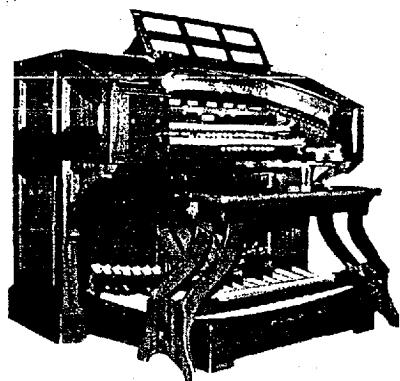
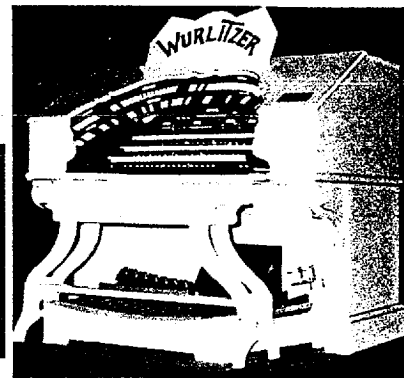


JULY, 2000



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA

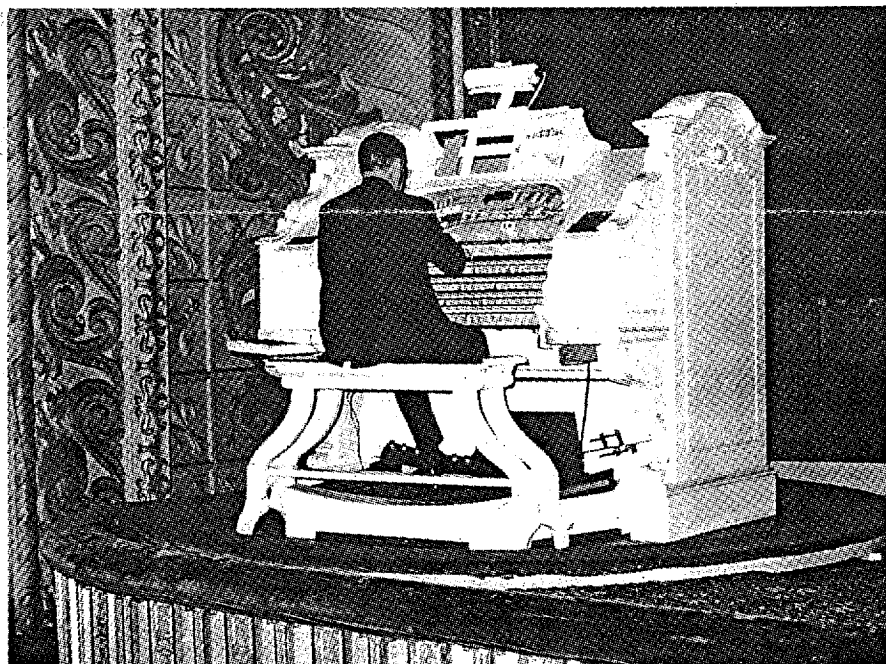


3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

NEXT TOSA CONCERT

Chris Powell

Sunday 20th August
Marrickville Town Hall



*Unknown organist at the console of
the Wurlitzer in the State Theatre*

More news
about the
condition of
Sydney's
State Theatre
Wurlitzer
(See page 5)

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TOSA NEWS

JULY, 2000

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

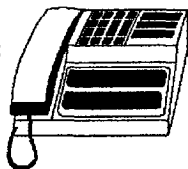
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JULY

Monday 3 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 27 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

AUGUST

Monday 7 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 20 at 2.00pm Chris Powell Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Thursday 24 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

SEPTEMBER

Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 28 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

OCTOBER

Monday 9 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 15 at 2.00pm Lance Luce Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
Thursday 26 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone to confirm 9798 6742

From The President

So, it was **Doctor of Biology John Atwell** who entertained us at the **Orion** on Sunday 18th June! I guess when you're that clever you don't have to prove anything. **John** didn't come on with the hard sell - he just quietly chatted to the audience, then proved he could delight us with his music.

John was relaxed about it all, and the pipes and computer performed perfectly. What more could we backstage people ask?

By the time you read this we will be well and truly into GST territory. That means both membership fees and concert tickets have gone up another 10%. We have done our best to keep prices down but, as you know, our theatre booking fees are high and we are not making the profit we used to. We therefore ask - will you support **TOSA** despite the increase? There are less concerts to save up for this year, which should mean your overall **TOSA** budget should come out about the same.

Stick with us - there are still things for **TOSA** to do - and new ideas are in the pipeline. Thank you to the big proportion of members who have already paid to 2001. If you have still to pay, the renewal form was in the June **TOSA News** - or you can phone **Membership** for one.

Till next month -
Watch this space,

Walter Pearce



Editorial

We had a first-class performance from **John Atwell** in June at the **Orion** - great arrangements (mostly written by **John** himself), a variety of tunes (plenty of jazzy, swing **Gershwin** and **Duke Ellington** numbers), most of them well-known tunes but sprinkled with a few rarer items, wide-ranging registrations and **John's** fabulous dexterity and technique. A real treat for theatre organ lovers. I hope you were there to enjoy this feast of entertainment.

Remember our next concert, Sunday 20th August, is at the **Marrickville Town Hall** and it will introduce a new artist with a great reputation from the **UK**, **Chris Powell**. More about **Chris** will appear in next month's **TOSA News**. Please try to be there to welcome this young man to **Sydney**. **TOSA** certainly needs your support, especially as overseas artists obviously entail increased overheads for the **Society** and recent concert attendance figures have been down.

With the console of the **State Theatre** already being repaired and refurbished, it was interesting to read an expert's assessment of the state of the organ itself. When I saw **Julien Arnold's** item in **Victoria's Vox**. I thought it would be of interest to **Sydney-siders** and it appears on page 5 of this issue with some photos

taken back in 1993 showing some of the obvious, deliberate dilapidation of the console.

Most of this issue of **TOSA News** is taken up with the interesting reports on the fabulous **Festival 2000 Convention**. These are designed to give those who could not attend a taste of the celebrations, and also to remind those who were there of the great entertainment they enjoyed. A sincere thank you to all those who contributed their thoughts on the **Festival** for all of us to think about and enjoy in **TOSA News**. Thanks once again to **Barry Tooker** who supplied all the accompanying photographs and to **Network Graphics** who processed them for clearer reproduction in our newsletter. Without these wonderful people there would be very little to publish each month.

If you have any publishable comments, articles, newspaper clippings, historical photos or documents, etc., please consider sending them in for inclusion in the pages of **TOSA News**. All sorts of contributions are more than welcome and add to the interest of each **TOSA News** issue for our readers.

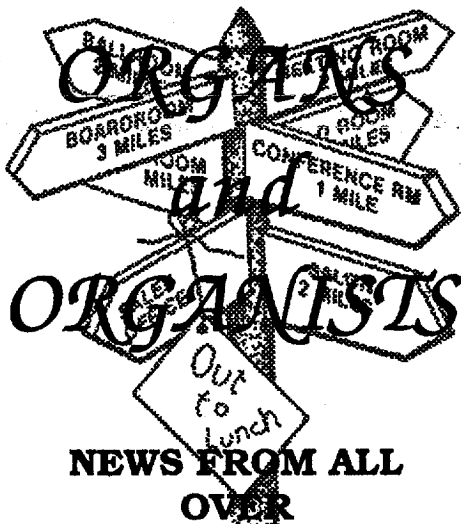
Remember too that we have archives in which we store all types material donated to the **Society** - theatre organ books, magazines, newsletters, photos, 78s, LPs, CDs, videos, etc. - in the hope that they will be of use and interest to future generations of theatre organ fans. So if you have any of this type material which risks being thrown out because no one in your family is interested in it, please let someone in **TOSA** know about it before you have that big "clean-up". As well as the historical value of these items, it is also the hope of **TOSA** that we could eventually have some kind of club-room where all of this material could be on display and/or available for members to peruse and enjoy.

