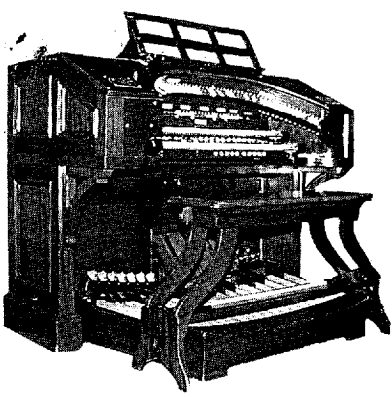
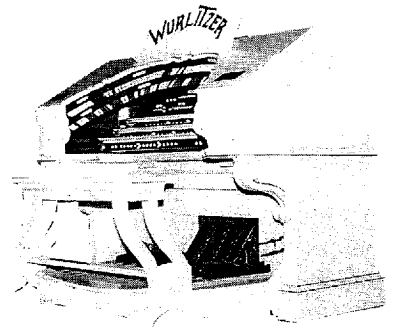


NOVEMBER, 1996



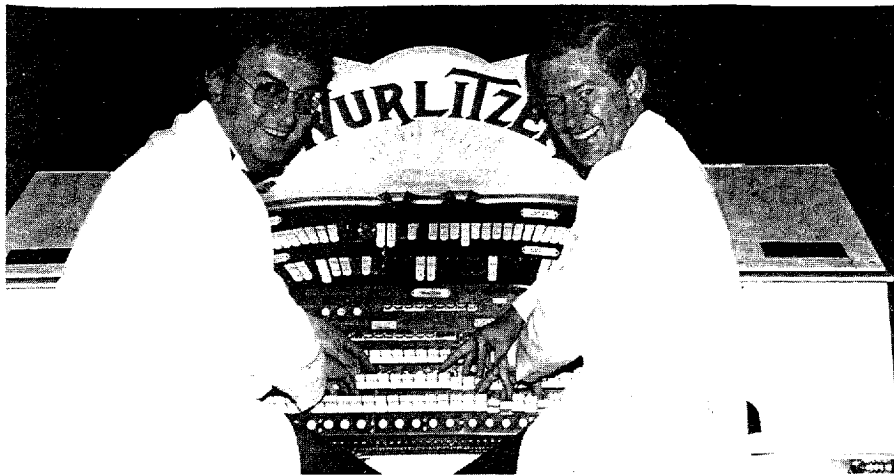
2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NEWS



3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

TONY FENELON and JOHN ATWELL Return for a Special Christmas Duo Concert



Sunday, 8th December at 2pm
Orion Centre Campsie

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TOSA NEWS

NOVEMBER, 1996

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Wednesday 20 at 8.00pm Annual General Meeting
Orion Centre Campsie

DECEMBER

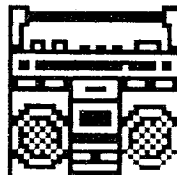
Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 8 at 2.00pm Tony Fenelon and John Atwell Christmas Concert
Orion Centre Campsie

JANUARY, 1997

Monday 6 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

FEBRUARY

Sunday 2 at 2.00pm Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting



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EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 9.00 pm
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
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Editorial

Wednesday, 20th November is the date set for our **Annual General Meeting**, which starts at 8pm and is held in the foyer of the **Orion Centre Campsie**. As always, we would like to see a lot of members showing their interest and support of the **Society** by attending to hear the reports given by the President, the Secretary and the Organ Conservators about the progress of the **Society** and the improvements to the organs over the past few months. There is always time for questions, and many informative comments and suggestions are made in the context of the **AGM**.

It is also worth attending the **AGM** for the social side of the relaxed, informal atmosphere that allows friendly contact and conversation with the committee and with other members after the formal meeting. If you would like to bring some supper to share over the tea and coffee, it would be much appreciated. See you there!

Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue in some way, especially to **Amy Caldwell** who not only supplied a review of the **Neil Jensen/Tony Fenelon** concert at the **Orpheum**, but also stepped in to take some photos of **TOSA's John Giacchi Orion** concert, in the absence of our regular photographer, **Barry Tooker**. **TOSA News** can only be as good as the contributions made by various members. Thank you to those members who contribute so unselfishly and frequently.

Don't forget that the closing date for **TOSA News** items is the 12th of the month and that I would appreciate having all items well before then if possible.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

*Articles in this journal
not necessarily represent
the views of the
committee nor the editor*

**The deadline for each
edition of TOSA News is
the 12th of the preceding
month**



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

TOSA (NSW) is pleased to welcome 8 new members this month, and we wish them all a happy and entertaining stay in our Society :

- Richard Benham - Sylvania**
- June Briggs - Narwee**
- Margaret Cam - Point Clare**
- Ronald Cam - Point Clare**
- Roy Ereaux - Bilgola Plateau**
- Chris Greenup - Salamanda Bay**
- Ruth Karnowski- Castle Hill**
- Joyce Pearson - Marsfield**



Nominations for 1997

Our Returning Officer, **Rod Blackmore**, informs us that at the closing of nominations on 9th October, the number of nominations received coincided with the number of positions to be filled and, consequently, no ballot will be necessary.

