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T.O.S.A. NEWS

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

ADDRESS ~~BOX~~ A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

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PLEASE ADDRESS ALL GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE TO
THE SECRETARY, P.O. BOX A584, SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000.

EDITOR: IAN HANSON, 4/26 Chester St., Petersham. 2049.

EDITORIAL.

Well, its the start of another year, once again. It is also my first issue as the Editor of this magazine. I hope to maintain the standard of the Newsheet that has been maintained in the past by the previous Editor, John Atkinson.

John, who was ably assisted by his wife Sue, and our Treasurer, Mark Gabriel spent many long hours preparing the Newsheet for distrubition. This is a very time consuming task and I think the manner in which the many featured articles were presented were of excellent quality. The TOSA News is without a doubt a valuable publication.

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The photograph on the front cover depicts the Elizabeth Street entrance of the Prince Edward Theatre, The Theatre Beautiful. You as members of The Theatre Organ Society of Australia, New South Wales Division are all joint owners in the magnificent 2 manual 10 rank Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ that once graced this fabulous building. This mighty instrument was by comparison quite small to those installed in the State and Regent Theatres, however being the first to play in Sydney, it also left its mark by being the last to be regularly used for theatre presentations.

The only way to keep the magazine together is for the members to use it. If you have anything interesting concerning the theatre organ, or if you would just like to send along some interesting news item, please forward same to the news editor.

1977 is going to be an exciting year, with the Capitol Wurlitzer nearing complete restoration etc. also, our committees planning concerts with top name artists, both local and overseas.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I will try to maintain the high standard that has been set with the newsheet and the only way this can be achieved is with your co-operation, and on behalf of the Executive Committee and myself, may you all have a Happy New Year.

Regards, Ian Hanson.

"NOTHING GREAT WAS EVER ACHIEVED WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson.

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Fellow members,

It is with interest and anticipation that I look forward to another year of activities involving our common interest. Our previous Executive and Committee have arranged our first concert for 1977. February 20th will see Tony Fenelon in concert on our Wurlitzer at the Marrickville Town Hall. From then on in we'll see what our new team has in store.

1977 will I trust be an eventful year for us judging by the variety of programmes under consideration. Our Wurlitzer will undergo some major and extensive reconditioning, necessitating us varying the venues and frequencing of our activities. More social activities seem to be in popular demand so lets see what happens.

For those who are not aware of the changes brought about by the last election here they are. We welcome to the executive John Weismantel as a Vice-President and Kevin Eadie as your new Secretary. Both gentlemen have served several terms representing you on committee. Ernie Vale convenor of the Capitol Wurlitzer restoration programme joins committee and Ian Hanson fills the editorship of T.O.S.A. News vacated by John Atkinson, a position he ably held for three years.

Jack Lawson rejoins our committee after an absence of twelve months from the administration. Other members returned include Herbert Wyatt, V. Pres. Mark Gabriel Treas., Alan Misdale, Barry Tooker, Robert Glidden and Bill Schumaker, to committee. Congratulations Gentlemen.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation recognising the responsibility you have given me in succeeding our dedicated past President Tom Haloran. I trust that with your continued support and the loyalty and team spirit of a good executive and committee, we will achieve success. May you all enjoy happiness and good health.

Sincerely,
Steve Mc Donald.

THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, S.W. DIVISION
PRESENTS

Tony Fenelon *on pipes*



Marrickville Town Hall
Sunday 20th February 1977 at 2:30 pm

Tickets to this exciting entertainment
are available at the door on the day or
by sending your cheque and stamped
self addressed envelope to:

P.O. Box 150,
Epping. 2121.

ADMISSION: \$2.50 Adults
\$1.50 Children & Pensioners.

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Our well known Member/Organist, Peter Held, wishes to thank the anonymous fellow member who paid Peter's subscription for the coming year. This was a very generous gesture indeed and, Peter says, he was very touched and gratified by it.

DEADLINE:

The deadline for the February issue is Friday 21st January 1977, so, if you have something to say, please send it along promptly.

