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# T.O.S.A. NEWS.

*The Official Publication of the Theatre Organ Society  
of Australia, N.S.W. Division  
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## FREE CONCERT!



Clinton White



Neil Palmer

Marrickville Town Hall  
Sunday 26th. February at 2pm.



DIRECTORY  
TOSA (N.S.W. DIVISION)

PRESIDENT Alan Misdale (525 5554)  
VICE-PRESIDENTS Frank Ellis (649 7011) Doug Smith (750 0917)  
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 SYDNEY SOUTH 2000.

WELCOME TO 1984 AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

No doubt you are presently suffering from the pains of excess nourishment and perhaps a recent glance at the scales has sent your blood pressure rising with the alarming results. The ugly question has arisen... 'how am I going to get rid of all that?'... Well, I have just the right answer.. Work! Work!

1984 for NSW TOSA is going to be a year of action..the amount of help required will be large..and will be governed not by how much we talk about pipe organs but by just how much we are going to do about them. There will plenty of small jobs for all to participate in...re-felting pallets..air motors..cleaning and adjusting magnets..dismantling pipe chests and refurbishing them back to new condition..glueing thousands of parts..and dozens of other small jobs, all of them most necessary to get our 3/15 WurliTzer back to top operating condition and ready for installation when the go ahead is given.

It will be a virtual painless way of losing weight but will need persistence to achieve it. We will all be notified when the various work projects are set up and ready to commence and I know that you will be anxious to start as soon as you can. Dont forget..this is YOUR pipe organ and what a good feeling it will be when you at the first concert and you can say to your friends..'I helped to put this beautiful instrument together and doesn't it sound great!'

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE.

UNLESS YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEES HAVE BEEN PAID, THIS WILL BE YOUR  
LAST T.O.S.A. NEWS.

Welcome to new members.

A most cordial welcome is extended to the following new members:

Bettie & Eric Hart, N.Goddard, Nell & Mervyn Mainstone, Bruce Mainstone,  
 Peter & Kath Harding, Chris & Shirley Brodbeck, John Crawshaw, Joyce Harrison,  
 Mr. & Mrs. R.G.Porteous, Mr. & Mrs. C.Craike, Lance & Jess McGarry, Mr. & Mrs. L.D.Dixon  
 Mr. A. Lansdowne, H. & G. Farrow, Mr. M.Quinnel, Mrs.N. Webb, David & Jan Gardner,  
 Howard Maugham, Warren & Beulah Gray.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



## February

MONDAY 6th at 7.30pm

COMMITTEE MEETING at 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.  
(visitors cordially invited to attend)

SUNDAY 12th at 10.30am.

↑  
Note Starting Time!

HOME ORGAN PARTY at the home of John & Jill Clark,  
17 Second Avenue, Berala. Ph:649 7497.

This will be a special fund-raising day towards the Capitol installation funds and will consist of a Hamburger Barbecue Lunch including Devonshire Tea, being provided. Bring your music for plenty of entertainment from the organ and grand piano. Leave when you like! Admission: \$5.00 per person. B.Y.O. Ring 649 7497 immediately for your booking!

SUNDAY 26th at 2pm.

FREE CONCERT at Marrickville Town Hall  
Featuring: Guest Artists, CLINTON WHITE (ACT)  
and NEIL PALMER from TOSA NSW.

## March

MONDAY 5th at 7.30pm

COMMITTEE MEETING at 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba.  
(visitors cordially invited)

SUNDAY 11th at 4pm

HOME ORGAN PARTY at the residence of Mr. & Mrs. J & M Maennl at 31 Tenth Avenue, Oyster Bay. A most entertaining afternoon is promised for all with a big Hammond, piano and other instruments to entertain us. This Party is a late starter and food and drinks will be provided for all. There will be dancing and a guest spot by Concert Artist: Miss Margaret Hall. Please bring your own music and have a play. Admission: \$3.00 per person and Ladies are asked to bring a plate towards supper. Ring: 528 6383 for bookings.

SUNDAY 25 at 2pm.

PAID CONCERT at the Marrickville Wurlitzer  
Featuring: NEIL JENSEN just home from his very successful American Tour.

Admission: Adults \$6, Members \$5, Concession \$3.  
Booking forms inside.



TONY FENELON - CHRISTMAS MAGIC AT MARRICKVILLE

(by Cliff Bingham)

If it were possible to preview the content of Tony's program, my reaction would have been one of disappointment in that many of the selections have been played before by quite a few organists; for example, "West Side Story," "My Fair Lady", "Holy City" and so on.

There were two factors however, that nipped any feelings of disappointment in the bud. Firstly, the program was played by Tony Fenelon; secondly, that was what the 680 strong audience came to hear anyway.

Tony's presentation, (including his entrance dressed as Santa, which set the mood of the afternoon), his arrangements, registrations, phrasing and sheer musical brilliance combined to produce a marvellously entertaining afternoon of theatre organ artistry.

The highlights for me were two beautiful ballads, "Through the Eyes of Love" from Ice Castles, and "Memory" from Cats; a Fats Waller-ish "Watermelon Man" and an unadulterated Sidney Torch arrangement of "Bugle Call Rag."

The concert ended around 5p.m. with an encore comprising requests from the audience - a very popular conclusion. In short - a great three hours of musical joy to conclude a very successful year for our society.

Good one Tony!



Santa Claus (or is it Tony Fenelon) arriving at Marrickville Town Hall.





*Tony Fenelon with the girls of the Sutherland branch of the Y.O.A. in their bright red and white uniforms, who acted as ushers.*



*Tony arriving with his bag of "goodies", of all things, ORGAN PIPES!!!*



TOSA CHRISTMAS PARTY at LYNDEL LODGE...Friday 9th December, '83. (by Doug Smith)

This would have to be the most enjoyable Christmas Party we've had for some time. Held in the resplendant luxury of Lyndel Lodge, the evening commenced in a happy mood with cocktails being served outside in the garden in pleasant surroundings, then we all slowly drifted inside to behold a beautiful set-up of party dinner tables and excellent decor.

The three course meal was good and obviously prepared with perfect cuisine and several carafes of wine and soft drink were provided for each table. The service was quiet and courteous and professionally carried out, the various courses being served with maximum efficiency which was a nice change for all.

Our Guest Organist for the evening was Rory Thomas who played a large Wurlitzer electronic instrument to good effect. Several of the 'features' were given a push and I particularly liked the 'German Marching Band' which was presented with a few variations and good rhythm. I do think the wonder human voice 'Mildred' does urgently need singing lessons though. Along with the show biz accent of our artist, the instrument was accepted quite well by our audience and we had about an hour of entertainment slightly contrasting to what we normally hear at TOSA parties. Rory Thomas did a good job and had obviously given his program some thought.

The star turn for the night was Guest Entertainer Paul Maybury who was superb with his rich baritone voice and plenty of good jokes to amuse us. Paul Maybury kept us on the edge of our seats for about 40 mins and the entire presentation was filled with top class entertainment and some excellent songs. Paul ended his segment with a great rendition of 'Ol' Man River' and the crowd called for more but unfortunately time was running out. Paul Maybury was accompanied by Rory Thomas and together they must be described as tops!

