeded to the Congregational church to hear the famous wurlitzer from the Hurstville Savoy, Organist for the afternoon was Bill Schumacher. Bill presented a very pleasant concert, considering the fact that Bill was doing an enormous amount of work at the Convention which of course met with many late nights. The numbers presented by Bill were in the Ballad style. The organ as usual sounded very fine. Bill's concert included very well known favourites, a 'Rogers and Hammerstein' medley, also a medley from 'A Little Night Music', 'It's D'Lovely', 'Sentimental Journey' and 'Girl from Ipanema'.

### Session 5 - Jonas Nordwall at Marrickville

Once again Marrickville Town Hall was packed from Floor to ceiling for the concert to end all concerts. Shortly after 8pm our well known MC Frank Ellis introduced the star of the show, Jonas Nordwall. As soon as the first notes were struck one could sense that the organ had a much better sound especially in the Trumpet section. Jonas had been working non-stop on the organ since his arrival in Australia. Over 100 hours had been spent by Jonas assisted by a few dedicated helpers, in adjusting the organ. The Wurlitzer when at the 'Prince Edward' had a most souless tone and now sounds like 20 ranks and each note can be heard as clear as a bell. Jonas opened with a very excellent rendition of 'Pinetop Boogie' the sound of which was absolutely incredible as well as the dexterity of his fingers and feet.

Jonas performed very excellent renditions of 'Secret Love' and Scott Joplin's 'Pineapple Rag'. From the Columbia film "Funny Lady" Jonas performed an exciting array of medleys also to conclude the first half Jonas played a selection from 'Carousel'.

If you missed out on this concert you certainly missed out on something fantastic. Superb arrangements and registrations, coupled with Jonas Nordwall's outstanding technique actually it seemed as though he was on a four manual instrument.

The second half opened up with a very well known number which has been revived in "Lucky Lady" and this of course was the ever popular 'Dizzy Fingers' following this we were treated to 'Killing me Softly' which was followed by Richard Ellsasser's Scherzo on Mendelsohnian Themes. In keeping with modern trends a brilliant arrangement of 'The Pinball Wizard' by Elton John from the rock opera 'Tommy' was executed. Also on the programme was a sparkling arrangement of



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"I've Got You Under my Skin" . The grandest, grand finale ever heard was then performed 'Orpheus in the Underworld' which concluded one of the most memorable evenings in Marrickville Town Hall. Our organ has never sounded so grand and never has the trumpet sounded so Fiery! Jonas's work on the organ as well as his concert makes him not only one of the world's greatest but an organ builder in his own right.

#### SESSION 6 - Lyceum Theatre

On Easter Sunday afternoon we had a choice of a harbour cruise or another organ recital. The Sunday afternoon recital was in the Lyceum Theatre, featuring Eric Smith at the 2/10 Christie. Eric excelled himself in giving an excellent performance.

Unfortunately we were not treated to enough of Eric's playing, which is very rich and smooth and makes for very easy listening. A feature of the afternoon was a Leroy Anderson medley which included 'Belle of the Ball', 'Penny Whistle Song', and 'Serenade'. On the classical side, an excellent rendition of 'Toccata in C Minor' from the Gothic Suite. Neil Gough's 'Harbourside Groovers' and the 'Cadence Chorale' also entertained us with a delightful programme which was concluded with the organ, band and choir in a grand finale.

#### SESSION 7 - Dinner at the Menzies

A very enjoyable dinner at the Menzies Hotel concluded, virtually, the Fifth Annual National Convention. During the dinner various organists were heard these included Jonas Nordwall, Bill Schumacher, Rory Thomas and John Atwell. A big ovation was given to a young Queenslander, who, played extremely well, Miss Leigh Dittman. Leith had never heard a 'real' Wurlitzer before coming to the convention.

#### SESSION 8 - SYDNEY TOWN HALL

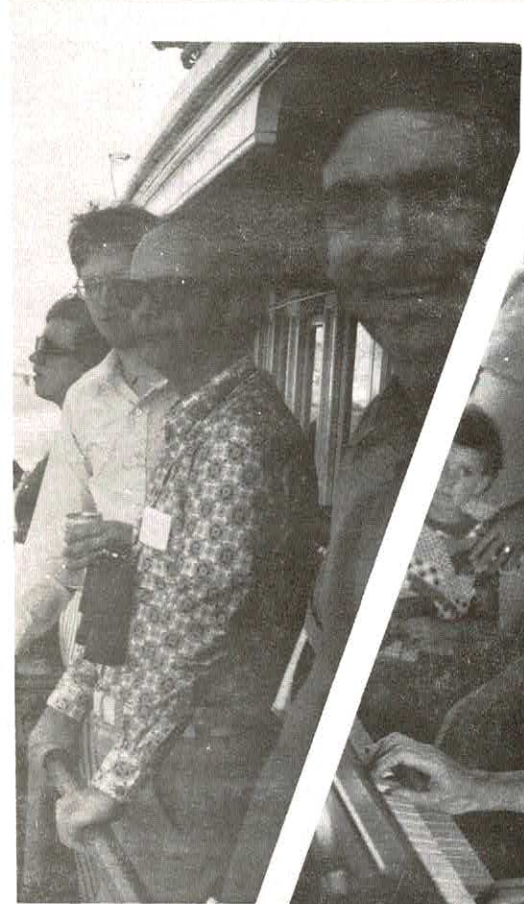
A brief, but fantastic concert was again presented by Jonas Nordwall at the 5/127 Hill, Grand Organ. Jonas said that it was a great privilege to play the organ as it is admired in the USA. Among the numbers he played were "Toccata from Widor's Fifth Symphony". Brilliantly handled by Jonas was Bach's 'Gigue' Fugue, and of course a concert in the Town Hall would not be complete without a demonstration of the 64' contra Trombone, which was heard during a performance of the theme from '2001 a Space Odyssey' and an incredible arrangement of the 'Stars and Stripes' concluded the Fifth National Convention. What a wonderful feast of music it was, there wouldn't be a more economical way of spending Easter. Special thanks should go to Jonas and his team for the wonderful job they did on our organ, making it undoubtedly the finest Wurlitzer in Australia.

