

TOSA NEWS

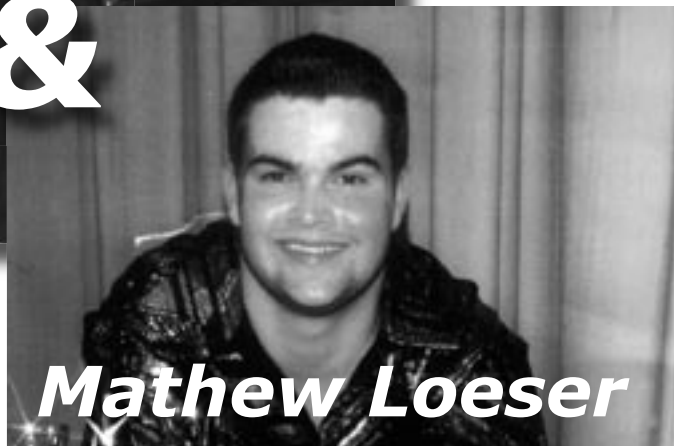
October 2008
Volume 47 No.9

Price: \$2.00

40th ANNIVERSARY of the Marrickville Wurlitzer



&



Directory

Patron

John Gorrie

President

Geoff Brimley 6351 3122 (phone/fax) *president@tosa.net.au*

Vice Presidents

John Shaw 9759 5825

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)

Secretary

Deirdre McMullan 4878 5179 (phone/fax) *secretary@tosa.net.au*
Lot 1, Spring Hill Rd, Mittagong, NSW, 2575

Treasurer

Kath Harding 9629 2257 *treasurer@tosa.net.au*

Membership Secretary

Walter Pearce 9716 0151 *membership@tosa.net.au*
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, NSW, 1805

Committee

Barry Tooker

Walter Pearce

John Weismantel

Robert Gliddon

John Andrews

Ron Mosman

Research and Archives

Ian Cameron 4841 1616

TOSA NEWS Editor

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 *editor@tosa.net.au*
P.O. Box A2322, Sydney South, NSW, 1235

Marrickville Practice Convenor

Neil Palmer 9798 6742 (after 7pm)

Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings)

Kath Harding 9629 2257

Artist Liaison Officers

Walter Pearce 9716 0151

John Shaw 9759 5825

Photography

Barry Tooker 9744 1535

Publicity Officer

John Shaw 9759 5825

Webmaster

Ron Mosman 9398 4775
ronmosman@bigpond.com

Printing by Rob Gliddon

From the President



We have again this year been provided with a feast of great music from some very dedicated and capable artists. And there are still concerts to come! Do watch the Members Diary page for details of coming events and reserve the dates.

The social time held at the Campsie rooms of the Christian Science church was enjoyed by those who attended. The opportunity to play the organ, listen to others play, chat with other members, plus have a cuppa and associated goodies was appreciated by those present. This was a chance to socialise in a way not possible at concerts. Unfortunately only a handful of members availed of the opportunity. May I encourage you to consider this as a means of getting to know other members. You don't have to play, although you are welcome, – just listen if you prefer. We will give you plenty of notice when the next social time is arranged.

Negotiations are still proceeding for a venue for our Christie organ: we are currently waiting on a reply to a submission made to an organisation which owns a site considered close to ideal. Unfortunately the wheels are turning slowly but they are at least moving.

See you at the next concert.

Happy organizing

Geoff Brimley

Editorial



Thank you to all the members who gave us very encouraging feedback on the new format of TOSA News. The Editorial Team appreciate your comments and will continue to improve this all-new look as it is a work in progress.

Please Note re Parking for Marrickville Concerts: that whilst signs have been erected at Banana Joe's parking area in Marrickville restricting parking to 2 HOURS, TOSA has been given approval for patrons to park there in excess of 2 hours on Marrickville Concert days. That means Sunday 26th October for David Parsons & Mathew Loeser and Sunday 14th December for the Christmas Concert with Tony Fenelon.

What a wonderful musical feast we heard from Richard Hills at the Orion Concert on 24th August. I particularly enjoyed his arrangement of Serenade in Blue which reminded me of the great Buddy Cole's style.

Please come along and bring some friends to the concert on Sunday 28th September to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Grand Opening of the former Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer at the Orion Centre, Campsie, with two of Australia's International Artists, Neil Jensen at the console and Bernard Walz at the Grand Piano. It will be great entertainment from these two dynamic artists.

Come early about 1:00pm to view the Classic Car collection and hear the Dutch Street Organ in the car park behind the Orion Theatre.

