TORA July/Aug 2023 Volume 62 No.4 PRICE \$2.50

Thank you to all Members who have renewed your TOSA Membership by June 30th 2023. TOSA has organised 2 Events for you to begin the new Membership year.

Firstly with the Christie at West Ryde Anglican Church on July 15th Secondly at Marrickville Town Hall on August 13th with our Patron John Atwell

Details inside







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TOSA News David & Margaret Badman

Printer Printers of Richmond

President



Dear Members,

It was good to see some TOSA members at the Sydney Male Choir concert at Marrickville Town Hall where Simon Ellis accompanied the choir in a few numbers on the Wurlitzer, Simon was given two solo spots where he also demonstrated some of the organ's features to an audience largely made up of people who have possibly never heard a theatre pipe organ before. As the audience were leaving, Ernie Vale was handing out flyers for the August TOSA concert at Marrickville. More about that concert later. On Saturday 15th July we will be holding the first 'formal' event at West Rvde Anglican Church (formal as in where there is an admission charge).

Cliff Bingham and Simon Ellis will play the Christie Unit Organ with guest Artists the David Clegg Quartet and vocalist Georgie Hannam presenting an afternoon of light music from the swing era. More details in this issue of the newsletter. Then on Sunday 13th August we have Dr John Atwell at the Marrickville Wurlitzer. Unfortunately due to the operational cost of presenting concerts we have had to increase our ticket prices commencing with the August concert.

Work continues on repairs to the Orion Wurlitzer following the water damage. An update on this is covered in this issue. I look forward to seeing you at West Ryde Anglican Church on Saturday 15th July then at Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday 13th August.

Regards, Neil

Editorial



Hello Members,

By the time you read this TOSA News, there will have been further progress on the Orion Wurlitzer refurbishment. See details inside.

Nice to know that the State Theatre Wurlitzer was played several times by our Member, Margaret Hall, for the Sydney Film Festival.

You are in for a treat on Saturday July 15th at West Ryde. Don't miss this exciting event that comprises a variety of musical styles and musicians.

Best Regards, Ernie Vale, Editor editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



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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*

Please Note

The Society's only bank account now is with **St George.** Details are **BSB 112-879, account number 442 088 530**.

Please direct all payments to this account with St George Bank.

Stop Press

Margaret Hall is now the organist who plays the Grand Organ at Sydney Town Hall for 30 minutes prior to "The Good Old Days Concerts"

Membership Renewal

Committee really appreciates all members who have been so loyal to TOSA in maintaining your membership during the Covid period.

Thank you to all Members who have renewed their membership by June 30th. If you have not renewed your membership by July 30th this will be your last TOSA News.

Concert Ticket Prices increase

The reality is that TOSA will not survive unless we increase the price of tickets for concerts at Marrickville Town Hall and the Orion Centre Theatre, Whilst we had large audiences we managed to maintain costs. Your Committee hope that you will appreciate that members have been able to maintain their membership during Covid at half price of \$25 and for those receiving TOSA News by email at \$20 for the past 4 years. This has given you a saving of either \$100 or \$120 over that period.

TOSA provides two hours of live music for your enjoyment whilst maintaining the organs on a voluntary basis. Please help us survive by encouraging friends to come along as well.

To Watch Out for The next concert on your Wurlitzer at Marrickville Town Hall will be Patron, John Atwell playing 'Movie Music Magic' on Sunday 13th August 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Public Transport Buses 418, 425 & 426 all stop in front of the Town Hall

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' Days

West Ryde Anglican Church Wednesdays in 2023 are:

> 19th July, 16th Aug, 20th Sept, 18th Oct. from noon to 5pm. Convener is John Weismantel

0435 258 287 or whitecoats@bigpond.com

Marrickville Town Hall 4th Mondays in 2023 are:

24th July, 28th Aug. Convener is John Batts on 0420424103 He will email you to confirm availability