Next year's Convention (maybe a Sunshine Sixth???) will be looked forward to now for renewal of great friendship and fellowship as this year's has been.

Queensland's "Pipeline's" review finishes with..... My congratulations to the New South Wales Division of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia for staging such a thoroughly entertaining convention. In all sincerity the workers behind the scenes are to be commended for their mental resilience.

Queensland's TOSA publication "Tibia".....

The highlight of any Convention is probably the dinner. This was held at the Menzies Hotel on Sunday night and the ten members of our division present fully occupied one table. Leith Dittman and Neil Jensen among others played the Gulbransen electronic organ provided and were very well received. All divisions were invited to speak and I was able to convey greetings from the Queensland Division.



The final session of the Convention was held at the Sydney Town Hall on Monday morning again at 8.00 am where our American visiting organist, Jonas Nordwall played a wide variety of music mainly classical on that grand old pipe organ.....As he played that ever popular favourite of mine, the Toccata from Widor's Fifth Organ Symphoney, I realised how privileged I was, having heard it played on many occasions on our own Henry Willis masterpiece in the Brisbane City Hall, to now hear it being played on another Masterpiece, by that other great English organ builder, William Hill, in the Sydney Town Hall. Comparisons are rather pointless; it is all great music! This recital concluded the Convention for 1976. The high standard of performance was expected and achieved, but the one thing that impressed itself on me on this occasion was the suitability of the Theatre Pipe Organ for playing transcriptions of certain orchestral pieces. They are entertainment of the highest order when properly performed, and were, of course, included in the repertoire of the early Theatre organists in that era.

Canberra's "Tosa Action".....

One of the best conventions I have been to. Congratulations again TOSA N.S.W.; We really appreciate the months of work that you have put into organising such a well co-ordinated and interesting weekend. The choice of artists was an achievement in itself, let alone the instruments we heard and the places we saw..... What a wonderfully FUNTASTIC national convention the NSW branch provided at Easter this year. Sydney TOSA deserves high praise for the amount and quality of content included, and the excellent organisation which caused everything to appear so easy. To those members who were unable to attend for various reasons let me just say that you missed a rare treat.



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FUNTAISTIC FIFTH CONVENTION REVIEW cont.

Harbour Cruise - Session 6 by Rob Weismantel

Commenced at 1 p.m. at No. 6 Wharf, Circular Quay with hundreds of happy TOSA Conventioneers boarding the ferry to take advantage of the perfect weather Sydney experienced during most of the Convention. The harbour cruise soon got under way with Bill Schumacher at the console of the Thomas organ. However, the ferry's generator was having trouble keeping up with two Leslie speakers and the organ which kept cutting out the circuit breaker until the speakers were disconnected. During the three-hour cruise passengers were entertained by many local and interstate organists and our guest Jonas Nordwall. The ferry cruised the bays and Parramatta River then the harbour before returning to the Wharf where the happy relaxed conventioneers disembarked and headed home to prepare for the main event of the Convention at the Menzies Hotel. The harbour cruise proved very successful and allowed everyone to unwind and get to know each other better and make new friends. This is an event I am sure should happen more often.

Convention Dinner - Session 7 by Rob Weismantel

At 7 p.m. on Sunday evening the very happy Conventioneers gathered in the foyer of the famous Menzies Hotel in the city where pre-dinner drinks were served by a very capable staff. After a most enjoyable dinner, with music on the Gulbransen organ, dance music was played by more of our local and interstate guests, including a duet with Bill Schumacher on organ and Rory Thomas on grand piano. After a short speech by President (NSW Div.) Tom Halloran and our every popular Patron Ian Davies, Ian was asked to play some dance numbers which immediately filled the dance floor. Among those who entertained during the evening was our seldom heard member Alan Tranter, and jazz organist Leith Ditman from Queensland, a very talented young lady. The difference in style of all artists was very much appreciated, and to end the greatest TOSA social event yet staged, Jonas Nordwall and Rory Thomas played the night out with an impromptu performance of jazz and dance numbers which set the place rocking. This is no doubt that the National Convention is the best part of the TOSA year, regardless of which State it is held in.

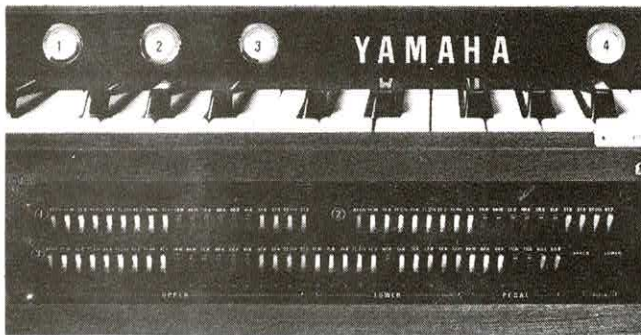
Monday Morning at Sydney Town Hall - Session 8 by Rob Weismantel

'The Morning After' had its effects on everyone, but all turned up to hear the last concert of a really Funtastic Fifth National Convention and who could blame them with Jonas Nordwall at the console of the giant 5/127 Hill & Sons classical organ. Jonas, assisted by Bill Schumacher and Mark Gabriel when his hands ran out, presented a very well played, well thought out concert which he obviously enjoyed playing. Jonas played, amongst other great classics, the theme from 2001 in which he used the famous 64' reed (contra trombone) with great effect. Recent restoration on the organ allowed the one hour concert to be played without a hitch. For hours after the concert finished TOSA members from all states were seen talking in groups outside the Town Hall, an obvious sign that many new friends were made and old friendships revived. Now is the time to start planning to be in attendance at the Sixth National Convention in '77!!!