Many thanks to the contributors to this edition

Enjoy the music,
Ernie Vale
PO Box A2322
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235
editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



Hey Readers...!

Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in telling us what you think of the concerts you have attended, or what you may be feeling about the direction of the Theatre Organ Society in general.

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, giving you a voice in the organisation. As space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit or shorten any submitted comments and as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division).

Please submit all comments via email to:
The Editor

editor@tosa.net.au

or in writing to:

The editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)

PO Box A2322 Sydney South, NSW 1235

.....

Dear Ernie,

Congratulations on the publication of the first edition of T.O.S.A. News under your editorship. The new format is a major departure from the one with which we have been familiar since the Society's commencement way back in 1960! I am sure you've spent many hours in consultation with Graham Weismantel with his long experience in the publication world to achieve this new look. I must at this time add my special thanks to John Weismantel for the hours spent in making the T.O.S.A. owned Canon Photocopier do what is required to fold and staple the newsletter in the correct aspect. This job took some patience and knowledge of computers beyond my scant ability in this area.

I cannot fail to note my appreciation to Colin Groves who for so many years was our editor, writer, compiler, typist, news gatherer and every other job which is required as editor of our T.O.S.A. News. He certainly deserves a break from this position in which he has so faithfully and expertly served. Colin never ever missed a deadline, although I know he was often frustrated in having to chase up contributions by various people who didn't have as higher regard for publication dates as did our former editor. To Colin and Françoise do have a very happy holiday in France and we'll see you at the Christmas concert.

Back to the latest edition of T.O.S.A. News and the excellent overview of the American Theatre Organ Society's Annual Convention in Indianapolis by Godelieve Ghalalas, it made me wish I'd attended. Let's hear more from Godelieve in the future, her experience in the world of both pipe and electronic organs is well known and respected.

On the subject of A.T.O.S. Conventions, next year is planned for Cleveland, Ohio but 2010 will be in Seattle, Washington.

Now would be a good time for T.O.S.A. members to start saving and planning to attend.

There are a few good reasons to holiday in Washington State, primarily one being the scenery which is some of the greatest in the U.S.A. Sydney is blessed with wonderful waterways and so is Seattle. From the organ point of view there are quite a few original installations as well as some excellent latter day ones. Here is a brief list:- Seattle Paramount 4/20 Publix One WurliTzer; Temple Theatre, Tacoma 2/9 Kimball; Lincoln Theatre. Mt. Vernon 2/6 (Style D) WurliTzer (complete with piano and marimba harp!); Mt. Baker Theatre, Bellingham 2/12 WurliTzer and an excellent 3/15 Robert Mortan in St. Columban's Church Hall in the country town of Yelm. I could go on with an extended list but as you will readily see there will be plenty of variety including Kimball and Robert Morton organs neither of which make, unfortunately, made their way to Australia. **Time to start planning now as this should be a great event and having attended both previous Conventions held in Seattle in 1971 and 1981 I am confident everyone can be assured of a great time.**

Sincerely Robert Gliddon by mail

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

Who Are We?

The NSW Division is now in its 48th year having been formed in 1960 to provide the opportunity for members to continue to hear the magical sounds of the Theatre Organ – Unit Orchestra.

Many music lovers who had heard Theatre Organ played in the Prince Edward, Lyceum, Capitol, State, & Roxy Cinemas - to name just some of the many installations around Sydney - wished to ensure that examples of Theatre Organ were preserved, restored and installed in venues suitable for concert performances.

Currently the NSW Division owns three Theatre Organs. A 2 manual 11 rank Wurlitzer (formerly Prince Edward Theatre) installed in Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville and a 3 manual 17 rank Wurlitzer (formerly Capitol Theatre) installed in the Orion Entertainment Centre, Beamish Street, Campsie. Both of these Theatre Organs have undergone significant restoration and the electronics have been modernised with computerised relay systems to give artists significant flexibility and reliability in setting up and playing music from all ages including modern day popular music. The third organ is a 2 manual 8 rank Christie (formerly Kings Theatre Gordon) which is in storage awaiting a suitable venue for installation.

Members and Our Activities

Members range from musicians to technicians to lovers of the Theatre Organ style of music and magical sounds capable of being played on these instruments. Members are entitled to discounted concert tickets for self or spouse, have the opportunity of playing both Wurlitzers on Members Playing days or evenings, attending home organ parties with the opportunity of playing a variety of electronic Theatre Organs as well as helping out with setting up concerts.

