

TOSA NEWS

June/July 2017
Volume 56 No.5

Price: \$2.00

Justin has arrived down under

*TOSA's World of Entertainment
brings you*

Justin Stahl USA

on his first Australian Tour
playing

**The Mighty Wurlitzer
Unit Orchestra**

Sunday 18th June 2017

Orion Centre Theatre

155 Beamish Street, Campsie

2:00pm - 4:30pm

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President



From the Secretary.

Hello all, Geoff is still offline caring for Ruth, however it was a pleasure to see them both again at our June committee meeting at St Columb's. Ruth is still in fine spirit and keeping Geoff on his toes.

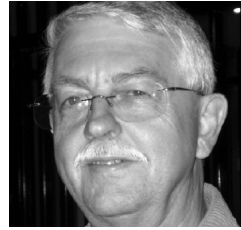
Remember that on Sunday 18 June we have our first visiting artist for the year. **Justin Stahl** comes to us from the home of many fine USA theatre organs and organists - Indianapolis. He is an excellent musician and you are sure to enjoy his theatre organ style. His wife Lora is accompanying Justin on this their first journey to Australia.

Justin played his first concert of the tour last Sunday on the Christie Cinema Organ in Brisbane and the feedback is that it was a fabulous afternoon of entertainment.

Looking forward to seeing you all and your family and friends at Campsie on 18 June.

See you soon!
Craig Keller

Editorial



Hello Members,

An article about developing younger theatre organists is particularly relevant for TOSA to survive into the future.

I hope you enjoy the article about the Fox Theatre, Brooklyn USA. It was built during the halcyon days of movie palace expansion in the 1920s.

The Wurlitzer organ that was in the theatre was one of five known as "Fox Specials," the others being installed in Fox theatres in St. Louis, Detroit, and San Francisco, and in the Paramount Theatre in Manhattan. While the other "Fox Specials" had 36 ranks of pipes, the organ for the Brooklyn Fox had 37 ranks, due to the addition of a Concert Flute Celeste.

As my wife and I are taking a holiday during June July the next TOSA News will be the August edition. The next concert is not until September so if you haven't received your new membership card in this issue it will be included in the August issue.

I hope to see you at the Orion on June 18th to hear an organist who will help the Theatre Organ World to continue for the future.

Enjoy the music,

Ernie Vale
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235
editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



Good Home Wanted for M100 Hammond Tonewheel Organ

Well cared for organ with recent service. Still operational. Make an offer. Funds go to brain cancer research.

Located in Thirroul (northern Wollongong). Contact Donna Bennett 0402 088 522



Membership Cards

Thank you to those members who have already renewed their TOSA membership for the next financial year. You will receive your membership card in this issue of TOSA News if receiving it by mail. For those receiving TOSA News by email your card will be posted to you. If you renew membership early this week you can pick up your card at the Justin Stahl concert at the Orion next Sunday.

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

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

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor editor@tosa.net.au

or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322

SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

Member News

Our Treasurer, John Wall has unfortunately suffered a mild stroke recently and is currently undertaking rehabilitation. John is progressing quite well to date and is currently in Sutherland Hospital. President Geoff has stepped in to look after Treasurer duties for the time being.

TOSA send our best wishes to John and hope that his condition continues to improve with the rehab program.

To Watch Out for

Justin Stahl has arrived down under and played his first concert of his tour in Brisbane last Sunday. TOSA look forward to seeing you at the Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie next Sunday.

In 2018 TOSA NSW will be celebrating the **50th** anniversary of the opening of the Marrickville Wurlitzer in Marrickville Town Hall. TOSA NSW will also be celebrating the **30th** anniversary of the opening of the Orion Wurlitzer at the Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie.

Overseas artists for 2018
Rob Richards has just been confirmed to tour Australia commencing in February 2018 and will play the Orion Wurlitzer. Also touring are **Simon Gledhill** playing the Orion Wurlitzer in November and **Dave Wickerham** will tour - date and venue to be confirmed.