Rory Thomas and John Shaw then combined on organ and piano for dancing which was popular with everyone and went for some time. After a rest, TOSA member Bill Schumacher and Rory Thomas combined on both instruments and more dancing got under way. This included the ever popular Barn Dance and when this became progressive I got my chance to check out all the girls and on the final round I ended up with my good wife, perfect timing indeed!

Our sincere thanks to John Shaw for being the brainchild of this evening and to all the helpers who assisted and also to Mrs. Phyl Wilson who conducted a raffle to help our very needy Capitol installation funds. The total amount raised was \$186, a very worthy effort. The whole evening was a huge success and perhaps I can now say that after several years of digging for a Christmas spot we have at last struck oil!

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

For sale... LOWREY PROMENADE Theatre console organ, condition as new. Two 61 keyboards with symphonic strings and 15 rhythms - magic genie. \$8750 (neg.)  
For all enquiries, please ring 665 3048.

For sale... CON THEATRE ORGAN model 643 - full pedal board plus extension pipes.  
\$4000 - negotiable.  
For all enquiries, please contact Mr. Paul Swadling at work - Australian Council of Churches, 199 Clarence Street, Sydney, phone 294126. Home 44 4605.

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HOME ORGAN PARTY NEWS.

Newly elected committee man, Ron Smith, has been appointed organizer for all home parties.  
Members wishing to hold a home party should contact Ron, (phone number 529 7379) who will only be too happy to help you with details.





*Members and friends enjoying the entertainment*



*Bill Schumacher*



*Paul Maybury*



*Rory Thomas - Piano Bill Schumacher - organ*

*At right.  
Cocktails in the garden.*





Monday 28th November saw an excited audience of parents and children gathered for the important NSW Final of the Lowrey Quest '83, at the Bankstown Sports Club. Several Lowrey dealers had been very active during the year in the promotion of this Lowrey Quest in NSW and had Generously donated \$100 for each winner of the respective age groups, plus a trophy for all place getters. After numerous heats, this night was the big one for all, including the parents and friends.

Hearty congratulations to all the participants who showed us all what they can do, with some very exciting music being presented. The judging panel for the evening had a hard time and some of the final decisions were very close indeed. The two M.C's for the evening were Bob Powell from Woolongong and Eddie Stoddart from Bankstown.



*The winners from left to right are;  
Michael Rohanek, Theresa Capola, Sue Anne Brownack, Michael Chin.*

#### GET WELL SOON....

At the Tony Fenelon concert in December it was good to see well known member Mal Mackay amongst us once again. After enduring major surgery in the form of a heart by - pass, Mal had only been discharged from hospital on the previous Friday and rested all the week - end so he could make it to Tony's concert... a fine example of great dedication. Welcome back Mal and we know that you are well on the road to a great recovery.

Member Dennis Bryant from Ermington underwent major surgery for a triple by - pass heart operation on the 29th of December.  
From all your fellow members and friends, a speedy recovery Dennis.

#### T.O.S.A. NSW Division has for sale the following;

A quantity of new 10" reels of recording tape.

One only Copyrapid Offset metal plate maker, Model 0 - 30, complete with chemicals and plates.

For enquiries, please phone Ron Wilson on 759 6050, or by writing to Box No.A584 P.O. Sydney South 2000



TOSA HOME PARTY at the SELWYN THEATRE (by Cec Paddy) 27th November '83.

A Sunday afternoon very dull and cloudy soon turned sunny inside the Selwyn Theatre when John Clark & Neil Palmer let go with some great music which covered from ragtime to ballads plus some duets on piano and organ.

Included were As Long As He Needs Me, Ballad For Adeline and Cant Help Falling In Love. Neil played the lovely theme from An Officer And A Gentleman in an excellent piano solo plus other tunes.

John Clark, dressed in long white fur ears and a fluffy tail, looked quite right for his act (he'd effected a quick change behind a blanket!) and played On With The Show, Everybody's Doin' It, My Curly Headed Baby which was beautiful then jazzed it up with a few more happy songs. John then did a recitation with me which was well received by the audience.

Friend Ritchie, resplendant in cowboy attire including a ten gallon hat, then did a monologue with live sound effects from Sally the dog who either loves or hates monologues, we couldn't decide which. Perhaps she didn't like the feathers on her master's hat. We just missed the rain at afternoon tea time, which was a lovely spread as usual, thanks to the ladies.

The second half of the afternoon was a very happy affair being mostly piano and organ duets plus a very nice interlude by Joyce Lawton who played the organ for her first performance at the Selwyn and we hope it wont be her last. Thank you to Joyce and very well done. One of the last items for the afternoon was the popular Twelfth St. Rag with John and Neil on the piano and myself on the organ. Everything was going fine until the 3rd chorus when I got 'lost' and amid cheers and laughter from the audience I fled the scene and Neil and John carried on to finish the number. The audience wanted more but it was time to go and so another most enjoyable afternoon at the Selwyn came to an end.

Sincere thanks to the Selwyn Theatre for promoting the afternoon for TOSA and a big round of thanks to our artists who no doubt put in hours of practise for this very entertaining afternoon which was most appreciated by the 'packed house' of eager listeners. The healthy sum of \$95 was raised towards TOSA funds.

TOSA HOME ORGAN PARTY at Dorothy and Arthur Cammell's (by Ron Smith) ... 19th Nov. '83.

I was pleased to be able to attend the home organ party at the home of Dorothy and Arthur Cammell's on Saturday 19th November. After just completing three years in Papua New Guinea (out of the organ "scene") I had forgotten the good times of fellowship we enjoy at these gatherings, but I was quickly reminded on the day.

Cliff Bingham was our organist for the afternoon and I have always enjoyed his easy-going style, bright programming and impeccable fingering. This day was certainly no exception and his familiarity with the Eminent F220 console too was most obvious.

Come afternoon tea time there was an abundance of fine food and this was most appreciated by yours truly who, only the day before, had left hospital after a week there on "light meals only" basis and had some catching up to do!!!