COMMITTEE MEETING:

The first committee meeting for 1977 will be held on Monday 24th January at 7.30 p.m. in St. Anne's Church Hall, Homebush Rd, Strathfield.

CAPITOL ORGAN WORKING BEE:

Remember, the next night will be held on Wednesday 26th January, commencing at 7.30 p.m. at the Organ Loft, 49 Boomerang St, Haberfield.

The Major Activity will be the glueing of secondary motors and further cleaning of chests.

Telephone: 798-6816.

GENERAL NEWS:

"ARCADIA" WURLITZER: We have been advised by the Willoughby Council of their intentions to expend \$15,000 on re-building the "Wurlitzer" in the Chatswood Town Hall. This is very good news indeed as the organ is in very poor shape at the moment. When this work has been completed, we will be enjoying more concerts on the North Shore.

VICTORIAN DIV. COMPTON: Congratulations once again to the Victorian Division who are installing a Compton Pipe Organ in the Plaza Theatre at Chelsea, a Melbourne suburb. This is the third pipe organ T.O.S.A. have installed in a theatre, the other two are the Dendy Theatre Brighton 3/15 Wurlitzer and the Cinema North at Reservoir, the latter boasting a 2/9 Blackett F Howden, the console of which is a "Christie", originally came from the Sydney Lyceum Theatre.

ADVERTISING: If you wish to advertise in T.O.S.A. NEWS, please phone or write to our advertising manager, Mr John Atkinson: 46 Lily St. Allawah 2218. Phone: 587 3374.

CAPITOL ORGAN

by Ernie Vale.

I am happy to report that Saturday 19th December saw a very successful move of the 32ft diaphones from Bankstown to Beverly Hills, thanks to a happy band of helpers, and, in particular to Ross Adams for again helping out with his van. From memory, it was the fourth time Ross has helped us move parts of the organ and we are indeed grateful for his assistance. Joe Ward was a big help with his mobile crane enabling the blower to be lifted into Ron Wilson's utility very quickly and efficiently and out against Beverly Hills. Joe also did the honors with his trailer at Beverly Hills where the heavy timber pipes were unloaded from the van onto the trailer for transit up the driveway such a manouver being necessary because of a 2 ton load limit on the driveway. The pipes stacked neatly into the garage leaving room for the regulators, blower and motor. Flo Lawlor served a delicious morning tea on the front patio when we had

finished which was gratefully devoured by all and indeed, we are most grateful to Flo for allowing the Society to store these large items in her garage and every indication was that she was very happy to help out in this way. I might say here that Mrs Nitschke was smiling broadly when we departed her place at Bankstown and again I thank her for having stored the items for the Society over the past couple of years. Having started at 8.00 a.m., we finished at Beverly Hills at around 12.00 noon, then out to Alexandria to unload the remaining timber, swell shutter motors, regulators, truaking, pipe brackets and parts of the hoist. My thanks to Ron Smith for helping out with Georges car and trailer, to Will Leeder for again arranging access to Alexandria and to Doug Smith, Norm, Robert and John Wisemantel who made up the team for the move.

When we finished at about 1.20 p.m., it was back to the Wilsons for a most refreshing dip in the pool before sitting down to another of Phyl's beaut salads to round off the days activities. Thanks are due to Barry Tooker for Obtaining some more forarm for restoration and I have obtained some more cushion felt from the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company for the pallet buffers.

I look forward to seeing you at the next work night and until then wish you a Happy New Year.

* The Organ Loft, 49 Boomerang St, Haberfield at 7.30PM on 26/1/77.

'Phone 798 6816 for details.

REVIEW: DENNIS & HEIDI JAMES CONCERT.

Rarely has there been an occasion where members have been able to meet the artists in a social atmosphere before a concert. This was made possible by two very keen members, Ron & Edna Smith of Sans Souci. A barbeque was organised by Steve Mc Donald and the Smith Family and from what I've been told, it was very interesting and a successful evening. Unfortunately, your editor was working and could not attend. On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank the Smiths and Steve for for arranging this gathering which gave many members a chance to get more acquainted with each other as well as having an opportunity of meeting Dennis & Heidi James, and we hope it will not be the last function of this type. The barbeque was held on Thursday, December 9th 1976.