It is going to be an exciting year in 2018 and a wonderful time for you to be a member of TOSA.

Please see the membership renewal form included in this TOSA News. Membership is due before June 30th each year to retain the priveleges that membership offers.

Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

**Members' Playing Dates
The Orion Theatre Campsie
2nd Thursday Morning
10:30am to 1:30pm**

**July 13th
August 10th
Convenor is**

Craig Keller on 0418484798

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

**June 26th
July 24th**

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

Players and listeners welcome.

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

Future Theatre Organists

One of the traditions that the various TOSA divisions have developed is to support up and coming theatre organists – both locally and internationally.

In Australia we have heard, in relatively recent years, the likes of **Chris McPhee, David Bailey, Ryan Heggie, Mathew Loeser** and **Debbie Fitzsummons**. From overseas shores, we have experienced **Richard Hills, Simon Gledhill, Donnie Rankin, and David Gray**.

In a few weeks TOSA NSW audiences, and other divisions, will continue this tradition and experience a theatre organist who is on his first tour of Australia – **Justin Stahl**.

Prior to my wife, Debra, and I going to our first ATOS Convention in 2014 at Indianapolis, the various TOSA Presidents asked me to “keep an eye and ear out” for new artists who may have touring capability. So, armed with that idea off we headed.

It was on day one of the convention, at a concert on the magnificent Barton at Warren Performing Arts Centre that we heard **Justin Stahl** play. Both Deb and I said “YES! This one’s great.” **Justin’s** concert was a wonderful blend of more traditional pieces such as the standards, medleys including “Gypsy” and some more recent tunes. One was a complete surprise being “Africa” a tune recorded by the band Toto in the year Justin was born - 1982. Boy did I feel old – I was in year 10 in 1982!

We were very impressed by his clever blending of theatre organ for all of his tunes. **Justin** is musically trained and works as a high school choral teacher and his musicality comes through in his outstanding use of harmony and counterpoint. He’s also been a band leader with the US Army Marines and had tutelage from expert organists such as Martin Ellis which shows in his playing.

Justin has been the resident organist for the Christmas Concert series at Indianapolis’ Hilbert Circle Theatre for over six years now and he also performs various concerts throughout the USA each year.

I really hope you can come along to see and hear this exciting new theatre organist from the USA and help continue the tradition of Australian audiences supporting up and coming artists. **Justin** plays your Wurlitzer at Campsie Orion Theatre on Sunday 18 June at 2:00pm.

Later in the year we will see the return to TOSA NSW audiences of another exciting USA theatre organist. In fact he's probably played more in Australia and New Zealand in recent years than any other USA theatre organist. That's Nathan Avakian.

We saw Nathan the first time in 2010 on his first tour when he played at Campsie. During that concert, he introduced us to his involvement in the International Youth Silent Film Festival (IYSFF) – a role he continues to this day and he has been to Australia every year since. He goes to Adelaide each time to play for the festival and accompany live the movies made by South Australian youth.

In recent years Melbourne and New Zealand have also been added to the schedule and Nathan plays those events too.

This year we've been able to combine Nathan's IYSFF visit with an Australian concert tour and he will be playing the Marrickville Wurlitzer for us on November 5. Sadly there is no Sydney round of the IYSFF but Nathan may include one or two short youth made silent films in his presentation. Nathan is sure to revel in the delights of playing Australia's Biggest Little Wurlitzer.

Fortunately ATOS is actively supporting the up and coming young artists by conducting the Young Theatre Organist of the Year competition – which has been won in previous years by a some of the younger theatre organists mentioned in my first paragraph. The competition continues and I can assure you that there is some excellent new talent "in the wings" who we hope to bring to you over the next few years. For some of the new players we have to wait while they undertake their college studies (in music – remarkably) before they can commit the time to undertake an Australia/New Zealand tour.

In the meantime, please come along and support the younger players as they are an important part of the future of theatre organs – both in Australia and elsewhere.

