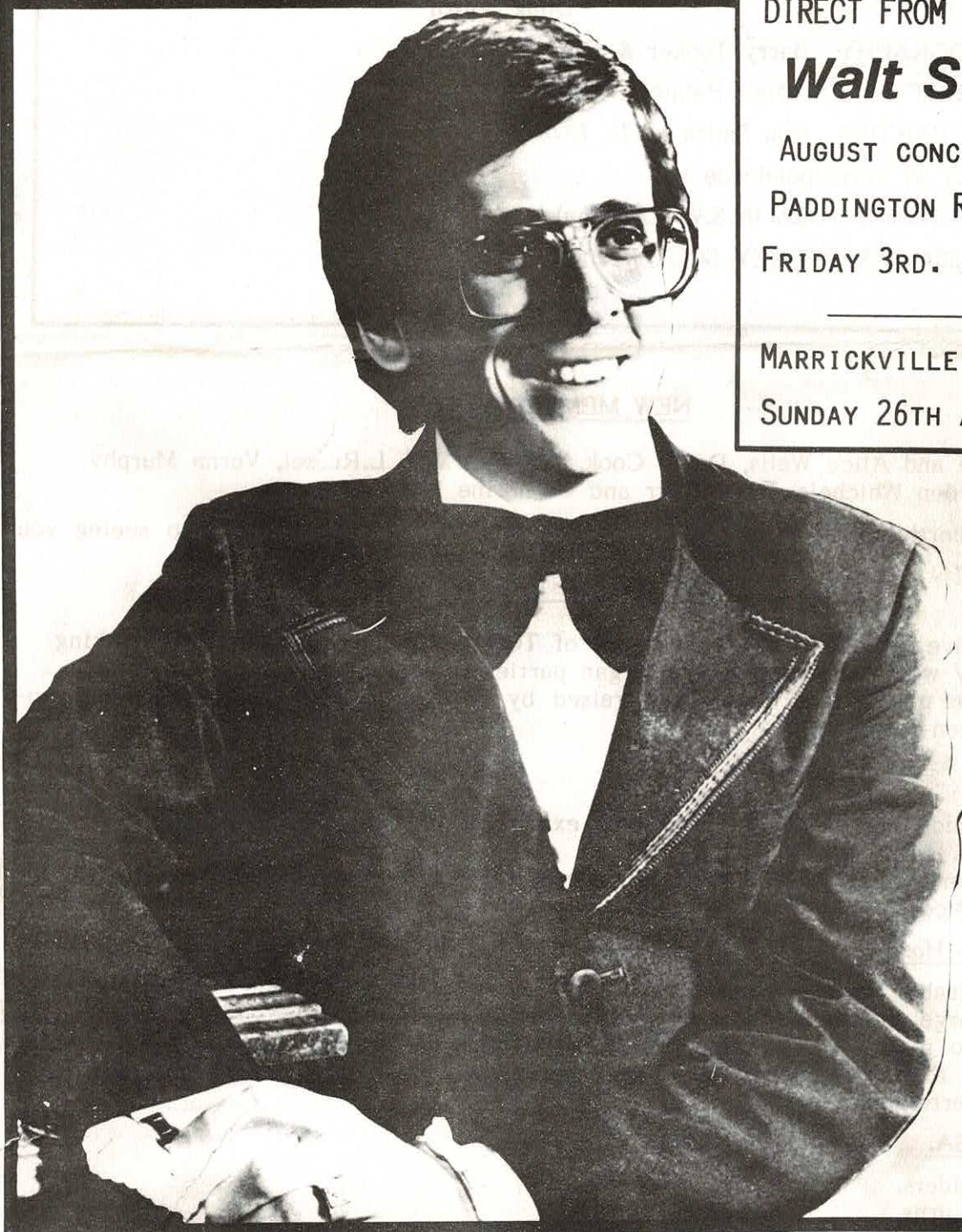
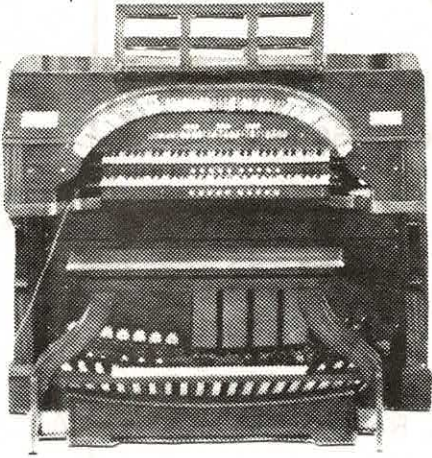


Volume 23 Issue 8 Price 40¢ August 1984

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
Registered by Australia Post - Publication No. N.B.H. 1038*



DIRECT FROM THE U.S.A.

Walt Strony

AUGUST CONCERT DATES
PADDINGTON R.S.L. CLUB
FRIDAY 3RD. AT 8.00PM.

MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL
SUNDAY 26TH AT 2.00PM.

DIRECTORY TOSA (N.S.W. Division)

PRESIDENT Alan Misdale (525 5554) PATRON Ian Davies
 VICE PRESIDENTS Frank Ellis (649 7011) Doug Smith (750 0917)
 SECRETARY Ernest Vale (570 4953 or 798 6816)
 TREASURER Edna Smith (529 7379)
 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Ron Smith (529 7379)
 RESEARCH & ARCHIVES Ian Cameron
 PRACTICE CONVENOR Jim Crombie (750 4294)
 COMMITTEE Phyl Wilson, Ron Wilson, Bill Schumacher, Robert Gliddon,
 Neil Palmer, Ron Smith
 TOSA NEWS EDITING & PRINTING Ron Wilson (759 6050) &
 Doug Smith
 PHOTOGRAPHY Barry Tooker & Ron Wilson
 CONCERT TAPES Neil Palmer (798 6742)
 HOME PARTIES Ron Smith (529 7379)
 Address all correspondence to:-
 The Secretary, TOSA (N.S.W. Division),
 Box A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH. 2000.

NEW MEMBERS

A.Oxley, George and Alice Wells, David Cook, Mr. and Mrs. L.Russel, Verna Murphy, Charles and Doreen Whichels, Doris Carr and Catherine McDonald.

May your membership be a happy and long one and we all look forward to seeing you at our functions.

HOME ORGAN PARTIES

Members will have noticed in the past issues of **TOSA NEWS** that we are often asking members if they would consider holding organ parties in their homes. To clarify some points that have been raised by various members, the following procedures have been formulated.

Object

- (a) To raise funds for **TOSA** maintenance, expansion and further instrument purchases and installations.
- (b) To provide an evening of our common interest, entertainment in which we can make new friends and consolidate existing relationships.

Required by the Host:

- (a) A venue, suitable for say 30 or 60 people.
- (b) An organ, large or small, it doesn't really matter.
- (c) Somebody to play - not necessarily of the calibre required to play solo all evening 'maybe to get the ball rolling' so that others might take the plunge and add their part to the entertainment.

Supplied by TOSA.

- (a) Cups and holders.
- (b) Teapots and urns.

If you would like to host an **Organ Party** in your home, please contact Ron Smith for any details on 529 7379.

August

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



FRIDAY 3rd at 8pm.

PAID CONCERT AT THE Paddington RSL Club, Oxford Street, Paddington.
(Opposite the Paddington Town Hall)

Special Guest Artist: **WALT STRONY** direct from the U.S.A.
Admission: ADULTS \$6...MEMBERS \$5...CONCESSION \$3...
(Ticket details in this issue)

MONDAY 6th at 7.30pm.