The officers for 1997 will be :

- President : **Robert Gliddon**
- Vice-Presidents : **Neil Palmer**
John Shaw
- Secretary : **Bill Schumacher**
- Treasurer : **Geoff Brimley**
- Committee : **Walter Pearce**
Colin Groves
Barry Tooker
John Parker
Peter Harding
Paul Luci

From The President

Dear friends,

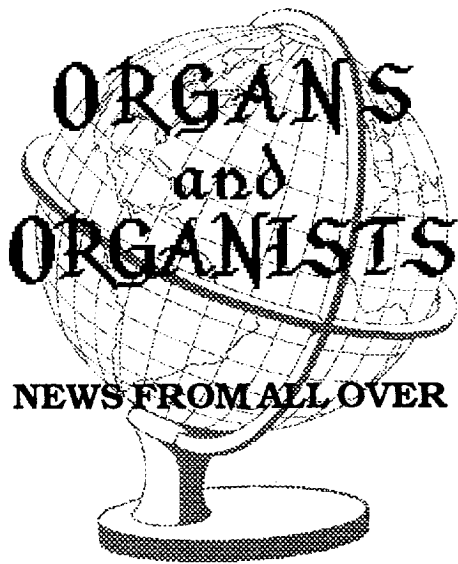
First of all, may I express my appreciation to those who attended **John Giacchi's** concert at the **Orion Centre** in September. It was most gratifying to both the artist and your committee to see an audience of 400-plus enjoying a superb concert from this extremely talented young musician. I would also like to thank those people who responded positively to my comments regarding concert attendances in the September **TOSA News**. As I said at that time, I am always wary of saying anything negative or critical. However, I felt that the point had to be made and, judging from the size of the audience and the expressions of support, I am glad that my remarks appear to have been accepted in the spirit in which they were written.

Most of you will be aware by now that there are concerns about the future of the **Orion Centre** in its present form. **Canterbury City Council** has decided to put the management of the centre out to private tender; a move that could possibly jeopardise our situation regarding concert presentations and society access to the organ. While it is still a little early to press the panic button, it certainly does not hurt to let the **Council** know our position. With this in mind, your executive has had several meetings and discussions with council officers to put our case and we are hopeful of a positive result. I hope that we will have more information to present at the **Annual General Meeting**.

As we approach the **AGM** and election of officers on November 20th, I feel that this is the appropriate time to inform you that I will not be standing for re-election as President. This is not a 'dummy-spit,' as I have enjoyed the last three years in the position. However, there comes a time when family comes first and, with three of our four children still in school (one doing the HSC), "it's time", as a past politician once said. My wife, **Jenny**, has also been very tolerant and understanding of my presidential responsibilities and is now deserving of more time and attention. Information regarding the executive and committee positions can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you at the **AGM**.

Cliff Bingham
President



Cremorne Orpheum

A reminder that you should book early for the next, highly popular show at the Orpheum on Sunday, 10th November at 1.30pm to hear Neil Jensen at the WurliTzer together with the sensational Yellow Rolls Royce Orchestra and the wonderful Helen Zerefos. What a feast of entertainment!

This nostalgic show, full of great old-time music, is called *The Organ, The Dance Band and Me* and reservations can be made on 9908 441.

Auckland's Hollywood

The WurliTzer Organ Trust of Auckland has recently contracted organ builder John W. Parker to fully rebuild a 3-manual WurliTzer console purchased in the USA.

The console is being shipped to Sydney, en route to Auckland, for complete rebuilding. The console cabinet is to be stripped and repolished, and the internal action converted to direct-electric operation. A solid-state, piston-capture action and organ relay is being constructed for installation in the console by John Andrews of Sydney.

The 3-manual console will replace the existing 2-manual at Auckland's Hollywood Theatre, where it presently plays a 12 rank WurliTzer, ex-Auckland's Regent Theatre. The new console will provide for an extra 3 ranks of pipes, to eventually take the number of ranks to 15.

During February, 1997, John Parker will be visiting Auckland to inspect the organ and take all measurements necessary to make up all new cabling, etc., for the project in

Sydney. This will allow the whole new system to be fully tested prior to export and minimise the change-over time in Auckland. While in Auckland, John will also attend to remedial work on the WurliTzer organ, enabling it to continue to raise revenue necessary for the project.

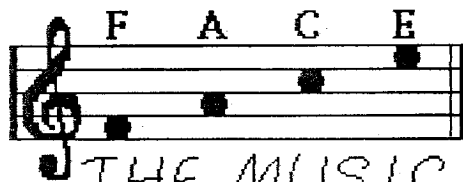
The Trust is working hard to raise a total of \$45,000 which will also include the provision of a new "scissors lift" to bring the console up into the auditorium.

The project is very exciting as it is probably the first rebuild of its type carried out in Australia for export to another country. This will also be the first total solid-state package constructed by TOSA member John Andrews for the overseas market.

TOSA (NSW) wishes the WurliTzer Organ Trust of Auckland congratulations in their endeavours and looks forward to hearing more of the project as news comes to hand.

Members' Night

Wednesday, 25th September saw about 15 people at the Orion to listen and perform. The players included Wendy Hambly, Ron Povey, Amy Caldwell, Bob Tuffin, Jack McDonald, Louisa Luci, Paul Luci and John Giacchi. A friendly soivial eveing and a shared, light supper was enjoyed by all.



THE MUSIC
With Allan Tassaker

"I had not been to a concert for ages, and I decided to take the whole family last week," explained Allan Tassaker to a friend. "I was lucky enough to get some Cats tickets."

"Did you enjoy the concert?" asked the friend.

"Well, to tell you the truth, we didn't go eventually."

"Why not?" enquired Allan's friend.

"Well," continued Allan, "I couldn't get any tickets for my dogs!!"

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Full pedalboard

Perfect Condition

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From The MAILBOX

Ron Ivin of Gosford has sent in a humorous reminiscence, which he heads :

"TAKE NOTE"!!

Mr Ronald Prussing plays "G" trombone in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Around 1958 in Inverell, I had the (then) dubious honour of giving Ron his first lessons on the cornet. This, as I remember, filled my heart with despair. This was my only musical contact with Ron as I moved from Inverell, thereby losing contact with him completely

However, Ron's advancement in music has become apparent over the years, as he is currently Bandmaster of the magnificent Salvation Army Congress Hall Band.

The band gave a much applauded concert in the City of Gosford some time ago, which gave me the opportunity of talking to Ron for the first time since I knew him as a battling beginner. I asked him how it was that he chose the "G" trombone as his solo instrument. He replied.... (Wait for it!) "Well, it is the only instrument that I could make a success of by letting it slide!!"

Bravo, Ronnie!

