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JANUARY 1980

# TOSA NEWS

## "THE NOTABLE NINTH"

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY CONVENTION,  
SYDNEY, EASTER WEEKEND 4TH - 7TH APRIL.



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

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### EARLY DIARY DATES FOR 1980.

SUNDAY 24th FEBRUARY, MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL, 2.30pm. FREE CONCERT.

This is our first Concert for 1980 and features the wonderful talents of our Patron, Mr. Ian Davies at our WurliTzer. (Please see separate article).

TUESDAY 18th MARCH, MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL, 7.30pm. CLUB NIGHT.

This is our first Club Night for 1980 and all members and friends are most cordially invited. A Supper is served, members play the WurliTzer and these evenings are a great chance to get together in an informal atmosphere.

SUNDAY 4th MAY, MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL, 2.30pm. CONCERT.

This will be our first paid Concert for 1980 and will feature well known member Mr. David Parsons at the WurliTzer. There are still a few details to be worked out and these will be finalised in the next edition.

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WURLITZER ORGAN ACTIVITIES, MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL.

As most of our members are aware, a pipe organ is a very complex piece of machinery which usually has a considerable number of components located in a comparatively small area and our Wurlitzer is no exception. The organ is built in two chambers, the solo and main, and these are filled up with wind trunking, chests, regulators and so forth before the actual pipework is considered. Add to this the various percussions such as chimes, glockenspeil sleigh bells and so forth and what you have left is a quite restricted area which could in some respects be likened to an overstocked china shop with every part being just as fragile.

Our Wurlitzer is a Style H Special and came into operation in 1924 and is quite an early example of Wurlitzer design and construction and models built after 1926 had certain design differences.

In operation we have experienced some minor problems with one rank which have now been overcome and it was realised that with no Concerts planned before Sunday 24th February that it might be a good idea to close the organ down for December and January to enable a detailed examination of what work may be required in the future as well as any regulation etc., that may be needed at this time.

Currently, work parties get told about anything that appears to be malfunctioning, such as a cipher or a dead note and a work party arrives, checks out the apparent fault, rectifies it and so on and the organ is put back together so that it is fully operational. From time to time a certain rank may be taken out of action for a week or two as has happened recently with the Kinura which is now fully operational.

Each rank of pipes is located on a chest and in the main chamber there is one chest that carries five ranks of pipes which is not the most convenient to get at. Under this rather large chest there are two regulators and the area is, to all intents and purposes, inaccessible.

It was felt that it may be a good idea to have a detailed examination of this large chest in addition to the other parts of the organ and, to examine properly the main chest the best method was to remove the pipework entirely and the associated top boards and also the bottom boards which are wired to the switch stack and so a work party gathered at Marrickville on Saturday 8th December and with many hands the work was completed without difficulty.

What some members may not realise is that work on a pipe organ is a slow, painstaking business, for instance, the taking out and storage of the pipes took quite some time in order that no damage to our precious instrument would occur.

Members can rest assured that our famous Wurlitzer will be open for business as usual in February and we hope for a big attendance to hear our Patron, Ian Davies, give the inaugural Concert for 1980.

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Recently I came across some old copies of T.O.S.A. News going back over the years when Frank Ellis was Editor and there were some quite interesting articles in these and the article on the next page entitled PROFILE. The Ian Davies Story is a reprint from the T.O.S.A. News, April 1967 and is reproduced here for the benefit of newer members of the Society as well as serving as a background for our first Artist for the year. I would like to thank Frank for his permission to reproduce the article.

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This month PROFILE brings you a word portrait of one of Australia's best known theatre organists. Like so many other theatre organists, IAN DAVIES started to study music at an early age. At the age of seven, he began to study the piano under his mother, who was well qualified to teach him, being an ALCM.

Two years later, he became a pupil of Miss K Cox, (LRAM), of Ascot Vale, a well known and highly successful teacher, and continued with her for three years. It was at this stage that the pipe organ made it's entry into young Ian's life. Sometimes his mother deputised at the organ of St. Johns Presbyterian Church at Essendon, Victoria, and as Ian's interest was aroused, he persuaded her to give him lessons on this fine pipe organ. After six months tuition from Mrs. Davies, Ian became a pupil of the organist of the church, the well known J. Dean Wells, B.Mus.

It was the 2/10 WurliTzer of Hoyt's Plaza Theatre Melbourne, that gave Ian his first taste of the thrill of a horseshoe console, and he lost no time in persuading LIONEL CORRICK to accept him as a pupil. Although Lionel Corrick was organist at the Regent Theatre he used the Plaza organ for Ian's lessons. The Plaza is located beneath the Regent and below ground level. It was fitting therefore, that Ian's first appointment to a theatre, should be the Plaza and the organ he had learned so much on. It was early in 1946, that he came to the Plaza remaining there for two years, and to quote his own words, "loving every moment of it". For the next three years he was to double between the upstairs Regent and the downstairs Plaza, as occasion demanded it until 1951.