COMMITTEE MEETING at 20 Dennis Street, Lakemba.
(Visitors welcome after 8.30pm)

SUNDAY 26th at 2pm.

PAID CONCERT at the Marrickville Wurlitzer.
Special Guest Artist: **WALT STRONY** direct from the USA.
Admission: ADULTS \$6...MEMBERS \$5...CONCESSION \$3...
(Booking Details in this issue)

September

MONDAY 3rd at 7.30pm.

COMMITTEE MEETING at 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.
(Visitors welcome after 8.30pm)

FRIDAY 14th at 7.30pm

CAPITOL ORGAN FUND RAISING NIGHT at Bondi-Waverley RSL Club,
Gray Street, Bondi Junction. PATRON Ian Davies has again invited all TOSA members
to be his guests at this special evening of good entertainment. Guest artists will include
ERIC SMITH and DAVID PARSONS and IAN DAVIES.

Admission will be \$4..per person and the Bistro Bar will be open from 5.30pm for dinner
before the concert. **ROLL UP** and support this important evening for TOSA.

SUNDAY 30th at 2pm.

PAID CONCERT at the Marrickville WurliTzer with Guest Artists:

MARGARET HALL...NEIL PALMER...BILL SCHUMACHER...IAN DAVIES.
Admission: ADULTS \$6...MEMBERS \$5...CONCESSION \$3...
(Booking Details in next issue)

DONT MISS this great opportunity to hear this outstanding line up of our own
local artists. This concert is being specially promoted to raise funds for the CAPITOL
Organ installation.

URGENT S-P-A-C-E URGENT S-P-A-C-E URGENT

Again we are in need of storage space to help with our extra components arriving
soon. If you can possibly assist in this way please contact our President, Alan Misdale
at once on 525 5554.

ELECTION TIME SOON.

Just to advise you that nominations are now open for the various positions in the Execu-
tive and Committee of our Society for the year of 1985. Nomination forms will be
found inside this and the next issues of TOSA NEWS. Please note that the closing date
for nominations is **OCTOBER 2nd, 1984.**

EFFERVESCENT MELANGE FROM RICHARD JAMES

(by Frank Ellis)

Some people may find Richard James boyish and enthusiastic approach to be, perhaps, a little brash, but, if such people exist at all, they were not in evidence in the almost capacity audience at Marrickville Town Hall for his concert on Sunday the 24th June. They all loved his patter which bubbled along as light-heartedly as did his musical offerings.

Since his very first appearance at Marrickville, Richard has continued to be his "natural self" and, as he obviously has just as much fun as does his audience, this is as it should be, I think. It certainly establishes a rapport with his audience that a serious or pompous attitude could never do.

A coachload of Richard's young pupils and parents made the long journey from the Taree area and surrounding towns, to hear their first theatre pipe organ concert featuring their teacher. As they left at 7am and would not arrive home until near midnight, this shows their esteem of Richard as a teacher as well as his personal popularity in those North Coast areas. Especially so, since his 15 hour public non-stop playing marathon.

Richard started the show by introducing 3 year old Nerida Rossiter, one of the young Y.O.A. members, and she played Lady Of Spain and When You Wish Upon A Star. She maintained the high standard so far set by all the young players to whom we have given the chance to appear at our own mighty Wurlitzer. She played in a very competent and confident manner and had the same confidence in announcing her items to the audience. She gave an excellent performance, her items were well registered and she received a warm ovation.

Richard then made his first appearance at the console and his opening bracket of two numbers consisted of a bouncy arrangement of Top Hat, White Tie and Tails from the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film Top Hat linked to that old favorite Putting On The Ritz.

In quieter mood, came an unusual and sensitively played Heather On The Hill from Brigadoon, followed by selections from the show Mame, Ice Castles, the theme from the TV series The Thorn Birds, then in complete contrast were the next two offerings, Beethoven's Song Of Joy, and journey To The Centre Of

The Earth which featured snippets of In The Hall Of The Mountain Kings.

After interval Richard presented the second of his young Y.O.A. guest artists and this was 16 year old Andrea Harrison who gave us a bracket of three Broadway tunes, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Give My Regards To Broadway and Hello Dolly. She then announced that as she was 16 going on 17 she would play the song of that title from the Sound Of Music and this was a highlight indeed for its unusual and beautiful registration and interpretation. Both of the young girls presented by Richard displayed an affinity for the pipe organ not always in evidence in those who learn on an electronic instrument, and much I feel, can be expected from them in the future.

Richard re-appeared to take us through a breezy Oklahoma selection followed by a soft and misty Memory from Cats. We were then treated to a Jerome Kern bracket and a selection from Annie. The grand organ sounds of our Wurlitzer were brought forth with an inspirational How Great Thou Art and the programme ended with the music of John Williams.

A prolonged and wildly enthusiastic ovation brought a smiling and very happy Richard back to encore with a Gershwin selection which of course rightly included a goodly measure of my favorite of favorites.

In the two years or more since we last heard Richard James play our Wurlitzer, his stature as a concert performer has increased enormously, and I would predict that it will not be too long before he joins that select group of Australia's top theatre organ performers.

During the interval, a member of the audience whom I did not know came up to me and said, and I'll quote his very words, "This should not be a free concert - we should be paying for this" unquote. And that was after he had heard only the first half of the programme. I couldn't agree more and I look forward to hearing him again in concert at the Marrickville Wurlitzer in 1985.



From left... Andrea Harrison, Richard James and Nerida Rossiter.



Richard James with some of his friends and pupils who travelled 356 kilometres by coach from Taree just for the day to hear Richard play.

"DOWN MEMORY LANE"

Number 6 of a monthly series
by Frank Ellis

Just before Xmas 1938, Les Waldren injured his thumb and was absent from the Vogue Theatre Double Bay for about a week, it was reported. His place at the console of the Hammond organ was taken by Wilbur Kentwell before Wilbur moved north to take up his residency at the Savoy Theatre New Lambton where he subsequently remained for several years. Whilst at New Lambton, Wilbur became one of the most prolific broadcasters in the country with a fifteen minute broadcast around 8.30am four mornings each week and a fifteen minute broadcast around 6.30pm on the theatre's grand piano located in the foyer on four evenings per week. As my army career had me located in the Newcastle district for a few months in 1941, I was a regular visitor to this theatre and frequently had to wait in the foyer whilst my friend Wilbur dealt with the queue of teenage autograph seekers. Theatre organists were certainly revered in those days believe me.

On his return to the Vogue Theatre following his thumb injury, Les Waldron dazzled the patrons with a selection from "The Student Prince". In fact, a critic of that time said that it was the best organ feature presented in any Sydney theatre that month. Waldron got the utmost from the Hammond without having to resort to the freak tonal qualities so easily obtained on this type of organ.

Friday 16th December 1938 saw Charles Tuckwell open at the Astra Theatre Parramatta. On January 4th 1939, he opened the organ at the Regent Theatre Wentworthville. This was the original organ in that theatre and not the 2/7 Wurlitzer which replaced it later on. Also, in the same week, Tuckwell re-opened the organ in the Astra Theatre Drummoyne following its major face-lift. Charles was a very busy organist indeed at the beginning of 1939.

Manny Aarons was back on the air again from the Sydney State Theatre on Sunday nights at 9.15pm on 2UW. 2CH made some changes to their "Masters Of The Organ" broadcasts during January.

Paul Cullen took over the show on Monday nights, Knight Barnett played on Tuesday night, Jim Williams retained the Wednesday night spot and Dennis Palmistra replaced Norman Robbins on Thursday nights.