Ron Ivin

In order to set the record straight, Mrs N. Bisby of Ettalong writes:

26/9/96

With reference to the TOSA News, for some time now my husband has been trying to have his name spelt correctly with regard to items appearing about Members' Nights, but to no avail.

He would very much like to have it right in the list of past theatre organists. His name is BRUCE BISBY, not Brisby. The name and address is always correct when the TOSA News is posted.

Trusting you can do something about this.

Yours faithfully,
N. Bisby

Bettine Vallenge of Burwood shares her thoughts, poetically, on John Giacchi's concert:

John Giacchi's Outstanding Talents

They were all there -
Those marvellous, melodious tunes
from days gone by,
And never likely to die,
And John's presentation of them all
Was a delight for us to recall.
Played with great expertise
In his own inimitable way,
It was an afternoon of sheer pleasure
With musical memories that are with
us forever.
We hope it won't be long
Before we hear him play for us another
day,
In his outstanding way.

Bettine Vallenge



TOSA (NSW) is pleased to announce that new stocks have arrived of the following Jelani Eddington recordings :

Here's Jelani! with Jelani playing the WurliTzer Pipe Organ in the Emmerich Manual High School Auditorium - 20 tracks, over 70 minutes. Fully described in June, 1996 TOSA News.

Jelani Eddington In Concert, on the Kimball/WurliTzer Pipe Organ in the Organ Piper Music Palace - 19 track, 73 minutes. Also fully described in TOSA News, June 1996

Each of these great recordings costs \$27.00 for Compact Disc (+\$3.00 postage) or \$17.00 for Cassette (+\$2.65 for postage).

The Record Bar also has a limited quantity of the following Nicholas Martin recordings :

Hi-Tech-Nick with Nicholas Martin playing the Technics GA-3 electronic organ.

Tracks include : *With Sword and Lance March, Be My Love, St Louis Blues, Fats Waller Medley, I'll Never Love*

This Way Again, Original Dixieland One-Step, Rollercoaster, Hungarian Dance No.5, Out of the Blue March, Nola, A String of Pearls, Dancing Tambourine, Piano Concerto-1st Movement Bb Minor, Guaglione, Jerusalem, Midnight in Mayfair, Pomp & Circumstance March No.4 in G.

Cassette only - \$17.00 (+\$2.65 postage)

Music From the Shows with Nicholas Martin on the WurliTzer Pipe Organ at Turner's Musical Merry-Go-Round.

Tracks include selections from the shows *Me and My Girl, King and I, Pal Joey, Carousel, Gigi, Showboat*, and a Broadway medley, selections from Andrew Lloyd Webber's various shows including *Sunset Boulevard, Phantom of the Opera, Cats, Joseph and Aspects of Love.*

Cassette only - \$17.00 (+\$2.65 postage)

50 Old Time Music Hall Hits with Nicholas again at Turner's WurliTzer.

11 tracks each with 5 or 6 well-known, classic Music Hall tunes, e.g. *In the Good Old Summertime, The Man Who Broke the bank at Monte Carlo, The Lambeth Walk, Two Lovely Black Eyes, Waiting for the Robert E. Lee, Underneath the Arches, I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now, Bertington Bertie From Bow, Let's All Go Down the Strand, Yankee Doodle Dandy, Shine On Harvest Moon, Teddy Bears' Picnic, Danny Boy, Any Old Iron, Baby Face*, etc.

Cassette only - \$17.00 (+\$2.65 postage)

WurliTzer Wonderland Summertime Special with Nicholas as usual on Turner's WurliTzer and with Ian Darlington on the Turner's Yamaha organ.

10 tracks of medleys, including a George Formby medley, *April in Portugal, Lady of Spain, Walk in the Black Forest., Copocabana, El Bimbo, The Hustle, Sugar, Sugar, Sweet Caroline, Yellow River, Rivers of Babylon, Rasputin, Do It Again, Enjoy Yourself, Quando, Island in the Sun, Yellow Bird, Guantanamo, What a Difference a Day Makes, It's My Party, Knock Three Times*, etc.

Cassette only - \$17.00 (+\$2.65 postage)

Available from the Record Bar at TOSA Concerts,

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

Tony Fenelon and Neil Jensen at the Orpheum

A review by Amy Caldwell

Sunday, 25th August, saw many distant friends, as well as local TOSA members, together with fans of the **Hayden Orpheum Theatre**, all gathering at their favourite **Cremorne** theatre.

The reason for this, of course, was the concert to be given by our own popular **Sydney**-based organist, **Mr Neil Jensen**, together with **Mr Tony Fenelon** from **Melbourne**. **Tony**, as well as being a top organist, is also an excellent pianist, and we only rarely have the chance to see and hear him perform on this instrument.

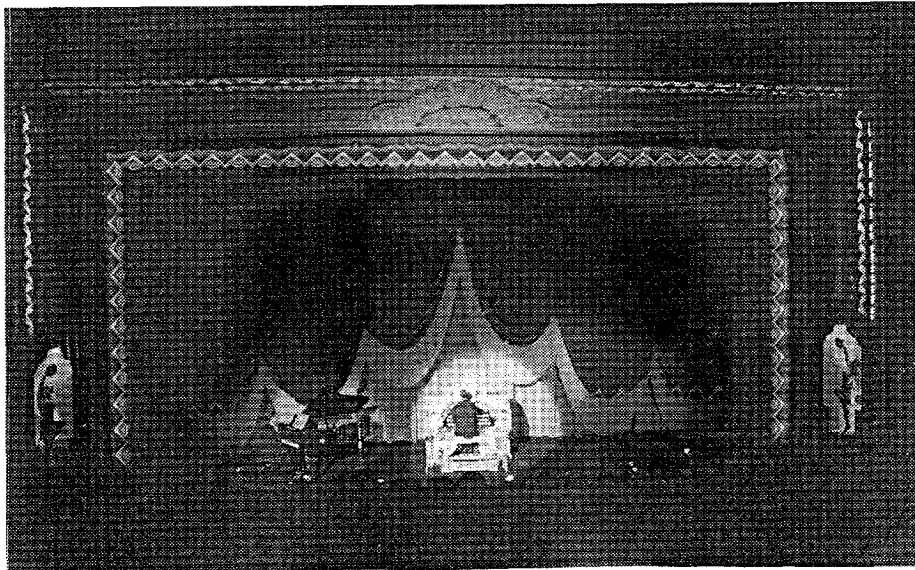
It was a very warm and friendly concert - one wonders who had the most fun - the artists or the audience.