BIG WHEEL KEEPS ON TURNING

Sunday, June 18, 2023 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Marrickville Town Hall

303 Marrickville Road MarrickvilleNSW 2204

A variety concert for the people of Marrickville and inner Sydney with guest artists

"Jonah and the Wailers" an acapella gospel group and Simon Ellis

on the 1924 WurliTzer Theatre Organ

This concert was well attended by some 80 patrons plus several Committee Members and TOSA Members. The Sydney Male Choir consisted of about 30 members arranged on a three level platform and were conducted by a Musical Director. They were initially accompanied by an electronic keyboard with speakers on the stage behind them.

After a couple of numbers, Simon was invited to join in the accompaniment playing the Wurlitzer. Then during a break from the choir, Simon explained the workings of the Wurlitzer to the gathering and demonstrated the various sounds available. Then Simon played a number from South Pacific that demonstrated the richness of sound available from the Marrickville Wurlitzer resulting in loud applause from the audience.

The Acapella Group consisted of some 20 plus men and women who were dressed in black with purple highlights of various types. They were lead by a gentleman calling himself "Jonah". They put on a fine performance.

I thought the mens choir performed more together when they were accompanied only by the Wurlitzer in the second half. I guess by that time the choir had adjusted to the lively accoustics of Marrickville Town Hall. *Editor*

Further Progress on Refurbishment of the Wurlitzer at the Orion Centre Theatre Campsie

The organ builder, John Parker, has completed releathering the two Regulators that had blown out their corners.



Regulators now covered with new leather and glued with animal glue.

The regulators will be reinstalled as soon as we can coordinate a date with the Orion Theatre having no bookings of other activities and the Organ Builder is available when not carrying out organ tunings and TOSA volunteers are available and healthy.

Editor.

The CHRISTIE of the GAUMONT-PALACE in PARIS

A FABULOUS PICTURE PALACE

In the 1920s, about when sound came to films, **Paris** saw the erection of new temples to the "Seventh Art", the cinema. The ancient hippodrome on **Clinchy Place** in **Paris** was replaced by the Gaumont-Palace, the largest cinema in the world, along with its twin, the **Radio City Music Hal**I, in **New York**.

This huge theatre seated 6,000 people and, though gigantic, was still able to be comfortable and attractive. Although in its shows the visual element reigned supreme, often this gave way to another form of entertainment, Music, and so at these times in the darkened auditorium the spotlights had only one target – the Organ. It surged out of the depths, with the organists creating sumptuous harmonies, while up in the heights, the thousand and one pipes responded to the keyboards, and music filled the whole theatre.

A MAGICAL SHOWPLACE

What seemed unbelievably magical in fact owed a lot to technical wizardry:

*On a lift – an organ console, i.e., 4 manuals and a pedal board which control a magnitude of registers and couplers;

*25 metres above the stage – 1,500 pipes made of wood, pewter and zinc, percussions bells, innumerable accessories, a blower, 2 enormous generators and the electric switchboard, the nerve-centre of the instrument; *Finally, the all-encompassing talent of the organist.

It is difficult to imagine the internal life of this colossal edifice: a huge auditorium, an equally huge stage, footlights, lighting rigs, projectors, full pipe organ equipment, below and above-stage machinery. To light and run this little universe, it required an electric power-station that could supply a small town. This temple devoted to pictures and music dispensed a magic potion to 2 or 3 generations, removing the cares of everyday life, bringing to some a taste of adventure and to others a sense of wonder.

GILBERT LE ROY

One Thursday afternoon a little boy, as a reward for good behaviour, was brought by his mother into this giant theatre. The film was no more than "interesting", the stage shows no more memorable that the taste of the ice cream, but what enchanted and, at the same time, disturbed him was the Organ that suddenly appeared, the Organist who played and the Music that came out of the walls! One day he would also be master of the keyboards and receive the applause of 6,000 spectators. His career-path was set...! And the little boy, each day, paid the necessary price for success – scales endlessly practiced, pieces constantly repeated, music deciphered and learnt!