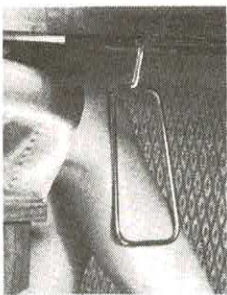
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REVIEWS cont.

Organ Party at Cammell's Saturday 1st May, 1976.-by Rob Weismantel  
The evening started with Arthur Cammel introducing our first artist Don McDonald to the console of the Thomas organ on which he played a fine selection of old tunes, after which he introduced Janice Wilson who played a well balanced programme of modern numbers. Janice Wilson was followed by Lorraine Ney and Ron Smith who both displayed their individual styles. After an interval some very unusual surprises were presented with Don playing the bagpipes with Lorraine on the organ, then Don accompanied Dorothy Cammell whom he had persuaded to sing for us. Janice came back to play another wider selection, finishing with a very up-to-date arrangement of 'Jesu Joy of Mans Desiring'. Ron, who followed Janice, was faced with the problem of meeting the standard set by everyone else, which he did with his imagnate arrangements of well known tunes. A vote of thanks went to Arthur and Dorothy Cammell led by Ritchie Willis, following Arthur's words of thanks and presentations to the artists, after which a superb supper was supplied by our hosts. TOSA is indebted to Arthur and Dorothy for the fun-filled and unusual entertainment which brought the Society \$66.00 which I am sure must be near a record for a home organ party.

ORGAN BROADCASTS ON FM RADIO

Since June, 1975 Radio Station 2MBS -FM has been broadcasting a one hour programme of Theatre Organ music each month. The tenth and concluding broadcast in this present series is scheduled to go to air from 7.30 - 8.30 p.m. on Thursday 8th June.

If you have an FM Radio and have missed earlier broadcasts how about tuning in on 8th June.

Further broadcasts may be made by 2MBS-FM if there is sufficient demand, however if this is to occur it is hoped that some of our members will be able to assist in the preparation of programmes.

Anyone interested should contact 2MBS-FM on 439 4777 or write to the station at 76 Chandos Street, St. Leonards. 2065.

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### NEW MEMBERS

Rather a quiet month for new members after the bonanza last month none the less it should make them much easier to find and welcome to the entertainments of Society life....well that is in the case of Mr. R. G. Hill from Burwood but Mr. F. E. Atkin of Auckland New Zealand may make it a little more difficult. A welcome is extended to them both and we can hope that Mr. Atkin will be able to visit us some time and meanwhile might let us have some information about our kiwi cousins and their organ activities for publication in our Newsheet.

### BIRTHS

Really the above statement is a bit incorrect as there are another two very important arrivals in May - definitely two budding organists if their fathers have any say because Michael Julien Thornley (4.5.76) and Scott William Bingham (14.5.76) will definitely be expected to make beautiful music (other than at the 2am feed). Congratulations to Ray and Carol Thornley and Cliff and Jenny Bingham and we wish long happy healthy and musical lives to Michael and Scott.

### REMINISCENCES - by Barry Tooker

After hearing Jonas Nordwall at the Convention Concert in Marrickville Town Hall, well known organist Penn Hughes was heard to comment that his playing style was very like that of Leslie V. Harvey. Fifty one years ago Leslie V. Harvey was playing the same organ in the same style as Jonas.

In 1925 he came from the California Theatre in San Francisco to open a season at the Prince Edward. He was noted for his classical and orchestral style of playing. Les also played the Wurlitzer organ at the Wintergarden Theatre Brisbane, before it was transferred to the Plaza, Sydney. Most of this organ is now part of South Australian TOSA's latest acquisition.

Other organs he played were the Christies at Victory, Kogarah NSW and the Empire Theatre, Dunedin, New Zealand.

### BALMAIN CHURCH CULTURAL CENTRE PLANS

Member, Ruby Findlay, kindly forwarded a cutting from the 'Westgate Weekly News' of May 4th outlining the plans of the Rev. F. Lambert to turn St. Andrews Church, Balmain into a religious cultural centre. The church being one of the oldest in Australia he feels would be a perfect display of religious art and the church could be used to stage a cycle of religious plays. The organ which is the original one installed about 115 years ago could be used for concerts or chamber music recitals. It is very heartening to hear of a church in Sydney with a pipe organ in such good condition that it can be entertained as part of cultural activity and appreciated by the Rector and parishioners enough that it is not hauled out and replaced by an electronic which is after all an imitation of that which they are destroying, with all the attendant limitations.

From the photograph accompanying the article it would appear that the organ is an extremely ornate installation with very decorative pipework behind the pulpit all beautifully hand painted. Ruby assures us she is going to take a look as soon as possible so it will be interesting to hear how the scheme eventuates.

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### DEADLINE

16th June will be the deadline for the July edition of TOSA News please make a mental note in CAPITAL LETTERS this month it will save that nasty scramble if you get into gear now and not wait till the last moment anyway. So many great tidbits are phoned or posted in too late and that means usually the following month they are all old and withered and stale so remember 16TH JUNE!

### FOR SALE

Mr. J. S. Lefcovitch has an E3 Yamaha organ for sale (as New). Anyone interested in obtaining information may do so by ringing 'Cliff's World of Music' Campbelltown 046 251540.