This organ broadcast went from strength to strength and had a huge listening audience every night.

Sandy Macpherson landed the job at the BBC London after having been eight years at the Empire Theatre Leicester Square. Ray Chaffer was doing extremely well at the Strathfield Cinema and had become very popular with the audiences at this select house where the patrons were described as "very discriminating".

Denis Palmistra's opening broadcast on 2CH on January 5th was described by a critic as "one which have been hard to beat". Although he was a stranger to the Burwood Palatial's organ and had not broadcast for some years, he played excellently using his stops with good taste and judgement. The same critic went on to say that he almost enjoyed The Donkey Serenade which was his pet aversion. He didn't mind the Serenade its the donkey he objects to.

Heard on 2HD Newcastle from time to time on a Hammond organ was someone referred to only as "Uncle Pete". I think this was on a children's session late afternoon. I also think that Uncle Pete was, in fact, one Peter Rowe, who played in, if I remember correctly, the old Victoria Theatre Newcastle on a Hammond. Peter Rowe would be best remembered by some members of TOSA as the man responsible for maintenance of both the Capitol and the State Theatre's Wurlitzer organs.

In the early days of our Society, when we more or less adopted the Wurlitzer of the Capitol Theatre, Peter Rowe gave the Society a great deal of help and advice in the loving work our members carried out on this very fine instrument. Later, when we became involved in a labour of love on the State Theatre's organ, Peter was once again, a tower of strength. He also took part in one of our concerts at the Capitol held early one Saturday morning. Little did either Peter or the members of TOSA know that the Capitol's wonderful Wurlitzer would become the property of the Society and be removed from the theatre only a few years later. I hope, as I am sure Peter Rowe would have hoped (if he were still alive) that the distinctive and gutsy Capitol Wurlitzer will sound the same when it is finally installed and opened in the new location at Campsie.

TONY FENELON IN THE A.C.T.

(by Doug Smith)

On Sunday June 10th, several Sydney members made the journey to the A.C.T. to attend an organ concert in the suburb of Kaleen in Canberra. It was held in the large (and heated) music room at the home of controversial Keyboard World personality Ian McLean. Australia's top artist Tony Fenelon was at the console of the "top of the range" Rodgers 340 White & Gold theatre organ and gave an excellent performance with a wide variety of numbers.

This instrument must now be delirious with joy for after sitting quietly in a Gold Coast home for some years, it was rescued by Ian McLean and restored to top condition, and is now being played by Australia's best artists. A rich and well balanced sound is projected from speakers mounted in the ceiling area at the rear of the room and the organ console is accompanied by a large grand piano for duet presentations.

I feel that Ian McLean deserves high credit to say the least. In providing a good music room, a high class theatre organ and grand piano (all at **ENORMOUS** personal expense) he seems to be trying to give theatre organ fans a first class chance to hear and appreciate good organ music. Obviously some of the locals haven't noticed yet, but I hope they will soon. Perhaps after all, behind that 7 o'clock shadow a true philanthropist is hiding!!



Tony Fenelon relaxing at the Rodgers after the concert.
(an Ian McLean photo.)

WEHMEIER'S WURLITZER

Most musically designed organ speaks through chambers that have been placed in an adjacent room, or even in an upstairs location above the room into which an organ plays.

There are a few that can sweep you off your feet, so to speak, when they provide melody matter from the ground up, right up through the floor, if you must.

Even the below level installations normally whistle through grilles placed in walls connected to the basement level by tone chutes, or through 'sound setees', which are more or less cabinet-like pieces of furniture anchored to walls in the listening room.

Not so in the Wehmeier residence in Cincinnati, Ohio. Organ tones come right up out of the floor in a two-story entry hall and then waft softly, or majestically through the entire residence.

Ron Wehmeier, owner of one of the country's finest home installations, has his "walk over" organ professionally erected in the basement of his home. To say the job is professional is to compliment Ron's profession—that of pipe organ service and representing the Moller Organ Company. It's a neat looking job any way you view it.

Upstairs the view is one encompassing interior design par excellence with antique enhancing the console and shutter areas; down below the scene represents handsome technical workmanship. And judging from what various organists say who have played the Wurlitzer, Ron's tonal regulation has no peer.

Kansas City, Missouri was the original location of Wehmeier's Wurlitzer-Opus 1949, 220 special-shipped from North Tonawanda August 31, 1928 to the posh Plaza Theatre. Prior to this, in 1964, when he was first bitten by the old devil organ bug, he owned the former Cincinnati Radio Station WLW 2/5 Wurlitzer. It must be added that the bug bite resulted from George Wright's first Hi-Fi record which was way way back in the late 50's or early 60's.

The bite was so big, organ building became his profession in 1965! He subsequently sold his WLW instrument for parts, keeping the Salicional and five rank chest for adding to the next organ he would acquire.

In the present instrument he copied the Wright idea in tonal ideas, from George's studio organ, which he regarded as the finest sounding due to tonal refinements and smooth regulation.

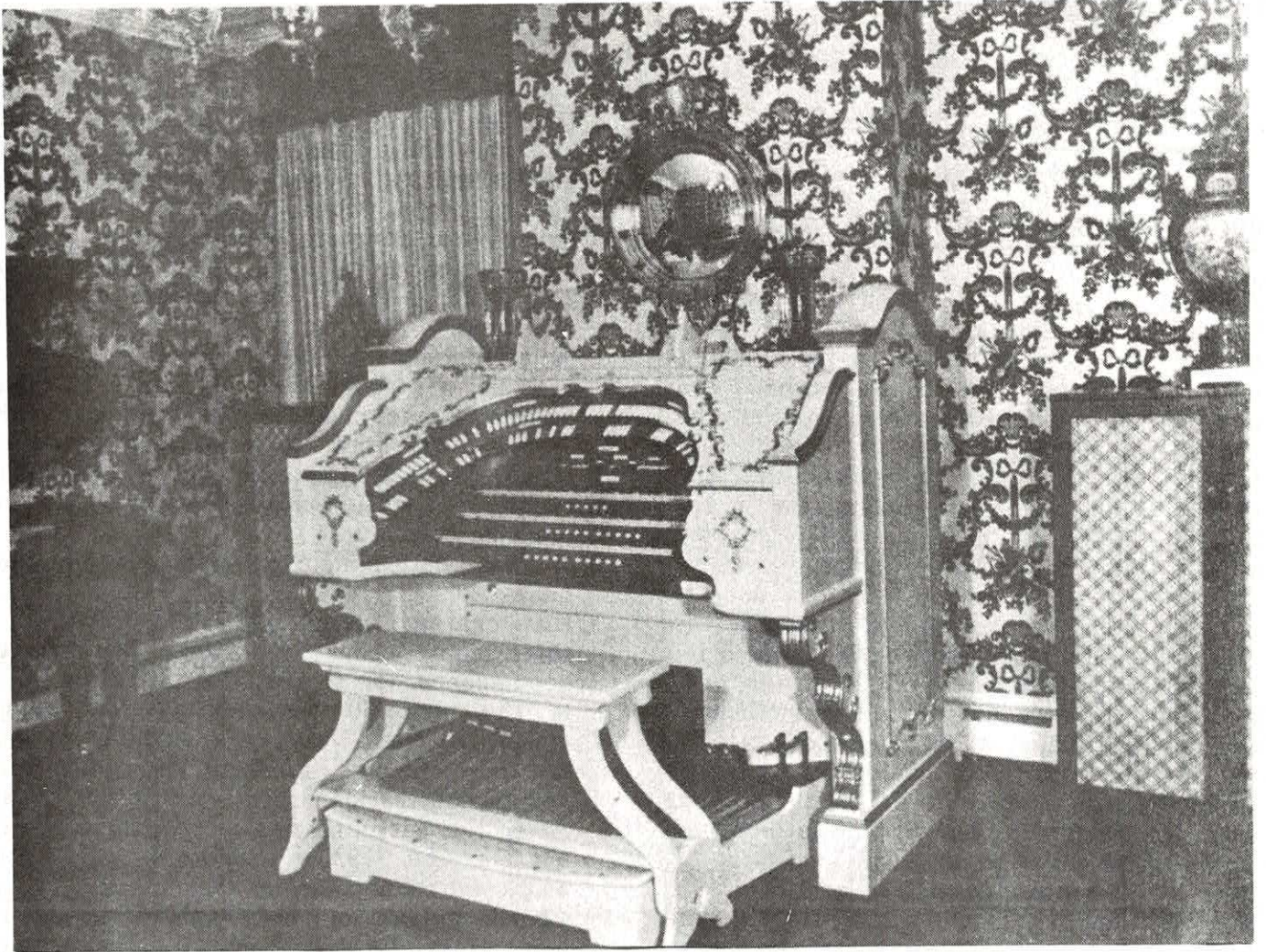
When his organ was being put in place, Ron thought he would increase its 13 ranks to 16—and then be satisfied. **What Ho!** He apparently wasn't! The old Plaza producer sports numerous additions in several departments and now will top out at around 21 or 22 ranks, according to Ron's latest estimate. A single chamber installation, it was planned thus because of space limitations. Chamber measurements are 18 by 22 feet.