The Concert was held on Sunday December 12th 1976 at 2.30 p.m. in the Marrickville Town Hall. As one entered the hall, you noticed two things the first being the sweltering heat, and the second being the the large YAMAHA GRAND PIANO which was mounted on a dias about 16ft away from the organ console. Opening number was played by Dennis James at the Wurlitzer and this being a beautifully and vibrantly executed "Maple Leaf Day" by Scott Joplin. Dennis then introduced his wife Heidi, who then played a piano solo, Thomas Wellers "Chelsea". Dennis then treated us to that popular novelty tune "The Whistler" and His Dog". Another popular novelty number was performed on the piano & organ by Dennis & Heidi and this was "Poly". The Wurlitzer attained an excellent Glen Miller sound when Dennis played a selection of Glen Miller tunes among which were the "Moonlight Serenade", "Pennsylvania 65000", "Chatanooga Choo-Choo" and "American Patrol".

"Waltzing Matilda", with a touch of Chopin was received with great applause after Heidi James concluded this interesting arrangement. The next item featured Heidi in a piano solo "Ricardti". Finally there was a piano and organ duet, Gottschalk's "Grand Tarantella" which closed the first half of the program.

THE ORGAN STOP

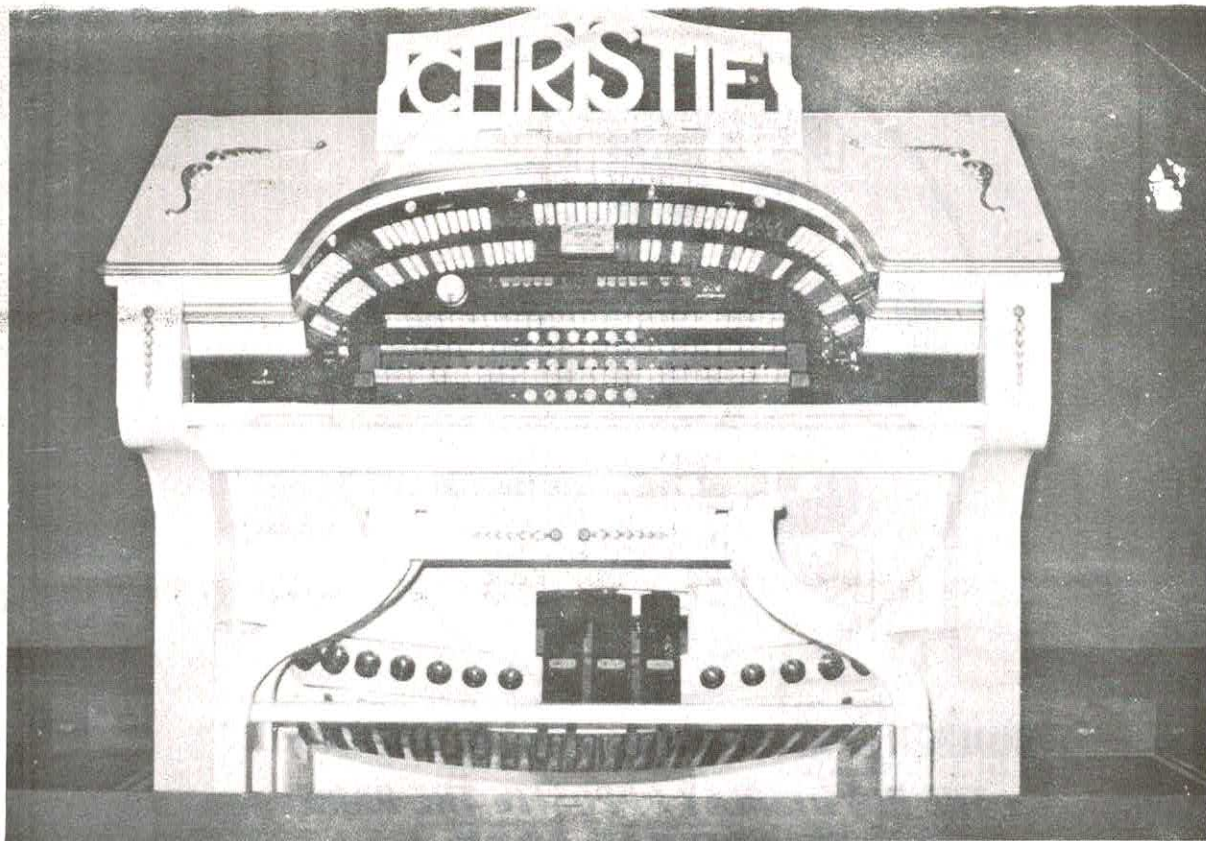
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3/8 CHRISTIE IN THE KELVIN GROVE HIGH SCHOOL.