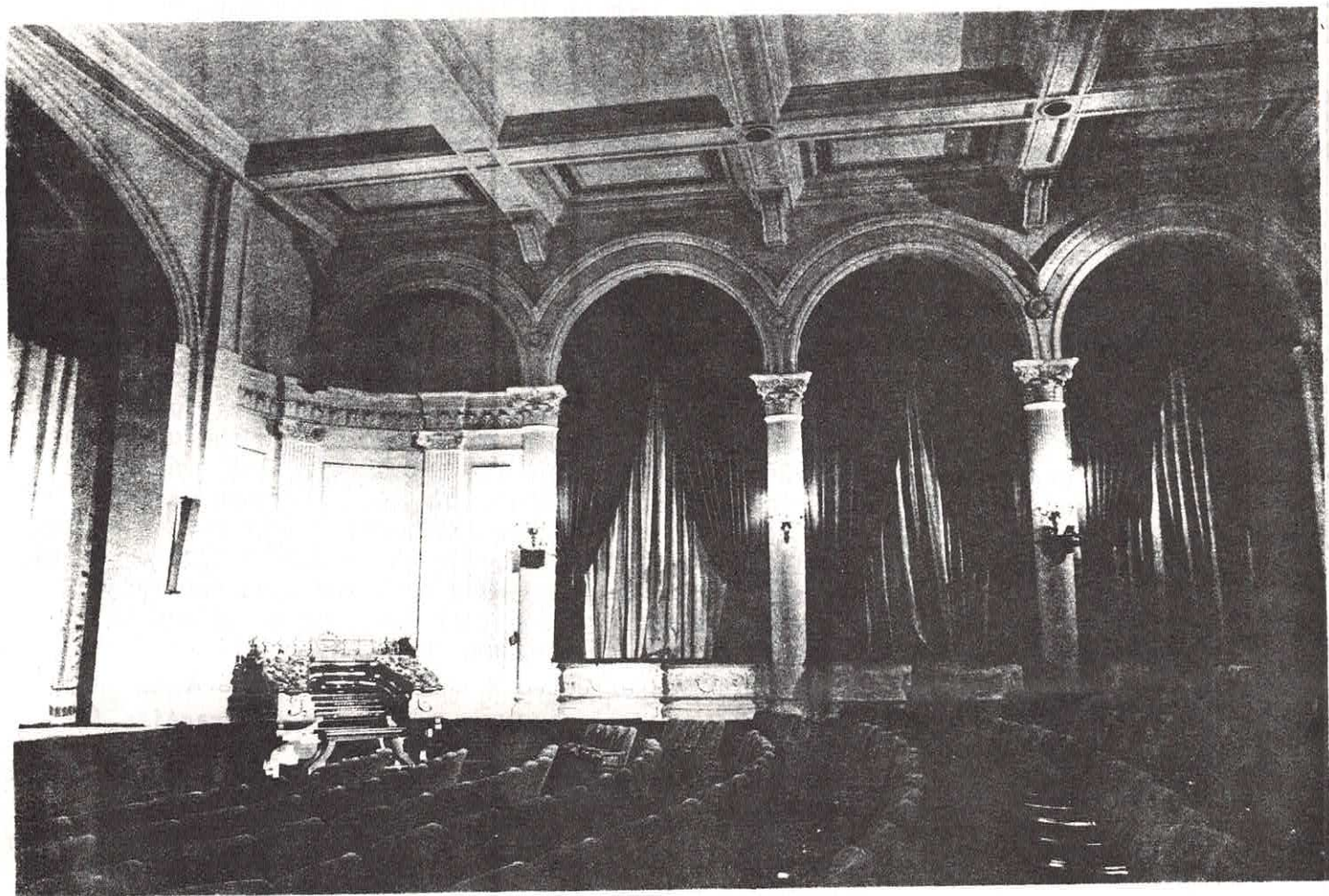
Our afternoon was very successful financially too as with the additional proceeds from raffles, a total of \$109 was donated to the TOSA Funds.

We give our sincere thanks to Dorothy and Arthur for their kind hospitality extended to the large number of folk who attended the home party and also we once again thank Cliff for the generous donation of his talents.



# CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA

by Lee Erwin.



Silent films have showcase houses in various parts of the U.S.A. They are not operated on the continuous performance policy, nor even weekly, but the operation of regular film houses, with an occasional silent photoplay and organ accompaniment is widespread enough to maintain the interest of not only film and organ buffs, but the general public as well.

Bright spots in the nation for silent film fare: San Francisco has the Avenue and Castro Theatres. At the north end of the Bay Area, in Vallejo, there is the Empress. Sacramento, the State Capital, has the Crest in a trial run of silent photoplays. Los Angeles' metropolitan area has Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo. Pennsylvania boasts at least two houses with pipe organs and sporadic silent fare - the Colonial in Phoenixville, and Capitol in Chambersburg. St. Louis has the Mighty Fox as does Atlanta, where there were film series presented that included silent pictures. And one of the finest is the Ohio in Columbus. Detroit has Motor City A.T.O.S. Redford Theatre and the Royal Oak. And away up north in Fargo, North Dakota, Red River Chapter A.T.O.S. now operates the Fargo Theatre and has several silent film nights each year. There are other theatres and performing art centres, such as the former Carolina Theatre in Greensville, North Carolina, that keep alive the silent drama sporadically.



CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA ... cont.

In Manhattan the outstanding showcase for silent movies is Carnegie Hall Cinema. And it is well equipped for deluxe presentations with the former Ben Hall "Little Mother" Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe organ. Now the property of the American Theatre Organ Society, the Wurlitzer is leased to Carnegie Hall Cinema. It was given to the Society following Hall's untimely death. He named it "Little Mother" because at the time he acquired the 2/5 instrument the big 4/36 Wurlitzer installed in the Paramount Theatre on Times Square was affectionately known as "Mother Wurlitzer" by virtue of the fact that it was acknowledged the finest installation ever made by Wurlitzer. Acoustics and organ chamber construction were such that the organ produced one of the most thrilling theatre organ sounds ever heard anywhere.

How the 2/5 small theatre organ became part of Carnegie Hall Cinema and how the cinema became a silent photoplay mecca is an interesting story. In 1891 Carnegie Hall Cinema was a concert hall with a seating capacity of 1,000. At that time it was known as "The Lyceum". Situated directly below the main auditorium in the Carnegie Hall Building, at 57th Street and 7th Avenue, the Lyceum opened its doors to the public about three weeks before construction of the big hall was completed. The big one opened on May 5, 1891 with a gala concert conducted by Tschaikovsky and Walter Damrosch.

For many years the Lyceum remained a recital hall. Then it was transformed into a ballroom. There are still remnants of a band-stand where the recital platform was situated. Later, a theatrical stage was built with all necessary facilities for presenting dramatic performances and musicals. During that period the Lyceum was the equivalent of an Off Broadway house.

Finally, in 1960, a transformation was effected - the Lyceum became a movie house and was renamed "Carnegie Hall Cinema". The Balcony gave way to a projection booth and a new entrance was added on 7th Avenue. For a number of years the Cinema was a first run motion picture theatre. When the present management took over a new policy of repertory films was established. The concept was immediately successful.

Early in 1975 silent film shows were beginning to attract the attention of New York theatre managers. Occasional silents had been presented as early as 1965 - 66. Gaylord Carter and Lee Erwin had played programmes at the Beacon Theatre on Broadway. Then Lee played programmes at the old Academy of Music (now the Palladium), the Brooklyn Paramount (now Long Island University basketball court), Loew's Kings, Loew's 175th Street (now Rev. Ike's church), and Radio City Music Hall.

When Lee played "Metropolis" at the Music Hall on January 28th, 1975, silent films were suddenly "in" in New York City. The Big Apple is always open to "new" things. A week later Carnegie Hall Cinema purchased an electronic organ and silent films became a regular feature of programmes there, and also at the Bleecker Street Cinema.

When the Ben Hall Wurlitzer became available - there had been plans to install it at the Harold Lloyd estate in Los Angeles as part of the Motion Picture Museum project then underway which was finally abandoned - it was shipped back to New York to replace the electronic at Carnegie Hall Cinema.