Two pianos are organ connected an upright player which is used as a Mandolin and a six-foot-two Steinway Duo-Art Grand which is completely expressive, using the left expression console pedal; piano sustain is achieved by depressing any pedal note, or by means of a slide switch on the expression pedal. The Steinway is located directly to the left of the console in the music room. Sound from the entrance hall floor grille enters the music room through a 5 by 6ft. tone opening in the wall and a 3 by 7ft. doorway. This provides a good balance at the console, without ripping the clothes off the organist's back.

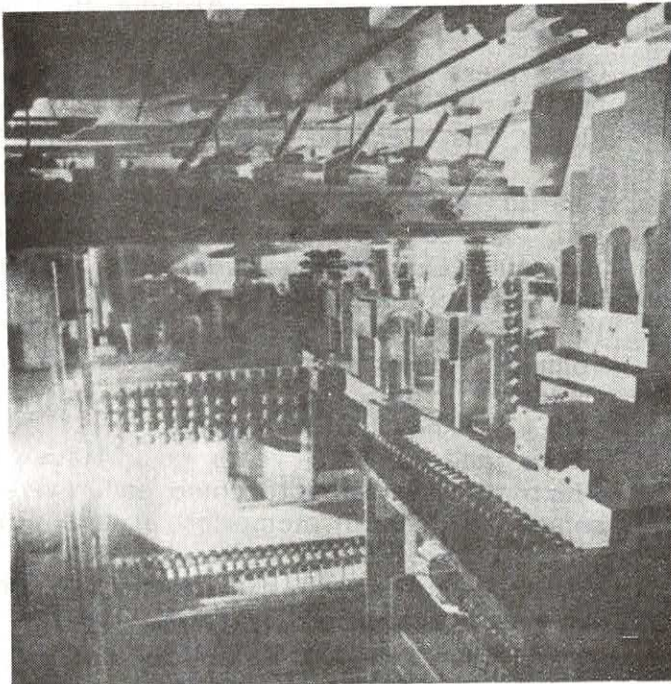
With exception of a new Moller Post Horn and the new Brass Trumpet manufactured by Al Bizik (resonators) and Bob Schopp (block assemblies), all pipework is original and mint condition Wurlitzer. In September 1982, Ron had installed his own style Bell Tree action on the Wurlitzer. "After much fooling around with a number of actions, I was satisfied with this particular one. The unit is powered by the vacuum pump for the pianos. When the toe stud is depressed, a magnet opens the primary valve at the top of the action, this then provides suction to the long accordin pneumatic, and pulls in the striker hammer on the bells as the action moves up the track. When the cycle to the top is finished, gravity drops the striker pneumatic to the rest position, and a spring pulls the hammer away from the bells," he explained.

He also has a Zimbelstern to the right of the Bell Tree which is powered by a small low RPM motor, turned on by a toe stud through a reversible relay.

In addition to keeping his own Wurlitzer in wondrous condition and his Moller contract jobs in top playing shape, Ron also rebuilds player and reproducing pianos and theatre organs and still has time to cook up "extras" for his organ.



Attractive console is placed in richly furnished area of the Wehmeier residence.



Chamber view reveals a neat, meticulous basement installation. Swell shades shown in the ceiling open into the residence through grilles in the hallway entrance floor.



Ron Wehmeier holds right console cap which was signed by George Wright when he gave a private concert there several years ago.

CHARLES TUCKWELL

MIGHTY ORGANIST FOR THE FLICKS

Anybody who has ever been to Roseville Cinema knows Charlie Tuckwell.

He has been playing the organ for cinema audiences since the silent screen era and has no plans to retire, even at the tender age of 83.

He is one of four organists, and the only one on the North Shore. He is renowned, for his musical skill, coupled with a delightful sense of humor.

Charlie is an unassuming sort, and it is not common knowledge that he is the father of Barry Tuckwell, the world's leading virtuoso on the French horn, and Patricia, once a professional violinist but now the Countess of Harewood.

He encouraged both children to learn music while they were toddlers, and both still come to hear their father play during their visits to the homeland.

But Charlie's most consistent admirers are the regular movie-goers. He is still approached by people who remember queuing at the old Arcadia cinema (now the base for the ABC Sydney Symphony Orchestra), in Victoria Avenue, Chatswood when they were children.

In the 1940's and 1950's they queued up at 6.30 for the 7pm sing-along which preceded the picture.

Charlie has so many songs in his head that he often does not need music. Roseville Cinema recently showed the Pirates of Penzance and he could not find the music until the last minute.

It didn't matter though-he played most of it from memory.

"When I used to play for the silent movies in Melbourne I had to play three hours non-stop and you had to make up most of it from your head,"he said.

"And you never knew what was coming next in the film, so you just had to keep up the best way you knew how.

"Sometimes there were pages of what was called 'hurry' music, so you could search for that with one hand while playing with the other for the scenes where people were not rushing around."

Charlie learnt to play the piano when he was three and had his first public engagement in Sydney Town Hall at the age of eight, when he played a Mendelssohn piano concerto with his sister.

He worked in a bank from the age of 15 to 22, a period he describes as "penal servitude."

A scholarship to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music when he was 17 meant he could take night lessons twice a week. I used to work in the bank, practise piano from 8-11pm, and then study the theory of music until 2am every morning," he said.

"I was determined to get out of that bank.

His chance came when he offered a three-month tour of New Zealand as accompanist for soprano Amy Castles.

In the next 60 years he was a school music teacher, cinema organist, broadcaster, cinema manager, chapel-player and demonstration organist in music shops. After the silent movies played themselves out in the 1920's organists were still employed to accompany the "takies".

Charlie played solo before the film began and again in the interval. He worked in Hobart, Melbourne and Adelaide and conducted a regular Sunday broadcast from Adelaide in the 1930's.