BACKGROUND TO QUEENSLAND THEATRE ORGANS.

The "Sunshine State", Queensland, will be hosting the 6th National Convention of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia. This is the first occasion that a convention of Theatre Organ enthusiasts has been held in Queensland, so for those who will be making the trip, and those who are considering the same, here then is an historical and up-to-date background to the Theatre Pipe Organs which are and used to be installed in the capitol city of Brisbane.

A mechanical "Orchestrelle" player organ was the first taste of
(Turn to page 9)

From page 6.....

On the second half of the program, we were again treated to a fantastic performance on piano and organ with the "Ragtime Dance". From the film "The Sting", we were entertained with Scott Joplins "Solace". Other numbers which were included in the second half of the concert was the beautiful piece, "Cascades" and the following tunes came "Hi Hat" and "The Continental", the latter being a duet. For the last item, Dennis and Heidi performed George Gershwin's very popular "Rhapsody In Blue", at the conclusion of which came a tumultuous applause which ended the concert. In conclusion the Society wishes to acknowledge Mr. Les Flannagan of Flannagan and Winter Pty.Ltd., who supplied the youthful and colourful corp of ushers, who are all members of the Young Organists Association.

theatre organ music that was heard in Brisbane. This unusual instrument was installed in the Magestic Theatre in 1915, the same year that this house of entertainment opened for business. 9 years later on the 1st of August, 1924, saw the opening of Union Theatres "Wintergarden Theatre". The Wintergarden was described by the newspapers of the day as "Not just a theatre, but a revelation." The first Hope-Jones Wurlitzer Pipe Organ to be heard in Queensland was installed and to open this instrument, Mr. Byron Hopper was especially brought out from the U.S.A. to open the organ. As well, the Wintergarden had its own orchestra of twenty musicians, conducted by Mr. Hayden Beck, late of J.C. Williamsons Theatres. Also, a startling new revolutionary modern lighting and dimming system with a specially designed automatic control which bathed the white painted auditorium into various different colours. There was also a Corp-de-Ballet of twenty. Carpeted lounges, beautiful powder rooms for the ladies, gentlemens Club Rooms and a restaurant with excellent cuisine and a small orchestra and dance floor which was second to none.

Unfortunately, this theatre suffered greatly during the Depression years and its glamour was lost almost overnight. In 1935, the theatres very popular organiste, Miss Ellie Jones resigned. After some years of idleness, the organ was sold to Hoyts Theatres Ltd. and later re-installed in the "Plaza" Theatre, Sydney where it replaced a Christie Unit Organ. The console of the Wurlitzer has since become separated from the original pipework and is now being installed in the "Star" Theatre, Padstow. Meanwhile, the pipework has become part of the 4/16 Wurlitzer-Christie which is now owned by the S.A. Div. of T.O.S.A.

A larger Wurlitzer instrument was installed in the 2583 seat "Regent" which was opened on the 8th November, 1929. The organ was a Style 260 with 3 manuals and 15 ranks of pipes which also incorporated a large Wurlitzer grand piano.