New Membership Fees

New Membership and Renewal of Membership

\$25.00 Full membership, \$20.00 Concession, Interstate or

Overseas \$25. (Only one TOSA News per household)

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 *membership@tosa.net.au* Associate Membership for spouse/partner an additional 50% In the 50s the little boy had become a charming young man and, for the first time in public, he was going to conquer this monster which could be as violent as a mountain storm, as gentle as a Spring breeze, as all-enveloping as the waves of the sea in Summer. The Organ of the **Gaumont-Palace** was to become "his" organ. Following in the steps of his predecessors, **George Ghestem, Simone Bernard, Tommy Desserre,** it was **Gilbert Le Roy's** turn to bring this magnificent instrument to life. Imagine Gilbert's emotions when, for the first time, he played for 6,000 spectators, fulfilling the promise he had made to himself one distant Thursday afternoon! His efforts were successful on this first occasion and on all successive ones.

THE CHRISTIE ORGAN

This organ of the **Gaument-Palace**, so dear to the hearts of Parisian music lovers, had a second childhood when in 1970 it was decided to re-create the spectacular past by putting on a show in which the imaginary world of showbusiness would overcome the drabness of ordinary reality. The Organ, built in 1930 by the English firm "Christie", was redesigned by **Gilbert Le Roy** and the organ-builder, **Jacques Probst.** After 4 months of constant work, they brought the organ back to a perfect state of functioning, even going so far as to transform the amplitude of the tremulants, to improve the response of the percussion registers and to correct the air pressure of certain pipes to give it the brilliance and colour of the famous American **WurliTzer** in the **Radio City Music Hall.**

THE FINAL CURTAIN

But in 1972 the walls of the **Gaumont-Palace**, which would have resisted the blast of all the trumpets of Jericho, had to fall in the name of "progress". As for the Organ, it was removed and temporarily stored, awaiting its fate...

Let's hope to see it once again standing ready to meet other challenges, to cast a spell over other audiences and to incite other little boys to take up an organist's career.

Bernard Marcay

So members, we in NSW are fortunate to have a Christie Cinema Organ that has been painstakingly restored and upgraded to include the most modern computer relay system available.

It is a two manual model that is very suitable for the location of the West Ryde Anglican Church. The Church environment provides a comfortable venue to enjoy both Church Services as well as music of many genres. You will hear Simon Ellis and Cliff Bingham play the Christie which has been further improved by work done by Organ Builder John Parker.

This is also a perfect venue to enjoy jazz played by a most experienced band of musicians for your enjoymant. A number of TOSA Committee Members have heard this David Clegg Quartet on several occasions and we assure you that you are in for a treat.

The Theatre Organ Society of Australia Proudly Presents an Afternoon Musical Soirée

On Saturday 15th of July at 2:00pm, talented theatre organists *Simon Ellis* and *Cliff Bingham*, in association with the *David Clegg Quartet* and guest vocalist *Georgie Hannam* will be presenting an afternoon of light music from the Swing era.

The venue is St. Columb's Anglican Church, West Ryde where Simon and Cliff will play the beautifully restored Christie Theatre Pipe Organ.

The David Clegg Quartet is a jazz quartet with many years experience playing in many venues.

Afternoon Tea will be available at intermission and is included in the ticket price of \$25 with freshly brewed coffee or tea. THE DAVID CLEGG QUARTET PLAYING AT WEST RYDE ANGLICAN CHURCH CNR. BELLEVUE & DICKSON AVENUES WEST RYDE 2.00PM, SATURDAY 15TH JULY 2023



L to R David Clegg, Georgie Hannam, Glenn Henrich The David Clegg Quartet with guest artist Georgie Hannam presents a programme of swing era jazz of the 1930's / 1970's, in the style made famous by the great groups like Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and Duke Ellington.