He came to Sydney in 1937 and played in the Victory Theatre, Kogarah, the Sydney Plaza, and the Arcadia in Chatswood.

Once there were 18 organists in Sydney, but by 1956 the heyday of cinema sing-alongs was over and television was moving in.

Charlie gave up the organ temporarily and moved into cinema management for 10 years with MGM. He managed the Metro Theatre in Kings Cross.

He demonstrated organs for J.Stanley Johnson's music shop in the Queen Victoria Building in the city, and later at Frank Dickson's shop in Chatswood.

Three and a half years ago Hans Van Pinxteren asked him to come and revive some sentimental memories at the Roseville Cinema.

When he turned 80 the cinema celebrated with a huge birthday party. The audience sang Happy Birthday."


INTERSTATE NEWS
ORGAN MAY MISS DENDY OPENING

The building of the new Dendy Theatre and shopping centre complex is proceeding rapidly. It is possible TOSAVIC will get advice within the next 12 to 16 weeks to proceed with the installation of the Wurlitzer organ, reports the convenor of the Dendy Organ Committee, Gordon Hamilton.

However, there is no guarantee the organ will be installed completely in readiness for the opening of the theatre. Installing an organ as large as the Society's 3/15 Wurlitzer, with all its attendant wiring, ducting and the problems of fitting it into a smaller space than it occupied previously is time consuming, especially when the work is being carried out by volunteers in their spare time.

Even when installation is complete, it can still be some time before tuning and removing bugs that develop bring the organ to the stage where it can be proudly presented to the public.

Dendy maintenance supervisor Bruce Hester, who is in charge of the restoration work, says the team is keeping up to schedule and should be ready to start the installation when given the go-ahead. Quotations have been invited for restoration of the three string ranks, the tuba horn and the orchestral oboe, and also for the ophecleide. The Wurlitzer piano also needs to be reconditioned this too will be done by outside contract. With the new installation it is hoped to restore the second touch on the piano action, which was removed during the first installation at the Dendy, and to possibly fit a sustain button on an expression pedal.

Efforts are being directed still to the provision of a dressing room for use by artists, and a suitable position and lift for the console, bearing in mind it is not possible to have a pit in the new building. It is also hoped to arrange for a better sound barrier chamber wall than the proposed masonite-clad stud wall packed with insulation.

At last Friday night's general meeting Bruce Hester presented a model of the 32 foot diaphone extension, showing how these gigantic pipes will need to be mounted in layers above the chambers to fit the space and also provide accessibility for maintenance.

The draft lease agreement between the Society and the theatre management has been prepared, and will be available for signing without delay when the time comes.

(News source....July issue VOX.)

NEWS FROM THE A.C.T.
WALTER STRONY IN CONCERT

Sunday, August 5th, 2.00pm

Tickets: \$11.00 each.

McLean residence music room
playing the

RODGERS CENTURY theatre organ
2 Shannon Circuit, Kaleen

PAYMENT: Please send your cheque or money order to P.O.Box 170, Belconnen, 2616. Tickets are to be collected at the door on the day of the concert.

ENQUIRIES: (062)41 3710

PREVIOUS BOOKINGS: Your reservations will be held until one week before the concert unless payment is received before this date.

BALLARAT THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
Presents

For the first time in Victoria
Popular Sydney Organist

DAVID PARSONS

Will entertain at the Compton Theatre
Pipe organ

Memorial Theatre Ballarat Sunday 19th
at 2.00pm.

and on stage...

Ballarat & Clarendon College concert Band
and

special demonstration of sensational
BREAK DANCE by a Melbourne Group

Adults \$6 Pensioners \$4 Children and
Students \$2

(Concession for TOSA Members)

GARDEN PARTY
at
Kingsgrove, Sunday 15th July.

Although the weather was overcast and cool, the 44 people who attended had a pleasant afternoon of relaxation amid the extensive garden display at the home of Marie and Jack Stronach.

A hastily convened White Elephant stall did a roaring trade and our ladies and gentlemen earned high praise for their generous efforts in providing the many saleable items at very short notice.

Mrs. Marie Stronach conducted a raffle and donated an excellent gift for first prize. Following afternoon tea we all invaded the house and heard the Yamaha organ played by volunteers from the audience.

Marie Stronach also thrilled us by rendering several songs with her rich soprano voice, very well received by all.

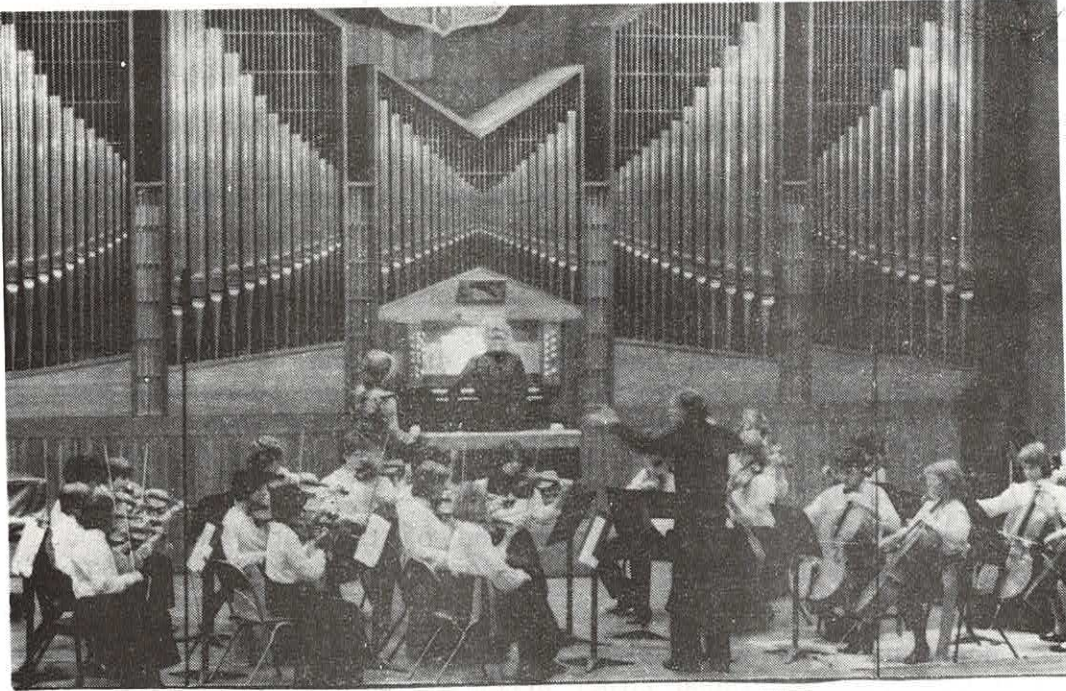
Thanks to all those artists who played and to our fine hosts, Marie and Jack for all their great efforts. The afternoon was very enjoyable, most entertaining and a total of \$300 was raised towards the Capitol Organ Fund.

A marvellous effort from all concerned.

(Reviewed by Doug Smith)



A happy group of TOSA members posing for the camera in the garden of Marie and Jack Stronach.



MARGARET HALL
 in
WOOLONGONG
 (Photos by Ron Wilson)



The Fourth City of Woolongong International Pipe Organ Competition was won by Lynda Kent from Melbourne.

Second prize was shared by Sydney TOSA member, Margaret Hall and David Drury, also from Sydney.

Margaret's first number was Prelude and Fugue in G Major by Johann Sebastian Bach followed by Concerto in Bb Major by George Frederic Handel accompanied by the Sydney Youth Orchestra conducted by John Painter.
 (see photo top left.)