The installation of this instrument was considered among the best in the country. The pipe chambers were located on either side of the proscenium arch, the organ speaking evenly into both stalls and circle.. Originally the polished rosewood console was situated on the left-hand side of the auditorium and was mounted on a hoist. After the departure of Will Quintrells' Orchestra in 1943, the console was moved to the centre of the Orchestra pit. This enabled the giant Wurlitzer Grand Piano to be placed on the small organ hoist and at one time the Chrysoglott was also placed on the elevated stage. Brisbanes "Regent" Wurlitzer became famous during the war years when it received much exposure under the hands of Reubert Hayes with his ever popular program, "Forces Sing-Song".

The organ continued on for many years after, until November 1963 when the Qld. Division of T.O.S.A. held a special final recital. The organ was sold to Dr. King and dismantling of the organ commenced on Sunday the 16th February, 1964.

From then until 1975 there were no theatre pipe organs in Queensland with the exception of a 3/7 Compton which was brought out from England and is now installed in the home of Blair Linnet of Darra. With all of Brisbanes' theatre organs removed and sent interstate the Queensland Division, with the help of C.O.S. members Ralph Bartlett were fortunate in purchasing a "Christie" pipe organ from the "Granada" Theatre, Maidstone, England.

This instrument consisted of 3/8ranks of pipes. The original console was of the "French" or "Cascade" style (similar to the Sydney "State" organ). As well, the was originally a piano attached to the instrument. It was opened in 1934 by Alexander Taylor and was in regular use until 1968 when the Medway river flooded the auditorium and completely destroyed the console. Fortunately, the organ chambers containing the pipes etc. were not damaged. On the opening night in 1934, the pianos wiring blew-up and caught fire and was never restored. T.O.S.A. Queensland however, have since rectified this position.

The Christie arrived in two containers from England in January, 1971. A two manual "Christie" console which was owned by Mr. Don Clark was sold to T.O.S.A. and a third manual was added during re-building. The console, originally came from the "New Empire Theatre" Dunedin N.Z. The pipework of this organ is now part of the 4/16 Wurlitzer-Christie now owned by the S.A. Division.

In June, 1973 the chambers were completed and work on the actual installation commenced.

Wind for the organ is supplied by a 7½ H.P. electric blower which is housed in a building adjacent to the auditorium and is conveyed by metal ducts to the organ chambers.

In the left-hand or, "Main" chamber is the Chrysoglott, from which the Vibraphone and Carillon effects are derived. In the right-hand, or, "Solo" chamber are the Chimes, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Drums, Cymbals, Siren, Bird and Boat Whistles, Castanets, Tamborine, Blocks and Triangle. There are 316 pipes in each chamber, the ranks are as follows:- SOLO: Tibia, Vox Humana, Tuba, French Trumpet.

MAIN: Diapason, Flute, Viol'd Orchestra, Celeste.

A Steltzner upright piano playable from the Christie console is not enclosed and may be moved around the stage. As of the time of writing we have not received full details of the "Sunshine Sixth" Convention, but I hope the information supplied in this revue has enlightened your knowledge of Queensland's organs. The organ which is owned by T.O.S.A. Queensland and installed in the Kelvin Grove High School Auditorium is unquestionably a very unique instrument and has the most beautiful sound. The Christie was opened by Tony Fenelon on Monday November 24th, 1975 in 100% working order. In conclusion I would like to say that a trip to Brisbane to hear this organ is certainly well worth it. Why not try it and participate in the National Convention of 1977. Further information about the activities of the Queensland Division may be obtained by writing to the Secretary, Mr. Warren White, 5 Pyrope St. Camp Hill, Qld. 4152.