Have you renewed your membership for 2000-2001?

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

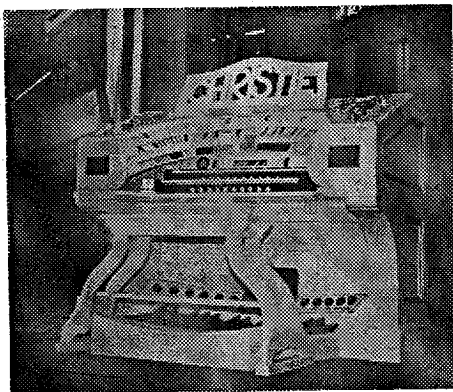
Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

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



MELBOURNE

At Coburg where a successful Opening Concert was recently presented, work continues in pursuit of leaking wind. The audience was well pleased with the sound of the music and delighted to have such an instrument available for future occasions.



With falling temperatures, the pipes are stably holding to the frequency of the tuned percussions, so more time is being devoted to storage and the long overdue tidying of the chambers.

While the organ in the Wilson Hall at Melbourne University is being cleaned, overhauled and the reed pipes regulated, the Schantz organ at the Melbourne Town Hall has been installed, or should I say, partly so? Tonal finishing will not occur until later in the year, subject of course to convenient availability of the hall.

The sad news is that the Diaphones were destroyed in a factory fire on 22nd April. Many resonators of the bottom octave had been stored at West Heidelberg while fortunately the boots remain in the USA. As the pipes were

made from hard-rolled zinc, reconstruction may prove most difficult, especially as scaling specifications have so far not been found.



A pleasant, social evening was had by all present at the Marrickville Players' Night on Thursday, 25th May. The players included Jack Rose, Graeme Costin, Rick Marschall, Wendy Hambly, Bruce Bisby, Walter Pearce, Frank Lewis and Ron Ivin.

The listeners were Betty Rose, Debra Marschall, David James, Edna and Ray Hambly, Neil Palmer and Kevin Clancy.

The date for the next Marrickville Players' Night is Thursday 27th July at 7.30pm, entry at the right-hand rear of the hall near the library.

At the Members' Afternoon at the Orion on Thursday 8th June the players were Amy Caldwell, Ron Ivin, Rick Marschall, Bill Schumacher, Walter Pearce, Wendy Hambly, Jack MacDonald and Tom Barber.

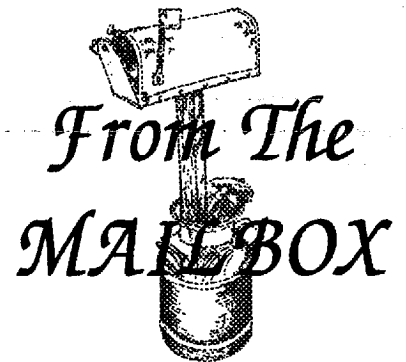
The listeners were Jack and Betty Rose, David James, John Atkins, Debra Marschall, Ray and Edna Hambly and Jenny Pearce.

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Ritchie Willis (TOSA's Transport Officer) of Mortdale has written the only letter received about the fabulous Festival 2000 :

5th May 2000

I would like to thank all those involved with the TOSA Easter Convention. I thought it was a great convention, with good music, very good instruments and a very friendly gathering of happy people.

Congratulation to Cliff Bingham for including Jason Mok as his associate artist. The audience showed their appreciation by their applause. What talent this young man has!

Margaret Hall-Nelson did a wonderful job in organising the week-end. Congratulations, Margaret. Pleased we had such good weather - it could not have been better for all our interstate and overseas visitors, to show off our great city and harbour.

Wonderful to see four young people from other states being interested in the theatre organ. May they continue to go on to be fine theatre organists.

A special thank you to all the artists that appeared during the week-end, showing off their talents at the theatre organ.

Thank you all once again for a great week-end on the *King of Instruments*, the Theatre Organ.

Yours faithfully,
Ritchie Willis

WANTED

TOSA Member George Tanton would like, for sentimental reasons, a copy of the sheet music and lyrics of *When You Come To The End of a Perfect Day*. If you can help contact George at 259 Quartersessions Road, Westleigh, NSW, 2120, or on 9875 1454.

TOSA Victoria's Vox of June 2000 carried this interesting but depressing report from Julien Arnold who was the driving force behind the recent re-installation of a Wurlitzer in the Regent Theatre Melbourne

STATE THEATRE WURLITZER

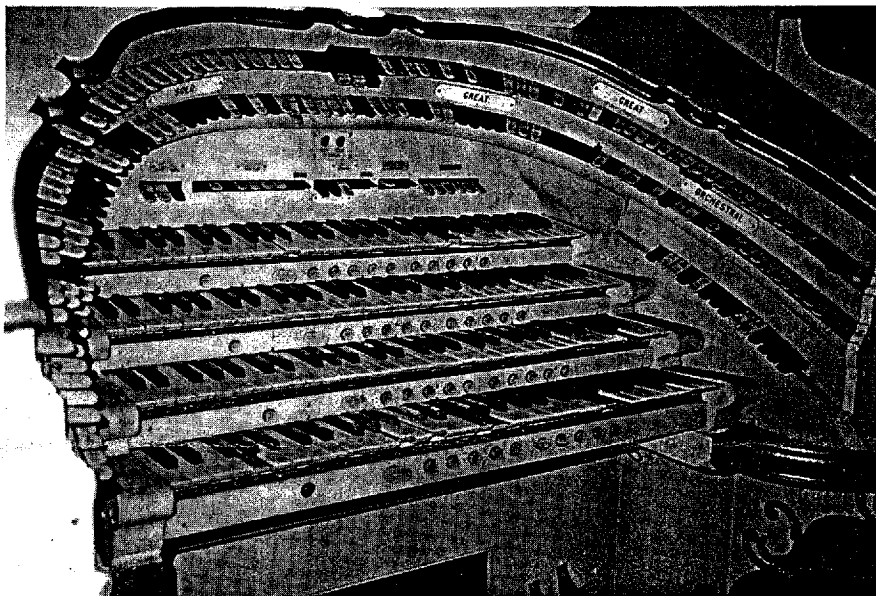
The first stage of the rebuild of the Sydney State Theatre's 4/21 Wurlitzer has begun, with the removal of the console to the factory of organ builder John Parker.

The console has not suffered time as severely as the rest of the organ, which has been 'rained' on over many years, due to the roof being damaged a number of times. Other than a number of console parts being stolen by 'midnight organ supply' from time to time, and the keyboards in need of a total rebuild, it is in a remarkably good condition for restoration.

The chambers, however, are another very sorry story, due to the fact that they are located above the proscenium, and in front of the stagehouse proscenium wall. They are of laminated pine flooring construction, and when the rain water flowed into the theatre from the damaged roof and drains, it percolated through the layered roof of the chambers over the entire area of the organ, dripping down on the pipes and chests. The water went down the pipes, through the pipeholes in the top of the chests, seeped past the pallet valves and on into the chest, where it wet the secondary motors, then travelling down through the bottom board actions, and on down to the wind regulators below, where they too became saturated.