David Clegg – Leader, Keyboard.

70yrs playing jazz keyboard with a career going back to the fifties and in the Sydney Town Hall for jazz concerts. David spent 20yrs practising as a Chartered Accountant, formed a jazz quartet playing at the Wentworth Falls Conservation Hut and from there to the Carrington Hotel for 5yrs. For the past 12yrs the band has been performing at the Royal Hotel, Springwood. David also plays for an Aged Care facility in his spare time.

Glenn Henrich - Vibraphone and Reeds.

One of Australia's finest performers on the vibraphone and a wonderful clarinettist and saxophone player. Glen was born in the United States and moved to Australia to create a career in jazz, as a performer as well as an arranger. Glen holds a University Degree in Batchelor of Music (Clarinet) from the University of Adelaide.

Laurie Bennett - Percussion

One of the top percussionists in Australian jazz, with a background including performances with Col Nolan, Judy Bailey and Don Burrows.

Alex Compton – Double Bass

Spent many years in France and is a most accomplished and talented bass player, interested in modern trends in jazz performance.

Georgie Hannam – vocalist

Georgie has been singing with David Clegg and his band for many years and feels privileged to keep the great tradition of jazz music alive and well today, and into the future.

The Organists



Simon Ellis is a native of Sydney, and has a background in Philosophy, English, Law and Theology. Simon studied organ with Robert Broughall and then with the late Eric Smith. He served as

Assistant Organist to Eric at Wesley Central Mission for 6 years and was regularly heard playing the Christie Theatre Organ in the Lyceum Theatre, playing for both church services, and before and after movies. Simon gained experience and advice from the late Ashely Miller, celebrated organist at Radio City Music Hall, New York. Simon was Organist/ Choirmaster at Northmead Uniting Church for 9 years and Director of Music at a large reception venue, Fairfield House, at Windsor. He also served several years as Associate Music Director for the Sydney Touring Theatre Company, and was Director of the highly successful Blue Mountains Consort for 6 years until 1998. Simon has performed in both theatre and classical organ venues in Australia, America, Britain, and Europe. He has accompanied singers and instrumentalists, both in Australia and overseas and studied singing with the late Florence Taylor. He has had a long involvement with the Royal School of Church Music and is currently in his 20th year as Senior Staff Organist for a large Sydney church.



Cliff Bingham began classical organ studies in 1962 with Roland Stenton and Frank Taylor at St Matthew's Anglican Church, Manly. In 1964 in his final school year, he was organ soloist at the Festival of School Instrumental Music in the Sydney Town Hall, the first of many occasions on which he would be featured at that iconic instrument. His first meeting with a theatre organ was in 1959 at the West Ryde Christie. (Yes, the same organ TOSA is currently reinstalling in the newer church building.) Cliff has played numerous concerts in all Australian states and New Zealand on both pipe and electronic organs and was featured at many TOSA conventions. Since 'retirement', Cliff has made an appearance along with good mates Simon Ellis and Titus Grenyer at the State Theatre, Sydney, Wurlitzer relaunch in February 2020.

Admission price \$25.00 (includes a delicious afternoon tea).

Come along and enjoy the afternoon. Bring your friends who enjoy jazz in a perfectly comfortable atmosphere.



Scan the QR Code to book tickets

Attendees wishing to have lunch before the show can dine at any of the three eateries in the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club, just across the road from West Ryde Railway Station.

TOSA will be providing a Courtesy Car from the club drop off / pick up area in Rydale Road between 1:30 and 1:40 PM with return after the show.

If you require a pickup, please contact Margaret on 0417 97 12 12 to reserve a seat.