Membership provides an opportunity to participate in the running of the Society and receive the TOSA News 11 times a year

to keep you informed of Theatre Organ activities, concerts throughout Australia and overseas, and various web sites of interest to Theatre Organ music lovers. The purchase of a range of Theatre Organ recordings by Australian and overseas artists is available at concerts.

Disabled access is available at both the Orion Entertainment Centre and at Marrickville Town Hall (Marrickville Library on some web sites).

How To Join

If you enjoy great music played on the Unit Orchestra that is the Theatre Organ - then we would love to welcome you as a member because the Theatre Organ is indeed a 21st Century musical instrument with a unique range of musical tones and colours that can thrill all ages.

Club membership costs a modest \$30.00 a year for full single membership. Pensioner, Country, Interstate or Overseas membership is AUD \$20.00. Six month membership is available from January to the end of June at half the full rate. After 1st April the full year rate takes members through to the end of June the following year. Full details are on the Membership Application Form at the back of TOSA News.

TOSA News
Editorial Team:
Editor: Ernie Vale
editor@tosa.net.au
0415 626 064 m

Creative Director: Graham Weismantel
Technical Manager: John Weismantel
Printer: Rob Gliddon
Posting: Graham & Marjorie Hill

Deadline for each edition is the 12th of the previous month. Please send copy before then where possible.

Your input is valued. Email where possible by typing into your email program or send separate files for text in "word .doc" and in ".jpg" for pictures.

Please do not format as that step is made by the Creative Director.

Vale Harold Duffell

Harold Duffell has long been a staunch supporter of TOSA(NSW) virtually from its inception back in the 1960's. He has been a friend, adviser and mentor to so many TOSA members, and a familiar face at virtually every TOSA concert over the years.

Sadly, Harold passed away at his Chatswood home at the Dougherty Apartments after finally losing a battle with declining health following a minor stroke around 1 month ago, which saw him admitted to the Royal North Shore Hospital for around two weeks. He was relieved to return to his home, but his health continued to decline, culminating in his passing away on Saturday 13 September.

An intensely private man, Harold insisted on no formal funeral arrangements, and his wishes have been honoured, but an appropriate celebration of his life shall be organised at a later date.

Harold will best be remembered by the theatre organ fraternity for his long association with the restoration of the Wurlitzer organ which had originally resided in the Arcadia Theatre in Chatswood.

After the closure of the Arcadia Theatre in 1961, the owners of the theatre, the Crispe family, donated the organ to the citizens of Willoughby. The instrument was in storage for many years suffering deterioration and the loss of numerous components. It was eventually installed in the concert hall of the new Willoughby Civic Centre in Victoria Avenue Chatswood and opened, incomplete, on Monday 28 February 1972. It was soon discovered that preparatory work was far from satisfactory and the Willoughby Council sought advice from TOSA(NSW), in the knowledge of TOSA's recent very successful reinstatement of the Prince Edward Wurlitzer organ into the Marrickville Town Hall.

TOSA recommended that the whole organ be dismantled and rebuilt, taking advantage of new technology and materials, with all missing components to be replaced. Harold's long-time friend and TOSA member Des Russell undertook the management of the restoration project, and was ably assisted by Harold Duffell, and later several other TOSA members (Messrs Halloran, Richards and Misdale), and a former work colleague Alan Mason. Des Russell experienced two serious motor accidents which forced him to abandon his commitment to the project. Harold was approached by the Council to take over

the management of the project which he did promising to see Des Russell's project through to completion. Over 19 years, Harold oversaw the organ's restoration which involved repairing rusted pipes, warped timber and materials which had been damaged during storage and an earlier installation. The 827 pipe 2 manual organ was finally restored to its former glory at its opening night concert on 31 July 1994 with David Parsons at the console.

Willoughby Mayor John Squire in the opening night brochure stated: "...I express heartfelt thanks to the Crispe family for donating the organ in the first place, and also to Mr. Harold Duffell for his relentless dedication in restoring the organ to its present grandeur."

The citizens of Willoughby (and beyond) have enjoyed the fruits of Harold's remarkable innovative work on the instrument since its re-opening in 1994, but it is now back in safe storage awaiting yet another reinstatement when the new Willoughby Civic Place Project's concert hall is complete around 2010.

Harold enjoyed a long and fruitful life, a man of great passions, with a life-long love of the theatre organ, a keen sense of duty, a loyal friend and a very kind and considerate man. He will be missed by all who have known him and enjoyed his company over the years. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife Roma, and to all his family.

Doug Grant
14/9/2008

Helpers Needed!