An exciting and dynamic rendition of *Night Riders in the Sky* was the opening number with piano and organ. The audience was then warmly welcomed by both **Tony** and **Neil**. **Tony** mentioned the re-opening of the **Regent** in **Melbourne**, with the **Wurlitzer** looking majestic but, as yet, still silent as it waits for the wind. (Sounds like a yacht becalmed, or, as **Neil** said, like a pub with no beer!).

Back to the music, and this time a beautiful duet, *The Dream of Olwen*, with chimes from the organ used to nice effect.

Tony then moved across to the organ to give us a waltz medley from the **Viennese** era - *Two Hearts in 3/4 Time* (**Robert Stolz**), then *Tales From the Vienna Woods* by **Strauss**, *One Day When We Were Young*, and *I'm In Love With Vienna*.

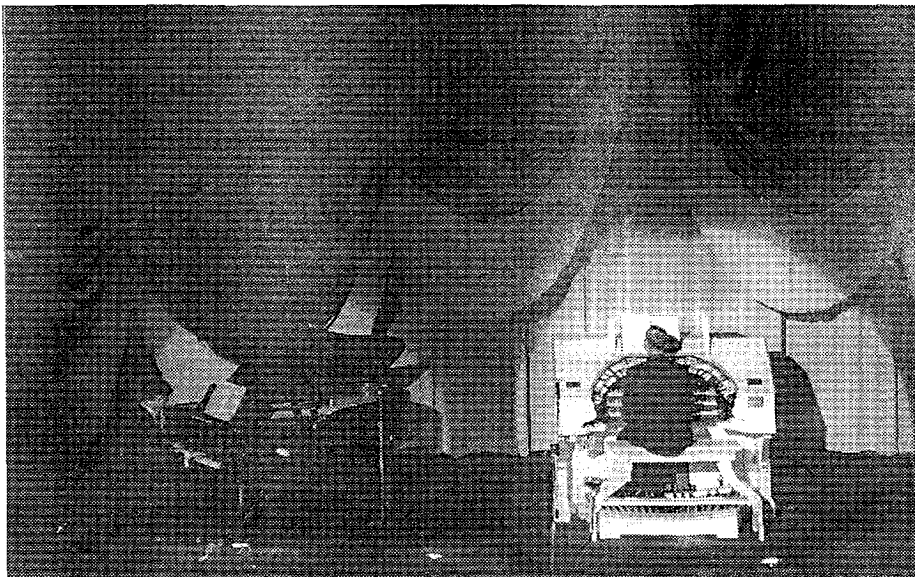
Time for **Neil** to return to the organ, and with **Tony** back at the grand, we were treated to a fun duet, again by **Strauss** - *Moto Perpetuo*, followed by **Chopin's Grande Valse Brillante**. Both



musicians were having a grand time themselves, with their many amusing remarks. It was certainly one of the happiest concerts one could wish to attend.

While **Tony** took a well-deserved break, we heard **Neil** back at the console with a great selection of tunes, beginning with *From This Moment On*, and including such delights as *Just One of Those Things* and *Night and Day*.

The second half of the day's entertainment saw both artists back at



their choice of instruments to give us a dramatic performance of *The Warsaw Concerto*. As if this was not enough, we were then delighted by a performance of the *Littolf Scherzo*, again as a duet. **Tony's** expertise on piano was superbly illustrated in this performance, as was **Neil's** excellent orchestral backing on the **Wurlitzer**

organ.

Felix Mendelssohn's Andante and Capriccioso, with a meticulous performance by **Tony** and once again **Neil's** orchestral backing, had the audience spellbound.

From here, **Tony** moved across to the organ to give us a selection of **Ray**

Noble tunes, starting with *The Touch of Your Lips* and ending with *Goodnight Sweetheart*.

With **Neil** back on stage, we heard a piece by **Clive Richardson**, which was the well-remembered music for the radio show, *The Hospital Half Hour*, called *Melody On the Move*.

By now it was well and truly time for **Tony** to have a break, and **Neil** entertained the audience with a splendid rendition of the *Overture to the Barber of Seville* by **Rossini**. Towards the end

of this item the organ became temperamental, with a relay going, causing a note to sound continuously. Until the fault was rectified we enjoyed a bonus impromptu selection of **Gershwin** music played by **Tony** on the **Yamaha** grand - a most enjoyable interlude.

With everything once more in working order, we came to the finale. **Tony** and **Neil** gave us **Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue**, followed by the *Sabre Dance* as an encore.

An excellent afternoon's entertainment, and certainly a good time was had by all!

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- * Chanson de Matin - *Sir Edward Elgar*
- * Powerhouse - *Raymond Scott*
- * Golddiggers' Cavalcade (a selection of music from the Golddiggers' films of the 1930's)
- * Elizabeth of England - *Haydn Wood*
- * The Oak and the Rose - *Ronald Hanmer*
- * Dance of the Hours from "La Gioconda" - *Amilcare Ponchielli*
- * Chopsticks - *Billy Mayerl*
- * Sapphires and Sables - *Peter Yorke*
- * Where There's You There's Me - *Sigler & Goodhart*

and the title track - "*Beyond the Blue Horizon*"

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The next few pages concern the history of the **Wurlitzer** originally installed in the **Civic Theatre, Auburn**. In January, 1966, **TOSA's** magazine, *The Diaphone* carried this story about the **Civic Theatre**, followed by **John Clancy's** report of his re-installing of the **Civic's** organ in his purpose-built home.

