



TOSA MARCH/APRIL 2005 volume 44 number 2 **news**

Price: \$ 2.00

TOSA's National Festival of Theatre Organ Music in Melbourne

Easter Weekend : March 25th - 29th (See page 10)

The Welcome Return of Young Brisbane Theatre Organist

DAVID BAILEY



Marrickville Town Hall
Sunday 24th APRIL at 2pm

TOSA NEWS

MARCH / APRIL, 2005

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

For the smooth running of TOSA, please contact the right person :
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All numbers use the prefix 02 from outside NSW



**COMING
EVENTS**

MARCH

Melbourne Easter Weekend : 25th - 29th
TOSA Festival of Theatre Organ Music

NO Marrickville Members' Playing Evening

APRIL

Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 14 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Sunday 24 at 2.00pm DAVID BAILEY Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 28 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Evening
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

MAY

Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 12 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Sunday 22 at 2.00pm NEIL JENSEN Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 26 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Evening
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

* DIRECTORY *



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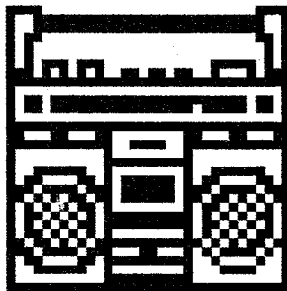
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For "THEATRE PIPE ORGAN - SERIOUSLY"
2MBS-FM102.5 on Saturday 16th April at 6.30pm

For "COLOURS OF THE KING",
2MBS-FM102.5 on Saturday 9th April at 6.00pm
Presented by Andrew Grahame

FM 90.3 or FM 88.7 on Sunday 3rd April at 2pm
or Tuesday 5th April at 9am
For Theatre Organ Magic".
Presented by Jim Coupland.

From The President

Hello again!

I want to thank all those who came to the **Rory Thomas and Zooo Superband** concert in February. **Rory** is a clever musician, and the band had very obviously been well tutored and disciplined under his baton. We understand that **Rory** pulls the whole group together and also coaches each member individually.

I especially want to thank everyone for coming to support our Tsunami appeal. Our estimated net income on the day came to \$1355, and **Geoff Gimley** was able to write a **TOSA** cheque on the spot. In addition an anonymous member chipped in with a cheque for \$645. This meant that our Patron, **John Gorrie**, was able to present the **Red Cross** representative with a total of \$2000 before the concert had ended. It was rather a nice touch that the local representative of **Red Cross** was **John's** wife, **Shirley**, who said a few appropriate words in response.

We regret to have to write that our Co-patron **Ian Davies** died in February. You will find appropriate comments elsewhere in this edition of **TOSA News** (page 5). Those who have been in **TOSA** for a long time always speak well of **Ian**, and acknowledge his support and encouragement. His passing was not unexpected, as readers of last month's **News** would have understood.

On the other hand we are glad to write that we are very fortunate in having **John Gorrie** as our other patron. He has been a constant supporter of **TOSA** and was instrumental in the favourable treatment **Canterbury Council** gave us at the time of our **Campsie Wurlitzer** installation. He has been "on



our side" ever since. Did you notice, at the February concert, that he even set up his own stall to help raise funds? Thank you, **John**.

Just a word to those who have a rostered playing slot at **Marrickville** - The stairs are on wheels again! They are not the lockable castors that were agreed to, but they are certainly stable and safe compared to the small ladder. Be careful anyway! Please make sure you know ALL the players (and their phone numbers) who play on the same day as you. Phone **Neil** for this information if you don't have it.

The new system with the **Town Hall** keys seems to be working well, but it is important that players keep in touch with the others rostered for the same day. This way no-one will be locked out, and the keys will transfer smoothly from player to player. Even more importantly you need to know if other players are NOT coming for their turn so that you can return the keys.

Don't miss **David Bailey's** concert at **Marrickville** on 24th April. He is no longer the young organist whose cleverness alone brought him to everyone's attention. He has matured into an entertaining concert organist. Don't miss this! And there just might be a surprise visitor at the console.

All for now - **Walter Pearce**

Welcome To New Members

TOSA(NSW) is pleased to welcome the following new members and to wish them a long and entertaining stay amongst our ranks :

Pam Drysdale - Revesby
Eric Stevenson - Ryde
Judith Hollis - Koolewong

Bequests

Have you considered including **TOSA (NSW)** as a beneficiary in your Will?

With bequests like that we might one day be able to own our own Theatre!

Please give it some thought and contact any member of our Committee

Marrickville Town Hall Parking

Marrickville Council advise that the council carpark nearest to the **Town Hall** is located in **Tuohy Lane**, off **Petersham Road**, at the rear of **St Clement's Church**.

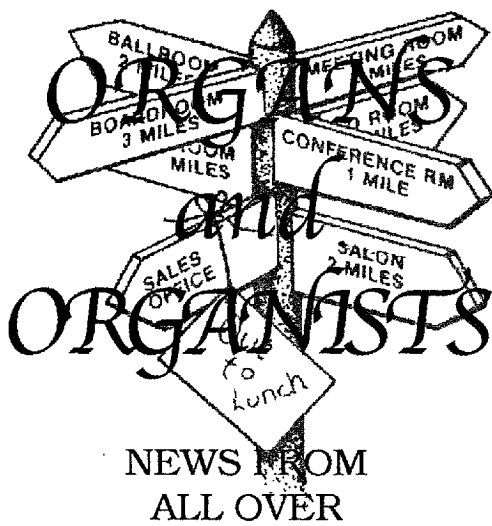
It has rooftop parking and is also called "**Banana Joe's Parking**".

To contact the **Promotions Team** with your ideas and support :

Tom Barber 9629 3105 tigerprints@exemail.com.au
OR John Batts 9389 8659 js_batts@hotmail.com

Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

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



NEWS FROM
ALL OVER

2MBS-FM 102.5

The Theatre Pipe Organ - Seriously

Saturday April 16 2005, 6.30 pm

Satie - *Gymnopedie No 1* (Robert Wolfe)
Léhar - *Frasquita Serenade* (George Wright)

Sibelius - *Finlandia* (George Blackmore)

Johnson - *If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight* (Fats Waller)

Hine - *How Great Thou Art* (Lyn Larsen)

Strauss - *Radetsky March* (Lyn Larsen)

Colours of the King

Saturday April 9 2005, 6.00 pm

Highlights from the concert given by the young French organist Vincent Dubois on the Puget organ at Rose Bay.