When all this water eventually dried out, the timber of the top boards, on which the pipes were sitting, had shrunk and cracked, the pallets became glued to the underside of the top boards, and the softened glue hardened again to glue the bottom boards onto the chests.

Somewhere along the line, some organ "enthusiasts" entered the scene, and "worked" on the organ. The results of this work wreaked more havoc than the rain. Every reed pipe on the solo chests - Trumpet, Saxophone, Orchestral Oboe, Oboe Horn and



Console with unplayable sections of keyboard, missing piston buttons and original department labels

Kinura - had the reeds, wedges and shallots removed. The reed tongues and the wedges were placed in individual envelopes, and placed on the toy counter loose, but the shallots from all these ranks were thrown into a large cake tin!

The Tuba Mirabilis however had special treatment. What remains of a Tuba Mirabilis in the Solo chamber is a number of resonators, cut from the reed blocks, stacked inside one another, while reeds, shallots, wedges and tuning wires and their guide tubes have all been removed from the reed block and are anywhere! This is a very rare, and expensive, set of pipes vandalised almost beyond repair. The pipework removed from the chests is stacked up in the corner and various parts of the chamber.

end of the Solo chamber which includes all the tonal and non tonal, Harp, Glock, Bells, Toy Counter, etc.

All the swell shutter actions have been removed, some of which have been placed in the tone chute outside the chambers and screwed to the wall, while the completely inoperable Chrysoglott was also placed outside the chambers in the tone chute, but never wired or winded. A lot of wasted effort!

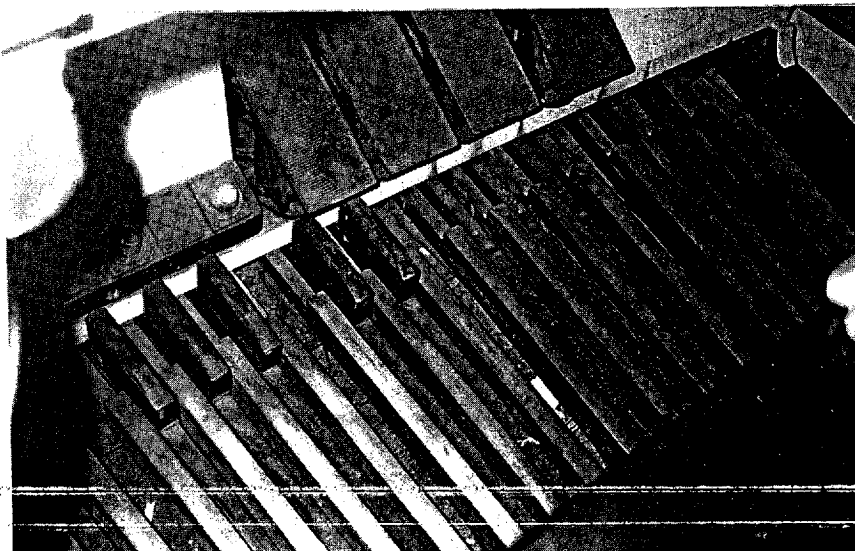
It will be a huge job to remove the organ from the chambers, as the only access is via a 90ft high ladder vertically up the stagehouse wall to the fly grid, across the fly cables, through fire doors in the proscenium arch wall, and down some 8ft into the chambers.

The 32ft Diaphone pipes are lying horizontally on a heavy timber framework

above the earth floor beneath the Stalls' floor and, while very dirty, are in good condition, unlike the regulators which need a total rebuild.

All things considered, it will be a very expensive rebuild, but it should be a sound worth hearing in a few years time, provided the Tuba Mirabilis can be recovered.

The rebuild/restoration is under the guidance of NSW Heritage, via Ray Holland of Adelaide, formerly of Sydney.



Pedalboard with half of the black notes missing (Photos from 1993)

Reports on the Festival of Theatre Organ 2000 (cont'd)

Christie Pipes Plus

3.30pm Saturday 22nd April
Epping Baptist Church
by Trish & Brian Mibus
TOSA SA

Saturday afternoon continued at the beautiful Epping Baptist Church, for a concert with Cliff Bingham on the church's Christie 2/10 Theatre Organ

Cliff opened the program with the rousing March *Let it Go* by Will Wood.

His next number was a quieter piece from the Hollywood movie *Spin a Little Web of Dreams*. He continued with a classical tune, a paraphrase on Psalm 19, *The Heavens Declare* followed by a high school marching song written by Virgil Fox, *Loyalty*. With his rendition of this you could almost imagine being out there and cheering the school on.

Associate artist, violinist, Jason Mok, a 20-year-old Physiotherapy student, then joined Cliff. Their first piece, *Malaguena*, had a Spanish flavour. Jason's virtuosity on the violin combined well with Cliff on the organ. Their second selection was *Minuet* by Mozart, followed by, in Jason's own words, "greatly distorted Western music" the *Hungarian Dance No.5* by Brahms.

Cliff continued with another classical arrangement by Virgil Fox, the *Cantata No 79* based on the hymn *Now Thank We All Our God*. He followed this with a tribute to Stan Laurel of Laurel & Hardy fame, *Stanley*, written by Lyn Larsen. (You could almost see him walking down the street looking at the flowers.)

The bright and lively *Pizzicato*



Polka by Johann Strauss Jr, was his next choice highlighting the Xylophone and Glockenspiel not usually used on a church organ.

An original composition by Harold Ramsey entitled *Rodeo March* was his next piece, followed by Mozart's *Alleluia*, in which you could imagine the voices of the choir singing their parts. The first half finished with an Easter tradition at this church, which started in 1985 when the organ was opened, with the audience joining in the singing of *O Praise Ye The Lord*. The roof was nearly lifted off the building.

The second half commenced with another march, *The Television March* by Eric Coates. His last serious classical piece was John Stanley's *Trumpet Tune* using the splendid trumpet voices of this organ.

Jason Mok again joined Cliff playing *A Romance* by Beethoven, which he dedicated to his late sister. He told us to close our eyes and let the music sink in. (How dangerous to ask us to close our eyes after the bus trip, and this the second day of the Festival!) He next played *Tambourine*, a dance tune where you could use your imagination again to see leprechauns dancing across the floor. And finally the Irish favourite *Danny Boy* including a bit of swing, all played with great feeling.

Again it was audience participation time with a wonderful rendition of *Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*.

Cliff went on to say that an old lady had sent him some music and he had put it aside. When he looked at it he found the words were by G. Clifton Bingham and music by J.L.Molloy - *Love's Old Sweet Song*, which he then played.

His final solo was another classical piece by Edward Elgar, *Pomp & Circumstance No 4*. This was played with straight organ, no tremulants because, as Cliff said, "This organ can do it."

As a finale Jason again joined Cliff to play *Victoria Monty's Hungarian Rhapsody* marinated with a

wild gypsy flavour which made you feel like getting up and dancing.

Their encore of *Amazing Grace* finished a truly wonderful afternoon of great music.

Sounds of Splendour

8pm Saturday 22nd April
Marrickville Town Hall
by Andrew Morison
TOSA Qld

Upon entering a large Town Hall with the knowledge that an 11 rank organ was buried somewhere beyond a thick, far wall, one may begin to question the logistics of the organ-to-roomsize ratio that has been implemented in the Marrickville installation. These were my thoughts as I awaited the beginning of the concert, the fifth in the 2000 TOSA Convention line-up.