The Next Concert Sunday August 13th, 2pm – 4:30pm Patron Dr. John Atwell plays the Famous Wurlitzer Theatre Organ At Marrickville Town Hall



Cnr. Marrickville & Petersham Rds. Marrickville 2pm - 4:30pm in a program titled

'Movie Music Magic' -.

including John Williams 'Superman' opening titles as well as music from The Godfather, plus Breakfast at Tiffanies, Charade (Henry Mancini); Bye Bye Birdie (Charles Strouse); The Way We Were (Marvin Hamlisch); Singing in the Rain (Nacio Herb Brown); Beauty and the Beast (Alan Menken); Toy Story (Randy Newman); The Bandwagon (Schwarz-Deitz) to name but a few. A delicious Afternoon Tea will be available at \$5 per person. This includes a tasty treat and fresh brewed percolated coffee or tea.

A gluten free option will also be available.

Cabaret Style Seating means you can BYO drinks, glasses & nibbles.

Jugs of Iced Water & Cups are provided on each table

John Atwel receives repeat invitations to play concerts at theatre organ venues around Australia both as a solo performer, as well as in piano/organ duo combination with his long-time colleague and friend, Tony Fenelon.

John has also taken his talents overseas on many occasions, playing performances in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe and New Zealand.

Tickets: Adult \$45, Concession \$40; TOSA Members \$30

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults \$30 per person

First Time Patrons to a TOSA Show, \$30 by completing a Voucher, available to download from the web site, and paying at the box office on show day. Debit & Credit cards accepted..

See www.tosa.net.au for more information and to book for the Concert. Booking your seats in advance helps TOSA with catering for your treats at interval.

You can book now on the TOSA Web site www.tosa.net.au

DAVID JOHNSTON IN CONCERT with "THE KID STAKES"

REVIEWED by COLIN TRINGHAM

On Sunday, 21st February, the Orion console rose for the first TOSA concert in 1993 to a lightning-fast rendition of "One of Those Songs", revealing an impeccably dressed David Johnston. After a bit of chit-chat with the audience, David put us in the mood for silent pictures with a talk and demonstration of the sound effects available on the Wurlitzer Organ, and included the usual romance theme, the villain's signature tune, etc., with the audience encouraged to boo and hiss at the appropriate times. This was a good bit of fun but could have been transposed to open the second half, just before the movie, where I think it would have had more impact.

A selection from "Barnum" followed, which was in keeping with the general time-period of the silent movies. The pieces were well played with the accent on sweet and traditional chords and countermelodies. Registration changes were rather sparing and always seemed to come back to the same sound quality. A selection from the musical "Chess" featured the plaintive song "Someone Else's Story" and David moved away from the chorus sounds, which dominated earlier to concentrate on some of the good solo effects available.

With a Fats Waller segment, David introduced the show "Ain't Misbehaving" which opens soon in Sydney with a most energetic group of black performers. David chose to try out the piano and the percussion in an attempt to achieve that foot-tapping beat which characterises Fats Waller rhythms.

Inevitably Lloyd Webber made his presence felt with selections from "Starlight Express", the early Webber show which was performed entirely on roller skates. Train effects were quite prominent in this section which included "He Whistled at me" and concluded with an energetic "Light at the End of the Tunnel". The first half of the show concluded with selections from "Jesus Christ Superstar" and made a feature of the less well-known theme, "Gethsemane", with fugue effects which did not quite come off for me. Throughout the first half a very prominent 16-foot pedal Diaphone overpowered many sections.

Lighting of the organ console with many colour effects was worthy of special mention and praise.

After interval the organ rose again as the screen was uncovered for the silent movie, "The Kids Stakes". This film was mostly shot around Woolloomoolloo and it was fascinating to see how many places one could recognise – especially the steps that lead up to Potts Point.

The actual race scene was shot in Rockhampton, as it was thought that the local Sydney wowsers would object to a race with children being shown with bets being placed on the winners.