At left.
 Margaret Hall being presented her prize by the Lord Mayor for Woolongong, Ald. Frank Arkell.

FOR SALE.....

Grand piano - German 5'-3". Immaculate condition. Mahogany - one owner.
 Price \$5900 - Phone John Shaw - 759 5825.

Thomas organ - model 1335/9 Playmate with harmoniser. Excellent condition.
 \$1500 O.N.O. Phone 53-8453

FOUND PROPERTY.

Found at the Maennl residence after the home organ party....Ladies' white cardigan. It may be claimed by phoning Phyl Wilson on 759 6050.

BANKCARD.

As from Sunday 29th July, (Ray Thornley Concert), **BANKCARD** will be operating and at all major functions in the future.

It is with much regret that in this issue of "Overseas News" we report the passing of two well known and respected organist/teachers in the U.S.

BILL THOMSON, internationally known theatre organist, teacher, composer and arranger, died on 31st. May, in Ventura Medical Centre following a lengthy battle against leukemia. He was 54 years old. His funeral, held Monday 4th. June at Valley Oak Mortuary in Westlake, California was a unique departure from the solemnity and sadness normally associated with a burial service. In place of traditional organ music, a zither was heard, and there were expressions of praise and love, and humorous vignettes of Bill's life with accompanying laughter and applause.

The service was conducted by Rev. Charles Sloan, husband of the late Irma Glen, whose theatre organ broadcasts over a Chicago radio station influenced Bill Thomson to become an organist.

The service was a vast departure from what might be termed a normal funeral. In place of organ music, Bill had requested taped zither music played by Ruth Welcome. The service itself was really conducted by the many friends and relatives who attended. Rev. Sloan asked anyone who would care to speak about their association with Bill to come to the microphone. Tributes were as varied as those who spoke, but throughout the almost two-hour 'symposium' everyone reflected on Bill's artistry as an organist, composer, arranger and teacher, and his willingness to go out of his way to serve his fellow man. Among those who spoke were:- Ann Leaf, Bob Ralston, Dan Semer, Bill Worrall and Robert Power.

Instead of the service taking on the feeling of sorrow and loss, it became almost and "Irish Wake" - without libation. There was laughter and applause, all of which seemed to take the occasion out of normal funeral solemnity.

T.O.S.A. members will remember Bill for his fine performances and Marrickville and throughout Australia during his tour here during the mid-1970's.

Bill Thomson was dedicated to his music. He was one of the finest organ teachers in the U.S.A. His mother expressed the feelings of his many friends when she noted - "Bill Thomson was a dedicated man to all human beings, and always a gentleman to all. He was loved by all who knew him."

MILDRED ALEXANDER, one of the most famous personalities in the theatre organ world, died Tuesday June 19 near San Diego, California. Details of her death were not available as this issue went to press, but it was well known she had been suffering many years with pulmonary disorders.

Born in Durham, North Carolina, she studied piano and at age 12 discovered the theatre organ. Later her artistry came to the attention of the Hammond Organ Company. She became famous and was with the firm many years.

Her most recent project, other than concert work, was the production of a teaching course on cassettes. This venture was in association with Sandy Fleet, well known San Diego organ buff and businessman.

She was the only woman organist ever employed by Radio City Music Hall, and appeared there in the early post World War II years.

Although Millie never played in Australia many members will be familiar with her name through association with the Hammond Organ and also through her numerous teaching books and courses which have been available here over the years.

CAPITOL THEATRE, PAISLEY, SCOTLAND.

by Ian R. McIver

By now my regular readers (greetings to you both!) will be familiar with Wurlitzer, Compton and Christie organs. Between them, these three companies virtually monopolised the unit theatre organ market in Britain. However, there were several other builders, whose products, for one reason or another, never really made it into the "Big Time". A few of these instruments survive today, and this month our spotlight falls on one which well merits a place amongst the Greats.

H. Hilsdon of Glasgow installed five organs in cinemas, all of them in Scotland. In 1913, the 2 - manual "straight" organ they installed in the Empress, Glasgow, was the first pipe organ to be installed in a Scottish theatre. This instrument was advanced for its time in that it was consciously "orchestral" in design. Their other installations were straight organs at the Savoy, Glasgow and Playhouse, Edinburgh (this has been restored by Scottish Theatre Organ Preservation Society members) and unit organs at the Palace, Edinburgh (2/8) and Picture House, Paisley (3-manual 10-rank).

The Paisley Picture Theatre opened in 1912 (the year in which the Hilsdon Company was founded), with an orchestra which included a reed organ. In the late 1920's, a large new auditorium was grafted to the rear and the original auditorium was reconstructed into an entrance lobby and foyer for the new cinema, which opened in early 1930 as the Picture House, a rather old-fashioned name for that time.

In the new auditorium was installed a Hilsdon organ, containing ten ranks of pipes, played from a (presumably) varnished wood console. At first, it was used mainly with J. A. Davis' orchestra, and the first organist was R. H. Dinwoodie.

For the next quarter-century the organ was a part of programmes at the Picture House, and organists included J. A. Donaldson, Norman Clay, David Clegg, Kevin Buckley, and Sam Ross, the last regular organist. In 1936, the organ was made more prominent, for the console was painted gold, fitted with illuminated sides, and installed on a lift. Since 1954, the instrument has survived a quarter-century of only sporadic use. During the 1960's, however, its main moment of glory came, when Frank Olsen made an LP record for the American Company, Concert Recording on it. Later in the 1960's, the theatre became a bingo hall, and was renamed the Capitol. The organ's console was stripped of its illuminated sides, taken off its lift, and placed at the left-hand side of the orchestra pit. By now it was looking very shabby, its once-gold paint greenish and flaking, and George Geddes, who played it for bingo shows for a while in the early 1970's, smartened it up with a lick of white and gold paint. I myself played it on a few occasions for bingo in 1973/74, and I believe one or two others have also played it on occasion over the years. At present it is not heard at all in public, being played only in private for practice purposes.

Throughout its 51 years, the organ has been maintained regularly by Hilsdon. There can be no greater testimony to the original workmanship and the quality of the servicing than the fact that when I first saw the organ, it had not been switched on, except for servicing, for some two years, yet everything seemed to work and nothing cyphered. I don't recall any mechanical fault whenever I have played it. For an organ of that age and with so little use, this is quite outstanding.

The ten ranks of pipes are listed in the summary specification below. It is difficult to single out individual ranks for special mention, as all are equally good. The Dulciana is unusual in an instrument of only

CAPITOL, PAISLEY ... cont.

ten ranks. The reason for its inclusion can probably be found in the organ's original role of augmenting the orchestra, for although the Dulciana adds little in volume to ensemble sounds, it noticeably increases the richness and fullness of the organ, enhancing the sound without causing the organ to dominate the orchestra.

The voicing of the pipework is along refined orchestral lines. The delightful French Horn has a very smooth, round, tone, and can be used both as solo and ensemble rank; in the latter function it fulfills the role of a mid Tuba. The Tuba itself is the most powerful rank on the organ. Its sound is rather more of Tromba or Posaune quality than one might normally expect, as the French Horn can deputise for it when a somewhat less "edgy" Tuba is needed. In an empty auditorium, the Tuba appears rather overpowering, but once an audience is present, the organ's apparent power is reduced, and the Tuba fits into the correct perspective.