This is a 2MBS-FM recording (Greg Simmons and Greg Ghavalas - recording engineers)

Franck - *Chorale No 3 in A minor*

Vierne - *Naiades*

Franck - *Prelude, Fugue and Variation*

Vierne - *Allegro Vivace and Final from Symphony No 1 in D minor*

Dubois - improvisation on submitted themes

Death of Don Leslie, Speaker Man

Don Leslie, a Californian whose name will forever be remembered in the electronic organ world, died on 3rd September, 2004, at the age of 93. As a young man, Don loved church and theatre pipe organs, and around 1935 he was so thrilled by the sound of the new Hammond organ in a spacious furniture store that he could not resist buying one. But in the confines of his home he was so disappointed "with the 'hard' sound that he started to experiment with devices to produce a warmer and more theatrical tone. Already fairly proficient in mechanics and electronics, he gained further experience when placed in the Naval Research Laboratories at Washington during the war,

and upon returning home the experiments were resumed, and a satisfactory result was obtained.

He found that rotating horns above the driver produced a good tremulant effect which could be varied by speeding up or slowing down the rotation, thus sweetening the sound when the device was in use. He offered the system and his services to Hammond, but as they were not interested he founded his own company, *Electro Music*, to manufacture and market what came to be known as the Leslie speaker. It was an immediate success, with a high demand from Hammond owners, and also increasing Hammond sales to people who liked the new sound, not that Hammond appreciated the extra business. Laurens Hammond and his close associates remained so opposed to the use of Leslie speakers with their organs that their franchised dealers were ordered not to stock Leslies, although apparently many of them did! Most of the electronic organ manufacturers which sprang up found it necessary to include the Leslie system in their instruments, but it was not until 1978, five years after Laurens Hammond's death, that Hammond acquired Leslie from CBS Musical Instruments, to whom Don had sold his company in 1965. Twenty-five years on things have changed considerably. Hammonds and Leslies are now made by Hammond-Suzuki, U.S.A., and it is possible to simulate the effect of both digitally. But despite that, and despite their weight, genuine Leslies are still in demand by the purists, almost sixty years after the system was first marketed. - from the UK's *News North*, Nov/Dec 2004



Marrickville - 27/01/2005

Listeners: Betty Rose and Jenny Pearce.

Players: Frank Lewis, Jack Rose, Ron Ivin, Paul Luci, John Batts, Walter Pearce.

Marrickville - 24/2/05

Listeners: Betty Rose, Jenny Pearce and Paul Luci.

Players: Jack Rose, John Batts, Frank Lewis, Ron Ivin, Walter Pearce.

Campsie Orion - 10/03/2005

John Atkins listened while Tom Barber, Walter Pearce and John Batts played. Where was everyone today?

FOR SALE

3 new NTSC videos :

The San Francisco Fox Theatre 1929-1963, includes Everett Nourse at the *Wurlitzer* (fantastic)

The Pipe Organ in America
Walt Strony in Concert, on Allen custom theatre organ.

Also : a new Paul Roberts CD

Viva Las Vegas - playing the ex-Granada Kansas City Barton with the famous Chicago Stadium Barton organ console.

Write to : Pete Andersen,
P.O. Box 35, Deepwater, 2371.



TOSA member Anne Haines of Clovelly comments on TOSA's February concert :

15th February

I was deeply impressed with the *Zoo Superband* at the concert on 13th February - and must confess I had never heard of them before.

Young people of this calibre - and such talent - should receive much more publicity in our community. I'm afraid our Media concentrate on more sinister matters.

My congratulations, thanks and good wishes for the future to the *Band* - and to the talented organist, their director Mr Rory J. Thomas. He must be very proud of them.

Yours faithfully,
Anne Haines

Chatswood Wurlitzer

Well-known theatre organist Chris McPhee will be playing the Willoughby Civic Centre's *Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ* on Friday 1st April at 8pm. The address is 409 Victoria Ave, Chatswood, and is close to the station.

The concert will be a special tribute to the late June Bronhill, and will also feature Karen Bruce (soprano) and Dean Sinclair (tenor).

The tickets cost \$15, with a seniors' price of \$12, and children under 15 are admitted free. Bookings on (02) 9417 2987.

TOSA patron **Ian Davies** passed away on the morning of Monday 14th February aged 88, at the **Amity Nursing Home**.

I first met **Ian** at **Suttons Music Store** in the early 1960s. He gave me a brochure on a **Wurlitzer** electric organ. Later I became quite friendly with him, when he played a concert one Saturday morning at the **Capitol**, for the 1965 NSW TOSA Convention.

Ian had a great sense of humour and interspersed his playing with a joke here and there. He had a unique rhythmic style of playing which kept everybody tapping toes and loving his music, whether it be popular or classical.

Ian was born in **Melbourne** on 12th March, 1917. He took piano lessons from his mother at an early age, progressing to tuition from **Miss K. Cox** for a further three years. Taking an interest in pipe organ he received lessons on the organ at **St Johns Presbyterian Church** at **Essendon**.

At age 14 he went to sea and gained experience on a variety of sailing ships, paddle vessels and steam ships.

Ian began his professional career in **Melbourne** at the **Plaza Theatre** after receiving instruction from **Lionel Corrick** who was playing at the **Regent Theatre** immediately above.

During World War II **Ian** saw active overseas service with the **RAN**. During his overseas duty he was invited to play as guest organist at the **Regal**, and **Greys Forum Theatres** in **Liverpool**. He also featured in "**Sing Song For The Forces**" at the **Bristol Theatre**, **Avenmouth** in **Wales**.

After the war **Ian** returned to the **Hoyts** circuit in **Melbourne** in 1946, starting at the **Plaza** where he stayed for two years. He spent another three years alternating between the **Regent** and **Plaza**.

1951 saw him spend twelve months touring the suburban circuit, during which he played the **Hammond** organs at the **Brunswick**, and **Albert Park Theatres**. Returning to the **Plaza** for another 18

In Celebration of the life of **Ian Malcolm Davies**



Born into this life 12th March, 1917
Born into eternal life 14th February, 2005

St Mary's Church, Waverley

2.30 pm, 17th February, 2005

months he then moved to the **Melbourne Capitol** where he remained for five years until the organ was finally shut down. It was here that he fell in love with the prettiest usherette in the place, and **Mary** became his bride and wife for life.