Craig Keller, Secretary TOSA NSW

Time to renew your TOSA membership

A membership renewal form is enclosed or you can download one from the TOSA Web Site www.tosa.net.au

How much fun could you have..

Imagine the fun you could have with Allen's new Historique II™ in your home!

The console is 50% smaller than other two manual organs with comparable stop lists, and its price is surprisingly "petite" at less than \$20,000.00!

With 9 complete stop lists and 10 different sampled reverbs, its versatility is huge! And, the most impressive thing about the HISTORIQUE II is that it's an Allen through-and-through with the sound and construction quality you expect from the company that produced the world's first digital organ!



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Show & Membership Prices

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

All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status

All Children FREE accompanied by an Adult

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

First time Adult \$20 cash by completed Voucher at Box Office

Annual Membership Fees 2017-18:

\$45.00 Full membership, \$35.00 Pensioner Concession, Inter-state or Overseas \$45. \$5 discount per membership if TOSA
News emailed to you

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman
(02) 4776 2192 membership@tosa.net.au

**An excerpt
written by TOSA Member Allan Youle
from a newspaper column**

*This was included with the photos
received recently from Allan's Daughter*

Mr Allan Youle, of 1, Goddings Drive, Rochester, read with interest my note last week about the theatre organ at the Ritz Cinema, Chatham, which manager Mr. A. Gray hopes to bring back into use with the aid of some keen local musician.

He writes, however, that the instrument deserves more mention and gives details about it, and appears to be something of an authority on the subject.

The organ, Mr Youle says, is a three-manual, eight-rank Wurlitzer, which was played for the first time in 1937, by Harold Ramsey. Since then many organists have been featured on it, the most recent being the well-known local organist, George Blackmore.

Mr. Gray invited enthusiasts (able to play) to try their skill on the Ritz organ ... Mr. Youle goes a step further.

"If any reader interested in theatre organ would care to further that interest, he can do so by writing to meand I will supply details of societies which for a very moderate subscription provide magazines, meetings and recitals and enough information to keep even the keenest enthusiast happy," he writes.

Out stops!

All Organs Demonstration at Orion Concert

There will be a demonstration at the Orion Centre Theatre in the foyer next Sunday June 18th by All Organs Australia Pty Limited of the **Allen Historique II** organ by a young experienced organist. Jim Clinch and Godelieve Ghavalas from All Organs will be in attendance to answer any questions about this recently released model.



Yamaha AR-100 Organ For Sale

This one owner instrument was bought new in 2007, and has been maintained in mint condition.

Excellent realistic voices and a superbly elegant cabinet for that traditional organ appearance. Easy to operate control panel, with all functions to hand.

Registration menu offering instant access to 384 professionally-developed registrations. Flute volume controls give total flexibility for organ sounds. Organ variations for Theatre, Jazz, Electronic and Classical Voicing. Additional specialist organ voices for ultimate realism. Six tremolo variations for total control. 160 new orchestrated rhythm styles to make amateurs sound like professionals.

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Powerful 340 watt amplification delivers sound with authority and clarity.

Full range of professional-quality digital effects further enhances all voices.

Comes with matching bench. Asking \$ 1,800. Ono.

I have been asked to help my elderly friend and long-time TOSA member to sell this fine instrument. Please contact me for further details. Simon Ellis 0403 548 354.

TOSA Presents

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

An Afternoon with International keyboard musician **Justin Stahl (USA)**

playing

Sydney's Premier 3 keyboard Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe
Organ

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

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

at

The Refurbished Orion Centre Theatre,
155 Beamish Street, Campsie
Sunday 18 June 2:00 – 4:30pm

Free parking behind the theatre & good public transport access see
www.tosa.net.au