TOSA really needs more helpers for the regular concerts, especially to help with the setting up of the hall before the concerts and the packing away of the equipment, etc., at the conclusion of the events.

If you feel you could assist your Society in this way, please contact our Vice President, John Shaw on (02) 9759 5825.

To watch out for..

A special celebration of the 80th Birthday of the Orion Wurlitzer and 20th Anniversary of its installation in the Orion Centre with:

Neil Jensen and Bernard Walz
Sunday 28th September, 2pm
At the Orion Function Centre, Beamish Street, Campsie.
For directions please refer to page 16.

The Orion Centre has disabled access directly from Beamish Street.

A celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Marrickville Wurlitzer with:

David Parsons and Matthew Loeser
Sunday 26th October
Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville.
For directions please refer to page 15.

Marrickville Town Hall has disabled access directly from the ramp beside the fire station.

But wait, there's more!!

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 16th November.
"Woodstock", Burwood.

Home Party at Peter Wilkinsons on Sunday 30th November.

Christmas Concert at Marrickville Town Hall.
Sunday 14th December with Tony Fenelon.

Considering a visit to the USA?

On the subject of A.T.O.S. Conventions, next year is planned for Cleveland, Ohio but 2010 will be in Seattle, Washington. Now would be a good time for T.O.S.A. members to start saving and planning to attend.

Rob Gliddon recommends this should be a great event, having attended both previous Conventions held in Seattle in 1971 and 1981.

NOTICE

Annual General Meeting Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc

Date: Sunday 16th November
2008 at 2:00pm

Venue: "Woodstock" Church
Street Burwood

Parking access from Fitzroy Street off
Shaftesbury Road

Nominations are open for the annual election of Office-bearers and Committee – see form in *September TOSA News*. Nominations must reach the Returning Officer no later than 5th October 2008. If sent by post nominations must be received no later than the last mail on Friday 3rd October 2008.

To foster a more social atmosphere, it has been suggested that attendees may wish to have dinner together at Burwood RSL Club in Shaftesbury Road following the meeting. If you are interested please advise the Secretary, Deirdre McMullan on 4878 5179 or secretary@tosa.net.au, so that tables can be booked in advance. Meals include tea, coffee and soft drinks and the Dining Room opens at 6.00pm. Woodstock is booked until 5.30pm.

Notice of any Motions or Special Resolutions for the AGM must reach the Secretary no later than 12th October 2008 to enable them to be advised to members in the November issue of TOSA News.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL cont'd..



Radio City Music Hall was described as "The showplace of the nation in the heart of Rockefeller Centre, New York, New York".

The following information is a continuation of our feature article from last month's issue about this magnificent venue in which a Wurlitzer Theatre Organ with dual ebony consoles is installed and still entertaining patrons in the 21st Century.

Continuing the outline of the complex as originally completed.

STAGE

The stage of the Radio City Music Hall is, in the opinion of technical experts, the most perfectly equipped in the world. It is 144 feet wide and 66 feet 6 inches deep. No practical innovation of the most modern stagecraft has been omitted, either in stage machinery or lighting. The stage equipment was designed by Peter Clark, noted theatre equipment expert. Among the special effects are rain and steam curtains.

The stage is equipped with a circular turntable made up of three sections, and there is a section of the turntable in each one of the three stage elevators. Each elevator is seventy feet long. These elevators, the largest of their kind, may be set at any level from the sub-basement to a position 13 feet above the stage, a vertical trip of 40 feet. They are so arranged that they can be adjusted in step

formation above the stage at various levels. The diameter of the revolving turntable is 43 feet. These three elevators together with orchestra elevator weigh 380,000 pounds or 190 tons.

The orchestra elevator will lower or raise the entire orchestra to or from the sub-basement level, 27 feet below the stage. When the orchestra elevator is at stage level it forms an extension to the main stage and increases its depth to a total of 84 feet. The orchestra carriage, or bandwagon, at stage level can be propelled backstage 60 feet, moving under its power supplied by seven huge batteries which run a five horsepower motor.

Equipped with a battery microphone, the stage is prepared for broadcasts of any type. The theatre dressing rooms are equipped with a call system as well as a public address system so that the artists can hear the show.

MOTION PICTURE SCREEN

The motion picture screen measures 70 feet by 35 feet. Engineered especially for the Music Hall, it is made of vinyl plastic with a lebliticular surface coated in a pearlized finish. It is constructed to give even light source distribution to all parts of the auditorium and thus enhance the definition of any projected

subjects. Its seams are electronically welded and it is flame-proof, crease-proof, sag-proof and resistant to heat, cold and moisture. A fresh screen is installed in the Music Hall about every six months. The screen is adaptable to four different picture sizes by means of masks or borders at the top, sides and bottom which are electrically operated by regulators at each end of the screen or by the projectionist from the booth.