Next came a highly successful tour of the suburban cinema circuit of Melbourne playing the electronic organ - this lasted twelve months and took him into the Padua Theatre Brunswick, Park Theatre Albert Park, Barclay Theatre Footscray, and the 1800 seat Victory Theatre at St. Kilda. At the conclusion of this season, Ian returned to his first love, the beautiful Plaza Theatre, as resident organist for a further eighteen months.

Then came five years residency at what was, undoubtedly, one of the world's most outstanding movie palaces, the magnificent Capitol Theatre, Melbourne with it's fantastic Burley Griffin ceiling and plushy atmosphere. This 'plum' organ spot remained as Ian's home until the shutdown of the organ. During his seasons at the Plaza, Regent and Capitol Theatres, Ian broadcast regularly, and his theme of "Cruising down the River", guaranteed the radio listeners, that the thirty minutes of organ music to follow would be in the best tradition of theatre organ styling.

Ian ruefully recalls one occasion at the Regent Theatre, when water pressure to the hoist built up due to a sticking valve. When Ian pressed the button to bring the organ up from the pit, the console rocked violently with a jerk that almost dislodged the console from it's platform. The audience seemed to think it was all part of the presentation, but the spectacle of the organist, hair standing on end and the sheet music spilling in all directions must have been a never to be forgotten one.

Asked for his favourite theatre and organ he didn't need much time to think about the question. Smiling broadly, he told us that the Plaza Theatre and organ were his idea of perfection - the console was centrally located which made balancing of the sound from each chamber so much easier. In addition this organ spoke into the auditorium in fine style. A case of first love being the last for Ian.

Friendly, natural, talented and a sparkling personality - this is IAN DAVIES our PROFILE for APRIL

Frank Ellis.

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HOME ORGAN PARTY. Held at "Selwyn Theatre" Mortdale on Sunday 25th November.

Sunday 25th November saw a good crowd turn up at member RITCHIE WILLIS's "Selwyn Theatre" for a home party.

This function featured young organist BERNARD WALZ playing organ and piano at various times with DOUG SMITH and CHRIS PALMER playing organ and piano in duet. Twelve year old MARK PALMER made a brief appearance at the Thomas 'Lawrence Welk' also.

For the benefit of those who may not be all that familiar with the 'Selwyn Theatre', it is a part of member RITCHIE WILLIS's home and features a Thomas 'Lawrence Welk' horseshoe spinet console with full pedalboard that was fitted specially to the organ. The organ would be the most heard Lawrence Welk in Sydney and has been played by most of Sydney's leading organists at one time or other.

The amount of \$70.50 was raised at this function for the Society and our thanks go to Ritchie for allowing the Society to use the venue for the occasion.

Any member who would like to make their home available for a home organ party should contact our Secretary, Ern. Vale, for further details as this type of function is one which allows members to relax in an informal fashion, without the formalities of the Concert atmosphere, with organ music being played by talented artists in an informal atmosphere.

Ritchie Willis runs a number of functions and the Selwyn Theatre programme is listed below:-

SELWYN THEATRE GROUP. MORTDALE 1980. THEATRE ORGAN RECITALS.

JANUARY 12th. SATURDAY 8.00pm.	SIMON ELLIS AND RAY TURNER.
FEBRUARY 23rd. SATURDAY 8.00pm.	RAY THORNLEY. (Yamaha Organ).
MARCH 9th. SUNDAY 2.30pm.	BERNARD WALZ.
APRIL 27th. SUNDAY 2.30pm.	DAVID PARSONS.
MAY 25th. SUNDAY 2.30pm.	REG BLACK.
JUNE 6th. FRIDAY 8.00pm.	IAN DAVIES.

PICTURE NIGHTS.

JANUARY 5th SATURDAY 8.00pm.	"WORLD WALKABOUT"	PHIL TURNEDGE.
FEBRUARY 16th. SATURDAY 8.00pm	"SONGS OF AUSTRALIA"	PETER SAGE.
MARCH 1st. SATURDAY 8.00pm.	"THE MILFORD TRACK"	ERNIE VALE.
APRIL 12th. SATURDAY 8.00pm.	"THIS AND THAT"	ARTHUR PHILLIPS.
MAY 17th. SATURDAY 8.00pm	"RICH'S ROUNDABOUT"	RICH WILLIS.
JUNE 21st. SATURDAY. 8.00pm.	"AUSTRALIAN WALKABOUT"	NORM READ.

All the above functions may be booked by phoning 57-3581 well in advance.  
Please note any cancellations must be notified one week ahead.

Selwyn Productions, 13 Rosemont Avenue, Mortdale. 2223.

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NEW MEMBERS. Mr & Mrs Athol Noad, Willoughby, Franklin and Annette Baldwin, Castle Hill, Allin and Lola Woods, Bexley North, John McEneaney, Warners Bay, Grahame Carlow, Kotara Heights, Allen and Phyllis Davies, South Hurstville, Joseph and Georgina Howie, Chester Hill, Roy and Joan Collins, Beecroft, Paul and Rae O'Connor, Blacktown, Herta Mloodycky, Oatley, Sylvia Kay, Miranda, Lance and Coralie Jones, Maroubra, Mrs. Isobel Skulthorpe, Granville, Warren and Maree Healey, Granville, Mr and Mrs A Thomson, Rydalmere, John and Constance Shaw, South Coogee, Mrs J. Daly, Ermington and John and Lois Adlard, Cronulla.