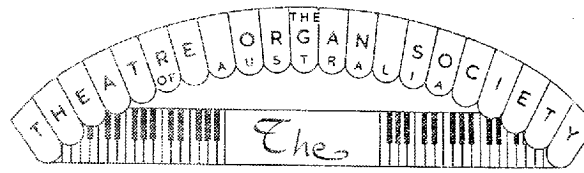
THE CIVIC THEATRE, AUBURN, N.S.W

by **Milton Speers**

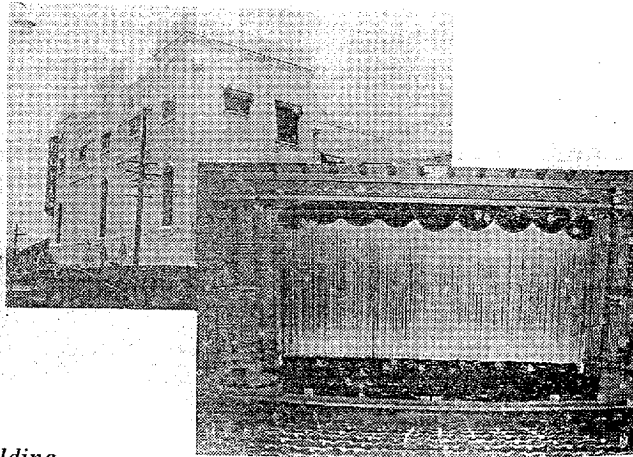
One of the last new theatres to be built "from the ground up" in **Sydney** suburbs, was the **Auburn Civic**. Built in 1933 in the difficult times of the depression, the theatre attracted advance publicity praising the courage of the promoters, more so than its addition to the local showbusiness scene. "Fearless, experienced **Australian** showmen, skilled **Australian** craftsmen, brawny **Australian** workmen all have done much to bring into being what is now, without question, the most attractive, up-to-date, and best equipped suburban theatre in the **Commonwealth**. **Western Suburbs Cinemas** need no introduction, for they have been catering for the entertainment-loving public of the **Western Suburbs** line for many years, and their fearless courage in building a new theatre of the size of the **Civic** is a true example of the business acumen and foresight of their directors in general, and the managing director, **Mr A. G. Besant**, in particular."

"The structure was commenced some time ago, but was held up owing to economic conditions that were nation-wide; but as soon as the silver lining behind the dark clouds of the depression began to radiate its welcome glow, the company immediately carried on with the work - a move that has given a fillip to local trades associated in the construction of the edifice."

"**FACTS AT A GLANCE** : Total cost of the theatre was £50,000. One million bricks, 10,000 bags of cement and 200,000 super feet of timber were used in the construction. and all were supplied locally. The mighty edifice is recognised as the pinnacle of achievement by the sponsors, **Western Suburbs Cinemas Limited**. The very latest **Wurlitzer Organ** is installed, and is presided over by **Australia's Wonder Organist, Mr. Barrie Brettoner**. Special **Western Electric** equipment provided the sound. The theatre has a seating capacity of 2,500 and an uninterrupted view of the stage and screen can be had from any part of



VOLUME 4. NO. 1 JANUARY, 1966
REGISTERED AT G.P.O., SYDNEY FOR TRANSMISSION BY POST AS A PERIODICAL



the theatre."

13th February, 1934, as the opening date, received double-page spreads in local papers.

As always in these chronicles, our prime interest in a theatre is the organ which entertained patrons for many years. Architecture is, of course, important, especially when acoustics are considered, but the quality of the instrument and its players to the enthusiast would have been sufficient for most so that they would have been prepared to sit on the bare floor just to listen, if need be!

The opening programme states, "The **Wurlitzer** unit organ, as installed at the **Civic**, is the perfect musical instrument for the theatre. It united the finest cathedral organ in the world with an orchestral section, and novelty and percussion department, which combines into one all the different voices of the symphony orchestra - the woodwind, the brass, percussion and string. It is the immediate response, together with special, characteristic voicing for theatre work, made possible by the **Wurlitzer Unit System** and enabling the organist to play in quick time, that marks the great point of difference between the **Wurlitzer** and

organs built along straight organ lines. It is possible to play any kind of music, and especially that which requires rapid technique and quick response, that has never been possible of proper performance on the straight organ. With such forceful argument, intending **Civic Theatre** patrons can look forward to something outstanding in musical presentation."

The particular organ chosen has an interesting history. It was shipped from **America** on 19th May, 1928, to **W.A. Crowle**, the **Wurlitzer** agent in **Sydney**. Opus no. 1879, and having 2 manuals 13 ranks, the organ was a "special" model quoted by the **Wurlitzer Company** as "S.R.15". Installed in **Mr Crowle's Rose Bay** home as a demonstration unit, it had three consoles : master, slave and player. The master console only was used in the **Civic**, the others being apparently broken up for parts. The console rose on a circular rostrum on the left side of the theatre, where the organist could well be seen by the patrons. Both chambers were forward of the proscenium and spoke well into the auditorium. The organ was rewired in October, 1931.

To open the new installation came **Barrie Brettoner**. He was shortly followed by **Knight Barnett**. Other organists who we remember at the **Civic** console were **Brian Hatfield, Paul Cullen, Denis Palmistra, Norman Robins, Des Turner, Ray Chaffer, Harry Weldon** and **Cecil Cranfield**.

In 1958, the **Wurlitzer** was purchased by **John Clancy**, and therein lies an inseparable tale. Also in this issue, **John**, in this year, goes on to tell us about the problems of installation.

The final recital at the **Civic** was given by **Roy Williamson** to a group of theatre organ enthusiasts, some of whom became the nucleus of the large society of which we are now members.