Although pierced with 10 million tiny holes to transmit sound from the picture loud speakers directly behind it, these openings occupy but eight per cent of the total screen area and are invisible to audiences in the vast playhouse.

MOTION PICTURE PROJECTION MACHINES

There are six motion picture projection machines in the Music Hall. These include four in the main projection booth and two rear projection machines on stage for scenic effects. Approximately 24,000,000 feet of film are run through these machines each year. Each machine uses 180 amps of current (the average projection machine uses 130 amps.) There are also four slide effect machines in the main projection room.



One of two ebony WurliTzer Organ Consoles

whose operator "mixes" the desired amount of reproduced sound for proper balance in the auditorium, is above the Third Mezzanine. This location allows the operator to hear the final blend and balance it from the patron's point of hearing. The Master Control Console is the largest audio mixing console of its type ever constructed by the Radio Corporation of America. It has over 100 microphone mixer positions and associated pre-amplifiers. Complete emergency protection is provided in case of trouble. The operator can automatically change every amplifier in a suspected chain by throwing one switch. The total number of vacuum tubes in operation when the movie and public address amplifiers are in operation is over 1,000. In addition

to this battery of equipment there are other auxiliary amplifying systems such as a backstage call system with over 90 speakers and a rehearsal system with 40 speakers for the producer's use during dress rehearsals. Over 100 microphones are often used for adequate pickup of music and voices in many of the Music Hall shows. Hundreds of sound effects are on file, on discs and tape. Automatic recorders are used at all times so that any problems

that arise can be dealt with and analysed following the show. Microphones strategically located in hidden pockets across the front of the stage are controlled automatically by the operator and arise at the press of a button. In its entirety, it is the largest sound reinforcement system in the world.

ORGAN

There are two organs located in the Music Hall building, the main one in the auditorium and the other in the sound studio. Both were designed and made by WurliTzer and the larger organ was built especially for the Music Hall. Eight separate rooms are necessary to house the great number of pipes of these organs. The rooms or lofts are located on

either side of the proscenium opening. The largest pipes are 32 feet tall, the smallest half the size of an ordinary lead pencil.

In addition to the pipes located in the lofts there are various instruments known as the "hardware." These instruments include tom-toms, wood blocks, cymbals, chimes, xylophone, marimba, snare drums, trap drums, military drums, bass drums, harps, tambourines, castanets, a glockenspiel, sand block, grand piano and many others.

The temperature and humidity of the air in the organ loft has a marked effect on the operation of the organ. Cold air causes the organ to go flat, heat makes it sharp. The best operating temperature is between 72 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit. The pipes are very sensitive to humidity and special arrangements have been made to supply the proper amount of moisture to the air in the lofts.

The operation of the organ may be likened

to a telephone system. The musician "dials" the music from his console and a vast amount of electrical apparatus selects the instruments and combination of instruments and causes them to play. **There are two consoles each weighing 5,700 pounds connected with the one set of pipes.**

A giant blower containing sixty fans supplies the wind for the organ pipes. All the air used in the organ is cleaned and deodorized before it reaches the pipes, preventing any odors from reaching the theatre auditorium. It has been said that if there were 3,000 musicians in the orchestra pit, they could not produce the variety of instruments, tones, etc. that the organ is capable of producing.

"..two consoles, ..one set of pipes!"

More details next month on this magnificent venue in which a Wurlitzer Theatre Organ with dual ebony consoles is installed and still entertaining patrons in the 21st Century.

Concert & Membership Prices

The following TOSA concert ticket prices now apply:

	Australian Artists	Overseas Artists
Non-members	\$25.00	\$27.50
Non-member Pension	\$22.00	\$25.00
TOSA Members	\$20.00	\$20.00
Students 15-21yrs	\$10.00	\$10.00

Child under 15yrs accompanying an adult: FREE!

Annual Membership Fees are now:

\$30.00 for Full membership, and

\$20.00 for Concession, Country, Interstate & Overseas.

Membership enquiries Walter Pearce 9716 0151 membership@tosa.net.au

Associate Membership for a spouse/partner is an additional 50% only.

Who Was the Father of the Theatre Organ, or Did It Really Have a Godfather?