The result, however, proved to be the defining example of irony as I sat in my seat some two thirds of the way back from the shutters of Opus 875, a two manual Special Style H WurliTzer. Under the masterful hands of John Giacchi, the organ burst forth with splendid sound that filled the room completely as John opened the evening with his own rollicking arrangement of *We Saw The Sea*, written by Irving Berlin for the RKO Radio film *Follow the Fleet*.

After an enthusiastic ovation John addressed the audience with his natural charm and demeanour, and then announced his next number. The piece, entitled *Journey Into Melody* is the title song of his latest album. It was presented with fantastic feeling, as he utilised the small but effective palette of the organ. Using the sounds of the smooth Harmonic Tuba, Salicional, and Tibia Clausa, among others, John enabled the music to flow from inside him and permeate the audience in a most effective manner.

Next came a selection of tunes, the words of which flowed from the pen of the truly gifted lyricist Gus Kahn. The songs covered the period between 1922 and 1940 and included *Flying Down To Rio*, *My Buddy*, *Makin' Whoopee* (complete with a cheeky whistle on the

2'Tibia!), *You Stepped Out Of A Dream*, *Orchids In The Moonlight*, *Love Me Or Leave Me*, and finally the 1938 hit *San Francisco*. His performance clearly displayed his respect for the lyricist and associated composers and was a genuine crowd-pleaser.

His next piece was one that was not known to me, entitled *I'll Never Smile Again*. For me, the striking part of this arrangement was the most effective expression and feeling that he managed to gain from using the Strings. This, rolled together with his always impeccable timing and taste, made for a stunning and impressive item.

During his announcement of the next number, John stated the need for modern music to be introduced to the Theatre Pipe Organ. The piece he played was *I Know Him So Well*, from *Chess*. This too was performed with much feeling and demonstrated an obvious understanding of the music.

His next number was a tune in no way unfamiliar to any Theatre Organ listener, and would no doubt be found in the repertoire of any serious Theatre Organist. *Serenade* from *The Student Prince* showed some of the prettier sounds of the organ including the Vox Humana and some gorgeous String registrations. His arrangement was enjoyed immensely by the audience.

After those straight pieces, it was time for a touch of light-hearted fun. A medley from *The Wizard Of Oz* was a perfect way to end the first half of the programme, and was perfect for demonstrating the novelty sounds of the organ.

With the interval over, John proceeded to play what we all thought was going to be *Jealousy*. As he continued, however, the tune started to resemble *The Continental*, and in no

time everybody's toes were tapping away to a tune that John named *The Continental With A Twist*. It was most enjoyable and a fun way to start the second half.

Next it was time for a bit of Australian nostalgia, with the theme from Australia's longest running radio serial, *Blue Hills*. The piece, entitled *Pastorale*, written by Ronald Hanmer, was registered perfectly and used a variety of subtle registrations, as well as the Vox Humana in the accompaniment and Solo Tuba played in the right hand. This item brought back memories for many in the audience and if you closed your eyes you almost found yourself in the English countryside.

To brighten things up just a little, John played a number composed by Reginald Forsyth, entitled *Serenade for a Wealthy Widow*. Quite a different piece of music, it was something unusual but still entertained at the same time.

The next selection was one of my favourites and was inspired by recordings made by the late George Wright. John played an assortment of tunes from *Rose Marie*, which included *The Mounties*, *Rose Marie*, *The Door of Her Dreams*, *Indian Love Call* and *Totem Tom-Tom*. This was without doubt my favourite item of the concert, and I can't help but think the majority of the audience agreed with me when we broke into spontaneous applause on the last chord.

Next, also inspired by George Wright, was a note-for-note, chord-for-chord, registration-for-registration arrangement of *Blue Twilight*, recorded by George Wright on the first of his recordings made on the Chicago Theatre organ in the late '70's. I was impressed by the sheer accuracy in registration and style that John managed to emulate.

Without announcement, John broke into a march entitled *Vienna Forever*, and, being obviously popular with the audience, keen applause followed.

John has for some time been an admirer of the works of composer Billy Mayerl, and his next piece was one of these compositions, entitled

Ladybird Lullaby, taken from Mayerl's *Insect Oddities* suite. This piece, having a variety of medium-to-fast sections, was performed impeccably, with some rather cute registrations and tuned percussion effects, and extra expression through the use of the Tuba on second touch.

To close the evening, John gave us the *Poet and Peasant Overture* from Franz Von Suppé. Perhaps being the piece of the night with the most variety, John was able to show the whole ensemble of the organ, from straight registrations, to solo voices, percussions, and subtle String, Vox and Tibia combinations. This, coupled with his technical brilliance and ability to fully grasp every aspect of the music and exploit it with outstanding effectiveness, made for a marvellous close to a night of fantastic entertainment.

But, the audience wasn't going to let it end there. As the applause continued, John made his way back up to the console for an encore. An hilariously funny arrangement of *Never On Sunday* was the perfect "cherry-on-top" - a wonderful evening of top-class entertainment.

The Organ, The Dance Band and Me 9.30am Sunday 23rd April Cremorne Orpheum by Ian Eadie TOSA Tas

1,-,2,-,1,2,3,4, was the count-in by the Master of Ceremonies for the first number of what was expected to be a highlight of the Festival, the coming together of Sydney's premier dance band, The New Trocadero Dance Orchestra, and popular theatre organist Neil Jensen at the console of the *WurliTzer* in the beautiful Orpheum Theatre at Cremorne.

Their opening number of *I'm Going to Lock My Heart and Throw Away the Key* began with full gusto and with the organ still in the pit and out of sight, but nonetheless audible. After several bars, a pair of Easter Bunny type years appeared (not Christian Dior type as Neil described later), followed by their wearer, none other than Neil himself



playing the *Wurlitzer* organ installed in, and complementing, the theatre. This was followed by *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, a second swing era toe-tapper to be played in the easy relaxed manner we have come to expect of this combo.

A drum solo initiated a change of pace to the rumba rhythm which followed, the tune being none other than the tune *Rhumba* itself. This was followed by *Make Mine Music*, also played in the same rhythm. A lovely rendition of the old standard, *Begin the Beguine*, further changed the pace and added to the variety thus far.

Until now, we had only heard the organ as a mostly rather subdued backing to the orchestra, but during the next item, *Honeymoon Hotel*, Neil provided some delightful organ embellishment to what was otherwise an orchestral number.

Neil and the *Wurlitzer* then took centre stage and entertained us with a selection from Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*. We heard all the usual songs from the show, but I enjoyed particularly the variety of tonal colourings used by Neil in playing them, and also to hear the acoustic difference between an organ in a real cinema as they used to be, and one in an auditorium-type situation as many are today.

Carioca, a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers number, brought the organ and orchestra back together, setting the scene for the final toe-tapping number before interval of *Stepping Out With My Baby*, played in a real swing manner that encouraged synchronized hand clapping that continued until the organ had once again lowered into the pit.

The first half consisted largely of tunes which I don't remember hearing the orchestra and Neil play before and

if I had one criticism of the concert it was that these numbers lacked a smidge in preparation, although thoroughly enjoyable nonetheless. The second half, if there was a second criticism, is that it contained many of the numbers that had been heard before at previous Conventions. Having said that, they were obviously well rehearsed and flowed out of the orchestra in a manner to which we are accustomed.

Up came the organ and we were away with some more 'Swing'. *Jeepers*, *Creepers* and another Astaire and Rogers hit from *Follow the Fleet*, *I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket*, really started our feet tapping, with the organ backing in the latter number really bringing it to the fore.