### FOR SALE

Allen Digital Computer Organ. Music Scene, demonstration model (at special price) Card Reader, Alterable Voices, Capture Action Pistons (18). Unmarked and includes separate Gyro Speaker Cabinet. Owner updating. Ring 48 3427 Mr. H. Wyatt.

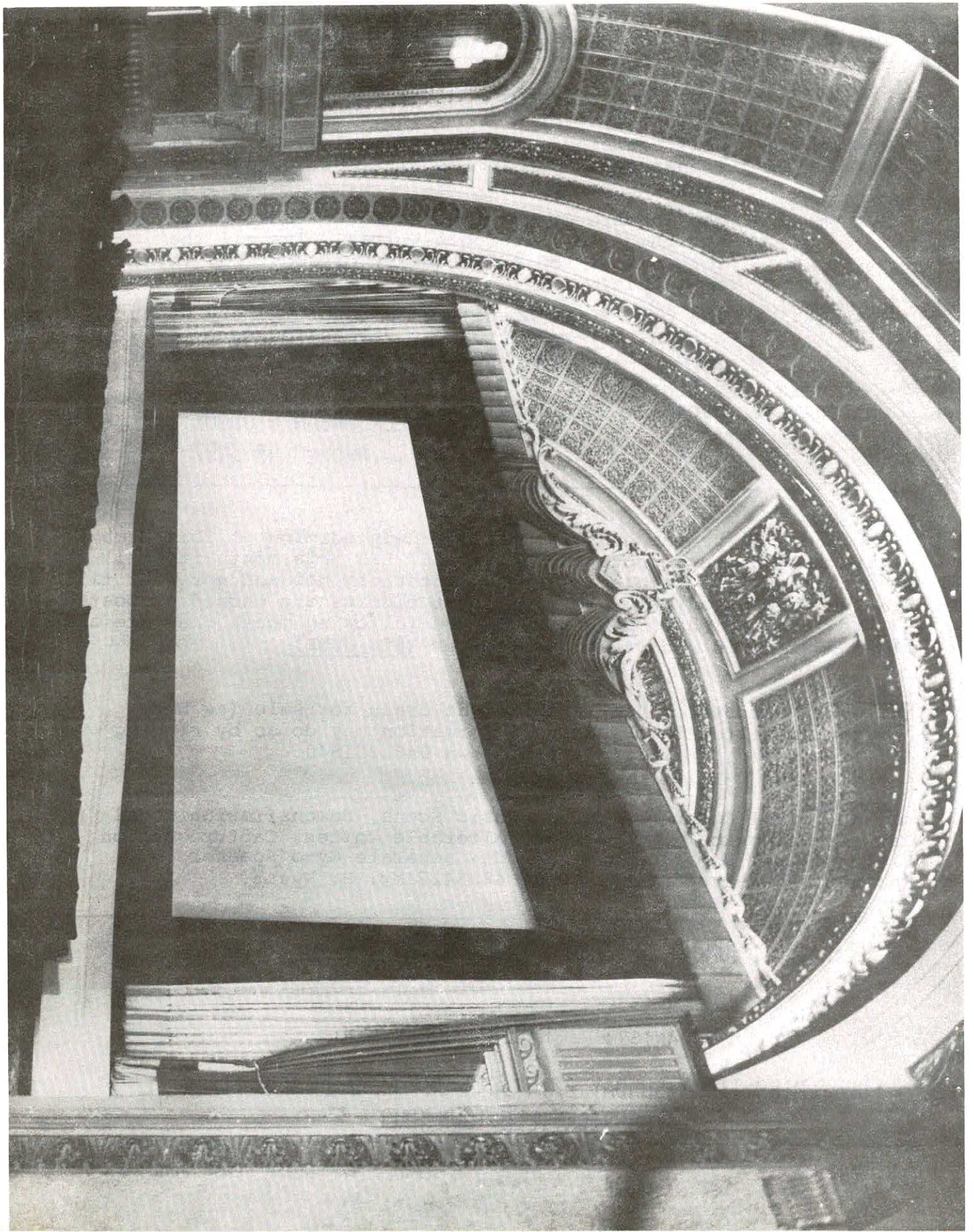
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FREE !!!      SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

ORGANIST:      ROBERT BROUGHALL

DONT MISS IT ON SUNDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE ON THE 2/11 WURLITZER AT  
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