For the past 98 years Robert Hope-Jones has resided in the Theatre Organ World's golden frame as the "Father of the Theatre Organ." Is that a fair assessment of his contribution and, if left on his own, would we now be enjoying the rich, vibrant, and exciting sounds we enjoy? Knowing Hope-Jones' sensitive nature and artistic temperament, it is difficult to understand the courtship and marriage with the powerful and demanding Wurlitzer firm.

Robert Hope-Jones' organbuilder career was based on the design and production of church instruments with somewhat radical and innovative orchestral specifications. Most of his instruments employed both straight (church) and unit windchests that allowed a given voice to be played from more than one position on the console. Hope-Jones' personality and creative mind attracted a staff of talented artisans, men who followed him throughout his misadventures in the new world.

Instruments produced by the Hope-Jones Organ Company were not large, with many of the famous organs not exceeding 14 ranks of pipes. However, one stop in a Hope-Jones organ often equaled the dignity and power of four or five stops on the pleuritic issues of competitors. The Hope-Jones organ in St Luke's Episcopal Church in San Francisco had a dynamic range from a slight breeze in the ear to a throbbing re-enactment of a World War.

In the year 1908 a substantial Hope-Jones organ was installed in the rear gallery of Saint Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, New York. It is

interesting to note Farny R. Wurlitzer was an active member of that parish, and he was exposed to the new organ's color and effectiveness in the accompaniment of the tasteful service of the late Episcopal Church. Did that personal experience spark Farny's interest in Hope-Jones tonal concepts? Two years later Farny R. Wurlitzer moved into action and convinced his father and older brother Howard to have the company purchase the Hope-Jones company assets out of receivership.

The year of conception was in 1910 when the seed of Robert Hope-Jones' inventive genius swam up the Wurlitzer canal where it was to be nourished, developed and put into production. Along with Hope-Jones came the faithful artisans who were on the same creative wavelength. The expected nourishment for their new child was in short demand in terms of adequate space, supplies, and equipment. Now under the direct control of its

Godfather, Farny R. Wurlitzer, the adolescent Unit Orchestra was struggling to take form. Communication between Hope-Jones and Farny indicated frustration and tension between the two parents, with Farny clearly ad-

addressing Hope-Jones from a scolding parent's position. It is easy to sympathise with the emotional pain Hope-Jones faced every working day, as he was not a suitable interface between Wurlitzer and their clients. In addition, he was always looking after the well-being of his faithful transplanted artisans in terms of their receiving appropriate compensation and having to work too many hours.

What was the tone of the factory memos between the Wurlitzers and Hope-Jones? Following are some examples:

15-9-1910 Howard E. Wurlitzer (HEW) to Hope-Jones (H-J): "Do not make advances in wages until we find out how the business turns out." 5-10-1910 (H-J) to (HEW): "I ought to have at least 10 skilled console hands. I now have one" 19-1-1911 (H-J) to (HEW): "I have been far from well for several days and had a



crazing headache." 30-1-1912 (FRW) to (H-J): SUBJECT: Organ specifications: " In going over these I find very much to my surprise that changes have been made in all of them."

Farny, the Godfather of the Theatre Organ, was in a most difficult position because he was solely responsible for convincing the other members of his family to make the considerable investment in the Unit Orchestra part of the business. During the first four years the Hope-Jones organ department was hemorrhaging company funds. Most of the history is very well covered in the magnificent book [The Wurlitzer Pipe Organ: An Illustrated History], but there are aspects of the tale that incorrectly place Farny R. Wurlitzer in the solitary position of an executive shuffling through mounds of "two-ply" work every day.

The fact is, Farny Wurlitzer was a very highly trained musical instrument technician, and he was interested in every facet of the manufacturing process. In 1902 he was sent to Germany by the family to study the repair and maintenance of the Philipps Orchestrons, which were being marketed by the Wurlitzer firm. During that training period, young Farny kept two technical notebooks, written in German, French and English. The detailed notebooks contained several pen and ink drawings on various methods of construction, including "how to make a spun Brass Trumpet pipe." Both of the original notebooks are in the care of some semi-retarded organ man living in Hayward, California. Farny's love for the development and growth of the Unit Orchestra was in part due to his knowledge and appreciation of the manufacturing process. The very musical Hope-Jones placed his perceived notion of tonal perfection first, and he felt there was always room for improvement with every new instrument. That is one of the principal reasons Farny pushed Hope-Jones into developing standard styles and sticking to the design in order that mass production of parts could be established. He knew that was necessary for his fledgling offspring to survive in the marketplace.