Ian made forty organ broadcasts over the **ABC** and could always be recognised from his theme tune *Cruising Down The River*.

After leaving **Hoyts**, **Ian** toured **Australia** and **New Zealand** with hypnotist **Franquin**, playing a **Bourne** electronic organ.

Coming to **Sydney** he worked for **Suttons** and later **Rees Wills** where he demonstrated and sold **Lowery** and **Rodgers** organs. He also had a job playing at the **Manly Hotel**.

Bondi Junction Waverley RSL Club secured his services as *Director of Entertainment*, and through **Rees Wills** the club bought a **Rodgers** organ and a **Petrof** grand piano. These have been regularly used until recently and a

number of functions have been provided for **TOSA**.

Ian did a course qualifying in the **TV School for Compering** and has appeared on both Channels 7 and 9.

Paddington RSL Club also featured **Ian** and also bought a **Rodgers** organ.

Upon the retirement of **Reginald Dixon**, **Ian** was elected *Patron* of the **NSW Division of TOSA** in 1972. He has held this position, in later years with co-patron **John Gorrie**, until now.

He has played numerous concerts for **TOSA**, including a return visit to the **Dendy Theatre** in **Melbourne**. He was also a popular artist for many years at the **Selwyn Theatre** and the **Atkinson Wurlitzer** organ.

Ian heard the legendary **Thomas Fats Waller** during a visit to the **United States** and was a great exponent of **Fat's** musical style. He also worked with the late **Roy Rene**, "**Mo**", and could rattle off many tales and sayings of the old master of comedy.

During the 1970's **Ian** was always ready to organise entertainment and act as organist and MC for **TOSA** cabarets at **Marrickville Town Hall**. He was also MC and organist for my wedding in 1971.

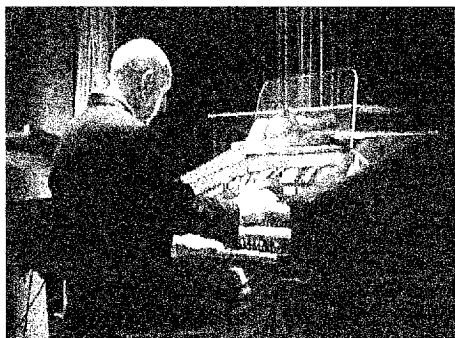
Greater Union Theatres engaged **Ian** several times to play for premieres of **Australian** movies.

During the 1960s **Ian** and I collaborated on a recording at the **Capitol Theatre** in **Sydney** which was released through the **US** company **Concert Recordings**. It was called *Australian Style* and came with a booklet called "*It's Capitol*". This was sold in **Australia** by their agent, the late **John Clancy**.

Ian is survived by his wife **Mary**, brother **Neil**, sister **Nonie**, four children and 11 grandchildren.

Goodbye, dear friend. We know you will be entertaining them in heaven, as you did for us.

Barry Tooker



Richard Marshall continues his informative series on electronic organs with this summary of the history of Thomas organs :

Organs To Remember (Part 4)

Thomas : A Tale of Engineering Leadership to a Whirlpool of Obscurity

Thomas George was a visionary engineer who really loved electronic music. After inventing a number of new musical devices and discovering the challenges of marketing and capital raising, he decided to learn from the pros. He joined *Hammond Organs* where he worked until 1943. In 1956 he felt he had his act together and founded the *Thomas Organ Company*. Together with his team of expert engineers, **Thomas George** and company created the electronic music equipment whose sound was fundamental to the definition of an era.

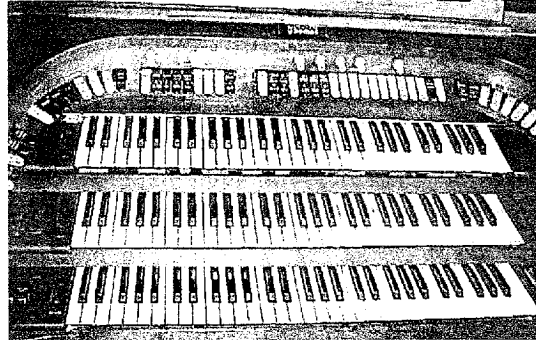
Thomas Organ Company released their first transistor organ in 1959. They were leaders in transistor musical instrument power amplifier development. They also were among the very few electronic musical instrument companies to make transistor audio power amplifiers with ratings exceeding 100 Watts per channel - during an era when audio power amplifiers seldom could put out more than a 10's of Watts.

Further increasing the usefulness of their power amplifiers, *Thomas* also developed among the first practical "soft clip" limiters so that their (already large) audio power amps could be driven at quite high average power levels and still sound OK. Even though most *Thomas* electronic organs employed internal power amplifiers and loudspeakers rather than external "tone cabinets", they were capable of sound pressure levels usually associated with external professional sound reinforcement.

Although the *Thomas* audio power amplifiers were originally designed for use in *Thomas* organs, they were also sold separately and became extremely popular (perhaps accounting for the majority of *Thomas Organ Company* profits). *Thomas* power amps were used by many of the rock and roll acts of the 60s: **The Beatles**, **The Who**, and others who did a lot of touring. (Valve or tube amplifiers may have had a nice "warm" sound, but they were unreliable, heavy, and a pain to tour with, especially if high power levels were required.)

Other *Thomas* organ technology also migrated to its stand-alone power amplifier and "guitar head" business. For example, their top of the line rock and roll guitar head

(c.a. 1965) called the "*Super Beatle*" (and used by **The Beatles**) had a three channel preamp with built-in effects. These effects included organ-like effects such as tremolo,



repeat percussion, and a variety of active "format" filters.

Some *Thomas* organ effects became separate standalone products. The *Thomas* "*Cry Baby*" *Wha-Whapedal* was among the first electric guitar "stomp boxes". Many would argue it was also the best. Prime condition *Thomas* "*Cry Baby*" pedals are now collectors items that trade for fairly serious dollars.

Despite *Thomas Organ Company* transistor power amplifiers being among the most powerful for over a decade and having their most substantial popularity in rock and roll, together with the popularity of *Thomas* effects with the same crowd, *Thomas* was curiously unsuccessful in getting *Thomas* organs into the rock and pop scenes. This was not for lack of effort on



Thomas Trianon

the part of *Thomas*. They acquired several combo organ companies and via licensing included *Moog* synthesizer components into *Thomas* organs.