The organ arrived on May 23, 1976 and installation started that same day with a crew of local A.T.O.S. members under direction of the late Peter Schabel. About nine months later, March 17, 1977, the Ben Hall Wurlitzer made its debut in Carnegie. The first programme included three versions of "Camille": Norma Talmadge, Sarah Bernhardt and Greta Garbo. Lee Erwin accompanied the two silent versions: Bernhardt and Talmadge; the Garbo film was a "talkie".

Soon after the opening day, Peter Schabel's position as head of a large construction and drilling company made it almost impossible for him to devote much time to the Carnegie Hall Cinema organ. He also had his own Wonder Morton



CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA ... cont.

to worry about. And as so often happens with volunteer crews, the novelty of routine maintenance soon wears off.

Donald Schwing, who had worked with Schabel during the installation, was finally the only person left from the original crew, so Peter officially turned over to Don the protection and care of the organ. During the past five years Don, with occasional help from a few friends has enlarged the original 2/5 Wurlitzer to 12 ranks. During the summer of 1982, Don and Jeff Weiler, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa completely rebuilt the Loew's Kings Robert-Morton organ console. It has been temporarily wired in as a second console. Ultimately it will have its own separate relay.

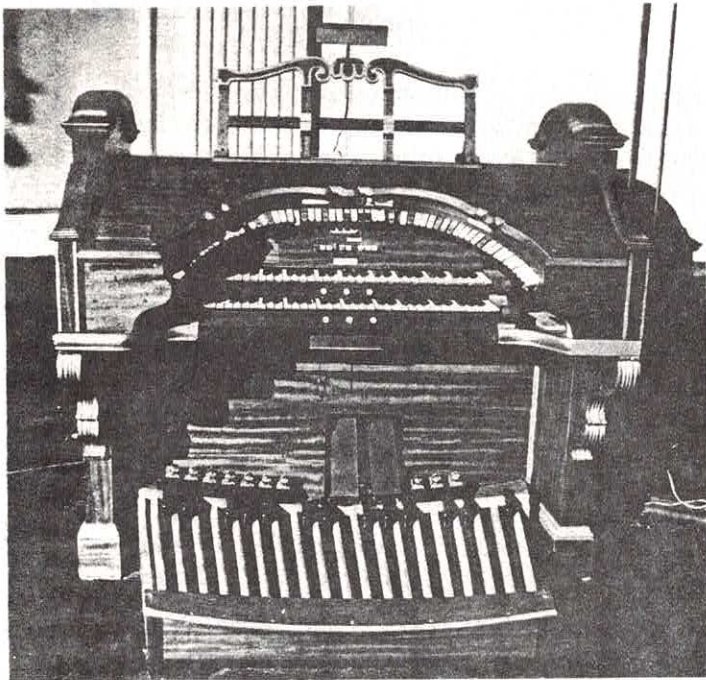
The shell of the console has been completely restored. Missing pieces of decorative scroll work were carved to match the originals by Carlo Greco, one of the finest makers of custom guitars in New York. A complete re-decoration job (matching the original colors) was done by Carina Sachs, a New York artist.

Twin consoles in the 300-seat Carnegie Hall Cinema makes a most impressive sight!

A second chamber is being constructed. Both chambers are on the stage behind the picture screen. Several more ranks will be added, and a few minor changes will be made to make the instrument more versatile - - - -  
But that's another story!

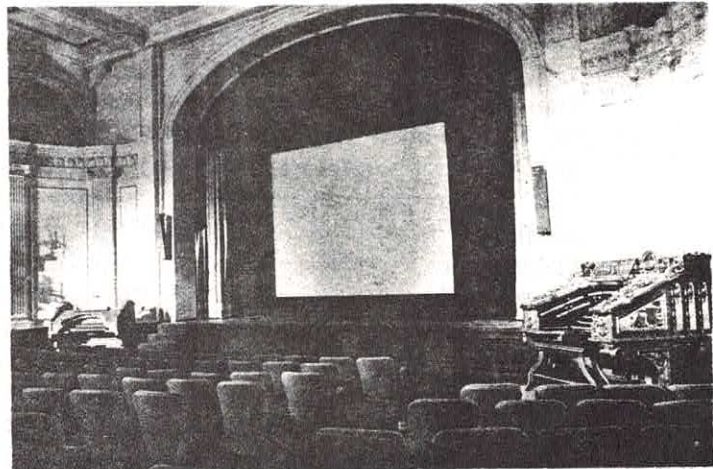
(Editor's Note: Many members will remember the fine concert performed by Lee Erwin at the Marrickville organ back in 1978 ... it is interesting to know that he is still maintaining a busy schedule of performances not only in New York but around the U.S.A.)

- - - Article reprinted from "The Console" Magazine.



**LITTLE MOTHER**—Console of the original 2/5 Wurlitzer owned by the late Ben Hall which was given to ATOS by his heirs. The organ has been increased to twelve ranks in the theatre by Donald Schwing with occasional help of friends.

—Alfred J. Buttler Photo



**DESPITE ITS SIZE**, the Morton console does not look out of place in Carnegie Hall Cinema auditorium.

—Alfred J. Buttler Photo



# "Did you know that?"

...13

by Ian R. McIver.

Few could question that the Tower Ballroom's instrument is the best-known theatre organ in the World. No other instrument even approaches its world-wide renown, and it is as much a part of the Blackpool experience as chip butties, trams, bingo, freak shows and the Tower itself. Blackpool without the Tower organ would be like a summer without Wakes Week. "Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear", proclaims the legend over the organ grilles, an apt, if somewhat surprisingly erudite, quotation from Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis". Here, then, is the story of the organ which has enchanted the ears of three generations in all parts of the globe, or all corners of the World, should you subscribe to the flat-earth theory.

Like all good stories, this is one not lacking in drama, as we shall see. It opens at the end of the "Roaring Twenties", when a Wurlitzer organ was installed in the Ballroom. This was more or less an experiment, and was a two-manual instrument with ten ranks of pipes (Style 205 Special, Opus 2037, for the technically-minded), completed in time for the summer season of 1929. It was introduced to the public by Max Bruce, and he was followed at the console during that season by a couple of other organists. It would be satisfying to report that the organ was an instant success, but good though the organists may have been as performers, the organ's primary role was to lead dancing, and in this capacity its first season was a more or less total flop.

It was decided to pursue the experiment for just one more season, and the relatively inexperienced Reginald Dixon was engaged for the start of the 1930 season. He was in no doubt that unless patrons were tripping the light fantastic to his music, both he and the organ were OUT - in today's parlance, an ongoing make-or-break situation! There was no precedent, no "Book of Rules" of how to play the organ for dancing. So he quickly developed a technique to set people's feet moving. It worked; his trial season extended into a 40-year appointment. He soon discovered what his public wanted, and has given it to them unflinching for half a century, a success story unparalleled in theatre organ history. His popularity soon spread well beyond the Fylde Coast, with radio broadcasts and records (he has made far more solo organ records than any other organist in history) carrying his name and music throughout the World.