A lovely foxtrot *Did I Remember* followed. The deep tones of the organ at the beginning, the combination of the organ and clarinets during the number, and Neil's use of the organ's Tibias made this an extremely listenable number that tried to 'drag one onto the dance floor'.

Let's Misbehave had us toe-tapping again with the clarinets once again coming to the fore during the number, followed by another change of rhythm and a soft dreamy start to *I Can't Remember Where or When*. This number encompassed some lovely vocal backed by the violin and Vox's from the organ - very nice.

Who else then to be 'tongue in cheek' inspired by for such a concert but Mahler, for an arrangement of *Where the Dog Sits on the Tuckerbox* (*Five Miles from Gundagai*), followed by another toe-tapper, Harry Warren's *Keep Young and Beautiful*. Rodgers and Hart's *There's a Small Hotel* followed, once again nicely changing the pace and the mood with a singing violin introduction accompanied by a lovely restrained backing from the organ.

Edward Heyman penned what was to be the final number. *Boo Hoo*, played in the swinging toe-tapping manner we all wanted to hear, and hear more of. This was supposed to end the show, but

much clapping and applause encouraged Neil and the orchestra to play Frank Loesser's *Says My Heart*, a lovely number to end a very enjoyable show.

A reprise of *Boo Hoo* saw the organ disappointingly disappear into the pit for the last time. It had been a concert well worth waiting for and thoroughly enjoyed. May there be many more in the future.

FOOTNOTE

The entertainment though was not yet over though. After a leg stretch and a few minutes to change the theatre to a new medium, John Thiele presented an audio-visual of the history of the Orpheum Theatre itself. Like most theatres, the Orpheum has had a chequered history, and John's exceedingly well researched history revealed many of the interesting details that were included in either the narrative or in the photographs we saw.

John is becoming an institution within TOSA generally for the quality of his audio-visual presentations, and this one was no exception to what we have come to expect.

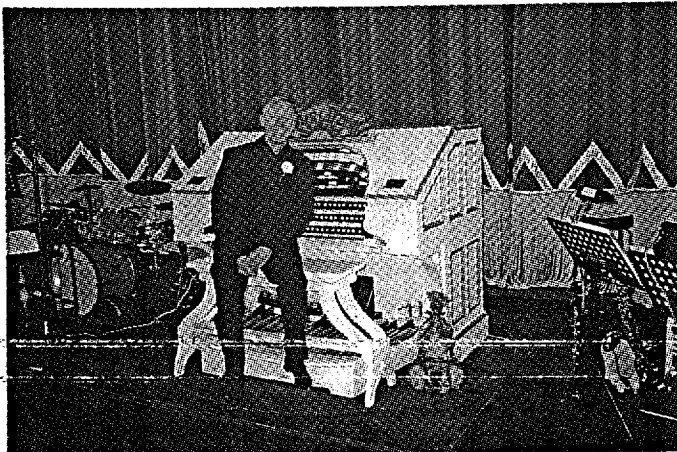
Peckham, Pipes, Pizzazz!

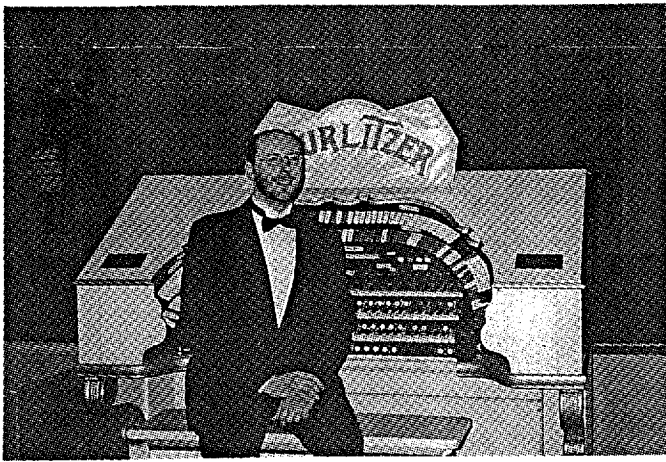
2pm Sunday 23rd April
Orion Centre Campsie

by John Atwell
TOSA VIC

Well, Sunday afternoon came around soon enough, and as if we hadn't already experienced a feast of musical delights already, there were many new and exciting things for us to hear that afternoon at David Peckham's concert at the Orion Centre. I had previously heard David at the Paramount Theatre, Oakland, as part of the 1998 ATOS Convention in San Francisco, and so was aware of what might be in store for us. I was not disappointed. David's original and infectious approach which had drawn me to his music was there again for all to hear, and the audience lapped it up.

David brought the console into view with a spirited rendition of the *RKO March*, which set the scene for the remainder of the afternoon. David's manner at the microphone was relaxed





and subtly humorous, and he soon had a positive rapport with his audience. He invited us to travel with him on a varied musical journey, sometimes in not quite so familiar territory. For those prepared to 'ride' along, that journey was most satisfying. The choice of music was interesting, although maybe not so well known, but varied widely in style, was superbly performed and above all was always played both musically and in a style that appeared to be completely uninfluenced by the console stylings of any other organist - a rare thing these days.

David played one dedicatory piece, a George Wright arrangement of *I've Grown Accustomed to her Face* from *My Fair Lady*. Despite being George's arrangement, the normally recognisable Wright clichés were not readily apparent. Maybe the choice was deliberate.

Selections of the better known, but unhackneyed variety included *Soon it's Gonna Rain* from *The Fantastiks*, *The Way You Look Tonight*, the theme from *Alfie*, a fun *Pie in the Face Polka* from the movie *The Great Race*, and Cole Porter's *It's De-lovely!* His tongue-in-cheek rendition of the lesser-known *Vatican Rag* by Tom Lehrer was a hoot.

David continued a theme set by Cliff Bingham the previous afternoon of showcasing compositions by other theatre organists. Today it was those of Ashley Miller and Dick Liebert, both names associated with New York's Radio City Music Hall. The Liebert selections were *Minuet* from an *English Lavender Suite* and a song with the most unlikely title of *A Bungalow, a Radio and You!* Ashley Miller's

contribution, *Jet Stream*, was used to open the second half. As the title suggests, it was tour de force.

One of David's recent regular engagements in the USA has been accompanying on the Kimball organ a full ballet performance of the *Nutcracker Suite* at Dickinson High

School in Wilmington, Delaware, each Christmas time. He performed three selections from the Tchaikowsky score, the last being *The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. As he played, the spot lit young ballet dancer, Laura Gammell, who stepped out on stage and danced to the very authentic sounds coming from the Wurlitzer, featuring the Chrysoglott soft strings and Clarinet. It was an eye-catching and welcome addition to the program, and probably a first in Australia, apart from Candi Carley's clowns way back in the 1980s.

David showed that he was no backslider when it came to classics - if that is what Robert Elmore's piece *Rhumba* can be described as! It was both visually and aurally exciting with lots of double pedalling - David almost did the splits on occasions. The Robert Hebble arrangement of *Come Down Thou Fount of Blessing* was in a more romantic style, but an equally enjoyable piece.