Hammond, *Lowrey*, and *Farfisa* came to dominate the 60's rock scene with little marketing effort in that direction. Even *Conn*, *Rodgers*, and *Allen* had more success on the pop organ front. It could be marketed by *Thomas* to the "*Lawrence Welk* demographic" that somehow precluded potential sales to younger generations. Nonetheless, *Thomas* electronic organs were sold in vast numbers to those generations who remembered movie theatre pipe organs from their youth. Peak sales of *Thomas* organs in the early 1970s were said even to exceed *Hammond*'s.

All engineering involves trade-offs and scores of judgement calls. With respect to electronic musical instruments the balance of economy versus results, or effects versus tone generation, despite all the marketing research, focus groups, and statistical analysis, is really a crap shoot: "*You places yer bets and takes yer chances*".

Thomas electronic organs were for the most part priced at the "lower end" of the scale. When new, they "only" cost as much as an automobile or modest condominium apartment! As *Thomas* was an engineering-led organization with many engineers coming from other leading musical instrument companies, the quality of physical construction of their organs was outstanding. Typical of many **American** engineering companies of the era, the organs were designed to last 100 years or so with proper maintenance and repair. A major overhaul was expected to occur after about 50 years. This level of construction and reliability was consistent with good pianos and pipe organs of the time, not to mention other seriously engineered products such as aircraft, machine tools, and power plants.

While having really good keyboards, power amps, and physical construction, *Thomas* organs had to pick up some economies somewhere. Relative to other, usually more expensive brands, *Thomas* electronic organs had less elaborate tonal generating circuits. For example, the

manual of most *Thomas* organs usually only had stops of 8' and maybe 4' pitch.

As far as the author can tell, *Thomas* organs always used direct keying (as did many other brands, at least in part). Direct keying, while simple and robust, did not allow for much in envelope control. Sustain is possible, but control of the attack phase proves to be prohibitive.

Another economy taken by *Thomas* was frequency divider tone generation. This form of tone generation, while having some advantages, is relatively "thin" sounding in some respects. A key advantage of frequency divider tone generation (besides economy) is that it always keeps relative tune (i.e. the notes are separated by a factor of $12\sqrt{2}$ from each other), although the absolute tuning may drift. Most people are not terribly sensitive to absolute tuning (e.g. they don't care if middle A is 440 Hz or 444 Hz or something else pretty close). On the other hand, errors in relative tuning quickly become irritating, even if non-musicians often cannot identify it. Of course, the tuning of frequency divider instruments is much easier since once one has one note in tune, the rest of the notes are automatically in the right place. Usually one just turns a knob until middle A is within 0.1 Hz of 440 Hz.

Thomas organ keyboards used AGO standard dimensions and touch. Although they were not the very best made at the time (those ones used gratuitous amounts of gold and were only found in extreme high-end equipment), *Thomas* keyboards had (and still maintain) a nice feel with good initial



Thomas Celebrity

resistance and a crisp action. Very few new keyboards manufactured today have actions this good. It should be noted that although *Thomas* did not use gold in their keyboards, they did use large amounts of silver. I've seen several *Thomas* organs being sold for less than their silver value alone. One would hope these organs are sold either for use or for conversion to MIDI and not destined for the scrap metal recovery!

Similar to many other electronic organs of the era, *Thomas* "full size" pedal boards are flat radiating of 25 notes. Like all those not made specifically for classical organ music, they are monophonic. This style of pedal board was introduced by *Hammond* in part for economy. *Hammond* noted the upper few notes of a full 32 note pedal board were hardly used and very few organists played more than one pedal at a time, so he removed the capability! The one musical advantage of analog, monophonic pedal boards is that they usually use a different, independent form of tone generation, similar to an analog synthesizer, that expands the range of sound available from the instrument. *Thomas* took advantage of this architecture

as well.

The *Thomas Organ Company's* engineers were always strong on effects. While inventing plenty of their own such as "Vibra-Magic" (an interesting form of delayed vibrato), a multivibrator-controlled modulator "Percussion" system, and a variety of active filters, they did not hesitate to purchase the rights to good ideas from other companies. *Thomas* organs (even the smaller models) came to incorporate genuine *Leslie* speaker systems and *Moog* synthesizers.

The company bought the *Moog* Satellite synthesizer design in 1970 and sold it in impressive numbers of organs between 1970-1973. The royalties from this deal permitted *Moog Music* to sell themselves to *Norlin* for a few million dollars (back when this was real money, not just the price of a quite ordinary house!). *Thomas* then sold themselves to *Whirlpool* around the same time period. (One wonders what the management of *Whirlpool* could have been thinking ... *Leslie* technology for their front loaders?!)

After this *Thomas Organ Company* lingered on as a subsidiary of *Whirlpool*. It produced organs until 1979. By this time, the economic consequences of *America's* lost war in *Southeast Asia* were becoming painfully apparent - expensive entertainment devices were quickly losing popularity. *Whirlpool* shut the company down in 1980 in what was to become among the first in a long list of *American* organ companies to go down the drain.

The Wall Street Journal on the History of Pipe Organs in America

Recently *The Wall Street Journal* carried an article, entitled "America Is Pulling Out All the Stops for Pipe Organs", which was written by *Barbara Jepson* and was about an increase in interest in pipe organs. Here is part of what was written :

For a while, pipe organs in concert halls were a particularly endangered species: In 1958, the 6,000-pipe *E. M. Skinner Organ* in *Severance Hall* was walled off by a stage shell and only audible through speakers. In 1976, when *Lincoln Center* undertook an acoustical "improvement" of the former *Philharmonic Hall*, it blithely removed its 5,000-pipe *Aeolian-Skinner Organ*.

But the worst blow of all was the replacement, beginning in the 1940s, of many historic organs by cheaper electronic imitations that render organ masterpieces with roller-rink uniformity and bloated sonic blasts.

That change, coupled with declines in church building, led pipe organ production to drop 55% from 1979 to 1997, when 100 organs were installed by North American builders.

Now several developments have spurred renewed interest in the king of instruments, and a modest turnaround among high-end builders has begun.

French Romantic style organs, which can hold up against a symphony orchestra in full throttle, are making a comeback.