The organ accompaniment was absolutely brilliant and it was very hard to concentrate on the organ alone, as David so accurately mirrored the actions on the screen, with the sounds and themes from the organ. At the end of the movie, with a masterpiece of synchronisation, the curtains closed across the movie screen as David was brought up to stage level to take his bow.

I heard comments from other TOSA members as they left the concert and were adamant that they would like to have more of this type of entertainment.

Well members, your Committee are working towards presenting silent movies with accompaniment by the Christie Cinema Organ at West Ryde Anglican Church in the future.

Watch this space for more information.



This is the Rialto Square theatre in Joliet Illinois where both Simon Gledhill and Dave Wickerham will play concerts on the 4/27 Barton theatre organ at the ATOS Convention in Chicago

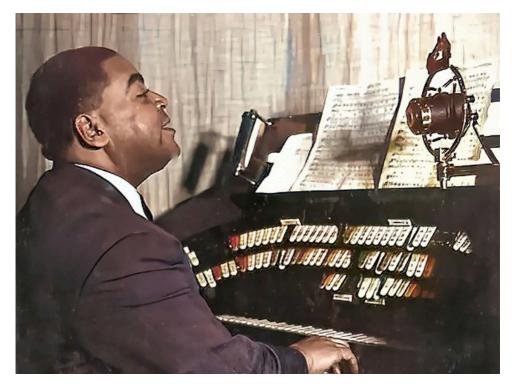




A mystery Wurlitzer. Can anyone identify this location. Please email the Editor if you know



Dear members, if you would like to make a donation to TOSA NSW Divn you can scan this QR code. As TOSA has not been able to present concerts for you during the Covid period any donation would be gratefully received to enable TOSA to continue. Thank You



Thomas Wright (aka "Fats"} Waller - 3/9 + melotone Compton organ in EMI's Abbey Rd Studio, St John's Wood, London. 1938-39

Here is an historic event featuring Thomas Wright Waller, better known as Fats Waller, who visited England in 1938, when he made a number of records on both piano and organ at EMI's Abbey Road studios. This is not from that session, but finds him in St George's

Hall playing the BBC Compton, together with singer Adelaide Hall, who appears on a couple of his EMI sides. I had been aware that Fats had made a broadcast from St George's Hall, and after many years of fruitless enquiry, eventually tracked down a Fats Waller devotee in Thailand who had a copy of the broadcast. The broadcast was never heard in Britain, so this is a UK premiere! It was transmitted to the USA on the short wave at 1245am on 10 September, 1938, where, because of the time difference it was heard the previous evening! Fats played both piano and organ, but to save time I have included only the piano sign-on and the items featuring the organ. Fats and Adelaide recap the two items they recorded togther at EMI, but with different versions, and the cream on the top is a fantastic "Flat Foot Floogie with the Floy Floy", that knocks one's socks off. As it is a short wave broadcast, there is some cross-talk, drop-out and frequency drift, which have been eliminated as far as possible. This broadcast is some superb cabaret jazz of the highest calibre, and it's one of my favourite recordings – I love it more each time I hear it.

Unfortunately I could not capture the link to the broadcast but I felt it was an interesting fill in for members. Editor

Members and friends, please do come along to the

Afternoon Musical Soirée at West Ryde Anglican Church for a magic afternoon of music

On Saturday 15th of July at 2:00pm, talented theatre organists Simon Ellis and Cliff Bingham, in association with the David Clegg Quartet and guest vocalist Georgie Hannam will be presenting an afternoon of light music from the Swing era.

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.theatreorgansaust.info (history of cinema organ installations in Australasia) is back on your computer

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

www.ATOS.org American Theatre Organ Society

65th Annual ATOS Convention 2023 "Stars , Stripes & Pipes" is based in Chicago from July 2-7 in the GREATER CHICAGOLAND AREA Organists are: Richard Hills, Walt Strony, Dave Wickerham, Justin Stahl, Tedde Gibson, Brett Valiant, Simon Gledhill, Zach Frame, Jelani Eddington



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