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# FAREWELL TO HOYT'S REGENT

## PART FIVE

BY - IAN HANSON

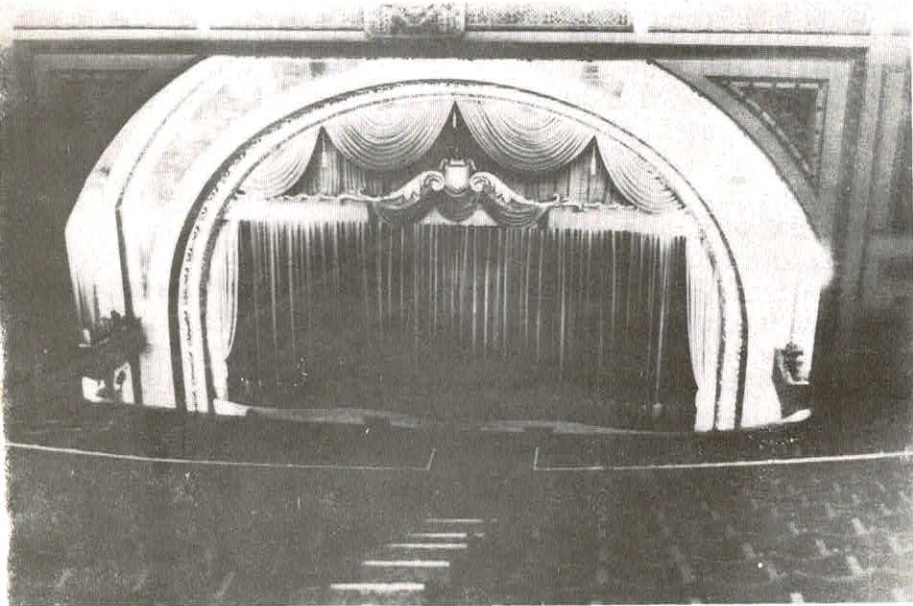
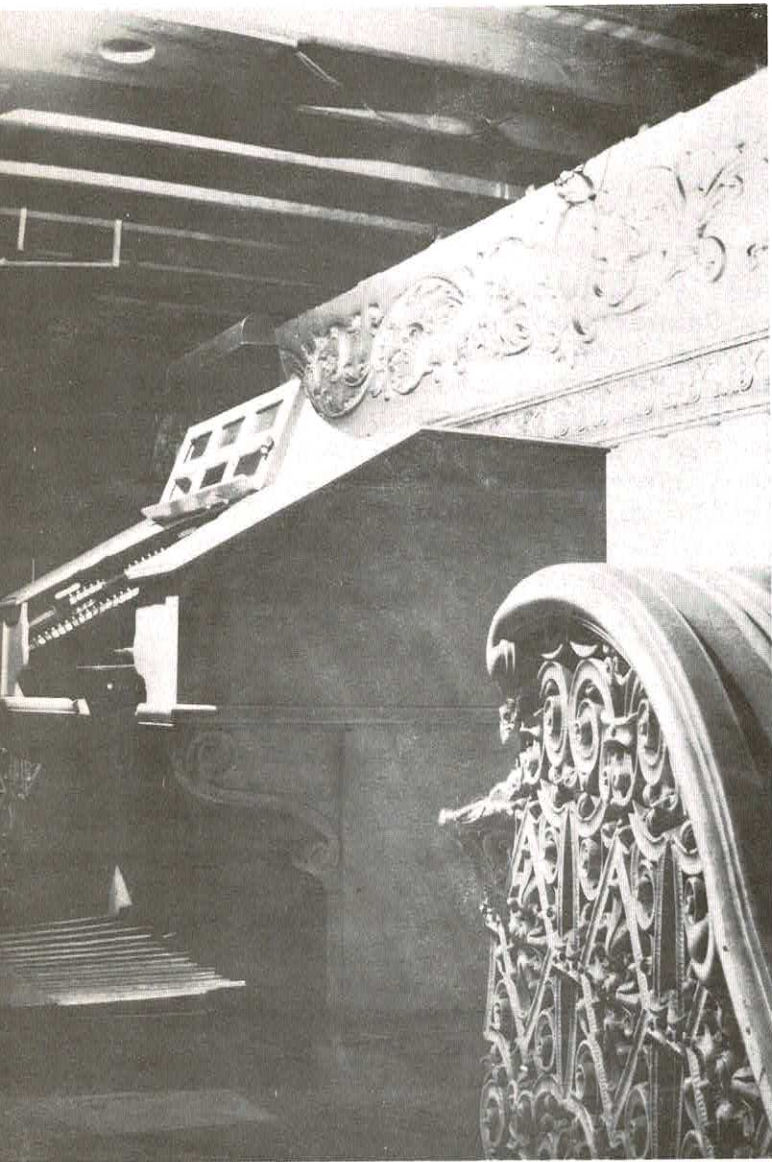
With the 'Regent' orchestra permanently disbanded it was decided that the organ should remain. The 'Canned' sound of records was provided for patrons at the morning and intermediate sessions, whilst the afternoon and evening sessions presented Stanley Cummins at the 'Mighty Wurlitzer', this now being the policy until the organ was eventually closed down. Since 1928, the organ had been coming up on its own hoist on the left side, however, it was decided by the management or the organist that the console should be placed in the centre of the now bare orchestra pit. So, early one morning many hands moved the heavy console into the orchestra pit, on either side of which was located two decorative plaster crests which can be seen in the accompanying photograph, on page 20.