They've been installed or refurbished during the flurry of concert hall building and renovation of the last several years, and they're a vast improvement over their shrill, thin-toned, *Baroque*-style predecessors.

At the same time, a small but growing number of churches, many of which present public recitals, are purchasing pipe organs in the \$1 million to \$2 million range. (The median cost of a new organ is \$300,000 for an instrument with about 1,500 pipes, slightly larger than average.)

"I've played organs that are hundreds of years old," says *Andrew Gingery*, project director at the *Fisk Organ Company*, "and the people who built them still speak to me."

AUSTRALIA'S MOST HISTORIC WURLITZER ORGAN

by
Alan Glover



The 1917 Wurlitzer at 'Montana', Geelong
(Photo: John Maidment)

When considering the theatre organ, so generic is the name Wurlitzer that it is almost as hard to imagine there being a Mr Wurlitzer as would be the idea of, say, a Mr Engidaire. One simply speaks of 'The Wurlitzer'. Yet there were several builders of theatre organs in America, while in England there were Compton, Christie as well as five others in a minor way and at least four on the Continent. Wurlitzer, however, reigned supreme despite being the most expensive, and it is generally acknowledged that the finest (though not the largest) theatre installation was the 4 manual 36 rank Wurlitzer of the Paramount, New York.

The family history is interesting. It goes back to the Middle Ages when a nobleman who owned most of the land around the village of Wurlitz in Saxony sent one of his men to be overseer of his other large estates some distance away. This overseer became known as the man from Wurlitz, or the Wurlitzer. Eventually he adopted this as his surname. A similar instance was that of the leading German violin bow maker, a man from Nuremberg, who became Herr Nuremberger. Adding er to one's place of origin to form a surname was not unusual in Germany.

The first Wurlitzer descendant who made a musical instrument was Nicolaus, born in 1659. He became a lute maker. From that time on, each generation of the family either made or dealt in musical instruments in Saxony and, later, America. The American connection began when Rudolph Wurlitzer migrated in 1852 and went to Cincinnati. He sent the first money he saved from his earnings as a bank clerk to his father in Germany and ordered some musical instruments. Violins, clarinets and flutes arrived in 1856.

He built up a prosperous business dealing in these instruments and sent for his younger brother Anton to join him. Rudolph gave up being a bank clerk. Instrument making followed and during the American Civil War the firm made and supplied drums, bugles and trumpets to the government for use by the Union forces.

Passing over the period when Wurlitzer imported coin operated instruments and pianos from Leipzig, the most important development for the firm was its acquiring the patents and equipment of the Elmira plant established by Robert Hope Jones who had migrated from England in 1903. While it is not intended here to discuss the contribution to organ building of this contentious figure, the fact is that his promotion of such ideas as extended and unified ranks on high wind pressure, rapid electro pneumatic action, second touch, pizzicato touch, his diaphone stop, convenient 'horseshoe' console layout for stop tabs, was to lead to the production of the Wurlitzer organ, originally known as the Wurlitzer Hope Jones Unit Orchestra. Undeniably Hope Jones was a clever inventor but he was no business man and it was this lack of business acumen that forced him to sell out to Wurlitzer who put him on their pay roll. By 1914, however, the brothers had lost patience with Hope Jones who would delay production while he thought up improvements for the instruments. Disheartened by his sacking, he committed suicide. In the meantime, after the first theatre installation, which was at the Cort Theatre, Chicago, in 1911, the call for these instruments increased with the burgeoning silent film business.

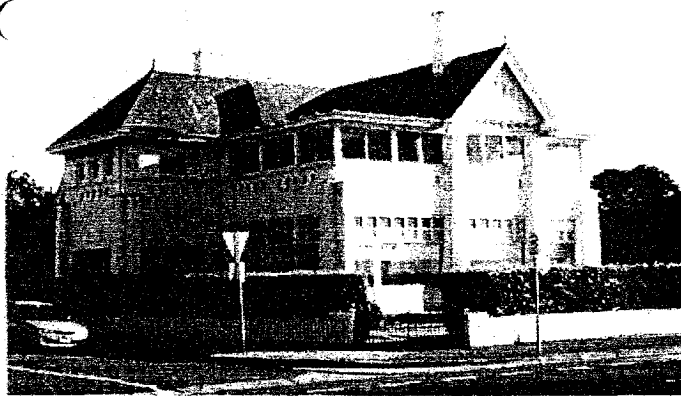
Rather than comparing the theatre organ with other organs, it is more appropriate to consider the former's designed purpose. The instrument was intended through various effects and suitable music to add realism to the silent film. It could also provide light musical entertainment for patrons. These functions it fulfilled admirably until, with the advent of sound to film in 1928, the theatre organ became basically redundant. However, particularly in Britain and Australia it remained a popular feature during 'lights up' and on radio. It has a large following today, even though few of the instruments are in their original location.

In Australia, most theatre organs arrived in the 1920s and were installed in prestige metropolitan picture theatres. However, the earliest and therefore the most historic, which is the main subject of this article, is the demonstration Wurlitzer imported early in 1917 by W. A. Crowle of Sydney, who had been appointed sole Australian representative for Wurlitzer. It was their first organ shipped anywhere from North America and it remains one of their two or three oldest intact organs. Incidentally, Opus 1, a 6 rank instrument of 1911, is still in its original private home.

Crowle had the 2 manual 7 rank Wurlitzer installed in his Rose Bay home where it was frequently demonstrated to prospective picture theatre owners. As built, it did not have a tibia rank, this not being specified for the smaller early Wurlitzers. Subsequently, a beautiful 1922 tibia was added to this organ. The present specification is as follows: diapason (unleathered) 16, 8, 4; flute 16, 8, 4, 2; dulciana 8, 4; salicional 16 (ten. c) 8, 4; viol celeste 8, 4; oboe horn 8; vox humana 8; tibia 8, 4, 2, 2^{1/2}; chimes, glockenspiel, chrysoglott, xylophone. Tremulants - main, vox humana, tibia. The organ is equipped with its original player attachment which was restored in 1984. While always acclaimed for its tonal refinement, there is surprising 'bite' when the oboe horn is added in chorus.