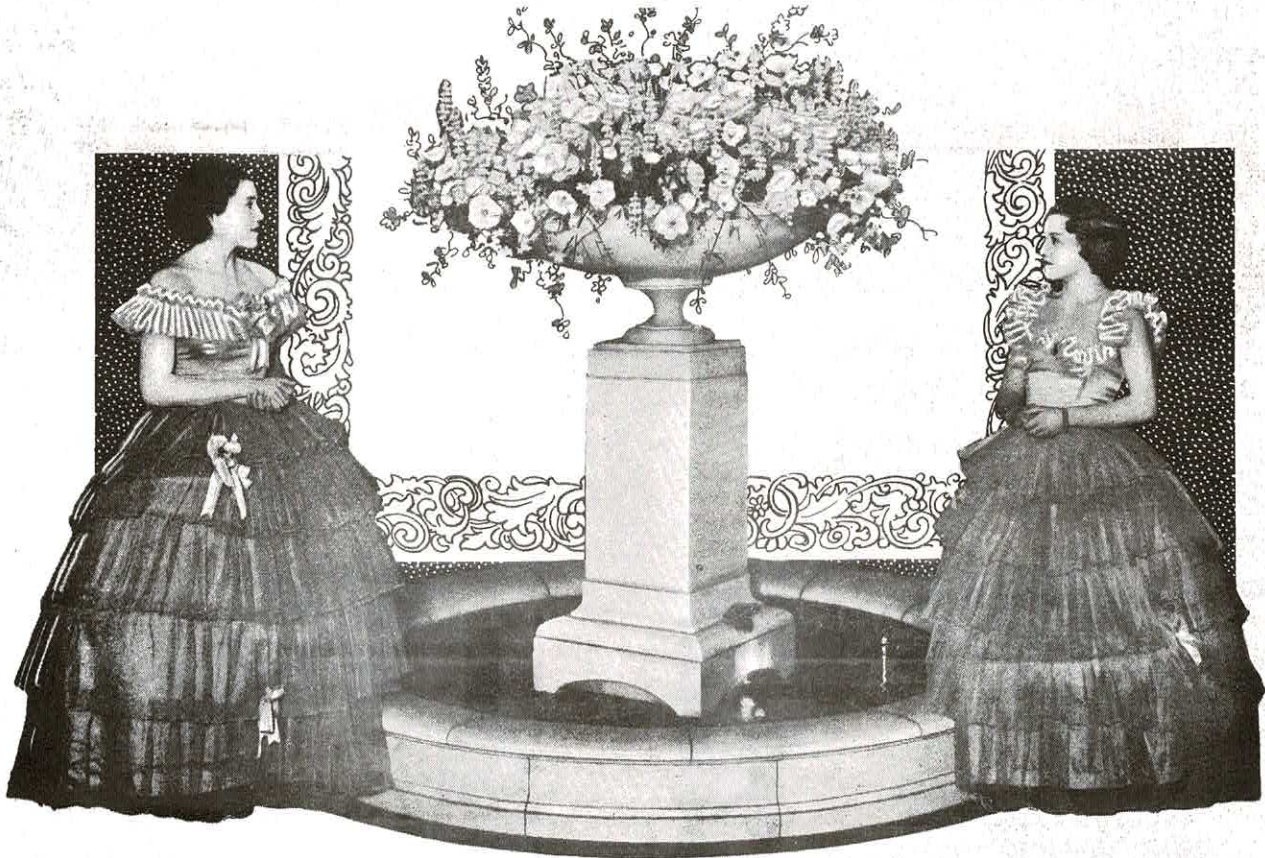
"Showcases of the Past." Presenting No. 11

"The Prince Edward Theatre", Sydney, N.S.W. - by Barry Sharp & Ian Hanson.