Specifications of the 2/13 *WURLITZER* Organ

CIVIC THEATRE, AUBURN, NSW

PEDAL ORGAN

Tibia Profunda	16'
Tuba	16"
Diaphone	16'
Bourdon	16'
Tuba	8'
Open Diapason	8'
Tibia	8'
Clarinet	8'
Cello	8'
Flute	8'
Aeoline	8'
Crash Cymbal	
Kettle Drum	
Cymbal Tap	
Bass Drum	

GREAT ORGAN

Viola	16'
Tuba Horn	8'
Open Diapason	8'
Tibia	8'
Clarinet	8'
Oboe Horn	8'
Salicional	8'
Celeste	8'
Aeoline	8'
Flute	8'
Vox Humana	8'
Solo String	8'
Octave	4'
Piccolo	4'
Salicet	4'
Celeste	4'
Vox Humana	4'
Aeoline	4'
Flute	4'
Snare Drum	
Chrysoglott Damper	
Vibraphone	

SWELL ORGAN

Oboe Horn	16'
Tibia Clausa	16'
Tuba	16'
Open Diaphone	16'
Bourdon	16'
Contra Virole	16'
Clarinet	16'
Tuba	8'
Open Diapason	8'
Tibia Clausa	8'
Clarinet	8'
Oboe Horn	8'
Salicional	8'
Celeste	8'
Aeoline	8'
Flute	8'
Vox Humana	8'
Solo String	8'
Orchestral Oboe	8'
Bass Trumpet	8'
Clarion	4'
Octave	4'
Piccolo	1'
Salicional	4'
Celeste	1'
Flute	4'
Aeoline	4'
Horn Diapason	4'
Twelfth	2 2/3
Piccolo	2'
Tierce	1 3/5
Cathedral Chimes	
Xylophone	
Glockenspiel	
Chrysoglott	
GREAT - Second Touch	
Tuba	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Clarinet	8'
Xylophone	

TREMULANTS

Main
Tibia
Solo
Vox
Tuba

COUPLERS

Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Swell Sub Great
Swell Sub Octave
Swell Unison Great
Swell Unison Off
Swell Octave Great
Swell Octave

CONSOLE EQUIPMENT

Swell Pedals	2
Crescendo Pedal	1
Pistons to Swell	10
Pistons to Great	5
Traps on 1st or 2nd touch by Bulgin switch.	

BLOWER

5 Horsepower Spencer Orgoblo, with 6 volt DC action current from Generator.
--

SWELL - Second Touch

Tibia 8'
Tuba 8'
Cathedral Chimes

The following effects have been added since installation in the **Clancy** residence: Master Xylophone, Master Glockenspiel (unenclosed), Set of Tuned Chinese gongs, Chinese Block, Castanets, Sleigh Bells, Triangle, Tambourine, Klaxon Horn, Electric Bell, Set of Tuned Bird Whistles, Tram Gong, Steam Whistle, Boat Horn, Horses' Hooves, Piano with Mandoline Effect.

From the same edition of *The Diaphone* (January, 1966) comes **John Clancy's** account of the relocating of the **Auburn Civic's Wurlitzer**, an event which led to the creation of the **Theatre Organ Society of Australia**.

CONSIDERATIONS ON INSTALLING A THEATRE PIPE ORGAN IN A RESIDENCE

by **John Clancy**

Most theatre organ enthusiasts have probably wished they could have one of these instruments at home, to play whenever they feel like it in privacy. However, when they see the hundreds of pipes of all sizes, the chests, the complex relay mechanism, the blower and associated wind-trunking it becomes clear that an average house is just not big enough to fit an organ of this type, and even if this problem is overcome, what happens to the most important item? - the SOUND that comes out.

There is a minimum size room for proper resonance of a pipe organ, and the best example to follow is the design of either a church or a theatre. This is the reason that so many home pipe installations, although carefully thought out, never sound any better, and sometimes sound worse, than an electronic organ - you must allow room for the sound to DEVELOP.

It is not much use firing the sound of the pipes into a room of standard size, with low ceiling. There must be a high ceiling, as sound waves of the intensity developed in the **Wurlitzer Organ** require a lot of space to circulate and blend in the proper proportions.

Another unwanted result of installing a **Wurlitzer** in a normal house is the tendency to blast your audience with noise. This can, to a certain extent, be overcome by acoustic treatment, either in the chambers or in the room, but this then raises another problem - by damping out the high harmonics, the organ sounds "dead", lacking in brilliance.

With these thoughts in mind, and the desire to duplicate as nearly as possible the sound of the organ as in the theatre, plus the adding of reverberation that is lacking in most Australian theatres, I was fortunate to be able to plan a home specifically to suit the **Wurlitzer** from the **Civic Theatre**. Through my many friends in **England** and the **USA**, I was able to ask questions, to learn from the experience of others, and to actually listen to the results, both good and bad that other home installers had achieved,

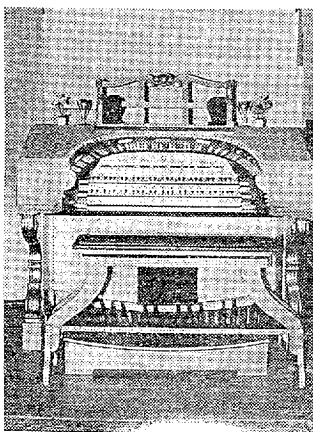
on tape recordings.

It was not by chance that I had chosen the **Civic** organ, for this was the only large Theatre Organ that had been originally built as a residence instrument, and actually installed in **Mr Crowle's** home at **Rose Bay**. This immediately made it an ideal organ to re-install in a home.

The one thing that both Churches and Theatres have in common is a high ceiling, and so the most important part of my home plan was the ceiling. This was achieved by using single-section, steel roof trusses, which allowed unrestricted access to actual ceiling height at the highest point of 40 feet.

The next consideration was the size of the music room into which the organ would speak, and this was fixed at 65 feet in length by 25 feet width, and including an upstairs mezzanine for the visitors to sit and listen to the organ.