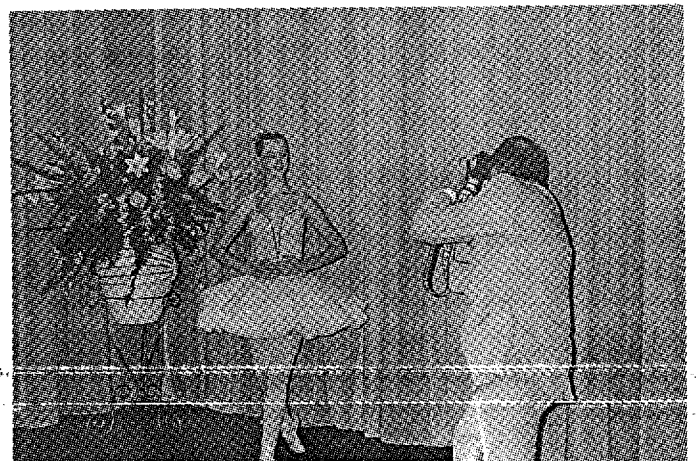
David's closer for the first half was an overture-type selection of pieces from an early Rodgers and Hart musical, *A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur*. This included the pieces *Thou Swell* and *My Heart Stood Still* played in a refreshingly up-beat style, quite different to the way it is usually played.

David's pièce-de-résistance at the

close of the show was his performance of the orchestral piece *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, well known to anyone who has seen Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. Throughout David's thoroughly orchestral performance, I could picture in my mind's eye Mickey Mouse, as the apprentice, unsuccessfully trying to bale out all the water brought in by the magic broomsticks! The piece started very quietly on soft strings, and to punctuate the sound with stronger strings, David didn't go to another keyboard - he just moved the extra string tabs up and down rhythmically to create the same effect. A smart idea. With this selection, David demonstrated just how orchestral these organs can sound in the right hands.

Other things which impressed me that afternoon were the varying textures that he was able to elicit from the organ. I particularly like the way he used the piano in a variety of his pieces. He certainly gave me some ideas which I will try on my next Orion audience. I enjoyed his body language, quite different from others at the console. His shoulders would rise in time on each occasion he made a musical emphasis as if to help the effect along. He seemed to be able to drive the organ with his playing, making it come alive.

I was thoroughly impressed with David's performance that afternoon. Although it may not have been an ideal choice of program for everyone in the audience, I for one enjoyed the new things which David presented to us along his musical journey, as well as the way he dressed up the more familiar in such original guises. Bravo for originality, and may he return to these shores very soon!





Theatre Organ
"Festival" in 2001,
and SA in 2003.

Compere **John Gorrie** made the official thank you's, which included the presentation of 'Oz' gifts to our visiting US artists, **David Peckham**(left) and **Tom Hazleton**.

Following

John's recap of the Convention so far, an overwhelmed (and no doubt exhausted!) **Margaret Hall-Nelson** gave a tearful acknowledgment of thanks for her mammoth effort in the role of **Convention Convenor**.

Soon back in control, **Margaret** spread the good news she had received in an e-mail from **Brian Barden**, General Manager of the **Sydney State Theatre** - the organ (not heard since June 1994) is to be refurbished by **Ray Holland** and **John Parker** for completion in 2004.

Most welcome news, after many years of uncertainty over the future of this mighty (and original) instrument!

The official part of the proceedings ended with thank you's from other divisions: **Ted Lloyd** (SA), **Ian Eadie** (TAS), **Kent Wilson** (Gippsland), **Don Hyde** (Lancastrian T.O. Trust, UK) and **Glenda Kubler** from Queensland, who gave us an appetiser for next Easter, including information flyers of highlights planned for **Qld's FESTIVAL! - "2001 - AN ORGAN ODYSSEY"**.

The music continued with tunes such as *Call Me*, *How Long Has This Been Going On?*, *Fever* and *Teach Me Tonight*. Obviously the hectic pace of the weekend had taken its toll, as most people were content to sit back and listen, with only a few couples venturing onto the dance floor. Others took advantage of the water views before saying farewells. I certainly enjoyed an elegant evening although I didn't seem to catch up with everyone I'd hoped to ... maybe next time?

Sydney Harbour Cruise

10am Monday 24th April

"Royale"

by **Pearl & Stan Higgott**
TOSA WA

It is official - **Conventions** will henceforth be known as **Festivals** and we were in the **Delegates' Meeting** which okayed the changed. That's fine but what do you call the folk who attend festivals - "festivites"?

Whatever we are called, a lot of us congregated at **Commissioner's Steps** to await the arrival and departure of the good ship **Royale** for what we were told was our obligatory cruise on "our 'arbour". And wait was the name of the game. Dropped off at the **Quay** before 9am for a scheduled 10am departure, there was ample time for a stroll around to the **Opera House**.

If we can have one small gripe about the whole weekend, it would be the long waits at various venues for the start of the next event. It seems it was mainly brought about by coaches making quicker trips than anticipated.

At last the **Royale** came alongside, we filed aboard and cast off at 10.20. Because of the general hub-bub the skipper's commentary could not be heard. However this did not really detract from the sights we enjoyed on a beautiful, sunny Autumn day.

First up-harbour, under the bridge, past **Luna Park** and the well known spots, **Darling Harbour** where millions have been spent on impressive re-development. We noted the demolition of concrete wheat silos, whereas in **Fremantle** the retention of similar structures is still being debated.

At **Millers Point** we saw the control tower from which all port shipping, including ferries, is controlled, similar to flight control. At **Walsh Bay** old finger wharves are being converted into expensive living apartments, complete with their own boat moorings. Some Royal Australian Naval vessels are moored in **Waterloo Bay**, but understand that in the longterm the Navy will relocate to **Jervis Bay**.

Then it was time to sail down-

Convention Banquet

7.00pm Sunday 23rd April

St George Motorboat Club

by **Andrea Harrison**
TOSA NSW

A lovely sunset ushered in a crisp, clear evening, and twinkling lights were reflected in the **Georges River** as Conventioneers arrived to the sumptuous surroundings of the **St George Motorboat Club**. The **Function Room** at the club had been meticulously prepared, including attractive table decorations, and music notes on the walls, courtesy of **Margaret Hall-Nelson**.

Traditionally a social culmination of the **Easter Convention**, everyone sat back and relaxed with good food and company as we were treated to the artistry of the **Julian Lee Trio 'plus one'**. **Sally Gwynne**, a female vocalist, set a sophisticated mood with renditions of standards such as *Angel Eyes*, *Willow Weep for Me*, *Green Dolphin St*, supported by the elegant cocktail style of pianism that is well known to fans of **Julian Lee**. Almost in the jazz veteran class, bassist **Craig Scott** provided a flawless foundation while young lion, **David Goodman**, proved he could purr on percussion. I thought it a pity that, even at relatively low volume, the speakers noticeably distorted the voice.

After a delicious main course, **NSW President Walter Pearce** delivered a short and sweet report on the outcome of the **Delegates' Meeting** - 'Conventions' had come to an end; however, **Queensland** would host the

harbour to collect and distribute to hungry customers a very welcome and delicious boxed fish and chips lunch. The hub-bub really died down for 10 to 15 minutes while attention was given to the goodies.. Sweet oranges handed out by Colin Groves put the finishing touch to a nice meal.

Back up the harbour, liberally sprinkled with hardy windsurfers to **Circular Quay**. Time to disembark from a pitching boat. Another delightful **Festival** event was over, and only one more to go!

Festival Finale

2.30pm Monday 24th April

Antique Mechanical

Music Collection

by **Beryl Kingsbury**
TOSA Gold Coast

Our visit to the **Service City Antique Mechanical Music Collection** was a Fabulous **Finale** to the **Festival of Theatre Organ 2000**. A carnival atmosphere had been created with helium filled balloons flying above each table; with dance hall, street and fairground organs on display and a jazz organ playing a merry tune.