It was not long before it was decided to replace the Tower Wurlitzer with a bigger and better one, and during the winter of 1934/35, it was removed (to be installed in enlarged form in the Empress Ballroom, Blackpool) and in its place was installed a three-manual Wurlitzer with thirteen ranks of pipes (Opus 2187, a specially designed organ), opened by Dixon for the 1935 season. Its greater tonal resources and flexibility enabled Dixon to develop further his distinctive style of playing, in particular his characteristic rhythmic accompaniments, accented "Off-beats" and snappy "breaks" on reeds or Xylophone. Later modifications included the provision of couplers at unorthodox pitches, their use giving his playing yet another stylistic hallmark.

Although the Ballroom was in operation only during the summer season, the organ was far from idle during the rest of the year, as many hundreds of recordings were made on it by Dixon during the out-of-season months, during breaks in his pre-war tours of Granada theatres.

During the War years, Reginald Dixon served in the RAF, and several other organists filled the bill at the Tower for the "duration", among them Ena Baga, who made some records there.



THE TOWER BALLROOM, BLACKPOOL ... cont.

Once hostilities ceased, Dixon was soon back at the console, and in 1955 he celebrated 25 years there. The following year, he was granted Blackpool's supreme accolade - he was invited to switch on the Town's celebrated Autumn Illuminations. For unfamiliar readers, I should perhaps point out that it's the sort of honour reserved in America for those who have traversed Niagara Falls in a barrel.

1956 was very nearly the organ's last season, though, for on December 14, the Tower Ballroom was badly damaged by fire, with an estimated total damage bill of 250,000 pounds. Fortunately, the flames did not reach the organ chambers above the stage, which contain the pipes and hardware of the instrument, but the white and gold console was scorched and blackened almost beyond repair.

But it was repaired, and the final touch was added which some consider an essential feature of any theatre organ; it was fitted with a lift, so that now it could rise majestically through the stage floor, rather than trundling out from the back of the stage on a trolley, as previously both it and its two-manual forerunner had done. However, it was out of action for some considerable time, and during the 1957 season Reginald Dixon could be heard at the Empress Ballroom (on the enlarged former Tower organ), and he used the Opera House organ for recording.

By the 1960's, Dixon seemed almost as permanent feature of Blackpool as the piers and Tower, but the decade closed with the news that he was to retire, and on Easter Sunday, 1970, he gave his farewell performance, heard in a packed Ballroom and millions of radio listeners, 40 years after his first nervous appearance there. During the decade since then he has continued to give concerts all around the country on all varieties of organs, and has made many more broadcasts and records. He was also awarded a well-deserved MBE.

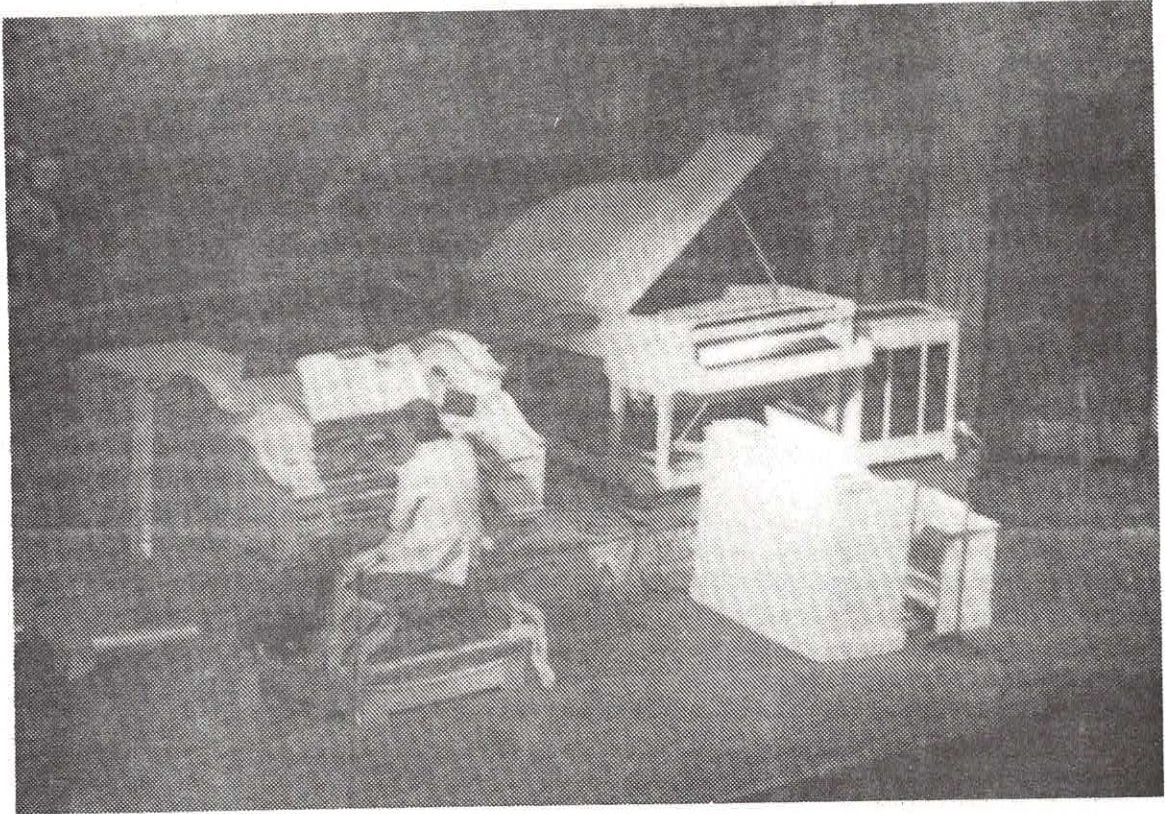
Dixon was succeeded at the Tower by Ernest Broadbent, for a long time deputy organist there, who continued to broadcast and record the organ, and who has also built up a major personal following.

In more recent times, after Ernest retired, the organ has been played by teams of organists including Philip Kelsall, Ron Ogden, Robert Wolfe, Mike Slater, Kevin Speight, Barry Kearns, Alan Skirrow and Cathie Haigh (who is also one of the finest Hammond organ exponents I have heard). As always, the music is a mixture of up-to-date and older popular favourites, and the Wurlitzer and electronic organ sessions alternate throughout the day. One can go in for the morning session and remain there all day, hearing five or six organists, all for the price of admission to the Tower complex.

The organ in this place of terpsichorean delight is so well-known that all readers must have heard it at some time, either in the Ballroom itself, or through radio or recordings, that any detailed description of its tone would be superfluous. The current list of ranks is below, but it is perhaps worth noting that there have been several changes over the years. When the larger organ was installed in 1935, it had 13 ranks of pipes, but in 1950 a Tuba Mirabilis was added, bringing the total to 14. In 1951, a Solo String was added, and the Vox Humana was removed. The new ranks were both made in England, but were exchanged for Wurlitzer ranks from the Opera House organ when the fire damage was put right in the late 1950's. The white grand piano on the stage, playable from the organ console, was added in 1946, replacing the less spectacular upright piano in the organ chamber. It has been said that Reginald Dixon would have liked a further two ranks, but there just wasn't room in chambers originally designed for only ten ranks.