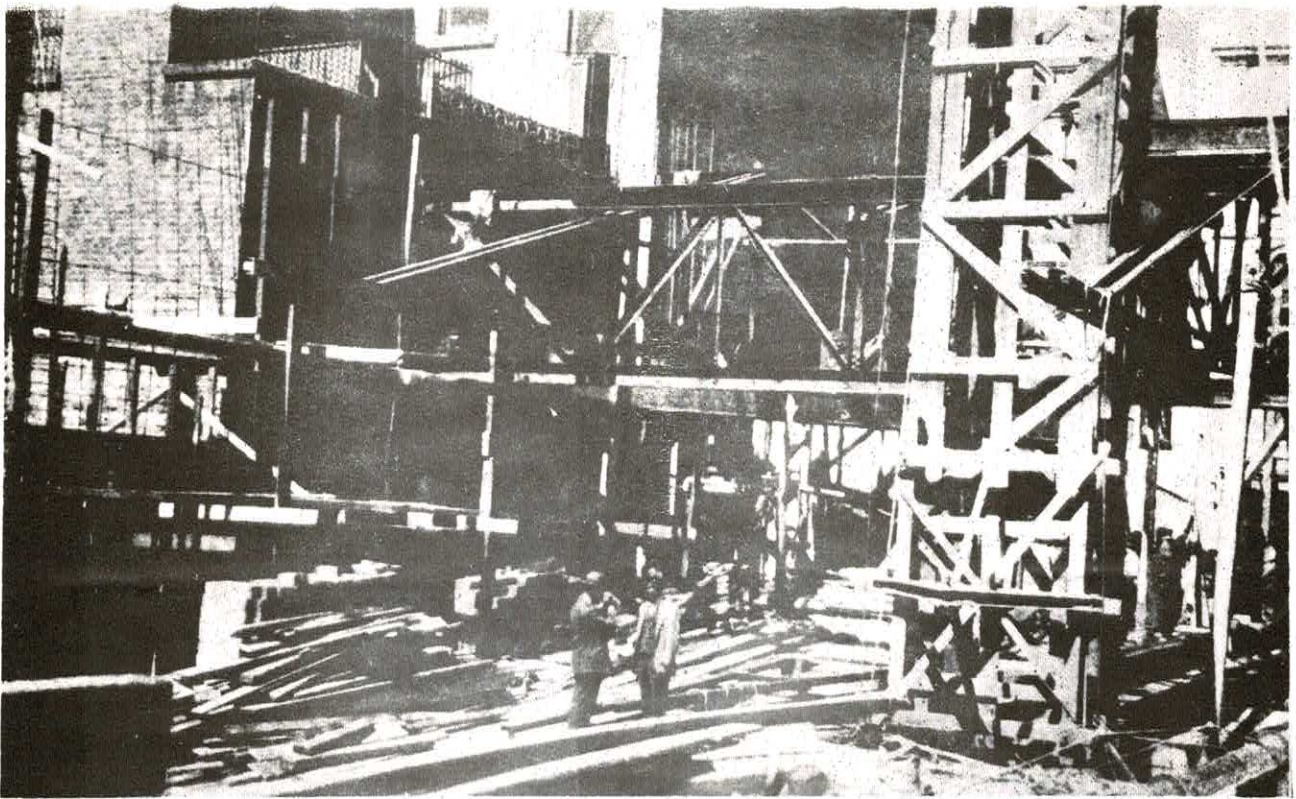
It has been over 11 years since a story of the Prince Edward Theatre has appeared, and after many requests we have decided to bring you this special story which will be told over several issues. The article will be of special interest to those who have never seen the original home of our Mighty Wurlitzer, now installed in the Marrickville Town Hall.

PRINCE EDWARD

THEATRE  BEAUTIFUL
SHOWPLACE of PARAMOUNT PICTURES



Over the next few months or so- we will be recalling the various aspects of the Prince Edward, the elaborate stage presentations, famous overseas and local organists, the magnificent orchestra and several other features which made the Prince Edward the most unique theatre in Australia, and certainly the most famous in Sydney.



Construction of the Prince Edward Theatre, 1923.



E.J. and Dan Carroll.

The Prince Edward Theatre was the brainchild of pioneer showmen, the late E.J. and the late Dan Carroll.

Dan was a clerk in a Brisbane merchants when in 1908 he joined his brother, who six months earlier had started showing one-reelers in Brisbane with a brass band, presenting open-air Summer-night Continentals. In 1910 the Carrolls built skating rinks in Queensland provincial towns, showing pictures in them in summer; that was the foundation of their northern circuit which between 1923 and 1927 was re-built as a chain of modern theatres now known as the Birch, Carroll Six Coil Circuit. The idea of constructing the Prince Edward in 1921 when the Carroll Bros. visited Sydney. At that time all the first-class cinemas were confined to George Street between the Haymarket and Bathurst St.