I usually find it difficult to enthuse over Vox Humana ranks in British-made organs, but the example at Paisley (and indeed its counterpart at the Playhouse, Edinburgh) is a real gem, everything a good Vox should be. The excellent quality of the pipework is reflected in the tonal percussions, which are by Deagan an American specialist company, generally reckoned to be the maker of the World's finest theatre organ percussions. Of special note are the Carillon Harp and Marimba Harp. The former is an unusual name for the Chrysoglott, and this is available at the uncommon pitch of 10 2/3' as well as 8'. The marimba is available at 8' and 5 1/3', and these quint pitches afford opportunities for unusual and attractive sounds.

So much for the instrument's tonal resources. One of its most intriguing features is that when one sits at the console everything seems to be in the wrong place. The strangest of these eccentricities is that the manual are Orchestral, Accompaniment and Solo, in that order. Each manual has a character of its own, as none controls more than eight ranks.

The orchestral has neither the Diapason nor Tuba ranks, the Accompaniment has a full Diapason chorus but neither the Vox Humana nor French Horn, although the Tuba is available at 16', 8' and 4'. The solo has neither the Clarinet nor Dulciana. One could almost suggest the manual should be called Choir, Great and Swell/Solo!

The stopkeys are arranged within the divisions by "families" of tone, rather than by volume within pitch, the normal positions of the Solo and Main swell pedals are reversed, and the stops for the lowest manual (Orchestral) are at the extreme right of the console, rather than towards the left, where one would expect to find them. There are no inter or intra-manual couplers, only manuals to pedal couplers. Second touch is available on the pedals (traps only) and the Accompaniment and Solo (traps only) manuals.

To sum up, this is a very individualistic instrument with a glorious sound. What a pity Hilsdon only built two unit theatre organs!

Acknowledgement is made to Charles Hayles' article "Cinema Organs in the West of Scotland", in the December, 1957 issue of "Journal of the Cinema Organ Society" for some of the historical information.

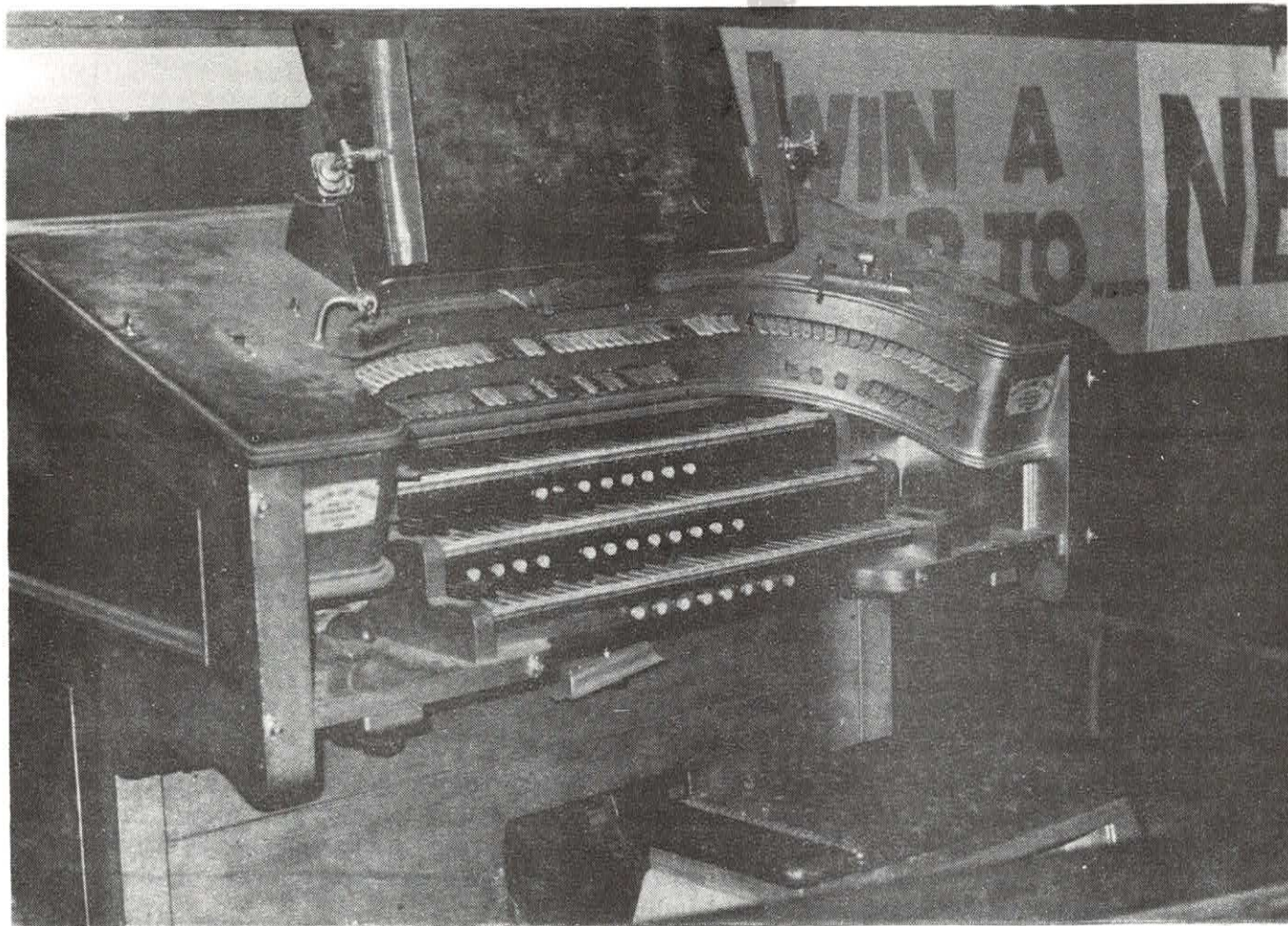
Note: Since this article was written the Capitol organ has been acquired by the East Kilbride Theatre Organ Society for preservation.

SUMMARY SPECIFICATION.**Solo Chamber**

Tuba; French Horn; Tibia; Clarinet; Vox Humana; Glockenspiel; Xylophone; Chimes.

Main Chamber

Diapason; Viole; Celeste; Flute; Dulciana; Carillon Harp; Marimba Harp; Non-tonal percussions; Effects.



(see review by Ian R McIver on page 15)

WALT STRONG NATIONAL CONCERT TOUR DATES.

SYDNEY: Paddington R.S.L. Club, 3rd August, 1984, at 8.00pm - Rogers Trio.

CANBERRA: McLean Residence, 5th August, 1984, 2.00pm. - Rogers Century.

BRISBANE: Kelvin Grove High School, 8th August, 1984, 8.00pm. - Christie 3/8.

MELBOURNE: Village Cinema, Reservoir, 12th, August, 1984, 2.00pm. - Blackett / Howden / Wurlitzer 2/9.

ADELAIDE: Capri Theatre, Goodwood, 19th, August, 1984, 2.00pm. - 4/16, Christie / Wurlitzer.

MELBOURNE: Moorabbin Town Hall, 22nd August, 1984, 8.00pm. - Wurlitzer 4/21.

SYDNEY: Marrickville Town Hall, 26th August, 1984, 2.00pm. Wurlitzer 2/11.

REPORT BY N. WEISMANTEL, MINUTE SECRETARY, OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL ON WEDNESDAY 11th JUL '84.

The purpose of the Meeting was to discuss and reach a final decision of the Draft Agreement submitted by Canterbury Council for the installation of the ex-Capitol 3/15 Wurlitzer Organ in the Orion Centre at Campsie.

The meeting was attended by 48 members.