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

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

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

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

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

Book securely at www.tosa.net.au/events trybooking

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

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

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

First time patrons \$20 by Voucher at the Box Office

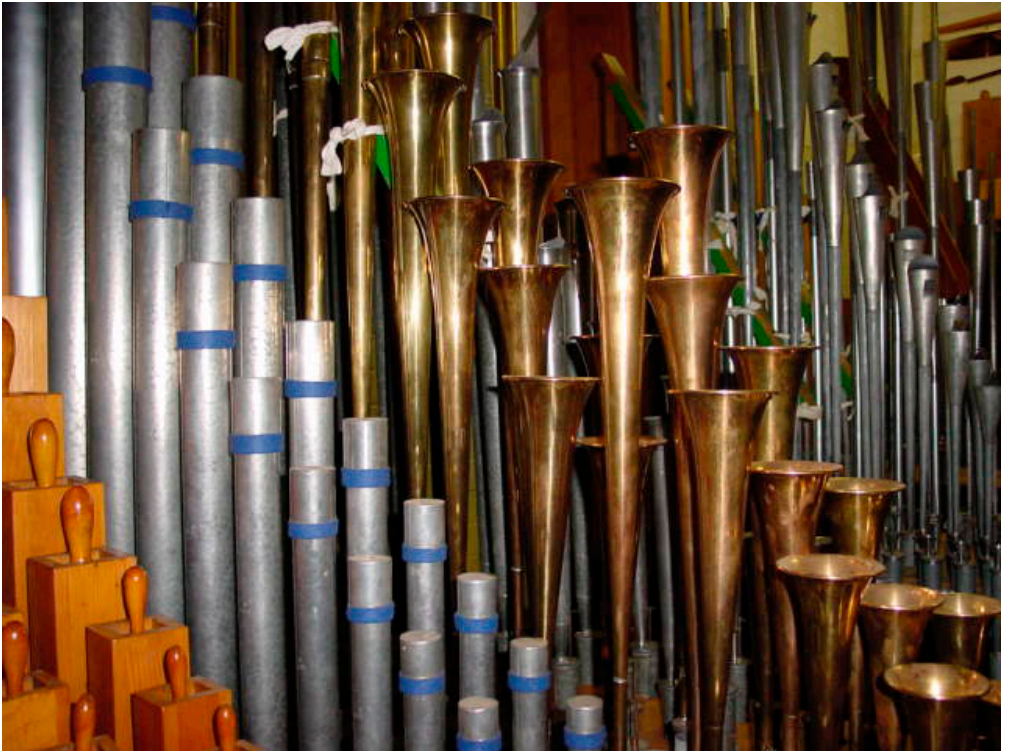
Students up to 25 years Free on confirmation of student status.

The Orion Theatre Wurlitzer Campsie, Sydney

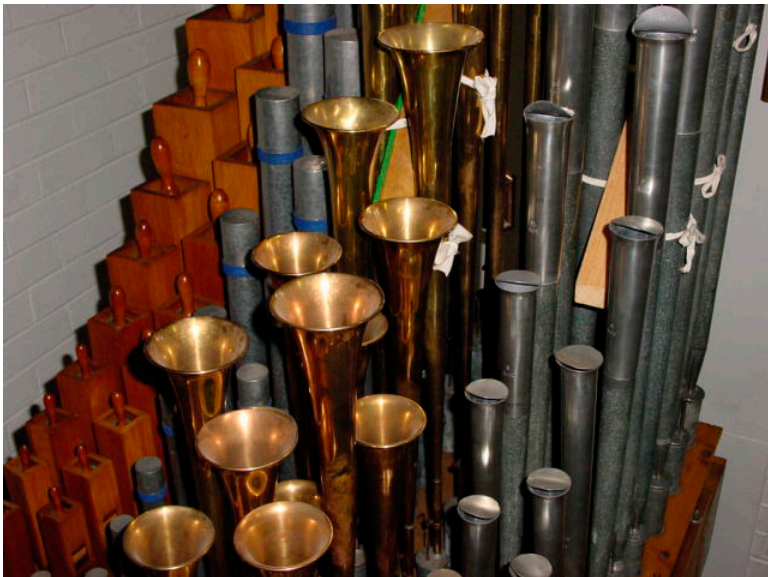
This Wurlitzer from the Capitol Theatre, Sydney opened in 1988 in the Orion Theatre, Campsie after a significant restoration and the addition of a computer relay sourced from the USA.