The difficult association between Robert Hope-Jones and the Wurlitzer principals made the Unit Orchestra a possibility, but a terrible

personal cost. Hope-Jones' ego and delicate condition could not possibly mesh in the gear train of a tightly run and driven corporation like Wurlitzer. Throughout his life he caught his coat-tail on one electric fence after another, resulting in irreversible damage to his self esteem.

Farny and Grace Wurlitzer did not have children, and it is clear the manufacturing plant became identified and personalised by him. The same pride he took in the creation and growth of the famed factory went into every part of production, with each instrument being improved and refined. A comprehensive investigation of the tonal growth of the Unit Orchestra would require a complete essay, but the vast difference between a Hope-Jones organ and that of the established Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra should be appreciated. The Tibia Clausa, with a vibrant tremulant, came into its own as the carrying agent long after his tragic passing. Actual Hope-Jones organs from the Elmira facility did not have a tremulant on the Tibia Clausa, and that voice was often paired with a large Diapason in the same box. Do you know how to say "wall of mud?"

Another key production control factor developed by Farny Wurlitzer was the system of product accountability. That simple, but effective, system is evident when a component is opened for service. Right on the front of the pneumatic plate of the console is a glued on tag with the date, initials, and clock number of the craftsman who did the work. It is difficult is difficult to comprehend in this wonderful "post-industrial age" how anything as wonderful as the Mighty Wurlitzer could have taken form. It was through the vision, leadership, and personal decency that Farny R. Wurlitzer made the Theatre Organ a possibility. In his old age, he glowed with pride and satisfaction there were dedicated souls determined to breathe new life into the grandest musical instrument of any age. At the time of his death in 1972, a New York newspaper published a respectful article titled "The Passing of a Gentle Giant."

From Theatre Organ July-August 2008

"I
ought to have
at least 10 skilled
console hands"

Heartbreaking Floods

In June, 2008, the area of Cedar Rapids in Iowa, USA, was hit with the worst flooding that could be imagined. Anticipating some flooding, the owners of the Paramount Theatre had brought the 1928 WurliTzer Balaban 1A console up to stage level on its lift. Who could have expected the floodwaters would rise to 9 feet above the stage level! The console was tipped on its back and suffered major structural damage.

In only slightly better condition is the 1928 Rhinestone Barton housed in the Iowa Theatre (now Theatre Cedar Rapids); at least this console remained upright at the top of its 4-poster lift with only (!) 4 feet of water around it, and is in better structural condition than the Wurli.

At this time it appears the chambers and pipework of both instruments have survived intact so there is hope that the organs will once again sing with their original voices.

The consoles have both been moved into a controlled-climate storage facility in a former 1940's car dealership building to stabilise, awaiting funds and resources to restore the restorable and replace the unrecoverable. CR-ATOS & CRBI are actively looking for donations to achieve this result. More details with

picture gallery of the damage and removal efforts can be found on www.cr-atos.com



The 2/11 WurliTzer in Marrickville Town Hall, formerly Prince Edward Theatre Sydney

from the web site of Rod Blackmore
www.theatreorganistaust.info

WurliTzer opus 875 was the first of the "mighty WurliTzer" organs to be installed in a theatre in New South Wales. It was opened on 22nd November 1924 with U.S. organist Eddie Horton at the console. The Prince Edward theatre in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, was billed as the Theatre Beautiful and it certainly was a magnificent building. Although the theatre had an orchestral hoist, the organ console was located on a dais to the right of the stage and adjacent to the main chamber.

An organist who was featured daily at the Prince Edward for more than 20 years until 1965 was the delightful Noreen Hennessy. During 1964 it became known that theatre must close and be demolished at the end of 1965. In September 1964 an enquiry from the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) indicated that the theatre management would be prepared to sell the organ, and agreement was quickly reached resulting in its purchase intact. The final recital in the theatre, played by Noreen Hennessy, was on 15th August 1965. The organ was thereafter removed to storage where complete reconditioning was undertaken by TOSA members. In the meantime an agreement was finalised with the Council of the Municipality of Marrickville enabling the organ to be installed in its Town Hall at Marrickville (an inner-western suburb of Sydney.)

The opening concert at Marrickville was held on Wednesday, 27th November 1968 played by TOSA patron and theatre organist Ian Davies. The chambers are disposed in a high-up position on either side of the Town Hall stage from where they speak directly into the acoustically live auditorium. The console is on a movable dais that enables it to be placed in a central position forward of the stage for performances, or to be tucked away against the wall adjacent to the stage when used for practice or open-console purposes. The specification has since been increased to 11 ranks by the provision of an English Post-horn. The organ is used extensively for TOSA concerts.