The brilliantly lit merry-go-round kindled childhood memories as the organ began to play and the horses went round and round. Restoration is continuing with meticulous attention to detail which will return it to its original 1920's glory.

The afternoon's activities had been arranged to fall into three categories - the tour and enjoyment of the **Museum** exhibits; the musical entertainment; and the closing of the **Festival** with afternoon tea, acknowledgements and farewells.

The multi-talented **Margaret Hall-Nelson**, she of the many hats, first donned her **Museum Curator's** model and, helped by husband **Robert**, introduced us to several of the dance hall and street organs on display.

First, there was the small, almost 100 year old **Dutch** street organ. **Margaret** took us through the workings of the organ, much of it common to other organs of this type which use folded-card, concertina music books with punched holes. It needed considerable effort to turn the wheel to pump the bellows and set the sequence

to allow it to play *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.

This was followed by **The Golden Lion**, a dance hall organ which had been modified and converted to a street or concert organ. In 1896 the **Gavioli Company**, with factories in **Paris**, and **Waldkirch** in **Germany**, built the military band organ on display. This organ was very loud, being used in a fairground to entice patrons to the **Bioscope** (moving pictures of the day). Predominantly reed pipes were used, contributing to the loudness of the organ.

The next exhibit, named for **Tino Rossi** - a piano accordionist and recording star, had a more romantic sound. This type of organ was popular in **French** cafes where patrons would insert a coin in the slot to listen to their favourite music as they enjoyed conversation and coffee.

The **De Cap Robot Orchestras** of the 30's and 40's were built in **Antwerp** in **Belgium**. This organ didn't have any pipes, the sound coming from an electronic organ. The robots performed on saxophone, drums and accordion. When this organ was displayed at the **Sydney Powerhouse Museum**, it was the most popular exhibit. We also loved it.

We now came to the musical entertainment and it was time for **Margaret** to change hats from **Curator** to **Entertainer**. Looking attractive in a beaded red jacket and remarkably fresh despite the late nights and early mornings, not to mention all her other duties, **Margaret** took her place at the **Allen Renaissance** theatre organ, opening her programme with music chosen as appropriate for the day, *It's A Lovely Day Today*. This was followed by a selection of well known tunes from the **Easter Parade** movie.

Carmen Cheong-Clinch, also attractive in a red cheongsam, took her place at the **Bernstein** grand piano, joining with **Margaret** in three duets - the hymn *Praise To The Lord*, *The Almighty*, *Meditation* from **Massenet's Thais**, and a novelty number *Raggin' The Scales*.

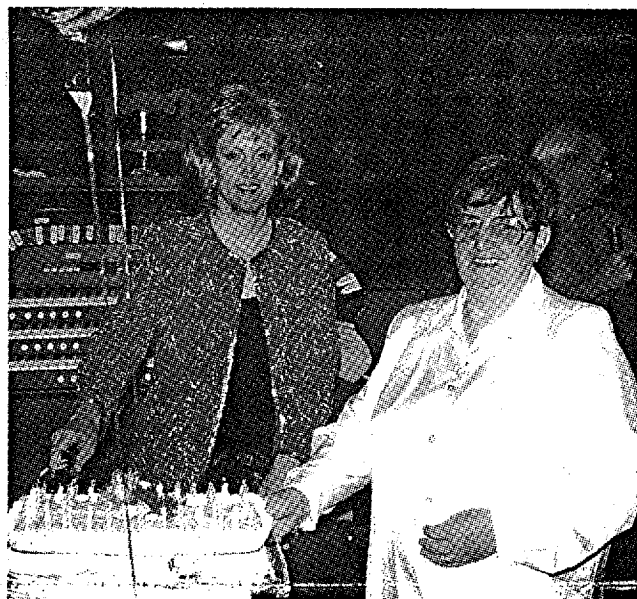
Later **Margaret** and **Carmen** delighted us again with the catchy *Step To The Rear* and *Beauty And The Beast*. **Carmen's** talent was evident as she played a piano solo - **LeRoy Anderson's Forgotten Dreams**. The ladies combined again for their finale, a concerto-like arrangement of **Hoagy Carmichael's Deep Purple**.

Having enjoyed **Tom Hazleton's** playing so much when he "Fired Up The Festival", we were pleased that he was able to be a part of the **Festival Finale**. **Tom** chose *Funiculi, Funicula*, followed by a tribute to **Festival Registrar, Bill Schumacher** (what a great job you did, **Bill**) - *Along Came Bill* and *Love Me Or Leave Me*, all interwoven with *Waltzing Matilda*.

Accompanied by **Tom, Jan Pringle** - a lady with a lovely voice - sang *You'll Never Know*, *Melody By Strauss* and *I'll See You Again*.

TOSA NSW had turned 40, and **Margaret**, now wearing her **Festival Convenor's** hat, joined with Vice Presidents **John Shaw** and **Neil Palmer** in blowing out the candles. President **Walter Pearce** was unable to be present due to family commitments.

Afternoon tea, served by rostered **TOSA** people, was greatly appreciated by all. **Margaret** had a special thank you for a behind the scenes helper, **Elizabeth**. The **Compere** for the **Festival, John Gorrie** (not at all "stuffy" as might have been expected from an ex-Mayor and jubilant that he had sold the last **Festival Souvenir**



Margaret and Elizabeth Cerda-Pavia who decorated the cake, co-ordinated the catering and also decorated the stage and tables at the Festival Banquet

Programme), thanked several people including the **Allen Organ Company USA** and **All Organs Australia**, and the man with the vision and owner of the complex, **Craig Robson**.

Craig spoke about the **Taj Mahal**, the largest surviving dance hall organ, manufactured by the **Mortier Company** in **Antwerp, Belgium**, in the early 1920's. It had found its way to **Sydney** via **The Netherlands** and the **USA**. It features a combination of Christian and pagan symbols depicting love and good luck, as well as having both a **Grecian** and **Chinese** influence in decoration; with copper domes, flaming urns, columns and statuary. **Craig** promised we would see the **Taj Mahal** fully restored at the next **Sydney Festival**, and that we would also be able to ride on the handsome merry-go-round horses.

Neil Palmer closed the **Festival** and we joined hands in singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

We all had a great time in **Sydney** and look forward to the "2001: An **Organ Odyssey**" **Festival** in **Brisbane** with another "ideas" lady, **Glenda Kubler**, at the helm.

John Thiele's Audio-Visual Displays

by **Pam and Barry Quick**
TOSA NSW

Easter's Festival of Theatre Organ 2000 provided a veritable feast of

entertainment for theatre organ fans. The combination of both the theatre pipe organ and **Allen** electronic theatre organ provided the musical foundation for the event which would be difficult to surpass.

The icing on the cake, however, was the extra events woven into the **Festival** in the form of the **Mechanical Music Museum** visit and particularly **John Thiele's** audio-visual magic *It's Capitol* and *Orpheum Picture Palace*, screened at the **Burwood RSL Club** and the **Cremorne Orpheum Theatre**, respectively.

John's slide presentations were a wonderful insight into the golden days of the movie picture palaces, with commentaries provided by fellow **Adelaide** personalities **Malcolm Patterson** and **Barry Hall**.

Conventioneers on **Good Friday** were treated to a history of the **Capitol Theatre** in **Sydney** from its early days to its threatened demolition, and on to its restoration in the 1990's.

John's slides beautifully reproduced the splendour of the interiors of the theatre - a **Roman** forum complete with statues, gardens and an atmospheric ceiling featuring clouds and twinkling stars.

The restoration faithfully followed the original interiors, much research being done to reproduce the carpet in original patterns and exact colours for paintwork and plasterwork.