**Some of the ranks of pipes in the main chamber
which is located on the right side of the organ console
under the stage and speaks through the sound shute**



The Trumpet and other ranks in the Solo Chamber located on the left side of the organ console





The Base Drum and Kettle Drum are some of the numerous percussion instruments playable from the organ keyboard and pedals

Rob Richards USA

and

Simon Gledhill UK

will play this Wurlitzer next year 2018

Brooklynites Bid a Nostalgic Farewell to the Fox



The Fox Theatre was once a centerpiece of downtown Brooklyn. It opened on August 31, 1928 with Janet Gaynor in "Street Angel." It had 4,305 seats. Interior decorations were a mix of Spanish Baroque with marine motifs. The proscenium was 50 feet wide, the stage 39 feet deep. It was equipped with a Wurlitzer 'Crawford Special' 4-manual 37 rank organ, which also had a slave console.

The Fox theatre closed as a movie palace on February 6, 1966 with William Bendix in "Johnny Nobody" and David Niven in "Where the Spies Are." It became a popular concert venue for rock'n' roll shows emceed by Murray Kaufman (Murray the "K") which lasted until April 1968. Later in 1968 it was briefly taken over by the Salmaggi Grand Opera Company. It was 'Temporarily Closed' for two years, then a "Farewell to the Fox" week of organ concerts were held from October 31 until November 7, 1970 Gage playing the Mighty Wurlitzer.

Demolition began on November 7, 1970 and was completed in early 1971. The consolidated Edison company of New York was built in its place.

The Fox Theatre, the movie palace that along with the Brooklyn Paramount, once drew thousands to the down town Brooklyn area, is finally coming down.

It was not unexpected. For almost five years, its marquee told the public that it was "temporarily closed for repairs; will reopen soon." It was not closed for repairs and it will never reopen.

The marquee that once announced to the crowds on Flatbush Avenue in downtown Brooklyn which Hollywood stars could be seen on the Fox's silver screen bore the theatre's epitaph until last week.



**FAREWELL TO THE FOX.
October 31, 1928, to November 4, 1970,
BILL GAGE AT THE MIGHTY WURLITZER**

The "Mighty Wurlitzer," a giant pipe organ that entertained audiences before films began or during intermissions, was as much part of the Fox as the dancing lights on its marquee. It was one of the largest built up to that time.

4 Pipe Chambers Needed

It required four pipe chambers on the side of the theatre and a large space over the main ceiling of the auditorium, extending over the stage roof, to house it.

The theatre's last marquee announcement was a far cry from the first one. On opening night, 5,000 people attended the gala inaugural ceremonies and to see the first film to play there, "Street Angel," a silent feature with Neapolitan romance theme, starring Charles Farrell and Janet Gaynor.

The audience was also treated to a Movietone film greeting from James J. Byrne, Borough President of Brooklyn, performances of Wagner's "Tannhauser: and " Dance of the Blue Danube Blues," and a jazz rendition of a Strauss waltz by the Fox Theatre Orchestra of 60 soloists.

Another Movietone film showed George Bernard Shaw doing his famous imitation of Mussolini, with a stage presentation entitled "Carnival de Naples," which featured a chorus of 40 voices. " Street Awl" closed the program, which also had George Jessel as a master of ceremonies.

Perhaps it is symbolic of the neglect the Fox had fallen into in recent years that the opening date on the marquee epitaph should be wrong. The theatre opened on Aug. 31, 1928, not Oct. 31.

Original Cost \$8 Million

Laughing workmen paid no attention to this as they recently started the work of razing the theatre and ripping out the insides of what was once an eight million dollar movie palace.

Except for a few scattered events of a cultural nature, the theatre has been closed since February, 1966. The last films to be shown there at the time were "Where the Spies Are," starring David Niven, and "Johnny Nobody," which was William Bendix's last film.