<u>LIST OF RANKS:-</u>	Tuba Mirabilis	English Horn	Harmonic Tuba
Tibia Clausa I	Tibia Clausa II	Diaphonic Diapason	Saxophone
Krumet	Solo String	Violin	Violin Celeste
Kinura	Concert Flute	Orchestral Oboe	





Philip Kelsall... Tower Ballroom - Blackpool.

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WURLITZER WONDER (by John Clark)

When you've only heard of a theatre organist, it's nice to be able to hear him in concert personally and so I was agreeably surprised to hear Alan Tranter at the console of the Grand Wurlitzer at the State Theatre Wurlitzer Wonder recital on 8th January 1984.

I was one of 400 people to attend this recital which was part of ORGANFEST.... itself a part of the FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY. Compere for the day was Swedish organist, Guy Bouvet.

Alan played the promised "choice selection of traditional organ pops" and did it very well indeed. He has a pleasant individuality in his style and I'd be interested to hear him again on an organ with a greater range of tonal colour than was available to him on the day.

The organ rising on the hoist was, to any theatre organ enthusiast, a sight to behold and Alan's broad smile, wave and seated bow all added to the spectacle. The console, in off white with gold embellishments looked splendid in the glare of the white spot light although thinking back to the opening of the Ballarat organ, coloured lights would have added even more to the pleasure of the day.

Jean Kelso Smith sang many well known songs and was accompanied by classical organist David Kinsela, who also played one solo on the Grand Wurlitzer. The State Theatre itself is an inspiring place to see and hear such a concert since it was recently restored and the comfort of its seating and air conditioning were the refinements that made Wurlitzer Wonder a very agreeable way to spend a couple of hours on a sunny Sydney Sunday.

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**YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IS  
NOW OVERDUE**



## "Book Review"

"Picture Palaces and Flea-Pits", Simon Brand, Dreamweaver Books, Sydney, 1983.

Price: \$26.95.

- Ian R. McIver.

In common with many connoisseurs of the theatre organ, my interests are not confined to the instruments themselves, but also encompass the ambiance which their voluptuous tones were designed to complement. In the course of my peregrinations in pursuit of theatre organs in their original habitats I have stepped through the portals of many of the World's finest examples of cinema architecture in Britain, America, Europe and Australia, and my library contains several copiously illustrated volumes concerned with the architecture of these fascinating buildings. It is thus with pleasure and interest that I have been pouring over Simon Brand's book, which was published in time to hit the shelves for Christmas.

Its coverage is confined purely to Australian cinemas, from the very earliest days onwards. It is not the first book on this subject, as Professor Ross Thorne, of Sydney University, has previously written two, "Picture Palace Architecture in Australia", and "Cinemas of Australia via USA", which are written from the point of view of the architectural historian, both being excellent and indispensable works of reference on the topic. Simon Brand's approach is somewhat different, and this is no criticism of him or his book; he presents us with a celebration of the golden years of the Australian cinema industry. He conducts us on a journey of pure nostalgia as we luxuriate in the opulence of buildings of which we shall not see the like again. Only a very few of these magnificent dream gardens remain intact, and the future of most of those is uncertain, to say the least. It is thus a journey tinged with sadness - "I-chabod" could almost subtitle every page, for it is only in photographs and cherished memories that most of the cinemas depicted remain.

The text is not overburdened with architectural technicalities, but concerns mostly the history of the main theatre chains and the social and economic influences which affected the development of the cinema presentation industry in Australia. The photographs, with which the book abounds, are mainly left to speak for themselves, and we are left to form our own judgement on architectural merit and taste. The same social and economic influences also controlled the development of the theatre organ, and thus the book is of great use as a *mise-en-scène* for all serious students of the instrument's history. Organs are mentioned in the text, and two specific views show the cavalcade of carts delivering the Wurlitzer to the "Regent", Adelaide and a close-up of the console of the same instrument. Consoles are also clearly visible in many of the auditorium views.

It is a pity that such an excellent book does not include more good views of the "atmospheric" theatre interiors. The photo on page 93, which purports to be of the "Capitol", Sydney, is in fact a back-to-front copy of a photo of the "Riviera", Omaha, Nebraska, USA, the original of which can be seen in Dennis Sharp's book, "The Picture Palace", published in England some 15 years ago. The same view, also back to front, is in Ross Thorne's "Picture Palace Architecture in Australia", where it is labelled as the "State", Melbourne! It would have been worthwhile also including views of the Regents in Sydney and Brisbane, the "Orpheum", Cremorne, and "Roxy", Parramatta, all of which are, perhaps, of rather greater interest and distinction than some of the Melbourne suburban houses shown. I do wish



BOOK REVIEW: "Picture Palaces and Flea-Pits" ... cont.

also, that the book had an index. However, these are minor "niggles", and do not materially detract from a fascinating work

The views of the "Regent", Melbourne, show the auditorium as rebuilt in 1947, following the 1945 fire, and it is worth mentioning that as this was to all intents and purposes a completely new building, it was perhaps the very last truly grand picture palace of the old style built anywhere in the World. The original 1929 auditorium was somewhat different, and had a curved proscenium arch similar to that at Brisbane.

What strikes one as one progresses through this book is the immense contrast in architectural styles of these buildings, from plain sheds, through elaborate American-style palaces of the late 1920's, to the Depression Modern styles of the late 1930's and 1940's, influenced strongly by contemporary trends in Britain and, to a lesser extent, in America. Rightly, there are several photographs of the stunning interior of Walter Burley Griffin's Frank Lloyd Wright-influenced "Capitol", Melbourne, one of the World's truly great and original theatre auditoria. It is given pride of place as the dust-jacket illustration; if only a colour view of the ceiling could have accompanied it!

For me, the most moving and memorable photograph of all is of the "Ambassador's", Perth, with a shaft of sunlight streaming through a hole smashed in the theatre's atmospheric ceiling by the demolition crew. providing a surreal (or even super-real) note of irony in its tragedy.

The nostalgia is not confined to the buildings, but Simon Brand recreates as far as is possible in words the total experience of what it was like to attend a show (and I use that word in its fullest meaning) at a picture palace. He even describes graphically such incidental pleasures as Jaffa-rolling, which was a pastime exclusive, as far as I am aware, to Australia, where wooden floors in stadium-style auditoria provided an ideal medium for the production and amplification of that distinctive sound. Most theatres in Britain and America had concrete floors with carpeting, only good for walking on.

Now, presentation is deemed to comprise showing a film to a crowd of 14-year-olds sitting in a characterless box approached via a line of video games.

We are warned, by the example of Lot's wife, against excessive retrospection, but there can surely be little harm in indulging in pleasureable tripping back, through Simon Brand's eyes, to the days when "going to the pictures" really meant a night out, for what today seems incredibly little expense. The great picture palaces are disappearing throughout the World, not just in Australia, and I, too, cannot help feeling that as each closes its doors and falls to the wreckers, the World becomes that much a poorer place.