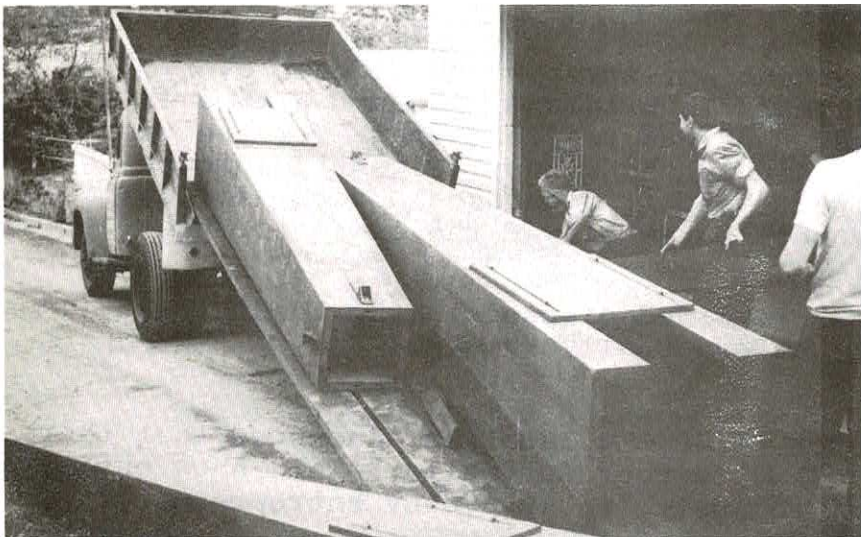
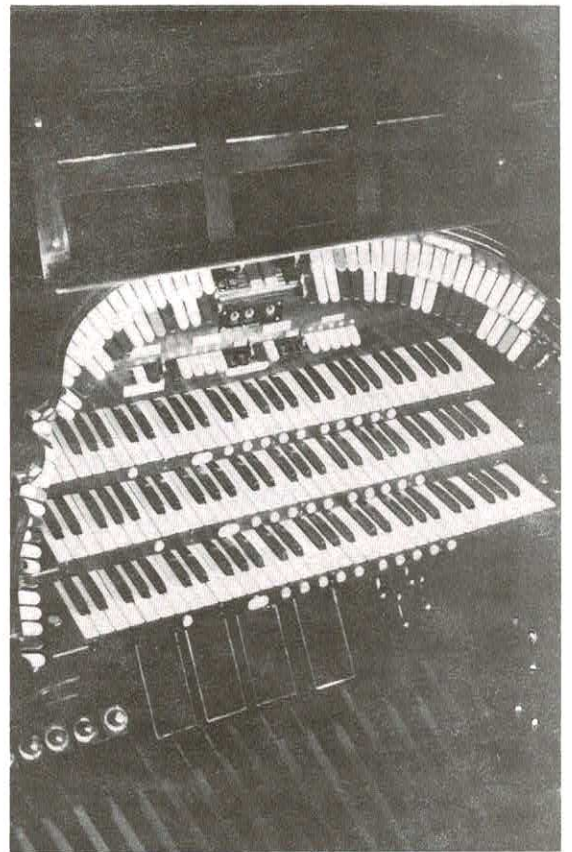
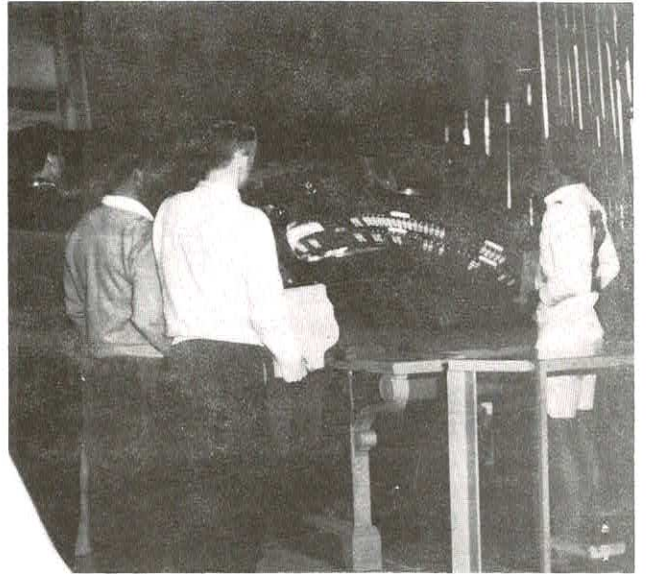
### CINEMASCOPE ARRIVES

Commencing on the 12th of November, 1953, the 'Regent' Theatre showed its last film in the old 'standard format'. This was a Fox picture entitled 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes', a Technicolor film starring Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell. On the same programme there was a trailer for the next attraction 'The Robe'. Patrons were wondering what sort of treat they would be in for this show as it was in the new widescreen process, 'CinemaScope', which was invented by Professor Henri Chitern who designed the special 'Anamorphic' lenses for the cameras and projectors alike. It embodied standard 35mm film using a 'Squeezed' image which was blown out to enormous size by way of the anamorphic lenses, also four magnetic tape strips on the film which produced the 4 track stereo sound which accompanied the picture.

Installation of 'CinemaScope' took nearly a week to complete at the 'Regent'. The giant 55ft. screen was flown from the United States whilst its installation and decoration was done by GR Brakell Pty Ltd., The installation of the speaker system is worthy of note. The amplifiers were placed underneath the projection room. Three large speakers were placed in the Mock Girders, behind walls and in ornately decorated boxes. Each amplifier has an output of 80 watts per channel.

Major alterations were carried out at stage level. This entailed complete removal of the orchestra pit and the organ console and a slight reduction of the seating capacity. The accompanying photographs show how the Proscenium has been altered over the years. The one thing which did not seem to worry the management was the fact that the organ was banished from sight in a now closed off room with a speaker mounted over the top of the console so he could hear what he was playing, but it seems no one obviously cared.





The first CinemaScope film shown was 'The Robe' starring Victor Mature and Jean Simmons. Opening night was the 17th December, 1953. On the occasion the 'Regent' was jammed packed with radio personalities, newspapermen, theatre exhibitors and VIP patrons. Mr. Stanley Cummins played the appropriate music on the Wurlitzer organ. At exactly 8 p.m. the curtains parted on an Australian Movietone News. This was followed by two short subjects, 'Umbrian Pottery' and 'Barrier Story' at the conclusion of which the screen masking stretched out to, at that time unbelievable proportions on and special 'CinemaScope' introductory film. At exactly 8.33pm the curtains closed for intermission and Stanley Cummins was heard once again. At 8.43 the fawn coloured curtains opened on the main feature 'The Robe' with the beautiful score written by Alfred Newman being greatly enhanced by the stereo sound system. The memorable evening ended at 10.45pm from then until the 7th April, 1954; 'The Robe' entertained thousands. Following 'The Robe' came 'King of the Khyber Ribbles', 'The Royal Tour', 'Night People', 'River of no Return', 'Broken Lance' and so on.