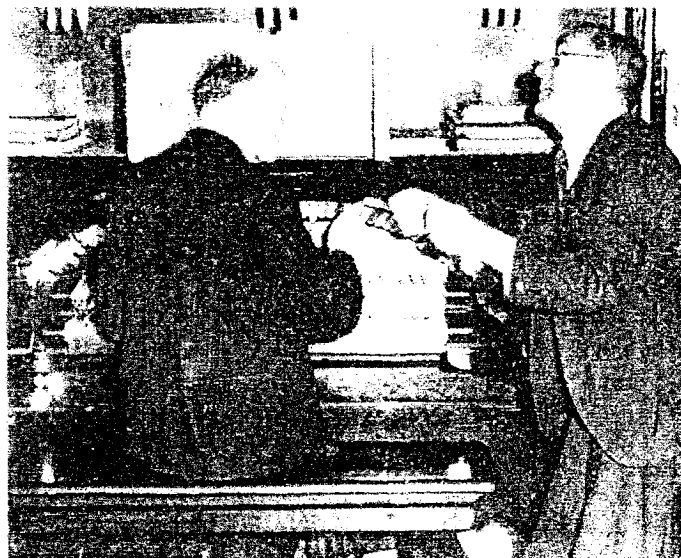
For ten years the organ served its demonstration purpose. In late 1927, Oswald Charles Hearne, a well known Geelong citizen, visited Sydney to play this organ. He had decided to retire as a church organist, having played in various churches since 1903 when, as a medical student at Melbourne University, he was the first organist at the recently completed College Church, Parkville. He was a pupil of William Steele of The Scots Church, Melbourne. Mr Hearne's long held dream was to install a pipe organ in his Geelong home 'Montana'. So impressed was he by the Crowle organ that he offered to purchase it. On being told that one of similar specification could be ordered, Mr Hearne, rightly said that similar tone could not be guaranteed and he was able to persuade Crowle to sell. A 10 rank Wurlitzer was installed to replace it.

On returning to Geelong, Oswald Hearne had an architect designed chamber built at first floor level for the organ to play into the spacious two storey hall. In May 1928, Eustace Dodd and Lancelot Smith arrived from Sydney to install the organ which had come by sea in nine large crates. They completed their task in four weeks, and when finally Mr Hearne was able to play the organ, he felt that it sounded even better than when with Crowle.



'Montana', residence of O.C. Hearne, Geelong

Over the twenty two years until Oswald Hearne's death in 1950, his Wurlitzer was played by many organists and heard by vast numbers, it being the first residence organ in Australia to be broadcast, through ABC station 3LO in 1930 and 3GL Geelong. Functions for various charities were held at 'Montana', particularly during the war years, and the organ was the focal point for both solo and accompaniment purposes.



Dr A.E. Floyd at the console with Oswald Hearne

The organ remained in 'Montana' for fifty one years after Mr Hearne's death, and it was classified by the National Trust (Vic.) in 1992. Steve Laurie in 1985 had regulated some ranks and modified the rather keen tone of the string stops. The writer enjoyed many hours playing the type of music for which this organ is well suited.

Following the death in 2001 of Patricia Glover, daughter of Mr and Mrs Hearne, the organ was removed prior to the sale of the property. Rather than placing the organ on the open market where a purchaser might alter it at the cost of its Trust classification, the trustees of the O. C. Hearne estate agreed that it could be donated to The Geelong College to be placed in the proposed 250 seat auditorium of the new Music Performing Arts Centre to be completed in 2005. The school has expressed great pleasure at acquiring the organ, and the architect has designed a suitable chamber. The team which removed the organ from the house was led by Julien Arnold of the Theatre Organ Society, who has agreed to take charge of the reinstallation. No one in Australia knows more about the workings of the Wurlitzer organ than Julien. The Geelong organ is currently stored at his engineering works at Mentone. John McLennan, also of TOSA, has done a complete re-leathering. It is intended that the organ will be presented to the school in first class condition.

The instrument has the following ranks:

- Diapason 16.8.4
- Flute 16.8.4.2
- Dulciana 8.4
- Tibia Clausa 8.4.2 (added later ex Lyceum Theatre, Duluth, Minnesota)
- Salicional 16 TC.8
- Viol Celeste 8.4
- Oboe Horn 8
- Vox Humana 8

The specification reads

SOLO		ACCOMPANIMENT	
Bass (Diapason)	16	Contra Viol TC	16
Contra Viol (TC) (From *)	16	Bourdon TC	16
Bourdon	16	Open Diapason	8
Open Diapason	8	Tibia Clausa	8
Tibia Clausa	8	Oboe Horn	8
Oboe Horn	8	Salicional	8
Salicional *	8	Viol Celeste TC	8
Viol Celeste (TC)	8	Flute	8
Flute	8	Vox Humana	8
Vox Humana	8	Dulciana	8
Dulciana	8	Octave	4
Octave (Diapason)	4	Tibia	4
Tibia	4	Salicet	4
Salicet	4	Viol Celeste	4
Viol Celeste	4	Flute	4
Flute	4	Dulcet	4
Dulcet	4	Chrysoglott	
Piccolo (Flute)	2		
Tibia	2	PEDAL	
Twelfth (Tibia)	2 2/3	Bass 16 (Diapason)	16
Tierce	1 3/5	Bourdon 16 TC	16
Compass 61/32		Open Diapason	8
Detached stopkey console		Cello (Salicional)	8
Electro pneumatic action		Flute	8
Solo to Pedal		Dulciana	8

Balanced electro pneumatic swell pedal
Tremulants. Main Vox Humana. Tibia.
Chimes. Chrysoglott, Xylophone, Glockenspiel

Theatre Organ SOCIETY of AUSTRALIA (Vic) Div. INC)

“Eh, What’s Up Doc?”