The President, Alan Misdale, outlined the major decisions that have to be made by the Committee to maintain and improve the Marrickville Instrument and in the restoration and preparation for installation of the ex-Capitol Organ in the Orion Centre, Campsie.

Robert Gliddon gave a report on comments he received, while on a recent visit to the U.S.A., from people experienced in installing Theatre Pipe Organs. His main point was that the Americans expressed doubts on the proposed placement and size of the shutters to allow the organ sound to reach the auditorium at an acceptable level and that a larger shutter area was desirable.

A letter from Cliff Bingham was read. The points he raised were the adequacy of the shutter opening and the provision of the organ sound to the stage area.

Tom Halloran reported that enlargement of the shutter area had been discussed with the architect involved but that Fire Protection Regulations would not allow for any change in the shutter opening. Tom also stated that shutter thickness and width would need to be considered to maximise the exit of sound and raising of the pipe chests as high as possible in the chambers would help.

Various other members then made comments on the installation and proposed agreement.

Ernie Vale, Secretary, reminded the meeting that approximately \$45,000 would be needed over the next three years and we would have to plan how we would raise that amount.

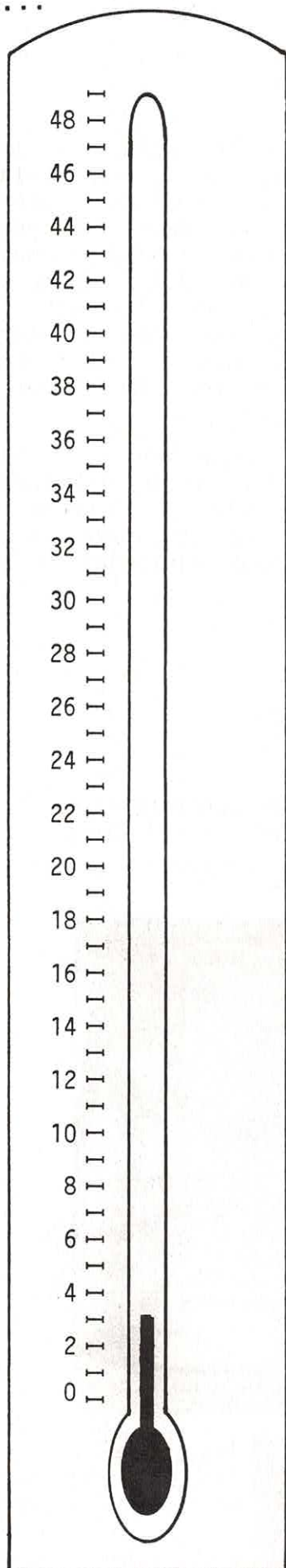
On the question of Trustees, Rod Blackmore expressed the opinion that, as T.O.S.A. was not a Corporate body, it was acceptable that the Executive for the time being act as the Society's agents in all dealings with Canterbury Council.

The following resolutions were then passed by the Meeting:-

- (a) That Canterbury Council provide the Hall free of charge six times per year for Society Concerts and that adequate practice time for concert artists be also provided free of charge.
- (b) That this Society enter into the Agreement with Canterbury Council as submitted except the Council will insure and keep insured the whole of the organ installation against such risks as the Council and the Society think fit to their mutual satisfaction. The insured sum shall be reviewed annually.
- (c) That this meeting resolves that no member of the Executive shall be personally liable for any act or omission arising from the proposed agreement with the Council, and hereby indemnifies such members against any action arising from any alleged breach of such agreement.

The meeting was closed at 9.30 p.m. and refreshments were served.

TO HELP US PROMOTE CONCERTS, PLEASE
PASS ON LOOSE BOOKING FORM.



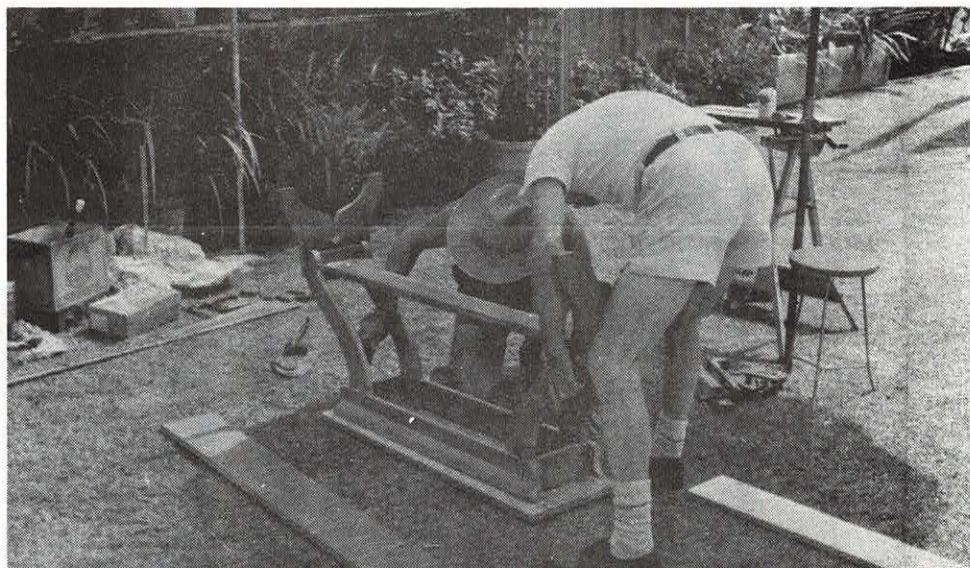
CAPITOL ORGAN FUND THERMOMETER

The executive and committee have frequently been asked by interested TOSA members how the Capitol Organ Fund is progressing.

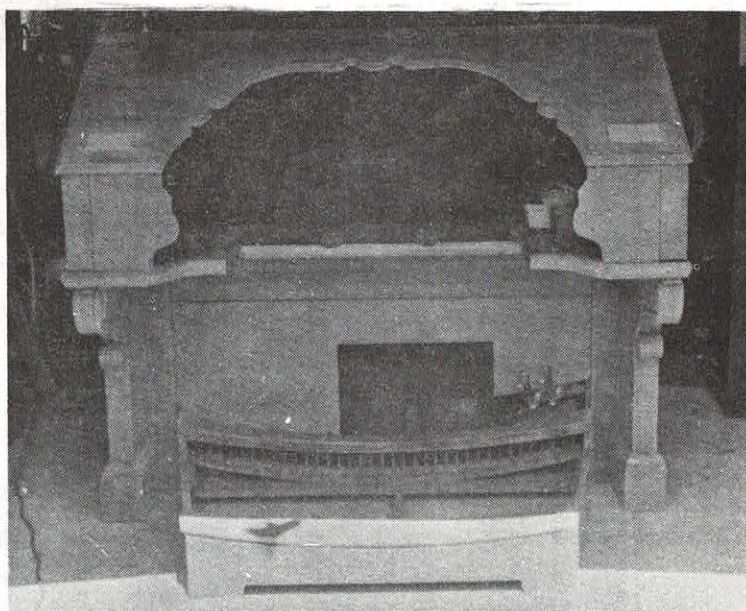
To help members, it has been decided to start a **Fund Raising Thermometer** which will be published each month (space permitting.)

Each graduation on the thermometer represents \$1000, so if you can help in any way to raise funds for this very urgent project by having home parties, raffles, donations etc. please contact your committee.

At the moment the thermometer shows \$3000, so how about making a **MIGHTY** effort to help 'raise the mercury.'



Members Bob Bones and Frank Hickson working on the Capitol seat.



Capitol organ console being restored.