#### DEMISE OF THE WURLITZER

Towards the end of March, 1958, Stanley Cummins retired from the Hoyts circuit after some 13 years at the theatre, and nearly 30 years at the theatre organ. In his place came 'Australia's Ace Organist' at the time, Mr. Reubert Hayes. Reubert Hayes had been made redundant at the 'Plaza' Theatre because the management decided to dispose of the famous 2/8 Wurlitzer, so that the new film process 'Cinerama' could be installed.

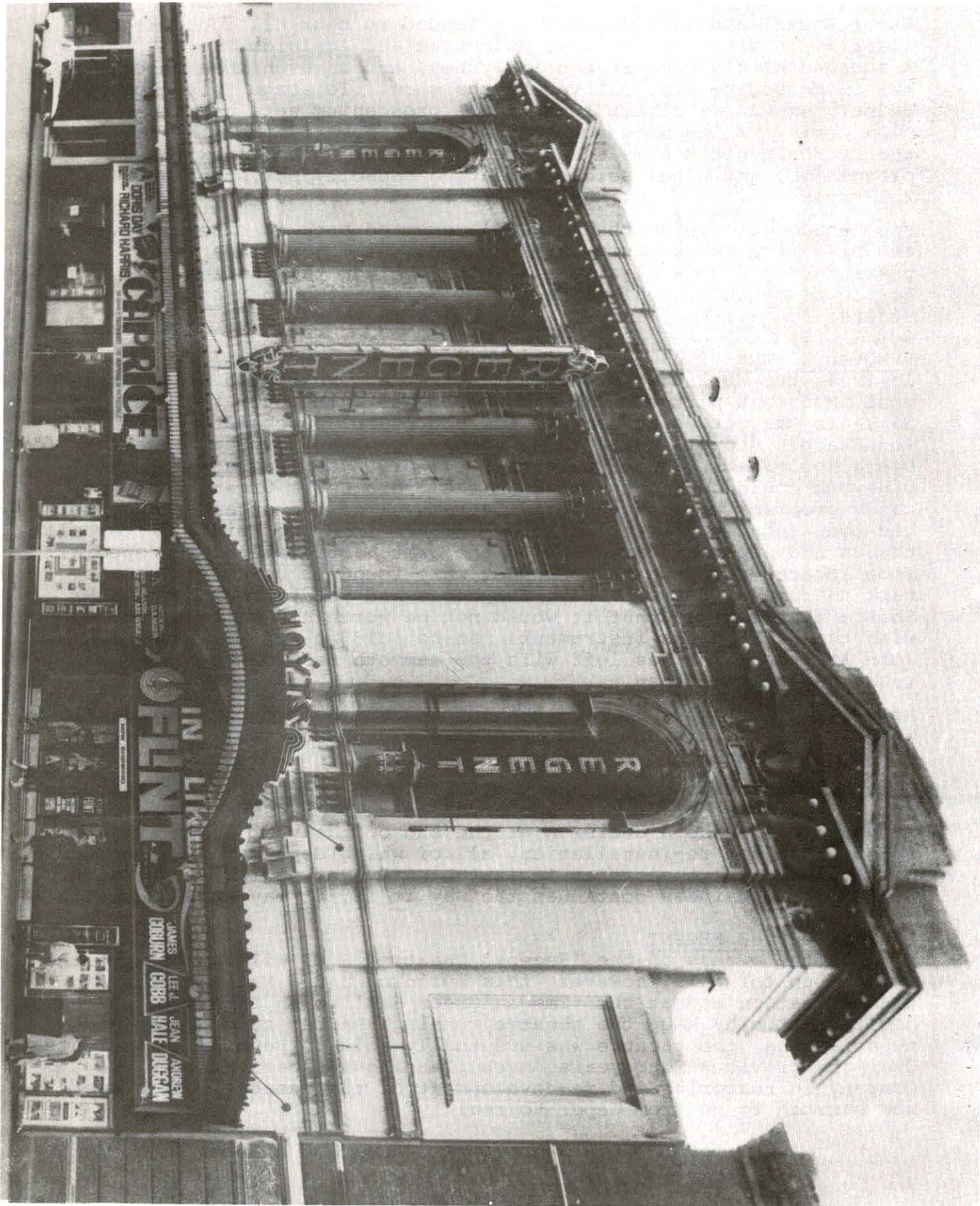
Reubert was born in the Sydney suburb of Rockdale and learned organ and piano technique from Arthur Haigh. Taking a very keen interest in the Theatre Organ, Reubert was successful in acquiring a position with Western Suburbs Cinemas at the Melba Theatre, Strathfield and a season on the 'big' Christie at the Burwood Palatial. Upon leaving W.S.C., Reubert was appointed to the Victory Theatre, Kogarah, playing the famous 2/7 Christie. In 1939, Reubert took a position as featured organist at the Regent Theatre, Brisbane and at this point began broadcasting over radio with the ABC. With regular radio broadcasts not to mention the 'Forces Sing Song', the name of Reubert Hayes became famous.

At one stage, the Brisbane Regent Wurlitzer was broadcast over the BBC in London. After 7 years in Brisbane, Reubert took over at the 'Plaza' Theatre, Sydney and was resident there for twelve years. Shortly after commencing at the Sydney 'Regent', rumours floated about the organ's future and it soon became fact, for on Saturday May 19th, 1960, Reubert Hayes played the organ for the last time.

After Reubert left, the organ remained disused in the theatre and it was some years before it was eventually removed.

#### STAGE SHOWS RETURN

In 1964, the Managing Director of Hoyt's Theatres announced that there was to be a dazzling 'live' show to tour Australia. This show entitled 'Ca C'est Paris' was brought to Australia by Sydney entrepreneur,



Tibor Rudas, and was originally intended to tour all four 'Regent' Theatres in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. A successful six week season in Sydney, and an even more successful run in Melbourne was achieved by the show. To stage this show in Sydney, expensive alterations to the proscenium were carried out once again. A few more rows of seats disappeared from the stalls and in their place came a new orchestra pit. Also a new false proscenium, and a new screen. Seating capacity now stood at 2,169 persons.