E.J. & Dan Carroll found that the cinemas operating were of a low standard. The Crystal Palace and the Lyric Wintergarden, both built in 1911 and the Haymarket Theatre built in 1907 were the main show places.

So the two enterprising showmen then decided to erect a new theatre to be designed along the most modern lines then in vogue overseas. This mammoth project was brought to fruition during years of financial distress. The banks and other institutions of the kind had created economic crisis. It took brains and courage to face such a situation and Dan Carroll had both.

His brother was in England so the burden was on Dan. Such confidence was expressed in the project that the whole of the capital was raised in spite of the attitudes of the financial institutions.

A type written prospectus on a sheet of foolscap, with the names of E.J. & Dan Carroll, the location of the site and the purpose of its acquisition were all that was found to be necessary to raise \$80,000.00 in a few days.

With the formation of a company known as Carroll-Musgrove Theatres Ltd., Architect, Theodore Marks was engaged to design a modern up-to-date theatre to screen the most outstanding motion pictures available. Demolition work on the site began in early 1922 and construction of the new building began in mid 1923, (see photograph), the master builders being Williamson and McIntyre of Sydney.

The architectural innovations were indeed magnificent, fine Italian marble and imported tiles retained their lustre throughout the years and the glittering chandeliers equalled those of the European opera houses. A \$20,000.00 Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra was installed and gave melody with every chord.

Technical features of the "Prince Edward" are worthy of note. The hydraulic orchestra pit was the first of its type in Australia, the stage was arranged in such a fashion that a change from live show to films was carried out in seconds. Projectors were of the Australian Cummings and Wilson make and were installed by the theatres' projectionist, Terry O'Shea. Seating capacity was 1,389 which made the theatre into a small scale "Movie Palace". To manage this beautiful theatre, the Carrolls appointed Mr. Hal Carlton as House Manager, Mr. Fred Burr became Stage Presentation Manager and the Orchestra of twenty instrumentalists was conducted by Mr. Will Prior, from the Metropolitan Theatre, Los Angeles. At the same time Eddie Horton was brought to Australia from the U.S.A. to play the Prince Edward Wurlitzer Organ. Opening night was the 22nd November, 1924 and during the evening many important events took place, but a reporter of the day recorded for



CASTLEREAGH St. ENTERANCE.

posterity the impresions we naturally look for when he penned;-
"Eddie Horton from the Californian Theatre, San Francisco was warmly welcomed on appearing at the console of the new Wurlitzer Orchestral Organ, the beautiful mellow tones of which were shown in Sindings, "The Rustle of Spring". Mr.Hortons skillful use of many Vox Humana voices at the climax, where the song-like theme was supported by chroma passages,contributed to an artistic and touching ensemble.Nevins "The Rosary" and the piquant devices employed for "Roses of Picardy"- were features of the brief recital. During the musical exposition the arches in front of the proscenium were flooded in crimson glo. which gradually extended to the great dome in the circle." The opening attraction was Cecil B.DeMills original silent classic,"The Ten Commandements" a Paramount picture starring Richard Dix,Leatrice Joy and Rod LaRogue. This picture started the showcase off with a season of 36 weeks. Apart from the early and continued success of the Prince Edward, The policy of presenting musical entertainment of world wide standard along with outstanding motion pictures paid off. Mr. Will Prior was a popular attraction for some years with his "Prince Edward Concert Orchestra".

The form of the stage prologues or presentations was introduced in the musical policy by the house manager Mr.Hal Carlton. It so established Hal and inspired confidence in him that within a few years he was able to realise his lifes ambition - to have managerial control of theatres in which he was financially involved,i.e. "Roxy" Parramatta and "Cameo",Pitt St. Sydney. .To be Cont.