It was decided to make the size of the pipe chambers considerably larger than the **Civic** theatre's chambers, both to provide plenty of space to work on the organ, and to allow ample room for future extensions of pipework to 21 ranks. The Solo chamber is 20 feet by 25 feet, with a ceiling height at a maximum of 35 feet, and can be increased if necessary to accommodate a set of 32' pedal pipes. The chambers are horn-shaped, with walls carefully shaped to eliminate 'standing' waves, and they are constructed somewhat below the level of the music room. The



large amount of swell shutters extending across the full width of the chambers means that the pipes are virtually unenclosed with all swells open, allowing a fine crescendo from pp to fff.

Possibly the most fascinating aspect of this installation is the V-shaped position of the two pipe Chambers, and it is probable that no other residence organ in the world is built in just this way.

The best position for the blower is as far away from the home as possible, and so this blower is installed in its own building at the rear of the residence. Visitors have been surprised at the absence of blower roar in the music room.

Careful tests were made to determine the best place to hear the balance of the two chambers and the decision was made to position the console here, as in this installation the organist would be the most important person to consider.

A display of show pipes in front of the pipe chambers will ensure that the **Wurlitzer** will be a visual, as well as an aural experience, on its final completion.

A question most people ask about a home installation of a **Wurlitzer** is, "What about neighbours?" Providing common sense is used in playing the organ, i.e. no midnight sessions, and that your neighbours' homes are not too close, this is usually not a problem. The great advantage of a home installation over a theatre is that you can hear individual voices. In most large theatres it is necessary to use fairly full registrations - why not take advantage of being able to feature beautiful, soft voices such as the *Acoline* and *Dulciana*?

The **Civic Theatre Wurlitzer** is probably unique as a home installation, because it is installed complete and unchanged, almost exactly as in the theatre. The addition of further ranks of pipes and effects has been planned only to complete the ensemble, and add to the beauty of the organ.

John Clancy's son, Kevin, kindly offered to update his late father's article about his home installation of the **Auburn Civic Theatre's Wurlitzer** to bring us up to the present time.

Clancy Home Installation Update

Addendum

Some additional comments to offer, some 30 years later.

The original 2/13 **Wurlitzer** organ from the **Civic Theatre, Auburn**, remains in tact in my home. There is currently added the percussion items mentioned in the previous item - Chinese Block, Castanets, Sleigh Bells, Triangle, Tambourine, Bird Whistle, Bell, **Wurlitzer** Piano with mandolin effect, 37 tuned Chinese gongs.

Additional ranks have been added and include a Kinura with 61 pipes, Mixture 3 ranks 183 pipes designed to complement the existing ranks. My

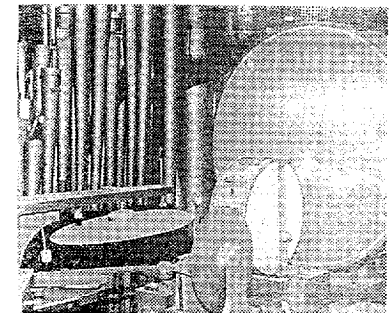
father always enjoyed the Classical (Cathedral) organ and its delightful upper harmonics, not produced by the theatre organ. He was trained in the classic organ and loved to play the **Wurlitzer** without having the tremulants switched on all the time.

For those readers who like some more technical details - there are three large sets of swell shutters with each chamber; a solo and a main chamber are on each side of the main room; the maximum wind pressure is 10 inches with the Vox 5.5 inches; the original **Wurlitzer** relays are still in use; the organ has currently 17 ranks in total, operating from a 2 manual console.

In addition (but not currently in operation), a 4 manual **Wurlitzer** console is in the main room. This is the 2nd console from the **State Theatre, Sydney**, which was not included the 1928 installation and which was intended to be in lieu of a grand piano. This console has been restored to its original polished wood state.

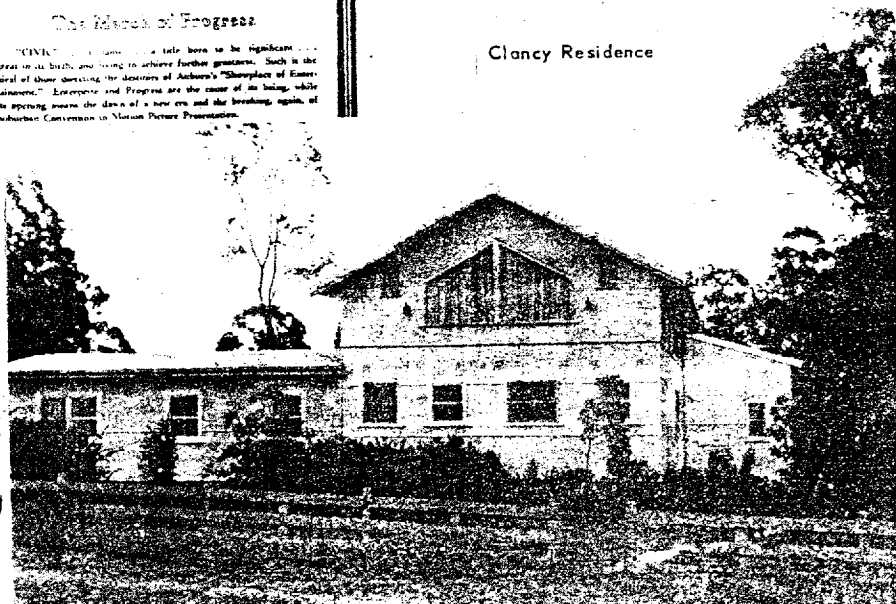
To conclude, readers will be interested to learn that future plans for the **Wurlitzer** organ will be to put it up for sale, with the hope that the organ can be installed in a building that will allow better public access, for future generations to enjoy the sounds of this **Wurlitzer**.

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Solo Chamber Traps

Clancy Residence



Review of John Giacchi's Concert

Orion Centre Campsie by John Shaw 8th September, 1996

A larger than average crowd attended John's first full concert at the Orion.

The opening number entitled *Theatreland*, probably the best opener for some time, was presented with light and shade, and soft accompaniment voices which resulted in a perfect balance. Use of the xylophone on some melodic passages added colour to an exciting arrangement.