WELCOME AND MAY YOU ALL HAVE A LONG AND HAPPY MEMBERSHIP!

SUNDAY 3rd FEBRUARY... Home Party at Ron Wilson's, 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.

Rally, Rally, Come on all!!!!

This will be the first get together in the New Year at the home of Phyl and Ron Wilson.

What a good opportunity to have a chat, a swim in the pool, (don't forget your costume!), and a good barbecue.

The cost of the afternoon will be \$2.00, starting at 3.30pm.

Please bring along your own meat and liquid refreshments, salads will be supplied.

Musical entertainment will follow and a very enjoyable time will be had by all.

So - !, How about it!, Make the effort and support your Society please.

Book now, by phoning Phyl or Ron on 759-6050.

NEW ADDRESSING MACHINE PURCHASED.

For some time now the committee has been aware that there have been some problems with the old addressing machine that has now served so long and it has been the subject of some discussion as to how it may be replaced with a more recent model without it costing us a fortune.

The decision was made to investigate prices, models etc., when a member happened to notice what seemed to be quite a bargain in one of the classified ad sections of a leading newspaper and the result is that we have a new addressing machine which is not that old and that has not done that much work and we got it for what could only be described as a song.

As the members subscriptions are renewed the address plates will be typed on to the special plates that are necessary for each member and everyone should start to see a much better standard in the addressing of the T.O.S.A News.

Lance and Marj. Wells are our members who fold and place the news in the envelopes and arrange the posting and it is a credit to them both that they have managed to keep the old addressing unit going so long.

Other happenings in Committee were that at the December meeting there was not time to ratify the various positions such as Membership Secretary, Editor, Recording Engineer, Practice Convener etc that was mentioned in the December issue of T.O.S.A. News. The agenda for the meeting was quite considerable and the position was that the people who hold these positions had not all had the time to be approached to find out if they still wished to continue in these positions. The matter will be finalised at the January meeting.

Member Ritchie Willis is thanked for the work that he put in whilst on Committee during 1979, Ritchie's place on Committee has been taken by Jack Lawson whose work is well known, particularly for his Cabaret efforts which are a great success each time they are held.

Incidentally, Pearl, Jack's wife, fell and injured herself quite badly on the night of the Cabaret but we understand that whilst in traction she is getting over the shock of the incident and is now starting to become her former self again, our very best wishes for a speedy recovery go to Pearl who has worked so hard to keep the standards of the Cabaret upto what they are.

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THE NOTABLE NINTH, THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY CONVENTION 1980, SYDNEY.

Attached to the front of the magazine you will have seen the details and prices of the Convention and it promises to be a tremendous get together and everyone is welcome.

The Convention Committee have been working on every detail to ensure that the whole operation goes smoothly so that everyone will enjoy the entire Convention.

One of the highlights of the Convention will be the cruise on Sydney's glorious harbour which is a unique feature of Sydney and indeed, the only similar harbour in Australia with some 148 miles of navigable waterway.

A beautiful vessel has been chartered for the cruise the M.V. ROYALE, which is quite a new vessel and one which is fitted with every comfort for cruising of this nature.

All functions of the Convention will be well worth remembering for years to come so please get your applications in as soon as possible.

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In haste to get this magazine off to the printers I have just noticed that the list of who is who that normally goes on page 2 has been omitted, (one chap actually calls it the 'rogues' gallery!), this list now appears and will be back on page 2 in the February edition.

PATRON: Ian Davies. PRESIDENT: ALAN MISDALE.(525-5554).  
VICE PRESIDENTS: DOUG SMITH,(750-0917), FRANK ELLIS,(649-7011)  
SECRETARY: Ernie Vale, (798-6816), TREASURER: Edna Smith, (529-7379)  
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ron Smith,(529-7379), PRACTICE CONVENER: Chris Palmer.  
RESEARCH AND ARCHIVES: Ian Cameron. RECORDING ENGINEER: Ray Garrett.  
EDITOR: Chris Palmer. (926-534).

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS.

Would members please check to ensure that they have got their receipt from our Membership Secretary Ron Smith, this period is one where much work has to be done and Ron barely gets to even see the cheque as Treasurer Edna Smith, (his mother), grabs it out and puts it in the bank very quickly and thanks are due to Ron and Edna who between them form a very diligent and hard working team in two jobs that require and get an enormous amount of attention.

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Well, by the time the February edition comes out I hope to have come back from sunny Queensland where one goes back in time, (no daylight saving!), and who knows, with a bit of luck I may even get a quiet look at the fabulous Christie at the Kelvin Grove High School and if this eventuates I will be able to give some mention in the future.

Planned for 1980 are a series of articles on lady organists of the Theatre scene and we will be getting the plates made for these very soon.

If any of the members have any contribution that they would like to make for the magazine, please submit your article and we will try and work it in as we can. There are some printing problems to be overcome yet but I would like to see a lot more articles if possible.

bye for now; Chris Palmer.

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