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## **"Australia's First Wurlitzer"**

In the year 1917, the first Wurlitzer organ ever to be exported from the U.S.A. arrived in Sydney. The owner of this instrument was prominent Sydney businessman, Mr. William A. Crowle, who was the then owner of the large home "Toftmonks" in Elizabeth Bay Road, Elizabeth Bay. This first export Wurlitzer, bearing the Opus Number 129, was duly installed in "Toftmonks" and was used as a demonstrator instrument by the Crowle Organization who were the Australian agents for Wurlitzer. Many prominent organists of the day played this Wurlitzer, including the legendary Eddie Horton, who came to Australia to open the Wurlitzer at the "Prince Edward Theatre", Sydney. The fine little 2-manual 7-rank Wurlitzer remained in the Crowle home until early 1928.

During November 1927, Mr. Oswald Hearne of Geelong, Victoria visited the Crowle home as he had decided to purchase a pipe organ for his home "Montana" which had been built for him in 1911. Mr Hearne was a prominent pharmacist and manufacturing chemist and many of our older readers will remember well "Hearne's Bronchitis Cure" which was his best known product. So impressed, was Mr. Hearne, with the tone of this particular Wurlitzer that he would accept no other, and Mr. Crowle was finally convinced, after much discussion, to sell this original instrument. The second Crowle demonstrator Wurlitzer was then ordered, it was three ranks larger - a 2-manual 10-rank instrument with no less than three consoles (!!!) again this organ was especially voiced for the residence location, but all this is yet another story.

Mr. Hearne returned to Geelong to arrange the building of a suitable annexe to his home to accomodate the pipework. Fortunately, there was an ideal space under the stairs in the main entry foyer to accomodate the console. The chamber was attached to the side of the house and the shutters opened onto the middle stairway landing, as it so happened the perfect place acoustically for the pipework. The Wurlitzer double roll playing mechanism (which looks somewhat like a large size player piano without a keyboard) was accomodated on the first floor landing.

Although Mr. Hearne purchased the instrument in November 1927 he waited until April 1928 to hear it in his own home. The primary reason for the delay was pressure of business with theatre installations - principally the "Capitol Theatre, Sydney" - Style 260, 3-manual 15-ranker. Mr. Hearne became a little anxious at the delay and copies of correspondence, still held by his daughter to this day, reflect this.

The organ was shipped from Sydney to Geelong on the "Edina" in nine packing cases, according to a 1928 article in the "Geelong Advertiser". Finally, the installation was completed by Mr. Eustace Dodd and a Mr. Smith. Mr. Dodd actually stayed with the Hearnese until the organ installation was completed - a total time of four weeks.

The pipework of this organ is all very small scaled and suits the environment at "Montana" perfectly. The Oboe Horn is the ideal choice for the main reed, instead of the usual Tuba or pipe metal ("Style D") Trumpet. During the 1930's Mr. Hearne commissioned George Fincham & Son of Melbourne to build a small scale stopped flute from Tenor 'C' only to replace to original Concert Flute (which is still stored at the back of the chamber) - the 16' octave of Bourdons and the 8' octave of the Concert Flute remain in service. The Dulciana is most useful, providing soft accompaniments and "filling out" ensemble sounds.

As one might guess the organ has not been heard a great deal publicly in the last 55 years. The exceptions being several broadcasts by the A.B.C. many years ago - in fact this organ was the first residence organ to be broadcast by them in 1930. During 1940 as part of the "War Effort" a recital was held,



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WURLITZER ... cont.

admission was 2 guineas (2 pounds & 2 shillings) a goodly sum in those days, all proceeds went to the "Red Cross".

Through the years various well known organists have made private visits to "Montana". During a visit in November 1964 by members of T.O.S.A. (Victoria Division) Stanfield Holliday former organist at the "Regent Theatre, Melbourne" was persuaded to give a short impromptu recital which included his famous theme, 'A Cool Verandah', composed by himself, and a 'Merry Widow' Selection. Shortly after his untimely death in 1965 permission was obtained to release a 7" Extended Play recording of this brief recital in addition to some material recorded at Easter 1965 at the "Regent Theatre, Adelaide". Needless to say this small memento is now a collector's item.

Mr. Hearne pre-deceased his wife who passed on only a few years ago. The home is now owned by their daughter and son-in-law Mr. & Mrs. Alan Glover. Alan is a Past President of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (Victoria Division), and is an accomplished organist in his own right. Thanks to the hospitality of the Glovers, those attending the National T.O.S.A. Convention in Melbourne next Easter will have the opportunity to hear this unique little Wurlitzer.

Rather than provide a stop list of the console, we have included here for your interest a copy of the stop list on the double roll playing mechanism, the stops are only activated manually on this unit.

Bass	16'	)	
Viol	16'	)	
Bourdon	16'	)	
Open Diapason	8'	)	
Oboe	8'	)	
Salicional	8'	)	
Viol Celeste	8'	)	
Flute	8'	)	ALL STOPS DUPLICATED
Vox Humana	8'	)	ON BOTH BASS AND TREBLE.
Dulciana	8'	)	
Octave	4'	)	
Salicional	4'	)	
Viol Celeste	4'	)	
Flute	4'	)	
Dulcet	4'	)	
Piccolo	2'	)	
Chimes			Chrysoglott
Xylophone			Glockenspiel
Main Tremulant			Vox Humana Tremulant

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We wish to thank the following people for the background material without which the preceding article could not have been written.

- Mrs. W. A. Crowle, for history prior to the organ leaving Sydney.
- Mr. & Mrs. Alan Glover, for details from 1928 until the present day.
- Mr. Ian McIver, for comments on the pipework and tonality of the organ.

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TOOTING'S WURLITZER WILL TOOT AGAIN.

Since the beginning of 1983, London Chapter, A.T.O.S. technical team have been restoring and repairing the 4-manual 14-rank Wurlitzer in the Granada Cinema at Tooting, South West London. The organ was badly damaged by flooding a decade ago. By mid-year the seven rank main chamber was "substantially completed" and in playing condition.

An under stage installation with the console on its own lift, the orchestra pit is blocked off from the auditorium. London Chapter officials are hopeful Granada circuit will sanction structural alterations so the organ can once again be heard when the club finishes restoring it.

- - - from C.O.S. Newsletter.

ALOHA CLUB RESTORES ORGAN.

Members of Aloha Chapter A.T.O.S., Hawaii, are currently at work on the 4-manual 16-rank Robert-Morton organ installed in the Hawaii Theatre. This instrument was originally installed in the Princess Theatre in Hawaii which was demolished many years ago.

The original Hawaii Theatre organ, a duplicate of the present installation was removed and re-erected in the Waikiki Theatre. It is currently heard on week-ends played by Robert Alder.

Consolidated Theatres, owners of the Hawaii, has budgeted funds for the restoration work now underway by Aloha Chapter volunteers.

(Members of the recent TOSATOUR were privileged to see and hear the fine Robert-Morton in the Hawaii Theatre and to meet with about twenty members of the Aloha Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

C.A.T.O.E. HAS ORGAN IN STORE; A.T.O.S. BIG WIG VISITS.

It's all out now and neatly stored - Chicago's famous Oriental Theatre 4/20 Wurlitzer - thanks to the diligent efforts of several Chicago Area Chapter A.T.O.S. members under leadership of Crew Chief Gary Bergmark. The unit was fortunate in receiving storage space in a large garage loaned by the Chicago Catholic Diocese.