At its peak, the Fox drew as many as 12,000 people on a Saturday night but when it finally shut its doors the number had dwindled to about 100 an evening, according to John F. Burke, the last manager of the theatre.

Some of the reasons for the low attendance are that the neighbourhood has become increasingly run-down over the years and that crime has increased in the area.

The theatre and the 12 story office building housing it were built by William Fox as a showcase for his company's films and vaudeville reviews like the "Sunkist Beau Ties," which featured 30 or more beautiful girls tap dancing, roller skating and singing their way to the audience's hearts.

The theatre was sold six years later to the Fabian Corporation,

the same company that closed it.



At the time of its construction, The New York Times reported the the Fox would be "almost an art museum with art treasures and rare fittings. Among other noteworthy features are a disappearing orchestra stage, refridgerating plants that sterilize the air every 90 seconds, and the most modern projecting devices."

The Fox, which could accommodate 4,061 people and which was described at various times as a wonderland of continental treasure, was decorated in the splendour that typified the movie palaces of the period.

As an example, its entrance consisted of polished Sienna marble and led into the inner lobby, which combined marble, teakwood and gold. Then came the block-long Grand Foyer, which had a white marble staircase and a large fountain.

In reality, the Fox was Brooklyn's answer to S. L. Rothafel's Roxy Theatre in Manhattan, which had been completed the year before at a cost of \$10 million and had ushered in the golden age of movie palaces.

Casualty List Growing

The demise of the Fox is just one more in a growing list of movie palace casualties. Only a very few of these great theatres of

the 1020s, such as Loew's Paradise in the Bronx, Loew's Kings in Brooklyn and Loew's Valencia in Queens, are still intact in the metropolitan area.



Other theatres have been demolished to make room for office buildings or cut up into smaller theatres.

The other major downtown Brooklyn theatre, the Paramount, which was also built in 1928, closed its doors in 1962 and is now used by the Brooklyn Centre of Long Island University as a gymnasium for its basketball games.

An office building, consisting of six stories and a penthouse, is scheduled to be completed on the site of the Fox Theatre in the summer of 1972 as part of the Brooklyn Centre Urban Renewal Project for downtown Brooklyn.

With thanks to the Puget Sound Pipeline ~ June-July 2017

Some current news from UK Theatre Organist Len Rawle re the Empire Wurlitzer

Dear Ernie and Aye

Many thanks for the very impressive TOSA News...it brings back so many happy memories.

Although we are not looking for any publicity on the subject I am happy to confirm that our Empire Wurlitzer has now left us after having looked after it here for the past 54 years. We have for a couple of years been conscious that in the event of our sudden passing, our children would have been left with something they would have no idea what to do with. Although we had no intention of putting the organ on the market, an opportunity presented itself that I felt I should, for the long term future of the organ, accept. The complete rebuilding of the organ in a large purpose built concert hall will all take some time but it is something I eagerly look forward to seeing completed in due course.

I'm sure Rob was excited hearing the sound of the Edmonton Christie and I hope your West Ryde installation is also a huge success. We just wish we could have spent more time with him.

I will be away playing up North from 7th - 13th July. I return on 14th to tune the fine Wurlitzer in the Musical Museum, which if you haven't been to, you should try to get in to see, it is close by Kew Bridge and its underground station. *(I visited the Musical Museum for their open day in 2012 and heard Len play that Wurlitzer along with several other organists. Editor)*

In addition to John Atwell recent most welcome trip, we have just hosted Scott Harrison. You will be pleased to hear he gave us a splendid concert last weekend at Woking - It was much enjoyed by our audience and he has been astonished at the sales of his CD's.

All the best

Len and Judith

Members Diary

Next Committee Meeting - Monday July 3rd at 7:00pm

West Ryde Anglican Church

Sunday 18th June 2017

2:00pm - 4:30pm

Orion Centre Theatre

An Afternoon with

Justin Stahl

from Indianapolis USA

see centre pages for details

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

or

by contacting

Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 Before 8:00pm please

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.ATOS.org American Theatre Organ Society

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