Broadcast Details Sep 08 – Jan 09

"Colours of the King" 2MBS - FM 102.5

(program of the Organ Music Society of Sydney)

2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm

September 13

Organ works of Georg Böhm (1661 – 1733) who is believed to have taught JS Bach. Christian Teeuwen playing the Reil organ (1999) in the Bovenkirk, Kampen, The Netherlands.

Prelude and Fugue in D minor

Partita "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend"

Chorale Prelude "Christ lag in Todesbanden"

Prelude and Fugue in C major

Partita "Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten"

Chorale Prelude "Vater unser im Himmelreich"

Prelude, Fugue and Postlude in G minor

October 11

2008 sees the 150th anniversary of the death, at age 24, of Julius Reubke. His monumental Sonata on 94th Psalm, which clearly shows the influence of his teacher Liszt, is a cornerstone of 19th century organ repertoire.

Liszt – Fantasia and Fugue on BACH

(Michael Dudman at Newcastle Anglican Cathedral)

Reubke – Sonata on the 94th Psalm

(Hans-Christoph Becker-Foss – organ not named)

November 8

Healey Willan (1880 – 1968) was an English-born musician who moved to Canada in 1913. This program gives a snapshot of his skill as a composer for organ.

Patrick Wedd performs on an instrument which dates from 1914 and which shows well the sounds Willan had in mind.

Five preludes on plainchant melodies

Prelude on "Aberystwyth"

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue

Epilogue

December 13

A concert recording made for 2MBS featuring Michael Deasey – formerly Organist and Choirmaster of St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney and now Director of Music and Precentor at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Bathurst.

Concert date 7th May 2006 – venue St Stephen's Anglican Church Penrith (Jackson organ of 1874, enlarged Fincham 1906, rebuilt Brown & Arkle 1977) – recording engineer Greg Ghalvalas.

Walond – Voluntary in G major

Stanley – Voluntary in C major

Buxtehude – Chorale Prelude "Now pray we the Holy Ghost"

Bach – Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor BWV 582

Gluck – In Paradise

Bonnet – Romance Sans Paroles

Owens – Chorale Prelude "Shall we gather at the river"

Bonnet – Ariel

January 10

A concert recording made for 2MBS featuring Angelo Castaldo, Organist and Choirmaster of Volto Santo's Sanctuary, Naples, Italy.

Concert date 7th April, 2006 – venue St Mark's Anglican Church Figtree (organ by Kinloch, 1845) – sound engineer Greg Ghavalas.

Frescobaldi – Toccata Decima, Canzon dopo l'Epistola, Toccata per l'Elevatione, Bergamasca
Pergolesi – Sonata per cembalo o organo
Panerai – 3 movements from Sonata 85 da organo
Donizetti – Rondo
Buxtehude – Preludium from Te Deum
Walther – Corale e variazioni
WF Bach – Toccata

The Theatre Organ 2MBS - FM 102.5

3rd Saturday of each month, 6.30 – 7.00 pm

September 20

Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue (Quentin Maclean)
Satie – Gymnopedie No 1 (Nigel Ogden)
Wagner – Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde (Walt Strony)
Monti – Czardas (Joseph Seal)

October 18

Bizet – Excerpts from Carmen Suite - Prelude, Aragonaise, Intermezzo, Changing of the Guard, Gypsy Dance (Tony Fenelon)
Offenbach – Overture to Orpheus in the Underworld (Jonas Nordwall)

November 15

Von Suppe – Light Cavalry Overture (Ron Rhode)
Chopin – Minute Waltz (Jelani Eddington)
Rodgers – Slaughter on Tenth Avenue (Chris McPhee)
Orth – In a Clock Store (Nigel Ogden)
Strauss – Thunder and Lightning Polka (Simon Gledhill)

December 20

A program of march music

Coates – March – Oxford Street (Joseph Seal)
Bagley – National Emblem March (Russell Holmes)
Belton – Down the Mall (Sandy McPherson)
Johnson – The Waterloo March (Nigel Ogden)
Sousa – medley of popular marches (Reginald Dixon)
Strauss – Radetsky March (Tony Fenelon)
Teike – Old Comrades (Joseph Seal)

January 17

Strauss – Voices of Spring (Margaret Hall)
Ketelbey – In a Monastery Garden (Quentin Maclean)
Smetana – Dance of the Comedians (Jonas Nordwall)
Gounod – Funeral March of a Marionette (Reginald Foort)
Curzon – March of the Bowmen (Simon Gledhill)