Why it's the "Eggstavaganza" Convention of Theatre Organ Music in Melbourne, Easter 2005, our own Easter Parade of Theatre Organ Stars. Highlights of this Bunny Convention will be -



- ✓ Local Bunnies *Gail Dibben & Scott Harrison* will reopen the refurbished Moorabbin Wurlitzer, complete with its new computer system and beautifully restored console, now one of the most elegant in the world.
- ✓ Out of Town Bunnies *David Bailey & Elizabeth Hanton* continue at Moorabbin with more exciting sounds from this wonderful organ which has been hiding in its burrow for some time.
- ✓ You wouldn't have to be 'Blind Freddie' to know that *Richard Hore* is New Zealand's best Theatre Organ Bunny, and will amaze you at Malvern Town Hall as he does it - *as Richard says - 'by feel alone'.*
- ✓ If one bunny is bad enough, try this for size - *Tony Fenelon & John Atwell!* Even the best myxomatosis couldn't stop this pair!
- ✓ Classical Organ Bunny *Thomas Heywood* will star at Malvern to bring you classical organ as you've never heard it before, in the best tradition of Virgil Fox and Carlo Curley.
- ✓ Local Bunny *Leith Ewart* teams up with the Singing Bunny *Robert Dugdale* (who astounded us at the Capitol 80th Anniversary) at Malvern, with the guest appearance of a Surprise Easter Bunny!
- ✓ Adelaide's Photographic Bunny *John Thiele* will present one of his amazing slide shows of theatre organ history. Forget those boring slide shows the neighbours used to invite you to - this is the real thing, just as you would see in his Regent Replica Home Theatre in Adelaide.
- ✓ Who else but Country Bunny John 'Fergophone' Ferguson together with the Eight Rabbit Mike Mckee Octet for a good old fashioned Dinner Dance. Even if you don't dance (*like me*) you can still sit, eat, drink and enjoy Big Band and Theatre Organ. You'd have to go to Blackpool to get better.
- ✓ 'Silent' Bunny John Giacchi plays a concert and silent movie on our own Dendy Wurlitzer, Australia's first 'big' theatre organ.
- ✓ You think you have the best home organ? Well stand aside. American Bunny Rob Richards is awaiting delivery of his own 5 manual 'Walker' digital touring organ - the largest of its kind in the world. Rob has just completed over 3,000 performances since 1999 at Disney's 'El Capitan' Theatre in Hollywood on the former Fox San Francisco Wurlitzer, an outstanding record in itself. This guy's not just an incredible musician but an out and out theatre organ enthusiast - and we'll have him here at Easter!
- ✓ What better way to wind things up than with another pair of Young Bunnies, Chris McPhee & Robert Wetherall at Moorabbin.
- ✓ Visit Howard Terrill's 2/12 home Wurlitzer installation at Heathcote in the heart of Bunnyland in rural Victoria
- ✓ Bring plenty of gold coins and expect to be fined for Unbunny Activities, the proceeds of which will go to the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal, and help Little Bunnykins less fortunate than ourselves.
- ✓ As for me, I'll be your Master Bunny of Ceremonies for the weekend, so anything could happen!

**Don't Be A Belated Bunny! Don't rabbit on, egg 'em on and hop in to book now for
'Extravaganza 2005'**

Visit our website at www.vicnet.net.au/~organ for more details, or phone our Treasurer Ken (*the man in charge of Bunny Money*) on 03 9569 8304.

(note that Coburg events have been moved to Malvern)

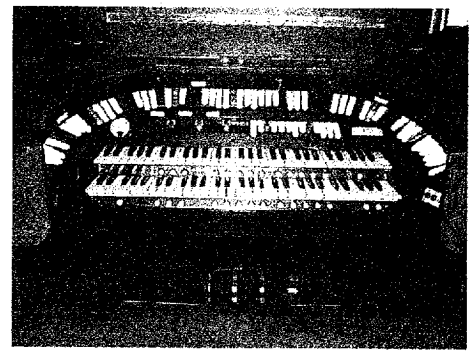
*Jo-ann Stenton & David Johnston
(Bunny Masters on behalf of the Convention Committee Bunnies)*

EPPING CHRISTMAS FUNCTION: 5-12-04

Review by Wendy Hambly

What a delight it was to play the *Epping Christie* once again. Everyone enjoyed the variety provided by the players. We made good use of the piano available, too and some rollicking duets were played. In fact we enjoyed ourselves so much, time seemed to slip away and the afternoon concluded well after 5pm. Listeners included **Rich and Debra Marschall, Colin Groves, Edna Hambly, Neil Palmer, Rob Gliddon**, to name just a few.

Following is a very quick summary of the players and some of the songs they played:



John Batts - a Christmas selection including *Jingle Bells* with *Jingle Bell Rock*, also a **Latin American** selection.



Ron Ivin - *When You Wish Upon a Star* (with glock).



Wendy Hambly - *By Strauss, You Ought to See Sally on Sunday*.



Frank Lewis - *The Way You Look Tonight*.
Rod Blackmore - *Perhaps Love, Phantom of the Opera*



Peter Wilkinson - *Puttin' on the Ritz, Angels from the Realms of Glory, First Nowell, We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.



Deirdre McMullen - *I Only Have Eyes for You, Ebb Tide*. This was **Deirdre's** first time on a theatre pipeorgan and everyone thought she performed very well indeed.



Tom Barber - *Change Partners, It's a Great Day for the Irish* (including the seldom heard verse), also a modern tune for *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'm Confessing* (I'm falling in love with you); *All Alone Monday* (from *The Ramblers*); *Nagasaki* (**Tom's** version).



Graham Costin - *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, Love me Tender, Love me True, Please, Live for Life*.



Deirdre and Wendy at the *Christie* console



Walter Pearce - *When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day, Delilah, Did I Remember, Did you Ever See a Dream Walking, Ding Dong the Witch is Dead* (*Wizard of Oz*).



Jack McDonald - *New York, New York, Makin' Whoopee, Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime*.

As you can see, we had an afternoon of great variety. **Wendy** had set some general pistons for us all to use and we had a great time swapping ideas and assisting each other in a very relaxed atmosphere. I know everyone would enjoy an event such as this again. Opportunities to play this lovely *Christie* are few and far between. Thanks to **Rob Gliddon and John Andrews** and the **Church** for making this instrument available to us.

Photos by **Deirdre**; Text by **Wendy**

Christopher Wrench at Sydney Town Hall

On Tuesday November 2, **Sydney Town Hall** was the venue for another lunch-time recital played by a visiting organist, this time **Christopher Wrench** from **Queensland**. I like listening to this very **Victorian** but **English** instrument.

At its opening in 1890 it was the largest organ in the world, and with 5 manuals and 126 speaking stops it still rates as a "mighty." The pipe total (almost 9,000) may not be impressive when compared to the **Wanamaker Grand Court** organ [the store now called "**Lord and Taylor**"] in downtown **Philadelphia** with its 29,000+ pipes, or to the not-so-distant **Midmer-Losh** organ in **Atlantic City, NJ**.