From then until 1970, the 'Regent' reverted back to cinema. Over the past five years there have been several major stage shows presented by J.C. Williamsons. These include the 'Ballet Folk Lorico De Mexico', Leningrad - Kirov Ballet, 'No No Nanette' and others.

#### REMOVAL OF THE ORGAN

In 1964, the Wurlitzer Organ in the 'Regent' which had played the most important part of 'live' music presentation over the previous 36 years was put up for sale. The successful purchaser was Mr. Ron Sharpe, who of course is building the organ for the Sydney Opera House. Mr. Sharpe purchased the organ so that some of the pipework could be incorporated in the Opera House Organ. However, major problems were encountered on removal of the organ, the console had been totally dismantled to be removed from the hoist. After all chests and pipework were removed the Switch Stacks from the special room located over the main chamber were found to be an impossible task to remove. Also the 32' diaphones had yet to be removed. Mr. Sharpe then decided that it would not be worth his while to bother with the rest of the instrument, so he sold it for a sum to Mr. John Atkinson, who was left with the mammoth task of removing the remainder of the organ.

After much hard work by Mr. Atkinson and his band of dedicated workers, the last truck load of oddments departed from the 'Regent' some months later.

Since that time the organ has virtually been overhauled and restored but as yet, has not been fully installed. The present owners of the 'Regent' will make a decision at the end of the year about its re-purchase and re-installation, all of which depends of the economic situation of the theatre as it is too early yet to make a decision. However, if business continues the way it is, it may soon become fact.

#### CLOSING OF THE REGENT

In 1971 the owners of the 'Regent' Theatre, J.C. Williamsons put the theatre up for sale, however, this building had a National Trust classification and at the time a 'Green Ban' so an intending purchaser had to virtually keep the theatre running. After some months of negotiations, the theatre was eventually sold to Bevelon Investments. Over the previous four years, much planning has been done by the Company in restoring and re-development of the theatre, which has now started to go from paper to reality.



For the record, the last film screened at the Sydney Regent was 'Paper Tiger' with David Niven and Tishiro Mufune on Wednesday 11th February, 1976.

Immediately after the final screening, workmen invaded the gothic domain of the Regent and on the 6th of March 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band on the Road' opened to a packed house.

#### CONCLUSION

We in Sydney are fortunate in the fact that we still have '3' of the theatres built in lavish grandeur of the twenties, these 'palaces' of course are the 'State', 'Capitol' and 'Regent'. The future of the 'Regent' is certainly secure for the next 10 years at least. Whatever happens will be the decision of the general public, who patronise the theatre.

Most of the musicians have long departed from us, whilst the 'Regent' no longer went in for spectacular presentations. The original organ still plays on in South Australia, in the Pultney Grammar School in a new enlarged form of 12 ranks instead of 8, the organ being purchased by TOSA (SA) from Hoyts Plaza, Melbourne in 1969. The Sydney Regent's identical 'twin', the Adelaide Regent has been closed since April, 1967.

The original seating capacity of the 'Regent' Theatre is listed below;-

Stalls	-	1,189
Circle	-	723
Lounge	-	304
TOTAL		2,216

A basic breakdown of the Regent Wurlitzer is as follows:-

WURLITZER      3 Manuals - 15 Ranks  
STYLE 260      Opus 1808

#### PIPES

Brass Trumpet  
Tuba Horn  
Diaphonic Diapason  
Tibia Clausa  
Orchestral Oboe  
Kinura  
Clarinet  
Brass Saxophone  
String  
Viol D' Orchestra  
Viol Celeste  
Hohl Flute  
Vox Humana  
Oboe Horn  
Quintadena

#### PERCUSSIONS

Upright Piano  
Marimba  
Harp  
Chrysoglott  
Xylophone  
Glockenspiel  
Bells  
Cathedral Chimes  
Bass Drum  
Kettle Drum  
Snare Drum  
Cymbal  
Plus Toy Counter unit

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before concluding I would like to thank the following people who have provided information, photographs and advice.

The Staff of the Mitchell Library, 'Everyones Variety', 'Show World', 'Film Weekly'.

Messrs:- Wilbur Kentwell, J.P. O'Callahan, Miss Robbie Wallace, Frank Ellis, John Atkinson, Ron Bettinson, Cliff Field, Norm Craven, and Hoyts Theatres.

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#### ILLUSTRATIONS

Page 18 : The proscenium just after Cinemascope was introduced and before the additional drapes were hung in the shell to hide the former proscenium arch.

Page 20 : Upper Left, shows the console buried beneath the stage after the alterations to accommodate Cinemascope. The organists could not hear themselves playing and a microphone was installed in the auditorium and the speaker, which can be seen in the photograph gave the organist some impression of what was going on.

Upper Right, shows the auditorium prior to the alterations for Cinemascope.

Lower Left, shows the proscenium after alterations for Cinemascope. Careful examination will reveal the boxes on either side have been given a more square look, the lanterns have been removed and replaced with chandaliers.

Page 22 : Upper Left The original organ installation had the bottom 8 pipes of the 16' Diaphones installed outside the chamber. In this photograph you can see 4 of them with another four behind.

Lower Left, the photograph indicates the size of half of the lowest note, 32' Diaphone (the part seen in the photograph are approximately 16' long).

Upper Right, Console painted cream and green!!

Lower Right, Restoration Complete!!

Page 24 : Facade during the days of the Hoyt's Regent Theatre.

Page 26 : TOSA News, June, 1976.