Up-dating and repair will be made on the entire organ as a site is being sought for this excellent instrument. The Bismarck Hotel and Auditorium Theatre are two places under consideration.

Ledwon in Town. John Ledwon, of the A.T.O.S. National Board, visited C.A.T.O.E. recently. His purpose was to evaluate facilities and the pre-programme for the 1985 National A.T.O.S. Convention to be hosted by C.A.T.O.E. He was very pleased with what he found, including our board's conduct and hospitality extended him by chairman John Peters.

Ledwon tickled the ivories of the Chicago Theatre and Mundelein Wurlitzers during his visit.. Plus, we were given a mini concert at a WGN-TV Studio C.A.T.O.E. social on their fair Wurlitzer. The Californian surprised most of us with his musicianship and keyboard dexterity. Many of us consider him full concert material.

Palmer House Headquarters. Again in 1985, the Palmer House will be used as Headquarters for the conclave. It was also the 1977 official hotel.

It looks as though the Chicago Theatre will also be around in '85 for the big meeting. Co-operation and great interest has been expressed by City Hall and other interested civic groups in preserving the hugh movie palace. Also, a movie museum is being contemplated for the Page Building adjacent to the theatre.

Generally, for a change,, the news at this date is all good!!!



A.C.T. DID HEAR PIPES!

After a mammoth amount of effort by restoration convenor Dave Dunnett and organ builder Richard Larritt to get some noise from the Compton pipework for the A.C.T. Division of T.O.S.A.'s A.G.M., music was the result AND, this Society did not need to postpone its meeting this year as a good turn out of members was present to "rubber stamp" the new committee in and hear the odd squawk from a pipe. These "squawks" were assessed as the most wonderful sounds to have assailed their eardrums since the Compton was purchased by T.O.S.A. (A.C.T.)

DR. KING TO UPGRADE.

Dr. King of Lawson in New South Wales' Blue Mountains who owns the Style 260, 3-manual Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ originally from Brisbane's Regent Theatre and now installed at his home, is planning to retire shortly and he intends to spend some effort in expanding and refurbishing his instrument. Plans already call for a Posthorn. More later.

- - - "Keyboard World", November 1983.

A MAP OF THE MOORABBIN WURLITZER.

It has been decided a plan be drawn of the Moorabbin Wurlitzer console, showing the stop layout, so that any organist can have one. It has also been decided a standard list of piston settings be drawn up, and should they be altered to meet the needs of any organist giving a concert, they be put back again to the standard settings as soon as possible afterwards. This should be of great assistance whose ability to handle the largest Wurlitzer in the country is often hindered by his or her finding the pistons are different from the last time.

- - - T.O.S.A. (Vic.) "Vox", December 1983.

PLAN SET FOR DENDY WURLITZER REMOVAL.

T.O.S.A. (Vic.) Christmas "Free-for-All" was promised as the last chance to see or hear the "Dendy" Wurlitzer in that theatre which has been its home for almost the last 17 years. Immediately after this last session with the Wurlitzer it was planned to commence the removal of the instrument. The heavy items and those which will not be needed for detailed work will be stored at Julien Arnold's factory in Moorabbin, all other items will go to a workshop area in Carnegie.

We all wish T.O.S.A. (Vic). well with the restoration and re-installation of this fine Wurlitzer and trust that it won't be too long before many T.O.S.A. (N.S.W.) members find the excuse to "travel south" for the re-opening concert.



Basking unashamedly, in a wave of nostalgia over many and varied things which have coloured our lives in the past, seems to be a popular trend these days. Even teenagers, not old enough to remember the songs, the films, the stars, the motor cars which the 'oldies' remember with affection, have become caught up in the wave of nostalgia which has swept the country, and has become, to those astute enough to cash in on the trend, a lucrative business.

During the next few months, I would like to bring forth a pot-pourri of nostalgic bits and pieces and share them with TOSA members who, like myself, remember those 'golden days' of the theatre organ and the magic spell it wove over audiences everywhere. The information I hope to bring to you comes from the scrap book of my friend, the late Eddie Aiken of New Zealand, from newspapers and magazines as well as from my own personal memories of those times. Let's start with a return to May and June of 1938.

On May 7th, Les Waldron opened the new Hammond organ installation at the Dreadnought Theatre, Chatswood. Later, on the 13th he also opened the Hammond organ at the new Vogue Theatre at Double Bay. He was to do two shows a day at each theatre. Considering how far apart these two theatres were, I can only say that it must have been an exhausting schedule indeed, and one can only wonder just how many miles he travelled each week. Also, in the same month I believe, the New Note Octette played one of Les Waldron's compositions over ABC radio. Entitled 'Valse Caprice' it was one of those daintily exquisite pieces so characteristic of Waldron.

A few Sundays earlier, Knight Barnett had turned church organist for a day to play for a special mens service at Roseville. By some mistake the authorities had his name up a G.Vern Barnett. Knight tied for first place in the Grammar Old Boys golf tournament. Charles Tuckwell held the fort at the Savoy Theatre Hurstville whilst Knight got the day off to do his golfing. Stanfield Holliday had his hands full about that time, when something went wrong in the projection booth and Stan had to play for a full hour until the fault was rectified. Imagine being called on to play without warning and at a moments notice, given no time for preparation and not knowing how long the repair would take! Just one of the hazards of being a theatre organist.

Local boy, Barrie Brettner, who opened the organ at the Civic Theatre Auburn, had just finished a season at the Palladium Theatre Copenhagen, where he was extremely popular and had returned to London for six months before returning to Denmark again. On May 28th, Paul Cullen, a N.Z. singing organist, finished his season at the Parramatta Roxy and moved to the Savoy Hurstville and Knight Barnett filled the vacancy at Parramatta. In June that year, the best organ record of the month was considered by a magazine reviewer of that period, to be 'St.Louis Blues' recorded on Parlaphone label by England's Harold Ramsay. It was described as a 'glorious version' indeed. The best organ broadcast of that month was said to have been Des Tanner's. This would probably have been done on a Hammond organ, although no details were shown.

One critic said that he didn't like the idea of the organist playing "in" the picture as he thought the film's soundtrack music was the most appropriate. But he gave full marks to Charles Tuckwell who struck just the right atmosphere for the film 'Night Must Fall' when he used the music of 'Finlandia' by Sibelius. From 1938 to 1983 is a long, long time, but Charles Tuckwell at the age of 82 is still playing at the theatre organ and can be heard at the Roseville Cinema on Sydney's North Shore, where he plays an electronic installation three times a week. This must surely make Charles one of the oldest theatre organists in the business.

To conclude this month, let's return to the present time. and this morning, in a long telephone conversation with TOSA member Cyril Watson, I learned something I had not previously known about the great Eddie Horton who opened the Prince Edward WurliTzer in 1924. Cyril recalled Eddie Horton imitating a dog fight on the organ which was so realistic that had one's eyes been closed it was possible to imagine the two savage beasts were in the auditorium. To those who may be sceptical, then think back a couple of years when Len Rawle did an imitation of a steam engine which, like Eddie's dog fight, was so real that by closing one's eyes, one could almost feel the steam engine thundering through Marrickville Town Hall.

See you next month with some more nostalgic bits and pieces.