Nonetheless, the way this **William Hill** organ speaks into the main auditorium at the **Town Hall** from a shallow disposition of enclosed and open pipes - the casework takes up the whole width and height of the west end - including the 64' Contra Trombone rank on the pedals, gives a good account of the richness and diversity of the pipework.

This recital offered a pleasing mix of old and new, opening with a short item by **Hermann Schroeder** (d. 1984), "*Praeamble IV*". This was followed by a theme and variations work of programme music by **Australian Colin Brumby** (b. 1933) called *Capt. Logan's Fancy*. **Logan** was once governor of the **Moreton Bay** penal colony, so the twelve variations were titled with suggestive phrases like: "*On the Sunny River Bank*", "*By Brisbane Waters*", and more sinisterly: "*Moundering (sic) underneath the Clay*". Further, there were emotive musical moments for "*In Chains*", "*Flogging*", "*Penal Stations*", "*Places of Condemnation*", "*Former*

Suffering", and the finale "*From Bondage We Are Liberated*".

From the console microphone **Wrench** called this "a guided tour of the organ," but as I suggested to him afterwards, there was no guide as such, just a chance for the organist to explore a variety of different, often smaller, sounds.

The final item for the first session was the lively "*Prelude and Fugue in G*" by **Marcel Dupré**, where the fugal subject seems to echo the syllabic rhythm, of "Mar—cel Du—pre Mar—cel Du—pre", etc. **Lew Williams** has played this work on the theatre-organ circuit as his classical offering.

After 30 minutes' break, **Wrench** continued with a stalwart organ piece, **Franz Liszt's** "*Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H*", a tribute piece using the motif of the notes B^b, A, C, and B (once referred to as H). Fistfuls of notes here at times and compositional complexity for a satisfying musical experience.

A couple of new (to me) items were offered next - **French** period pieces very much in keeping with the **Hill** organ. From *Trois Pièces* (1893) by **Gabriel Pierné** (not a typo for "**Vierne**", but a fellow once organist of **St. Clothilde, Paris**). **Wrench** played first the "*Prelude*" - noisy but showing the influence of **César Franck** - and then a gentle "*Cantilene*" which wandered agreeably via soloed melodies over string accompaniment (and heavy pedal!). The latter was notable for lush harmony in the **Victorian/French** style.

Finally we were sent away happy with tidy playing of another *tour de force*, **Louis Vierne's** "*Carillon de Westminster*" from *24 Pièces de*

Fantasia.

So we had had in total not much over sixty minutes of very acceptable organ music for the lunch 'crowd' - not quite the right term because these lunch-time events seldom attract more than about 140 people, despite free admission. "Go figure" as our **Americans** say! These presentations are somewhat dramatic because the pipe-work and organ case are bathed in coloured light - in fact, it is not unlike the appearance of many a theatre organ console, in that there is much use of gold leaf highlighting the overall scheme of cream paint-work on the wood.

This vaguely super-cinema impression is enhanced by the presence of six faux marble columns among the pipes. Above and behind the pipes was the glow of sky-blue lighting on the rear wall, highlighting the eight small, wooden, octagonal cupolas sitting atop the organ case, and doing just enough to remind this listener of an atmospheric cinema, even though no **Spanish** courtyard beneath the stars was intended!

Perhaps the theatricality was enhanced by the attire of the organist who appeared in grey trousers but with a wine-coloured, glittery shirt - perhaps **Liberace** did not play in vain! That irreverent thought may also explain the performer's excessive bowing to the audience after each piece. However, the ever-present page-turner hovering on one side or another, and occasionally helping with registration changes, as he pulled out or pushed in various stop-knobs, totally offset any lingering suspicion that one was in the nearby **State Theatre** with its **Wurlitzer** rather than in **Sydney Town Hall**.

©jsb/11/2004

Our Next Artist : David Bailey

Being only 22, **David Bailey** is one of the few younger organists making an appearance around **Brisbane**. His interest in theatre organs has taken **David** into an exclusive niche in the local music scene.

David began formal study of the piano in 1993 and continued studying piano and theory until 1997. In this time he attained numerous certificates from the **Australian Music Examinations Board**. After discovering the theatre organ in 1997 **David** also studied electronic organ for one year.

Following this, **David** studied classical organ for one year with the organist of the **Holy Trinity Church** in **Brisbane**. He has continued his study of the classical organ under **Christopher Wrench**, lecturer for organ at the **Queensland Conservatorium**.

David performs regularly for **TOSA Qld** on their 3/11 **Christie** theatre organ and for **TOSA Gold Coast** on their **Rodgers** theatre organ, both for meetings and in concert. **David** also makes appearances at many other organ clubs around **Brisbane**. He has also performed at several **TOSA National Conventions** in recent years.

Besides his activities for **TOSA**, in the past two years **David** has entertained audiences at **Brisbane's Regent Theatre** before features at the **International Film Festival**. Large audiences attended these sessions, resulting in thousands of people experiencing a glimpse of the **Regent's** former glory. **David** has also played **Hammond** organ stylings to huge crowds of his own generation as a support act for the well known DJ group 'The Avalanches'.

David takes an enormous personal interest in theatre organs and their history. It is his enthusiasm for the instrument which has resulted in what is currently the only permanent theatre organ installation in a **Brisbane** picture theatre. **David** now resides at the organ of the 400 seat main house of the **Balmoral Cineplex**. Here, large appreciative audiences are treated to live theatre organ music every week and **David** is proving that organ music is still a crowd-pleaser.

David hopes to continue his music studies into the future and his plans also include silent movie accompaniment and using the organ for dancing.

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Do you have friends who have never attended a TOSA Concert?

This invitation is for them :

Invitation

If you have never been to a **TOSA Theatre Organ Concert** before, here is your chance to hear one of **Australia's** finest young Theatre Organists, **David Bailey**.

The time: **2pm on Sunday 24th April**. The place: **Marrickville Town Hall**

Cut out and post this form, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to :-

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DAVID BAILEY CONCERT
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL
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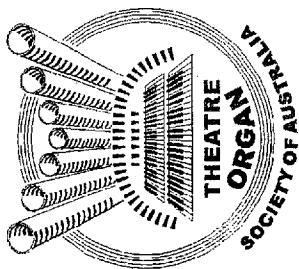
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