It was a massive job and **John's** slides took us along each step towards the complete restoration and re-opening of the theatre.

Later in the evening we were treated to a wonderful concert in the **Orion Centre** at **Campsie**, which now houses the original organ from the **Capitol Theatre**.

As one young staff member from **Burwood RSL** remarked, 'What a pity most of these lovely old theatres have been demolished' - a pity indeed!

Sunday morning saw conventioneers at the **Cremorne Orpheum Picture Palace** where we were treated to a wonderful concert from **Neil Jensen** at the **Wurlitzer** organ with the **New Trocadero Dance Orchestra**.

Following the concert, **John Thiele** screened another fascinating audio-visual presentation on the early history of the theatre and its subsequent restoration.

The slides covered the early days of the theatre in its original form, followed by shots taken during the alterations and subsequent restoration into the magnificent art deco cinema it is today.

As building work continues at the **Orpheum**, **John** was busy with his camera and we can look forward to further updates in the future.

TOSA is fortunate to have **John Thiele** as a member, with his passion for visually recording the history of theatres and theatre organs.

A Report on the Ian Davies' Afternoon at Bondi

by **David Devenport**

As the old pop song says, "This is a lovely way to spend an evening". I can recommend a lovely way to spend a Saturday - try an **Ian Davies** afternoon organ show at his **Bondi Junction RSL Club**.

This is an outing where you can treat yourself to an excellent lunch for as little as \$6, then take the lift up to the auditorium for the organ show - and it's free!!

There you are welcomed by **Ian** and **Mary Davies** on behalf of the club - a most friendly and comfortable place, where you can enjoy a drink with your music - very civilised.

Ian varies the artists each time - I think it takes place 2 or 3 times a year

- something he does for **TOSA** so very generously.

On the last occasion (27th May), the artists were **Ian Davies**, **Bill Schumacher** and **Peter Seward**, who all gave their services for the afternoon.

With **Peter Seward** we have a new star rising on the Eastern horizon. A great crowd-pleaser - he got a good hand from those present. **Ian** and **Mary** described him "as having the gift of rhythm". It will be interesting to watch his star rise to the zenith.

Of course, our old friend, **Bill Schumacher**, played with his fine **American** style with a touch of sophistication - shades of **Buddy Cole** there.

I have long admired **Bill's** playing style and with his chord progressions I have sometimes wondered whether he's painted himself into a corner - but he always resolves them. Never a dull arrangement.

Then there is the very full style of the experienced theatre organist in the person of **Ian Davies**, who knows the instrument so well. He goes from bouncing rhythms to soft ballads - very ably played, spiced by stories of his show business experiences and a joke or two. Later **Bill** joined him on the piano for a great finish.

So why not take the train to **Bondi Junction** and enjoy a lovely way to spend a Saturday, as I have.

Report on Neil Jensen's Concert

Sunday 21st May 2000 by *Ron Ivin* Marrickville Town Hall

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was one of the most renowned composers of history. He gave organ recitals all over the **European** continent. He was lauded wherever he went and his popularity increased as he made regular visits to the cities. I guess you are now wondering what this has to do with **Neil Jensen's** brilliant recital! Well, in **Bach's** day there were no electric blowers to supply wind from the bellows to the pipes so **Herr Bach** had to employ a man who went with him to pump the bellows by hand. The story is told that during a rather long piece the man pumping the bellows became exhausted and could carry on no longer. To **Bach's** dismay the organ wheezed to a stop. How embarrassing! These days we hope there are no power failures during a performance.

Just as important is the organ's maintenance - so I come to my point that **Neil Palmer** should be praised from the once Art Déco ceiling to the well-preserved ballroom dance floor for the effort he makes in keeping the organ in "tip-top" condition, in both tuning and mechanics. The organ's stability became evident during **Neil Jensen's** performance when he used the full scope of dynamics, from pianissimo to fortissimo. We hope that **Neil Palmer** will be able to "keep pumping" for many years to come. Congratulations, **Neil!**

Neil Jensen is endowed with an exuberant personality which is evident even, and especially, in his playing. The opener was, I thought, topical - *Something's Got To Give* (hopefully, it was not going to the organ!). This bright piece certainly put an air of expectancy into us, with a good contrast in the middle chorus using an excellent display of Tibias.

Without You left us in no doubt that **Neil** is a master of extended codas. Straight into a selection of *Kiss Me Kate* favourites, starting with a well syncopated *Another Opening Another Show*. There

was also *Why Can't You Behave?* and after this came *Wunderbar*. Did you notice the magnificent bridging? Included in the bracket were other titles like *So In Love, I'm Always True To You in My Fashion, From This Moment On*, finishing with a reprise of *Another Opening Another Show*. Most enjoyable!

Now, **Neil's** versatility was revealed in the classical contrast of **Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake**. A **Wurlitzer** can be made to sound like a symphony orchestra in the hands of the right person. You could certainly close your eyes and think that, rather than **Neil** on the **Wurlitzer**, an orchestra was playing the well known ballet music.

The verse and chorus of *Puttin' On The Ritz* was next - bright and breezy.

The selection of tunes from MGM musicals that **Neil** decided to play included *Swing Trot* from *The Barclays of Broadway*, *Shoes With Wings On*, *Embraceable You*, *By Strauss*, *I've Got You Under My Skin*, *Where or When*, the lilting waltz *Falling In Love*, followed by *I Concentrate On You*, and finishing with *Broadway Rhythm*.

This cavalcade of "well-knowns" brought us to interval and nice refreshments - let's not forget the good people who tirelessly prepare them. After a browse at the record bar, it was time to take our seats for the second half. Having had such a treat prior to

interval we were now anticipating more of the same. As it turned out we were far from disappointed as a great version of *That's Entertainment* was the opener.

Jerome Kern never wrote a bad melody line and one of the favourites is *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*. Contrast again with the following number, *Espana Cani* or *Gipsy Dance* by **Pascual Marquina**.

Sometimes I had difficulty in hearing what **Neil** said but the next number was *All of My Life*, followed by an adaptation of a **Fritz Kriesler** violin piece.

Now a selection of numbers from *Guys and Dolls* - the title song, *A Woman In Love*, *Luck Be a Lady*, *If I Were a Bell*, *I've Never Been In Love Like This Before*, and *Sit Down You're Rocking The Boat*.

Harlem Nocturne received a haunting rendition using all the right colours. Some of the audience commented on their enjoyment of this treatment.

After this **Neil** made praiseworthy comments concerning **Neil Palmer** and his devotion to the task of keeping the organ in pristine order.

If many were asked what they would like to hear from **Neil**, I feel a lot would say **Richard Rodgers' Slaughter On Tenth Avenue**. **Neil** obliged us in excellent style.

The encore was the *Overture* from **Nicali's Merry Wives of Windsor**. **Neil** did the artistically appropriate thing of leaving the audience wanting more, but the time had gone and "all good things must come to an end".

Did anyone else notice that **Neil Jensen** played the entire programme without one note of sheet music. **Neil**, thanks for a wonderful afternoon of top rate entertainment!



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JULY, 2000

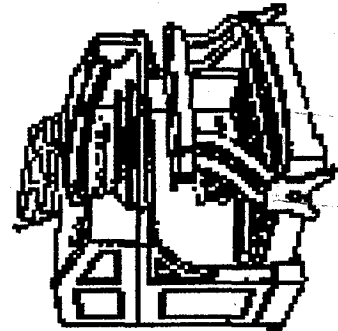
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