Beyond the Blue Horizon (which is the title piece of John's recently released CD) followed with a well-developed introduction and a contrasting staccato passage towards the end.

The aria *One Fine Day* from *Madame Butterfly* highlighted a section of Strings recently replaced with re-modified and re-winded tremulants. An excellent orchestral arrangement of this operatic masterpiece was presented and resulted in a soulful rendition.

Next, *In a Party Mood*, theme song for the 1950's BBC programme *Housewife's Choice*, featured various solo voices as well as Tibias and Strings which once again highlighted the much improved sound of these ranks. I personally thought the tremulants a little fast to suit my taste. This rendition certainly compared well with other arrangements of this piece that have been heard previously.

It is some years since John 'discovered' the music of composer Harry Warren. Now John has become somewhat an exponent of the music of his favourite composer. From the soft strains of the *Shadow Waltz* we passed into a faster tempoed *Go Into Your Dance*, then *Daydreaming* complete with suitably-chosen registrations. *All Night Long* segued into *We're in the Money* and the lovely melody *I Only Have Eyes for You*, which was re-recorded by a female pop vocalist a few years ago. A slight Jesse Crawford

s o u n d



complemented the arrangement. The up-tempo *Lullaby of Broadway* completed this bracket with a speedy finish.

A rarely heard Elgar composition sounded excellent on theatre organ. The rather impressionistic work is entitled *Morning Sun* and is probably one of the composer's better works.



A novel English suite entitled *The Oak and the Rose* contained traditional English songs such as *Barbara Allen* and *Oh Dear What Can the Matter Be* woven into a musical tapestry portraying Anglican folklore. Next came *Offenbach's Orpheus in the Underworld*, a well orchestrated arrangement featuring solo voices and well suited for theatre organ. Inevitably, the *Can-Can* brought back to me visions of the *Moulin Rouge* and that swirl of dancers in their yellow feathers. (For further information on this subject speak to Neil Palmer!)

After interval, a Sidney Torch-style *Where There's You, There's Me* opened the second half. Then came the theme from *Blue Hills*, the ABC radio serial which John claimed was being played for the first time on theatre organ - certainly I hope it won't be the last.

The work *Power House* (Raymond Scott) followed which is another impressionistic work well-suited to the theatre organ and played so well technically. *Sapphire and Sables*, a haunting melody preceded another Harry Warren medley of songs from the *Golddiggers* films. Arranged with imagination and played with a technique that was flawless but never mechanical.

After an absence of some years due to Law studies, John's eagerly awaited return reflects a metamorphosis in both his professional careers (in Law and music), as well as personal and artistic development. It is always an enormous attribute when a young organist does not resort to loud and louder mode or heavy, unsuitable classic organ registrations, which is not uncommon even in the USA and the UK.

Since I have listed most of the programme contents the reader will be able to judge the great variety of John's selections and also appreciate the versatility of the artist.

A Christmas Special Duo Concert

OUR NEXT ARTISTS

JOHN ATWELL

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

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

John has presented theatre organ concerts, both solo and in conjunction

with other artists, for most TOSA Divisions around **Australia** since 1971. Some highlights of his career as an organist include : being one of the first artists to play a concert on the **Adelaide Regent's** organ in its new location in **St Peters College** in 1970; playing the **21st Anniversary Concert**, with **Tony Fenelon**, for **TOSA (Vic)** at the **Dendy Cinema** in 1981; opening the **Compton** organ, with **Hubert Selby**, in the **Memorial Theatre** (now **Her Majesty's**), **Ballarat** in 1982; presenting a concert on the **Cassavant** organ in **Melbourne Concert Hall** during the month-long opening celebrations in 1982; opening **Adelaide's Capri Cinema's**

WurliTzer, with **Tony Fenelon** and **Ray Thornley** in 1983; recording on the **Capri** organ as part of the "**Five Alive**" album in 1985; participating in **Melbourne's "Carols by Candlelight"** each Christmas Eve on piano or organ; presenting, with **Tony Fenelon**, highly-successful duo concerts with piano and organ duets for the past 15 years. He has had a hand in the tonal design and console lay-outs of several theatre organ re-installations, including **Dallas Brooks Hall, Melbourne**, the **Capri Cinema, Adelaide**, and the **Marrickville WurliTzer's** recent refurbishment. For some years, he was also the editor of the Newsletter, **Vox**, for TOSA Victoria.

TONY FENELON

Tony was born in **Melbourne** and commenced his piano tuition at the age of 7, playing competently in Eisteddfods and local festivals when he was 8. He completed a **Bachelor of Science** degree at the **University of Melbourne** in 1963 and a high scoring **Licentiate Diploma** at **Melbourne's Conservatorium of Music**, under famed pianist and teacher, **Roy Shepherd**.

In 1964, Tony was invited to perform a feature spot in a special programme being presented at **Melbourne's Regent Theatre**. As a

result of his outstanding performance, he became the resident organist at the **Regent** until it closed down in 1969.

During this early period he started playing for the growing number of **Theatre Organ Societies** throughout **Australia**. His first USA tour came in 1969 and he has since toured there many times, one highlight being a highly-acclaimed duo tour with famed US artist, **Lyn Larsen**.

He has also toured several times in the **UK**. He has released 15 record albums in various countries, including

"Interval at the Regent" (now on CD) which is available at our record bar for the special price of only **\$15**.

In everyday life **Tony** is a Bio-medical scientist, designing and maintaining the highly sophisticated life-support systems and complicated equipment of modern hospitals.

A man of great versatility, **Tony's** dedication, energy, musical genius and warm personality have made him **Australia's** leading theatre organist and an artist in constant demand throughout the world.

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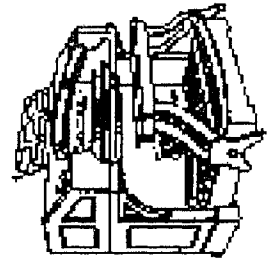
TOSA NEWS

NOVEMBER, 1996

Theatre Organ Society of Australia
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